

For Immediate Release

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## THE EXCEPTIONAL SALE 2012

### CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS THE VERY BEST EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS IN LONDON ON 5 JULY

**London** – In 2008 Christie's launched a unique sale platform for the very best decorative arts; *The Exceptional Furniture Sale* saw 10 masterpiece works realise a total of £10.3 million. Building on the success of this sale and *The Exceptional Sale* held in 2011, Christie's is pleased to announce details of *The Exceptional Sale 2012* which will take place on the evening of 5 July. Comprising 48 lots, the sale presents three centuries of decorative arts, from the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Featuring the finest examples of furniture, silver, sculpture, clocks and porcelain – including recent discoveries and previously unknown examples - the sale exemplifies the very best of European decorative arts; it is expected to realise a total in excess of £13 million.

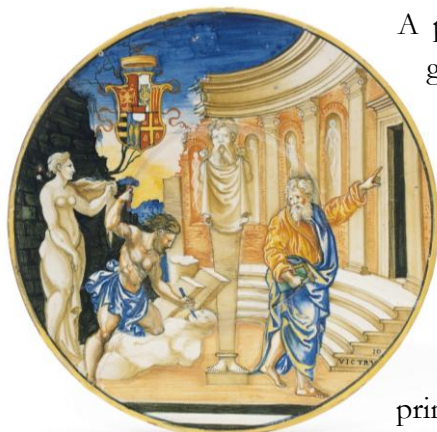
**Robert Copley, Deputy Chairman Christie's UK, International Head of Furniture and Decorative Arts:** *'With 'The Exceptional Sale' Christie's celebrates excellence in furniture and the decorative arts. The attributes of this carefully curated auction are provenance, rarity, design, and craftsmanship. From exquisite furniture by André-Charles Boulle and Thomas Chippendale to the magnificent Leinster silver dinner-service; from a rare maiolica plate by Nicola da Urbino to a newly discovered marble group by Jan van Delen; from glittering Chinese clocks and ormolu-mounted porcelain to the finest examples of Italian pietre dure, 'The Exceptional Sale' offers collectors an opportunity to acquire the very best.'*



The exceptional *Brand Cabinet*, a George II ivory-mounted padouk medal-cabinet, circa 1743 (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000, *illustrated left*), was made for the wealthy young Dilettante Thomas Brand, who like many English *milordi* went on The Grand Tour, arriving in Rome in 1738. It is here that he probably purchased the ivory plaques that depict figures from Classical mythology such as Leda and the Swan. A couple of years later, Brand's contemporary and 'intimate friend' Horace Walpole also made the Tour. On his return he designed a cabinet to house his precious 'enamels and miniatures'. No doubt inspired by William Kent, his cabinet and Brand's are both made of padouk and are attributed to William Hallett of Great Newport Street, in Covent Garden. Walpole's cabinet subsequently hung in the Tribune at Strawberry Hill and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while Brand's cabinet remained at the family house, The Hoo, in Hertfordshire until it was first sold at Christie's in 1938.

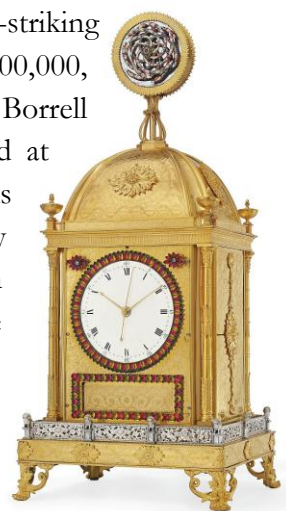
The *Ogden Mills 'Armoires à Six Medailles'* are lavishly decorated with spectacular gilt-bronze mounts that fuse seamlessly with the scrolling foliate pattern of the sumptuous ground of brass and tortoiseshell *première* and *contre-partie* marquetry (estimate: £1,000,000–1,500,000, *illustrated right*). The Louis XIV armoire in *contre partie* is attributed to André-Charles Boulle, while the late Louis XVI 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.





A previously unrecorded Urbino armorial plate by Nicola Da Urbino - the greatest of all 16th century maiolica painters - is an exciting addition to three other pieces from a set which have the same coat-of-arms of the Marquesses of Montferrat (estimate: £200,000 – 300,000, *illustrated left*). This is a rare opportunity for collectors and institutions to acquire an important piece by the artist as the vast majority of Nicola da Urbino's surviving works are in museums. It also appears to be a unique opportunity to obtain a piece of 16<sup>th</sup> century maiolica depicting Michelangelo; the inscription on the reverse translates as 'Vitruvius, the prince of Architecture, and Michael' suggesting that the sculptor shown is Michelangelo and the figure holding a book is Vitruvius.

