

CHRISTIE'S

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THE HAND OF GOYA, REMBRANDT, DÜRER AND THE MYSTERIOUS TAROCCHI ON OFFER AT CHRISTIE'S IN DECEMBER



Old Master Prints

8 December 2009, at 10.30am
Christie's King Street

London - Christie's sale of *Old Master Prints* on Tuesday, 8 December 2009 will offer outstanding examples of printmaking, dating from the 15th to the 18th century. Consisting of around ninety lots, the sale showcases rare and iconic prints from continental Europe by the masters of the medium, including Francisco de Goya, Rembrandt, Albrecht Dürer and others; estimates range from £2,000 to £200,000.

Spanish



Leading the sale is a complete set of *The Bulls of Bordeaux*, 1825 (estimate: £200,000-300,000) *detail illustrated left*, by Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828); one of the most productive, original and innovative printmakers of all time. Deemed a failure at the time they were published, very few complete sets of four or even single sheets have survived, making this publication a great and important rarity on the print market. An early example of an artist using the newly invented medium of lithography, this work illustrates Goya's artistic and technical mastery. With no rules and conventions set in place, Goya embraced the

opportunity to combine the immediacy and spontaneity of drawing with the visual force of a print. The *corrida* was a great cultural attraction for artists and visitors from France to the Iberian peninsular, no doubt leading Goya, with his own love of the subject, to create these vibrant and haunting images.

Dutch

The rooms at Christie's King Street will be packed with breath-taking Dutch masterpieces this December. Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606-1669) comes to London, on the 340th anniversary of his death, with the *Old Master Prints* sale featuring over forty of his works including miniature portraits, large and dramatic biblical subjects, and quiet atmospheric landscapes such as *A View of Amsterdam from the North West*, circa 1640 (estimate: £40,000-60,000) *illustrated top right*. The sale showcases Rembrandt's minute attention to detail, his sympathetic fascination with the beggars and burghers of Amsterdam, and above all his love and dedication to printmaking as a unique form of artistic expression.



As well as creating many portraits – often of relatives, friends and colleagues – few artists depicted themselves as regularly as Rembrandt. He etched himself at least thirty-one times and painted himself in the mirror on at least forty occasions. Two self-portraits are featured within the sale: *Self-Portrait drawing at a Window*, 1648 (estimate: £12,000-18,000), and *Self-Portrait in a Cap, open-mouthed*, 1630 (estimate: £10,000-15,000). Another print on offer shows him depicted in the guise of *A Beggar seated on a Bank*, circa 1630 (estimate: £15,000 - 20,000). On the same day as the *Old Master Prints* sale is the Christie's *Old Master and 19th Century Art* evening sale, highlighted by Rembrandt's painting *Portrait of a man, half-length, with his arms akimbo* (estimate: £18-25 million).

German

The sale contains a strong section dedicated to Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), one of the first great printmakers in Europe, including some of his most sought after subjects. His work *The Four Horsemen*, from: *The Apocalypse*, circa 1487/98 is often considered to be his most important woodcut (estimate: £60,000-80,000) *illustrated right*. He shows the four horsemen of the Apocalypse as they burst out of heaven and thunder over the earth, conveying a sense of violence and rupture. Other key works by Dürer are also offered in the sale, such as the allegorical and highly enigmatic engravings of *Hercules at the Crossroads*, circa 1498 (estimate: £10,000-15,000), the *Knight, Death and the Devil*, 1513 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and the famous *Melencolia I*, 1514 (estimate: £20,000-30,000) *illustrated top left*.



Italian

The series of fifty engravings erroneously known as the "*Mantegna Tarocchi*" – they are neither by Mantegna, nor are they tarot cards – form one of the most important and mysterious group of prints from the earliest period of printmaking in Italy. Individual impressions of these prints are extremely rare, and an almost complete set, such as the one included in the sale, has not been on the market for decades (estimate: £150,000-250,000) *details illustrated below and top centre*.



This particular set has been in the same Noble Italian family for over 400 years and the sale provides an exceptional opportunity for any private or public collection. Created by an anonymous, probably Northern Italian engraver, they describe the universe in a hierarchical order: from beggar to pope, and from the muses, liberal arts, virtues, planets and the gods of antiquity to the "*First Cause*". Of great beauty and simplicity, they offer a fascinating insight into the secular thought and culture of the early Renaissance. Further important Italian prints featured in the sale include one of Marcantonio Raimondi's rarest and largest prints, *A Triumph*, circa 1510 (estimate: £10,000 - 15,000), *The Triumph of Julius Ceasar* by Andrea Andreani (1558/59-1629) after Andrea Mantegna's monumental series of paintings which are today at Hampton Court (estimate: £10,000-15,000), Venetian views by Canaletto (1697-1768), and a whimsical, baroque *Scherzo* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (circa 1696-1770).

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Images available on request

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Notes to Editors:

Sale date and public viewing:

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

- Viewing: 4 - 7 December 2009
- Sale: 8 December 2009, at 10.30am

About Christie's

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium