

For Immediate Release

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FROM FABERGE EGGS TO RUSSIAN PAINTINGS AND EXCEPTIONAL SILVER

Important Silver, Objects of Vertu and Russian Works of Art

April 11, 2003

New York, NY – Christie's Important Silver and Russian Works of Art sale on April 11 will offer extremely rare and selective works of art this season, highlighted by Fabergé's Diamond Trellis Easter Egg, an exquisite pastel of ballerinas by Zinaida Serebriakova, Russia's foremost female artist, and a rare 15th-century Spanish Colonial cup with colorful enameling.

During the pre-sale exhibition of Important Silver and Russian Works of Art, Christie's will hold an exclusive exhibition of three magnificent Renaissance silver-gilt works of art from the Collection of Fritz and Eugen Gutmann, which will be sold at Christie's London on June 11, following an act of restitution made last year by the Dutch government. Christie's will also host a lecture discussing the topic of restituted art on April 8.

Russian Works of Art

Following the sale of The Winter Egg in April 2001, which realized a record-breaking price of \$9.5 million, Christie's will offer The Diamond Trellis Egg by Carl Fabergé (estimate: \$2,000,000–3,000,000). Alexander III presented this extraordinary rarity to his wife, Maria Fedorovna, as an Easter gift in 1892. This elegant pale green hardstone egg is brilliantly enwrapped with swirling diamond trelliswork that creates a delicate spiraling motion around the egg. The Diamond Trellis Egg was displayed at the Antichkov place in St. Petersburg until it was confiscated by the Kerensky government in 1917, and sold off by the Soviet government in the 1920s. It last appeared on the

auction market in 1960, and in 1977, was displayed at The Victoria and Albert Museum at the Fabergé exhibition to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's silver jubilee.

Leading a fine group of Niello works offered in the sale is a cartographic bonbonniere (box) from the Velikii Usting region, 1788 (estimate: \$30,000–40,000). Niello is an ancient art known in Russia since the 10th century in which an alloy of silver, copper, lead and sulfur is applied to an engraved silver surface and then polished. This museum-quality cartographic box is extremely rare because it is the first of its kind to illustrate a battle scene, in particular, the Naval Battle of Chesme between the Turks and Russians. Another unusual piece is a parcel-gilt and niello coffee and tea service, which illustrates a charming peasant scene (estimate: \$15,000–20,000).

Further selective and high-quality objects in the sale include a gem-set bell-push of a crouching rabbit with red cabochon eyes (estimate: \$60,000–80,000) and a parcel-gilt and enamel icon of the guardian angel and Saint Aleksandr Nevskii, Moscow, 1882 (estimate: \$14,000–18,000).

Russian Paintings

The Russian Paintings offered this season present collectors with a full spectrum of many styles and schools of painting in Russia at the turn of the 20th century. One of the most significant works in the sale is an exquisite pastel of ballerinas painted by the most well-known Russian female artist, Zinaida Serebriakova. Reminiscent of Degas, Young Ballerinas (estimate: \$80,000–90,000) is a colorful work that poeticizes the beauty of the female dancers in the purest manner.

Nikolai Konstantinovich Roerich is represented in the sale with a selection of lesser-known works painted during his stay on Monhegan Island off the coast of Maine. This wild and remote island was discovered during the 1870s by noted American artists such as Rockwell Kent, George Bellows, Edward Hopper and Robert Henri. Roerich joined these painters during the 1920s and painted his Ocean series, including Reverie, 1922 (estimate: \$60,000–90,000). Complimenting Reverie are Ocean Series: Night Glimmer, 1922 (estimate: \$40,000–60,000) and Ocean Series: Strength, 1922 (estimate: \$40,000–60,000). The painter's strokes convey the island's mystical quality and sense of tranquility, from the thin light to the startling contrast of steep, dark cliffs and foaming white surf that stretches out to the horizon.

Two enchanting landscapes by Isaak Il'ich Levitan, the most outstanding Russian landscape painter, will also be offered. Landscape at Dawn, 1923 (estimate: \$75,000–95,000) and Twilight Landscape (estimate: \$40,000–60,000) are both enriching and realistic while also portraying a philosophical depth.

Important Silver

The silver offered this season includes fine examples from early Spanish Colonial silver to the best of early Regency. From circa 1620, is a rare Spanish Colonial silver-gilt and two-handled cup (estimate: \$25,000–35,000) with heavy blue-green enameling and beaded scroll handles. The interior also is embellished with red and blue enamel ornamentation. A similar example marked in Bogotá New Granada (now Colombia) was recovered from the 1622 wreck of the Atocha (sold: \$79,500, Christie's NY, April 1999).

Of excellent provenance and condition is a highly-important pair of Queen Anne silver-gilt salvers from the Raby Ambassadorial plate, mark of Philip Rollos, London, 1705 (estimate: \$150,000–250,000). This pair was given by the Crown to Baron Raby on his appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Prussia in 1705. At the same time, two sets of ewers and basins were also given to Baron Raby, and are in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Also highlighting the sale is an important Louis XV gold and enamel double snuffbox, 1754–55, (estimate: \$120,000–180,000) by Jean Ducrollay, one of the most important 18th century Parisian boxmakers. Ducrollay provided the King with these snuffboxes to present as diplomatic gifts. Double snuffboxes, in particular, were extremely unusual, and this example displays en plein enamel panels, the base of which illustrates a Muse reclining on clouds.

An important early George III silver-gilt tea tray, 1802 (estimate: \$80,000–120,000) illustrates the best of early Regency with hoof feet, leopard mask handles, ram's head joints and grapevine borders. Bearing the marks of Digby Scott and Benjamin Smith, this tea tray is one of the earliest models of this important design, and centers upon an engraved coat-of-arms.

Representative of Edward Wakelin's best work of the 1750s is a fine George II silver epergne (estimate: \$50,000–70,000). This piece is sculpturally impressive with a detachable boat-shaped central basket with four foliate scroll branches that fit circular dishes with flower centers.

The Gutmann Collection

Exclusive Exhibition and Lecture on Restituted Art in New York

Following an act of restitution made last year by the Dutch government, Christie's will offer three magnificent Renaissance silver-gilt works of art from the Collection of Fritz and Eugen Gutmann at Christie's London on June 11. These superlative pieces will be on view at Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, from April 8–10. Christie's is also delighted to host a lecture on April 8, entitled "Closing the Circle: Restitution and the history of the Gutmann family collection" with Anne Webber, Co-Chair of the Commission of Looted Art in Europe and Anthony Phillips, Christie's International Director of Silver. (A separate press release on The Gutmann Collection is available).

Important Silver, Objects of Vertu and Russian Works of Art

Auction: April 11, 2003

Christie's Rockefeller Plaza

Viewing: April 6 - 10

Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Plaza

The Gutmann Collection Silver Highlights

Lecture: April 8, 2003

Christie's Rockefeller Plaza

Viewing: April 8 - 10

Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Plaza

More information about Christie's sale of Important Silver, Objects of Vertu and Russian Works of 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.

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