

Press Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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**CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER WORKS OF ART FROM ALTHORP
AND SPENCER HOUSE IN SUMMER 2010**



Althorp

Old Masters and 19th Century Art Evening Sale 6 July 2010
Works of Art from the Spencer Collections: The Spencer House Sale 8 July 2010
Works of Art from the Spencer Collections: The Spencer Carriages and Attic Sale Summer 2010

London – Christie's, the world's leading art business, announce that a selection of works of art from Althorp – the ancestral home of the Spencer Family and currently undergoing a £10 million re-roofing and restoration project - and Spencer House, their London town house until 1924 – which is still owned by the family, but is leased to tenants - will be offered in Summer 2010. In order to allow for reinvestment which will underpin the long term future of Althorp and its Estate, the Trustees of Althorp Estate have carefully selected a number of pieces of exceptional English and French furniture, porcelain and works of art from the Spencer Collections, two highly collectable and important Old Master pictures, and treasures from the attics at Althorp to be sold at Christie's this summer, in addition to the Spencer Carriage Collection, an exceptional group of 19th Century horse-drawn carriages. The Spencer Carriages and Attic sale, Spencer House sale and the sale of two Old Master pictures are estimated to raise approximately £20 million.

A statement from the Trustees outlines that *"For eighteen years, the Trustees at Althorp have significantly built up the Estate through the acquisition, development and retention of commercial and*

residential property. The Trustees believe now is the time to prepare for further, positive diversification and have therefore elected to sell a selection of works of art that are not core to the Althorp Collection. Their aim is to help the Althorp Estate to thrive for generations to come.”

Orlando Rock, Director of Christie’s Collections Department, commented: “*The sale of Works of Art from the Spencer Collections offers international collectors an unprecedented opportunity to acquire works of art from one of the most historic English collections. Like so many of the great aristocratic treasure houses, Althorp in Northamptonshire has, over the centuries, become the repository for works of art and furniture from numerous family houses, many of which have long disappeared or been sold. The rich and varied sales this Summer have therefore been carefully curated to ensure that the historic integrity of the 18th Century collections at Althorp remain intact – focusing instead upon later additions by both inheritance and purchase.*” He added: “*This magnificent group embraces two sublime Old Master pictures, exceptional works of art originally supplied to Spencer House - the most important Neo-Classical interior in Britain which the Spencer family lived in until the 1920s - and an array of treasures that have been stored in the attics and stables at Althorp, unseen for many years.*”

Important Old Master Pictures

Two highly important Old Master paintings will be offered at Christie’s sale of Old Masters and 19th Century Art at King Street on 6 July: *A Commander being armed for Battle*, painted circa 1613-14, by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) (estimate: £8,000,000 - £12,000,000) and *King David*, by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, Il Guercino (1591-1666) (estimate: £5,000,000-£8,000,000) datable to 1651.



Depicting a powerful moment of implacable moral determination, *A Commander being armed for Battle*, by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) is masterfully presented by the artist in the most forthright and technically accomplished manner; particularly notable in the facial expressions and the handling of the light. The sitter has traditionally been identified by some scholars as Emperor Charles V. Rubens has chosen, with his Baroque sense of drama and movement, the moment of arming the Commander. In contrast to the central figure, the youths have an attractive demeanour which contrasts deliberately and sharply with the proud manliness of the warrior.

A Commander being armed for Battle by Rubens was a comparatively late arrival to the collection, having only been at Althorp since 1802 when it hung as an overdoor. Although originally described as the ‘School of Rubens’ in the 1802 inventory of the Althorp collection, this superbly preserved picture is now justly recognised as the prime

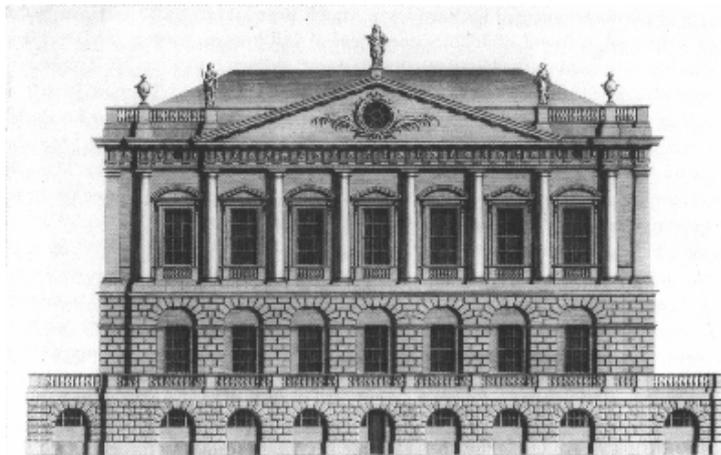
version of this composition by leading Rubens scholars, including those connected to the Corpus Rubenianum in Antwerp.

