

For Immediate Release
19 March 2007

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SELECTED CONTENTS FROM TWO GREAT SCOTTISH HOUSES TO BE REVEALED AT CHRISTIE'S IN MAY



SCONE PALACE AND BLAIRQUHAN

The Selected Contents of Two Great Scottish Houses

24 May 2007

London – Christie's announce the auction of *Scone Palace and Blairquhan - The Selected Contents of Two Great Scottish Houses* which will take place in London on 24 May. The sale will offer a wide selection of pictures, furniture, works of art, ceramics and silver from two famous Scottish Houses; **Scone Palace**, Perthshire, coronation site and ancient heart of Scotland and the seat of the Earls of Mansfield and Mansfield, and **Blairquhan**, Ayrshire, ancestral home of the Hunter Blair family. The auction will include over 500 lots ranging from old master pictures to Scottish antique curling stones, much of which have been hidden under dust-covers in attic storage for many years and will now be revealed to the delight of collectors and connoisseurs. Individual estimates in the sale range from £250 to £100,000. The following day on 25 May, Christie's will present the auction of *Scottish Art including the Hunter Blair Colourist Collection* (see separate release).

Scone Palace breathes history and romance like no other place in Scotland. It was the coronation site of the Scottish Kings for nearly eight centuries; Kenneth Macalpine, first King of the Scots, was enthroned at Scone *circa* 843, as were 48 Scottish monarchs, including Charles II, who became the last to be crowned there in 1651. The



grounds of the Palace were also the seat of Macbeth, immortalised by the Shakespeare play, who ruled as King of Scotland from 1040-1057. In 1604, the Palace and lands of Scone were presented to Sir David Murray of Tullibardine in whose family they have remained to this day. The present Palace was commissioned by David Murray, 3rd Earl of Mansfield, and was a major re-design in 1803 by William Atkinson who was also architect for Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott. Atkinson's design produced an

imposing castellated gothic Palace, built in red sandstone, which stands in Scotland's most historic setting. Today, the Palace and gardens are open to the public and have been seen and enjoyed by several million visitors.

The Earl of Mansfield and Mansfield and his son, Viscount Stormont: “*Scone Palace is the most historic location in Scotland and the present Palace, in which the family has lived since 1604, welcomes large numbers of public visitors each and every year. We hope that Scone will continue to be enjoyed and cherished by the public long into the future. The sale of selected contents from the Palace storerooms at Christie’s in May is to provide us with the space now needed to further both the enjoyment and use of the Palace by visitors.*”

The majority of furniture, paintings and works of art to be offered from Scone have been in storage and under dust-covers for over half a century. Highlights of the paintings in the sale include *A wooded landscape with Diana and her nymphs, bathing* by Hermann Van Swanevelt (*circa* 1600-1655) which is expected to realise £20,000-30,000 and *Portrait of Heneage Finch, 1st Earl of Nottingham (d.1682)* by Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680) *illustrated right* which carries an estimate of £20,000-40,000. The sale will also offer a selection of furniture whose design is attributed to William Atkinson, with estimates from £500 to £5,000 and including a selection of tables and chests of drawers attributed to the famous cabinet-maker George Bullock, who worked closely with William Atkinson. Leading this section of the sale are two pairs of Scottish George IV Gothic-revival oak easy armchairs *circa* 1825, each of which are expected to realise £5,000 to 8,000. The 2nd Earl of Mansfield was Ambassador to France between 1772-78; a close intimate of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, it is possible that he purchased the fine pair of Louis XVI ormolu-mounted bronze three-light candelabra of *circa* 1785 which are offered with an estimate of £40,000-60,000. His



Francophile tastes were, however, equally strongly reflected in his son, the 3rd Earl of Mansfield, whose purchases after the Peace of Amiens in 1811 are represented by an Empire ormolu and bronze clock with Father Time signed by *Thomire & Cie* which is expected to realise £30,000-40,000 *illustrated left*. A selection of porcelain will be offered at the sale, including a pair of superb Restoration ormolu-mounted Wucai five-colour baluster vases and covers of *circa* 1820 (estimate: £20,000-40,000) and a pair of Chinese blue-ground baluster vases and covers *circa* 1800 which is expected to realise £8,000-12,000. A Scottish Wemyss

ewer and wash basin and a large selection of Victorian Copeland Spode ceramic ewers and wash-basins from the attic bedrooms carry estimates from £200-500.



Blairquhan in Ayrshire is one of the finest Regency castles in Scotland. The presence of a fortified tower is recorded on this site since 1346, and the present Castle was built from 1821-1824 at the request of Sir David Hunter Blair, 3rd Bt., in whose family it remains. The Castle was designed by Scottish architect William Burn (1789-1870) who pioneered Scottish Baronial architecture of the gothic revival. More recently, Blairquhan was stood in as a double for Balmoral Castle in the film *The Queen* starring Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren, and is open to

the public every Sunday from Easter through to September. The sale of *Scottish Art* on 25 May is highlighted by *The Hunter Blair Colourist Collection*, the finest private collections of Scottish colourist works to come to the market in over 25 years (see separate release).

Patrick Hunter Blair comments: ‘*Blairquhan has been the seat of the Hunter Blair family since 1790 and is now open to the public on selected days throughout the year, attracting a significant number of visitors. As a remedial action following the passing of James Hunter Blair in 2004, the family are offering at auction a collection of colourist paintings and selected contents from the Castle in order to secure its future. The family has carefully selected these contents in order to have the least effect on the historical fabric of the house; the proceeds of the sale should safeguard the majority of the objects and works of art which have been in situ for generations and which give the Castle the historical character for which it is so appreciated.*’

Highlights from Blairquhan to be offered on 24 May include a pair of *Classical landscapes near Tivoli* by Andrea Locatelli (1695-1741) which is expected to realise £30,000-50,000 and *A vegetable seller before a statue of Bacchus* and *a vegetable and fruit market in front of a statue* by Joseph van Aken (circa 1699-1749) which carry an estimate of £15,000-25,000.

The sale will also offer a rare selection of documented furniture by the Scottish cabinet makers *James and Matthew Morison of Edinburgh and Ayr* including eighteen George IV mahogany dining room chairs delivered between 1823-25 at a cost of £2 10s each (estimate: £25,000-35,000) as well as a pair of Scottish George IV oak hall chairs (estimate:



£1,500-3,000) and a pair of Scottish George IV mahogany bedside commodes (estimate: £4,000-6,000). A further highlight is a Scottish George III mahogany breakfront front bookcase of circa 1775 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) *illustrated left*. The bookcase is stylistically extremely close to Thomas Chippendale's workshops, which was almost certainly supplied for Dunskey House, the original seat of the Hunter Blairs that appears in the background of the group portrait by David Allan (1744-1796) which now hangs in the dining room at Blairquhan. Also included are a selection of books, ceramics, Grand Tour works of art and

four pairs of Scottish granite curling stones from the late 19th century with estimates ranging from £300-500 per pair. A Scottish carved and painted shop figure of a Highlander from the 19th century, standing over 6ft tall, is expected to realise £7,000-10,000.

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Notes to Editors:

- On 25 May 2007 at King Street, Christie's will offer *Scottish Art including The Hunter Blair Colourist Collection*, highlighted by the finest private collection of Scottish colourists to come to the market in over twenty five years. This will be the first ever auction dedicated to Scottish Art to be held in London and builds on the success of *The Scottish Sale* held in Edinburgh in October 2006 which realised £3.7 million, the highest ever total for the category at Christie's, and whose Colourist section realised £1.9 million, the highest total for a group of colourists anywhere since Christie's Scottish sale in 1989.

- Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

- Scone Palace and gardens are open to the public daily from Sunday 1 April 2007 to Wednesday 31 October 2007. See <http://www.scone-palace.net/> for further details.

- Blairquhan is open to the public every Sunday from Easter until September, and is also available for exclusive rental for film location, weddings, and corporate entertainment. See <http://www.blairquhan.co.uk/> for further details.