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THE ABBEY PALACE OF ROYAUMONT FOULD-SPRINGER COLLECTION



Treasures of Neoclassicism, Furniture and Works of Art, Old Master and 19th Century Paintings and Drawings, Goldsmithing, European Ceramics, Asian Art

Paris – Christie's France is honoured to offer the Fould-Springer collection adorning the Abbey Palace of Royaumont near Chantilly to be held on 19, 20 and 21 September 2011. Designed for the Abbot of Balivière around 1780 by the architect, Louis Le Masson, this historic Neoclassical palace

houses a collection of works of art, furniture, Old Master and 19th century drawings and paintings, European sculptures and ceramics, goldsmith pieces and Asian Art. Nearly 1,000 works will be put up for auction. The estimates range from a few hundred Euros up to one million Euros. The entire collection is estimated in excess of 4 million Euros.

The auction will be joining the ranks of the long tradition of *House Sales* organised by Christie's since the 18th century. It will provide the opportunity to discover a collection in its entirety and in its original habitat, the Abbey Palace of Royaumont. The works, the rooms and their arrangement have all been preserved at the estate for nearly a century. The onsite exhibition will offer up the chance to savour, over the course of a few days, the works of art in their incredible setting.

The Abbey Palace and Its Occupants

If the history of Royaumont first took root starting in the 13th century with the founding of the abbey by Saint Louis, then it is in the 18th century that the Abbey Palace sees the day. In 1781, Louis XVI's chaplain, Henri Eléonore Le Cornut de Balivière, is appointed Abbot of Royaumont. Though the majority of his time is spent at Versailles, he reserves Royaumont for hosting prominent figures, such as Paul I of Russia and Gustavus III of Sweden.

He then decides to have built an ambitious Abbey Palace, and seeks the expertise of Louis Le Masson, a student under the tutelage of renowned architect, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. He is a fervent admirer of Palladian architecture, the latest trend at the time. His work at Royaumont draws its inspiration directly from the 'Rotunda' in Venice brought to life by the illustrious Italian architect, Andrea Palladio. The Abbey Palace settles in rather nicely among other Neoclassical creations boasting a similar ambition, including Gabriel's *Petit Trianon*, Ledoux's *Pavillon de Madame du Barry* in Louveciennes or Bélanger's *Château de Bagatelle*.

During the Revolution, the whole of the estate is confiscated before being sold to Joseph Bourguet de Guilhem. Shortly thereafter in 1792, the abbey is destroyed; later, the buildings connecting the abbey to the Palace are demolished. When the Marquis of Travanet acquires the Royaumont estate, he designates the Abbey Palace as his primary residence, and transforms the remaining buildings. The Gouïn family, having taken over the reins come the start of the 20th century, sells the Palace in 1923 to the Baron and Baroness Fould-Springer. They undertake restoration of the property, and even have ornamental ponds restored to their original state. They devote all of their energy to decorating the Abbey Palace. The works of art selected are Neoclassical in nature, lending particularly well to both the setting and architecture. Adjacent to the majestic reception halls are more comfortable and intimate rooms. The result reflects the stately French taste of the period.

Eugène Fould, future Baron Fould-Springer, akin to Napoléon III's Minister of Finance, Achille Fould, descends from one of the most distinguished financial and industrial families of the 19th century. Thanks, in part, to this family, the construction of the Eiffel Tower was made possible, as seen on each main iron cast by the Forges de Pompey carrying the name of Fould, as well as the Jockey-Club Foundation and Heine-Fould Hospital. Eugène's wife, the Baroness Fould-Springer, née Marie-Cécile von Springer, hails from a very well-known family of Austrian industrialists. Her grandfather, Baron Max von Springer, created the yeast industry in 1872 in France while her father, Baron Gustav von

Springer, was close to the Emperor François-Joseph. Her mother, Hélène de Koenigswarter, was the daughter of the Deputy of Paris, Baron Maximilien de Koenigswarter.

The Baron and Baroness Fould-Springer divide their time between their Parisian residence on Avenue d'Iéna and the Abbey Palace where they hold celebrations. Among the many guests include Marcel Proust as well as the couple's nephew, Charles Ephrussi, founder of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, which apparently is the source of inspiration for the writer's character of Charles Swann in *A la recherche du temps perdu* [*In Search of Lost Time*]. Sacha Guitry is also a regular at the estate. During the war, the Palace remains untouched thanks to Spanish diplomat and family member, Eduardo Propper de Callejon, also husband of Hélène Fould-Springer, one of the Baron and Baroness's daughters.

After WWII, it is primarily the Baroness Fould-Springer and her son, Max, who call the Palace home at the weekend and during summer months. Max is passionate about architecture. He becomes involved in the restoration of several landmarks, most notably the Royal Opera of Versailles and the Great Stables of Chantilly. It is nothing other than natural that he devotes himself for over sixty years to restoring and reviving the Abbey Palace of Royaumont, its park and woods.

