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CHRISTIE'S  
in association with MEALY'S

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# IRELAND'S SECRET COLLECTION: FURNITURE, PAINTINGS, PORCELAIN, WORKS OF ART & SILVER FROM MOUNT CONGREVE TO BE SOLD BY

CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN MAY, IN ASSOCIATION WITH MEALY'S OF KILKENNY

& AT MOUNT CONGREVE, COUNTY WATERFORD, IRELAND, IN JULY

BY MEALY'S OF KILKENNY, IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHRISTIE'S



**London** – Christie's and Mealy's of Kilkenny are pleased to announce the two part sale of property from *Mount Congreve*, Kilmeaden, County Waterford, Ireland in summer 2012. *Mount Congreve: The London Sale* will comprise a carefully curated selection of approximately 120 lots of furniture, paintings, silver and Chinese and European porcelain from the collection which will be offered at Christie's in London on 23 May, in association with Mealy's. A larger range of works will be offered in *Mount Congreve: The House Sale* which will be staged in a marquee in the grounds of Mount Congreve on 10-11 July 2012, by Mealy's in association with Christie's. *A separate press release for the House Sale will follow.* The *London Sale* is expected to realise in excess of £2.5 million.

Internationally renowned as one of the greatest woodland gardens in the world, the house at Mount Congreve also contained one of the greatest unknown and unseen collections in Ireland. The magnificent array of decorative arts was formed concurrently with the garden.

**Charles Cator, Deputy Chairman, Christie's International:** *'Following Christie's long tradition of offering the finest collections, the two part sale of property from Mount Congreve celebrates the legacy of collecting in the greatest country houses in England and Ireland. Continually evolving since the house was built circa 1760, and substantially added to and enhanced to great effect over the last 60 years, this collection highlights the importance of distinguished provenance, comprising works from many illustrious collections of great renown, from the Rothschild family in London and The Earls of Coventry at Croome Court to Studley Royal and Middleton Park, among many others. The breadth and depth of the works to be offered in both The London Sale and the in-situ House Sale is a testament to the discerning taste and connoisseurship exercised, ensuring that this collection has grown in size and beauty in tandem with its internationally acclaimed woodland gardens.'*

**Fonsie and George Mealy, Mealy's of Kilkenny:** "We have known this wonderful collection for many years and are honoured to be presenting it to a wider public in association with Christie's. The gardens are so well known and they will be the perfect setting for The House Sale in July."

Mount Congreve – which was originally called 'Brauchaille' meaning *the edge of a cliff* in Irish - stands majestically above the River Suir, not far from the city of Waterford in the south east corner of Ireland. The neo-classical house was built, *circa* 1760, by the leading local architect John Roberts for John Congreve, the son of a successful merchant, banker, politician and land developer.



Significant inspiration for both the garden and interior of Mount Congreve came from the connoisseur Lionel de Rothschild (1882-1942), who created the revered gardens at Exbury on the Beaulieu River in Hampshire. His taste for ormolu-mounted French furniture of the highest quality was to be as great an influence on the collection at Mount Congreve as his taste in magnolias was on the gardens. Reflecting the quality and important provenance which underlines the beautiful works offered from Mount Congreve, some of the earliest acquisitions for the house were purchased from Lionel de Rothschild's collection, sold at Christie's in 1942. They include a pair of Louis XVI two-tone ormolu figural candelabra (estimate: £20,000-30,000 in *The London Sale*) and a magnificent large marquetry cylinder bureau with double Rothschild provenance (estimate: €20,000-30,000 in *The House Sale*).

A highlight among the French furniture is a pair of Louis XV ormolu-mounted marquetry encoignures by Joseph Baumhauer, *circa* 1755, which exhibit that maker's characteristic synthesis of marquetry with sinuous mounts (estimate: £120,000-180,000), *illustrated right*. Prior to joining the Mount Congreve Collection they were housed in the Edwardian splendour of Prince's Gate, Knightsbridge and part of the huge collection of the 'Nitrate King', George Lockett, who had made his fortune in the Chilean nitrate trade.



The superb breadth and depth of the furniture and works of art featured show that while a passion for French furniture was to be a constant theme during the formation of the Collection, full advantage was also taken of the treasures to be found in English country house dispersal sales after 1945. The continuous growth of the collection during a period of six decades also highlights the unusually long time frame during which the collection grew.

The famous 1948 auction of furniture from the Earl of Coventry's magnificent Robert Adam mansion at Croome Court in Worcestershire provided one of the undoubted stars of the English group, the magnificent George II giltwood overmantel mirror by John Linnell, 1759 (estimate: £200,000-300,000), *illustrated right*. Over seven feet tall, this mirror ranks among the very best of English overmantels in its sinuous design and superb quality. It was accompanied



at Mount Congreve by two pairs of George II giltwood pier glasses from Studley Royal in Yorkshire, a house demolished in the late 1940s. These two pairs of pier glasses were bought for Mount Congreve at Christie's in 1965. One has a straight and the other a serpentine apron; each has an estimate of £120,000-180,000.

