

For Immediate Release

6 November 2006

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RUSSIAN PICTURES AND WORKS OF ART OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY TO BE SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S IN NOVEMBER

Collectively estimated to fetch in the region of **£25 million**, Christie's will offer the **Best Quality Russian Pictures and Russian Works of Art** available on the Market this Season



I.K. Aivazovskii (1817-1900)
View of Constantinople
Estimate: £1,500,000 - 2,500,000

Russian Week at Christie's, King Street

27-30 November

London: The Russian category continues to be one of the fastest growing and most exciting areas of the international art market. This November, Christie's, the world's leading auction house, will devote an entire week of sales to Russian Pictures, works of art, books and Icons in London from 27-30 November 2006. The week is led by auctions of **Russian Pictures** and **Russian Works of Art** on 29 November 2006 which are collectively estimated to realize in the region of £25 million and will offer significant pictures and works of art that represent the best quality available in the market for Russian Art this season.

"Christie's 2005 sale of *Russian Pictures* and *Russian Works of Art* realised £21,941,320 (\$37,695,186/ €31,946,561) in November 2005, the highest combined sales total ever achieved for Russian pictures and works of art, with nineteen new artists record were set," says Alexis de Tiesenhausen, International Head of the Russian Department, Christie's International. "This year we expect unprecedented interest in our sales, not only a reflection of the true quality that we are offering, but also as a result of Christie's expanded programme of activities in Russia this season, including an

exhibition of painting highlights in Samara (from 9-13 November 2006), the first time such an event has ever been staged in Russia by an international auction house, as well as the exhibition of a Blue Period masterpiece by Picasso in Moscow last month.”

One of the sale’s highlights of the Important **Russian Pictures** sale on 29 November 2006 is a double portrait known as *The Children* (estimate: £250,000-350,000) by Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev painted in 1922. A striking example of Russian Expressionism, in 1923 *The Children* was illustrated in *Jar Ptitzja*, the influential Russian émigré journal published in Berlin in the 1920s.

The name Il’ia Ivanovich Mashkov has become synonymous with the Russian avant-garde, the *Knave of Diamonds* and, above all, the genre of still life. *Still life with Strawberries, Cherries and a blue Decanter* (estimate: £500,000-700,000), painted in 1923 is an exquisite example of Mashkov’s work in his signature genre and embodies his unique synthesis of classical and folk art. Last viewed by the public in 1924 when it was exhibited in Moscow, ‘Still Life with Strawberries, Cherries and a blue Decanter’ has been in a private collection for the past fifty years. With the vast majority of Mashkov’s *oeuvre* in private collections and Russian Museums, the appearance of this work at auction is an exceptional event.

Émigré artist, Fedor Zakharov left Russia for the US in 1924. In America he is well-known for his distinctive portraits of socialites and high-society figures but his early work is scarce. Painted *circa* 1912, *Football* is one such work; this dynamic composition captures the spirit of the players as they fight for the ball in front of a packed spectator-stand. Although it is difficult to identify the teams from the strips depicted, 1912 was an important year for Russian football. For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, the Football Union of Russia sent a side to Stockholm to compete.

The luminous impressionistic landscapes of Gurzuf and the genre scenes of Konstantin Alekseevich Korovin have been much sought-after and commanded high prices in recent years. Korovin is represented in the sale by a huge canvas known as *Pushkin and Muse* (estimate: £500,000-600,000). It was painted *circa* 1930 for an exhibition of Russian pictures in Prague. However, it didn’t go to Prague and was sold to a collector in Paris. The picture depicts Russia’s greatest poet, Alexander Pushkin, elegantly clad and wearing a cape standing next to his muse of the moment as imagined by Korovin. In the background is the façade of a country mansion. At the feet of the muse is a paraphrased line from Pushkin’s poem *To My Inkwell*; ‘And to the feast of the imagination I would summon the muse’.

