

For Immediate Release

Contact: Catherine Manson 020 7389 2664 cmanson@christies.com

HIGHLY IMPORTANT CARPETS TO APPEAL TO COLLECTORS AND CONNOISSEURS AT CHRISTIE'S IN APRIL



Rugs and Carpets

Thursday 15 April 2010

London – The enduring appeal of the finest quality Persian carpets continues to command audiences today. One of the strongest selections of Persian carpets offered to the market in recent years will feature Christie's bi-annual London sale on 15 April 2010. Highlights include a stunning and rare mid-17th century Kirman 'vase' carpet (estimate: £200,000-300,000), *illustrated left*. This particular example reflects how the weavers of Kirman were arguably the most inventive and influential of all carpet designers, at this time. *"This example has huge charm, subtlety and balance, which combine in a design of deceptive simplicity"*, commented **William Robinson, Director, Rugs and Carpets**.

Since the 16th century weavers in the Islamic world have created carpets directly for export to be used in houses in Europe and, more recently, America. An early and famous connoisseur was King Henry VIII of England (r.1509-1547) who is depicted, in portraits, standing on carpets very similar to a Star Ushak carpet from West Anatolia, last quarter 15th or first quarter 16th century, in the upcoming sale (estimate: £50,000-80,000).

When sitting in front of the loom, each weaver starts with a plain rectangle within which almost any design can be created. At one other end of the weaving scale is the tribeswoman who has no cartoon, just an amazing memory for traditional patterns. This sale is particularly rich in weavings by the Qashqai tribe, a nomadic tribe who live in western Iran. The best examples use wool that is extraordinarily soft, occasionally accented with purple silk wefts running between the rows of knots. One remarkable example dates to *circa* 1870, *illustrated right*, which even has the end panels fully woven in the piled technique; these parts of the rug were invariably flatwoven (estimate: £5,000-7,000).



In other contexts, such as an established workshop, a very rigid cartoon was used. Perfection was the aim, and the fineness of the materials, the number of knots per centimeter, the quality of the dyes employed all have a major part to play in the appreciation of such carpets. Collectors of workshop carpets are looking for examples where all these features come together, as illustrated by a number of silk rugs in this sale. One of the best workshops of silk carpets, that has always been highly collectable, is that established in Koum Kapi, the "sand gate" on the southern edge of Istanbul, a beautiful example is from *circa* 1920, *illustrated left* (estimate: £18,000-20,000). Some of these examples are signed by the master weaver Zareh Penyamin who concealed his signature within the metal thread details that he wove into the silk design. The auction includes a near-pair of silk and metal thread Koum Kapi

prayer rugs by Penyamin which were last sold in Christie's in 1985; each *circa* 1910 with estimates of £25,000 to £35,000.

The sale is particularly rich in silk rugs, a number of which come from a private collection that has been built up over the last 25 years, including a souf Kashan carpet; a carpet woven with the design in coloured pile against a silver thread ground, creating a relief or *souf* effect (estimate: £12,000-18,000).

Of all the Persian silk rugs it tends to be the products of Heriz that are the most sought after. The sale has two truly extraordinary examples. One is a pictorial rug depicting an enthroned young Qajar prince (estimate: £22,000-28,000) while the other, which displays a wonderful finesse of weave and a potentially unique method of plaiting silver wire into the structure, bears the very rare signature of Rajab (estimate: £40,000-60,000).



The classic period of courtly rug production was the 16th and 17th century, whether in Turkey, Persia or India; the influences of the rugs of that period have echoed down through subsequent centuries to contemporary rug designs. The sale has one beautiful Fereghan rug from early 19th century West Persia, that is inspired by the extraordinary millefleurs rugs from India in the 17th century, which were woven with an incredible fineness, in pashmina wool (estimate: £35,000-50,000), *illustrated left*.

Additional highlights include two remarkable Agra carpets in the sale that would look stunning in any interior and are of excellent quality. One is from *circa* 1890 (estimate: £25,000-35,000) and the other is from mid-19th century (estimate: £40,000-60,000) *illustrated right*. The styles of these carpets demonstrate that certain classic looks never go out of fashion.



More recently created highlights in the sale include an extremely fine Meshed carpet made by one of the late Shah of Iran's favourite weavers, Saber, North East Persia, *circa* 1940 (estimate: £8,000-12,000).

###

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

Notes to Editors:

King Street Public viewing: Sunday 11 April – Wednesday 14 April

Sale: Thursday, 15 April: 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.
Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, SW1Y 6QT

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.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium