

For Immediate Release

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**MOVERS AND SHAKERS OF LATE 1800S APPEAR AT
CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON IN DECEMBER**

**The John Franks Vanity Fair Collection
Wednesday 14 December 2005 at 10:30am**

South Kensington – A rare private collection of original watercolours from early editions of *Vanity Fair* will be offered at Christie's South Kensington on Wednesday 14 December 2005. For the past 25 years, John Franks, a retired solicitor and writer, has acquired this unique collection of original caricatures, in addition to his comprehensive print collection which he retains, published by *Vanity Fair* between 1869 and 1914. The Franks Collection is one of the most complete collections of this genre to remain in private hands.

The highlight of the group is an historic portrait of Count von Bismarck (1870), the German Chancellor, by Joseph James Jacques Tissot (1836-1902) (estimate: £10,000-15,000), which was smuggled out of Paris during the siege of 1870 to appear in *Vanity Fair* in Great Britain. The collection also includes 26 original watercolours by Sir Leslie Ward 'Spy' (1851-1922), as well as works by Carlo Pellegrini 'Ape' (1836-1889); Melchiorre Delfico (1825-1895); Wallace Hester (fl.1897-1913); Sir Luke Fields "Elf" (1844-1927); Jean-Baptiste Guth (1883-1921) and a further three by Tissot.

During the lifetime of the magazine, over 2,000 distinguished politicians, judges, sportsmen and other international figures appeared in its weekly column, 'Men of the Day'. Important sitters whose portraits feature in this sale include:

- *The Earl of Darnley, Ivo Bligh* (1904), the Ashes Captain from 1882-3, who's name appears on the current Ashes cup (estimate: £3,000-5,000)
- *Anatole France* (1909), writer and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1921 (estimate: £2,000-3,000)
- *Gladstone & Harcourt* (1892), the Prime Minister and a British Liberal statesman (estimate: £3,000-5,000)
- *Major Esterhazy* (1898), a French traitor who served as a spy for Germany, famous for his involvement in the Dreyfus affair (estimate: £2,000-3,000)
- *Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim* (1904), the inventor of the Maxim gun and the 'heavier than air flying machine' (estimate: £2,500-3,500)
- *His Imperial Majesty Alexander III* (1884), the Emperor of Russia (estimate: £2,000-3,000)

- *The Duke of Norfolk* (1887) a courtier and patron with a rich and varied career (estimate: £1,500-2,000)

The magazine was started in 1868 by a journalist, Thomas Gibson Bowles (1842-1922). Bowles met Tissot in Paris and when the artist came to London in February 1871, Bowles commissioned him to produce cartoons for the publication, providing Tissot with a livelihood until he could re-establish his career as a painter. Leslie Ward (Spy) who spent forty years with *Vanity Fair* and was the most prolific of their artists said: ‘*I consider that in order that I shall have the perfect result, it must be drawn firstly from memory. One is not distracted from the general impression by the various little fascinations of form one finds in closer study*’. This statement perfectly captures a common trait in the portraits from The Franks Collection. They are vivid with personality and humour and express a characterful ‘impression’ of their sitter. It is reputed that Leslie Ward made observations of his sitters without their consent – sketching them from across a crowded restaurant or smoking room.

With the arrival of the 20th century and the age of the camera, watercolour caricatures gave way to photographic portraits. Increasingly, much of *Vanity Fair*’s readership was drawn to newspapers and by 1914 the company could no longer survive as a profitable publication. It was sold to the American publishers, Conde Nast, and was re-launched in March 1914 specialising in photographic portraits and ‘stimulating material for conversation in society’. It was later combined with *Vogue* in 1936. The *Vanity Fair* that we know today was re-launched in 1983.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie’s Web site at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors:

Public Viewing Times:

Saturday 10 December	10am – 4pm
Sunday 11 December	10am – 4pm
Monday 12 December	9am – 7.30pm
Tuesday 13 December	9am – 5pm

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In 2005 Christie’s South Kensington will have the following opening hours:

Monday 9am – 7.30pm

Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5pm

And will be open for Weekend Shopping on:

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm

The weekend openings will be throughout the year except for bank holidays.

Christie's South Kensington is the first international auction house in London to offer regular weekend auctions.

Christie's South Kensington is now open seven days a week with regular new sales on Sundays. The UK's busiest auction house, Christie's South Kensington offers more sales in more categories than any other auction house. With prices ranging from £200 to over £20,000, the average price at Christie's South Kensington is £1,000. Established in 1975 on the Old Brompton Road, Christie's South Kensington offers over 50,000 objects a year including works of art, furniture, paintings, prints and drawings, glass, ceramics, lighting, modern design, and silver. There is something for everyone and all you need to decorate your home or start a collection.

Christie's South Kensington is also famed for its popular collectible sales including Toys, Teddy Bears, Cameras, and Costumes, Posters, Film, Football and Pop Memorabilia to name just a few! If you are looking for a little luxury from as little as £200, regular sales of Vintage Jewellery, Fashion and Fine Wines also regularly appear on the auction calendar. For those contemplating selling, Christie's expertise is also available 7 days a week, free of charge, at the Valuation Counter to advise you on the current market value for your works of art.