

**For Immediate Release**  
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Press Release

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## **THREE CENTURIES OF ALLURING BRITISH ART ON PAPER AT CHRISTIE'S IN DECEMBER**



**Wednesday, 10 December 2008**

***British Art on Paper* at 2.30pm**

**London** – Three centuries of *British Art on Paper*, exemplifying the dramatic power and also calm beauty captured in the best figure and landscape drawings, watercolours and rare pastels, are offered in Christie's sale on Wednesday, 10 December 2008. Kick starting *British Art Week*, this auction features a remarkable range of over 90 drawings, many of which come fresh to the market with superb provenance from private collections, by the greatest masters of the genre. With estimates ranging from £1,500 to £300,000, the sale as a whole is expected to realise in the region of £1.5 million.

The figure is powerfully explored throughout the sale, in the context of both interiors and landscapes. A leading highlight, which uses an interior as the compositional setting for the narrative, is **Simeon Solomon's** (1840-1905) 'Pre-Raphaelite' watercolour *A Prelude by Bach* (estimate: £200,000-300,000) *illustrated top right*. Conveying an air of languid delicacy, this is arguably the finest painting by the artist to remain in private hands. It was executed in 1868 at the height of Solomon's career when he formed part of the circle around **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** (1828-1882), whose chalk drawing *Study for the figure of Love in Dante's Dream*, 1875, is offered with an estimate of £50,000-70,000. Inspired by Botticelli's allegorical *Primavera*, this work by Solomon was originally exhibited as *A Song of Spring*, a theme reflected in the light floral blues, lilacs, yellows and whites employed. Depicting an audience of wistful beauties listening to performers, a motif of 'Aesthetic Movement Art' founded by Rossetti and developed by Albert Moore, this composition possesses a lyrical fluidity. It is offered from the collection of the late Sir Colin and Lady Anderson. Sir Colin, who was knighted in 1950, was a key figure in the world of British Art, having been Chairman of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, Chairman of the Contemporary Art Society, Trustee of the National Gallery, Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission and Provost of The Royal College of Art.

Intimate, individual portraits are exemplified by a desirable early pastel, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, 1754, by **Francis Cotes**, R.A. (1726-1770) (estimate: £20,000-30,000), *illustrated right*. A founder member of the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy, Cotes trained in the studio of George Knappton and was greatly inspired by the masterful pastels of Rosalba Carriera. His sitters ranged from H.R.H Queen Charlotte



to the artist Paul Sandby, R.A. Further early examples include Cotes' *Portrait of Peter Pennington Legh, of Booths Hall, Cheshire*, 1764 (estimate: £8,000-12,000) and *Portrait Head of a Lady* by **John Constable**, R.A. (1776-1837) (estimate: £25,000-35,000); the sitter is believed to be either Laura Moubray, the fourth daughter of Sir William Hobson of Markfield House, Tottenham, or one of her sisters.



The landscapes offered are led by an early 19<sup>th</sup> century watercolour by **John Martin** (1789-1854), *The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum: 'The Tongues of Fire'* (estimate: £200,000-300,000) *illustrated left*. Dramatically depicting the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD, Martin powerfully conveys the overpowering strength of nature. He utilises chiaroscuro lighting, broken effectively with the piercing white lightning of an electric storm.

Compositionally combining a detailed foreground, with a collapsing temple and figures, and a smoky cloud filled sky and mountains in the middle-ground, he employs bold sweeping vertical brushstrokes to create foreboding 'curtains' which powerfully focus the eye inwards, theatrically framing the scene. This work is thought to have been executed in preparation for the monumental oil painting of the subject which is now at Tate Britain.

Elsewhere, other landscapes include four Golden Age, early 19<sup>th</sup> century watercolours by **Joseph Mallord William Turner**, R.A. (1775-1851); the universally acknowledged master of watercolour and the 'precursor of Impressionism'. These topographical landscapes include a further depiction of an electric storm, *Lochmaben Castle, Dumfriesshire, Scotland* (estimate: £60,000-80,000), *illustrated left*. Turner employs a myriad of pinks and blues to create a tempestuous sky, where extensive scratching out has been used to great effect to convey lightning. Offered from a private collection and first sold at Christie's in 1901, this work is based on a drawing in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border Sketchbook* of 1831; it is an alternative study for Sir Walter Scott's *Poetical Works*, published by Robert Cadell in 1833/4. Turner made two Scottish tours in connection with Scott in 1831 and 1834: the present drawing was probably executed on the first tour which included the Borders and extended to Staffa and Skye.