Though the palace is no longer a regular dwelling place since the late 1980s, it continues to be a rallying point for the family.

The Collection

The Palace is home to numerous Neoclassical masterpieces. The creations produced by the best designers, cabinet-makers and *bronziers* from the second half of the 18th century adorn the rooms designed by Louis Le Masson. In the lobby, a spectacular table dating from circa 1800 is attributed to the most famous *bronzier* of the period, Pierre-Philippe Thomire. The rails and feet are cast completely in bronze, and illustrate the fascination with the Egyptian style, which was so fashionable at the time (estimate: €500,000-800,000). Also an impressive Louis XVI cabinet reusing earlier Boulle marquetry panels and richly decorated with ormolu mounts illustrates the genius of the Parisian cabinet maker, Joseph Baumhauer (estimate: €400,000-600,000).

In addition, French Neoclassical chairs constitute one of the major axes of the collection. In one of the family bedrooms is a pair of giltwood chairs, which are stamped by Jean Jacques Pothier (estimate: €200,000-300,000). They illustrate beautifully the transition between the Louis XV style and the Louis XVI style. Whilst the general contour and certain decorative elements still lean toward the style of Louis XV, several elements embody an Antiquity-infused influence, which brings to mind a more Neoclassical nature. Seated alongside these masterpieces is a vast selection of attractive chairs whose estimates vary between a few hundred and a few thousand Euros.

The 19th century painting is an important part of the collection through its masterpieces created from a handful of the period's primary players. The classical style will be illustrated with a major work by Dutch painter, Barend Cornelis Koekkek (1803-1862) entitled, *Paysage boisé avec un château* (estimate: €150,000-200,000) whose presence in this collection brings to the forefront the eclectic nature of its owners. The Belle Epoque will be represented by the *Portrait de Julie de Koenigswater*,

Madame Isaac Hirsch Kann (estimate: €60,000-80,000) by Spanish native, Ricardo de Madrazo y Garreta (1852-1917), one of the most highly esteemed portrait artists of late 19th century Parisian aristocracy alongside Giovanni Boldini and John Singer Sargent. A selection of equestrian paintings will round up the selection with several compositions immortalising horse racing at its finest, including *Palmyra* (estimate: €4,000-6,000) and *Veronica* (estimate: €4,000-6,000) by William Richter (1824-1892) and a work by Alfred de Dreux (1810-1860) entitled, *Cavalier sautant une haie* (estimate : €3.000 – 5.000).

The section of Old Master drawings will feature more than one hundred pieces. There within is a stunning selection of architectural and decorative works lining the walls of one of the smaller family rooms in the Abbey Palace of Royaumont, otherwise known as “the drawing room.” The prints showcased, and for the most part in their original layout and frame, are representative of the period between 1760 and 1790, and were made possible by artists in the entourage of Jean-Charles Delafosse, Etienne de Lavallée-Poussin and Richard de Lalonde. For instance a small *Projet de médaille* on a blue background of the 18th century French school according to Jean-Baptiste Boucheron’s taste, French artist who was most visible between 1778 and 1793, and estimated between 300 and 500 Euros. Another example is a pair of *Projets de vases ornés de personnages* attributed to Jacques Saly (1717-1776). The latter, made possible through a pen-and-ink drawing heightened with a light grey wash, bears witness to the finesse in workmanship of the collection (estimate: €700-1,000). Caryatids, ceilings, pediments, decorative panels, vases, fountains, ewers and trophies are just as much objects as furniture as illustrated in this drawing room, and form a continuous echo that resonates seamlessly with the content of this Neoclassical residence. Floral art is another dominant theme in this ensemble best seen in the several dozens of paper- and vellum-based watercolours and paintings dating back to the second half of the 18th and early 19th centuries, and whose colours drape the bedroom walls of the Abbey Palace. A couple of examples include a lovely still life by Jan Frans van Dael (1764-1840), *Fleurs dans un vase en metal*, estimated between 60,000 and 80,000 Euros and *Bouquet de Fleurs* by a follower of Jan Van Huysum (estimate: €3,000-5,000). Pierre-Joseph Redouté’s (1739-1840) watercolour, *Une branche de pruniers avec fruits et fleurs*, is realized with rare finesse (estimate: €4,000-6,000). Several classical landscapes complete this highly pastoral ensemble such as *Personnages conversant avec une vue imaginaire de Saint-Pierre de Rome dans le fond*, a pair of signed paintings dated 1775 by Michael Wütke (1739-1823) and *Dessinateur et des personnages élégants dans un parc*, an oil on panel signed by Favart (estimate: €15,000-20,000).

Lastly, the auction will offer a fine selection of European porcelain and glass serving sets with heraldic engraving as well as a section of goldsmith pieces.

Auctions: 19, 20 and 21 September 2011 at 9 avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris - France

Viewings: 17 and 18 September at the Abbey Palace of Royaumont during the Journées du Patrimoine (Heritage Days)

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