

For Immediate Release

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***STRONG DUTCH AND FRENCH WORKS COMPLEMENTED BY EXQUISITE
GOYA STILL LIFE***

Important Old Master Paintings

January 24, 2003

New York – Christie’s sale of Important Old Master Paintings, organized in New York on January 24, will offer a particularly strong selection of works from Dutch and French masters, representing both categories with splendid examples by artists such as Gerard David, Jacob van Ruisdael, Christiaan Luyckx, Antoine Watteau and François Boucher.

Dutch Painting

Holland’s greatest landscapist, Jacob van Ruisdael is presented with A wooded river landscape with a shepherd, circa 1670’s (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000). Van Ruisdael trained in Haarlem with his uncle, Salomon van Ruysdael, whose Valkhof Castle at Nijmegen, circa 1650’s (estimate: \$450,000-550,000) is also offered.

Next to landscapes, still-lives were also very popular. A sumptuous still life or ‘pronkstilleven’, painted by the Flemish artist Christiaan Luyckx (estimate: \$700,000-900,000) is a prime example of its type. The extravaganza of colors and textures evokes an almost delirious ensemble. Also in the sale is a beautifully preserved still-life by Balthasar van der Ast (estimate \$1,200,000-1,800,000).

A pair of still-lives by Jan van Huysum (estimate: \$1,500,000-2,000,000) portraying flowers and fruits, reveals delightful microscopic details such as delicately scattered dewdrops and swarming insects. Van Huysum’s paintings beam and sparkle and his renderings of flowers and fruits are glorious celebrations of the abundance of the land.

Dirck van Baburen, one of the principal exponents of Caravaggism in Utrecht, appears rarely at auction. However, Christie's is fortunate to have An offering to Ceres (estimate: \$1,000,000–1,500,000), a painting that might have sprouted from a literary source.

A beautifully preserved example of Northern Renaissance painting is represented by Gerard David's Holy Family (estimate: \$700,000 – 900,000). Known as the last of the 'Flemish Primitives', this small panel was executed at the end of the artist's long career, and is full of tenderness and pathos. It belonged to the important French collector, Martin Le Roy, who already owned it by 1887, and it has been in the collection of his descendants since that time.

French Painting

Antoine Watteau is considered the first great painter of the 18th century and he was undoubtedly one of Europe's most original and influential artists. He was known for his small 'fêtes galantes' and his large-scale paintings are rare. This sale offers an exceptional work, Nymphe de Fontaine (estimate: \$700,000–900,000), an almost life size painting depicting a beautiful nude carrying a large water-filled vessel.

The most brilliantly gifted of Watteau's followers was François Boucher. By Boucher, the sale offers a set of four paintings: Le repos près de la fontaine (estimate: \$600,000–800,000), Le Retour du Marché, L'Heureux Pêcheur and Le Bonheur au Village (estimate: \$1,000,000–1,500,000) and a mythological scene, Venus and Cupid (estimate: \$600,000–800,000). This painting breathes an opulent sensuality that is elegantly masked by a mythological context.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard, one of Boucher's prodigy students, is represented with Venus Crowning (estimate: \$200,000–300,000) which is influenced by Boucher's Venus and Cupid. Also offered is Laundresses among the Ruins of an Italian Garden (estimate: \$150,000 – 200,000), one of his early landscape paintings, created when Fragonard studied in Rome.

Jacques Louis David is represented by a highly important Revolutionary portrait in the form of his majestic Portrait of François Mollat (estimate: \$1,000,000–1,500,000). Mollat assumed a leading role in Nantes's political life at the outset of the French Revolution.

Also in the sale are a magnificent pair of fêtes galantes by Nicolas Lancret (estimate \$1,000,000–1,500,000), which were exhibited at the major retrospective on the artist at the Frick collection in 1992.

Various Properties

A ravishing winter portrait by Pieter Brueghel the Younger (estimate: \$1,000,000–1,500,000) leads the viewer to an animated outside scene, populated by dozens of people and set near the edge of a village. Brueghel the Younger painted this scene based upon a drawing by Hans Bol, an accomplished draftsman and watercolorist whose drawings were often made into prints.

The Italian section of the sale offers a select group of works, led by Bernardo Daddi's Saint Catherine of Alexandria (estimate: \$1,500,000–2,500,000). Also offered are two paintings executed in tempera on panel by Giovanni Bellini, entitled The two crucified thieves (estimate: \$500,000–700,000) and a pair of Muses by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (estimate: \$300,000–500,000). There is an exceptionally strong section of vedute “view” paintings in the sale, including two works by Bernardo Bellotto (A capriccio of the Palazzo del Senatore, Rome, estimate: \$600,000–800,000; and The Market Square, Pirna, estimate \$500,000–800,000). There is also a superb view of Rome by Antonio Joli (estimate: \$500,000–700,000), a capriccio by Michele Marieschi (estimate: \$200,000–300,000), a view of Venice by Johann Richter (estimate: \$150,000–250,000), a view of Rome by Hendrick van Lint (estimate: \$120,000–180,000) and a magnificent capriccio by Giovanni Paolo Panini (estimate: \$300,000–500,000).

The incomparable master of the 18th century Spanish court, José de Goya y Lucientes, was as intrigued by the intricacies of the still-life as he was by the psychology of his sitters. Although he did not start painting still-lives until he was over sixty years old and only some twelve works of this genre are known to exist, they are a vital and important part of the artist's oeuvre. A marvelous example of the former is Still-life with hares (estimate: \$2,000,000–3,000,000), which offers a unique opportunity to acquire one of the incredibly rare Goya still-lives to have appeared at auction in recent years.

A small but select group of English paintings includes a portrait of Lady Killigrew by Sir Anthony van Dyck (estimate: \$400,000–600,000), a ravishing little landscape by Joseph Wright of Derby of the gulf of Salerno (estimate: \$20,000–30,000) and Henry Fuseli's 'The Three Witches' from Shakespeare's Macbeth (estimate: \$250,000–350,000).

Auction: Important Old Master Paintings

January 24

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

January 18 – 23

More information about Christie's sale of Important Old Master Paintings can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.