

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Matthew Paton

020.7389.2664

mpaton@christies.com

BELLOTTO AND BOTTICELLI LEAD CHRISTIE'S £32 MILLION (\$62.5/€46.9 MILLION) SALE OF *IMPORTANT OLD MASTER PICTURES*

- Evening sale of Important Old Master Pictures realises £32 million (\$62.5 million / €46.9 million)
- Bellotto views of Rome sell for £6.5 million (\$12.8 / €9.6 million)
- Botticelli sells for £3.8 million (\$7.5 / €5.6 million), a world record price for the artist at auction
- 12 new artist records established
- 7 lots sell for over £1 million

London – Christie's evening sale of *Important Old Master Pictures* realised £31,745,600 / \$62,507,086 / €46,856,506, exceeding its pre-sale estimate of £18.6 to £27.1 million. The top lot of the sale was an outstanding pair of views by Bernardo Bellotto (1721-1780) which sold for £6.5 million (\$12.8 / €9.6 million), against a pre-sale estimate of £3 to £4 million. A further highlight was *The Madonna and Child* by Sandro di Filipepi, known as Botticelli (*circa* 1445-1510) which realised £3.8 million (\$7.5 / €5.6 million), a world record price for the artist at auction.

Richard Knight, International Director of Old Master Pictures, and Paul Raison, Director and Head of the Old Masters department, London:

"We are extremely pleased with the results of this evening's sale which welcomed a noticeable number of new international private buyers, as well as a number of bidders who are known to Christie's but new to this collecting category. Clients this evening from the United Kingdom, the United States, South America, Europe and Russia bid fiercely and competitively resulting in many of the paintings on offer far exceeding their pre-sale estimates, including the exceptional pair of Bellottos which sold for over £6.5 million, the Botticelli which sold for a record £3.8 million and the beautiful view of Venice by Francesco Guardi which sold for £3.8 million, over four times its high estimate."

Highlights of this evening's sale included:

- *The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina in the Roman Forum* and *The Roman Forum with the Temple of Castor and Pollux*, an outstanding pair of views by Bernardo Bellotto (1721-1780) which realised £6,504,000 (\$12,806,376 / €9,599,904). These pictures were bought in 1773 by Patrick Hume, a Berkshire landowner, from the widow of Consul Smith, the most important patron of Bellotto's uncle and teacher, Antonio Canal, Il Canaletto (1697-1768). They were acquired at this evening's auction by a private European client.

- *The Madonna and Child* by Sandro di Filipepi, known as Botticelli (circa 1445-1510), one of the most prominent and influential artists of the early Renaissance (sold for £3,816,000 / \$7,513,704 / €5,632,416 – a world record price for the artist at auction). This painting is one of many which entered British collections during the 19th century and, having passed through the collection of Cyril Flower, Lord Battersea (1843-1907) it was acquired by Sir Thomas Merton, K.B.E. (1888-1969), a trustee of the National Gallery and notable collector of Renaissance pictures. It was acquired this evening by a private European client.

- *The Battle between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Breughel II (1564/5-1637/8) which realised £3,256,000 (\$6,411,064 / €4,805,856). One of the most recognised of all subjects painted by the Breughel family, this is one of only two examples universally accepted as autograph and the last to remain in private hands.

- *The Punta della Dogana, Venice, the Giudecca and the Redentore beyond* by Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) which was subject to a fierce bidding battle before finally being sold to an anonymous telephone bidder for £3,760,000 (\$7,403,440 / €5,549,760), over four times its pre-sale estimate.

New auction record prices were set for 12 artists at this evening's sale: Gerrit Houckgeest (lot 2), Sofonisba Anguissola (lot 9), Hendrik van Balen II (lot 11), Gerrit Berchkeyde (lot 22), Aert de Gelder (lot 25), Hans Leu (lot 35), The Master of Apollo and Daphne (lot 38), Sandro Botticelli (lot 39), The Mezzana Master (lot 41), The Master of the Sterbini Diptych (lot 43), Gabriele Ricciardelli (lot 61) and Giovan Beinaschi (lot 63).

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- In 2005, Christie's International Old Master Department achieved annual sales of £127.5 million / \$230.8 million, reaffirming their position as market leaders in both the Old Master Picture and Old Master Drawing categories, with a 53% market share over the nearest competitor in the Old Master category as a whole.