

For Immediate Release

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**IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION BY ITALIAN DESIGNER
ETTORE SOTTASS TO APPEAR AT AUCTION FOR THE FIRST
TIME**

20th Century Decorative Art and Design

4 May 2007 at 11am



King Street, London - An important collection of furnishings created for two residences in Italy by Ettore Sottsass, one of the most important Italian designers of the 20th century, leads Christie's London sale of **20th Century Decorative Art and Design** on 4 May 2007. The sale features over 160 lots including one of the most important collections of Emile Gallé glass to appear at auction in London for many years and a single owner collection of studio ceramics by Lucie Rie. Spanning a wide variety of styles and materials from the beginning of 20th century until the present day, estimates range from £1,000 to £80,000.

Represented by thirteen lots, the furnishings from the 1959 Ivrea apartment (near Turin) and the 1965 Capri home were designed by Ettore Sottsass, the designer, architect and design philosopher. Sottsass established his first design practice in 1947 and was appointed as a consultant designer for Olivetti in 1958. Shortly thereafter Sottsass was invited by one of Olivetti's newly-married directors to decorate and furnish their Ivrea apartment. The completed apartment was published and extensively illustrated in 1960 in the prestigious *Domus* magazine.

Sottsass's scheme for this compact yet colourful apartment is striking with its minimalist forms and structures. His preoccupation with uncluttered and architectural forms marked an aesthetic departure from mainstream extravagant Italian design in the 1960s. Furniture offered from the Ivrea apartment includes an oak wall storage unit (estimate: £10,000-15,000), three stacking tables (estimate: £2,500-3,500) an oak library bookcase (estimate: £2,000-3,000), a magazine rack (estimate: £2,000-3,000) and an occasional table (estimate: £3,000-5,000).



By 1965, when Sottsass was commissioned to design a second interior for the same client, a holiday home on the Isle of Capri, his designs had moved even further away from his mainstream contemporaries. Heavily influenced by his earlier travels in India and the United States, Sottsass became fascinated by the role of objects within the home and their embodiment as a symbol of ritual. The 1965 bookcase (estimate: £30,000-50,000) designed for the Capri home acquired the role of an altar for the rituals of domestic life.

Further highlights from the Isle of Capri home include a storage partition designed to divide the kitchen and living area (estimate: £8,000-15,000); a steel and marble dining table (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and a birch, walnut and lacquered wood cabinet (estimate: £20,000-30,000). In 2006 Sottsass was the subject of a major retrospective at the Los Angeles County Museum and in Spring 2007 he will be the subject of a similar retrospective at London's Design Museum. A further seven lots from both interiors will be offered in Christie's South Kensington's sale of Modern Design on 5 June 2007.



Further design highlights from the 20th Century Decorative Art and Design sale include a bathroom suite by Piero Fornasetti from 1955 from his villa in Varenna (estimate: £18,000-24,000), a group of erotic Polaroid photos taken by Carlo Mollino 1967-71 (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and a rare paper dragon (estimate: £6,000-8,000) that was created by Mollino in 1964 for his flight instructor, Commandante Vignelli.

Leading the Art Nouveau section of the sale is an important private Swiss collection of French art glass by pioneering designers Emile Gallé and Daum Freres which is estimated to fetch in excess of £230,000. The collection of 16 lots was formed over the past 20 years and includes one of the most important collections of Gallé glass to appear at auction in London for many years; estimates range from £1,500 to £50,000. From the Art Deco period is a two metre long bronze figure *circa* 1925 by French sculptor Marcel-André Bouraine of an Amazonian archer, Penthesilia Queen of the Amazons (estimate: £70,000-90,000) and a selection of Art Deco bronze and ivory sculptures by Romanian sculptor Demetre Chiparus, including two Russian Dancers that have been in the same family for over 70 years (estimate £35,000-45,000).

Lucie Rie (1902-1995) was undoubtedly one of the leading ceramicists of the 20th century and studied under Michael Powolny at the School of Applied Art, in Vienna. Having moved to England in 1938, she spent four days learning from the potter Bernard Leach. Work was interrupted by the Second World War and this collection of 22 lots from the Fischer collection of studio-ceramics provides an overview of her work from the 1950s to the 1980s. A monumental stoneware vase, *circa* 1960 (estimate: £4,000-6,000) is one of the highlights. It demonstrates Rie's distinctive style, which was born from an exploration of the relationship between the body of the piece, its texture and the glaze applied. Dr Wolfgang and Mrs Jutta Fischer were key promoters of Lucie Rie's pots through their world renowned gallery, Fischer Fine Art, in London. The items being offered at Christie's are from the Fischer's private collection, which was acquired directly from the artist between the mid 1960s and early 1980s.

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A selection of images is available on request*

Notes to Editors

Pre-sale viewing from 29 April to 4 May 2007: Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6QT

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