

For Immediate Release

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OLD MASTER PICTURE SALE OFFERS SUPERB QUALITY AND VARIETY AT CHRISTIE'S IN JULY

Old Master Pictures

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London – Christie's announces the sale of Old Master Pictures in London on 8 July, which will be led by a



recently restituted work by Francesco Guardi, considered to be one of the finest pictures by the artist offered in recent years (estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000). Also included in the sale are a variety of portrait, landscape and still-life paintings from the hands of Italian, French and Dutch artists, including works by Jan van Huysum, Jan van der Cappelle, Parmigianino and Titian.

The superb Venetian view painted by Francesco Guardi (Venice 1712-1793), titled *The Grand Canal, Venice, with the Palazzo Bembo* (estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000) is an exceptional example of the artist's work and exemplifies his ability to conjure atmosphere through an almost impressionistic style of painting. In this painting Guardi captures the spectacle of his native city draped in morning sunlight, portraying a Westward view of the Grand Canal as the sun burns away the last of the morning mist. Unusually this example was engraved by Dionigi Valesi, and dedicated to Carlo Spinola, Marchese de Rocca Forte, who may have been the original owner of the work. This painting was owned by John and Anna Jaffé, who formed an impressive collection that was housed in Nice from the 1880s. John died in 1933 and, after Anna's death in 1942, the Jaffé collection fell into the hands of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime. The contents of their house were sold in July 1943 as 'Jewish property' with this painting subsequently sent to the 'Sonderauftrag Linz', the museum project planned by Hitler for his hometown. After the end of the war, the painting was assigned to the Louvre, and then deposited in 1952 in exchange for another work by Guardi in the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse. This work is being sold by the heirs of John and Anna Jaffé, who have recently been restituted the work by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France.

Also included in the sale is a magnificent still-life by Jan van Huysum (Amsterdam 1682-1749) being sold by the Trustees of the 4th Duke of Westminster's settlement. *Fruit, flowers and insects on a marble ledge, a pillar to the left, a wood behind* is a remarkable work in exceptional condition (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000). Jan van Huysum was the greatest Dutch still-life artist of the 18th century, and always demonstrated meticulous attention to detail. He was almost obsessive in his style of realism, so much so that a number of his works were painted over two years, in order that the artist could source flowers and paint them only while they were

at the very peak of their bloom. The example being offered at Christie's illustrates well this attention to detail – lifelike drops of dew are visible on the fruit and flowers, insects crawl across the panel and close inspection shows pips in some of the grapes. The signature of the artist is partly obscured by a flower, further heightening the illusionistic effect that was the trademark of van Huysum's work.

The sale will also include a deeply moving composition by Tiziano Vecellio, also known as Titian (*circa* 1485/1490 – 1576) titled *The Mater Dolorosa* (estimate on request). This picture portrays the Virgin Mary in mourning, with her hands clasped in front of her in grief while teardrops fall from her eyes. This picture is thought to have been in the collection of Gonzalo Pérez, secretary to King Phillip II of Spain, the great patron of Titian. By 1783, the work had become a part of the Colonna Collection, and it is listed in the inventory of Principe Filipe III Colonna. The Colonna family were princes of Salerno, Galatro, Stigliano and Aliano and had become grandees of Spain in 1739, perhaps explaining the acquisition of this work. This picture is one of a group being sold by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York in order to benefit Catholic Education. The group of paintings was bequeathed to the Diocese in 1956 after the death of Archbishop Thomas E. Molloy, who formed his personal collection during the 1930s and 1940s. The other paintings of this collection were offered for sale at Christie's sale of Old Master Pictures in New York in May.

A portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte, painted in 1803 by Antoine-Jean Gros (Paris 1771-1835 Hauts-de-Seine) (estimate of £600,000-800,000), is one of five full-length portraits commissioned by Napoleon between



March 1802 and September 1803, only two of which have survived. The other surviving portrait is in the Musée de la Légion d'Honneur in Paris, while this example has been in the ownership of the same family for two centuries. The painting was most likely offered to General Moreau, one of Napoleon's closest friends until 1804 when he was exiled at Napoleon's request. It has since passed by family descent to the present owner, the Duc de Mouchy. As is so evident from this imposing canvas, Napoleon was fully aware of the propagandistic power of art – he was said to declare '*I love power, but it is as an artist that I love it.*' The French emperor believed that images had an enormous influence over the attitudes and values of

those who viewed them. In this portrait, his chosen artist did not fail him.

Jan van der Cappelle is arguably the greatest Dutch marine painter of the 17th century. Having inherited a personal fortune from his father, van der Cappelle split his time between teaching himself to paint and building a formidable art collection which grew to include works by Rubens and Frans Hals, as well as 300 landscape sketches and a number of paintings by Rembrandt. This sale will offer a work by the artist which has been in the ownership of the same family since 1881. *A kaag and smak in a calm, with fisherman pulling in their catch from a rowing-boat in the foreground, a Dutch frigate and other boats beyond* (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000), represents an outstanding example of the artist's work.

Other works to be offered in the sale include a recently rediscovered portrait by Parmigianino, thought to be the oldest existing painting on copper (estimate: £300,000-500,000), four dramatic portrayals of the eruption

of Mount Vesuvius by Pierre-Jacques Volaire (Toulon 1729-*circa* 1790/1800 Italy), which range in estimate from £40,000 to £400,000, and a *Portrait of a philosopher* by Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli (1505-1570), the follower of Parmagianino (estimate: £300,000-500,000).

Further major Old Master highlights will be offered during the week of 4th July as Christie's will present *The Champalimaud Collection* for sale in London on 6 and 7 July 2005. In contrast to his immensely distinguished public life as a financier and entrepreneur of international stature, as well as a munificent philanthropist and benefactor to Portugal, Antonio Champalimaud's collection was a very personal quest, created for the enjoyment of his family and those close to him. The collection is expected to fetch in the region of £15 million, with proceeds to go primarily to a Medical Foundation that Mr Champalimaud set up for the nation.

Highlights will include *The Bucintoro at the Molo on Ascension Day* by Canaletto (estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000), Canaletto's views of the *Piazzetta* and *Piazza San Marco* (estimate: £700,000-1,000,000 for the pair), and *Grand Canal, Venice, with the Church of the Scalzi and the Lista di Spagna* and the *Island of San Cristoforo, Murano* by Francesco Guardi (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000 for the pair).

Christie's sale of *Old Master Drawings* on 5 July is to offer a rediscovered work by Andrea del Sarto, the last great Florentine artist of the High Renaissance. *Head of St Joseph*, a study for a picture now in the Pitti Palace, Florence, is a work of exceptional quality and condition, drawn on an imposing scale. It is expected to realize in excess of £1.5 million. A separate press release is available.

Highlights from this sale of Old Master Pictures on 8 July will be on view in various locations preceding the sale. The tour dates are as follows:

New York: 22nd to 27th May at Christie's, New York

Geneva: 1st to 3rd June at the Bodmer Foundation

Venice: 9th to 11th of June at the Venice Biennale

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Images available on request

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