

For Immediate Release

15 March 2005

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CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON FOCUSES ON CAMERAS

Cameras, Magic Lanterns & Optical Toys

Friday 6 May, 12 noon

South Kensington – Spies, Mountaineers, war heroes & James Bond himself will love the quirky, eclectic array of cameras in South Kensington's Camera sale on Friday 6th May at 12 noon. Every area of photography is represented, from the 1850s right through to the subminiatures and spy cameras of the middle of the last century, and recent Leica & Nikon.

Mountaineers in particular will love the Tropical Una hand camera (estimate: £2,000 – 3,000). Originally belonging to Captain J B L Noel, this camera accompanied the celebrated adventurer and photographer on a lifetime of expeditions, including the ill-fated 1924 expedition to Mount Everest. It took the last ever pictures of George Leigh Mallory and Andrew Irvine as they began their fateful ascent, and sadly perished on Everest in 1924. The camera was specially made in London of seasoned teak with brass bindings, which would have protected it against the extreme temperatures it had to endure, and comes with its original maker's case, 6 large format (20 x 24inch) signed and captioned photos of Everest, taken by Noel and a signed photo of Captain Noel himself, with the camera.. Bought from Captain Noel by the current owner, this is the first time this unique part of exploration history has come up for auction.

Spies, War Heroes and James Bond will love the fascinating variety of disguised and miniature cameras which cover a century, from the 1880s to the 1980s. These range from cameras looking like pocket-watches to digital watches and rings, through to cigarette lighters, cigarette packets, guns and pens. With estimates starting as low as £100, these original "boys toys" make the perfect gift for the man who has everything. Of particular interest in this category are the Minox Spy Cameras. Known to have been used by both sides during the war, these tiny pocket sized cameras quickly became known as the ultimate, miniature precision camera. Minox production was started by Walter Zapp, who set up his factory in Latvia in 1937, just before the outbreak of World War II. Latvia was originally neutral, but was invaded during the war by the Russians, and later by Germany. Two examples are included in the sale, bearing the USSR stamp (estimates £1000 – 1,500) and from Latvia (estimate: £300 – 500)

Other interesting items in this sale include Petie Vanity cameras, which were designed in the early 1950s to appeal to ladies. Also miniature, they fitted into a decorated vanity case which provided storage for a powder compact, lipstick and even a roll of spare film. Estimates for these start at £300. There is also a fine selection of Coronet Midgets. Mass produced by the Coronet Camera Company of Birmingham in the 1920s, these minute bakelite cameras were designed as a bit of fun for the amateur photographer and came in a range of 6 colours. Finally there are several good examples of 1960s camera radios (estimates from £100). Made in Japan by the Kowa Optical Company, these miniature cameras were combined with a simple AM transistor radio. As it was a dream of any kid in growing up in the 1960s to own a transistor radio, these were an instant hit the younger crowd.

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

Notes to Editors:

Cameras & Optical Toys

The camera department's annual sales comprise of over 2,000 lots and feature a wide variety of collectible and usable cameras, optical toys and viewers from the 1840s to the present. Held since 1972, these sales have established Christie's as the pre-eminent auction house in an increasingly popular collecting field.

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.