Another artist who achieved record breaking success in last year’s sale returns: Ivan Ivanovich Shishkin was a member of the *Peredvizhniki* or ‘Wanderers’ famed for his depictions of the impenetrable Russian forest. *Mast Pine Forest in Viatka Province* (estimate: £500,000-700,000) is an exceptional example of Shishkin’s meticulous attention to detail and his ability to convey the expanse of Russian landscape whilst personalising every leaf, branch and tree trunk. A larger version of *Mast Pine Forest in Viatka Province* is in the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

After achieving a world record (£1,296,000; \$2,226,528; €1,886,976) for a picture by Konstantin Andreevich Somov in November 2005, this autumn Christie's is offering an important selection of works by Somov. The group of nine pictures, collectively estimated to fetch over £1 million is led by *Pastorale Russe* (estimate: £200,000-300,000) an erotic yet strangely innocent composition of young lovers by moonlight. The group also includes a theatrical picture, an exquisite, rare still life and a sensitive self-portrait of the artist dated 1928, a year in which he painted several self-portraits including one in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Born into a cultivated Russian family— his father was at one time Senior Curator at the Hermitage—Somov studied at various art schools in St Petersburg. He traveled extensively in Europe in the mid- 1890s, and lived in Paris 1897–99, where he attended Whistler's classes at the Académie Carmen. Back in St Petersburg he was a founding member of the World of Art Society, taking part in all their exhibitions, and he occupies a special place in the history of Russian art.

The much celebrated marine artist Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovskii is represented in the sale by a number of works, including the magnificent *View of Constantinople* (estimate: £1,500, 000-2,500,000) and *Fishermen on the coast of Sorrento* (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000).

Christie's is delighted to be including within the sale of **Russian Works of Art**, also on 29 November, The Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna Twenty-Fifth Wedding Anniversary Clock, a magnificent silver, onyx, and diamond-set presentation mantle clock marked Fabergé and with the workmaster's mark of Michael Perchin, St . Petersburg, 1891. (estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000) – separate press release available.

This year's sale highlights also boast a pair of monumental two-handled porcelain vases by the Imperial Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg, period of Nicolas I, 1844. During the reign of Nicolas I, the Imperial Porcelain Factory produced a remarkable number of vases, with many of them decorated with copies of old master paintings, of which this pair are a fine example. The vases adorned the Imperial Palaces and, as in this instance, were gifts from the Emperor to members of the Royal and princely families (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000). An exquisite pair of floral vases again by the Imperial Porcelain Factory during the period of Nicholas I will also be offered (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000).

Fabergé are renowned specialists in the production of the enameled 'object' but they also manufactured large silver *surtouts de table* and presentation pieces for the Army and Navy or for visiting foreign potentates and statesmen. The sale offers an Important monumental silver presentation kovsh marked Fabergé and with the workmaster's mark of Julius Rappoport, St. Petersburg, circa 1891, made all the more impressive by an Imperial crowned double-headed eagle finial. The massive shell-shaped bowl decorated with the coat of- arms of Prince Vladimir Sergeevich Obolenskii has an engraved dedication in Russian that reads: '*To my dear regiment, the former Adjutant Prince Vladimir Sergeevich Obolenskii, 1868–1891*'. It has a rising scroll handle surmounted by the double-headed eagle of the Chevalier Guards Regiment. The bowl bears the mark of workmaster

Julius Rappaport . Prince Vladimir Sergeevich Obolenskii Neledinskii- Maletskii (1847–1891) was a great-grandson of Field Marshall Suvorov (estimate: £300,000-500,000).

With an impeccable provenance, a rare silver-gilt and gold-mounted Guilloché enamel sunburst Clock , *circa* 1898 by Fabergé is also included in the sale (estimate: £400,000-600,000). The clock was purchased from Fabergé by the Dowager Maria Feodorovna on 12 January, 1898 as a gift. It was later given by H.H Princess Maud, Countess of Southesk to her philanthropic friend, Mrs Mona Guthrie, great grand daughter of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.

