

For Immediate Release

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THE SPLENDOURS OF INDIA



A late 19th century magnificent silver carriage made for H.H. Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Estimate: £50,000-80,000

Arts of India 23 September 2005

London – Over the centuries, India has inspired a wide variety of artists, both at home and abroad. Gathered together for Christie's eagerly awaited *Arts of India* sale on 23 September 2005, is a wonderful array of unusual and beautiful works led by an outstanding silver horse-drawn carriage belonging to the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. The sale will also include a superb selection of jewellery, furniture, textiles and works of art as well as a wide variety of paintings, watercolours, prints and illustrated books by British artists.

An unusual late 19th century silver *Landau-style* carriage made in Bombay, with possible European additions, for H.H. Maharaja of Bhavnagar (estimate: £50,000-80,000) is one of the highlight of the sale. This impressive carriage is in good working order and is nearly 5 meters long, 1.7 meters wide and over 2 meters high. The exterior is covered in silver sheet, bedecked with naturalistic flowers and animals such as hummingbirds worked in repoussé, together with enamelled decoration and areas of gold overlay, which appear more European in style than Indian. On each door is the crest of the princely state of Bhavnagar in Gujarat while the interior is upholstered in woven yellow and olive silk.

Among the jewellery included in the sale is a magnificent antique single row emerald bead necklace with diamond clasp (estimate: £290,000-350,000) and an exceptionally fine 17th century Archer's ring of white jade decorated with carved rubies, emeralds and with a central diamond (estimate: £55,000-65,000).

A fascination for the cultures of other peoples and religions is what gives much later Indian Art its vitality. Akbar, a Muslim and one of the early Mughal emperors, commissioned a series of illustrated versions of Hindu epics, one of the most important of which was the *Harivamsa*. One of the best paintings from this manuscript, shows *Krishna dancing on the head of Kaliya*, circa 1590-95 (estimate: £40,000-60,000). The last Arts of India sale included Anglo-Indian paintings from the collection of W.G. and Mildred Archer. This auction features over forty Indian miniatures from the same collection, most of them from the Pahari School.

It was not just the Indian people and customs that were of interest; the landscape was a revelation and early artists who travelled there found it fascinating. Chief among these were the Daniells, Thomas and his nephew William, who during their travels left the areas of European control, often venturing into unmapped districts, as shown in the oil painting *The Temples at Tirukalikundran, Tinnevely District*, 1816, (estimate: £80,000-120,000). In India, the Daniells were able to indulge in the "picturesque", a fashionable concept in England at the time and this can be seen in their view of *The Rope Bridge at Srinagar*, a watercolour painted in 1789 (estimate: £35,000-45,000), showing a very early suspension bridge that spanned a full 240ft. above a wildly flowing river.

Alongside the European school, a native school of painting developed in the late 18th century that was highly stylized and varied according to region. Two outstanding examples in the sale depict Sir John Dalling (estimate: £50,000-60,000) and Colonel Antoine-Louis Polier (estimate: £20,000-30,000), each enjoying local customs, and are reminiscent of the type of East India Company employee portrayed in William Dalrymple's book 'White Moghuls'.

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Images available on request

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Notes to Editor

A lecture on the Palaces of Rajasthan by architectural historian, George Michell, will take place at Christie's King Street on Tuesday 20 September 2005 at 7.45pm followed by a reception. Tickets £35, in aid of Ra, please contact raassociation@yahoo.co.uk or 020 7352 4336.