

For Immediate Release

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**CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG IMPORTANT WATCH AUCTION SPOTLIGHTS
EXTREMELY RARE TIMEPIECES WITH HIGHLY COMPLEX MECHANISMS A
superb enamelled Ruyi Sceptre set with striking watch and a magnificent
"King Kalla" by Vacheron Constantin are amongst the highlights.**

Important Watches

26 April 2004

Hong Kong – Christie's forthcoming auction of Important Watches on 26 April at the JW Marriott will create immense interest among watch collectors with the offer of extremely rare timepieces, enamelled pocketwatches and wrist and pocketwatches by world-renowned watchmakers. The sale also features a selection of limited edition Montblanc pens from various private collectors.

Highlighting the sale is a highly collectable and stunning 18k gold and enamel Grand Complication pocket watch by Patek Philippe, circa 1993. This watch is in spectacular condition and comprises perpetual calendar, minute repeating, split-seconds chronograph, "Grande" and "Petite" Sonnerie (Grand and Small Strike). Its highly complex mechanisms render the watch very rare as it takes the watchmakers many hours of intensive labour to complete such a watch. Very few examples have appeared at public auction (estimate: HK\$2,400,000–3,200,000/ US\$300,000–400,000).

A most unusual watch with a royal provenance is another highlight of the sale. Christie's is proud to offer a royal gift from the Prince of Wales to Emperor Qianlong (1736–1795) in the form of an extremely rare enamelled and embellished ruyi sceptre set with sonnerie striking watch. Other examples of embellished ruyi sceptres are known in the Palace collections, but none as sumptuously decorated as the present example. Made by Chinese craftsmen in Guangdong, this sceptre is believed to be the only piece still in a private collection. It is finely engraved with the Prince of Wales' feathers (Frederick, son of King George II) (estimate: HK\$800,000–1,200,000/ US\$100,000–150,000).

The gilt bronze sceptre is lavishly set with gloriously multicoloured glass and pearl beads. Ribbioned emblems and dragonflies serve to form auspicious signs and symbolism. The handle is decorated with a few of the Buddhist emblems while the bats on the central grip are homophonous of fortune. The lingzhi shaped head contains a petit sonnerie striking movement by one of England's foremost watchmakers, Windmills of London. During the 18th century, many clocks and timepieces were imported to China from England where the clockmakers from Guangzhou learned their technique and eventually succeeded in creating a large number of clocks that were both in good working order and highly decorative.

Equally precious and rare are two sets of watches by Breguet. The first set was created by Breguet in 1992 to celebrate more than 200 years in the history of the company and is very rare, as this set is one of only 15 examples produced in platinum. The "Souscription" watches comprise of a minute repeating perpetual calendar wristwatch with phases of the moon and a self-winding openface keyless lever watch with instantaneous calendar, power reserve and phases of the moon. The Souscription set is beautifully presented in a polished walnut casket and is accompanied by a Breguet Certificate (estimate: HK\$800,000–1,200,000/ US\$ 100,000–150,000).

The second set featured in the sale is also a very rare and important set of six "perpetuelle" complicated pocket watches by Breguet. Made in 1996, this current set is numbered No. 1 in a limited edition of only ten examples. Each of the six 18k gold pocketwatches features a dial of a different design, is self-winding and showcases various highly complex mechanical functions. The First watch comprises power reserve, date, moonphase and thermometer, while the Second one is an annual calendar watch with equation of time, power reserve, date and moonphase. The Third watch has power reserve, moonphase and date while the Fourth one is a World Time watch with power reserve. The Fifth and Sixth watches both feature Jump Hour but the former has a white enamel dial while the latter has a silvered engine-turned dial. Accompanied by certificate and an elaborate Breguet wooden case, this extremely collectable set is estimated at HK\$800,000–1,200,000/ US\$100,000–150,000.

Patek Philippe is synonymous with technical superiority and the house is responsible for innovations, which shape the history of watchmaking. The sale features a very fine and important platinum and diamond-set cushion-shaped perpetual calendar chronograph wristwatch with phases of the moon. This model is very rare as the Ref. 5020 was only made over a limited period of three years and very few examples are being offered in auctions. The diamond enhances the design of the watch and adds to its elegance (estimate: HK\$640,000– 800,000/ US\$80,000–100,000).

Many famous watchmakers and jewellery houses combine the beauty of diamonds and gemstones with technical sophistication and excellent craftsmanship to create timepieces which showcase creative designs and the dazzling magnificence of the stones. Amongst jewelled watches, the “King Kalla” is undoubtedly the most lavish and grandiose example. A combination of excellent technology and scintillating diamonds, the King Kalla is the largest watch in the Kalla series in the Vacheron Constantin range of Haute Joaillerie watches. King Kalla’s are exceptionally rare, it is believed that fewer than 10 examples were made, due to the difficulty in matching the number of top quality diamonds used to their production. This current example in 18K white gold was produced utilising 160 diamonds in the case and bracelet totalling 97.17 carats, 32 diamonds in the dial of 4.10 carats giving a combined total weight of 101.27 carats. All the diamonds used are of E – F colour, and VVS1 clarity (Estimate on request).

The Important Watches catalogue also features many wristwatches by Graff and Cartier with a particularly impressive collection of Franck Muller watches, along with an array of classical and modern designs to be sold without reserve.

Notes to Editors

Pre-sale Exhibitions:

<i>Tokyo</i>	<i>22 –23 March</i>	<i>Grand Hyatt Tokyo</i>
<i>Jakarta</i>	<i>30 – 31 March</i>	<i>The Residences at Dharmawangsa</i>
<i>Singapore</i>	<i>2 –3 April</i>	<i>Grand Hyatt Singapore</i>
<i>Kuala Lumpur</i>	<i>4 – 5 April</i>	<i>The Westin Kuala Lumpur</i>
<i>Bangkok</i>	<i>7 – 8 April</i>	<i>The Regent Bangkok</i>
<i>Shanghai</i>	<i>10 –11 April</i>	<i>The Westin Shanghai</i>
<i>Beijing</i>	<i>13 – 14 April</i>	<i>The St. Regis Beijing</i>
<i>Taipei</i>	<i>17 – 18 April</i>	<i>Fubon Life Assurance Building</i>
<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>23 – 26 April</i>	<i>JW Marriott Hotel</i>

Auction:

Important Watches, 26 April 2004, 4.00pm at JW Marriott, Hong Kong

More information about Christie’s sale of Important Watches 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.

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Images available upon request

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