

For Immediate Release
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IMPERIAL RUSSIAN OBJET'S D'ART AND PARISIAN FURNITURE LEAD CHRISTIE'S JULY SALE OF IMPORTANT EUROPEAN FURNITURE, SCULPTURE AND TAPESTRIES

Important European Furniture, Sculpture and Tapestries
Thursday, 6th July 2006

London – Christie's announces the sale of *Important European Furniture, Sculpture and Tapestries* in London on 6 July 2006, which will include approximately 250 lots of furniture, tapestries, sculpture and works of art from the 15th to the 19th century. Highlights include a selection of 18th century Parisian furniture, including works by André-Charles Boulle and Jean-François Leleu, a magnificent single-owner collection of 17th and 18th century mirrors and a superb group of Russian hardstone and marble artefacts from the Collection of Grand Duke Peter Friedrich Ludwig of Oldenberg (1755-1829).



Leading the Furniture section of the sale is a selection of 18th century Parisian works. A Louis XV ormolu-mounted tulipwood amaranth, marquetry and parquetry commode by Jean-François Leleu (1729-1807) from *circa* 1760-70 is expected to realise £250,000-400,000 (*illustrated left*). Leleu learned his trade as an apprentice to Jean-François Oeben and at the age of 34, following the death of his master, he established a workshop of his own. He was successful, particularly among the aristocracy, and his furniture was distinguishable by its restrained architectural character and simple undecorated lines. The present piece breaks away from this trend; an ambitious and superbly inlaid commode, it may in fact be Leleu's masterpiece. A further highlight from 18th century Paris is a Louis XIV ormolu-mounted and brass-inlaid ebony boule marquetry bureau plat attributed to André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) and dating to *circa* 1720-30 which carries an estimate of £200,000-300,000. Boulle is considered to be one of the finest names in the history of European furniture, and he applied his talents in marquetry, design and sculpture with astounding effect, as highlighted by the present example.

An exceptional selection of works of art will also be offered in the sale led by a Louis XV ormolu, patinated bronze and brass-inlaid corne verte and green-painted musical mantel clock, the movement

by Jean-Baptiste Dutertre, the case attributed to Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain, *circa* 1750 (estimate: £200,000-300,000). This magnificent timepiece incorporates a figure of a rhinoceros, inspired by the famous visit to Paris in 1749 of Clara, a travelling Rhino. Such was the excitement around the visit that a range of decorative objects began to incorporate images and representations of this exotic creature.



A magnificent collection of 17th and 18th century mirrors is another highlight of the sale. Man's fixation with his own reflection culminated in Venice in the 16th century with the creation of the first mirrors fitted with reflective glass. Immediately desirable, mirrors began to be framed with elaborate decoration including gold, silver, ivory, enamels and corals. This collection offers an overview to the history of the mirror and presents exceptional examples illustrating its development over the centuries. Highlights include an Augsburg ormolu, silver, pewter and enamel-decorated octagonal mirror attributed to David Altenstetter from the first half of the 17th century (estimate: £200,000-300,000) (*illustrated left*), a pair of Italian coral, mother-of-pearl and enamel-mounted gilt-bronze octagonal mirrors from the mid-17th century (estimate: £120,000-180,000) and a Louis XIV armorial ormolu-mounted tortoiseshell, horn, brass, copper and pewter-inlaid marquetry mirror from the second half of the 17th century (estimate: £25,000-40,000).



A further highlight is a superb group of Russian hardstone and marble artefacts from the collection of Grand Duke Peter Friedrich Ludwig of Oldenburg (1755-1829). As first cousin to Catherine the Great, the Grand Duke was well connected with the aristocracy of Russia and received a number of precious gifts as a result. In 1801, he visited Russia to pay his respects to Emperor Paul I, who was married to the Grand Duke's sister-in-law. He stayed at the Pavlovsk and is thought to have received a number of precious items at this time including furniture, paintings and possibly some of the works to be offered in July. Highlights from this group include a pair of Russian ormolu-mounted jasper vases *circa* 1790-1810 (estimate: £200,000-400,000); a Russian green translucent jasper tazza from the early 19th century (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and a pair of Russian Kalkan jasper vases from *circa* 1800-1810 which are expected to realise £40,000-60,000.

The tapestry section of the sale is led by a Savonnerie portiere panel from *circa* 1730 after a design by Belin de Fontenay or Claude Audran. Savonnerie were renowned during the 18th century for the carpets and tapestries that they crafted which were most generally reserved for the Royal family or for prestigious diplomatic gifts. The example to be offered in July measures 300cm x 228cm and is expected to realise £250,000-400,000.



The sale will also offer approximately 70 works of sculpture from the 15th through to the 19th century. Leading this section is a pair of marble figures of Venus and Mercury by Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714-1785) *circa* 1750 which carry an estimate of £300,000-500,000. A terracotta and wood crucifixion group of Christ, the good thief and the bad thief, in which the thieves are cast from models attributed to Michelangelo and the Christ from a model by the Circle of Michelangelo, is expected to realise £20,000-30,000. This is one of only four complete groups known to exist and is thought to have been discovered near St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by an Italian sculptor in the 16th century before passing from master to apprentice until the late 19th century when it was given to the grandfather of the present owner. A further highlight is a carved ivory head of a man by Johann Christian Ludwig Lücke (1703-1780) (*see illustration*) which is expected to realise £10,000-15,000.

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Images available on request

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Notes to editors:

- Highlights from the sale of *Important European Furniture, Sculpture and Tapestries* on 6 July will be on view at Christie's Headquarters at 8 King Street, London, SW1Y 6QT from 1 to 6 July. See www.christies.com for further details.

- Christie's Furniture and Sculpture Sales in London realised a total of £37,200,488 million (\$65,993,666/€54,870,720) in 2005 establishing a 70% market share over the nearest rivals.