

For Immediate Release

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BEAUTIFUL PANDORA APPEARS AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN JUNE



Important British & Irish Art Evening Sale Christie's King Street 9 June 2004

London – A stunning pastel of *Pandora* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) will be one of the highlights of the evening sale of *Important British Art & Irish Art* at Christie's on 9 June (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). Once the much-treasured possession of L.S. Lowry, the painting is offered from the John H. Schaeffer Collection.

The model for Pandora was Jane Morris with whom Rossetti was deeply in love. When Jane and Rossetti met in Oxford in the autumn of 1857, Rossetti was immediately struck by her remarkable looks and she soon became his model for many of his most famous works. Despite their mutual attraction, Rossetti was engaged to Lizzie Siddal and Jane became the wife of fellow artist and friend, William Morris in 1859. Rossetti and Lizzie finally married after a long and torturous engagement in 1860 however the marriage was short-lived with Lizzie dying from an overdose of laudanum in February 1862.

The story of Pandora in classical mythology is both alluring and dramatic. She was the first mortal woman, created by Zeus and given by each of the gods a special gift of skill, hence her name, Pandora - 'all-gifted'. Pandora was sent to earth with a box given to her by the gods with strict instructions never to look inside it. Pandora's curiosity prevailed, she opened the box and all the evils and sorrows of mankind were irrevocably released. All that was left in the box was Hope.

The work and the myth it depicts gives the viewer a glimpse into the personal narrative of the artist, suggesting the temptation, the danger and the passionate nature of Rossetti's feelings for Jane. The works which Jane modelled for have become icons in the history of Victorian painting and were referred to by the artist himself as his 'Janey pictures'.

The painting also gives a fascinating insight into Lowry revealing his admiration for the works by Rossetti who was the most Romantic figure associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Poet and painter, Rossetti was one of the founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement yet increasingly drew artistic inspiration from the texts of his namesake, Dante, as well as classical mythology and a medieval dream world.

L.S. Lowry once declared that Rossetti was "*the one man whose work I have ever wanted to possess ... Now I've got about twelve. I have always been fascinated by certain types of the women he painted.*" In 1966, an elite 'Pre-Raphaelite Society' was formed with Lowry as President, Micky Marshall as Chaplain, Tilly Marshall as Librarian and Ian Stephenson as Secretary. The condition of membership was to own a Pre-Raphaelite work. Lowry hung many of his paintings by Rossetti all over his house at Mottram and vintage photographs reveal that prized works were hung in his bedroom. *Pandora* was originally owned by one of Rossetti's greatest patrons, William Graham and first appeared at Christie's in 1886 in the sale of his collection. Lowry bought *Pandora* in 1968 as a special gift for Carol Lowry, so she too could join the elite 'Pre-Raphaelite Society.'

Pandora became the most expensive British work on paper ever sold when it was auctioned at Christie's in June 2000. Carol Lowry sold the painting to John H. Schaeffer who is now dispersing a selection from his collection.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the Web at www.christies.com

Christie's is market leader of the international British Art market. 2003 was a record breaking year with sales totalling £64.5 million; the highest yearly total ever achieved by Christie's in this category. Christie's holds sales of British & Irish Art sales at South Kensington and King Street throughout the year. Christie's retains the auction record for the highest sale total of Victorian Art of just under £17 million (\$27 million) which was established in February 2003 for *The Forbes Collection of Victorian Pictures and Works of Art*, which set 65 new world auction records. In June 2000, Christie's set the auction record for the highest price ever paid for a Victorian picture when John William Waterhouse's *St. Cecilia* sold for £6.6 million.

Notes to Editors:

British Art Week 3-11 June 2004

British Art on Paper including Victorian Watercolours from the Collection of Albert Dawson, 3 June 2004

20th Century British and Irish Art, 4 June

Important British and Irish Art, Evening Sale, 9 June

British Pictures 1500-1850, 11 June

Victorian Pictures including the John H. Schaeffer Collection of New British Sculpture, 11 June

Viewing

British Art Week sales will go on view on selected days at London, King Street from 27 May 2004 onwards.