

CHRISTIE'S

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THE OPULENT EYE 19TH CENTURY DECORATIVE ARTS AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN SEPTEMBER



London - Christie's sale of *The Opulent Eye*, which will be held on 10 September 2013, offers furniture, sculpture, works of art and clocks from the 19th century. Held twice annually in London and New York *The Opulent Eye* is the only specialist sale in Europe devoted to 19th century decorative arts. The sale reflects the eclectic and opulent styles of the period from the regal grandeur of Napoleon's Empire to the Art Nouveau of *Belle époque* Paris. The sale is best understood with reference to the world fairs of the 19th century, from London's Crystal Palace in 1851 to the Paris *Exposition universelle* of 1900, which attracted fifty million visitors. These exhibitions were key in promoting excellence in art and creating the international Beaux-Arts style, which was pursued by both Royalty and a new class of global bankers, industrialists and entrepreneurs. Representing the best furniture makers and sculptors of the period, the lots are united by their use of luxurious materials, their rarity and exceptional craftsmanship. Offering 218 lots, with estimates ranging from £2,000 to £150,000, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £2 million.

HIGHLIGHTS

Leading the sale are four Italian bronze-patinated carved wood figures of Apollo, Mercury, Pallas and Peace (estimate: £150,000 – 250,000, *illustrated right*). These four sculptures are copies of the bronze statues adorning The Loggetta in Piazza San Marco, Venice. The originals are considered among the most beautiful creations of sixteenth-century Italian sculpture and an extraordinarily example of Sansovino's response to Venice and to the medium of bronze. The importance of the 'Loggetta Gods' for Venetian sculpture cannot be over-emphasised. The present statues, faithfully rendered in wood, capture their vitality and would have been commissioned by a 19th century connoisseur perhaps frustrated at not being able to buy the priceless and unique originals.



A rare marble statue by Emmanuele Caroni is entitled *Schiava alla Vendita* (estimate: £60,000 – 100,000, *illustrated left*). Beautifully detailed in Carrera marble, the statue was shown at the 1861 Italian Exhibition in Florence and is a rediscovered masterpiece by Caroni. It was bought in 1910 by Sir James Liege Hulett of Durban, South Africa. Hulett pioneered the country's sugar industry when he founded the Hulett Company in 1892, which had extensive cane plantations and erected the first sugar mill in 1903. Today, the Hulett Sugar Company is called Tongaat-Hulett Sugar.

Further highlights include a table made by Maison Millet of Paris in the Louis XVI 'goût Weisweiler' style of the late 18th century, which was revived from the 1860s by Empress Eugénie (wife of Napoleon III) who was fascinated by Queen Marie-Antoinette and an avid collector of Louis XVI items (estimate: £40,000 – 60,000, *illustrated right*). In the 20th century this table belonged to John Mills, who entertained Hollywood stars and Royalty at his club Les Ambassadeurs, 5 Hamilton Place, Park Lane.



Elsewhere in the sale is a lifesize figural torchère which once belonged to the Bardou family of Perpignan, France who made the famous 'JOB' brand of cigarette papers (estimate: £50,000 – 80,000, *illustrated left*). The immensely wealthy Pierre Bardou commissioned the architect Viggo Theodor Dorph-Petersen (1851-1937) to build a magnificent château for each of his children. The present torchère was probably made for the most impressive Château d'Aubiry: raised on a marble terrace, it is in the *tradition palatiale française* combining neo-renaissance and neo-baroque elements to create a fairy tale castle. An Art Nouveau poster advertisement for 'JOB' cigarette papers dating from *circa* 1896, by Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) will be offered at Christie's South Kensington, in 'Graphic Masterworks: A Century of Design', on Wednesday, 2 October 2013, lot 3 (estimate: £8,000-10,000).

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PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

Thursday, 5 September: 9am - 4:30pm
Friday, 6 September: 9am - 4:30pm
Saturday, 7 September: 2pm - 5pm
Sunday, 8 September: 2pm - 5pm
Monday 9 September: 9am - 8pm

AUCTION:

The Opulent Eye
10 September 2013
Day, date month year
10:00am

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2013 that totaled £2.4 billion/\$3.68 billion. In 2012, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 £465.2 million (\$711.8 million) in the first half of 2013, an increase of 13% on the previous year, and for the third successive year represents the highest total for the period in both company and art market history.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. 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.*

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