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DIVERSE SELECTION OF FRESH AND REDISCOVERED WORKS LEAD CHRISTIE'S SUMMER AUCTION OF IMPORTANT OLD MASTER PICTURES

Important Old Master Pictures Thursday, 6 July 2006

London – Christie's announces the sale of *Important Old Master Pictures* in London on 6 July 2006, which will include a diverse offering of still-lives, landscapes and portraits representing over 300 years of European art, a large number of which are entirely fresh to the market. Highlights include an oil sketch for an altarpiece by Sir Peter Paul Rubens, a rediscovered and unlined masterpiece by Ludovico Carracci, a rediscovered pair of Roman views by Hubert Robert still on their original stretchers, and the second part of the finest collection of Italian still-life pictures ever to come to auction. The sale is estimated to realise in excess of £15 million.



Salmacis and Hermaphroditus by Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619) is in remarkable original condition having never been relined and as such, offers a rare and exciting opportunity for museums and collectors alike (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). While the highly-finished drawing for this work can be found in the Horne Foundation in Florence, the oil painting has lain largely undisturbed for many years at Knole in Kent. It is thought that the painting may have entered this notable collection in the early 17th century having been acquired by Lionel Cranfield, 1st Earl of Middlesex, who was briefly treasurer

to James I and was the father-in-law of the 5th Earl of Dorset. Hermaphroditus was the son of Hermes and Aphrodite; while wandering the woods of Caria, he encountered Salmacis who was overcome with lust. Her advances rejected by Hermaphroditus, she leapt into the pool where he was bathing, wrapped herself around him and prayed for the Gods to unite them forever. In this work the vitality of the subjects convey Carracci's constant study of life figures, while the landscape is charged with colour and atmospheric tone.

A remarkable oil sketch by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) will also be offered in the sale. *The Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity* is the study for Rubens' altarpiece at the Church of the Recollects in Antwerp, now in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, and is expected to realise £1,000,000-1,500,000. In December 2005, Christie's sold Rubens' *Meleager and Atalanta hunting the Boar* for £3,144,000, highlighting the desirability of his oil sketches. The present panel, which measures 66.1cm x 51.1cm, depicts the Virgin Mary accompanied by five angels ascending into Heaven, with Jesus and God the Father preparing to place the crown. It is being offered from a private European collection.





Another highlight of the auction is a group of eight Italian still-life paintings from the Lodi Collection, the most impressive selection of Italian still-lives ever to appear at auction. Eight paintings from the collection were sold at the New York sale of Old Master Pictures on 6 April 2006 for a collective total of \$5,243,600 (£2,996,343), and a new artist record was set for Fede Galizia (1578-1630), an example of whose work sold for \$1,640,000 (£937,143). Galizia's *Still life with peaches in a white porcelain basket*, arguably the finest example of her work and the

cover illustration of the artist's catalogue raisonné, will be offered on 6 July with an estimate of £400,000-600,000. Galizia was much admired by her contemporaries and helped to pioneer still-life painting, although she is thought to have painted no more than twenty examples herself. A further highlight from this collection is *Bouquet of Flowers* by Mario Nuzzi (1603-1660), one of the only known signed works by the artist (estimate: £80,000-100,000). Mario Nuzzi, who was also called Mario dei Fiori, was another pioneer of the still-life genre. The biographer Leone Pascoli writes of collectors competing for his flowerpieces 'almost as avidly as for a Raphael'.

A Crouching Cat by German artist Hans Hoffmann (circa 1530-circa 1591) is a further highlight (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). Painted on vellum with watercolour and bodycolour, this work illustrates the influence and inspiration that



Hoffmann drew from his supposed master Albrecht Dürer; indeed the hind legs of *A Crouching Cat* bear a vivid resemblance to those of Dürer's famed composition *The Hare*. This work can be dated to circa 1569 when Hoffmann was based in Nuremberg, the wellspring of the German Renaissance. The size of the work suggests that it was made as a presentation piece for an important patron, perhaps Paulus Praun or Willibald Imhoff. An inventory taken after Praun's death shows that he had owned a portfolio of 137 works by

Hoffmann including 'fine beads, birds, animals and flowers.' This work featured in the *Albrecht Dürer and his legacy* exhibition at the British Museum in London 2002-03 and is being offered from a private collection.



Colonade et jardins du Palais Médici: Gentleman sketching in an Italianate garden and *Restes du Palais du pape Jules: An architectural capriccio with haymakers*, a recently rediscovered pair of paintings by Hubert Robert (1733-1808) will be offered in a state as original as the day they left the artist's easel (estimate: £300,000-500,000). Previously known only by engravings made after them by Jean-François Janinet (1752-1814), these impressive and contrasting pictures show Palatial Roman scenes of the 18th century, one work depicting privileged artists and tourists in the daytime light outside the Villa Medici, the other showing the dark and crumbling interior of the hayloft at the Villa

Giulia. The paintings are both on their original stretchers, in their original frames and possibly even coated with their original varnish. Robert lived and worked in Italy between 1754 and 1765 and spent most of this time based in Rome. The present works date to this period, with one of the canvases inscribed *Romae 1759*'.





Further highlights of the sale include a rediscovered work by Gerrit Dou (1613-1675), the first pupil of Rembrandt, titled *The Grocer's Shop: the herring-seller and the boy* (estimate: £300,000-500,000). Formerly in the Collection of Count Vladimir Grigorievich Orlov, this painting was presumably a gift from Catherine the Great of Russia before passing by descent to Count Anatoli Vladimirovich Orlov-Davydov. The work last appeared in a publication in the early 20th century and has resurfaced recently from the collection of a private European family. A recently rediscovered portrait by Parmigianino (1503-1540), thought to be the oldest existing painting on copper, carries an estimate of £300,000-500,000; a still-life by the Dutch master of the 18th century Jan van Huysum (1682-1749) is expected to realise £500,000-800,000 and *Sleeping Venus* by François Boucher (1703-1770) which is being offered from the Collection of Barbara Piasecka Johnson, is expected to realise £600,000-800,000.

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Images available on request

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Notes to editors:

- 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 2005, Christie's International Old Master Department achieved annual sales of £127.5 million / \$230.8 million, reaffirming their position as market leaders in both the Old Master Picture and Old Master Drawing categories, with a 53% market share over the nearest competitor in the Old Master category as a whole.
- The sale of Old Master Pictures on 6 April 2006 in New York realised \$74,523,360 (£42,584,777), the highest ever total for a sale of Old Master Pictures in the United States. The top lot of the sale was *Ginevra, La Donna della Salute and San Giorgio* by J.M.W. Turner, R.A., (1775-1851) which sold for \$35,856,000 (£20,489,143) and set a world record price for the artist at auction.
- Highlights from the sale of *Important Old Master Pictures* on 6 July will be on view at Christie's salerooms at 8 King Street, London, SW1Y 6QT from 1 to 6 July. See www.christies.com for further details.