

For Immediate Release

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**DECORATIVE ART TREASURES AT CHRISTIE'S
IN NOVEMBER**

500 | DECORATIVE ARTS
YEARS | EUROPE
NEW YORK, TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2009
INCLUDING CARPETS FROM
THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

New York – This autumn, Christie's is pleased to announce the sale of *500 Years: Decorative Arts Europe* on November 24, which will include over 450 treasures from the 16th to the 19th centuries. With a range of estimates, the sale offers superb private and institutional collections such as carpets from the Corcoran Gallery of Art and one-of-a-kind examples of European and English furniture, ceramics, and decorative works of art showcasing the variety and the range of styles from the scholarly to the exotic.

Carpets from the Corcoran Gallery of Art

Prominently featured in the sale is the largest group of classical Isfahan carpets to emerge on the auction market in recent history. An outstanding collection of 15 carpets from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, as bequeathed by Senator William Andrews Clark of Montana (1839-1925) includes some of the most intricate and luxurious pieces that fully encompass the highest quality of Persian carpet weaving. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Senator Clark assembled a great collection of oriental rugs of Safavid weaving. These finely crafted and well-preserved carpets adorned his legendary 5th Avenue mansion, and are widely published and exhibited for their historical importance. The collection includes a group that illustrates the pinnacle of Safavid carpet weaving during the reign of Shah Abbas from 1587-1629, such as a 17th century Isfahan carpet from Central Persia (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$80,000-120,000) as well as ornate carpets, including one rare Polonaise rug, circa 1600 (estimate: \$15,000-25,000).



Further highlights from other collections include a Mohtasham Kashan carpet, Central Persia, late 19th century (estimate: \$80,000-120,000), an excellent example of design and color from the Mohtasham family workshops; a Kazak rug, South Caucasus, dated 1833 (*illustrated right*, estimate: \$30,000-50,000), with a rare border example of a part panel format enclosing a beetle or shield device; and a Kurdish rug, Northwest Persia, 18th century (estimate: \$3,000-5,000), having a unique variation of floral elements including beautifully executed multicolored pin-wheel rosettes and split-leaves.



European Furniture

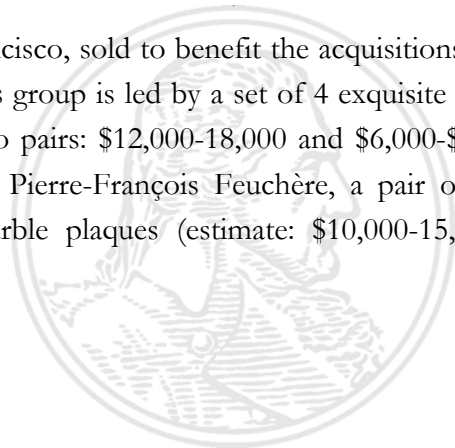
The European furniture section of the sale includes examples of French, German and Italian craftsmanship of exceptional quality, and is led by a bronze group of Saturn devouring a male child, after Pietro Francavilla, French, circa 1680-1700, previously in the collection of Queen Marie of Romania (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). Equally gorgeous and menacing, the figure is a magnificent example of late-Baroque sculpture. Particularly fascinating is a Chinese export black and gilt lacquer



bureau-cabinet, circa 1730-1740 (estimate: \$150,000-250,000). This superb bureau cabinet is an excellent example of the Chinese export trade creating a piece of furniture for a specific Western market, in this case Denmark. The decoration combines elaborate rococo motifs that are Chinese-inspired with an unusual scene depicted on the fall-front of hunting figures in European costume. Also, a stunning Empire ormolu-mounted mahogany and specimen marble gueridon, circa 1810 (*image of top on left*, estimate: \$70,000-100,000) is an example of the Grand Tour taste, with its specimen marble top bought abroad and fashioned into a table by Parisian cabinetmakers.

Recently, it was in the collection of the legendary fashion designer Gianni Versace.

Property of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, sold to benefit the acquisitions fund, consists of 19 works of furniture and works of art. This group is led by a set of 4 exquisite French ormolu five-branch wall-lights, 19th century (sold as two pairs: \$12,000-18,000 and \$6,000-\$10,000), which are based on models circa 1785 attributed to Pierre-François Feuchère, a pair of Régence oak boiserie panels incorporating 19th century marble plaques (estimate: \$10,000-15,000), and also



includes a Spanish Iron-Mounted Walnut Vargueño from the collection of William Randolph Hearst (estimate: \$5,000 – 7,000).

The sale also includes a spectacular pair of empire ormolu-mounted patinated bronze ewers, attributed to Claude Galle, circa 1805 (*illustrated right*, estimate: \$80,000-120,000). Galle was the foremost *bronzier* of the empire period and the ewers are a richly example of early Empire taste decorated with animals, flaming torches, and foliate motifs; a late Louis XV parquetry table à écrire, stamped 'RVLC', circa 1770 (estimate: \$60,000-90,000) by Roger Vandercruse, one of the most celebrated furniture makers of the mid-18th century; an impressive set of four late Louis XV ormolu three-branch wall-lights, circa 1765, ornamented with lion masks and attributed to Jean-Joseph Saint Germain (estimate: \$60,000-90,000); and two charming German beadwork, ebonized and parcel-gilt tables, circa 1760 (each estimate: \$4,000-6,000).



English Furniture



This auction will offer approximately 75 lots of furniture and works of art presenting the finest examples of British technique and design. Furniture produced by the pre-eminent cabinetmakers Gillows of Lancaster and London lead the sale. Prized for their well chosen timbers and fine quality of craftsmanship, highlights by the firm include a Regency mahogany 'Imperial' extending dining table, circa 1815 (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$40,000-60,000); a signed Regency mahogany reading library armchair, circa 1815 (estimate: \$10,000-15,000); and a variety of tables and cabinets.

Other English furniture highlights from various private collections include a George III satinwood, marquetry, cream-painted and parcel-gilt side table, circa 1775 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), a pair of George II giltwood console tables, circa 1740 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000); a magnificent pair of George I gilt-gesso two-light girandole mirrors, circa 1725 (estimate: \$50,000-80,000); and a set of ten George III mahogany dining-chairs with finely-carved shield-form backs, circa 1785 (estimate: \$25,000-40,000). An amusing George II tea caddy features a bust of Shakespeare and



was reputed to have been carved from the mulberry tree in Shakespeare's own garden in Stratford-on-Avon. The caddy is signed by the local maker George Cooper and dated 1759 (*illustrated on page 3*, estimate: \$6,000 – 8,000).

Palissy Ware



Proudly featured in the sale are intricate 19th century French ceramics of in the style of Bernard Palissy. These ornamental wares by workshops centered in Paris, Tours, and deeper in southern France and into Portugal are inspired by the work of one of the finest ceramists of the French Renaissance. Palissy and the 19th century Palissy ware workshops whimsically bring to life fish, reptiles, insects, and other aquatic life in his colorful tabletop grottoes. One of the most intricate pieces of the collection is a French Palissy style faience wall cistern, cover and basin (estimate: \$4,000–6,000) by Félix Tardieu, a celebrated Menton atelier. Fashioned circa 1880, it features a milieu of snails, snakes and frogs on a mossy frit background above a white-metal bird head spigot with a shell-molded valve. Equally elaborate is a large French Palissy style faience trompe l'oeil oval dish (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$5,000–7,000). Molded in 1880, it is applied with a central alligator flanked with small fish and the rim is enclosed with high reliefs of a frogs, snakes and life-sized beetles.

19th Century Furniture, Sculpture, Works of Art and Ceramics

Highlighting the 19th century furniture and sculpture section is a pair of large Italian gilt and patinated bronze and verde antico marble jardinières, second half of 19th century (estimate: \$50,000–80,000). Impressive in both their scale and execution, the decorative jardinières are deeply rooted in Baroque furnishings of the 17th and 18th centuries.



Among the important examples of porcelain are pieces from the Chateaubriand Service, a Sèvres porcelain part dessert service, of 1820-1823 (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$70,000-90,000). Given by order of King Louis XVIII to Vicomte de Chateaubriand, each plate and bowl is finely painted with beautiful garden flowers and was fully documented in the manufactory's archive. The sale also features an exotic pair of ormolu-mounted Paris porcelain slate-blue ground dragon-handled vases and fixed covers, mid 19th century, (estimate: \$50,000-80,000) a superb pair of Paris gold-ground porcelain vases, circa 1820 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000),

once owned by Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon I, who lived in Bordentown, NJ from 1815 to 1832; and a selection of porcelain snuff-boxes with estimates ranging from \$3,000 to \$12,000.

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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