

For Immediate Release

9 June 2005

MAGNIFICENT FURNITURE AT CHRISTIE'S

The Kedleston Bookcase sells for over £1.4 Million

A Magnificent pietra dura octagonal centre table realizes £2,024,000

Important English Furniture

Two Regency Collectors: Philip John Miles and George Byng, 1815-45

Christie's London

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London – Two magnificent pieces of furniture were sold at Christie's today; The Kedleston Bookcase achieved £1,464,000, and was the highest selling lot of the sale of *Important English Furniture and Carpets*. Designed by Robert Adam and supplied by the celebrated cabinet-makers William and John Linnell, the Kedleston Bookcase was commissioned in 1760 by the connoisseur, Sir Nathaniel Curzon, 5th Baronet (1726-1804) for his wife, Lady Caroline's apartment at his 'pleasant seat' Kedleston Hall, one of England's greatest treasure houses. In this morning's sale, *Two Late Regency Collectors: Philip John Miles and George Byng, 1815-45*, a magnificent pietra dura octagonal centre table on a griffin-supported Regency base sold for £2,024,000, more than four times the high estimate. After the Badminton Cabinet, it is the most expensive piece of Italian furniture ever sold at auction.

Christie's International Furniture Department are auction market leaders and have a long established reputation for the highest levels of scholarship and achieving the strongest prices for works of art. Eight of the top ten lots of English furniture ever sold have been at Christie's including the holder for the most expensive piece of English furniture sold at auction, the Anglesey Desk that sold for £1.76 million at Christie's London in 1990. These sales follow that of The Badminton Cabinet which realized £19,045,250 at Christie's London in December 2004, becoming the most expensive decorative work of art ever sold at auction

The Kedleston bookcase is part of one of Robert Adam's earliest and most important commissions. By 1758, Robert Adam, who had just returned from Italy, was already known as 'a man of genius'. In December of that year he was introduced to Sir Nathaniel Curzon, who had the previous month succeeded his father to the baronetcy and the extensive Kedleston estate in Derbyshire. Lord Scarsdale, who was created Baron Scarsdale in 1761, became instrumental in launching the London career of the Rome-trained architect, Robert 'Bob the Roman' Adam (d.1792), and the bookcase's manufacture coincided with Adam's appointment as one of George III's court architects. The bookcase was sold on behalf of the Executors of the late Viscount Scarsdale and the Curzon family for estate planning purposes. The buyer of the bookcase was anonymous.

The magnificent pietra dura octagonal centre table on its griffin-supported Regency base, attributed to George Bullock was offered alongside a selection of furniture and objects that were amassed by George Byng and Philip John Miles during the Regency period 1815-45. The top, executed in the rarest jaspers and hardstones with parrots amongst a riot of flowering garlands, worthy of the greatest Dutch still lives, is executed in an illusionistic style of breathtaking quality, representing the highest achievements of the Grand Ducal workshops in Florence around 1700. The equally remarkable, sculptural Regency base is a new addition to the cabinet-maker, George Bullock's (d.1818) oeuvre, its original design surviving in the Wilkinson Tracings at the V&A. It was sold to a private buyer.

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