

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**RARE SURVIVALS AND RE-DISCOVERIES HIGHLIGHT
CHRISTIE'S AMERICANA SALE SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**



Important American Furniture, Folk Art & Prints
September 30, 2009

New York – Rare survivals of American craftsmanship from the 18th and 19th centuries and a re-discovered duck decoy are among the highlights of the upcoming mid-season sale of *Important American Furniture, Folk Art & Prints* at Christie's New York. The September 30 auction includes over 100 historic items and is expected to realize in excess of \$1.8 million.

Leading the sale is a Chippendale Mahogany Bombé Chest-of-Drawers (pictured above; estimate: \$500,000-800,000). Crafted in Boston or Salem, Massachusetts *circa* 1760-1780, this magnificent chest was gifted to Historic New England nearly forty years ago and has been in the permanent collection since. Chests of this design were the pride of 18th century Bostonians, who valued the bombé's graceful curving form as the height of fashion and style. Creating these chests required significant amounts of raw material and labor as well as exceptional woodworking skill, all of which

contributed to their great expense. Given its extreme rarity and continued appeal to collectors, the bombé chest remains one of the most celebrated forms of American craftsmanship today. The present example features a perfectly-proportioned base with a notch-cornered top and a swirling pattern in the wood grain of the case sides. The gradual swell of the case sides begins at the second drawer and is widest between the third and fourth drawers. It is accented with ogee feet, original hardware, and a center decorative pendant below the bottom drawer.

Rare Decoy Discovered in Argentina



Among the most exciting re-discoveries in the sale is a very rare hand-carved decoy from a rig that was previously known to have only three decoys (pictured left; estimate: \$200,000-400,000). Carved in the form of a Canada Goose, this late 19th century example bears the same characteristics as its rigmates: a slot-neck design with a dovetail joint to remove the head for packing, and a small carved floret of feathers behind its neck. The number “6” is painted at the base of the neck and in the groove of the body, indicating that at least six decoys made up the original rig. Christie’s New York sold the number “2” decoy from the same rig in January 2007 for \$553,600.

Designed as a working decoy, the goose was recently re-discovered in Argentina, where it had been a decorative piece in a family home for over two decades. The decoy made its way there with a previous owner, an American man who lived there for a time and sold the decoy along with a number of hunting rifles for about \$2,500.

Dwarf Clock

At just under four feet high, a Federal Dwarf-Case Clock (estimate: \$40,000-80,000) bears an elaborate dial signed by Joshua Wilder, one of the most prominent clockmakers working in Southeastern Massachusetts in the early 1800s. The clock dates from *circa* 1825, a period in which production of these charming diminutive clocks far surpassed that of tall-case clocks. The elegant inlaid mahogany case is attributed to Abiel White (1766-1844), a well-respected craftsman and a frequent collaborator with Wilder.



Folk Art Highlights

New England maritime history is embodied in the form of a charming hand-carved and paint-decorated pine doll from the 19th century (estimate: \$8,000-12,000). According to a small tag

affixed to the doll's wrist with string, the doll is "160 years old from Truro Cape Cod carved by [a] Sea Captain".



Also from the 19th century is a complete set of eight nesting swing-handle Lightship Baskets (pictured left; estimate: \$15,000-25,000). These iconic baskets were hand-woven by Captain Andrew J. Sandsbury (1830-1902) while he was stationed aboard the famous Nantucket South Shoal Lightship from 1867-1869. Sandsbury and other seaman of his era crafted baskets of this style to break up the monotony of long days at sea and to earn a supplemental income from their sale upon returning to shore. A well-

known craftsman whose baskets were highly coveted for their exceptional quality, Sandsbury would have earned about \$50 for a similar complete set in 1869.

Audubon Prints

Rounding out the offerings in the September 30 sale is a special section of prints from John James Audubon's *Birds of America*. A collection of 42 prints comes from the Norton Audubon Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky, where they have been displayed since their acquisition. Among the highlights of the collection is *American White Pelican (Plate CCCXI)* from *circa* 1836 (estimate: \$50,000-70,000), and *American Flamingo (Plate CCCCXXXI)* from *circa* 1838 (estimate: \$50,000-70,000).

Auction: *Important American Furniture, Folk Art & Prints*

September 30, 2009

Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

September 26-29, 2009

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

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Images available on request

E-catalogue available online at www.christies.com