

For Immediate Release

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RAPHAEL PORTRAIT OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN JULY

**- MOST IMPORTANT RENAISSANCE PORTRAIT TO BE OFFERED IN A
GENERATION EXPECTED TO REALISE UP TO £15 MILLION**

Important Old Master and British Pictures
Thursday, 5 July 2007 at 7.00pm



King Street – Christie's will offer a masterpiece by Raffaello Sanzio, called Raphael (1483-1520) at the auction of *Important Old Master and British Pictures* on 5 July 2007 in London. One of only a handful of paintings by the artist to remain in private hands, the work portrays Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino and ruler of Florence from 1513 to 1519, and has not been seen in public for over 40 years. The most important Renaissance portrait to be offered at auction for a generation, and the most important work by the artist to be offered at auction in recent decades, it is expected to realise between £10,000,000-15,000,000.

Richard Knight, International Director of Christie's Old Master Department and Paul Raison, Director and Head of Old Master

Pictures at Christie's, London: *"Building on Christie's continuing leadership of the market for old master paintings, we are excited to offer in London this remarkable work by Raphael, one of the most renowned and accomplished of European artists. The importance of the artist and the sitter, together with the provenance and the historical context behind this painting's creation, make it one of the most significant old master pictures to be offered at auction for a generation. We look forward to exhibiting this remarkable painting to the public from 30 June to 5 July at our King Street salerooms in London."*

The portrait shows a swagger Lorenzo de' Medici standing proud and resplendent against a rich green background. In the Duke's right hand he holds what is probably a portrait miniature showing his future wife, and his striking tunic and shawl of gold and red are of the most impressive order with the fur on the neck and lining of his cape painted in a delicate manner which highlights Raphael's exceptional ability and technique. The vivacity and boldness of the colours, together with the handling of the abundance of fabrics worn by the Duke, are typical of the style of the Renaissance master and substantiate his being known as *'the Prince of Painters'*.

The portrait is recorded in the possession of Cosmo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in an inventory of 1553. During the 1800s, it was in the possession of two of the most prominent collectors of the 19th century; Lord Northwick (1769-1859) whose collection was offered at auction in 1859, and then the merchant Hollingworth Magniac (1786-1867) whose collection was sold over an eleven day sale at Christie's in 1892 where the present picture, lot 84, sold for 567 guineas. The painting was the subject of attributional debate with regards both the artist and the sitter from 1862, although Sir Charles Robinson (1824-1913), the esteemed scholar of Italian Renaissance art, supported the attribution as it is accepted today. It was sold again at Christie's in November 1962 and in 1968 it was sold at an auction in New York to Ira Spanierman, in whose possession it remains to the present day. In 1971, Professor Konrad Oberhuber conclusively reinstated the attribution of the painting in an article for *The Burlington Magazine*, a view now accepted by all major scholars of the artist.

THE MEDICI FAMILY

The Medici family ruled Florence from the 14th to the 17th centuries and provided many of the greatest patrons of the High Renaissance; Donatello, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti all received the patronage of the Medici family, one of the wealthiest families in Europe. The Medici also held great power through a series of appointments, conquests and strategic marriages. One such appointment was that of Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici (1475-1521), second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was elected Pope Leo X in 1513. Seeking to consolidate the position of the Medici family on an international stage, the Pope arranged for his nephew, Lorenzo, to be married to Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, a cousin of Francois I, King of France, an important ally of the Vatican against the Holy Roman Empire. As neither the Duke nor the bride-to-be had met, an exchange of portraits was arranged in order that they could see what to expect.

On 2 May 1518 the Duke was married in the château of Amboise in France. Returning to Florence with his bride, their entry to the city was celebrated with a banquet at which Raphael's portrait of the Pope, now in the Uffizi, Florence, was exhibited. The couple had a child, Catherine de' Medici, who went on to marry King Henry II of France, but less than a year after the marriage, the Duchess died. Lorenzo died soon afterwards in 1519.

RAPHAEL

Raffaello Sanzio, called Raphael (1483-1520) was one of the most important artists of the High Renaissance and one of the most influential and accomplished painters in European history. Born in Urbino in 1483, he was orphaned by the age of 11 and sent to the care of his uncle. He lived in Florence from 1504 to 1508 where he absorbed the influence of his great contemporaries Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. In 1508, he was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II and commissioned to paint frescos in one of the Papal rooms in the Vatican. He spent most of his life in Rome under the patronage of Julius II and his successor, Leo X, the uncle of Lorenzo Medici whose portrait is to be offered at Christie's in July. According to the great biographer Giorgio Vasari, Pope Leo X "*wept bitterly when he died*" in 1520, and had planned to make him a cardinal.

The auction of *Important Old Master and British Pictures* on 5 July 2007 will also offer Part Two of the Goudstikker Collection, arguably the most important collection of Old Master pictures ever restituted.

Following on from Part One which took place on 19 April in New York and totaled \$9,741,200, the collection is an overview of Dutch Old Master pictures from the 15th to 19th centuries, together with excellent examples from 16th century Germany, early Italian and 18th century French works. On 5 July, the Goudstikker Collection Part Two will offer 35 lots, highlighted by an altarpiece by **The Master of the Pauw and Zas altarpiece**, *circa* 1520, which is expected to realise £1,000,000 to 1,500,000, and *The Plaats, the Hague, with an elegant hawking party* by **Gerrit Berckheyde** (1638-1698) (estimate: £200,000-400,000).

The auction will also offer a masterpiece by the Baroque master **Domenico Zampieri, Il Domenichino** (1581-1641). *The Pietà*, which was exhibited at the recent exhibition *Domenichino 1581-1641* at the Palazzo Venezia, Rome from October 1996 to January 1997, is expected to realise £2,500,000 to 3,500,000. Leading the selection of important British pictures is a masterpiece by **Sir Peter Lely** (1618-1680) traditionally considered to depict a favoured mistress of King Charles II, and thought to have been a work owned by the King and kept in the Royal bedchamber at the Palace of Whitehall. *Portrait of a young lady and child as Venus and Cupid* by Sir Peter Lely, the finest painter of the Restoration and official artist to Charles II, is being offered at the auction by the Trustees of the Denys Eyre Bower Bequest and is expected to realise £1,500,000-2,000,000 (see separate release). Another highlight of the sale is the swagger *Portrait of Philip Gell* (1723-1795) by **Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.** (1723-1792) which carries an estimate of £1,500,000-2,500,000.

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Images available on request
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Notes to editors:

- The record price for a work by Raphael at auction was established on 13 December 1996 when *Study for the head and hand of an apostle*, a study drawing in black crayon, sold for £5.3 million at Christie's in London.
- *Important Old Master and British Pictures* will be on public view at Christie's, King Street, from 30 June to 5 July 2007. See www.christies.com for further details.
- Christie's *International Old Master Department* realised an annual sales total of £146 million / \$264.3 million / €213.2 million in 2006. This built on the success of 2005 and reaffirms Christie's position as market leaders in both the Old Master Picture and Old Master Drawing categories, increasing market share against the nearest competitors to 54.5% for the Old Master Category as a whole.
- Christie's has an unrivalled expertise in the field of Old Master Pictures, and hold major auctions of Important Old Masters twice a year in both London and New York. Christie's also hold regular sales of Old Master Pictures in the more regional markets of France, Italy, Holland, Spain and Christie's South Kensington.
- In July 2007 Christie's will host a week of auctions dedicated to classical collecting categories and including an impressive selection of old master paintings and drawings, European furniture, sculpture, tapestries and important clocks. All works of art will be on public view before going under the hammer between 3 and 6 July. See www.christies.com for further details.