

For Immediate Release

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Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**PROPERTY FROM THE PORTLAND COLLECTION AT CHRISTIE'S
IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER
Magnificent Jewels, Fabergé, Old Masters and Sculpture**



The Duchess of Portland in coronation robes, 1902
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The Combat between Carnival and Lent by Pieter Bruegel II
(Brussels 1564- 1637/8 Antwerp)
Estimate: £2,000,000–3,000,000

London – Christie's announce an historic opportunity for connoisseurs around the globe in late November and early December, when a magnificent selection of jewellery, Fabergé, old master paintings and sculpture will be offered from collections of the Dukes of Portland, in a series of auctions in London.

22 lots will be showcased in four auctions over two weeks: *Russian Art* on Tuesday 29 November; *Jewels: The London Sale* on Wednesday 1st December; *Old Masters & 19th Century Art* on Tuesday 7th and *500 Years: Decorative Arts Europe* on Thursday 9th. Highlights are led by the re-appearance of *The Combat between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Bruegel II (Brussels 1564-1637/8 Antwerp) (estimate: £2,000,000–3,000,000), *illustrated above*, a sumptuous antique diamond and natural pearl brooch, with three drops, 1870 (estimate: £500,000-700,000) and an exceptionally rare terracotta bust of John Locke, 1755, by Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770) (estimate: £600,000-900,000). With estimates ranging from £4,000 to £3 million, *Property from The Portland Collection* is expected to realise in excess of £6 million.

Edward Clive, Director of Christie's: *'The collections of the Dukes of Portland were undoubtedly among the most illustrious in England. Christie's is honoured to be entrusted with presenting such outstanding jewels and works of art to the international market, at a time when refined appreciation of quality, beauty and provenance is paired with a notable hunger for 'the best'. These sales provide a remarkable and highly evocative window to the world of a great family collection.*

The Portland family descended from Hans Willem Bentinck (1649-1709), one of William of Orange's closest allies during and after his ascent to the English throne in 1688. In recognition of his friendship



and support, Bentinck was created the 1st Earl of Portland; his eldest son Henry succeeded him as Earl and was created 1st Duke of Portland in 1716. Bentinck's grandson married Lady Margaret Cavendish Holles Harley, the greatest heiress of her day, in 1734, herself a collector of natural curiosities and an eminent scientist. Their son, William Bentinck, the 3rd Duke, was twice Prime Minister in 1783 and 1807-09. In the late 19th century the 5th Duke is best known for his magnificent underground buildings in Nottinghamshire.



Providing evocative illustrations of an age of confidence and prosperity, the 13 exquisite jewels to be offered on Wednesday 1 December are dazzling highlights amidst the multiple treasures offered. Mostly from the jewel casket of Winifred Duchess of Portland (1863-1954) *illustrated page 1*, one of the great beauties of her time and a prominent society figure, they are led by a sumptuous antique diamond and natural pearl brooch, with three drops, *circa* 1870 (estimate: £500,000-700,000) and an antique diamond festoon necklace, *circa* 1870 (estimate: £400,000-600,000). The brooch was evidently one of Duchess Winifred's favourites – as her full length portrait by John Singer Sargent shows the pearls prominently displayed on her 17th century style costume; they are also seen in photographs of the Duchess in coronation robes and at the 1897 Devonshire House costume ball, a celebration of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897. Natural pearls are highly sought after gems. The pearls in this brooch are comparable to the historic *La Pélégrina* or the *Mancini Pearls* and are some of the largest and most desirable drops to appear at auction in recent years.

The Duchess married the 6th Duke of Portland in 1889. Dating to 1890, the Portland sapphire, diamond and pearl tiara (estimate: £250,000-300,000) and its matching stomacher brooch (estimate: £60,000-80,000) were made by E. Wolff & Co. for Garrard. Most of the collection was commissioned from Garrard, the Crown Jewelers since 1843. The 1887 family inventory notes that several of the family jewels were dismantled to construct the tiara and it seems likely that other examples may have been remodelled from earlier Portland jewels, such as a fine ruby, mounted in an Edwardian platinum and diamond ring, the cut and flat shape of which point to it possibly dating from the 17th century (estimate: £400,000-600,000).

Further highlights:

<i>Russian Art</i> Tuesday, 29 November 2010	
 	<p>It is believed that these Fabergé works: a realistically carved <i>Obsidian Model of a Seal</i>, <i>circa</i> 1900 (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and a <i>Two-Colour Gold and Silver-Mounted Guilloché Enamel Table Clock</i>, 1899-1908 (estimate: £50,000-80,000) were acquired by Ivy Gordon-Lennox, Duchess of Portland, with the guidance of Queen Alexandra. It is notable that the Royal Collection contains a similar hardstone figure of an obsidian sea lion on a rock crystal base by Fabergé that was acquired by the Queen. Both the 6th and 7th Duchesses of Portland were closely associated with H. M. Queen Alexandra. The wife of the 7th Duke, Ivy Gordon-Lennox, held the office of Maid-of-Honour to Queen Alexandra between 1912 and 1915. She married the 7th Duke in 1915, and was invested as a D.B.E. in 1958.</p>

Old Masters & 19 Century Art

Tuesday 7 December 2010



The re-appearance of *The Combat between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Brueghel II (Brussels 1564-1637/8 Antwerp) marks a major addition to the *oeuvre* of Pieter Brueghel the Younger (estimate: £2,000,000–3,000,000) *detail illustrated left, full image illustrated page 1*. The picture is one of the Elder Brueghel's undisputed masterpieces, and only 5 versions by the Younger are known. The 4th Duke of Portland had acquired Brueghel's instantly-recognisable oil on panel by 1831. Measuring 46.1/2 x 65.1/2 in. (118.1 x 166.3 cm.) it is described in his wife's Memorandum Book as a "Picture of a Burlesque subject by P. Brughell."



Portrait of a Senator of Antwerp, half-length, in senatorial robes, leaning on a plinth, by Sir Anthony van Dyck (Antwerp 1599-1641 London) was most likely brought into the Portland Collection by either the 2nd Earl and 1st Duke of Portland, Henry Bentinck, (1682-1782) or his son, William, 2nd Duke of Portland (1709-1762). It is first recorded by John Achard, William's tutor. The masterful handling of the senator's robe is a powerful tribute to van Dyck's lifelong study of Titian. This oil on canvas measures 48.3/4 x 38.1/8 in. (123.9 x 97.2 cm.) and is estimated to realise between £1,000,000 and £1,500,000, *illustrated left*.

500 Years: Important Decorative Arts Europe

Thursday 9 December 2010



This Terracotta bust of John Locke, 1755, is by Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770), the most sought-after sculptor in England in the mid-18th century (estimate: £600,000-900,000). It part of a series of 'worthies' commissioned by Sir Edward Littleton. Locke came to be known as the Father of Liberalism, whose work had a profound influence on Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers of America. Rysbrack used the bust as a study for his full length marble of Locke at Christ Church collection, Oxford. The Littleton busts were dispersed in 1931, when the 6th Duke of Portland purchased *Locke*. The majority of Ryback's 'worthies' are now in public collections, making this an unprecedented opportunity to acquire a work by one of the greatest portraitists of Georgian England. The bust is accompanied by a letter from Rysbrack to his Patron dated 31 July 1756, discussing the delivery of the work.

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