

For Immediate Release

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A REDISCOVERED TREASURE TROVE: THE LOVE COLLECTION OF MAGNIFICENT SILVER-GILT, GOLD, RUSSIAN WORKS OF ART AND JEWELRY

The C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love Collection: Magnificent Silver-Gilt and Gold including Russian Works of Art

**The C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love Collection: Important Jewelry
October 19**

New York, NY – On October 19, Christie's will present a rediscovered treasure trove of English Regency and Napoleonic silver-gilt as well as Imperial Russian works of art and important jewelry from The C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love Collection, at Rockefeller Center.

The magnificent and superbly decorative group of English and French silver-gilt was acquired between 1930 to 1970. It speaks to Ruxton Love's exceptional ability to recognize great works of art that the collection was formed at a time when many such 19th century pieces were far from fashionable. The collection is full of major pieces of historic and artistic importance, particularly in the field of English Regency silver-gilt.

English Regency Silver-Gilt

The extraordinary group of silver made for the Duke of York by Edward Farrell, an important English silversmith, under the direction of Kensington Lewis, one of London's leading silver retailers, was the most innovative silver of its time. The Duke of York centerpiece, a George IV silver-gilt nine-light candelabrum formed as Hercules slaying the Hydra, 1824 (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000), is considered to be Mr. Love's greatest purchase in this field. This centerpiece is one of the most important pieces of silver

from the first half of the 19th century and Farrell's ultimate masterpiece. A symbol of military might, Hercules was chosen as the subject of this piece to symbolize the Duke of York's position as Commander-in-Chief of the Army while the Hydra represents the enemies of England.

A pair of Regency silver-gilt six-light candelabra, circa 1818 (estimate: \$150,000-250,000), also by Farrell for a Duke of York commission, flanked a larger candelabrum made by Farrell and Lewis in 1818. This massive candelabrum, which was sold by Christie's London in 1998 and is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, displays Neptune standing on a seahorse while the pair offered in the sale shows the same figure standing on a dolphin.

A pair of Regency silver-gilt four-light candelabra, 1819 (estimate: \$150,000-250,000) was also retailed by Lewis but made by Paul Storr. As this pair of candelabra was ordered during Farrell's execution of the Duke of York commissions, it is possible that Lewis employed Storr to assist with the increasing demand.

An early example of Farrell's work is a set of twelve George III silver-gilt salt cellars and spoons (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). The marine theme of these pieces was possibly inspired by Lewis' purchase of a salver decorated with marine deities, sea nymphs and tritons from the sale of the 11th Duke of Norfolk Collection in 1816. In 1817, the same year in which the present salt cellars were made, an identical set was also supplied to the Duke of York.

A set of eight George III silver-gilt salt cellars with the maker's mark of Paul Storr, 1810 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) illustrates a design by the painter and sculptor William Theed (1764-1817). This attribution is supported by a bronze sculpture with a similar design by the artist, now in the Royal Collection, and drawings from the Rundell firm, where Theed was employed, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

A superb example of "display silver" is a George IV silver-gilt sideboard dish made by Philip Rundell, London, 1820 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000). The central relief, which shows Nike leading the horses of a quadriga, was designed by Benedetto Pistrucci, the leading medal-engraver and the official Chief Medalist to the King. Pistrucci designed numerous medals for Rundell and this example relates closely to his famous Waterloo medal.

Two documentary George III sideboard dishes are included in the sale. The first is one of thirteen recorded silver objects designed by the influential English architect, Charles Heathcote Tatham (estimate: \$120,000-180,000). The second was made by Paul Storr following a design by Thomas Stothard (estimate: \$150,000-250,000). Stothard's brilliant design of Bacchus and Ariadne ultimately derives from a superb antique Roman cameo excavated in the 17th century. There appear to be only four known dishes of this model, the others being made for the Prince Regent and a pair for the 3rd Duke of Northumberland.

Napoleonic Silver-gilt

The Loves also collected exemplary Napoleonic silver-gilt, which they brilliantly combined with their Regency silver-gilt to create a breathtaking and luminous atmosphere at their elegant New York triplex. While some of their major examples of French silver have been bequeathed to the French nation to be displayed at the Louvre, Versailles and Malmaison, the sale includes a number of French 19th century works of exceptional interest. Apart from a gold three-piece cutlery set made by Biennais for the great French diplomat, Talleyrand (estimate: \$20,000-30,000), several pieces have either French Imperial or Royal provenance and there are examples from three of the greatest of Empire services, those made for the Borghese, Demidoff and Pavlovitch families

During their lifetimes the Loves were also generous in their loans and gifts to museums. The important *Arts under Napoleon* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, New York in 1978 featured several of their pieces. Over the years, a number of significant English pieces was also donated to The Metropolitan Museum. More recently much of the Duke of York's silver mentioned above was loaned to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Russian Works of Art

An exceptionally rare jeweled, enamel and gold Russian Field Marshall's baton by the jeweler Keibel, St. Petersburg (estimate: \$100,000-150,000), will highlight the Russian section of the sale. The position of Field Marshall was the highest rank in the Imperial Russian Army and an honor bestowed infrequently. The survival of any Field Marshall baton is even more extraordinary and the one offered appears to be the only 19th century example still in existence. The baton was one of three made in 1878 during the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881). Two were presented to Grand Duke Michael Nicolaevich and Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaevich. The third, now offered for sale, was not awarded and was kept by the Imperial Cabinet. Since Alexander III (1881-1894) did not appoint any Field Marshalls during his reign, the baton was subsequently presented by Nicholas II (1894-1917) to General Iossif Vladimirovich Gurko in 1894 and was returned after his death to the Imperial Cabinet. It was finally awarded to His Royal Highness, King Nicholas I of Montenegro in 1910.

Also offered is a large imperial parcel-gilt, silver and enamel presentation charger for the coronation of Emperor Alexander III and Empress Maria Feodorovna presented by the Buriates from the Transbaikalian province (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). Chargers were offered on Coronation Day during the reigns of Tsars Alexander II, Alexander III and Nicholas II by numerous provincial delegations.

Jewelry

Audrey Love's collection of jewelry ranged from the traditional to the fanciful and represents a unique array of different types of workmanship and design. An antique spinel, ruby and diamond necklace (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) is one of the earliest pieces in the collection and is a fine example of the 'cluster' design, a classic jewelry design of the 18th century. An elegant Art Deco diamond bracelet

(estimate: \$80,000-120,000) is also offered and perfectly embodies the style of the 1930s with its bold design and grand scale. A unique piece in the sale is a delightful aquamarine, diamond and ruby brooch of a fish (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). The fish's body is artfully carved from a large piece of aquamarine and the dynamic tail is made of calibr -cut diamonds. An attractive invisibly-set sapphire and diamond brooch of a bird by Van Cleef & Arpels (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) is a superb example of the firm's well-known technique of concealing the visible metal gridwork making the stones appear as if they are floating.

Auction: The C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love Collection: October 19, 2004
Important Jewelry 10 a.m.
Magnificent Silver-Gilt and Gold
including Russian Works of Art approx. 10.45 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center October 16 - 19

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Images available on request

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