

# CHRISTIE'S

POST-SALE RELEASE | LONDON  
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## CHRISTIE'S EVENING AUCTION OF *MASTERPIECES FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF MONSIEUR AND MADAME RIAHI* REALISES

£19.8 MILLION/ \$31.9 MILLION/ €23 MILLION

- 6 works sell for over £1 million / 9 for over \$1 million
- MME DE POMPADOUR'S DESK SETS RECORD PRICE AT AUCTION FOR A WORK BY BERNARD II VAN RISEN BURGH ONE OF THE MOST CELEBRATED ROYAL CABINET MAKERS



**London, 6 December 2012** – Christie's evening auction of *Masterpieces Formerly in The Collection of Monsieur and Madame Riabi* realised £19,842,600/ \$31,887,058/ € 23,022,285. The sale was 95% sold by value. The top price was paid for a magnificent ormlu-mounted Japanese lacquer secretaire-à-abattant, *circa* 1755 by **Bernard II van Risen Burgh (BVRB)** - which is believed to have been in the collection of *Mme de Pompadour*, Royal Mistress to King Louis XV of France - it sold for £3,177,250/ \$5,105,841/ €3,911,195 setting a world record price for a work by BVRB at auction.

**Jussi Pylkkänen, President of Christie's EMERI and auctioneer for the sale:** *“Christie's has always believed that decorative arts are the DNA of the art market, and we reiterated this belief in 2008 by pioneering the innovative platform of 'The Exceptional Sale'. Once again we have convened both new and established clients with exceptional works of art which will now go on to inspire the next generation of collectors.”*

**Charles Cator, Chairman, Furniture & Decorative Arts Department, Christie's International:**

*“The response to this collection further highlights exciting developments in the vibrant market for European decorative arts which, since Christie's introduction of The Exceptional Sale format in 2008, has continued to attract a new global following. The best works draw out old and new buyers and, as well as traditional American and European collectors, this sale welcomed bidders who are new to this field, with works bought by clients from growth markets including Russia, the Middle East and South America. The significance of this museum quality collection was complimented by Christie's in-depth research, which revealed important new discoveries, and our world class presentation via the catalogue, international tour and pre-sale exhibition. The result pays tribute to Djahanguir Riabi, a passionate connoisseur who assembled this extraordinary collection over 50 years. The Riabi collection will always hold a legendary position among the greatest collections of French furniture sold by Christie's, including the Givenchy, Lagerfeld, Ojeh, Rothschild, Wildenstein and Champalimaud collections.”*

- The top price was paid for a magnificent ormolu-mounted Japanese lacquer secrétaire-à-abattant, *circa* 1755 by **Bernard II van Risen Burgh (BVRB)** which sold for £3,177,250/ \$5,105,841/ €3,911,195 setting a world record price for a work by BVRB at auction (estimate: £3,000,000 – 5,000,000). It is believed to have formerly been in the renowned collection of *Mme de Pompadour*, as recorded in Lazare Duvaux's journal of 19 February 1757, and was, until 1993, part of the collection of Dukes of Richmond at Goodwood House, Sussex, which it entered in 1765. Though one of a small group of secretaires made by BVRB with the same dimensions, overall form, mounts and marble top, the majority were executed in marquetry, as the use of lacquer panels was extremely expensive and thus extremely rare, and reserved only for the most prestigious clients. The only comparable secrétaire is in the Royal Collection, in the Queen's private apartments at Windsor.

### **Highlights of the auction:**

- A rare late Louis XV ormolu-mounted amaranth and burr-walnut, maple and bois satine commode en bibliotheque, by Jean-Henri Riesener, executed in the workshop of **Jean-Francois Oeben** *circa* 1763-68, sold for £2,505,250/ \$4,025,937/ €3,083,963 having been offered with new Viennese Rothschild provenance which was discovered by Christie's (estimate: £1,500,000 – 2,500,000). Only two such examples are known to exist: the current piece stamped by Oeben and its counterpart by Riesener who took over the Oeben workshop after his death. Oeben was one of the greatest ébénistes in the reign of Louis XV and 'Ébéniste du Roi' from 1754 until his death in 1763. His distinctive individual style is characterised by the unparalleled pictorial marquetry and transitional forms.

