

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Kate Swan 212.636.2680 kswan@christies.com

MORVEN FARM: A CLASSICAL TREASURE

Christie's to Offer Collection from Media Mogul John W. Kluge's Historic Virginia Estate

The John W. Kluge Morven Collection

December 16, 2005

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce the 16 December sale of The John W. Kluge Morven Collection, featuring American and English furniture and decorative arts from the main house and several of the outbuildings on the grounds of Mr. Kluge's Virginia estate, Morven Farm. This historic property, set on over 7,300 acres in rural Virginia and comprising 35 buildings, was home to the renowned media entrepreneur from 1988 until 2001, when he donated the estate to the University of Virginia, a gift valued at over \$45 million. Each lot with an estimate below \$20,000 will be offered without reserve.

American Furniture & Decorative Arts Highlights

John W. Kluge purchased Morven Farm in 1988 and along with New York designer, David Anthony Easton, he refurbished the house paying homage to its early 19th century origins. The collection's American furniture and decorative arts offerings feature examples from the Federal and Classical periods. The collection has an emphasis on objects made in New York, but is representative of nearly every major center of early American furniture production, as well as vernacular furniture made in outlying areas. One highlight of New York production is the opulent Grecian sofa, displaying many popular motifs taken from antiquity, including scrolled arms with dolphin supports, elaborately carved cornucopia returns, and heavily rendered hairy paw feet (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

The collection also features a fine representation of the earlier Queen Anne and Chippendale period furniture, including a set of four carved mahogany side chairs representing the height of New York artisanship during the Chippendale era. The chairs display many of the characteristics associated with the New York region during this time, including ornamental serpentine crestrails with scrolled ears, elaborate diamond-centered splats, gadrooned seats and angular ball and claw feet (estimate: \$40,000-60,000).

Other highlights include a distinctive Federal inlaid mahogany tall case clock by Effingham Embree, circa 1800–1810 (estimate: \$12,000–18,000); a Classical marble, rosewood and ormolu-mounted mirrorback pier table, circa 1815–1820 (estimate: \$8,000–12,000); and a rare Federal inlaid mahogany sideboard bearing the label of Elbert Anderson, circa 1790–1820 (estimate: \$40,000–60,000). Also of note is a carved and paint-decorated Cigar Store Indian Princess attributed to Samuel Robb (estimate: \$15,000–25,000).

English Furniture & Decorative Arts Highlights

A true masterpiece among the English furniture at Morven is the majestic George II walnut side table with its boldly carved frame (estimate: \$70,000–100,000). Also of note is the impressive Regency white statuary marble chimney piece, reputed to have been purchased by Thomas Jefferson on behalf of Morven's second owner, Colonel William Short (estimate: \$40,000–60,000). A pair of George III silver triangular vegetable dishes by Paul Storr, engraved with the arms of Alexander, 10th Duke of Hamilton, one of the great 19th century collectors, heads off the silver collection (estimate: \$20,000–30,000).

Property from a number of outbuildings on the grounds are also featured in the sale, including the Old Kitchen, Guest House, and the “Fun Barn,” a former stable later converted to a recreational facility, complete with a movie theatre. The Fun Barn housed furniture of an impressive scale, including a massive George IV mahogany breakfront–bookcase (estimate: \$60,000–100,000) and a four-pedestal dining table that seats eighteen people (image left). Another highlight is a fine copy of a highly influential, very detailed 1755 ‘Map of the most Inhabited parts of Virginia’ by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson (father of the future President), depicting western wilderness lands well into the Ohio valley (\$25,000–40,000).

Perhaps the most unique item in the sale is the massive Asprey-designed picnic “hamper” (image right). A lover of the outdoors, Mr. Kluge often entertained friends with extravagant hunts on the Morven property. This picnic installation (estimate: \$20,000–30,000) would be brought into the woods by horses or tractors, and includes mahogany tables and chairs, as well as numerous wicker hampers containing china, silver and glassware for sixteen place settings.

