

## Press Release

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#### **CHRISTIE'S DECORATIVE ARTS SALES TOP \$7.7 MILLION IN RECORD YEAR**

**Melbourne, Australia** – Christie's Director Richard Gordon, Head of Decorative Arts in Australia, announced today that the company had established a new single year auction sales record of over AUD\$7.7 million/US\$6 million for Decorative Arts in 2004.

*"This has been the best year in the Department's 15 year history. Strong international and local bidding ensured that record prices were achieved across an astonishing diversity of objects offered for sale. This included fine furniture, antique silver, estate jewellery and quality works of art. The result is a credit to all the members of a relatively small department who worked tirelessly to secure consignments and manage global auctions of a diverse range of material for a wide variety of clients."* said Richard Gordon.

Highlights of the record-breaking year were:

#### **The Binh Thuan Collection**

A massive internationally sought collection of almost 18,000 items of Ming Dynasty porcelain salvaged from a c.1602 shipwreck. Sold on behalf of the Government of Vietnam, the cargo was 100% sold and realised \$2,099,563 over four sessions on 1 & 2 March 2004.

#### **The John & Amanda Elliott Collection**

Sold as part of the March Decorative Arts auction and comprising antique silver, quality furniture and ornithological art the collection exceeded the expectations of many when it realised almost \$1 million. Highlights included \$303,625 for a set of twelve Queen Anne Britannia standard silver dinner plates, maker's mark of Philip Rollos Jnr, London, 1706; \$58,009 for a George II oblong Sterling silver salver, maker's mark of Jonah Clifton, London, 1727 and \$18,218.00 for a William III standard silver tankard.

**"The Southern Cross Brooch"** was consigned for sale by Charles Kingsford Smith, the son of the pioneer aviator, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. The brooch was presented as a gift in 1932 to the aviator's wife, after Kingsford Smith had it made in Europe and it flew with him and *'The Southern Cross'* back to Australia. Finely modelled, pave set with diamonds and sapphires, in the shape of the aeroplane in which it travelled, the brooch sold for \$101,766. The entire proceeds of the sale were donated to charity. The March Decorative Arts sale realised \$1.7million in total sales.

**The John H. Schaeffer Collection at Rona** was dispersed over the weekend of May 15 & 16. In a total sale of \$5.2 million, half was decorative art which realised in excess of \$2.6million. Highlights included \$163,957 for a white marble & gilt bronze statue (1893) by Louis-Ernst Barrias; \$133,595 for a Ziegler Carpet (494 x 357cm); \$97,160 for a rare Dutch musical automaton walnut longcase clock by J.M. Mantes, circa 1780 and \$78,942 for a Gothic revival oak writing table, designed by A.W.N. Pugin and made by the firm of Crace (1788-1899). The department also negotiated private treaty sales and consigned other items of Mr Schaeffer's decorative arts collection that were not part of the 'Rona' auction to Christie's international auctions.

**A Pair of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Italian micromosaic views of Rome** was consigned to the final Decorative Arts auction in late October. The item generated enormous worldwide interest. Frenzied bidding saw telephone bidders from four continents compete with buyers in the Christie's Melbourne auction room. It was sold for \$109,305, well above original expectations, to an American collector. At the same auction, which realised a total of almost \$1.4 million, a George III giltwood and inlaid satinwood table sold for \$60,725 and a pair of George III satinwood card tables realised \$46,151.

#### **2004 in Summary**

1 & 2 March (The Binh Thuan Collection)	\$2,099,563	(US\$1,637,659)
30 & 31 March (Decorative Arts)	\$1,699,214	(US\$1,325,387)
15 & 16 May (John H. Schaeffer at Rona)	\$2,614,285	(US\$2,039,143)
26 & 27 October (Decorative Arts)	\$1,324,582	(US\$1,033,174)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,737,644</b>	<b>(US\$6,035,362)</b>

Plus Private Treaty Sales (not included in total)

Christie's Decorative Arts department is already consigning an array of wonderful objects to its first auction in 2005, scheduled for March. Specialists are based in Melbourne and Sydney and travel regularly to other centres. For appraisals and consignments contact Richard Gordon or Jennifer Jones on 03 9820 4311 or Ronan Sulich on 02 9326 1422.

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