The selection of exceptional clocks is led by a George III engraved ormolu quarter-striking musical and automaton clock which is expected to fetch between £300,000 and £500,000, *illustrated right*, made by London clock and watchmaker Henry Borrell. A clock by Borrell fetched £2.3 million, a world-record price for an English clock, when it was sold at Christie's Hong Kong in May 2008. This is one of nine musical and automaton clocks which appear in a selling exhibition catalogue dedicated to them and produced by Robersons' Galleries of Knightsbridge in the 1920s. The collection was gathered by an Irish gentleman while he travelled the world before the Great War. The clocks were purchased in Peking, Tehran, St. Petersburg, Lahore and many other places and were kept in his home in Danzig before he returned to Ireland after the outbreak of War. Further highlights include a Chinese ormolu, white marble and paste-set 'double gourd' clock with swinging dial from the Guangzhou workshops, in the Qianlong period, which dates to the late 18th century (estimate: £150,000–250,000).



The Leinster Dinner-Service 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 18<sup>th</sup> century dinner-services. It 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. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the buffet at the side of the dining room had been used to show the host's wealth through the assembled arrangement of flagons, flasks, cups and dishes. In the 18th century display moved to the dining table itself. The linen covered table was centered on the great epergne or *surtout-de-table*. The fashion for dining *à la Française* also called for soup tureens for the first course and a plethora of dishes and covers for the following courses. The French style of dining also created the need for casters, cruets, sauceboats and condiment vases for the table as the diners served themselves and their neighbours from the dishes that were placed on the table. The diners entered the dining room to see a fully dressed table and as the courses progressed the dishes were removed and replaced, all courses being similarly served on silver dishes and in the richest of houses with silver covers, protecting the food and providing a visual spectacle for the guests. The Leinster Dinner Service is rare, not only because of its survival but also because its commission is fully listed in the *Gentleman's Ledgers* of its maker, the Royal goldsmith George Wickes. It is expected to realise between £1.5 million and £2 million.





Further silver highlights include an extraordinary Portuguese or Portuguese Colonial silver Aquamanile or Incense Burner; in the form of a mythical beast, the caquesseitão (estimate: £400,000-600,000, *illustrated left*). The Rosebery wine-cistern is among the grandest examples of late 18<sup>th</sup> century display plates; the design re-interprets the historical form of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century silver cisterns in the idiom of the neo-classical style and the silver wine-cistern has adorned the buffets of Royal and aristocratic dinners from the 1670s (estimate: £400,000-600,000).

A recently discovered marble group is an important addition to the known *oeuvre* of the Flemish sculptor Jan van Delen (estimate: £150,000- 200,000, *illustrated right*). This sculpture, which was found in the foyer of a private house in Paris, is believed to be the lost group of *Charity* which once formed part of the sculptural ensemble of the Thurn und Taxis chapel in the church of Notre Dame du Sablon in Brussels. Originally one of four allegorical groups that adorned niches in the corners of the chapel, two groups were removed, probably during the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars, and have been missing ever since. The interaction of the three figures, especially between the adult woman and the little girl at her knee, conveys a tenderness that is entirely appropriate for the subject.



Additional highlights include a pair of marble and alabaster Italian busts of Homer and Plato dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century; these busts were supplied to Sir Robert Walpole for the niches of the Stone Hall at Houghton (estimate: £200,000-300,000). The busts, which combine white marble heads of the highest quality, on shoulders luxuriantly veneered in oriental alabaster, remained in the Marble Hall at Houghton until they were sold at Christie's London in 1994 to the present owner.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the web at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

#### **Auction:**

Christie's London – 8 King Street, SW1Y 6QT  
Thursday 5 July 2012, at 7pm

#### **Viewings:**

Christie's London – 8 King Street, SW1Y 6QT  
Saturday 30 June: 10am – 5pm  
Sunday 1 July: 10am – 5pm  
Monday 2 July: 9am – 4:30pm  
Tuesday 3 July: 9am – 3:30pm  
Wednesday 4 July: 9am – 4:30pm  
Thursday 5 July: 9am – 4:30pm

#### **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.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.