

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | SOUTH KENSINGTON  
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## THE TESSA KENNEDY COLLECTION AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON IN MARCH

- Interior decorator to the stars with impressive list of elite clients including Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton
- Designer of The Rivoli Bar at The Ritz
- Collection includes mementos of society life in Monte Carlo, gifts from Marlon Brando and furniture once owned by Kennedy's dear friend Rudolph Nureyev

Simon Brown / House & Garden © The Condé Nast Publications Ltd.



**South Kensington, London** - On 18 March 2014 Christie's South Kensington will offer the collection of celebrated interior designer Tessa Kennedy within the sale of *Interiors*. Tessa Kennedy is an international award-winning decorator to the stars who for the last 50 years has created interiors with a sense of grandeur and a hint of theatre for an impressive list of elite clients including Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, George Harrison, Pierce Brosnan, as well as significant commercial commissions for De Beers and world-renowned hotels such as Claridges and The Berkeley. She is perhaps best known for designing the Rivoli Bar at the Ritz which was re-instated in 2001 and for which she was awarded Designer of the Year. The collection features furniture from her Knightsbridge apartment as well as tokens from her glamorous life among film stars and celebrities.

A number of pieces in the collection were inherited from her grandmother Milica Popovic, whose brother was Dusan Popovic one of the founders of Yugoslavia. Her apartment in Monte Carlo was a hub for social gatherings where Princess Grace, who was godmother to Kennedy's daughter Millica (her godfather was King Hussein of Jordan whose Middle Eastern influence can also be seen throughout the collection), and other members of the social elite gathered to watch the Grand Prix from her balcony. A pair of Ormolu wall trophies, from Kennedy's grandmother's flat in Monte Carlo were brought back to the UK on Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton's private jet as they were too large to carry on a commercial plane (estimate: £2,500 – 4,000, *illustrated right*).



Kennedy's second husband was the Hollywood film producer Elliot Kastner; many a summer holiday was spent on set with him and Kennedy's five children, where cast and crew became a close-knit family. The collection includes mementos from this period such as the jacket given to Kennedy by Marlon Brando on the set of *Missouri Breaks* in the mid-1970s (estimate: £1,500 - 2,500, *illustrated left*). Spending holidays on film sets influenced her children's future careers, Cassian Elwes, a film producer like his stepfather, currently has 6 Oscar nominations for his film *Dallas Buyer's Club* and Cary Elwes starred in films including *The Princess Bride* and *Robin Hood*.

The biggest influence on Kennedy's collection was the ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev, whom she met at a party at the Royal Palace in Monte Carlo in the 1960s whilst visiting her grandmother, and whom was her best friend until his death in 1993. Kennedy designed her Amber Room in the Ritz Casino as homage to the great dancer. Their joint interest in rich textiles and opulent costume, ecclesiastical and gothic tastes is perhaps most obvious in the design of her bedroom (*illustrated page one left*). The Aubusson hangings were among several lots purchased from the Nureyev collection which Christie's sold in two parts (New York and London) in 1995. She has fond memories of collecting Nureyev from the stage door at the Royal Opera House after his performances and driving him past all the antique shops she had been to that week, having selected items she knew he would like to see as they drove past. The collection also features a near pair of Baltic mahogany pedestal cabinets from the Nureyev sale at Christie's New York in 1995 (estimate: £8,000 – 12,000, *illustrated right*).



The superb half-tester bed from Kennedy's bedroom was featured in several magazines over the years including *World of Interiors* and *Vogue* (estimate: £4,000 – 6,000, *illustrated left*). Kennedy first spotted it in the window of an antique shop in Islington where she was distraught to find it had already been sold but a year later it was back in the window as the buyer had moved to a smaller property. This time it had been promised to Filmways Pictures to dress the set of *The Eye of the Devil* (1966) but Kennedy could not let it go. She bought it immediately and rented it to the film company instead.

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**Public Exhibition:**

Saturday, 15 March 2014: 11:00am – 5:00pm

Sunday, 16 March 2014: 11:00am – 5:00pm

Monday, 17 March 2014: 9:00am – 7:30pm

Tuesday, 18 March 2014: 9:00am – 10:00am

**Auction:**

*Interiors*

18 March 2014

**10:00am**

**Christie's South Kensington**

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from under £1,000. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Popular Culture Memorabilia, Vintage Couture, Islamic Art, Jewellery, 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, amongst others. In 2012 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the third consecutive year with sales of £139.4 million / \$223.1 million having welcomed a 10% growth in registered bidders and a 20% increase (£ / \$) in total sales.

**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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