

For Immediate Release
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Press Release



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A PERIOD OF BEAUTY, ELEGANCE AND DRAMA: Victorian & Traditionalist Pictures at Christie's in December



Victorian and Traditionalist Pictures Thursday, 11 December 2008 at 2.30pm

London - Showcasing a splendid array of subjects and styles, Christie's sale of *Victorian and Traditionalist Pictures* offers over 80 captivating works, by the leading artists working in Britain during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The top lot is Charles Edward Perugini's (1839-1918) exquisite group portrait of the Countess Granville with her daughters, the Ladies Victoria and Mary Leveson-Gower, on the ramparts of Walmer castle (estimate: £300,000-500,000), *illustrated above right*. Exemplifying the excellent provenance of many works featured in the sale, this painting is the property of the Earl Granville and is offered at auction for the first time; having been commissioned by the second Earl Granville and passed by descent. Also of considerable importance is a re-discovered Pre-Raphaelite roundel *Paolo and Francesca*, 1894 (estimate: £250,000-350,000) *illustrated above left*, by Sir Frank Dicksee, P.R.A. (1853-1928). The style and content of this work epitomises the passion and tragedy which was celebrated internationally during the Romantic period. The sale as a whole is expected to realise in the region of £3 million.

The protégé of Frederic, Lord Leighton and a close friend of Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896), Perugini was born in Naples but grew up in England where he married the daughter of novelist Charles Dickens, Kate. This grand group-portrait, of the Countess of Granville and her daughters, firmly established the artist's reputation within the highest ranks of British portraiture from Sir Joshua Reynolds (dates) onwards. The second Earl Granville was one of the great Whig magnates of the day, holding offices of state under a series of Prime Ministers, including Palmerston and Gladstone. He was appointed warden of the Cinque Ports in 1865, and therefore used Walmer, which overlooks the English Channel as is depicted in this painting, as a country retreat.



Female portraits featured elsewhere in the sale include the direct steady gaze of the subject in Sir George Clausen's, R.A., RWS, R.I. (1852-1944) *In the Street*, 1880 (estimate: £150,000-250,000) *illustrated left*; the contemplative peacefulness of the fresh-faced sitter in *The Wedding Dress*, 1889, by Thomas Benjamin Kennington, R.B.A., N.E.A.C. (1856-1916) (estimate: £100,000-150,000); the alluring self-possessed awareness of the odalisque in the Hon. John Collier's (1850-1934) *Pomps and Vanities* (estimate: £120,000-180,000) and the seductive beauty in the re-discovered painting *Mischief and Repose*, 1909 by John William Godward, R.B.A. (1861-1922) (estimate: £150,000-250,000). Having been missing for half a century, it is amongst the finest examples of Godward's oeuvre. It reflects both his masterful ability of depicting texture and surface, as demonstrated in his portrayal of the rug and the floor, and also his highly skilled use of colour and shade.

A group of four works by John Atkinson Grimshaw (1836-1893) includes a rare portrait *Blue Belle*, 1877 (estimate: £70,000-100,000), which is believed to be of his daughter Enid. The *objets d'art* which surround the little girl typify not only Victorian eclecticism but also the artist's personal tastes in collecting, as it is set in his home Knostrop Hall, a Jacobean Manor House outside Leeds.



The other three works within the group by Grimshaw are landscapes, which are led by *Near Lake Windermere, the Lake District, Cumbria*, 1865 (estimate: £150,000-250,000), *illustrated left*. This painting displays all of the Pre-Raphaelite sensitivity associated with Grimshaw's early work; capturing the last moments of sunset with an extraordinary array of greens, purples and blues. *Under the Moonbeams*, 1887 (estimate: £120,000-180,000) shows Grimshaw at the height of his powers and alludes to the romantic notion of lovers meeting in secret. *Waterloo Lake, Roundhay Park Leeds*, 1876-7 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) is both enigmatic and wistful and is amongst a number of moonlight paintings of this location, which are recognised as ranking amongst the finest he ever produced.

Further notable landscapes include another moonlit scene, *Lesser Light to Rule the Night*, 1873 (estimate: £20,000-30,000) by John Samuel Raven (1829-1877), *illustrated right*. This remarkably atmospheric painting, executed by an artist whom Ruskin praised for his application of elaborate and rich detail and colour, can be positioned amongst some of the greatest Romantic works to have been painted by British artists. A highlight, *Mending Nets: Bay of Naples*, 1869 (estimate: £120,000-180,000) by Edward William Cooke, R.A. (1811-1880) is thought to be the artist's last depiction of the west Italian coast and was warmly received by critics when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1869. Elsewhere, topographical scenes of Britain and beyond feature seven paintings by the highly celebrated Edward Seago, R.W.S., R.B.A. (190-1974), such as *Morning Haze, Sheun Wan, Hong Kong* (estimate: £40,000-60,000), *The Acropolis, Athens* (estimate: £20,000-30,000) and *Morning Haze, Ramsgate* (estimate: £30,000-50,000).



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Images available on request

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Notes to Editors:

Sale date: Christie's London: Thursday, 11 December 2008 at 2.30pm – Victorian & Traditionalist Pictures

Public Viewing dates

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

About Christie's

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