

# CHRISTIE'S

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

£44.9 million / \$77 million / €56.5 million

The sale was led by a masterpiece by Francesco Guardi  
*From The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection*  
which realised £9.8 million / \$16.9 million / €12.4 million



**London, 8 July 2014** – Christie's evening auction of *Old Master & British Paintings* realised £44,986,000 / \$77,016,032 / €56,547,402. The sale attracted 145 registered bidders from 27 countries across 5 continents. The top price was paid for *Venice, the Bacino di San Marco with the Piazzetta and the Doge's Palace* by **Francesco Guardi** *From The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection*, a masterpiece dating from the artist's full maturity which realised £9,882,500 / \$16,918,840 / €12,422,303, setting the second highest price for a work by the artist at auction (estimate: £8-10 million). New artist record prices at auction were achieved for works by Willem Claesz. Heda (lot 31); Matthias Stomer (lot 34); The Master of the Annunciation to the Shepherds (lot 36); Luca Giordano (lot 38); and Sir Henry Raeburn (lot 64), among others.

**Henry Pettifer, Head of Old Master & British Paintings at Christie's London:** *"This sale drew strong and enthusiastic bidding from around the world for the rarest works of the highest quality. The continued breadth of demand for Old Masters was reflected by the fact that bidders from 27 countries across 5 continents registered to bid in this auction. We are very pleased with the results of the works from The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection which was led by Vermeer's Saint Praxedis and included a group of Italian Baroque paintings which set new record prices at auction for The Master of the Annunciation to the Shepherds (lot 36: £2,434,500) and Luca Giordano (lot 38: £962,500). Notable prices were also achieved for the masterpiece by Francesco Guardi from The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection (lot 19: £9,882,500) and the Brueghel the Younger 'Road to Calvary' (lot 13: £5,514,500), each respectively setting the second highest auction price for the artist."*

**Top Lot:** *Venice, the Bacino di San Marco with the Piazzetta and the Doge's Palace* by **Francesco Guardi** (1712-1793) From *The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection* which was executed at the height of Guardi's maturity sold for £9,882,500/ \$16,918,840/ €12,422,303, setting the second highest price for a work by the artist at auction (estimate: £8-10 million). Depicting one of the most celebrated prospects of Venice, centering on the Doge's Palace, the calibre of this work is matched by its exceptional condition and provenance. Originally in the collection of The Earls of Shaftesbury this picture entered the Rothschild collection in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has passed by descent in the family to the present owner. Not seen in public since 1954, this work is widely recognised to be among the artist's masterpieces.

**Further highlights of the auction:**

- *Saint Praxedis* by **Johannes Vermeer** (1632-1675), of 1655, is the earliest dated picture by the artist and one of only two works from his rare oeuvre of 37 known paintings to have remained in private hands realised £6,242,500/ \$10,687,160/ €7,846,823, setting the second highest price for a work by the artist at auction (estimate: £6-8 million). Scientific evidence has endorsed the attribution of this highly charged devotional work to the Delft master. Significantly, the recent material technical analysis conducted by the Rijksmuseum in association with the Free University, Amsterdam, has established that the lead white used in the painting matches precisely with that employed in another early painting by Vermeer - *Diana and her Companions*, in The Mauritshuis, The Hague. This work led the group offered from *The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection with Proceeds to Benefit the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Foundation*.

- *The Road to Calvary*, a tour de force of **Pieter Brueghel the Younger's** (1564/5–1637/8) early maturity and one of the finest of all his large-scale compositions to have remained in private hands, sold for £5,514,500/ \$9,440,824/ €6,931,727 (estimate: £5–7 million). Loosely inspired by an equally monumental rendering of the subject by his father, Brueghel the Elder (1564; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), this painting is one of the Younger's most important and original designs. Only five signed and dated versions of this composition by the Younger are recorded and this is not only the largest, but also the only one to remain in private hands. The vibrancy of the palette and richness of narrative and naturalistic details underline the picture's extraordinary state of preservation.

- A monumental *pronk* still life by **Willem Claesz. Heda** (1594-1680), which has been in the family of the present owner from the early-19<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the most significant discoveries in recent years in the realm of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch still-life painting, sold for £4,848,500/ \$8,290,360/ €6,087,023, setting a new record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million). Painted in 1644 it has survived in extraordinarily pristine condition. A majestic work by arguably the greatest exponent of the genre, this picture belongs to the phase of the Haarlem master's career when his compositions took on a richer and more elaborate character.

- *Portrait of Lady Frances Marsham, later Countess of Romney (1755–1795)* by **Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.** (1723–1792) realised £4,786,500/ \$8,194,488/ €6,016,631, setting the second highest price for a work by the artist at auction (estimate: £3–5 million). An exceptionally well preserved example of the artist's female full-lengths of the 1770s, it was executed in the decade that Reynold's secured his reputation as the dominant artistic figure of the age of George III. Acquired by the distinguished collector Michael Arthur Bass, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Burton, in *circa* 1890 for Chesterfield House, this picture was offered from the Burton collection.

- A masterpiece of 17<sup>th</sup> century Neapolitan painting, *The Annunciation to the Shepherds* by **The Master of the Annunciation to the Shepherds** (active in Naples, first half of the 17th century), from *The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection*, set a new record price for the artist at auction selling for £2,434,500/ \$4,167,864/ €3,060,167 (estimate: £1-1.5 million). Measuring 50¼ x 70¼ in. (128 x 181 cm.), this work is grand in scale and rich in drama. While the artist's identity has still not been conclusively established, he has a close affinity with Ribera, and the exceptional quality of his oeuvre places him amongst the most significant artists of the Baroque period.

- *The Siege of Asola* by Jacopo Robusti, called Jacopo **Tintoretto** (1519-1594), from *The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection*, sold for £1,142,500 (estimate: £500,000 - 800,000). At nearly five metres long and brimming with spectacular details, this lot was a rare example of a great Venetian *telero* appearing on the market.

- An extensively published and exhibited painting, *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* by **Luca Giordano**, called Fa Presto (1634-1705) sold for £962,500/ \$1,647,800/ €1,209,863 (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). Dating to around 1656-7, it is a prime example of Giordano's early career. This work was formerly in the collection of Carlo del Chiaro, Florence, until 1839; going on to be owned by Prince Anatole Demidoff of San Donato, Florence until 1870 and later André Marie, Président du Conseil des Ministres, Paris, until 1975. It had been in The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection since 1984.

- *Melancholia* by **Lucas Cranach I** (1472-1553) realised £902,500/ \$1,545,080/ €1,134,443 (estimate: £500,000 - 800,000). An image charged with dynamism, fantasy and eroticism, *Melancholia* is one of the most iconic and enigmatic subjects in Cranach's oeuvre.

- Setting a new world record price for the artist at auction, *Christ before Pilate* by **Matthias Stomer** (c. 1600-c. 1652) sold for £842,500 (estimate: £400,000 - 600,000).

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*Images available on request*

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