In addition, the sale includes an outstanding silver-gilt ten-piece neo-classical tea and coffee-service, marked Fabergé and with the Imperial warrant, Moscow, 1908-17. The service was purchased by a member of the Persian Royal Family direct from Fabergé and is offered for sale by a direct descendant (estimate: £150,000-200,000). A contrasting silver tea and coffee service, with the mark of Nikols and Plinke with the Imperial warrant and with the workmaster's mark PK., St. Petersburg, circa 1874, comes by direct descent from the Grand Duchess Maria, daughter of Nicolas the property of a European Princely family (estimate: £50,000-80,000). One of a selection of porcelain Military plates included in the sale and by the Imperial Porcelain Factory, St. Petersburg, during the reign of Nicholas I, is dated, the centre painted with soldiers of the Life Guards Probrzhenskii Regiment by N. Iakovlev (estimate: £60,000-90,000). The plates produced during this reign are without doubt the finest produced by the factory, as they are the very embodiment of Russia's military society in which the Tsar and the members of the Imperial family were the principal figures

Christie's Expanded Activity in Russia

Highlights of Russian Week to be Exhibited in Samara, Russia – 9-13 November 2006

Christie's programme of Russian Week sales are the culmination of the firm's extensive activities relating to Russia this season. These events and exhibitions are a continuation of Christie's commitment to bringing the most important works of art available in the international art market to Russia, a world-class centre of artistic and economic excellence, and as part of our service to new and established collectors in this highly important region."

In September Christie's was honoured to accept an invitation from the Hermitage Museum to advise on, and participate in, an international forum on Contemporary Art, held at the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. With the official backing of the Ministry of Culture and the support of Gazprombank and the Kremlevsky Complex, on 19 and 20 October Christie's exhibited the highly important Blue Period masterpiece by Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Angel Fernández de Soto*, 1903 in Moscow. The painting is arguably one of the most important of this period in the artist's oeuvre and is estimated at \$40 – 60 million (£22 – 33 million) - a rare masterpiece, of the highest quality, by an artist whose work has been admired and widely exhibited in Russia. The portrait is being offered, as part of the Impressionist and Modern Art evening sale in New York on 8 November, by The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. Andrew Lloyd Webber will make no personal gain from the sale.

From 9-13 November Christie's will stage an exhibition of highlights from Russian Week in Samara, the first time an international auction house has held such an event in Russia. This exhibition is the fifth such event Christie's have staged in Russia over the last decade. Christie's first exhibited in Moscow at the Kremlin, in partnership with Lukoil, to showcase Impressionist Art. In 1998, Christies' staged a second exhibition of important jewels, again at the Moscow Kremlin. In 2002, the firm staged an exhibition, at The State Pushkin Museum, for the Imperial "Winter Egg" by Fabergé, which subsequently sold in London for \$9.5 million, and remains the world auction record for any Russian Work of Art.

Calendar of sales:

27 November	Icons	South Kensington
29 November	Important Russian Pictures	King Street
29 November	Russian Works of Art	King Street
30 November	Valuable Russian Books and Manuscripts	King Street
30 November	19thC European Art including Russian Pictures	South Kensington

Notes to Editors

- Christie's were the first auction house to devote sales to Russian art although the connection between Russia and the world's leading auction house extends back to the 18th Century when James Christie, the company founder, helped negotiate Robert Walpole's Collection of Pictures to Catherine the Great of Russia, now the core of the Hermitage Collection.
- Christie's have held Russian sales for the last 20 years – starting in Geneva and then in London and New York. Recently we have seen the market grow substantially, from auctions of £5.6 million worldwide in 2000 to £24.3 million in 2005. The first half of 2006 saw Russian art realize \$15 million in global sales. In addition to these figures, in 2005 over 775 lots of Russian origin were sold in sales other than Russian auctions, generating sales of over £25 million. In 2006 to date we have sold 569 items of Russian origin in auctions other than the Russian sales, collectively totalling over £35 million.
- A strong and unified team of experts has been led by Alexis de Tiesenhausen who has over 20 years of experience.
- Christie's Russian department holds world auction records for the top Russian artists, including Nicholas Roerich, Ivan Aivazovsky, Ili'a Repin, Konstantin Somov, Boris Kustodiev, Isaac Levitan and Ivan Shishkin.
- Christie's holds the world auction record for any Russian Work of Art (the 2002 sale of Fabergé's Imperial Winter Egg for \$9.9 million)

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For further information on any aspect of the international art market, images or interviews please contact Christie's Press Office on 020 7389 2664. Christie's dedicated email address for Russian clients is po-ruski@christies.com