

For Immediate Release

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RARE & EXCEPTIONAL JAPANESE PRINTS AT CHRISTIE'S IN NOVEMBER

Including The B.W. Robinson Collection



Japanese Prints including the B.W. Robinson Collection
Wednesday, 7 November 2007

London – Rare and exceptional Japanese prints from the world-famous *The B.W. Robinson Collection* and a number of private properties including *Property of a Private European Collection*, will be offered in a special dedicated sale **Japanese Prints including the B.W. Robinson Collection** during Asia Week at Christie's London on Wednesday 7 November 2007. *The B.W. Robinson Collection* showcases 3,000 prints by 19th century artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi, including many major designs which have not been offered at auction for many years. With estimates ranging from £1,000 to £100,000, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £1million and will offer collectors an exceptional opportunity to acquire rare works by some of the leading artists in the field.

The B.W. Robinson Collection of Kuniyoshi prints was created with the passionate zeal and academic knowledge of one man, Basil Robinson (1912-2005). Focusing on the exploits of warriors and mythological heroes, these prints also reveal the collector and the artist's shared fondness of cats and feature a considerable number of humorous designs. *Please see separate Asian Art Week press release for further information.*

Not seen in the public domain for over 50 years, the 100 lots, comprising 180 works, offered from the *Property of a Private European Collection* were formed in the 1960s with the advice of renowned print specialist Jack Hillier. Many originate from the celebrated collection of Henri Vever and the star lot is a previously unrecorded impression of Katsushika Hokusai's (1760-1849) *Fuji at Dawn*, known as *The Pink Fuji* (estimate: £80,000-100,000) *illustrated above*.

Hokusai, whose name is synonymous with arresting Japanese images of waves and Mount Fuji, was a master of his art. Christie's will offer an excellent example of Hokusai's famous *Great Wave* (estimate: £20,000-30,000) and, for the first time in over 10 years, three depictions of Hokusai's *Fuji at Dawn* will be offered in one sale, including *The Pink Fuji*.

The leading impression of *Fuji at Dawn* (estimate: £80,000-100,000) *illustrated on page 1*, is previously unrecorded and one of only seven known prints of Mount Fuji which Hokusai executed in sublime pale pink hues. A very good early print of the 1st state, this work demonstrates exemplary fresh colours and even reveals a light, beautiful imprint of the wood block's natural grain. One further example of *Fuji at Dawn* executed in this rare pink hue, as opposed to the more well known red depiction, is held in the prized collection of Musée Guimée, Paris. The two additional versions of this subject which will be offered demonstrate the traditional red palette. The first was originally the property of a European Nobleman and displays strong fresh colours (estimate: £60,000-80,000) and the second dynamic example is from the *Property of a European Gentleman* (estimate: £50,000-70,000).

Figurative highlights include one of the great works by Kitagawa **Utamaro** (1754-1806) *Somenosuke of Matsubaya* (estimate: £15,000-20,000) which originates from the esteemed Vever Collection. Elsewhere in the sale, Utagawa **Kuniyoshi's** *Toto Meisho, oban tate-e (Seaweed Gathering)*, is an important demonstration of the artist's experimentation with Western techniques of perspective (estimate: £6,000-8,000). Nature is depicted in an array of charming prints which are led by *Guncho Gafu (Swarm of butterflies)* by Kuboto **Shunman** (1757-1820), which is an extremely rare complete set of butterfly studies in subtle hues, originally from the Vever collection (estimate: £10,000-20,000). Other works, which provide an excellent entry level for new collectors and enthusiasts, include Ando **Hiroshige's** (1797-1858) *Yamabuki Chu-tanzaku (Frogs and Japanese roses)* (estimate: £5,000-6,000), *O-tanzaku (Wild duck)* and *36 views of Mount Fugee* (estimate: £1,000-1,500).

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A selection of images is available on request

Notes to Editors:

Public Viewing: Christie's London, 8 King Street, St James's SW1Y 6QT

Thursday, 1 November – Tuesday, 6 November 2007

About Christie's

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