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March 28, 2006

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MASTERPIECES OF ORIENTALIST PAINTING TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN APRIL

Orientalist Art

April 19, 2006

New York – On April 19 Christie's will continue to lead the field in Orientalist art by presenting collectors an outstanding selection of works from some of the most sought after artists of the genre. Artists represented in this highly selective sale include such masters as Ludwig Deutsch, Edwin Lord Weeks, Gustav Bauerfeind, among others.

Leading the sale is David Robert's Ruins of the Great Temple at Karnak (estimate: \$2,500,000–3,500,000). Among the best known and most highly regarded of the Orientalist painters, Roberts was famous in his time as a documenter of historic sites, with many of his representations of his romantic images of Egypt among the most recognizable in the world. Reflecting upon the magnificence of the site, Roberts noted in his journal that the grandeur of Karnak “cannot be imagine” and that he was fearful that his paintings would “scarcely convey” the tremendous images he saw. This fear, however, was unfounded, as he masterfully conveys not only Karnak's size, but also and the incredible romantic mystery that veils it.

During the second half of the 19th century, the Academy in Vienna produced a number of now legendary painters, among them Ludwig Deutsch, from whom comes a tremendous work leading the sale: The Palace Guard (estimate: \$1,500,000–2,000,000). Illustrating the thematic choices indicative of the Austrian Orientalists with its focus on real settings, costumes and peoples as opposed to local legends and far-fetched tales favored by their French escapist and voyeuristic counterparts, this work is among Deutsch's most revered compositions, executed by the artist at the pinnacle of his career.

The discovery of an important work by Gustav Bauerfeind, arguably the most skilled of the German Orientalists, also leads the sale. Entitled Street Scene in Damascus (estimate: \$700,000–1,000,000) it is a key work by the artist and incorporates all of the elements for which Bauernfeind is known: his exceptional understanding of architecture, his minute

attention to detail, and most of all his beautiful use of color and light. Depicting his personal experience in the city, this work portrays the artist on a busy street surrounded by locals, all gathered around him in obvious curiosity. As Islam forbids the depiction of the prophet, many at the time regarded drawing and painting as a sin, which ultimately left Bauernfeind unable to work in situ as locals would constantly distract or disturb him with their curiosity. The present work was therefore likely painted in the artist's studio around 1887, following his second trip from the region. It was long thought that *Street Scene in Damascus* was lost or perhaps destroyed in the war, as the only record apart from one recorded engraving was a photograph that has appeared in various books.

From the property of a distinguished collection comes Edwin Lord Weeks' *Interior of La Torre des Infantas* (estimate: \$250,000–350,000). Beautifully illustrating the legend of the three Moorish Princesses in Washington Irving's "The Alhambra," this work made its debut at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1882, one of three paintings the artist sent from his studio in Paris. A reflection of Weeks' empathetic relationship with history through literature, a recurring theme in the artist's work seen in his series of paintings influenced by "A Thousand and One Nights," based on his travels in Persia, *Interior of La Torre des Infantas* links his travels through Spain and the Moorish North Africa with the literature and history of the region.

Also of note is *The Queen of the Brigands* (estimate: \$200,000–300,000) by Frederick Arthur Bridgman, one of Jean-Léon Gérôme's best known students and a work that clearly shows the master's influence; Edwin Long's *An Ancient Custom* (estimate: \$200,000–300,000) a smaller version of the work the artist exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1877; and a dynamic composition depicting Bedouin warriors in full gallop from Adolf Schreyer entitled *The Chase* (estimate: \$100,000–150,000).

Auction:	Orientalist Art	April 19
Viewing:	Christie's Rockefeller Plaza Galleries	April 12–18

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

More information about Christie's sale of Orientalist Art can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.