

For Immediate Release

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SPECTACULAR MORRIS & CO. TAPESTRY DESIGNED BY EDWARD BURNE-JONES LEADS THE SALE OF 20TH CENTURY DECORATIVE ARTS AT CHRISTIE'S IN NEW YORK

Important 20th Century Decorative Arts including Works by the Tiffany Studios from The Museum of Modern Art

June 12, 2003

New York – On Thursday June 12, Christie's New York will hold its bi-annual auction of Important 20th century Decorative Arts. The sale includes a selection of works by the Tiffany Studios consigned by The Museum of Modern Art (separate release available) as well as several exceptional private collections. Among those are an important group of bronze and ivory figures, fine French art deco furniture from the Mrs. Kersey Coates Reed House, Lake Forest, Illinois and a splendid selection of Tiffany objects from a Boston collection. The star lot of the sale is a spectacular tapestry designed by Edward Burne-Jones and woven by the Morris & Co. Merton Abbey Tapestry Works.

'The Failure of Sir Gawain', a Morris & Co. Merton Abbey Tapestry

This truly extraordinary tapestry, designed by pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones in collaboration with Arts and Crafts genius William Morris, was woven at the famous Morris & Co. Merton Abbey tapestry works in south London. The tapestry was one of a series of six narrative panels commissioned in 1890 by the Australian mining engineer William Knox D'Arcy for his mansion Stanmore Hall in north London (estimate: \$750,000-900,000). The complete set, which included a further six decorative verdurees which hung below the main panels, illustrated scenes from the famous Arthurian legend "The Quest for the Holy Grail".

The creation of this magnificent suite of tapestries for Stanmore Hall marked the fulfillment of the aspirations of life-long friends and medievalists Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, who had

shared a fascination for all things medieval since their student days in the 1850s. The revival of the art of tapestry weaving in England – a long-time goal of Morris which was realized in the founding of the Merton Abbey Tapestry works – also reached a glorious pinnacle in this prestigious project. The remaining five tapestries from this series are all in private collections.

Tiffany Glass

A “Laburnum” leaded glass and bronze floor lamp, Property of a Lady (estimate: \$250,000–350,000) produced circa 1910 offers an impressive example of the Tiffany Studios’ craftsmanship. Also remarkable and rare is the ‘Flowering Bouquet’ leaded glass and bronze chandelier, circa 1910 and Property of a Gentleman (estimate: \$150,000–200,000). A very refined selection of Tiffany items is being offered from a private Boston collection. It includes a rare ‘Fern’ bronze mirror (estimate: \$30,000–50,000), a ‘Peacock’ bronze and glass mosaic mirror (estimate: \$20,000–30,000), a ‘Drophead Dragonfly’ (estimate: \$120,000–160,000), a ‘Dogwood’ (estimate: \$65,000–80,000) and a Filigree ‘Poppy’ (estimate: \$70,000–90,000). The selection of Tiffany works from The Museum of Modern Art will head this segment of the sale (see separate release).

An Important Private Collection of Bronze and Ivory Figures

The sale will start with twenty bronze and ivory sculptures, collected some 25 years ago. The pair of collectors who devoted their time and energy to the creation of this spectacular group, were passionate about the work of Ferdinand Preiss, a German artist who founded the firm Preiss and Kassler in Berlin in 1906. Children, acrobats and athletes were among Preiss’s favorite models and the sale offers beautiful examples of all of these. Arguably the most fabled name in chryselephantine sculpture is Demetre H. Chiparus and this group includes two figures by him: ‘Dancer with a Slit Skirt’ (estimate: \$90,000–120,000) and ‘Le Secret’ (estimate: \$30,000–40,000). Among Preiss’s sculptures are ‘Balancing’ (estimate: \$15,000–20,000), ‘Breasting the Tape (estimate: \$12,000–16,000) and ‘Invocation’ (estimate: \$20,000–30,000) and the collection further includes figures based on models by Professor Otto Poertzel and Paul Philippe.

Property from the Mrs. Kersey Coates Reed House, Lake Forest, Illinois

The story of the Mrs. Kersey Coates Reed House and its furnishings is essentially a tribute to the remarkable partnership between architect David Adler and his sister Frances Elkins. Together they were responsible for the creation of some of America’s most distinguished dwellings of the 20th century. American-born and trained in Europe, brother and sister joined forces to create homes that were characterized by refinement and sophistication. The pieces offered reflect their intense contacts with Europe, and the influence of France in particular. The epitome of the French modernist style is the very sleek and very chic leather covered desk by Jean-Michel Frank and Hermès, circa 1930 (estimate: \$100,000–150,000). Traditionally referred to in the Reed family as “the Dunand tables”

and attributed to Jean Dunand are two exquisite eggshell and lacquer low tables, circa 1930 (estimate: \$60,000–80,000 each). From one of the gentlemen’s cloakrooms in the house comes a parchment-covered dressing table by Jean-Michel Frank, manufactured by Chanaux & Co. circa 1930 (estimate: \$60,000–80,000). Additional Frank/Hermès pieces are included such as waste paper baskets and a leather covered bench as well as a leather upholstered and sycamore armchair by Frank (estimate: \$8,000–12,000).

*Auction: Important 20th Century Decorative Arts including
Works by the Tiffany Studios from The Museum of
Modern Art* *June 12*

Viewing: Christie’s Galleries at Rockefeller Center *June 7 - 11*

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*Images available on request
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More information about Christie's sales of Important 20th Century Decorative Arts including Works by the Tiffany Studios from the Museum of Modern Art and Fine 20th Century Decorative Arts including Works by the Tiffany Studios from the Museum of Modern 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. 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.