

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**FINE ART, FURNISHINGS AND ANTIQUITIES FROM ONE
OF MANHATTAN'S MOST FASHIONABLE ADDRESSES**

**THE COLLECTION OF WILLIAM F. REILLY TO BE OFFERED AT
CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK ON OCTOBER 14**



A view of the living room at 7 Sutton Square, Manhattan

Photo by Pieter Estersohn

The William F. Reilly Collection

October 14, 2009

New York – This October, Christie's is honored to present a special collection of fine art and furnishings from the Manhattan residence of the late Mr. William F. Reilly, a prominent philanthropist, collector, and former chief executive officer and chairman of the publishing firm Primedia. This superb collection of important 18th and 19th century furniture, rare antiquities, Old Master paintings, and decorative items was primarily housed in Mr. Reilly's Sutton Square townhouse, located in one of Manhattan's most fashionable neighborhoods. The three-story house with its dramatic river views and impeccably-designed interiors has been profiled in *House & Garden* and *Architectural Digest*, among other publications. The complete collection of over 230 items is expected to realize in excess of \$5 million.

To build the collection, the late Mr. Reilly worked with top New York antiques consultant and interior designer Timothy Whealon. Over the course of 12 years, Whealon scoured auction houses, dealers, antiques fairs, and art galleries to create a refined collection of rare works of art and antiques. For the sale preview, Christie's will re-assemble the bulk of the collection just as it appeared in the main rooms of Mr. Reilly's home, even using a similar color palette as the one that Whealon chose for the walls.

"The overall design aesthetic was conceived as a modern take on the great English country houses," said Whealon. "Mr. Reilly was an educated connoisseur with a deep interest in European history and the classics. To reflect that, we grounded the collection with excellent examples of English, Irish, and Continental furniture and complimented them with Greek and Roman antiquities, and paintings by the early 18th century Italian masters. Modernist touches in the form of lamps, occasional tables, and small decorative items kept the whole looking fresh and relevant, and remarkably easy for someone to live with."

Exceptional Provenance



The Reilly collection is highlighted by several extraordinary furnishings from prominent British houses, including a **Regency Ormolu and Black Slate Mantel Clock**, no. 538 (pictured at left; estimate: \$40,000-60,000) by Benjamin Lewis Vulliamy, London's pre-eminent luxury goods producer in the early 19th century. The clock was ordered by the Prince of Wales for his Royal residence at Carlton House, St. James's, London and delivered in 1815. A **George III Mahogany Cabinet-On-Chest** (estimate: \$200,000-400,000) features an arched cornice, paneled doors and four graduated drawers accented with carved ionic columns and a Greek key design on the façade. This extraordinary 18th century cabinet bears the penciled signature of William Hallett, one of the most well-regarded cabinetmakers to England's royal families. It is believed this magnificent cabinet was commissioned by Sir Charles Kerneys Tynte, 5th Baronet, for Halswell Park, Bridgwater, Somerset.

From Hamilton Palace, the largest and most majestic of Scotland's country houses, comes a pair of **English Ormolu-Mounted Satinwood-Inlaid Walnut Stools** (pictured at right; estimate: \$60,000-100,000) that were once part an extensive marquetry suite. Based on inventories of palace furnishings, it is believed that one stool dates from the original suite that was likely commissioned by James Hamilton, 4th Duke of Hamilton,



or by his son James, *circa* 1710-1720. The second stool was likely commissioned in the early 19th century by the 10th Duke to extend the suite. In later years, the pair was purchased by Sunlight Soap magnate William Lever, the 1st Viscount Leverhulme, and became part of his storied collection at The Hill, his residence in Hampstead.



A pair of **George II Walnut and Figured Walnut Open-Armchairs** from *circa* 1730 (pictured at left; estimate: \$250,000-400,000) bears the ducal coronet of the Astley family, and are part of a set believed to have been ordered by Sir Phillip Astley, 2nd Baronet (d.1739) or his son Sir Jacob Astley, 3rd Baronet (d. 1760). A **Regency Brass-Mounted Ebonized and Specimen Marble Side Table** (estimate: \$70,000-100,000) features a top veneered with a grid of multi-colored Italian marble specimens.

This unique table from *circa* 1800 is believed to have been acquired on the Grand Tour by the notable art patron and connoisseur Edward, Viscount Lascelles (d. 1814).

