

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 23, 2008

Contact: Kate Swan Malin +852 2978 9966 kmalin@christies.com

CHRISTIE'S ANNOUNCES FALL SALE OF IMPORTANT WATCHES IN HONG KONG

Historic Highlights Include a Pair of Magnificent Pocket Watches
Reputedly given to Emperor Qianlong from the English Royal Family

-PLUS-

Over 200 notable timepieces from Patek Philippe and Rolex

Important Watches
Wednesday, December 3rd - 11am and 2pm
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

Hong Kong – Christie's announces that the autumn sale of *Important Watches* will take place on Wednesday, December 3rd at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The sale features a wide range of over 500 rare and noteworthy wristwatches and pocket watches valued in the region of HK\$70 million. The sale offers a particularly strong focus on two of the most sought-after brands for collectors of all levels: Rolex and Patek Philippe. From historically-significant pieces to modern timepieces boasting the most advanced horological innovations, this sale caters to enthusiasts across all tastes and budgets.

PATEK PHILIPPE

Patek Philippe remains the ultimate name for many watch collectors the world over and this season Christie's is pleased to offer 114 wristwatches, pocket watches, and a very rare bracket clock from this famed maker.



Among the star Patek Philippe offerings are two rare *haute joaillerie* men's complicated timepieces: **Ref. 5971P perpetual calendar chronograph** (*illustrated above, estimate on request*) and **Ref. 5071G column-wheel chronograph** (*illustrated right, estimate: HK\$1,400,000-1,800,000/US\$180,000-230,000*), the former a timepiece that is making its auction debut in this sale. Before the introduction of the Ref. 5971P perpetual calendar chronograph in 2007,

the Ref. 5071G was the only *haute joaillerie* timepiece in Patek Philippe's stable of men's complicated watches. Both sensational timepieces stand out not only for their extreme technical sophistication,



but also for their lavish diamond embellishment – the **Ref. 5971P** features **26 baguette-cut diamonds**, while the **Ref. 5071G** boasts **118 baguette-cut diamonds weighing approximately 11.55 carats**. Both perfectly exemplify the allure of exceptional quality diamonds in combination with the marvels of micromechanical engineering that today’s top collectors expect and demand.



Also of note from Patek Philippe is the **‘Celestial’ Ref 5120G** (*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$1,600,000 – 2,000,000 / US\$200,000 – 250,000). Following the sensation of the Star Calibre 2000, one of the most complicated pocket watches ever created, and the Sky Moon Tourbillon, a Grand Complication wristwatch that embodies the horological innovation of its sister timepiece, Patek Philippe debuted the Sky Moon Celestial wristwatch in 2002. Encompassing all the astronomical indications of its predecessors with the same configuration of the

nocturnal sky with the movement of the stars, the position of the moon, and its progressing phases within a lunar cycle, the Celestial wristwatch differs in that it allows the wearer to admire the progression of the stars while observing the mean solar time on his wrist. In order to accomplish such a horological achievement, Patek Philippe devised a highly sophisticated and complex system whereby stacked discs, each turning at different speeds and creating a spellbinding sensation of depth, are employed.

ROLEX



Rolex is also featured most prominently in the sale, with over 100 pieces offered including leading models such as the Submariner, Daytona, GMT-Master, Oysterquartz, Bubbleback, among others. Of note among the top lots offered from Rolex is the **Submariner Ref. 5513 Military wristwatch made for the British Royal Navy** (*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$500,000 – 700,000 / US\$63,000 – 88,000).

The Military Submariner was adapted following the specifications requested by the British Ministry of Defence as part of the equipment of some military corps including the British Royal Navy, and is therefore a much rarer and more desirable model than the standard Submariner Ref. 5513. The watch cases of the Military Submariner were soldered with fixed bar lugs rather than standard spring bars, allowing for a more secure military nylon wrist strap. The easily readable dial is equipped with ‘sword’-type hands, and on the face is the international symbol for tritium, the encircled ‘T’, which indicates the presence of tritium in the luminescent coating of the hour markers. The back of the case of the present example has a series of engraved markings – ‘0552’ indicating the British Ministry of Defence, ‘923-7697’ corresponding to the NATO code, ‘680’ indicating the issue number, ‘77’ for the issue year, and the Broad Arrow which characterizes all watches issued by the British Army.



The sale includes many vintage Rolexes from the 1940’s and 1950’s, including the **Rolex Ref. 6062 Triple Calendar** (*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$600,000 – 800,000 / US\$75,000 – 100,000). Rolex launched the reference 6062 in the early 1950s and it is **considered by many as the ultimate Rolex wristwatch**.

Together with the **Reference 8171** which is also offered in the sale (estimate: HK\$240,000 – 400,000 / US\$30,000 – 50,000), it is one of only two models from Rolex to show the date, day, month and moon-phases. An estimated 400 examples of the reference 6062 were produced in a great variety of dial configurations, with a majority in yellow gold. The rarest examples feature the diamond or "star" hour markers.

'THE IMPERIAL POMEGRANATES'



The sale includes an important group of enamel pocket watches made for the Chinese market. Among the most historically significant lots offered this season is **"The Imperial Pomegranates"**, an extremely rare pair of gold, enamel and pearl-set pocket watches, made by Piguet & Meylan for the Imperial Chinese market, reputedly given to Emperor Qianlong from the English Royal Family, circa 1820 (*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$ 1,200,000 - 1,800,000 / US\$ 150,000 - 250,000).

This spectacular pair of identical watches was reputedly given as a gift to Emperor Qianlong from the English Royal Family during the reign of King George III. Legend has it that the watches were transported to China under the governance of the British Ambassador George McCartney and Sir George Staunton, 2nd Baronet. They were then personally handed to the Emperor, a well-known enthusiastic collector of clocks and watches, who apparently treasured these as among his most cherished possessions. The watches remained in China for over a century until the outbreak of the civil war in 1911. On the day of the coup in Beijing in 1924, then Emperor Puyi fled the Forbidden City, but managed to take the fabled watches with him.

The extraordinary identical cases of this pair are sculptured in the form of a pomegranate flower and are of considerable size, measuring an impressive 66 mm. in diameter and a remarkable 22 mm. thick. The rich red translucent enamel is decorated to resemble petals, with a reputed 1,200 natural pearls.

It is most unusual to find a quarter repeating watch with a mechanism of such complexity, and to the best of our knowledge it was only used by Messrs. Piguet & Meylan. A similar Imperial Chinese market piece of great sumptuous decoration containing this special repeating mechanism was sold by Christie's in Hong Kong in May 2005 for HK\$ 3,032,000 (US\$ 394,160).

Additional highlights among this group of enamel pocket watches made for the Chinese market is an impressive gold, enamel and seed pearl-set pocket watch circa 1820 from Piguet & Meylan, the makers most associated with the very finest of timepieces made for the Imperial Chinese Market (estimate: HK\$ HK\$400,000 – 500,000 /US\$50,000 – 63,000). Also of note among this collection is a rare gold, enamel and pear-set pocket watch from the London watchmaker Ilbury, circa 1820 (estimate: HK\$320,000 – 480,000 / US\$40,000 – 60,000).

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



From Lange & Söhne comes the **Lange Double Split Sincere Golden Jubilee** (*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$620,000 – 750,000 / US\$78,000 – 94,000), a new chronographic innovation inspired by a Lange double *rattrapante* pocket watch that dates back to 1891. In 2004, this highly complicated horological masterpiece opened up a new dimension in mechanical chronometry as the world's first flyback chronograph with a double *rattrapante* mechanism. The supreme artisanship of this timepiece is seen not only in the 465 individual parts that are each finished by hand and the sapphire-crystal case back, but in the fact that it is available exclusively in platinum with a reinforced crocodile strap. Together, this is a watch sure to delight the most discerning collector.

From **Breguet** comes the **‘Classique’ Grande Complication Ref. 5447PT** in platinum, a highly complicated perpetual calendar minute repeating wristwatch that features leap-year, retrograde month, as well as phases and ages of the moon (HK\$700,000 - 900,000 / US\$88,000 - 113,000). **Audemars Piguet** is represented with the **‘Jules Audemars - Tourbillon Repetition Minutes Chronographe’** in pink gold, another superb example of haute horlogerie at its summit. The manually-wound column-wheel chronograph features two of the most difficult complications in watchmaking, the tourbillon and minute repeating mechanisms, and will certainly delight the most discriminating of collectors and aficionados (HK\$800,000 - 1,200,000 / US\$100,000 - 150,000). Also of note is the **Piaget ‘Galaxy’** set with 295 baguette-cut diamonds weighing over 40 carats (HK\$1,200,000 - 1,800,000 / US\$150,000 - 230,000).

IMAGES OF HIGHLIGHTS OF SALE HIGHLIGHTS CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE:

<http://cshk.myftp.org/2008%20Christie's%20Hong%20Kong%20Fall%20Auctions/Important%20Watches/>

Auction

Important Watches

Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

Wednesday, December 3, 11am and 2pm

Viewing and Tours

ABU DHABI, *Emirates Palace*

SINGAPORE, *Four Seasons Hotel*

SHANGHAI, *Four Seasons Hotel*

TAIYUAN (SHANXI), *World Trade Hotel*

BEIJING, *Park Hyatt Beijing*

BANGKOK, *The Four Seasons Hotel*

TAIPEI, *Fubon Life Assurance Building*

HONG KONG, *Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre*

October 25-27

October 29-30

November 2-3

November 6-7

November 10-11

November 12-13

November 22-23

November 27 –December 2

#

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totalled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totalled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 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 600 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 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium