

For Immediate Release

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STUBBS MASTERPIECE TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN JULY

**One of the most valuable Old Master paintings ever offered
at auction, it is expected to realise in excess of £20 million**



London – Christie's announce that they will offer for sale one of George Stubbs' most important works at the *Old Master and British Paintings Evening Sale* on 5 July 2011 in London.

Gimcrack on Newmarket Heath, with a Trainer, a Stable-Lad, and a Jockey by George Stubbs (1724-1806) is a true masterpiece of both British art and sporting painting, portraying Gimcrack, one of the most popular and admired of all 18th century racehorses. It is offered from the Woolavington Collection, one of the finest private collections of Sporting Art, and is expected to realise in excess of £20 million.

John Stainton, Senior Director of British Pictures, Christie's: *"This is a truly exceptional example of 18th century painting which holds immense importance on many levels - as an Old Master picture, as a great masterpiece of British Art, and as one of the finest sporting pictures ever painted. It is a great privilege for us to be able to work with this painting and to offer it at auction. Stubbs is an artist admired and collected by individuals and institutions from all around the world, and we look forward to presenting the opportunity for clients to acquire one of his greatest works at Christie's on 5 July."*

Richard Knight, International co-head of Old Master and 19th Century Art at Christie's: *"Painted the year before James Christie oversaw our company's first auction, the sale of this masterpiece will be a cornerstone moment in the history of Christie's. It is telling that as a result of the global nature of the 21st century art market, Stubbs, a very British artist, is set to join a small and select group who represent the most valuable old master artists ever sold, placing him alongside Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Turner."*

George Stubbs (1724-1806) is often celebrated as the greatest artist-scientist since Leonardo. His early career was spent working as a portrait painter, first in his native Liverpool, and subsequently in York. Having briefly visited Rome in 1754, Stubbs spent 18 months in a farmhouse in Lincolnshire dissecting and drawing horses in preparation for the publication of his famous book *The Anatomy of the Horse*. His striking depictions of animals are true to science and he held an ability to portray the magnificence of beasts in paint with complete accuracy and with no compromise to sentimentality. His exceptional talent earned the artist the patronage of many important aristocrats, particularly those involved in horseracing, the 'sport of Kings'.

Gimcrack on Newmarket Heath, with a Trainer, a Stable-Lad, and a Jockey (40in. x 76¼in. (101.6 x 193.6 cm.) was executed in 1765 having been commissioned by the horse's owner, Frederick St. John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, who led an extravagant lifestyle pursuing his main interests of racing and gambling. Gimcrack was one of the most popular and admired of all 18th century racehorses. Although he was small, he had great stamina and won an impressive 28 of his 36 races, finishing unplaced only once.

The painting shows Gimcrack twice: in the background he is seen winning a 'trial' by some distance, and in the foreground he is depicted with his trainer and jockey, a stable-lad rubbing him down. Gimcrack is portrayed with the full magnificence of the artist's talent; anatomical perfection with even his veins shown pulsing through his skin. A secondary, autograph version of the painting was owned by Lord Grosvenor (a subsequent owner of Gimcrack) and is now in the collection of the Jockey Club, Newmarket.

The painting is making its third appearance at Christie's. Sold by the Bolingbroke family in 1943, it was bought by Walter Hutchinson, founder of the National Gallery of British Sports and Pastimes, before being sold again at Christie's in 1951 when it made £12,600 and entered the Woolavington Collection. One of the greatest collections of Sporting Art in the world, the core of the Woolavington Collection was formed at the end of the 19th and the early 20th century by Lord Woolavington, a whisky magnate, philanthropist, and successful racehorse owner. The collection also includes other paintings by Stubbs, as well as exceptional works by Marshall, Ferneley, Herring and Munnings.

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