

For Immediate Release

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TWO SPECTACULAR EXAMPLES OF AMERICAN FURNITURE LEAD CHRISTIE'S JANUARY 2005 AMERICANA SALE

A Rare New York Marble Top Pier Table and a Labeled Townsend Chest-on-Chest, Highlight the Sale

Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver and Prints January 20 & 21, 2005

New York, NY – Two exceptional works of art, the only documented piece of furniture by Thomas Townsend and one of the most important marble top pier tables from New York, will lead Christie's Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver and Prints sale on January 20 & 21. Boasting an impeccable provenance, the Townsend bonnet-top chest-on-chest comes from the Estate of Robert David Lion Gardiner, a scion of one of the oldest and most important New York families. Equally impressive, the extremely rare New York marble top pier table descends directly from the Cortelyou family and is one of the finest examples ever to appear at auction.

The New York Marble Pier Table

Very few marble top tables have survived from Colonial America and the present example, the Cortelyou Family Chippendale carved mahogany marble top pier table, 1750-1770 (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000), is not only an exceptional example from New York but also the most developed form to survive from the area. This superb marble top pier table is considered a *tour de force* of New York craftsmanship with its sweeping form, outstanding execution of carved knees and feet, exquisite proportions, original thick marble top and rich original surface. The small group of serpentine tables that do exist are mainly from Newport, Rhode Island and Philadelphia while very few have survived from New York. Though the maker is unknown, the table was executed by one of the sophisticated New York shops during the 1750s and 1760s, a time when the cabinet trade was flourishing. Immigrant carvers from London and elsewhere came to New York following the

French and Indian Wars, including Henry Hardcastle, Stephen Dwight, John Brinner, James Strachan and John Minshall.

The table descended through the Cortelyou family, a Dutch family that immigrated to Long Island, New York. By 1657, the Huguenot Jacques Cortelyou was the surveyor-general of the colony and in the same year founded a town in memory of his Dutch birthplace called “New Utrecht.” He was a respected member of the community also serving as Vendue Master, captain of militia, a justice of the peace, a judge in the court of common pleas and sessions, and is believed to have created the first map of New York City. His great grandson, Aaron Cortelyou (1726-1789), who petitioned for the founding of the first Moravian church of Staten Island, is thought to have ordered the table for his home, the Lakeman-Cortelyou-Tayloe House on Staten Island in 1761.

Property from the Estate of Robert D. L. Gardiner

The Chippendale mahogany bonnet-top chest-on-chest, Newport, Rhode Island, circa 1772 (estimate: \$500,000-800,000), is the only known documented piece of furniture made by Thomas Townsend. This piece is the key in attributing other furniture to his shop. Townsend was a prisoner of the French and Indian Wars and the American Revolution and little is known of his career. In addition to the label, the chest also bears the ink inscription *Nicholas Easton 1772* on the top of the lower case. Easton was also a cabinetmaker and may have signed the case while working as a journeyman in Townsend’s shop. While little is known about Easton, he did have clear ties to the Gardiner family and the Newport cabinetmaking community.

This rare chest-on-chest along with a select group of furniture and objects comes from the collection of a 16th generation Gardiner, Robert David Lion Gardiner, who was a custodian of four centuries of collecting. The Gardiner family owns over 3,000 acres of land called Gardiner’s Island, one of the largest private islands in the world, located on the eastern part of Long Island. Lion Gardiner first purchased the land in 1639 from the Algonquian Indians for a gun, gunpowder, cloth and ‘a large black dog,’ an agreement later ratified by Charles I. He came to America as an engineer and fort-builder for the financiers of a small colony, now Connecticut. After helping to defeat the Pequot Indians, he sought permanent residence on Long Island Sound, an area that reminded him of his home in the Isle of Wight, England. He eventually owned nearly 100,000 acres of the island through his friendship with Chief Wyandanch of the Montaukett Indians.

The Gardiners were among the wealthiest and most prominent families on Long Island during the pre- and post-Revolutionary periods. Later generations continued to uphold their prominence locally and nationally. John Lyon Gardiner (1770-1816) married the daughter of Connecticut Governor Griswold and Julia Gardiner (1820-1889) married the tenth President of the United States, John Tyler. The collection, offered from the Estate of Robert D. L. Gardiner includes American furniture and silver, Old Master paintings (Important Old Master Paintings sale, January 26), English and Continental furniture and porcelain and historical portraits (House Sale, March 1 & 2), and books and documents (Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts, June 14).

