

For Immediate Release  
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CHRISTIE'S

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# *MASTERPIECES AT CHRISTIE'S*

## A FREE PUBLIC EXHIBITION SHOWCASING LEADING AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON

The exhibition will launch one of the richest and most exciting auction seasons in company history - expected to realize in excess of £300 million

Open to the public from Tuesday 12 June to Thursday 14 June

Led by John Constable's *The Lock* – previously the most valuable British painting ever sold at auction - highlights include masterpieces by Bacon, Breughel, Freud, Klein, Picasso, Rembrandt, Renoir, and Turner, together with treasures of European decorative art by Robert Adam, Thomas Chippendale and André-Charles Boulle



**London** – Christie's announce that they will launch one of the richest and most exciting summer auction seasons in company history with *Masterpieces* - a curated public exhibition from 12 to 14 June 2012. Showcasing leading highlights from the four week season of sales, it is led by John Constable's epic and celebrated landscape *The Lock* (estimate: £20 million to £25 million). *Masterpieces* will present over 50 works by many of the most celebrated artists in the last 500 years of art history – a number of which have rarely, or never, been seen in public – and including pictures by Bacon, Freud, Klein, Rembrandt, Renoir, and Turner, alongside exceptional furniture, works of art and medieval manuscripts.

**Jussi Pylkkänen, President & Chairman of Christie's, Europe, Middle East, Russia & India:** *"This year, as London congregates international art collectors from around the world, the four week summer season of major international auctions at Christie's will present a truly extraordinary offering of art, and is set to become one of the richest and most valuable series of auctions in company history. Led by John Constable's 'The Lock', which is among the most important paintings to be offered at Christie's in London in recent decades, we will also have celebrated works of art by a roll-call of great names in the history of art, including Francis Bacon, Pablo Picasso, Rembrandt, Pierre-August Renoir, and Yves Klein, amongst many others. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year that we have launched the summer season with a curated exhibition of highlights, and it has become a hugely popular event. Such an initiative allows us to show the public works of art that have often rarely, if ever, been seen in public. In showing great art together, independent of age or category, the exhibition also presents a showcase of the collecting tastes and habits of many buyers in today's market. We are honoured to have been entrusted with so many works of this quality, and we look forward to celebrating the timeless beauty of art at the home of the global auction market."*

### Selected highlights of the exhibition

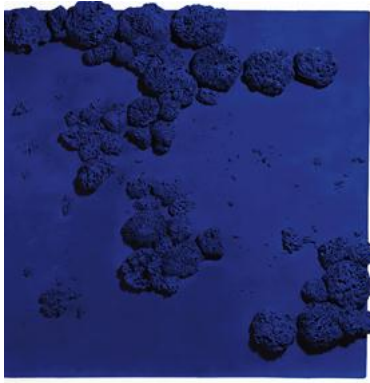
***The Lock* by John Constable** (1776-1837). The sale of this masterpiece represents a major



moment for the international art market. One of six paintings that make up the artist's most celebrated series of large scale works which also includes *The Hay Wain*, now in The National Gallery, London, *The Lock* is the last to remain in private hands. From the Private Collection of Baroness Carmen Thyssen Bornemisza, it has been sold only once since it was acquired from the artist. When bought at auction in 1990 for £10.8 million, it became the most valuable British painting ever sold at the time – a record it held for 16 years. It is expected to realise £20 million to £25 million on 3 July at the *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale*

*Study for Self-Portrait*, 1964, by **Francis Bacon** (1909-1992) is a poignant and exceptionally intimate painting which marries the artist's face to the figure of friend and fellow painter, Lucian Freud. It represents one of only twelve, floor-length self-portraits ever to be realised by Francis Bacon, four of which are now held in international museum collections. It is the only one to undertake the almost devotional act of conflating the two artist's bodies (estimate: on request - *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction*, 27 June).





The newly discovered *Relief éponge bleu* by **Yves Klein** (1928-1962) was first acquired in 1959 by Klein's friend and artist Lucio Fontana and has rarely been seen in public. It is expected to realise £6 million to £9 million. Another exceptionally important work by **Yves Klein** (1928-1962) will be offered at the auction of *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction* on 27 June; the magnificent *Le Rose du Bleu* – is by far the largest sponge relief ever executed in rose madder. It has been included in all the major exhibitions dedicated to Klein over the past 50 years (estimate: on request).

*Baigneuse*, 1888, by **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** (1841-1919) is one of the most beautiful paintings by the artist in private hands (estimate: £12 million to £18 million – *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale*, 20 June). It was painted at a moment of release and revelation for the artist; a crucial point in his career which saw him tackling the subject of the female nude, often in the form of a bather as here, with increasing confidence and enthusiasm.



*A Bust of a Man in a Gorget and Cap*, 1626/27, by **Rembrandt** Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669) is from the *The Pieter & Olga Dreesmann Collection* and will be offered at auction for the first time in almost 40 years. This work was exhibited in the *Rembrandt/Caravaggio* exhibition staged by The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in 2006. It is expected to realise £8 million to £12 million (*Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale*, 3 July).

*Untitled*, 1981, by **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960-1988) is one of the artist's earliest masterpieces, marrying the gritty urbanism of his street graffiti with his raw and guttural symbolism. In 2007, it sold for \$14.6 million, breaking the artist's world auction record at the time. It will be offered at the *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction* on 27 June, and is positioned to break the current record, which was achieved last May in New York (\$16.3 million) (estimate: on request).



*Femme au chien*, 1962, by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) has not been seen in public since 1973 when it was exhibited at The Art Institute of Chicago in Major Works from the Collection of Nathan Cummings, the celebrated collector and food magnate. Having been acquired the following year by the present owner, it is offered from an important private collection for the first time in almost 40 years (estimate: £6 million to £9 million - *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale*, 20 June)



**The Leinster Dinner-Service** is the grandest and the most complete surviving aristocratic service; its cost far exceeded that of the Prince of Wales' service and unlike so many it has remained almost intact. It comprises 70 dinner plates, 18 soup plates, 29 dishes, 22 dish covers, 4 candlesticks, 11 salvers, 8 sauceboats and many other pieces. It embodies the wealth of royal and aristocratic patrons, the skill of the goldsmith, and the innovative design of the greatest of 18th century dinner-services. It is expected to realise £1.5 million to £2 million (*The Exceptional Sale* – 5 July).



*Head of a Greek Man*, 1946, by **Lucian Freud** (1922-2011) has rarely been seen in public and has been in the collection of John Craxton and his heirs since 1947. It is an exceptional, early portrait which dates from an important moment in Freud's development, when he travelled to the Greek island of Poros with close friend John Craxton. Exhibited in Freud and Craxton's joint show at the London Gallery in 1947, *Head of a Greek Man* was acquired directly by Craxton, who greatly admired his friend's limpid and luminous aesthetic (estimate: £1,500,000-2,000,000 - *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction*, 27 June).

*The Ogden Mills 'Armoires à Six Medailles'* are expected to realise £1 million to £1.5 million (*The Exceptional Sale* – 5 July). The Louis XIV armoire in contre partie is attributed to **André-Charles Boulle**, while the late Louis XV in première partie is by **Delorme**. They are decorated to the doors with trails of medals celebrating the Life of Louis XIV as well as the figures of Aspasia and Socrates. Conceived initially with shelves to house collections of precious medals, this series of armoires proved so successful it remained in production in Boulle's workshop throughout the first half of the 18th century and was subsequently continued by Boulle's followers.



### **Public Viewing Times**

Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6QT

**Tuesday 12 June** – 2pm to 4.30pm

**Wednesday 13 June** – 9am to 8pm

**Thursday 14 June** – 9am to 1pm

\* Press releases for individual auctions are available on request \*

\* Catalogues can be viewed at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) \*