

For Immediate Release

6 December 2007

Contact: Matthew Paton

020.7389.2965

mpaton@christies.com

CHRISTIE'S AUCTION OF *IMPORTANT OLD MASTER AND BRITISH PICTURES* REALISES £18.8 MILLION / \$38 MILLION / €26 MILLION

- Rubens sells for £3.83 million / \$7.74 million / €5.3 million – a record price at auction for an oil sketch by the artist

- World auction records realised for Jan Lievens, Giandomenico Tiepolo, Quentin Metsys and Pierre Dupuis

London – Christie's evening auction of *Important Old Master and British Pictures including Works from the Collection of Anton Philips* realised a total of £18,802,200 / \$38,021,808 / €26,041,047. The top lot was *Two studies of a young man*, a little-known work by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), which realised £3,828,500 / \$7,741,993 / €5,302,473, the highest ever price for a Rubens oil sketch at auction. Another leading highlight of the sale was a rediscovered painting by **Jan Lievens (1607-1674)** which was offered at auction for the first time having been in the ownership of the present family for over 200 years, and which sold for £2,148,500 / \$4,344,697 / €2,975,673 establishing a world record price for the artist at auction.

The Rubens was the highlight of a group of *Important Old Master Pictures from the Collection of Anton Philips* which realised a total of £6,371,100 / \$12,883,638 / €8,823,974.

Richard Knight, International Director of Old Master and British Pictures, and Paul Raison, Director and Head of the Old Master and British Picture Department, London: "*This evening's auction offered a diverse selection of European pictures. We saw selective bidding with particularly strong results for exceptional works which were fresh to the market, such as the rediscovered Jan Lievens, which had been in the ownership of the same family for over 200 years and which sold for a record £2.15 million; and Giandomenico Tiepolo's 'Dancing the Minuet' which realised £1.3 million, against a pre-sale estimate of £600,000-800,000. The group of works offered from the Collection of Anton Philips realised £6.37 million, led by Rubens' 'Two studies of a man' which sold for £3.83 million, a record price at auction for an oil study by the artist. The market continues to show a great appetite for the most attractive and market fresh works, and we look forward to tomorrow's day sale of Old Master and British Pictures.*"

Sir Peter Paul Rubens' (1577-1640) *Two studies of a young man* was painted between 1615 and 1617. The panel (46.5 x 65.5 cm.) is a study for Balthasar in *The Adoration of the Magi* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon and shows a Levantine head, pictured *en face* and *en profil* respectively. The sitter is

unknown but judging by his tanned skin, plain shirt and leather hat, it is thought that he could have been a contract labourer building the extension of the artist's house in the Wappen, Antwerp.

The picture was rediscovered in 1934 when Mr Douglas Lewis of Merton Park, near Wimbledon, brought it to Christie's having acquired the work in a box of paintings at a local West Country auction. The picture was recognised as a Rubens and was offered at Christie's on 23 November 1934 where it sold for £1,560. It was acquired soon afterwards by Anton Philips who displayed it as a central work of his private collection at his house *Villa de Laak*. The picture left this sanctuary on very few occasions, and was exhibited at The Musée Royaux des Beaux Arts in 1937 and the landmark Rubens oil sketch exhibition at The Museum Boymans van Beuningen in Rotterdam in 1953.

Further highlights included a rediscovered painting by **Jan Lievens (1607-1674)** which was offered at auction for the first time having been in the ownership of the present family for over 200 years, and which sold for £2,148,500 / \$4,344,697 / €2,975,673. Painted in the mid to late 1620s and first recorded in 1640 in the inventory of the artist's neighbour and early patron, Jan Jansz. Orlers, the picture was in the possession of the great actor Barton Booth (1681-1733) by the early 18th century. It passed by family descent to the 1st Lord Eliot, and has remained in the family ever since. Jan Lievens was a great friend of Rembrandt and the two artists are thought to have shared a studio, and are known to have shared models; indeed, the sitter in the present work also appears in Rembrandt's *A man in a gorget and a plumed cap* (J. Paul Getty, Museum, Los Angeles).

Madonna and Child, an exceptional work by **Orazio Gentileschi (1563-1639)**, realised £2,036,500 / \$4,118,210 / €2,820,553. Offered as the Property of Mrs. Barbara Piasecka Johnson, the proceeds of sale to benefit in part the Institute for Child Development in Gdansk, Poland, and exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2002, this moving depiction of the Madonna and Child is painted with rich use of colours, the wide eyes of the infant Jesus gazing up at the Virgin Mary. Orazio Gentileschi was one of the most gifted and closest followers of Caravaggio, although his work tends to be more colourful and defined. In 1626, he settled in England and became court painter to Charles I. The present work is thought to have been painted as a private commission for an Italian patron, possibly Cardinal Giacomo Sannesesi (1551-1621).

Dancing the Minuet by **Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727-1804)** sold for £1,308,500 / \$2,646,049 / €1,812,273 against a pre-sale estimate of £600,000-800,000, and established a new record price for the artist at auction. *The Nativity with the Annunciation to the Shepherds beyond*, an atmospheric and dramatic depiction of the Nativity by **Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Seville 1618-1682)** sold for £468,500 / \$947,401 / €648,873.

###

Images available on request
Visit Christie's on the web at www.christies.com