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Press Release

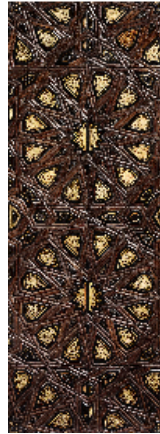
CHRISTIE'S

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**TREASURES OF THE ISLAMIC AND INDIAN WORLDS  
INCLUDING THE DR. MOHAMMED SAID FARSI COLLECTION  
AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN OCTOBER**



**London** - Christie's *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds* sale on 5 October, presents a wealth of over 400 rare and beautiful treasures of high quality and significant provenance which span the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Setting the tone, the sale begins with 50 lots from the core of **Dr. Mohammed Said Farsi's classical Islamic Art collection**. The group is led by an extremely rare **Fatimid Egyptian carved wooden panel**, *circa* 1150 (estimate: £400,000-600,000) and a late 18<sup>th</sup> century **Indian emerald, ruby and diamond parrot** (estimate: £400,000-600,000) *illustrated top right*, which is one of seven spectacular Mughal and Deccani jewelled gold objets de vertu featured. Christie's Dubai will offer the second sale of Modern Arab Art from the Farsi Collection on the 26<sup>th</sup> October.

Magnificent highlights elsewhere in the London sale range from an exceptional 17<sup>th</sup> century **Safavid velvet figural panel** (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000) *detail illustrated top left*; the only known **Mamluk figural ivory inlaid wooden door** (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000) *illustrated top centre*; an exquisite 11<sup>th</sup>/ 12<sup>th</sup> century **silk robe** (estimate: £400,000-600,000) and a monumental 12<sup>th</sup> century **Royal Seljuk carved stucco panel from Iran** (estimate: £500,000-800,000). With estimates from £500 to £1.2million, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £8 million.

Dr. Mohammed Said Farsi (b.1935) was the first Lord Mayor of Jeddah and is one of the Middle East's great patrons of the visual arts. He attributes his time in Alexandria, during the 1950s, to



having had the greatest effect on forming his artistic consciousness. This is reflected in the strength of Egyptian works in the collection, particularly from the Mamluk and Fatimid periods. **A very rare carved interlace wood panel provides a fine example of Fatimid wood carving in the 12<sup>th</sup> century** and illustrates the tradition of a geometric motif - comprising polygonal and star shaped panels - which began in the Fatimid period and developed in complexity over the next two centuries (estimate: £400,000-600,000), *detail illustrated left*.

The collection boasts a superb array of metal-work including an extraordinary **Mosul silver-inlaid brass jewellery casket** from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which is the only known example with a combination

lock in the lid. A 14<sup>th</sup> century Siirt silver and gold-inlaid bronze candlestick from East Anatolia (estimate: £120,000-180,000) is comparable to a candlestick in the Museo di Palazzo Venezia, which was previously in the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Vulturella presso Tivoli. A fine Mamluk silver and gold-inlaid candlestick dating to 1342 is also notable as it was made for Sultan Ahmed whose reign lasted for just a matter of months (estimate: £40,000-60,000).

Drawing the collection to a dramatic close are **seven jeweled gold objets de vertu**, which are, by repute, originally from the family of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The most impressive of all is an exceptional late 18<sup>th</sup> century **Mughal emerald, ruby and diamond-inset enamelled gold - parrot from India** (estimate: £400,000-600,000), *illustrated top right page one*. During the reigns of the great Mughal emperors, the classical imperial Mughal jewellery style developed and fused with indigenous traditions to produce a distinct style of jewellery and jewelled objects. A love for these glittering pieces was driven by demand from the courts, not just of the Mughals, but also of the Deccani sultans and smaller princedoms. A fine **Mughal gem-set silver and gold rosewater sprinkler** dating to north India in the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and a late 19<sup>th</sup> century **jewel-encrusted gold-mounted dagger from Yemen** and India (estimate: £30,000-50,000) are other examples.

Elsewhere in the sale, three outstanding museum quality highlights - each executed in very different periods, media and styles - come in the form of two panels and a door. Dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the only known **Mamluk figural ivory inlaid wooden door** is both academically significant and aesthetically beautiful; conveying a sense of movement (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000), *illustrated page one centre*. A monumental **Royal Seljuk carved stucco panel**, measuring 5ft high and 11 ft wide, provides evocative depictions of 12<sup>th</sup> century Iranian daily life, courtly pleasures, royal protocol and musicians (estimate: £500,000-800,000), *detail illustrated right*. This was bought from a French collection in the 1930s by the present owner's grandfather. An exceptional large **Safavid figural velvet panel**, from Iran in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is offered from the property of a European collector (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000), *detail illustrated page one top left*. Very few large figural velvets exist and the present lot is part of small number which depict substantial, rather than willowy, figures. Epitomising Safavid textile expertise at its best, the wide range of colours and complex design thematically illustrate a synergy between east and west, with the Christian mother and child figures and the overlaid cypress and pomegranate tree, which are part of early Safavid decorative arts found in carpet and book binding design.



