

For Immediate Release

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Contact Zoë Schoon 020.7752.3121 zschoon@christies.com

SCIENTIFIC IS TRULY EXCEPTIONAL AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

Exceptional Scientific Sale Thursday 7th April, 2pm

South Kensington – Practically every era from pre-history, science, astronomy & the natural world is covered in the first of this year's Exceptional Scientific Sales at Christie's South Kensington on 7 April 2005. The sale also features the eclectic William L Camp Jnr. Collection of just under 1,000 pieces of both ladies and gentlemen's eyewear, with estimates ranging from £200 to £3,000.

The exquisite beauty of the inner earth is unlocked in a magnificent collection of minerals, which as well as being scientifically significant, provide a stunning and mysterious focus to any room in the home. Exceptional pieces in this category include an enormous rock crystal sphere (estimate: £5,000–7,000) which shows a spectacular degree of transparency for its size, and a piece of the famous meteorite from the Campo del Cielo fall in Argentina (estimate: £8,000–10,000). Thought to be between 4,000 to 6,000 years old, this meteorite was discovered broken into several thousands of pieces by Spanish explorers in 1572. The piece at auction weighs an impressive 82kg and is one of the perfectly preserved specimens found on a mountainside several hundred miles from the original "strew" field. There is also a gorgeous slab of wood from Arizona formed during the Jurassic period (208 – 146 million years ago). Estimated at between £10,000 to £12,000 and displaying an extraordinary range of colours, this would make a fine table top.

For serious fossil collectors, the sale features some superb fossils from the United Kingdom. Of particular interest is a museum standard Ichthyosaur Communiss fossil reptile discovered 30 years ago in Lyme Regis (estimate: £18,000 – 22,000). Dating from the Jurassic period, this is one of the finest examples of only a handful ever discovered in this country. Framed in a black walnut frame, the Ichthyosaur is 1m 57cms long and in a classic swimming pose, with its snout standing proud from the rock host and its eyeball extremely well preserved. Another British highlight is a world class ammonite group from Connesby Quarry in Scunthorpe. Collected in 1988, this beautifully preserved group of prehistoric creatures is expected to fetch between £4,000 to £6,000.

The history of science throughout the years is also represented by a fine selection of scientific instruments. The main feature of this group is a unique early 18th century pearwood plane table compass (estimate: £6,000–8,000). This is signed by the celebrated inventor John Harrison (who was the subject of the recent television series Longitude) and dated 1718. There is also an exceptional French Astrolabe from 1400 (estimate: £50,000– 80,000) and a fine and complete 19th century English binocular microscope, complete with accessory case by R&J Beck (estimate: £4,000– 6,000).

Finally, the William L Camp spectacle collection features practically every type of eye-wear that has ever been created, with estimates ranging from £200 to £3,000 for each of approximately 1000 pieces. From the fashionable to the functional, spanning a number of centuries on several different continents, no stone of eye wear history has been left unturned. There are nose spectacles, monocles, fine embroidered spectacle cases, lorgnettes, magnifying glasses, Eskimo glasses, 20th century sunglasses and many more. Mr Camp owned a chain of opticians stores across America in the early 1970s and during this time collected as many vintage and antique spectacles as he could. He was also fortunate enough to acquire the spectacle collections of 3 other prominent collectors, making his own collection one of the most impressive and comprehensive of its type in the world.

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors:

Scientific Instruments and Engineering Works of Art

Interest in the art of science and scientific instruments has created a very specialized, yet increasingly popular collecting category. Christie's offers all types of scientific and medical instruments and apparatus, including globes and planetaria, engineering and maritime models. Sales take place throughout the year in London. Notable results include the auction of the extraordinary William Bonardo Collection of Wax Anatomical Models that sold for £203,463 (2001); a unique 1.5in. scale model of Stephenson's locomotion no.1; and the Gaunless Bridge model built in 1875 that realized £109,038 (2001).

In 2005 Christie's South Kensington will have the following opening hours:

Monday 9am – 7.30pm

Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5pm

And will be open for Weekend Shopping on:

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm

The weekend openings will be throughout the year except for bank holidays.

Christie's South Kensington is the first international auction house in London to offer regular weekend auctions.

Viewing Times:

Monday 4 April: 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Tuesday 5 April: 9.00am – 5.00pm