

For Immediate Release

March 10, 2005

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**REDISCOVERED STILL LIFE BY GERRIT DOU EARLY HIGHLIGHT OF
CHRISTIE'S MAY 2005 OLD MASTER PAINTING SALE IN NEW YORK**

**Old Master Paintings
May 25, 2005**

New York – Following the success of its January 2005 auction in New York, coupled with its brokering of the sale of Duccio's *Stroganoff Madonna* to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in November of last year, Christie's International Old Master Paintings Department continues to secure exceptional works for sale.

On May 25, a recently rediscovered and highly important 17th century painting by Gerrit Dou (Leiden 1613-1675) will be offered during the second New York *Old Master Paintings* sale of 2005, to be held at Christie's Rockefeller.

A sleeping dog beside a terracotta jug, a basket, and a pile of kindling wood is a masterpiece of 1650 by the acclaimed Dutch painter who was the first and most famous member of the Leiden 'fine' painters (*Leidse Fijnschilders*) – and Rembrandt's most accomplished pupil.

Estimated at \$2,000,000-3,000,000, the work has been unpublished since 1908, has never appeared at a public exhibition, and is one of the finest Dou's to come on the market in living memory. It is offered for sale by the Nelda and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation.

"This exquisite little panel by Gerrit Dou is one of the most important 17th century Dutch Old Masters I have had the honor of handling in my 17 year career at Christie's, and certainly the most appealing," says Anthony Crichton-Stuart, Head of Department, Old Master Paintings, New York.

The Painter and His Work

Gerrit Dou specialized in small-format paintings, the details and surfaces of which he carefully observed and meticulously rendered. Entering Rembrandt's studio at the age of 13, Dou's ability was quickly recognized. His paintings were sought after by the greatest collectors of the day, including Charles II of England and by the age of 28 Dou was hailed by historians and art theorists as someone whose style all artists should emulate.

The subject matter and format of this Dou is unique within his *oeuvre* (only one other horizontal still life by the artist is known) and the painting has overtones of a *Vanitas* still life. Emphasizing the transitory nature of earthly life, the work keeps with the strong tradition for such themes in Leiden. However, its exact meaning remains unclear, and the visual richness of Dou's imagery and the multi-layered interpretation played a large part in the appeal of his paintings to contemporary audiences - and will also appeal to today's collectors.

The Vendor

Offered for sale by the Nelda and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation, Orange, Texas, the painting was purchased by Henry Jacob Stark in 1927. The Lutcher and Stark families have had a major influence on the artistic and cultural development of Southeast Texas and in 1961 established the Foundation.

After Henry Jacob Stark's death in 1965, his widow Nelda oversaw the construction of the Stark Museum of Art and proceeds from the sale of the Dou will be used to benefit the Museum for future acquisitions in the field of American Western paintings.

Auction:	Old Master Paintings	May 25 at 10am & 2pm
Viewing:	Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center	May 20 - 24

More information about Christie's sales of *Old Master Paintings* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from upcoming sales can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

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