Among the excellent examples of Continental furniture in the collection is a **Pair of Italian Giltwood Side Tables** (estimate: \$150,000-250,000) made in Rome *circa* 1775 in the manner of the influential architect and designer Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). These exquisite tables with their unique curved legs and medallion friezes are similar to those formerly housed in the Palazzo Rezzonico and Palazzo Borghese.

Antiquities

Mr. Reilly's deep knowledge of Roman history fueled the acquisition of several important antiquities for his collection, led by a **Roman Marble Portrait Head of the Emperor Antoninus Pius** (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), who became emperor at the age of 52, and reigned from 138-161 A.D. – a period of relative calm, security, and religious piety in the Roman empire. Other portraits in the collection include a **Colossal Roman Marble Portrait Head of the Emperor Trajan** (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) who reigned from 98-117 A.D., and a **Roman Marble Portrait Head of the Youthful Marcus Aurelius, *circa* 138 A.D.** (pictured at right; estimate: \$150,000-250,000). The latter was one of the first purchases Mr. Reilly made as a collector; he had such high regard for the celebrated young emperor that he named his company Aurelian Communications upon its founding in 2001.



Perhaps the most dramatic item to feature in the Reilly collection is a **Greek Marble torso of the goddess Aphrodite** (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) from the Hellenistic period, *circa* 1st century B.C.

Nearly two-thirds life sized, the partially-draped torso stands with left knee bent and right hip thrust at an angle, forming a sensuous pose.

Old Master Paintings



Leading the collection's offering of Old Master paintings is a massive 16th century festival scene by a Flemish artist known only as the Monogrammist 'MO'. Populated with scores of brightly costumed acrobats, ***A view of a villa with acrobats and gentlefolk*** (pictured at left; estimate: \$600,000-800,000) is a sweeping, jubilant scene of a court festival on the grounds of an Italianate villa. As elegantly dressed courtiers look on, troupes of acrobats in red jumpsuits and ancient military uniform perform

elaborate dances and complicated balancing acts. This vibrant celebratory scene, which measures nearly eight feet wide, was the focal point of the dining room at Reilly's Sutton Square home.

Two important Italian Old Master landscapes from the living room of the Reilly home will be offered as highlights of the *Important Old Masters and 19th Century Art* sale on January 27, 2010: *View of Piazza del Popolo, Rome* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000) by Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691/2-1765) and *Extensive Landscape with Figures at a Shrine* (estimate: \$300,000-500,000), a rare collaboration between Alessandro Magnasco, Il Lissandrino (1667-1749) and Antonio Francesco Peruzzini (1643/46-1724).

Decorative Highlights

A devoted collector of Irish as well as English furnishings, Mr. Reilly's collection is highlighted by an exceedingly rare example of Dublin scagliola inlay work attributed to Pietro Bossi, the most accomplished artisan working in Dublin towards the end of the 18th century. This **Irish George III White Marble and Scagliola Chimneypiece** (pictured at right; estimate: \$100,000-150,000) is accented with beautifully-drawn leaf work and ribbon-hung Etruscan medallions in vivid hues of red, blue and green that remain remarkably unfaded. Less than 50 chimney pieces of this type are believed to have been created, and only two or three pieces of comparable quality have appeared on the market in recent years.



Among the more whimsical items within the Reilly collection is a **Pair of George II Giltwood Dolphin-Form Wall Carvings** from the mid-18th century (estimate: \$20,000-40,000). These grimacing fish-like figures with scrolling tails once adorned the Sutton Place apartment of Marietta Tree, the New York society doyenne. They are believed to have been purchased initially by Nancy Lancaster, the legendary designer (and the first Mrs. Ronald Tree), for Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, one of England's greatest country houses.

Rounding out the selection of decorative accents is a large selection of mirrors from a variety of periods and styles, including a **Louis XIV Ormolu-Mounted Boulle Marquetry Mirror** from *circa* 1710 (estimate: \$60,000-100,000); and a pair of five-foot high **English Giltwood Mirrors** (estimate: \$60,000-90,000), one George II, *circa* 1740, and the other created to match by Carvers and Gilders of London. Also among the offerings is a selection of English silver, including salvers, salt cellars, utensils, and a complete coffee and tea service (estimates range: \$500-35,000); and an array of blue and white Chinese export porcelain items, including vases, plates, and urns from the Kangxi period (estimates range: \$3,000-30,000).

Auction:

The William F. Reilly Collection

October 14, 2009 at 10:00am

Viewing:

New York - Christie's Rockefeller Center Galleries

October 10–13, 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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E-catalogue available at <http://www.christies.com/eCatalogues/index.aspx?saleid=22490>

