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**TOWN & COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES: THE CHARLES PLANTE COLLECTION AT CHRISTIE'S IN JUNE 2008**



**Town & Country Perspectives - The Charles Plante Collection  
Christie's South Kensington ~ 4 June 2008**

**London, South Kensington** – Elegant finds over the past twenty years - pictures, watercolours, furniture and decorative arts - form **The Charles Plante Collection**, which will be offered at Christie's South Kensington on 4 June 2008. Comprising the contents of Charles's Pimlico flat and country house, the collection of 570 lots reflects his passion for neo-classical furniture, drawings, porcelains and bronzes; estimates range from £100 to £15,000.

The collection is rooted in the Grand Tour, an educational rite of passage, when artists, patrons and young aristocrats travelled through Europe acquiring a taste for the antique and the exotic, furnishing both their visual imaginations and their private collections. The charming Regency group portrait shows two brothers and their tutor using a Cary globe to plan their travels (estimate: £4,000-6,000), whilst the pair of exotically-costumed gentlemen in a park, portrayed by J. Childe, dated 1817 appear to have recently returned from abroad (estimate: £1,000-1,500). Further mementoes of such Grand Tour travels include three marble models of Scipio's tomb (estimates range start from £600); gouaches of excavations at Pompeii (estimate: £1,000-1,500) and a collection of Staffordshire obelisks simulating Aswan granite (estimates range from £500 to £1,000).

Neo-classical architectural drawings and design form a core component of the collection providing a rich source of stylistic and technical information. Designs in this sale by Bailey, Barry, Chambers, Cockerell, 'Athenian' Stuart, Jeffrey Wyatt and others include drawings of a grand design for Upton House, Derbyshire (estimate: £1,000-1,500) and an American Gothic house by A.J. Davis (estimate: £2,000-3,000). Further notable neo-classical finds in the sale include three watercolour drawings of fragments of ruins by Charles Percier (1764-1868) (estimate: £5,000-8,000 each). The beautiful and subtle gouache with watercolour *Promenade dans un Parc a Versailles* is one of the few works to have survived by the talented painter of gardens and interiors Jean-Baptiste Marechal (fl. 1760-1780) (estimate: £4,000-6,000). Other highlights include a selection from a collection of 50 rare watercolour drawings of *Tools of the Trade* from the Biedermeier period, *circa* 1830 (estimates range from £600 to £1,200).

The neo-classical style, which flourished between 1760-1840, witnessed sweeping and innovative reforms in furniture design, distinguished by its use of exotic imported woods, veneers, gilt-bronzes, mounts and rare marbles. Amongst the examples of neo-classical English, French, Italian, Russian and American furniture in the sale includes is a set of three chairs by A.W.N. Pugin, made for John Hardman, *circa* 1852 (estimate: £2,000-3,000). Further notable examples include a sinuous pair of lyre-shaped green leather and rosewood bergeres attributed to Gillows (estimate: £10,000-15,000); a pair of William IV giltwood over-mantel mirrors (estimate: £8,000-12,000); a pair of Russian bedside cabinets (estimate: £3,000-5,000) and an American classical mahogany card tables (estimate: £4,000-6,000).

The dazzling selection of porcelains is led by an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris porcelain gilt and apricot garniture set from the collection of Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte, wife of Jerome Bonaparte, youngest brother of The Emperor Napoleon (estimate: £4,000-6,000). Historic lighting includes a pair of Paris floral-painted porcelain column lamps (estimate: £2,000-3,000) and a pair of Restoration sinumbra lamps with cut-crystal shades (estimate: £3,000-5,000); a dramatic pair of green glass and gilt-bronze winged-bird wall chandeliers (estimate: £8,000-12,000) and a pair of Argand lamps attributed to Messenger of Birmingham after a design by Piranesi (estimate: £3,000-5,000).

Now, with a flat in London and a house in the country, both furnished and decorated in a manner reflecting Charles's keen eye and great knowledge, not to mention a warehouse full of his finds, the collector is widening his attention from the neo-classical period 1760-1840 into the 20th century. The sale of fascinating and decorative works will enable a new generation to discover the neo-classical world through its art and artefacts.

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