Another very important textile is a rare 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century **silk robe from central Asia** (estimate: £400,000-600,000), *illustrated left*. This beautiful robe is in astonishing condition. An early example of Islamic textile production, the robe's design is very unusual as it was conceived as an overall pattern, rather than as individual roundels. A rare **solid gold bracelet, engraved with the name of the name of the last Ghaznavid ruler**, Kusraw Malik, dating to Afghanistan between 1160 and 1186 (estimate: £250,000-350,000) is a further impressive item.

A unique masterpiece of Islamic ceramics is offered in the form of an outstanding, incomplete, 13<sup>th</sup> century **Seljuk jar** with polychrome enameled decoration (mina'i) from central Iran (estimate: £300,000-500,000). Having been purchased by the previous owner's family in Iran and exported in April 1932,

its monumental size and highly accomplished figural decoration display complete technical prowess and demonstrate considerable technical sophistication. With its voluptuously curved baluster body, this is one of the best illustrations of the mastery reached by Iranian potters before the Mongol invasions.

The Islamic paintings featured include two wonderful historically significant portraits which date to 1625, which are **the earliest known western portraits of Iranians**: Sinal Khan by Esaye le Gillion, 1604-05 (estimate: £40,000-50,000) *illustrated right* and Mehdi Quli Beg, by le Gilon, 1604-5 (estimate: £35,000-45,000). Miniatures range from a superb **Safavid depiction of a battle between the army of Shah Ima'il and the Aq Qoyunlu** (estimate: £12,000-18,000), which is thought to have been removed long ago from a manuscript Christie's sold in 1999 (estimate: £12,000-18,000), to a charming **17<sup>th</sup> century Safavid miniature of a youth with a falcon** which is offered from the property of the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, to benefit its acquisitions fund (estimate: £3,000-5,000).



Drawing the Islamic section to a close, notable **Ottoman lots** range from a wonderful 19<sup>th</sup> century polychrome painted and relief carved **Damascus room from Syria** (estimate: £40,000-60,000) to an early **16<sup>th</sup> century Qur'an**, which is an example from the Royal workshops with high quality illumination and original binding, from Ottoman Turkey (estimate: £30,000-50,000). A magnificent **Ottoman gilt-copper (tombak) ewer**, complete with the original chains linking the stopper and the lid to the body, which dates to the second half the 18<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates the Ottoman baroque style which began during the reign of Ahmed III (1703-1730) (estimate: £20,000-30,000), *illustrated left*. A late **19<sup>th</sup> century large Kutahya tile** depicting the royal relief of Ivriz provides a delightful quirky example of later Ottoman art (estimate: £5,000-7,000).



**Anglo-Indian works of art are led by an album of botanical paintings showing north Indian plants** (estimate: £60,000-80,000), *detail illustrated right*. Though executed in India by Indian artists around 1810, this very elegant album fits in to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century European tradition of *Florilegia*. Further highlights include a magnificent **16<sup>th</sup> century Mughal miniature of the Annunciation** (estimate: £50,000-70,000) and from the **19<sup>th</sup> century two miniatures of racehorses and grooms signed Sheikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya, Calcutta** (estimate: £15,000-20,000 and £20,000-30,000).



All of these works reflect the fascinating fusion of eastern and western cultures, society and religion. Games boards were amongst the first articles encountered by the Europeans in India which they could use, a superb example is a **16<sup>th</sup> century fine micro-mosaic ivory and ebony inlaid games board** from Gujarat (estimate: £50,000-70,000); it has the lattice for chess on one side and divisions for trik-trak, a precursor to backgammon, on the other. Less whimsical, but equally masterful examples of craftsmanship include a very realistic Moghul Ram's-headed jade-hilted dagger, from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: £30,000-40,000) and a fine horse-headed jade-hilted dagger from the same period (estimate: £15,000-20,000).

### Indian & Islamic Works of Art and Textiles ~ South Kensington ~ 8 October

Christie's South Kensington auction of *Indian & Islamic Works of Art and Textiles* will offer over 500 lots with estimates ranging from £500 to £6,000. The sale will feature the final 100 lots of Ottoman, Safavid and Qajar manuscripts, calligraphies and miniatures from the revered collection of the late Djafar Ghazi. This collection was built over a period of 60 years and has captured many people's



imaginings, as demonstrated by the amazing results in Christie's recent sales. In addition, a superb collection of Indian miniatures, a group of Qajar and Ottoman weapons from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries and medieval pottery and tiles of incredible quality will be offered. Further highlights include a 19<sup>th</sup> century Islamic style Lobmeyr enameled glass flask (estimate: £1,000-1,200), a 13<sup>th</sup> century Iranian



turquoise glazed moulded pottery jug (estimate: £2,000-3,000) and a late 18<sup>th</sup> century Qajar Lacquer papier-mache card box and 20 playing cards (estimate: £1,200-1,500), *illustrated left*. Historically, card games flourished as a leisure pastime in Persia, even though it was considered a form of gambling and was forbidden in certain parts of the country, which adds to the rarity and uniqueness of this lot.

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Images available on request

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#### **Sale dates and public viewing:**

- **Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds:**

Viewing: Thursday 30 September to Monday 4 October

Sale: Tuesday 5 October: Christie's London, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT

- **Indian and Islamic Works of Art and Textiles:**

Viewing: Saturday 2 October to Thursday 7 October

Sale: Friday 8 October: Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7 3LD

#### **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