

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 11 February 2014

## PIANO AND BED ONCE OWNED BY SPECTACULAR PERFORMER AND JAZZ AGE DIVA **JOSÉPHINE BAKER** TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN MARCH



A French giltwood and *vernis martin piano à queue*,  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Estimate: £30,000 – 40,000



A French giltwood bed, of Louis XVI style, late 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Estimate: £4,000 – 6,000

**London** – Christie's London will offer furniture once owned by jazz age diva Joséphine Baker in *The Opulent Eye – 19<sup>th</sup> Century Furniture, Sculpture & Works of Art* on 6 March 2014. Born in the slums of St. Louis in 1906, Joséphine Baker rose to fame during that city's *Roaring Twenties* becoming the highest-paid chorus girl in vaudeville. She travelled to Paris in 1925 where her sensual *La Danse de Sauvage* sensationalised society; she made France her adopted homeland and morphed from 'petite danseuse sauvage' to 'la grande diva magnifique'. Baker was the first African-American actress to star in a major motion picture and was the most successful entertainer working in France at the time.

The piano (estimate: £30,000 – 40,000, *illustrated above left*) and the Louis XVI style giltwood bed (estimate: £4,000 – 6,000, *illustrated above right*) were in Joséphine Baker's French home, the Château des Milandes in the Dordogne. The Château was her home with her fourth husband, the French composer Jo Bouillon whom she married in June 1947, and where she raised her twelve adopted children. It is fitting of the otherworldly aura of Joséphine

Baker that she chose the fairy-tale Château des Milandes to create the home of her dreams. She modernised the Château with electricity, running water, no less than six bathrooms and a huge kitchen. Having created a theme park in the grounds Joséphine welcomed 5000 visitors on opening day in 1949.

Baker was also famous for her advocacy of human rights and refused to perform for segregated audiences. During World War II Joséphine Baker served France by not only performing for the troops but also by smuggling secret messages written on her music sheets for the French Resistance and as a sub-lieutenant in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. She was later awarded the *Medaille de la Resistance* and named a *Chevalier légion d'honneur* by the French government for hard work and dedication.

---

**PRESS CONTACT: Demagh O'Leary | +44(0)207 389 2398 | [doleary@christies.com](mailto:doleary@christies.com)**

**PUBLIC EXHIBITION:**

Sunday, 2 March 2014: 2:00pm – 5:00pm  
Monday, 3 March 2014: 9:00am – 4:30pm  
Tuesday, 4 March 2014: 9:00am – 8:00pm  
Wednesday, 5 March 2014: 9:00am – 4:30pm

**AUCTION:**

*The Opulent Eye*  
Sunday, 6 March 2014  
11:00am

**About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 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 around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

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.*

###

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

Complete catalogue available online at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) or via the Christie's iPhone app

**FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:**

