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A SUPERB EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

***Important French Furniture, European Ceramics, Silver, Old Master Drawings,
Old Master Pictures, Impressionist Pictures.***



*Two rare 18th century Meissen
porcelain herons,
circa 1730 by J.-J. Kändler
(Estimate: €2.500.000-3.000.000)*

A Magnificent European Private Collection
Christie's Paris, Wednesday 22 June 2005

Paris - Christie's Paris will present A Magnificent Private European Collection on 22 June 2005. The collection offers over 150 works of art embracing a variety of differing collecting fields from European ceramics, furniture, silver and works of art to Old Master paintings and drawings through to superb Impressionist paintings, all of which reveal the Collector's exquisite taste and passionate eye. All works of art in the collection, with the exception of two items*, will be sold without reserve.

"We are very delighted to announce that Christie's has been chosen to auction this highly important single-owner collection and we are proud to be able to offer such rare and significant pieces to the French market," says François Curiel, Chairman of Christie's Europe.

Furniture, Chinese Porcelain and Works of Art

A superb selection of lacquer and marquetry leads the furniture section of the sale. Among this selection is an early Louis XVI armoire decorated with Chinese lacquer panels (estimate: €150.000–300.000) and an exceptional Louis XVI ormolu-mounted ebonized and Japanese lacquer bureau plat, stamped Ferdinand Bury (estimate: €300.000–500.000/£200,000–300,000). An important Louis XVI ormolu-mounted mahogany bibliothèque, stamped Jean-Henri Riesener, with a rectangular white marble top (estimate: €300.000–500.000/£200,000–300,000) is a highlight of the sale. The piece is heavily influenced by “the English style” of 18th century French furniture, the leading exponents of which were Jacques-Laurent Cosson, Jean-François Lelen, Adam Weisweiler and Joseph Gengenbach dit Canabas.

Magnificent Kangxi Chinese blue porcelain baluster-shaped vases, with mounts incorporating elephant and rhinoceros heads, were acquired for the collection from the prestigious Russian Princes Narischkine Collection and are superb examples to be offered for sale (estimate: €600.000–1.000.000/£400,000–600,000).

“The collection is exceptionally rich in superb examples of Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture – and is especially strong on decorative objects, mounted porcelain and bronzes. It is perhaps the highly unusual and rare pieces that leave a particularly lasting impression as they demonstrate the spirit of the collection”, says Charles Cator, Co-Chairman of Christie’s UK and International Director of the Furniture and Works of Art. “Each object I examined revealed a depth of knowledge and passion that was thrilling”.

Two game boards, the first a rare Neapolitan piqué (estimate: € 60.000–100.000/£40,000–60,000), and the other a fine and rare ormolu mounted lacquer copper, gold and tortoiseshell double-sided board (estimate: € 100.000–200.000/60,000–130,000) are exquisite examples of craftsmanship in this field. The precious materials and jewel-like qualities of these boards made them extremely popular among fashionable aristocracy of the day, with both Madame de Pompadour and Queen Marie-Antoinette amassing their own collections.

European Ceramics

Modelled with breathtaking naturalism, two very rare and extraordinary 18th Century Meissen Herons (estimate: €2.500.000–3.000.000/£1,600,000–2,000,000) form the heart of this collection, produced circa 1730 by J.-J. Kändler, Meissen’s chief modeller. The figures are remarkable for their power, vivacity and the originality of their modelling and were created for the Saxon-Elector Augustus the Strong’s Japanese Palace in Dresden between 1731–35. Hard-paste porcelain had not long been discovered when Augustus first conceived his ambition to furnish an entire palace with life-size porcelain animals. It was the white clay found at Meissen that produced the new version of the material which rivalled porcelain that previously could only be imported from China or Japan. “These majestic and stately birds combine technical achievement with superlative creative design, the result of which is simply breathtaking”, says Hervé de la Verrie, Director of European Ceramics, Paris.

Silver

The silver section of the collection is highlighted by a remarkable pair of rare lacquer gold-mounted boxes by Louis Mailly, 1739 (estimate: €120.000–180.000/£80,000–120,000). The pair, made with the highest quality Japanese lacquer, and a mount supplied by a renowned Parisian goldsmith, will delight and attract international connoisseurs. “The collector’s remarkable depth of knowledge and taste reflect a high artistic quality, particularly for small sized silver works of art and objets de vitrine”, says Anthony Phillips, International Head of Silver Department. Among the miniatures and objets de vitrine to be offered are a Louis XVI enamel ‘drageoir’ by Joseph-Etienne Blerzy, 1785 (estimate: €7.000–10.000/£400,000–600,000), a Louis XV gold sealing-wax case with flowers and leaves, engraved by Michel Robert Halle (estimate : €6.000–8.000/£4,000–5,000), and a miniature mother of pearl and blue glass brass telescope (estimate: €300–400/£200–250).

Old Master Drawings

The Old Master Drawings section is led by two impressive illustrations by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo from the celebrated Punchinello series. Punchinello at the market (estimate: €150.000–200.000/£100,000–130,000) and Punchinello riding a camel (estimate: €220.000–320.000/£140,000–200,000) are part of a sequence from the Comedia del’Arte that Tiepolo executed later in his career, arguably the most important series the artist ever produced. In the 1920s the set of 120 drawings were unbound and sold separately by an English art dealer living in Paris, the majority being purchased by Sir Brinsley Ford, from where they passed to his descendant’s private collections. These drawings are rarely seen on the market and will be of great interest to a wide variety of art collectors.

Impressionist Paintings

Like Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley produced canvases en série throughout his career. One of the most celebrated is the series of 20 canvases depicting Canal du Loing. Christie’s is thrilled to offer the largest and, arguably, most beautiful canvas he produced in the series (estimate: €400.000–600.000/£250,000–400,000). Two oil on canvas works by Jongkind; Skaters nearby Rotterdam, 1879 (estimate: €18.000–25.000/£12,000–16,000) and The village of Overschies, 1881 (estimate: €25.000–35.000/£16,000–23,000) also feature in the collection.

Public Viewing at Christie’s Paris – 9 avenue Matignon – 75008 Paris

Friday 17 – Tuesday 21 June 2005

Auction: Wednesday 22 June 2005

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Images and catalogue upon request

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