

For Immediate Release
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MAN-O'WAR AHOY AT CHRISTIE'S



An extremely fine 1:48 scale 40-gun Navy Board model of a two-deck Fifth Rate, circa 1710-1719
Estimate: £150,000-200,000

Maritime and Naval Battles
19 November 2003 at 10.30am & 2pm

South Kensington - Christie's second Maritime sale of the year takes place on Wednesday 19 November. Over 550 lots are on offer, including paintings, watercolours, prints, models, books, commemorative wares and related ephemera. The auction features the finest Navy Board warship model to appear on the market for 40 years and the sale is expected to total in excess of £1million.

The extremely fine 1:48 scale 40-gun model of an unrigged English two-deck Fifth Rate was built between 1710-1719 and is constructed in fruit and box woods. Undeniably one of the Maritime auction highlights of recent times, the ship is expected to fetch £150,000-200,000.

A Fifth Rate, this ship size ultimately developed into the ubiquitous frigate. One of the most versatile units in any fleet, these small and fast men-o'war were used as despatch carriers, convoy escorts and scouts.

Used by the Admiralty between 1650 and 1820, such models were produced for a variety of reasons; to detail a possible re-fit, to provide a souvenir for Naval commanders or to illustrate development plans for their Lordships of the Navy.

The modellers, talented shipwrights and usually anonymous, were highly skilled artisans and the models that survive can be considered accurate replicas of the full-sized vessels, even down to their carving plans.

This particular model reveals the changing attitudes towards British warship design at the start of the 18th century, including a limiting of the use of carved ornaments to the bow and stern and the transition from the high, narrow stern of the last century, to a wider, open-galleried arrangement.

Other sale highlights include an extremely fine display quality model of the Royal Yacht Caroline of 1749 (estimate: £7,000-9,000); a finely restored 1:48 scale builder's model of H.M.S. Arrogant, the Royal Navy's first successful screw-driven frigate, circa 1848 (estimate: £15,000-20,000); the ship's bell from the White Star Line's R.M.S. Homeric, 1922 (estimate: £2,500-4,000) and the ship's chronometer from Thermopylae, the legendary clipper (estimate: £3,000-5,000).

A notable picture highlight is The Dutch attack on the English fleet in the Medway in June 1667 by Pieter Cornelisz van Soest (fl. 1640-1667). Detailing the daring attack by the Dutch fleet along the Thames Estuary in June 1667, the picture depicts the taking of the Royal Charles, the English flagship. The most celebrated prize in Dutch naval history, the Royal Charles was towed out to sea and the assault was a bitter humiliation for England's navy, lingering in the national psyche for centuries. A delightful oil on canvas and one of the finest Maritime pictures ever to be offered at South Kensington, the picture is estimated at £30,000-50,000.

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*Images available on request
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