

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Sara Fox

212.636.2680

sfox@christies.com

**EXCEPTIONAL SANDPAINTING WEAVINGS AND A CHEROKEE BASKET AT
CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK AMERICAN INDIAN ART SALE**

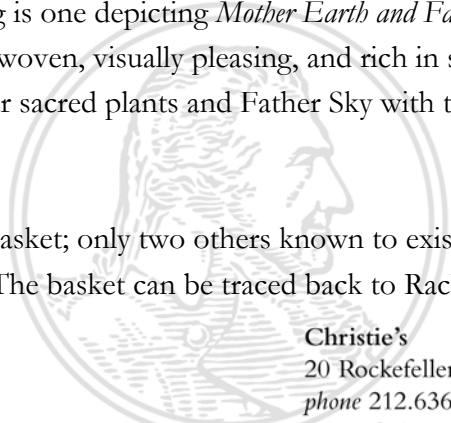
**American Indian Art
June 13, 2005**

New York — Christie's New York spring sale of American Indian Art on June 13 features a strong selection of Navajo pictorial weavings, an extremely rare Cherokee basket, and an assortment of early Cree garments.

Leading the sale is a Navajo sandpainting rug woven by Hosteen Klah (estimate: \$200,000-300,000). Well known among the Navajo for his achievements as a medicine man, Klah broke with tradition not only for being one of the few male weavers in a craft dominated by females, but also for becoming the first to preserve sacred sandpainting images through weavings. Throughout history, sandpaintings had been private healing ceremonies in which patients entered an image created with sand, and destroyed the depicted sacred symbols. Klah's weavings preserved these symbols, offering for posterity unparalleled imagery of Navajo beliefs. Made in the 1930s, the tan colored wool imitates sand and the eight figures imbue the weaving with the symbols of the Hailway Chant.

Another fine example of Navajo pictorial weaving is one depicting *Mother Earth and Father Sky* (estimate: \$15,000 – 25,000). This textile is finely woven, visually pleasing, and rich in symbolism. Mother Earth is depicted with symbols of the four sacred plants and Father Sky with the sun, moon and stars.

An exceptional lot in the sale is a rare Cherokee basket; only two others known to exist reside in European museums (estimate: \$20,000-30,000). The basket can be traced back to Rachel Martin



Christie's
20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020
phone 212.636.2680 fax 212.636.4951
www.christies.com

Davis, a woman of Cherokee descent, who owned it in 1843. Constructed of thin rivercane splints and dyed with walnut and bloodroot, the basket and its lid reveal the most difficult of the Cherokee techniques in the double weaving pattern.

A pair of Cherokee beaded hide moccasins are another treasure from Rachel Martin Davis (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). Exhibited at the Atlanta History Museum four years ago, the moccasins are beautifully adorned with tiny seed beads and in excellent condition.

Two Hopi kachina dolls are a delightful addition to the sale. One, representing *Kokopelli*, as noted by his subtle humped back, has small semi-circular feet with bent knees, squash blossoms in place of ears, and a phallus – a fairly rare characteristic for a kachina doll (estimate: \$7,000-9,000). Another, *Black Dress Kachina*, has pothook eyes, a large conical beak and red tab ears (estimate: \$4,000-6,000). Both kachina dolls were purchased by the present owner approximately 47 years ago from the Delacorte Gallery in New York City, who acquired them upon exchange with the Heye Foundation in 1957.

An exciting grouping in the sale features Cree garments that are unusual in design. A Cree man's beaded hood (estimate: \$15,000-20,000) and cloth leggings (estimate: \$2,000-3,000) possess brightly colored floral beadwork and both are in near-perfect condition. A Cree beaded cloth dress features a pair of red sleeves that attach by delicate strings (estimate: \$5,000 – 7,000). In fine condition and embroidered along the hem, the dress is accompanied by a letter which states, "Grannie's Red Indian dress bought in Canada about 1856 — or perhaps a few years earlier."

Finally, the sale features a strong grouping of over 30 baskets from a private collector who was a physician on the Pima Reservation. An early Tubatulabal polychrome coiled bowl (estimate: \$4,000-6,000) depicts the *flight of the butterfly* design in concentric rings and *rattlesnake* motifs in a series of panels.

Auction:	American Indian Art	June 13 at 2pm
Viewing:	Christie's Galleries at 20 Rockefeller Plaza	June 10 - 13

More information about Christie's sale *American Indian 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.

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