A pair of large giltwood side tables designed by Robert Adam for the banker Robert Child's London house in 1770 are an important later addition to the collection, having been sold by Child's descendant in 1934 and finally acquired for Mount Congreve in 2004 (estimate: £200,000-300,000), *illustrated right*. Their superb scagliola tops are attributed to the London maker Johan Richter (1767-96), who worked alone in 1770 but was later more famous in partnership with Domenico Bartoli. Together the partners executed several of Robert Adam's decorative schemes but these table tops, probably designed by Adam like their bases, are among the earliest likely links between either man or the architect.



### Further Highlights

#### OLD MASTER PAINTINGS



Offered at auction for the first time in almost half a century, *Portrait of the Rt. Hon. John Denis Daly* (1747-1791), is attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A. (Plympton, Devon 1723-1792 London) and Studio. Having first passed from the sitter to his son, this portrait was acquired at Christie's London sale of the Dunsdale Estate in 1954 (estimate: £40,000-60,000) *illustrated left*. Measuring 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.5 cm.), this charming portrait was exhibited in Ireland throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century: at the Royal Irish Institution, in 1815; the Annual Exhibition at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, in 1872 and later at the Academy's Winter Exhibition of Old Masters 30 years later in 1902-3.

#### FURNITURE



A Louis XVI ormolu-mounted tulipwood, amaranth, marquetry and parquetry bureau à cylindre, by Joseph Stockel, which was previously the property of 2nd Viscount Bearsted (1882-1949), of Upton House, Banbury, Oxfordshire (estimate: £100,000-150,000), *illustrated left*.

A superb 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese twelve-leaf double sided screen of incised lacquer known as 'Coromandel' (after the part of India from which it was ultimately shipped to Europe) was bought for the collection at a very early date, in May 1945, from Doddington Hall in Cheshire (estimate: £30,000-50,000) *illustrated page 2*.



Also offered is a pair of George III giltwood side tables, attributed to Mayhew & Ince, with magnificent Italian specimen lava tops, (estimate: £200,000-300,000), *illustrated left*. The tops were probably bought in Italy on the Grand Tour *circa* 1770.

## PORCELAIN AND WORKS OF ART



This stunning George III ormolu-mounted white marble urn perfume-burner, by Matthew Boulton, *circa* 1770, (estimate: £70,000-100,000) *illustrated left* is the only known single white marble vase of this model, and may be the one offered by Matthew Boulton himself, at Christie's, in May 1778.

Other examples range from a pair of late Louis XV ormolu-mounted Sèvres porcelain pot pourri vases and covers, *circa* 1765 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and a Sèvres Vincennes bleu celeste écuelle, 1755-6, which bears a paper label for Baron Foley, almost certainly the 7<sup>th</sup> Baron Foley of Ruxley Lodge, Surrey (estimate £40,000-60,000), *illustrated left*, to a 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese reverse-painted glass picture (estimate: £5,000-£8,000) and a Chinese *famille rose* baluster vase, Yongzheng period (1723-35) (estimate: £5,000-8,000). One demonstration of the very high standards of care taken of the Collection at Mount Congreve is the number of Chinese vases, such as this lot, which have been converted to lamps without being drilled for the electric cable.

## SILVER



A magnificent George III silver epergne, by Thomas Pitts, London 1763 is one of the centerpieces from the silver collection at Mount Congreve (estimate: £80,000-120,000), *illustrated left*. The crest is that of Trevor, probably for Robert (Hampden formerly Trevor), 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Trevor who was created Viscount Hampden in 1776. The collection also features a magnificent selection of candlesticks and sauceboats, led by a rare set of four Scottish candlesticks by Thomas Ker, Edinburgh, 1700, originally from Hopetoun House, outside Edinburgh (estimate: £40,000-60,000). Another piece with a strong Scottish connection is a massive George I silver cup by James Fraillon, London, 1723, engraved with the arms of William Duff, later Earl Fife, who built the magnificent Duff House, in Banff (estimate: £50,000-70,000), *illustrated left*. The fine array of silver gilt includes a George III silver-gilt neoclassical two-handled cup and cover, which was made for the Margrave of Brandenburg (estimate: £10,000-15,000).

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### Notes to Editors:

#### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions

annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

#### **About Mealy's**

Mealy's, est. 1934, is Ireland's leading business in sales of Irish personal estates and collections. Major fine & decorative art sales are held quarterly in the fine art office on Kilkenny Road in Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny and also on location at great Irish estates. These sales include a wide variety of items including silver, jewellery, porcelain, glass, fine art, period furniture, taxidermy, fashion, vintage wine & whiskey, and other items typically found in Country Houses. Specialised sales of rare books, Irish history memorabilia, sporting memorabilia and other collectibles are held both in Dublin and at the rare book office in The Old Cinema, Castlecomer, and Co. Kilkenny. The business was established by the late George Mealy in 1934, whose name and legacy lives on almost 80 years later. The RARE BOOK OFFICE is managed by Mr. Fonsie Mealy FRICS, P.R.D.S (Tel. +353 (0)564441229, Email [fonsie@mealysrarebooks.com](mailto:fonsie@mealysrarebooks.com)) and the FINE ART OFFICE is managed by Mr. George Mealy Senior, MRICS MSCSI (Tel. +353 (0)564400942, Email [george@mealysfineart.com](mailto:george@mealysfineart.com)).