

***For Immediate Release***

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***AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN FAMILY COLLECTION TO BE SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S IN JUNE***



*A Louis XIV Ormolu-Mounted Boulle, Ebony, Brown Tortoiseshell and Floral Marquetry Pier-Table, attributed to André-Charles Boulle (estimate: £250,000-400,000)*



*A wall-light from a set of four designed by Pierre Delbée (estimate: £8,000-15,000)*

***Boulle to Jansen: An Important European Private Collection Evening Sale***

***11 June***

***Boulle to Jansen: An Important European Private Collection Day Sale***

***Porcelain, Paperweights and Maritime Pictures from an Important European Private Collection***

***12 June***

***London – In June 2003, Christie's London will offer furniture and works of art from an important European family Collection that celebrates the exquisite craftsmanship and unparalleled exuberance of Parisian high design, from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A 60 lot evening sale will be held on 11 June with the auctions Boulle to Jansen: An Important European Private Collection (day sale) and Porcelain, Paperweights and Maritime Pictures from an Important European Private Collection on 12 June.***

***The Collection was assembled under the guidance of Pierre Delbée from the celebrated decorative atelier, Maison Jansen in the 1960s. The magnificent interiors he created for the family are the culmination of mixing the most stylish and original works ever made by the skilled craftsmen employed in the atelier***

*Jansen together with French furniture and works of art from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The three sales are expected to fetch in the region of £5 million.*

*Established in 1880, the Maison Jansen quickly became the meeting place for cosmopolitan high society under the leadership of founder Henri Jansen. In 1930 Pierre Delbée took charge of the house which by this time boasted branches from Buenos Aires to New York, Cairo to Havana and clients including Coco Chanel, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the Kennedy White House and Lady Mendl, who made her fortune in America as the celebrated interior designer, Elsie de Wolfe. Maison Jansen's influence on taste in the decorative arts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century remains unequalled. Fascinated by the world of fantasy, as well as the magic of natural materials, Delbée's true genius lay in his ability to place the best of old and new side by side, harmoniously bridging the inspiration of the past with a hunger for modernity. Effortlessly fusing old and new, he made the Collection dazzle.*

*One of Pierre Delbée greatest inspirations was the celebrated ébéniste André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732), whose uneclipsed fame rests upon his extraordinary technical virtuosity, his innovation in both technique and design, his brilliance as a sculptor and, like Delbée, his love and inventive use of rare and exotic materials. The spectacular set of four Louis XIV torchères (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000), to be offered, originally formed part of the exceptional collection of Boulle furniture assembled by the inveterate, if, financially reckless, collector George, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Warwick (d.1816) for Warwick Castle, where they remained until their last sale at Christie's in 1968. Perhaps even rarer are the two pier tables, which display Boulle's most lavish and expensive brilliance, illusionistic wooden marquetry flowers inspired by Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer inlaid into a tortoiseshell ground from the Wanstead House sale, 1822 (estimates: £250,000-400,000 and £200,000-400,000)*

*A 17<sup>th</sup> century amber casket (estimate: £150,000-250,000) was the centrepiece of a kunstkammer meticulously planned by Delbée for the display of his patron's treasures. Created circa 1670-80, the casket is a 'tour de force' of the amber carver's skill, exploiting the translucent nature of the material and brilliantly contrasting the amber with inset carved ivory panels, depicting scenes of lovers from classical mythology.*

*Nautilus cups appealed to Delbée and his patron equally, in many ways personifying the Renaissance love of the exotic. The collection includes no fewer than five silver-gilt mounted nautilus cups, of which the most significant, the shell beautifully engraved with insects and butterflies heightened in black ink, is attributed to Jan Belliken and was probably made in the Low Counties in the first half on the 17th century (estimate: £40,000-60,000).*

*From the Garden Room are two sets of four Giuseppe Arcimboldo inspired shell wall-lights of the Seasons and the Elements (estimate: £8,000-15,000 for each set of four) by Delbée. It is possible that he might have drawn inspiration for these from a previously unrecorded set of Chelsea Continents, or 'Four Quarters of the Globe', which stood in the same room (estimate: £60,000-100,000). The largest 18<sup>th</sup> century English porcelain figures known, the Chelsea Continents must be considered among the finest and most startling undertakings in porcelain sculpture approaching this size. Soft paste does not*

*naturally lend itself to models of these proportions and indeed even at Meissen, with its more easily controlled hard paste, large-scale figures had similar firing difficulties. As with most models from Chelsea at this period, the hand of the Flemish modeller Joseph Willems (c. 1715–66) is readily discernible.*

*Of equally monumental size is the Chinese porcelain jardiniere with Bacchic satyr-mask mounts attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1751–1843) (estimate: £300,000–500,000). Probably originally from a set of four, only two other jardinieres are known – one acquired in 1812 by George, Prince of Wales, later King George IV, remains in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, whilst the other, reputedly purchased in Paris in the Revolutionary sales of the early 1790's by Princess Isabella Lubomirska for Lancut, Poland, is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.*

*Along with Jacques Doucet and the architect Emilio Terry, Maison Jansen were amongst the first to rediscover the restrained architectural power, clean lines and uncomplicated modernity of ebony furniture 'à la grec'. A superb commode by Philippe-Claude Montigny is offered (estimate: £200,000–300,000), originally commissioned by the passionate collector and conchologist, the maréchal de Choiseul-Stainville, for his house on the rue d'Artois, from whose collection it was sold in November 1789. A jewel-like Japanned lacquer table à liseuse by Martin Carlin formerly in the collection of Baron Henri de Rothschild is a further highlight (estimate: £200,000–300,000).*

*A number of paintings are to be offered from the Collection. The highlight is a pair of oil on canvases by Hubert Robert (Paris 1733–1808), *A classical arch, with figures before an obelisk* and *A natural arch, with figures before a cascade* (estimate: £200,000–300,000). Celebrated as a painter of ruins, Robert was also one of 18<sup>th</sup> century France's pre-eminent garden designers. With this pair of paintings he creates a fusion of both careers, contrasting oils of the two traditions of French picturesque landscaping. Over 70 maritime paintings will be offered with estimates ranging from £1,000–15,000.*

*The Collection also contains over 100 antique glass paperweights, many from the finest French makers. Inspired by Bohemian and Venetian factories, the French glasshouses of Baccarat, St. Louis and Clichy became leaders in this discipline. The Collection features beautiful examples of fruit, flower and sulphide portrait weights and particularly fine examples of the delicate millefiori weights produced in the 1840s and 1850s. Highlights include two Baccarat carpet-ground scattered millefiori weights, signed and dated B 1848, one turquoise (estimate: £4,000–6,000) and one blue (estimate: £3,000–3,000), a St Louis patterned carpet-ground weight (estimate: £3,000–5,000 and a Clichy moss-ground spaced concentric millefiori weight (estimate: £3,000–4,000).*

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**Images available on request**

*These auctions will be featured on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). A complete illustrated online catalogue will be published with hard copies available to purchase via the site. If a collector is interested in finding any specific works of art for their collection Christie's online search engine Lotfinder® Assistant can immediately source specific forthcoming items of interest.*

**Viewing**

**The Collection will be on view at Christie's 8 King Street, London SW1 from 8–11 June**