Richard Knight, Co-International Head of Old Masters and 19th Century Art at Christie's said: *"This magnificent work by Rubens is one of the most important works by the artist to remain in private hands in the UK. It is a museum quality masterpiece and will have wide international appeal."*

King David by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, Il Guercino was acquired in Rome through the Scottish painter and dealer Gavin Hamilton by John, 1st Earl Spencer in 1768. Originally commissioned in 1651 by Giuseppe Locatelli for the Palazzo Locatelli in Cesena and depicting the Old Testament Hebrew prophet, King David, the work was bought specifically to hang in the Great Room at Spencer House. The quiet classicism of *King David* would have been in keeping with the opulent yet restrained decoration of the London house overseen between 1759 and 1765 by James 'Athenian' Stuart and it was placed in a carved and gilded frame specifically designed by the great classical architect himself. There the painting remained until the 1920s, when the 7th Earl Spencer, faced with declining agricultural rents and rising costs, took the difficult decision to give up Spencer House and take the works of art northwards to Althorp.



Works of Art from the Spencer Collections: The Spencer House Sale



The West Front of Spencer House to the Green Park

Spencer House in St. James's is one of only a handful of London's great eighteenth-century private palaces to remain intact today. Built by John, 1st Earl Spencer between 1759-65, it is arguably the earliest and most important Neo-Classical revival interior. The

‘Spencer House’ sale includes a variety of exceptional pieces of English and French furniture, porcelain and objets d’art that were originally supplied for Spencer House between 1755 and 1791. Subsequently moved to Althorp in the late 19th and early 20th Century, many are recorded in a series of evocative photographs of both Spencer House and, subsequently, Althorp taken between 1874 and 1912.

The Spencer House sale is particularly rich in exceptional examples of English seat-furniture designed by the architects John Vardy and James ‘Athenian’ Stuart. Originally from extensive suites, sometimes in excess of over 60 pieces, the sale includes specimen pairs from these long sets, of which the majority will remain in the collection at Althorp.



Highlights include a rich array of pieces designed by James ‘Athenian’ Stuart and supplied by Gordon and Taitt: a set of four George III giltwood open armchairs, *illustrated left* (estimate: £300,000-£500,000) originally supplied for the Great Room, with four matching side chairs (£100,000-£150,000); a George II mahogany sofa (estimate: £120,000 to £180,000) and a set of four George II mahogany open armchairs en suite (estimate: £300,000-£500,000); and a pair of George II giltwood stools commissioned either for

Lord Spencer’s Room or the Palm Room (estimate: £200,000-£300,000). There is also a pair of George III ormolu candelabra supplied by Diedrich Nicholaus Anderson for the Painted Room, estimated at £150,000 to £250,000, *illustrated right*, and a set of twelve George II mahogany dining chairs, from an original suite of at least 23. Almost certainly by Chippendale’s great rivals, Messrs. Mayhew and Ince and supreme masterpieces of the carver’s art, these chairs were designed by Vardy for the Great Eating Room (estimate: £600,000-£1,000,000. Perhaps intended for the very same room was a spectacular George II ormolu-mounted mahogany wine cooler attributed to Benjamin Goodison, circa 1755 (estimate: £120,000-£180,000).



The 2nd Earl Spencer – brother of the ‘Duchess’ Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire – and his wife Lavinia were not to be outdone. Leading lights of the increasingly Francophile Whig taste at the Court of the Prince



Regent, it was they who purchased the magnificent suite of Louis XVI furniture decorated with Japanese lacquer panels, *illustrated left*. Executed by Claude-Charles Saunier,

the commode and matching corner cupboards were acquired from the Parisian luxury merchant or marchand-mercier Dominique Daguerre just after the French Revolution in March 1791. The original bill described them as ‘*Une grande commode en laque sterlin 100’ Deux coins diem 52’*. This July, they are expected to fetch in the region of £2,500,000 to £4,000,000.

