

For Immediate Release

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WILDENSTEIN COLLECTION EVENING SESSION REALISES £14 MILLION
Auction Continues at Christie's Tomorrow

London – The first session of **The Wildenstein Collection of Magnificent French Furniture, Objets d'Art and Tapestries** took place at Christie's this evening and realised a total of £13,992,720 (\$24,823,085), well ahead of expectations and nearing the total estimate for the Collection as a whole. The auction continues tomorrow at 10.30am.

The top lot of this evening's sale was a late Louis XIV ormolu-mounted brass-inlaid ebony and tortoiseshell marquetry bureaux plat by the famed furniture maker André-Charles Boulle which sold for £2,920,000, the third highest price ever for a work by the maker and the tenth highest price ever paid for a piece of French furniture.

An extraordinary Louis XV ormolu-mounted Nautilus shell, which was probably designed by Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier and came from the fabled collections of the Viennese Rothschilds through Rosenberg and Steibel was another top lot this evening. The magnificent object sold after a fierce bidding battle for £1,105,600, ten times its pre-sale estimate. Further highlights including a superb pair of Louis XV ormolu-mounted celadon carp vases, supplied by the marchand-mercier Lazare Duvaux that sold for £456,000, doubling pre-sale expectations and a superb Louis XIV bronze group representing Bacchus and Ariadne by Corneille van Cleve, *circa* 1704, which sold for £904,000.

The Wildenstein Collection of Magnificent French Furniture, Objets d'Art and Tapestries is being offered as a two-part auction at Christie's, and is one of the most important sales of French furniture ever held. The Collection is comprised of over 250 works of pieces of furniture and works of art, the majority of which have been unseen in decades and are offered in an untouched and unrestored condition. The auction is highlighted by the unprecedented offering of magnificent Boulle furniture.

The remarkable ensemble was largely the creation of one man – Nathan Wildenstein (1851-1934). Hugely influential in the history of taste in the early 20th century, Nathan Wildenstein was the founder of the Wildenstein dynasty, which to this day represents more than a century of tradition, expertise and connoisseurship. The collection is being sold to create new facilities to house the archives and research workrooms of the Wildenstein Institute, the world's leading publisher of catalogues raisonnés.

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