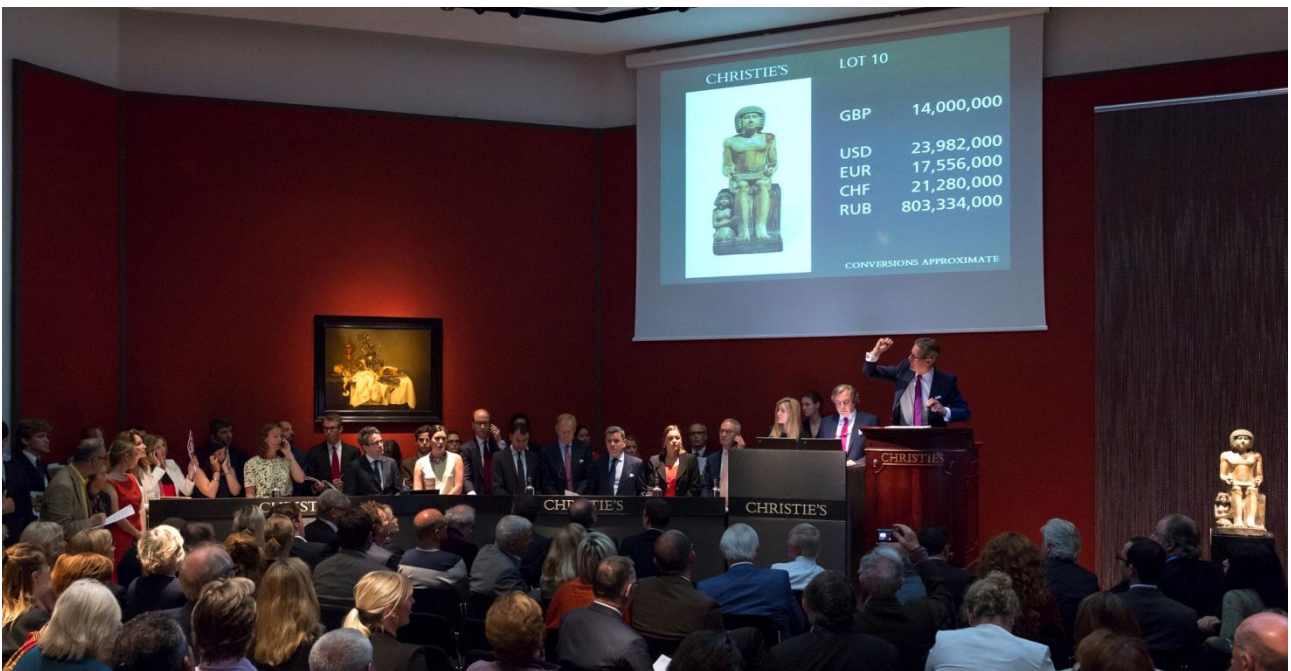


CHRISTIE'S

POST-SALE RELEASE | LONDON
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CHRISTIE'S EXCEPTIONAL SALE 2014 REALISES £31 MILLION/\$53.1 MILLION/€38.9 MILLION MARKING THE HIGHEST AUCTION TOTAL FOR ANY VARIOUS-OWNER SALE OF CLASSICAL DECORATIVE ARTS



London – *The Exceptional Sale* evening auction realised £31,048,500/\$53,186,081/€38,934,819, marking the highest total for any various-owner sale of classical decorative arts and breaking the previous record established by Christie's Exceptional Sale in 2011 at £28.7million. The top price was paid for Sekhemka, an exceptional Egyptian painted limestone statue dating to the Old Kingdom, Late Dynasty 5, *circa* 2400–2300 B.C., probably from Saqqara in Lower Egypt, which realised £15,762,500/\$27,001,163/€19,766,175 (estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000) setting a world record price at auction for an ancient Egyptian work of art.

