

# CHRISTIE'S

POST-SALE RELEASE | LONDON  
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## CHRISTIE'S EVENING SALE OF *OLD MASTER & BRITISH PAINTINGS* REALISES

£23.8 million / \$36.3 million / €27.7 million

The sale was led by *The Molo, Venice, from the Bacino di San Marco* by Canaletto (1697-1768) which realised £8.5 million / \$12.9 million / €9.8 million

Buyers from 11 countries across 4 continents highlight the international appeal of the category



**London, 2 July 2013** – Christie's evening auction of *Old Master & British Paintings* realised £23,852,300 / \$36,279,348 / €27,740,225. The sale attracted buyers from 11 countries across 4 continents. The top price was paid for a glittering view of Venice by **Canaletto** (1697-1768) painted at the height of his powers, *The Molo, Venice, from the Bacino di San Marco*, which realised £8,461,875 / \$12,870,512 / €9,841,161 (estimate: £4-6 million).

**Georgina Wilsenach, Head of Old Master & British Paintings at Christie's London:** "This sale saw strong prices for paintings from all schools, particularly Italian, Flemish and British. We welcomed, once again, bidders from Asia, the Middle East, South America and Russia as well as the traditional markets of Europe and America, with buyers this evening from 11 countries across 4 continents. This resulted in the impressive price for the Canaletto, which doubled its pre-sale estimate."

**Top Lot:** *The Molo, Venice, from the Bacino di San Marco*, a beautifully preserved masterpiece by **Canaletto** (1697-1768) executed at the height of his powers in the 1730s, realised £8,461,875 / \$12,870,512 / €9,841,161 (estimate: £4-6 million). This work is from the artist's famous sequence of views of the Molo from the Bacino, showing the greatest religious and secular monuments at the heart of Venice. Bathed in a clear, luminous light, the celebrated buildings are meticulously described and are skillfully enlivened by the hustle and bustle of the boats and figures in the foreground. This exceptional canvas – one of the largest of this type of composition – was supplied to Edward Howard, 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk (1686-1777), who was a major British artistic patron of the day; it passed by descent in the family until the 1970s.

**Highlights of the auction:**

- *Head of a bearded man in profile holding a bronze figure* by **Sir Peter Paul Rubens** (1577-1640) sold for £1,741,875 / \$2,649,392 / €2,025,801 (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million). An impressive, vigorously executed and characterful head study, it throws light on Rubens's creative method during a busy period in his career, after he had returned from Italy and established his pre-eminence in Antwerp. It reveals a fascinating aspect of Antwerp's cultural attitudes, as it was later enlarged on three-sides by Jan Boeckhorst (1605-1668), one of Rubens's most intriguing early followers, and one of the city's leading artists following the deaths of Rubens and Sir Anthony van Dyck, in 1640 and 1641, respectively. It is a study for one of the kings in Rubens's monumental *Adoration of the Kings* painted in 1616/7 for the Church of Saint John in Mechelen. The panel is recorded, since at least 1719, as belonging to the German princely house of Schönborn - a name long associated with one of the greatest cumulative contributions to the cultural landscape of Germany since the High Renaissance.
- *Christ on the Cross*, a unique depiction of this subject by **Lucas Cranach the Elder** (1472-1553) sold for £1,137,075 / \$1,729,491 / €1,322,418 (estimate: £500,000-800,000). This rare and poignant work seamlessly blends extreme pictorial refinement with a heightened sense of pathos.
- *The Payment of the Tithes* by **Pieter Brueghel II** (Brussels 1564/5-1637/8 Antwerp) fetched £1,047,475 / \$1,593,209 / €1,218,213 (estimate: £250,000-350,000). This composition is unusual in Pieter II's oeuvre in that it is neither a direct copy of one of his father's compositions nor an adaptation of a Bruegel-like composition by one of his father's contemporaries - such as Martin van Cleve - or close followers. Indeed the *Payment of Tithes* is noticeably different from Pieter I's compositional, figural and facial types, and its derivation has therefore been the subject of much discussion.
- *The Tower of Babel* by **Abel Grimmer** (Antwerp 1570-1618/9) realised £980,275 / \$1,490,998 / €1,140,060, setting a world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £400,000 - 600,000). Offered for the first time in almost two centuries, this painting was acquired in the 1830s by Sir Edward Blackett, 6<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1803-1885), for Maften Hall, Northumberland, passing by descent to the present vendor.
- A remarkably subtle half-length *Portrait of Emily, Lady Berkeley*, which is an exceptional example of **Sir Thomas Lawrence's** (1769-1830) early work, sold for £901,875 / \$1,371,752 / €1,048,881 (estimate: £400,000-600,000).

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

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