

**For Immediate Release**

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## **EXCEPTIONAL WORKS BY FABERGÉ, GONCHOROVA AND SOMOV LEAD *RUSSIAN ART WEEK* AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN NOVEMBER 2007**

*Russian Art Week*  
Christie's, London  
24 to 30 November 2007

**London** – From 24 to 29 November 2007, Christie's will stage *Russian Art Week*, a series of auctions, events and public exhibitions presenting exceptional examples of Russian pictures, works of art, books, icons and silver. The highlight of the week is *The Rothschild Fabergé Egg*, a previously unrecorded work of art and an addition to no more than 12 documented examples of a Fabergé Egg known to have been made to Imperial standards for anyone other than the Russian Imperial Family (estimate: £6 million to £9 million).

Christie's started its links with Russia with a very impressive private treaty sale when in 1778 Sir Robert Walpole entrusted James Christie, the company's founder, with the sale of his unique collection of masterpieces. James Christie was able to attract the attention of Catherine the Great, who bought the collection in a private transaction as the foundation of the Hermitage Museum collection. Included in the collection was Rubens' *Mary Magdalen Washing Christ's feet* bought for £1,600, Poussin's *Moses striking the Rock* bought for £900 and Rembrandt's *Abraham's Sacrifice* which was sold for £300. These paintings are still the core of the Collection on public display at the Hermitage. Today, the Russian category is one of the fastest growing and most exciting areas of the international art market, realizing a sale total of £35 million / \$69 million at Christie's for the first half of 2007, nearly matching the £37.9 million / \$70.5 million achieved for the full year in 2006.

Works of art to be sold during *Russian Art Week* will be on public view at Christie's King Street and South Kensington salerooms between 24 and 29 November 2007. The auctions will be scheduled as follows:

### **26 November 2007 at 2pm (King Street)**

#### ***Icons and Artefacts from the Orthodox World***

Approximately 220 Icons representing the Orthodox culture of Russia, Byzantium and Greece will be offered at this auction, which follows on from the successful sale in June 2006 in which an Icon of St. Nicholas once in the possession of Tsar



Nicholas II sold for a record £434,400. The auction will offer a number of Icons linked to the Russian Imperial family including a depiction of the Transfiguration, which was commissioned by the Archbishop of Mount Tabor Nicodemus and given to Tsar Nicholas III and his wife, Maria Feodorovna on the day of their coronation (estimate: £30,000-40,000); a travelling triptych once owned by Grand Duchess Olga (estimate: £12,000-16,000); and an icon of St. George donated by Prince Georgi Konstantinovich of Russia to his English teacher, Mr. Denison of Eaton Hall (estimate: £3,000-5,000). Elsewhere in the sale, rare and exceptional offerings include a 17<sup>th</sup> century vita icon of St. Theodore Stratelates is expected to realise £120,000-150,000 *illustrated left*; and an impressive Muscovite panel of *The Fiery Ascent of Prophet Elijah* carries an estimate of £250,000-350,000.

**27 November 2007 at 11am and 2pm (King Street)**

***Miniatures including an Important Russian Collection***

This auction will feature an excellent collection of 137 Russian miniatures, depicting members of the Imperial Family and key military and cultural figures. Highlights include *The Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna (1759-1828)* by Henri Benner (1776-1829) (estimate: £3,000-5,000), *Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1777-1825)* by Domenico Bossi (1765-1853), 1804 (estimate: £3,000-5,000) and *Tsar Nicholas I of Russia (1796-1855)* by Ivan Winburg (fl.c.1830-1846) (estimate: £1,500-2,500). Prominent miniaturists, Henri Benner, Domenico Bossi and Iwan Winburg, who painted *Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich (1778-1831)*, 1825 (estimate: £4,000-6,000) *illustrated right* were all painters to the Court of Russia, in St. Petersburg, during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This collection is expected to realise in excess of £200,000.



**28 November 2007 at 10.30am (King Street)**

***Russian Works of Art***

The highlight of this auction is *The Rothschild Fabergé Egg*, a previously unrecorded work of art and an addition to no more than 12 documented examples of a Fabergé Egg known to have been made to Imperial standards for anyone other than the Russian Imperial Family *illustrated left*. This exceptional work of craftsmanship is expected to realise £6 million to £9 million and potentially establish a new world record price for a Russian object (see separate release). Further highlights include *The Imperial Imeretinsky presentation Fabergé frame*, which contains a signed photograph of Emperor Nicholas II and his wife, the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, and was presented by the Tsar upon the christening of the son of His Highness Prince George Imeretinsky. An example of exceptional size, the frame is expected to realise £600,000-900,000. A St. George Cossack sword decorated with diamonds, one of only eight examples awarded during the First World War and the first to be offered at auction, carries an estimate of £150,000-200,000.



**28 November 2007 at 2.30pm (King Street)**

***Important Russian Pictures including the Somov Collection***

A highlight of this auction is *Portrait of N.A. Tikhonov* by the leading Avant-Garde portraitist Yuri Annenkov (1889-1974) (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000) *illustrated right*. As one of the most colourful figures on Parisian artistic scene of the Russian emigration, Annenkov was highly regarded and recognised by the Soviet authorities for his portraits of the party leaders (V. Lenin, L. Trotskii, G. Zinov'ev) and public figures (A. Akhmatova, B. Pasternak, M. Gorkii). This portrait of the Soviet's noted literary figure, Alexander Tikhonov, was exhibited at the XVI International Art Exhibition in Venice in 1924, and is undoubtedly the most important work by the artist to be found in a private collection outside of Russia. *Picking Apples* by Russian Artist Natalia Goncharova (1881-1962) established a world record price for any female artist when it sold for £4,948,000 at Christie's, London on 18 June 2007. Goncharova's *Still life with lilacs*, 1905, will be offered at Christie's in November and is expected to realise £700,000-900,000. An exceptional work from the artist's early oeuvre, it was included in the artist's first retrospective exhibition in Moscow in 1913. Another leading highlight is *The Somov Collection*, which offers 53 lots related to Konstantin Andreevich Somov (1869-1939), whose masterpiece *The Rainbow* sold at Christie's London in June 2007 for £3,716,000, establishing a world record price for a Russian painting sold in a Russian sale. Leading the collection is *The Stroller's Rest* which is expected to realise £300,000-500,000. Further highlights of the collection include *The Boxer*, 1933, which is offered together with the boxing gloves used as a prop for the composition (estimate: £80,000-120,000), and a selection of the artist's personal effects. Elsewhere in the sale, further highlights include 17 works by Ivan Pokhitonov (1850-1923), one of the most renowned members of the Imperial Academy of Arts, all which have are being offered at auction for the first time by descendents of the artist; *View of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour from the*



*Kremlin, Moscow* by Aleksei Petrovich Bogoliubov (1824-1896) which is estimated to realise £600,000-800,000; and *The Illumination of the Kremlin* by Isaak Levitan (1860-1900) which carries an estimate of £300,000-400,000.

**29 November 2007 at 10am (King Street)**

***Russian Books and Manuscripts***



This season's auction will include an unprecedented number of the luxurious albums produced to commemorate the enthronement of the Russian sovereigns. These rare publications have become the foundation stones upon which any serious collection in this field is built. Elizabeth, Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II are each represented. The most monumental of them all, that commemorating Alexander II's coronation, is in remarkable condition and complete with all the original brass-work on the binding (estimate: £50,000-80,000) *illustrated left*; the Alexander III album, formerly in the collection of Duke Michael Mecklenburg, is in a gleaming example of the richly gilt deluxe leather binding (estimate: £20,000-30,000). Flawless provenance is a characteristic shared

by many of the books offered in this auction: Demidoff's *Voyage dans la Russie Meridionale* is from Demidoff's library at San Donato, later in the collection of Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia, in a special binding bearing the arms of Nicholas I, and bound with 10 original pen-and-watercolour drawings by Raffet. It is expected to realise £6,000-9,000.

**29 November 2007 at 2pm (South Kensington)**

***Russian Icons and Pictures including Works by Nonconformist Artists***

This sale will incorporate 19th century Russian and Nonconformist Paintings, Sculptures and selected Icons. The 19th Century Picture sale includes a fine selection of collectable Russian art. Highlights include works by Korovin, Roubaud, Choultse, Bakst and Sar'ian with a section of 20 set and costume designs by Dobuzhinsky. The Nonconformist section offers an excellent collection of works by dissident artists from the 1960s to the early 1990s, including works by Oscar Rabin, Ernst Neizvestny and Edouard Gorokhovski, and *Badminton* by Natal'ia Nesterova (b.1944) which is expected to realise £20,000-30,000.

**30 November 2007 at 10.30am and 2pm (South Kensington)**

***Selected Silver & Russian Works of Art including a Private Collection of Icons***

The afternoon session of this sale will offer 193 lots of Russian silver, Fabergé objects and Russian icons from a private collection, with estimates ranging from £500 to £20,000. Highlights include a silver & niello cartographic snuff box, Vologda, 1843 (estimate: £2,000-3,000), three 18th Century Russian icons depicting portraits of the Mother of God (estimate: £15,000-20,000 each), a beautiful cloisonne enamel & silver-gilt beaker by Pavel Ovchinnikov, Moscow, 1887 (estimate: £1,500-2,000), a Fabergé lilac enamel & gold cigarette case by workmaster Michael Perchin, *circa* 1890 (estimate: £5,000-8,000) and an extensive selection of cloisonné enamel cigarette cases and kovshi.

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**Images available on request**

**Visit Christie's on the web at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)**

- Works of art to be sold during *Russian Art Week* will be on public view at Christie's King Street and South Kensington salerooms between 24 and 29 November 2007. The pre-sale exhibition at King Street will be open on 27 November 2007 until 8pm. For viewing dates for specific sales, please see [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

- Christie's hold the world auction record for any Russian painting sold in a Russian Sale (Somov's *The Rainbow* sold for £3,716,000/\$7,327,952 at Christie's London June 2007), and the world auction record for any Russian Work of Art (Fabergé's *Imperial Winter Egg*, sold in April 2002 for \$9.5 million).

- Christie's has had a dedicated Russian Art department since the mid-1970s and have had a full time representative in Russia for 15 years.