Robert Copley, Deputy Chairman Christie's UK, International Head of Furniture: *'The solid results witnessed in the Exceptional Sale 2014 mark the highest total for any various-owner sale of classical decorative arts, previously established by the Exceptional Sale in 2011 at Christie's London which realised £28.7million. The finest and rarest examples achieved exceptional prices as increasingly multi-national bidders competed for works of exceptional quality. Several records were set including Giambologna's 'The Rape of A Sabine', which realised £3.6 million, surpassing the previous record for the artist set by this work when it last came to the market at Christie's 25 years ago. Following the inaugural Exceptional auction in 2008, these results build on Christie's success with this pioneering sales platform. It continues to demonstrate the enduring appeal of individual masterpieces, which were highly admired over the past few weeks while they have been exhibited alongside highlights of the Old Master, Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary art in London.'*

Top Lot:

- The top price was paid for Sekhemka, an exceptional Egyptian painted limestone statue (29½ in./75 cm. high) which is over 4,500 years old, dating to the Old Kingdom, Late Dynasty 5, *circa* 2400–2300 B.C., probably from Saqqara in Lower Egypt, which realised £15,762,500/\$27,001,163/€19,766,175 (estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000) setting a world record price at auction for an ancient Egyptian work of art. Depicting a man called Sekhemka, who we know from the inscription on the statue's base was the Inspector of the scribes of the royal court, this statue would have been placed in his tomb's chapel as a living image, with the depictions of offerings in carved relief around the side of his seat sustaining his soul for eternity. The sculpture was originally acquired by the 2nd Marquess of Northampton during his travels in Egypt in 1849-50 and was given to the Northampton Museum by either the 3rd or 4th Marquess of Northampton prior to 1880. The statue was offered for sale by Northampton Borough Council. Proceeds of the sale of the sculpture will help fund a major new extension of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery doubling the size of the exhibition space, creating new galleries, teaching facilities and commercial space. The new development will position Northampton as a leading regional museum focused on history, art and Northampton's footwear heritage.

Highlights of the Auction:

Lot 30 - The bronze sculpture by Giambologna, *The Rape of A Sabine*, fetched £3,666,500/\$6,280,715/€4,597,791 (estimate: £3 million – £5 million). This work achieved a world record price for the artist at auction, which surpassed the previous record for the artist set by this work when it last came to the market at Christie's 25 years ago. The bronze depicts one of the most celebrated compositions of the Florentine court sculptor Giambologna (1529-1608) and is one of only three bronzes to bear the inscription 'GIO BOLONGE' – the other two being in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In terms of facture and surface, it closely resembles an important group of Giambologna bronzes in the collection of the noble family of Schönborn, who acquired them in 1660 from the heirs of Sebastian Zäch, a close friend of Giambologna. Documents show that an example of this composition was among the Schönborn bronzes purchased from the Zäch family, and it may be that the present bronze is the missing Zäch/Schönborn cast.

Lot 1 - An Italian specimen marble table top produced in the late 16th century in Rome, on an Irish George II giltwood stand attributed to Thomas Johnson after a design by Matthias Darly, *circa* 1756-58, realised £482,500 / \$826,523/ €605,055 (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Probably acquired by Admiral John Forbes (d. 1796), while in Rome in March 1755, he commissioned a superb George II giltwood stand carved with naturalistic oak branch supports that are wrapped with foliate trails.

Lot 19 - A chess-table by the Birmingham silversmiths Elkington & Co., which is exemplary of the innovation and superb quality of 19th century design, fetched £1,986,500 / \$3,402,875 / €2,491,071 (estimate: £400,000-600,000), achieving a world record price for the maker at auction. Exquisitely crafted in gilt-electrotype inlaid with precious enamels, it was a highlight Elkington's medal winning stand at the 1867 *Paris Exposition Universelle*. Each corner of the top is set with a finely painted enamel portrait roundel depicting a great Emperor from history; in allegory of the cunning and military strategy needed to win a battle of chess. The Emperors shown are Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon Bonaparte and Tamerlane. The table reputedly later belonged to Tsar Alexander II (d. 1881).

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