Additional Highlights from The John W. Kluge Morven Collection

Christie's will also be offering a sale of sporting art from The John W. Kluge Morven Collection on December 8th. Mr. Kluge collected a diverse group of mainly 19th century sporting art for Morven Farm, reflecting his interesting in thoroughbred racing. The group is led by two notable works by John Frederick Herring – Colonel Peel's Chestnut Fill Vulture by Langar out of Kite, on Newmarket Heath (Estimate: \$250,000–350,000) and Sir Mark Wood Bt., with his bay filly Vespaby Muley out of Miss Wasp, and his trainer (Estimate:

\$300,000–500,000). Two works from his collection will also be included in Christie's upcoming Post War and Contemporary Art Morning Session on November 9, 2005, Arnaldo Pomodoro's Sphere (Rotante Massimo) (estimate: \$220,000–280,000) and Alex Katz's Samantha, Joey and Yolanda Kluge (estimate: \$150,000–250,000). Sunflowers by Georgia O'Keefe (estimate: \$150,000–250,000) will be offered in Christie's Important American Paintings sale on December 1, 2005.

John W. Kluge

John Werner Kluge (b. 1914 in Chemnitz, Germany), a world-renowned television entrepreneur, made his first move into the media world in the mid-1950's with the purchase of stock in the Metropolitan Broadcasting Company. Over a series of years, Mr. Kluge gained control of the network, renaming it Metromedia. Mr. Kluge went on to greatly expand Metromedia, and in 1986 sold his network stations to Rupert Murdoch which were to be the foundation of the FOX television network. Once out of the television industry, Mr. Kluge switched his focus to telecommunication ventures.

Over the years Mr. Kluge has been an avid collector of art and antiques representing diverse time periods, styles and origins. His collecting taste ranges from Greek and Egyptian antiquities to Henry Moore sculptures, and include such diverse categories as Australian Aboriginal art and furniture from Baroque to Biedermeier. Christie's has offered important works of art from The John W. Kluge Morven Collection in a number of sales, including the May 4, 2005 Impressionist and Modern Art sale in which two works by Aristide Maillol sold for a combined total of over \$2.6 million. A series of artwork from Mr. Kluge's collection of Aboriginal art – long considered one of the most important in the world – was sold on August 30th of this year by Christie's in Melbourne.

A Brief History of Morven Farms

The history of Morven is an intriguing one, with many distinguished owners and important associations. The site of Morven was part of the 9,350 acres purchased in 1730 by John Carter. Carter's grandson later asked Thomas Jefferson to negotiate the sale of the property in 1796 to Colonel William Short (1759–1848), Jefferson's secretary in France from 1758–1789 and his "Charge des Affairs" in Paris in 1790, and somewhat of an adopted son to him. Short, however, did not ultimately live in the house, instead remaining in Paris to pursue a doomed love affair with the Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld. The house itself was built by its subsequent owner, David Higginbotham (1775–1853), a storekeeper with whom Jefferson had run up a large debt. In 1813, Jefferson rather cleverly negotiated another sale of the property transferring his debt to his good friend Colonel Short. It was Higginbotham who gave the property its name, meaning "ridge of hills."

Mr. Kluge purchased Morven in 1988. During the Kluge residency many significant changes were made, including the addition of many new gardens and significant horse and cattle operations. In 2001 Mr. Kluge donated Morven and its 7,379 acres to the University of Virginia, a gift valued at over \$45 million. The 749 acres of the core property will be held by the UVA Foundation in perpetuity and used to support the University of Virginia Educational Programs.

Auction:

The John W. Kluge Morven Collection

December 16

Viewing:

Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

December 10 -15

Log on to Christie's website, www.christies.com, for a virtual tour of Morven and select highlights from The John W. Kluge Collection.

More information about these sales can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

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