The star of the group is his *View of the river Brent* (estimate: £120,000-180,000), *illustrated left*. An idyllic image, this is a variant of an oil in a private collection, depicting a countrified stretch of river leading into the Thames west of London, which is now the suburban area of Brentford and Chiswick. In addition, Turner's peaceful image of *Addingham Mill on the River Wharfe, Yorkshire* (estimate: £70,000-100,000) is a variant of his watercolour, now in Manchester City Art Gallery, which is one of nearly two hundred works executed for or purchased by Turner's great patron Sir Walter Fawkes (1769-1825) of Farnley Hall. The present watercolour was painted for the Rev. Richard Hall, a friend of Fawkes. A further work providing a charming insight into country life is *Lanrwst* (estimate: £50,000-80,000); this was purchased by the present owner at Christie's groundbreaking 1979 sale of *The Newall Collection of English Drawings and Watercolours*. Such topographical romanticism is also found in the work of Turner's contemporary and friend **Thomas Girtin** (1775-1802), *Bolton Abbey*, 1801 (estimate: £25,000-35,000).

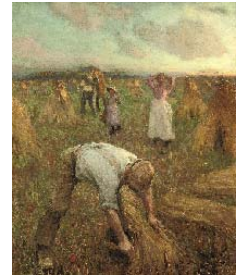
From the 20<sup>th</sup> century two important works which further celebrate the natural beauty of the British landscape are led by *In the Fields*, by **Dame Laura Knight**, R.A. (1877-1970) (estimate: £150,000-200,000), *illustrated page one top left*. Capturing a warm and soft naturalistic light, which stands out from that of her classical counterparts Augustus John and Charles Sims, Knight's watercolour has a freshness of palette and atmosphere. This is enhanced by both her *stylistic* freedom, using vigorous brushstrokes, and the *visual* freedom she affords with a low horizon showing the sea stretching into

the distance beyond the graceful beauties that pause under the expansive, open sky.

The second, *Harvest – Evening*, by **George Clausen**, R.A., R.W.S. (1852-1944) (estimate: £60,000-80,000) is captivating in a very different manner, *illustrated right*. Whilst the light is also soft and warm, the tone is one of masculine strength, with the farm worker representing the heroism of agricultural labour. Last offered at auction by Christie's in 1979, this work was exhibited at the London Royal



Institute of Painters in Water-colours in 1885. Executed in a period of industrial expansion, Clausen poignantly conveys the natural strength of man versus the machine and his labourers assume monumental significance. This superb depiction of a lone harvester was hugely influential, inspiring the work of many subsequent generations. Further works which explore the human condition include **Walter Langley's** (1852-1922) emotive character study *An Interesting Letter* (estimate: £20,000-30,000), *illustrated left*.



Depictions of foreign climes include views of Egypt, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland. These include *Luxor, Egypt*, 1854 (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and *Abu Simbel, Egypt*, 1867 (estimate: £12,000-18,000) by **Edward Lear** (1812-1888). Further examples range from *The Rialto Bridge, Venice* (estimate: £8,000-12,000) by **Richard Parkes Bonington** (1802-1828) and *The Flower Market Verona* (estimate: £5,000-8,000), one of several works by **Albert Goodwin**, R.W.S. (1845-1932), as well as works by **William Callow**, R.W.S. (1812-1908) and **David Roberts**, R.A. (1796-1864).

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*Images available on request*

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

**Sale date:** Christie's London: Wednesday, 10 December 2008 at 2.30pm – British Art on Paper

#### **Public Viewing dates**

**Christie's London**, 8 King Street, St. James's, London, SW1Y 6QT: Between Wednesday 3 and Friday 5 December and Sunday 7 and Wednesday 10 December.

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totaled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.