Additional Highlights

Furniture highlights include a Chippendale carved mahogany easy chair, Philadelphia, 1755-1765, among the most intact surviving 18th century example that closely compares to three others, one of which is in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (estimate: \$600,000-900,000). Also offered is a distinguished Queen Anne mahogany tray-top tea table from Boston, 1740-1760 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), one of the most sophisticated American examples of the tray-top form with an addition of a drawer, and a Federal painted and figured maple work table, 1800-1810 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000), a collaborative work between masterful craftsmen John and Thomas Seymour and superb decorative painter John Ritto Penniman.

American Folk Art

Christie's strong offering of American Folk Art will be highlighted by a selection of delightful pictures. A watercolor on silk titled *Aurora* by Ruth Downer (1797-1833) (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) is a beautiful and meticulously rendered work in a bold and colorful design and demonstrates the sophistication, skill and education of young women in early 19th century New England. *Aurora*, which shows the Goddess Aurora riding her chariot, is one of five surviving examples from an unknown girls' school that depicts the same subject and overall design of a grassy foreground and a river with a ship sailing towards a town of white clustered buildings. These pictures are in the collections of The Folk Art Museum, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection and a private collection. The present work also has descended directly through Ruth Downer's family. A companion piece by the artist titled *Diana* (estimate: \$60,000-90,000) is also beautifully executed and reinforces her high education, knowledge of classicism and sense of fashion.

Very rare portraits titled *A Group of Family Portraits* by William Matthew Prior, c. 1840 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000), will also be offered. Prior, known better for his academic pictures, advertised that "persons wishing for a flat picture can have a likeness without shade or shadow at quarter the price." Similar in style is George Hartwell's handsome *Pair of Portraits of a Gentleman and a Lady*, circa 1840 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

A menagerie of carved and painted carousel animals will highlight the sale including a rare and charming elephant by Charles Loeff, circa 1885 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), a stander horse by Daniel C. Muller, circa 1927 (estimate: 70,000-100,000), and a giraffe by Gustave and William Denzel, circa 1910 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000). Other animal figures in the sale are a pair of carved and polychromed wood parrots by the trader Wilhelm Schimmel, Southeastern, Pennsylvania, 1865-1890 (estimate: \$12,000-18,000), that comes from the highly regarded collection of Edith Halpert, a **pioneer and advocate of contemporary American art during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s**.

An allegory of liberty, highly popularized during the formation of the new American nation, is shown on a watercolor, silk and chenille on silk needlework picture, 1805-1810 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), possibly by Sarah Wheeler of the Abby Wright School, South Hadley, Massachusetts. This highly detailed and vibrant

textile is one of five known surviving examples that all illustrate Liberty as a young woman with ringlets in her hair, wearing a classical-inspired gown and holding a cornucopia and flagpole topped by a liberty cap. The Abby Wright School, established in 1803, produced a well-documented and distinctive record of needlework until its closing in 1811.

James Bard, a marine artist who painted steamboats traveling the Hudson River and surrounding waters of Manhattan, will be included in the sale with *Brother Jonathan*, ca. 1851 (estimate: \$150,000-200,000), a ship built in New York to run to Panama in pursuit of gold. This painting once belonged to the Vanderbilt family. Representative of the immigrant artists who painted in Bridgeport, is a Connecticut landscape *Barge and Tom-Boat in Bridgeport Harbor* by J. F. Hoge (1809-1878) (estimate: \$50,000-80,000).

A nice grouping of weathervanes will highlight the sale and includes a copper Indian mermaid weathervane, early 20th century (estimate: \$18,000-22,000). Representing an unusual subject, this weathervane is believed to have been from a Krieger family outbuilding in Tuxedo Park. Also offered is a copper and zinc peacock weathervane, late 19th century (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), from the collection of Edith Halpert.

Mochaware

The sale features over 100 examples of mochaware assembled by devoted collectors Charles and Gloria Mandelstam over the past 35 years. Mochaware was a utilitarian ware produced from the mid-19th century to the early part of the 20th century in Staffordshire and Yorkshire, England although French potteries Creil and Montreuil in northwestern France were also making similarly decorated pieces. Though used as everyday objects, they were whimsically decorated in colored slip or liquid clay. Mochaware was sold in huge quantities to the American market at the time of its manufacture but since the wares were not preserved, few examples survive. This collection includes both English and French examples in a variety of shapes, colors and patterns, including a rare double jug of 1830-1840, one of only six known examples (estimate: \$15,000-25,000) and a selection of blue and green banded tavern mugs and jugs with estimates ranging from \$500 to 3,000.

Auction:	<i>Important American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver and Prints</i>	January 20 at 2 p.m. January 21 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Viewing:	Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center	January 15- 19

Additional information about Christie's Americana sale can be found on www.christies.com closer to the sale date. 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.

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