

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S EVENING SALE OF *OLD MASTER & BRITISH PAINTINGS* REALISES

£21.8 million/ \$35.8million / €26.3 million

The sale was led by the most important rediscovery of
a painting by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) in more than a generation,
The Embarkation of Saint Paula
which realised £5 million/ \$8 million / €6 million

10 artist records were set, including world record prices at auction for
Claude Lorrain, Pietro Fabris and Marten van Cleve I



London, 3 December 2013 – Christie's evening auction of *Old Master & British Paintings* realised £21,858,250/ \$35,803,814/ €26,382,908. The sale attracted buyers from 14 countries across 4 continents. The top price was paid for the most important rediscovery of a painting by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) in more than a generation, *The Embarkation of Saint Paula* from the Smith collection at Hambleton Manor, Buckinghamshire, which realised £5,066,500/ \$8,298,927/ €6,115,266, setting a world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £3-5million, *illustrated above*).

Georgina Wilsenach, Head of Old Master & British Paintings at Christie's London: *"The strong and consistent bidding in this sale came from around the globe, continuing the trend of growing interest in Old Masters seen in recent years. Each season we welcome a greater number of collectors to our field, with new buyers from growth markets adding to an already rich group of long standing collectors from Europe and America. We are very pleased that Christie's increased presence in South America, Russia and Asia, particularly China, continues to build interest in Old Masters on a truly international stage. This is evident in the active bidding and 10 record prices achieved for paintings across the French, Flemish, Dutch, Italian and British schools."*

Top Lot: *The Embarkation of Saint Paula* by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), one of the greatest and most influential landscape painters of 17th century Europe, realised £5,066,500/ \$8,298,927/ €6,115,266, setting a world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £3-5million). Whilst not entirely unrecorded, this work was inaccessible to scholars and students of Claude's works – even through photographic reproduction – and had been unseen by the public since the late 19th century, when it was last exhibited at the Royal Academy. Over time, claims of authenticity were advanced for various copies of the composition and a damaged version in the Musée des Vosges, Épinal, came to be accepted as the prime version since the 1950s, largely because it was thought to have had French royal provenance. Recent reassessment of the provenance and careful examination of the present painting showed this work to be – beyond question – not only Claude's unique autograph version of the composition, but a masterpiece of the artist's full maturity. Upon studying the canvas for the first time, Professor Marcel Rothlisberger, *doyen* of Claude studies and author of the *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's paintings – who had never before seen the present painting – has declared it a 'great Claude', concluding that it is 'a truly sensational discovery, all the more so as the picture is in such wonderful condition, luminous, visible down to every detail, complete with an elaborate figure scene, the brilliant sun, rippling waves, a Roman temple, trees and rocks.'

Commissioned in 1650 by the Roman Cardinal Domenico Cecchini (1589-1656), and recorded as such in the artist's illustrated record of commissions (the *Liber Veritatis*), the picture was in the collection of the Earls of Portarlington, probably by the late 18th century, and by the late 19th century in that of the famous English retailer WH Smith.

Further highlights of the auction:

- *Man with a Sword*, 1644, by **Rembrandt and studio** sold for £2,546,500/ \$4,171,167/ €3,073,626 (estimate: £2-3 million). Shedding fascinating new light on Rembrandt's studio practice during one of the most enigmatic and least well-documented phases of his career, this painting was recently the subject of a thorough re-appraisal. Through a process of scientific investigation and fresh scholarly analysis, *Man with a Sword* has now been acknowledged as a reliably signed and dated portrait by Rembrandt, later fashioned into a historical portrait or *tronie* by another artist active in the Rembrandt workshop.

- *James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Clanbrassil (1730-1798), with his hunter Mowbray, resting on a wooded path by a stream*, 1765, by **George Stubbs, A.R.A.** (1724-1806) sold for £1,426,500/ \$2,336,607/ €1,721,786 (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million). A masterpiece from Stubbs' early maturity, it demonstrates the artist's supreme skill at rendering the equine form, combined with his gifts as a portraitist and his dexterity as a landscape painter. This picture dates to the same year as Stubbs' celebrated painting of Gimcrack on Newmarket Heath, sold at Christie's London in July 2011.

- Offered from a Distinguished Private Collection, an exquisite Still- life of flowers in pristine condition by **Jan Davidsz. de Heem** (1606-1684), who is regarded as one of the most accomplished still life painters of the period, sold for £1,314,500/ \$2,153,151/ €1,586,602 (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million).

- *The Birdtrap* by **Pieter Brueghel II** (1564-1637) fetched £1,202,556/ \$1,969,787/ €1,451,485 (estimate: £800,000-1,000,000). This is a beautiful example of what is arguably the Brueghel dynasty's most popular invention.

- *The Payment of Tithes* by **Pieter Brueghel II** (1564-1637) realised £1,022,500/ \$1,674,855/ €1,234,158

(estimate: £700,000-1,000,000). It is a popular and unusual subject in the artist's *oeuvre*, as it is a rare instance when the artist does not copy one of his father Pieter Bruegel the Elder's compositions.

- *The Supper at Emmaus*, a major rediscovery for the *oeuvre* of **Bernardo Strozzi** (1581-1644) sold for £914,500/ \$1,497,951/ €1,103,802 (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). Offered from the *Property of a Lady and Gentleman* this painting can be regarded as possibly the lost prime version of this well-loved composition by the artist.

- *The Carnival in Naples in 1778* by **Pietro Fabris** (1756-1779) realised £782,500/ \$1,281,735/ €944,478, setting a world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £500,000-800,000). A previously unpublished canvas which is in remarkable original condition, this is the most ambitious work known by the artist and is arguably his greatest masterpiece. *The Property of a Spanish Noble Family*, it was acquired almost 100 years ago and has passed by descent to the current owners.

- From the *Property of Jacques and Gaiba Hollander*, an exceptionally large treatment of the popular subject *Saint George's Day: A village kemesse* recently ascribed to **Marten van Cleve I** sold for £746,500/ \$1,222,767/ €901,026, setting a world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £200,000-300,000).

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Images available on request

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