Porcelain has also long-been a passion of the Earls Spencer. Highlights include a Sevres porcelain dinner service presumably ordered by the 2nd Earl Spencer on his first trip to Paris from the marchand M.Perragaux, 12 April 1786 (estimate: £50,000 to £80,000). Porcelain from Chelsea, Meissen and the Orient are also included – led by the garniture of five Japanese lacquered and mother-of-pearl inlaid Imari vases (estimate: £50,000-£80,000). Dating from the late 17th Century, these may well have formed part of the fabled collections of Oriental and ‘Indian’ porcelains assembled by the redoubtable Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, the builder of Blenheim Palace.



Pertinent to an election year, the sale includes two previously unpublished albums of drawings that shed new light on the most significant political reform of the 19th Century. These two albums of original portrait drawings by Benjamin Robert Haydon (estimate: £60,000 - £80,000) depict detailed sketches of the Members of Parliament who attended the Reform Banquet in 1832 and who affected the reform of Parliament that same year: the resulting Act of Parliament, the Reform Act of 1832 introduced wide-ranging changes to the electoral system of the United Kingdom.

The Spencer Carriages

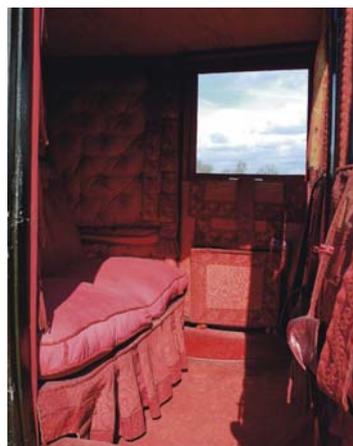


The Attic and Carriages sale includes The Spencer Carriages, arguably the most important group of aristocratic 19th Century horse-drawn family carriages in existence and certainly the most extensive to survive in the family for whom they were commissioned. Originally housed in the Mews behind Spencer House and numbering over a dozen, they are representative of the needs of a leading English political family throughout the 19th century – and almost all are painted in matching Spencer livery of dark green and black with maroon-striped undercarriages. Several of the carriages will be

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sold with sets of harness mounted with the Spencer family coat-of-arms. Moved to the Stables at Althorp in the early 20th Century, the collection has been in secure storage since the Princess Diana award-winning exhibition was installed in the Stable Block at Althorp in 1998.

At the core of the group are three carriages by one of the leading London makers of the Regency period - Barker of Chandos Street. These include the state chariot (estimate: £50,000-£80,000) *illustrated right*, one of the grandest types of carriage and one designed with only two seats. It was intended to be used by Lord and Lady Spencer alone on state occasions.



The interior is lined in sumptuous 'padua' red watered silk, a family colour derived from the hunting field, and the roof is mounted with magnificent silvered coronets. As was customary, the coats-of-arms on the doors were updated over time and those on this chariot almost certainly date from its use for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

The other two carriages by Barker are extremely comfortable barouches, with huge C-springs suspending the body in luxury. One is a 'posting' or travelling barouche (estimate: £20,000-£30,000), with seats for coachman at the back although the actual steering would have been done by postilions mounted on the horses. Two postilions saddles are included with the lot, an exceptional survival. This posting barouche has a painted crest that suggests that it was used when the 5th Earl Spencer was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1868-1874 and 1882-1885.

The third Barker carriage is a park barouche (estimate: £20,000-£30,000) *illustrated right*, designed for the ritual of driving out on Hyde Park, with a front seat for a driver.

The other carriages reflect the complexity of the family's lives between Spencer House and their various houses in the country. An early



Victorian private coach or drag by the coachmakers Holland and Holland (estimate: £30,000-£50,000) is of the familiar stagecoach form and would be capable of transporting at least ten people, many of them in the discomfort of the top. Less chilly is an enclosed private omnibus of a slightly later date by Peters and Sons. Among the smaller carriages is one by Mulliner of Northampton (estimate: £2,000-£3,000), the leading 19th century coachmaker local to Althorp itself. Among the coachmaking branches of the Mulliner family, one went on to become car coach-builders, creating the bodies for some of the most beautiful Rolls Royce cars of the mid-20th century. The name still survives as a special projects division within Bentley Motors.

