

For Immediate Release

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LIBERTY & CO. – A FREEING OF THE DECORATIVE SPIRIT

“Do not follow existing fashions, but create new ones.”

Arthur Lasenby Liberty



*A large Tudric pewter and abalone clock by Archibald Knox, circa 1902-1905
Estimate: £20,000-30,000*

*Liberty & Co.
24 September 2003*

South Kensington, London – Christie’s is delighted to announce the first-ever auction exclusively devoted to Liberty & Co., the world-famous London department store. Liberty was a major force in the development of decorative arts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and with the backbone of the sale being provided by a fine single-owner collection, this ground-breaking auction is set to make major waves amongst the international collecting crowd.

Christie's Decorative Arts Department retains a proud tradition of pioneering new sales categories including Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Arts & Crafts and The Aesthetic Movement. Liberty & Co., the latest addition to this impressive and innovative list, will take place on Wednesday 24 September.

Comprising over 250 lots and expected to realize in excess of £200,000, the auction will showcase all the major decorative arts designers of the period. Featuring fine wares from the whole oeuvre of Liberty production – including metalwork, ceramics, glass, furniture, textiles, carpets and jewellery – the sale will pay homage to the department store that was a mecca for those seeking the best in international design and decorations and whose name is still synonymous with style and elegance the world over. With a sale containing such breadth and depth, keen interest is expected from across the globe, including the UK, Europe, America and Asia.

Established on Regent Street in 1875 by Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843–1917), Liberty & Co. had its origins in the artistic world of the late 1800s when the decorative influence of the Orient reached the West. With a dash of bohemia thrown in, Liberty soon became a byword for style and elegance and within five years was large enough for seven departments including silks, embroidery, furniture, carpets, curios and miscellany. As the store's success continued to grow, it encompassed the beauty of Arts and Crafts design and later Art Nouveau. By 1894, the company was credited with creating an entirely new taste in decoration and style and Arthur Liberty was knighted for his services to British and Applied Arts in 1913.

Sale highlights include a large Tudric pewter and abalone clock by Archibald Knox, circa 1902–1905 (estimate: £20,000–30,000); a pair of unusual Tudric Archibald Knox hammer form pewter candlesticks (estimate: £8,000–10,000); a Cymric silver mounted claret jug set with semi-precious stone cabouchon and clear glass liner by Archibald Knox (estimate: £3,000–4,000); a Sigurd earthenware jardiniere designed by Archibald Knox, circa 1902 (estimate: £500–800); a Liberty copper mirror, circa 1905 (estimate: £1,000–1,500); a Moorcroft Claremont dish with toadstool (estimate: £400–600); and a Cymric vase with turquoise cabouchons (estimate: £2,500–3,000).

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*Images available on request
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