

Press Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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**PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF
HRH THE PRINCE GEORGE, DUKE OF KENT KG, KT, AND
HRH PRINCESS MARINA, DUCHESS OF KENT CI, GCVO AND
THEIR FAMILIES
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN NOVEMBER 2009**



Property from the Collection of HRH The Prince George, Duke of Kent KG, KT, and HRH Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent CI, GCVO and their families

Auction: 20 November 2009

London – Christie's announce the auction of *Property from the Collection of HRH The Prince George, Duke of Kent KG, KT, and HRH Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent CI, GCVO and their families* which will take place on 20 November 2009 in London. The auction will offer approximately 200 lots including silver, jewellery, paintings, furniture, tapestries, rugs and works of art with estimates ranging from £250 to £100,000.

Elizabeth Lane, Director, Chairman's Office, Christie's said: *"We are honoured to have been chosen to offer this collection in November, and to be able to build on Christie's long and distinguished tradition of Royal sales. In recent years, we have been entrusted with a number of Royal collection sales and they have proved to be among the most popular of all auctions drawing interest from private collectors from all around the world. The property to be offered in November will offer a rare and exciting insight into the lives of HRH The Prince George, Duke of Kent and HRH Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent and their families, and allow the public the chance to admire their taste and acquire works of art from their private collections."*

The auction continues a long tradition of Royal sales at Christie's which began in 1773 when the company's founder, James Christie, sold Property of the Princess of Wales, mother of George III. Most recently, Property from the Estate of HRH The late Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, realised £5.1 million in January 2006, and in June that year, works from the Private Collection of HRH The late Princess Margaret sold for £13.7 million.

HRH The Prince George (1902-1942) was the fourth and youngest surviving son of HM King George V and Queen Mary, and a great-grandson of Queen Victoria. In 1934 he was bestowed with the Dukedom of Kent and he married HRH Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark (1906-1968), the last foreign-born Princess to marry into the British Royal Family. Her father was Prince Nicholas, a son of the Danish Prince who in 1864 had been invited to ascend the Greek throne as King George I of the Hellenes, and her mother was Grand Duchess Helen Valdimirovna of Russia, the last to bear the resounding and imperial style of Royal and Imperial Highness. While she did not bring great wealth to the marriage, HRH Marina of Greece belonged to a cousinage that embraced almost every ruling dynasty in Europe.

She was considered one of the most beautiful and best dressed women of her time. According to Cecil Beaton, *"Those who had the good fortune to meet her on her arrival in England could see the cool classical features in a perfect oval head held high on a straight column of neck, the topaz eyes, the slightly tilted smile, the apricot complexion, and the nut brown cap of flat silken curls. We soon knew that she was a character of great gentleness and modesty, with a natural gift for draughtsmanship and a love of music. She enjoyed the company of creative talent."*

The couple lived at No.3 Belgrave Square, an imposing house near Buckingham Palace, and also at Coppins, a gabled Victorian villa near Iver which was inherited from the Duke's aunt, Princess Victoria, who died in 1935. They had three children; HRH the present Duke of Kent, HRH Princess Alexandra, the Honourable Lady Ogilvy and HRH Prince Michael of Kent.

Tragedy struck in 1942 when the Duke was killed as his plane crashed into a mountain in Scotland while he was serving for the RAF. Unfortunately his civil list did not pass to the Duchess but



abruptly ceased, and he left most of his inheritance in trust for his children. While The Duchess was cared for by the Royal Family, she found herself needing to raise funds and in March 1947, five years after HRH The Prince George, Duke of Kent's death, Christie's held a three day auction of his property. The sale included English furniture, objects of art and porcelain and totalled £92,300. Such was the interest in the auction that The Daily Telegraph reported at the time that *'I believe that the crowds of connoisseurs and sightseers trying to get into Christie's this week to view the art possessions of the late Duke of Kent.... will have surpassed all previous records.'*

Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, joined the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRNS) soon after her husband's death and throughout the rest of her life she continued to be an extremely popular Royal, commanding widespread respect and admiration, becoming President of the Wimbledon All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club and often attending State occasions. She lived her final years in a state apartment in Kensington Palace where she died in 1968.



A highlight of the auction is a portrait of Princess Louise (1848-1939) by her mother, Queen Victoria (1819-1901), which is expected to realise £10,000 to £15,000. This portrait is based on a detail of *The Four Eldest Princesses: Victoria, Princess Royal, Alice, Helena and Louise* by Franz Xavier Winterhalter that was painted in 1849 and given to the Queen by Prince Albert on his birthday. The portrait by Queen Victoria of Princess Louise is one of three portraits after Winterhalter that she painted in the summer of 1851. The other two are of Princess Clothilde and Princess Amalie of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

A leading furniture highlight is HRH The Prince George, Duke of Kent's chair and stool from the coronation of his brother, HM King George VI in 1937. Covered in red silk, and woven with the Royal coat of arms, it is estimated to realise £15,000 to £30,000. It is a rare occurrence for these chairs to appear at auction. A chair of a simpler design that was used by Queen Mary at the Coronation in 1937 was offered from the Collection of HRH The Princess Margaret at Christie's in 2006, and sold for £38,400.



The impressive silver section in the sale is led by a pair of wine coolers (estimate: £20,000 to £30,000) and a silver plate made for George II in 1752 (estimate: £8,000 to £12,000). An art deco gold and nephrite mantel clock by Cartier is expected to realise £8,000 to £12,000, and a George II silver gilt bell which was hung from the coronation canopy held by the Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports at King George II's coronation carries an estimate of £5,000 to £8,000.

The sale also includes a magnificent silver model of the Bentley Jackson Special, known as “Mother Gun” that was presented by The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) to HRH Prince Michael of Kent, its President from 1978 to 1998 on his retirement. On 26 April 1992 at Milbrook High Speed Circuit, the car, one of whose drivers was HRH Prince Michael of Kent, took the UK Class B Standing Start 1000 miles record at a speed of 104.49 miles per hour. Proceeds from this lot, which is estimated at £30,000 to £50,000, will be donated to the charity, the Soldiers’, Sailors’ Airmen and Families’ Association (SSAFA) whose President of Council is HRH Prince Michael of Kent.



The jewellery collection includes an array of highly personal pieces, many of them monogrammed or inscribed. Highlights include a charming necklace which features miniature photographs of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and each of their nine children, each set in silver (estimate: £500-700) and an antique diamond brooch forming “Victoria R” in old-cut diamond script letters, circa 1880, mounted in gold (estimated: £400-600). There is also a ring with a cameo possibly of Frederick, Prince of Wales, circa 1790 (estimate: £400-600).



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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totalled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. For the first half of 2009, art sales totalled £1.2 billion/\$1.8 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the Middle East, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium