

For Immediate Release

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ITALIAN ELEGANCE THE COLLECTION OF GIORGIO MARSAN & UMBERTA NASI AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN DECEMBER

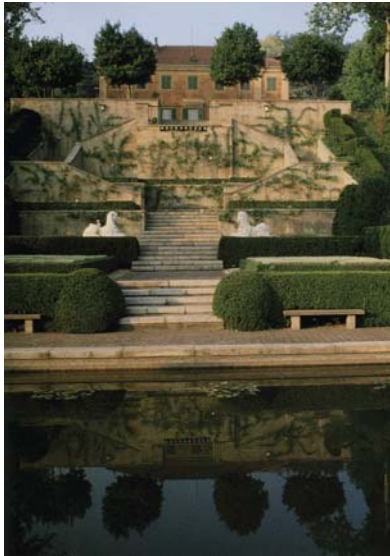


Turin London Corfu: The Collection of Giorgio Marsan and Umberta Nasi
Christie's King Street, London
12 & 13 December 2007

London – Christie's are delighted to present the sale of **Turin London Corfu: The Collection of Giorgio Marsan and Umberta Nasi** in a unique two-day auction on 12 and 13 December 2007 in London. The very epitome of Italian elegance, the collection is drawn from the beautiful Villa Silvio Pellico in Moncalieri, in the hills overlooking Turin; an apartment in London's fashionable Cadogan Square and the historic fort of Kouloura, Corfu. From bold to conventional, ancient to modern, this stylish collection is united by the chic and impeccable taste with which it was assembled. Consisting of 750 lots, estimates range from £100 to £300,000.

Umberta Nasi and Giorgio Marsan

As well as reflecting the cultural legacy of the Agnelli family – a dynasty synonymous with enlightened patronage of the arts – this collection embodies a longstanding love affair between Italian and English culture. The fourth child of Tina Agnelli and Carlo Nasi, Umberta Nasi grew up in an 18th century Turinese palazzo, a richly decorated and furnished



building that had been bought in 1919 by Giovanni Agnelli, her grandfather and founder of FIAT, for his daughter and her husband. Umberta's exquisite taste and sense of style combined with Giorgio Marsan's great empathy with English culture saw the couple create elegant, graceful but not precious environments in their residences including a magnificent maisonette in Cadogan Square, London; an old Venetian fort on the northern shores of Corfu and Villa Silvio Pellico, a late 18th century house in the hills of the exclusive Turin suburb of Moncalieri.

At the heart of their collection, the Villa Silvio Pellico (*pictured left*) embodied the couple's unerring eye for quality, and their eclectic, cosmopolitan taste. The interiors, in the style first of Tommaso Buzzi and later of Renzo Mongiardino, were decorated with fine examples of neo-classical furniture, 19th century paintings, old masters, topographical views, and a vast array of extraordinary and intriguing objects from all over the world.

Pictures

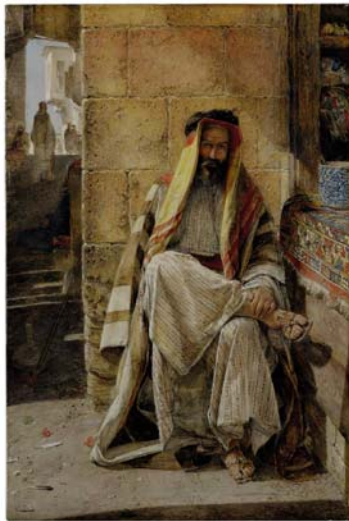
The collection includes over 50 works by the legendary Victorian polymath Edward Lear, the largest collection to appear at auction in recent times. Famous for his nonsense poems and as the author of 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat', Lear was also one of the great artist travellers of the Victorian age. The collection encompasses both his wonderfully free on the spot sketches, as well as his highly finished studio works, dating from all periods of his life and a broad range of subjects including many views of Italy and the Greek islands; drawings from his 1864 walking tour along the Corniche; his 1878 visit to Switzerland and his 1848 trip to Constantinople.



Amongst the finest are the Panorama of *Turin from the Monumento alla Crimea* (estimate: £40,000-60,000) (*pictured above right*) and the rare and exceptionally beautiful *View of Corfu from the Hill of Gastouri* (estimate: £150,000-250,000).

Topographical views are a major theme of the collection and are led by the magnificent and rare *Panoramic view of Cairo* by David Roberts (estimate: £150,000-250,000). The sale also includes an important *View of the Vatican* by Giovanni Battista Lusieri (*circa* 1755-1821) (estimate: £80,000-120,000); a pair of breathtaking *Views of Constantinople* by the

topographical artist, J. Cook (estimate: £60,000-100,000) and further views of Italy and Europe by artists such as Hugh ‘Grecian’ Williams, Guiseppe-Pietro Bagetti, Ippolito Caffi, Joseph Schranz, John Ruskin and Julian Barrow. Among the Old Masters are a magnificent pair of grisaille oils of the Giants Causeway and Fingal’s cave by Antonio de Bittio (estimate: £10,000-15,000) while the maritime theme is led by Henry Parke’s immense *Bombardment of Algiers* (estimate: £15,000-25,000).



Also included is Leighton’s magnificent lunette, *Cupid and Doves* (estimate: £120,000-180,000), the centre-piece which hung in the drawing room above the fireplace in the Cadogan Square apartment. Pre-Raphaelite Sir Edward Burne-Jones is represented by *Philomela* (estimate: £70,000-100,000) which once belonged to Ruskin and *The Blessed Damozel* (estimate: £80,000-120,000).

The Orientalists in the collection are highlighted by the Victorian artist John Frederick Lewis’ *A Seated Arab* (estimate: £200,000-300,000) which appears at auction for the first time (*pictured left*). The Scottish school is represented by Arthur Melville’s, *After the theatre* (estimate: £60,000-100,000) and further works by Millais, Alma Tadema and Joseph Southell.

Furniture & Works of Art

The couple had a particular taste for exotic timber and rare examples of English, Italian and Colonial cabinet-making. The furniture includes a superb example of English cabinet-making: a pair of George III sycamore bowfront chests, from Hinton House in Somerset (estimate: £50,000-80,000). The topographical theme is echoed in a magnificent Italian 17th century ivory-inlaid ebony table top, attributed to Gian Battista de Curtis and Jacob Fiamengo, depicting views of cities including Rome, Paris, Mexico City and Seville (estimate: £50,000-80,000). Epitomising the height of Royal Victorian luxury is a Victorian mother-of-pearl mounted walnut dressing-table (estimate: £10,000-15,000), which belonged to HRH The Princess Royal, Countess of Harewood (*pictured right*) and a Regency satinwood and ebonised inlaid four-tier étagère (estimate: £12,000–18,000), recorded at Windsor Castle during Queen Victoria’s reign.



The neo-classical furniture is led by a sensational pair of Turinese marquetry commodes by Ignazio Ravelli, 1791 (estimate: £180,000-250,000) and a pair of Baltic steel and rock-crystal



chandeliers, 19th century (estimate: £30,000-50,000). An important pair of Viennese neo-classical ormolu four-light candelabra, last quarter 18th century (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and a pair of Italian ormolu wall-lights, attributed to Giocondo Albertolli, (estimate: £50,000–80,000), commissioned by Ferdinand Hapsburg in the 1770s, offer a strong contrast to a delicate marquetry portrait of Eugene of Savoy from the workshop of Luigi Prinotto (estimate: £15,000-25,000). The collection also includes a group of four Italian white marble busts, emblematic of the seasons, from the workshop of Giovanni Maria Benzoni (estimate: £30,000-50,000) (*pictured left*).

Decorative Arts

The sale will feature a selection of French and Austrian Art Nouveau art glass from the Fin de Siècle. Particularly notable examples include artistic-hand carved and cameo glass masterworks from seminal designers such as Emile Galle, Daum and Almaric Walter (estimates range from £200 to £20,000). The highlight of this section is an Emile Galle vase internally decorated with gold and silver foils and wheel-carved with a willow branch and catkin design (estimate: £15,000-20,000). In addition, there are a number of examples of iridescent glass vases from the Austrian factory Loetz and Tiffany & Co (estimates range from £300 to £2,000).

Silver & Objects

This love of design is also reflected in the silver collection. A pair of timeless George III silver candelabra, by Wakelin and Taylor (estimate: £40,000-60,000) are complimented by a selection of items from the design studios of Christopher Dresser (estimates range from £100 to £1000). Completing this remarkable collection is a selection of works by English, Italian, French and Danish silversmiths (estimates range from £100 to £60,000). Amongst the more whimsical objects is a pair of 18th century Indian mother-of-pearl and snail shell powder flasks (estimate: £6,000-9,000) and a mid 19th century north Italian mother-of-pearl and gold inlaid truffle slicer (estimate: £700-1,000).

A small selection of items from this collection will be sold in the Old Master Pictures sale in Milan on the 28 November 2007 at the Palazzo Clerici.

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

- 12 December 2007 at 2:00 pm
- 13 December 2007 at 10:30 am

Public Viewing Dates: 9-12 December 2007

Selected Pictures, Furniture and Works of Art to be sold in Milan on 28 November 2007 at Palazzo Clerici

Public Viewing Dates:

Turin: 7 November

Rome: 16-19 November

Milan: 23-27 November

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