

CHRISTIE'S

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ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY: AN INTERIOR BY SIBYL COLEFAX & JOHN FOWLER

4 - 25 November Online



*Pictured left and right: The Drawing Room in
Alexandra Tolstoy's former Chelsea Townhouse
Photo © Christie's 2020*

London – Christie's announces the sale of **Alexandra Tolstoy: An Interior by Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler** online from 4 – 25 November. To view the sale please click [here](#)

The collection comprises approximately 130 lots from Alexandra's former London townhouse in Chelsea, London where she lived for eleven years. Alexandra worked closely with the London-based interior designers and decorators Emma Burns and Daniel Slowik of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Interiors from 2008 onwards to create her family home. The property in historic Chelsea was an inspired choice; comprising two



former artists' studios with high ceilings and large windows, it previously housed the modern British artists Walter Sickert and Sir William Rothenstein. Alexandra recognised the space as a blank canvas to create a welcoming and warm family home in the heart of London. Alexandra's inimitable eye for design and eclecticism, combined with Emma's expertise and aesthetic, ensured a stylish and comfortable interior. Alexandra had previously collaborated with Emma on the design of her home in Moscow.

The interior and collection created by Alexandra since 2009, speaks not only of her love of the traditional English country house, but also of her Russian family heritage, innate personal sense of style and a strong desire to create a special home for her children.



The objects and works of art offered at Christie's are all highly decorative and desirable. In most cases these pieces would work both in a townhouse as well as in the country, which is something that Alexandra finds so appealing. From a large group of botanical prints to the selection of lamps and the japanned furniture supplied by Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, the pieces are versatile and would meld into an existing interior scheme individually or as a group. It was in the more unusual and original pieces that Alexandra found most pleasure; the group of collage works by George Smart, (*illustrated below left and far right*), (estimate £3,000-5,000 and estimate £3,000-5,000), and the model of the Monastery of St Sergii, (*illustrated below centre*), (estimate £3,000-5,000), which Daniel Slowik imaginatively magnetised for display, being amongst her most treasured.



A Regency cut out collage of The Maid and Soldier by George Smart circa 1820 Estimate £3,000-5,000

A Russian painted pine model of The Trinity Monastery of St. Sergii, circa 1900 on a later magnetised tray Estimate £2,000-3,000

A pair of Regency cut-felt collage pictures of the Goose Woman and 'Old Bright' The postman of Frant by George Smart, circa 1820 Estimate £3,000-5,000

Alexandra comments, *'The sale of the interiors from my Chelsea townhouse at Christie's London marks a new chapter in my life. There are many treasured items that I sourced and selected over the years with the expert guidance of decorators at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler. It was a great pleasure to be able to fully utilise such a diverse and highly personal selection of works of art, furniture and objects in a family home but also to be surrounded by objects that I took great pleasure from every day. I very much hope that these pieces will find a new home and be equally enjoyed'.*

Highlights as selected by Alexandra Tolstoy:



A Scottish Regency oak library bookcase, early 19th century
Estimate £4,000-6,000



An English grey-painted pine dolls house, second half 20th century
Estimate £1,000-2,000



Two Indian architectural paintings of palace gardens mid-20th century
Estimate £1,000-2,000



A pair of English brass studded white sofas, by Katharine Pooley, Modern
Estimate £2,500-4,000



An Italian walnut large refectory table, late 18th/early 19th century
Estimate £2,000-4,000

Highlights as selected by Daniel Slowik and Emma Burns, Directors of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler:



A late Victorian cast-iron club fender circa 1900
Estimate £2,000-4,000



Three Italian carved alabaster 'Grand Tour' models of Pisa, 19th century
Estimate £3,000-5,000



An American 'Rag' carpet
20th century
Estimate £2,000-4,000



An Anglo-Dutch black -and-gilt-
Japaned press cupboard
Circa 1700
Estimate £2,500-4,000



A pair of oatmeal and brown
'Volga' linen curtains, modern
Estimate £800-1,000

Emma Burns, Director, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Interiors comments, *'I believe if you are passionate about the art and furniture that you choose as an integral part of your interiors, pieces of different centuries can work well together - volumes need to be correct and well balanced, and pieces need to be thoughtfully placed as Alexandra did throughout the property to great effect. Like all good houses this project was very much a work in progress over the years. With an interesting interior I find that nothing stands still and no piece is forever destined for one place. The joy is to be able to move things around when new furniture arrives or a new painting, or your needs from a room change, in order to keep things interesting'.*

Daniel Slowik, Director, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Interiors comments, *'Alexandra has a strong sense of place and great style, it was extremely enjoyable to work for her and to enable her to create a warm yet very stylish family home. All these spaces needed to be practical but aesthetically pleasing. Her love of colour and the importance of home, both of which I consider to be part of her Russian heritage, massively influenced the interiors which is evidenced in this sale '.*

Benedict Winter, Head of Sale comments, *'The English country house-style, immortalised by Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, is instantly recognisable. When combined with the personal vision of its owner, the effect is magical. Alexandra's selection of objects, furniture and works of art sit harmoniously together – creating a highly personal interior and a comfortable family home. Christie's has a longstanding relationship with interior decorators Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler. With accessible estimates, we are confident these pieces will find new-buyers and attract seasoned collectors alike'.*

The sale comprises works including English furniture, lighting, porcelain, works of art, lighting, rugs and carpets. Estimates for individual lots start from £300 up to £4,000. The sale is expected to realise in the region of £250,000.

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Notes to Editors

About Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Interiors

Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler was founded in the 1930s and is the longest established interior decorating firm in Great Britain, as well as one of the most respected. Its reputation for work of the highest quality remains unchallenged. The company's current generation of designers have over 150 years of collective experience between them, and are as used to creating 21st century interiors as they are working on important historic buildings. The company's reputation is not confined to the British Isles. There is demand for the designers' very particular skills and experience world-wide, and even in Great Britain many of the projects carried out are for international clients. The majority of commissions are private and residential, ranging from some of Britain's most notable stately homes to modern city apartments, ranches in the Wild West or South America, ski chalets and tropical beach houses. Boardrooms, offices, restaurants, yachts and private jets add occasional variety to the mix. The client list (always kept confidential) includes royalty and rock stars, businessmen and bohemians, with many others in between. The eight interior decorators, each with a support team, work independently of one another and have distinctive areas of expertise – and also have the great advantage of being able to exchange knowledge when necessary. Clients have a choice of which designer they feel is right for them, knowing that they all work to the same high standards. Clients find that collaborating on a project with their designer can be both enjoyable and rewarding. Crucially, they know that the project is being tailored to suit their individual requirements and that the end result will be entirely personal. Whether their tastes are traditional or cutting-edge contemporary, clients can also be confident of an attention to detail that ensures their home will be deeply comfortable as well as beautiful to look at; subtle, unobtrusive luxury is taken for granted. Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler's new Belgravia premises place the firm squarely in the middle of London's exciting decoration and design quarter in Pimlico Road. The famous Yellow Room back in Mayfair, designed by Nancy Lancaster and John Fowler, is part of a distinguished history of which the company is proud – but we have now moved on. The change of location brings fresh inspiration and a new lease of life. The Pimlico Road showrooms give the interior decorators the opportunity to display their talents in an entirely different context. A new era has begun.

www.sibylcofax.com

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in 2019 that totalled £4.5 billion / \$5.8 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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