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Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**WHITE GOLD - TWO IMPORTANT SALES OF
FINE MEISSEN AND SEVRES TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN MAY**



White Gold - 18th Century Porcelain from Meissen and du Paquier
Property of The Byrnes Children Trust

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London – This May Christie's King Street celebrates 18th century porcelain with two important sales entitled *White Gold*. The first collection which will be offered on 12 May coincides with the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Meissen factory and is a fitting celebration of this important cultural and historic event. This single owner collection of Meissen and Viennese du Paquier is the property of The Byrnes Children Trust and consists of over 170 lots that will be offered in the morning session. The auction will be immediately followed by the afternoon sale of *White Gold - 18th Century Porcelain from Vincennes and Sèvres*; one of the most important selections of porcelain to appear on the market from the internationally renowned French manufactures. These two unique sales are a tribute to the great names in European porcelain, which are synonymous with quality across the world, from the Americas to the Middle East and Australia.

White Gold - 18th Century Porcelain from Meissen and du Paquier

Christie's is proud to offer the Property of The Byrnes Children Trust, a splendid collection of Meissen and du Paquier which wonderfully illustrates how Meissen designs evolved during the eighteenth century, between 1710 and 1760. The collection is a demonstration of how useful wares that were created for the rich and powerful of the day were elaborately decorated with exquisite gilding, painted scenes and sculptural decoration. As well as

the service wares that Dr Byrnes has amassed over the last 40 years he has collected stunning figure groups and vases and these will all be offered in the May sale.

Highlights include pieces from the exquisite Swan service; one of the largest services created in the 18th century, commissioned by influential statesman of the Saxon Court and director of the Meissen factory from 1733-63; Count Brühl. The pieces in this service were the triumph of J.J. Kändler, head of the Meissen sculpture workshop and the most important sculptor in porcelain of the 18th century. The collection features a bottle stand from the service (estimate: £10,000-15,000), *illustrated right*, beautifully decorated with gilding and moulded with swans, herons, reeds and water, and shell cartouches enclosing the coat-of-arms.



Like Count Brühl, Augustus the Strong was a key figure in the world of ceramic collecting in the 18th century, and had a particular taste and appreciation for Meissen. He housed his collection in the Japanese Palace in Dresden, displayed alongside fine Japanese and Chinese porcelain. A blue and white vase (estimate: £40,000-60,000), *illustrated top left*, was commissioned by Augustus the Strong, probably for a royal residence such as the Japanese Palace or hunting lodge. Also included in the Byrnes Children Trust collection is a selection of works by **du Paquier**, produced in Vienna between 1719 – when the formula was stolen from the Meissen factory – until 1744, when ownership passed to the Habsburg emperors. Alongside Meissen, du Paquier

was the only factory to produce true, hardpaste porcelain in the early eighteenth century yet different styles began to develop and these are apparent in the collection. One particularly fine example is a gilded bowl, cover and stand (estimate: £7,000-10,000), *illustrated above*, which depicts figures in wooded landscapes and classical ruins, delicately painted in puce.

White Gold - 18th Century Porcelain from Vincennes and Sèvres

The sale of *White Gold - 18th Century Porcelain from Vincennes and Sèvres* presents a rare opportunity to view one of the most important selections of porcelain to appear on the market. The last notable collection of Sèvres was sold by Christie's in December 2001 as part of the *Collection Zieseniss* that realized in excess of €2.7 million. The second of the *White Gold* sales this May will chart the history of the Vincennes and Sèvres factory from the 1740s through to the 1790s. Careful research into these factories' records reveals the extraordinary provenance of the pieces offered in the sale, and much can be traced back to Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour and French

nobility. As so much of the production is recorded, the paper trail from the factory's and dealers' archives and the owners' inventories reveal the remarkable provenance of the works that will be offered in May. With estimates ranging from £1,500 to £280,000, this 82 lot sale is expected to fetch in the region of £2 million.



Early pieces from Vincennes were highly influenced by Meissen, as the beginning of the sale catalogue illustrates, though the recipe developed by Vincennes was slightly different to the German factory; Vincennes and Sèvres produced a soft-paste porcelain. A pair of bottle coolers (estimate: £75,000-85,000), *illustrated left*, demonstrate the influence of the Meissen style and are typical of early Vincennes, with the carefully painted idyllic river landscapes and rich gilding. However, from the 1750s onwards Sèvres began to establish a more contemporary French style, which became more popular in Europe. The innovative techniques developed by the craftsmen throughout the eighteenth century included imitating oriental lacquer and cloisonné, which made Sèvres

highly distinctive and popular throughout Europe. All Sèvres pieces were designed for a specific use and the careful cataloguing of the *White Gold* sale refers to the pieces with their original name in French, which often indicates their particular intended use.

Highlights include a beautiful Vincennes *bleu lapis* vase and cover (estimate: £230,000-280,000), *illustrated top right*, which was made as a diplomatic gift for Elizabeth of Russia from Louis XV of France in 1757. Originally one of a pair in a five-part garniture, this stunning vase was previously the most expensive lot of the Christie's New York sale of the Elizabeth Parke Firestone Collection in 1992. A figure group (estimate: £60,000-80,000), *illustrated right*,



This unusual fine glazed white porcelain group represents a scene from a contemporary comic opera by Charles-Simeon Favart, whose works inspired artists such as Boucher. Madame de Pompadour played a very important role in the commissioning of Sèvres as well as setting trends, with exquisite pieces such as a *bleu mosaïque* ewer and basin or *pot à eau à la romaine et jatte* (estimate: £30,000-40,000), *illustrated left*. The decorative border on the ewer and basin became popular in the 1750s and '60s and it is recorded that Madame de Pompadour was amongst the earliest buyers of pieces with this design.



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