- An exquisite and delicate ormolu-mounted Japanese lacquer and vernis martin bureau en pente, attributed to **Bernard II van Risen Burgh (BVRB)**, *circa* 1756, sold for £2,057,250/ \$3,306,001/ €2,532,475 (estimate: £2,000,000-4,000,000).

- A near pair of Louis XV ormolu-mounted Japanese and Chinese lacquer commodes attributed to **Bernard II van Risen Burgh** or **Jean Desforges**, *circa* 1740-50, possibly supplied by Charles Darnault

sold for £2,057,250/ \$3,306,001/ €2,532,475 (estimate: £2,000,000 - 4,000,000).

- A superb bureau plat by **Joseph** Baumhauer, *circa* 1765, combining panels of Japanese lacquer with tulipwood - its sinuous lines a triumph of the Rococo – realised £1,721,250/ \$2,766,049/ €2,118,859 (estimate: £2,000,000 - 3,000,000). One of the earliest acquisitions of the collection, having been bought in 1963, this bureau is extremely rare and possibly unique. Joseph Baumhauer, known simply as ‘Joseph’ to his contemporaries, specialised in the use of the richest materials in his creations – including delicate plaques of Sèvres porcelain, rich inlay of hardstones (*pietra dura*) and exotic panels of lacquer from China and Japan. He created a small number of bureaux, almost all of which incorporate porcelain plaques; the only other example known to include lacquer panels, as with the present example, is in the Louvre, though the panels are set against an ebonised ground.

- A suite of twenty-eight Louis XV silver candlesticks, mark of Louis Lenhendrick, Paris, 1747-1770, sold for £1,049,250/ \$1,686,145/ €1,291,627 having been chased pair by pair over a 50 year period by Djahanguir Riahi (estimate: £1,000,000 -2,000,000).

- A Louis XV ormolu-mounted Chinese celadon porcelain pot-pourri vase and cover, Kangxi (1662-1722), with mounts dating to *circa* 1740 sold for £802,850/ \$1,290,180/ €988,308 (estimate: £250,000 – 400,000). This unusual and unique little pot-pourri vase has a history that can be traced back to 1756, when it was sold from the collection of Marie Joseph d’Hostun, duc de Tallard, in a sale of his property that included one of the most important collections of porcelain formed in the 18th century. Many of the pieces in his collection came from the cabinet of the Dauphin, the son of Louis XIV, whose property was sold to different collectors after his death. It was bought at the duc de Tallard’s sale by Honoré Camille Leonor Grimaldi, duc de Valentinois and Prince of Monaco (d. 1785) and subsequently sold in 1803. Its whereabouts were then unknown until it was sold from the collection of Mme Henry Farman in 1973 in Paris, when it entered the Riahi Collection.

- A near pair of Louis XVI ormolu-mounted Chinese celadon porcelain Qianlong (1736-1795) vases, with early Neoclassical tortoise and triton mounts, emblematic of the sea-god Neptune sold for £769,250/ \$1,236,185/ €946,947 (estimate: £400,000 – 600,000). These beautiful vases form part of a small group of eight related vases whose mounts can be attributed to Pierre Gouthière and are possibly the pair that was owned by the painter François Boucher and sold in Paris on 18 February 1771. Separated at some point over the course of two hundred years, they were eventually re-united as a pair by M. and Mme. Riahi, having been bought separately, one in 1971 and the other in the late 1980s.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

Christie’s New York sale of *Magnificent French furniture, formerly from the Collection of Monsieur and Madame Riahi*, 2 November 2000, comprised 59 lots which attracted buyers from around the globe and realised \$40,324,200. **Together with the 2012 sales of the Riahi Collection have realised a combined total in excess of £47 million.**

#### **THE TOP 3 MOST VALUABLE COLLECTIONS OF FRENCH FURNITURE SOLD AT CHRISTIE’S**

1 *The Collection of The Barons Nathaniel and Albert von Rothschild*, 8 July 1999, Christie’s London, realised: £57,716,497/\$89,980,019.

2 *The Champalimaud Collection*, 6-7 July 2005, Christie’s London, realised £38,968,460/\$68,452,825.

3 *Magnificent French Furniture, Formerly from the Collection of Monsieur and Madame Riahi*, 2 November 2000, Christie’s New York, realised £27,809,793/ \$40,324,200.