The Attic Sale



As this goes to Press, Christie's specialists are still working from room to room in Althorp's labyrinth of attics, cellars and stables discovering a treasure trove of works of art, ceramics, silver, textiles, furniture, pictures and militaria. From Coronation chairs to Coachmen's livery and Butler's trays to giltwood picture frames – not to mention copper batteries de cuisine and several centuries of textiles - the unused contents of the storerooms of this fascinating house are being revealed daily. Numerous historic items were put away in storage by past generations and are now being researched, with over 500 lots destined for the Attic Sale.

The cataloguing and photography of these works of art continues and further details will be released in the near future. In addition to the Carriages, highlights of the Attic Sale revealed to date include: a magnificent set of four Irish glass table display centrepieces, circa 1880 (estimate: £15,000-£25,000) commissioned by John Poyntz, 5th Earl Spencer while serving as Viceroy of Ireland; and an extensive Coalport turquoise bordered dinner service with the Spencer family crest (estimate: £10,000-£15,000).



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Images available on request
Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors

Althorp

Althorp is home to the Spencer family, one of Britain's most celebrated aristocratic dynasties, and its estate covers 14,000 acres of beautiful countryside in Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Norfolk. The house, with its magnificent interiors, is also home to one of Europe's finest private collections of furniture, paintings, photographs and ceramics – the result of one family's uninterrupted occupation for over 500 years. Sir John Spencer acquired a 300 acre estate around Althorp in 1508; and his grandson, another Sir John, had made Althorp the principal Spencer home by the time of his death, in 1586. Previously the family had lived at Wormleighton, in Warwickshire, much of which was to be destroyed in the English Civil War.

The house, which has been in existence since the beginning of the 16th century, is not the product of any one period, but has changed over the years. Like many great country houses, its interior and art collection has benefited from the discriminating and varied collecting of generations of occupants, their marriages and chance provisions. Today, the house, park and gardens at Althorp are open to the public from 1st July to 30th August. For further information, please visit, www.althorp.com.

Spencer House

Spencer House is arguably the most important Neo-Classical commission in England. Built in 1756-65 by the Hon. John, later First Earl Spencer, who wanted a home worthy of his wealth and ambition, it was constructed by John Vardy under the direction, and possibly the design, of Col. John Gray, secretary of the Society of the Dilettanti. From its conception, it was recognised as one of the most ambitious aristocratic town houses ever built in London and is, today, the city's only great eighteenth-century private palace to survive intact.

The furnishings supplied under John Vardy and James 'Athenian' Stuart for Spencer House are rightly lauded as being pivotal in the evolution of English decorative arts. Drawing heavily on the buildings he had documented on his travels to Greece and Italy, Stuart constructed the ballroom like a Roman palace; a painted room in the Roman arabesque style, called a 'phoenix' by Arthur Young; a music room; the Rubens room; and a dressing-room with fantastic pineapple-capitalled columns. The importance and appeal of their interiors to private collectors and museum curators alike is beyond doubt.

In 1924 Spencer House was leased, and much of the furniture - along with the mahogany doors and chimneypieces - was removed to Althorp. As a result, the state rooms were used as offices from the late 1920s until 1985, when RIT Capital Partners plc acquired the lease.

Interestingly, Spencer House was once occupied by Christie's. In 1941, Christie's premises on King Street suffered a direct hit during the Blitz in the Second World War. The firm moved to Derby House, near Oxford Street and then to Spencer House before returning to the re-built King Street premises in 1953.

Under the direction of its current occupants and leaseholders, Lord Rothschild and RIT Capital Partners plc, Spencer House has been the object of one of the most ambitious and celebrated restoration projects to be undertaken this century. The House has now been restored to its

original splendour and is used partly as offices and as a place where entertainments can be held in the historic setting of the state rooms.

Spencer House is open to the public for viewing every Sunday (except during January and August) from 10.30 a.m. - 5.45 p.m. Access is by guided tour, which lasts approximately 1 hour. Tours begin at regular intervals and the last admission is at 4.45 p.m. For further information, please visit, www.spencerhouse.co.uk.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2009 that totaled £2.1 billion/\$3.3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.