

Press Release

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CHRISTIE'S

Contact: Matthew Paton +44 (0) 20 7389 2965

mpaton@christies.com

CHIPPENDALE MASTERPIECE LEADS AN UNPRECEDENTED AUCTION OF EXCEPTIONAL FURNITURE IN JUNE 2008 AT CHRISTIE'S

- A landmark evening auction will present twelve exceptional works of art - the most important selection of British masterpiece furniture ever to be offered at auction
- Highlights include five pieces by Thomas Chippendale - the most important selection of Chippendale furniture ever offered at auction
- *The Kenure Cabinet* by Thomas Chippendale, the most important of his works ever offered at auction, expected to realise between £2.5 million to £4 million and set a record for any piece of British furniture sold at auction

12: Exceptional Furniture, 18 June 2008 at 6pm
Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT



London - Christie's announce that they will present an evening sale of twelve masterpieces of furniture on 18 June 2008 in London. The most significant auction of 18th century English furniture ever presented to the market, the sale will present the finest British design and craftsmanship of the Golden Age and is led by five works by Thomas Chippendale, including *The Kenure Cabinet*, the finest example of his craft ever to appear at auction, which is expected to realise between £2.5 million to £4 million and may become the most expensive piece of British furniture sold at auction. The sale will offer twelve lots and is expected to realise in the region of £10 million.

Robert Copley, International Head of the Furniture Department, Christie's, and Deputy Chairman of Christie's UK: *"This auction is an unprecedented event in the art market and will offer some of the most pioneering pieces of 18th century design and craftsmanship ever offered for public sale. Over the last five years, we have seen an ever-increasing demand from international collectors for exceptional examples of British furniture and we are excited to offer this sale which will present 12 of the most impressive works of Golden Age furniture seen at auction. We expect considerable interest and excitement from collectors and institutions around the world."*

The auction will offer:

The Kenure Cabinet attributed to Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779)



Thomas Chippendale is arguably the most famous name in furniture and the greatest cabinet-maker of the 18th century, and The Kenure Cabinet is the finest example of his craft ever to appear at auction (estimate: £2.5 million to £4 million). In 1754, Chippendale published the *Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*, a comprehensive book of furniture designs which became popular with European nobility, gentry and cabinet-makers; Catherine the Great and Louis XVI, two of Europe's most prolific collectors, owned editions in French. The success of the book prompted Chippendale to publish an enlarged edition in 1762, and the period surrounding its publication is recognised as *The Director Period*, considered to be the cabinet-maker's most important and influential style. The Kenure Cabinet was conceived in the late 1750s and was designed as a Chinese fantasy cabinet in which exotic ceramics from China could be displayed. A magnificently crafted

work of art in exceptional condition, it is strikingly similar in design to the Chippendale cabinet in Dumfries House, Ayrshire, which was invoiced in 1759 at £47.5s. The Kenure Cabinet was most likely made for Sir Roger Palmer, 1st Bt. who in 1751 had married Eleanor Ambrose, the beautiful and influential Irish patriot. Sir Roger inherited Kenure Park in County Dublin, Ireland, in 1811 and the cabinet remained there until the house and its contents were sold by the family in 1964. The Kenure Cabinet was sold at auction in Dublin in 1964 and has been in the possession of the same family ever since.

The Dundas Chairs by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779), designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792)

In 1765, Sir Lawrence Dundas (1712-1781) was sent an invoice by Thomas Chippendale for a suite of eight armchairs and four sofas supplied to the Great Room at 19 Arlington Street, London. Chippendale had created the suite from a design by the renowned Scottish architect Robert Adam. The chairs cost £20 each. At Christie's London in July 1997, a pair from the suite sold for £1.7 million / \$2.85 million. The current pair passed by family descent and was sold by the Marquess of Zetland at Christie's London in 1934 together with another armchair and a sofa from the suite for 360 Guineas (£400). They are expected to realise between £1,500,000-£2,500,000.



The Dundas Sofa by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779), designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792)



The suite of furniture delivered to Sir Lawrence Dundas also included four sofas which cost £54 each. Sir Lawrence Dundas had made his fortune as Commissary-General of the Army during the Seven Years War and he used his wealth to commission great works of art and to buy significant landholdings across the country. Having bought his grand London residence in Arlington Street, he employed Robert Adam, a fellow Scot, as the architect in charge of its redesign and it was Adam who designed the Dundas suite which was realised and crafted by Chippendale. The current sofa passed by family descent and was sold by the Marquess of Zetland at Christie's London in 1934 together with three armchairs from the suite for 360 Guineas (£400). It is expected to realise £800,000-£1,200,000.

The Dundas Bookcase by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779)

Sir Lawrence Dundas also commissioned two mahogany bookcases from Thomas Chippendale, one for Arlington Street and the other for Aske, the house and estate in Yorkshire which he had recently acquired. The bookcases were delivered in 1764 and were of identical design, the only difference being the inclusion of the more expensive plate glass on the one for 19 Arlington Street, London, as opposed to 'spun' crown glass on the one for the country. This bookcase is the one supplied to 19 Arlington Street at a cost of £80. It has passed by family descent to the present owner and is being sold by the Trustees of the 3rd Marquess of Zetland Will Trust. It is expected to realise £1,500,000-£2,500,000.



The Moor Park Chairs by James Lawson (fl. 1763-1778), designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792)



In 1763, Sir Lawrence Dundas also acquired Moor Park, a princely mansion near Watford, and Robert Adam was entrusted with designing its interior. For the Banqueting Saloon, Adam designed a suite inspired by the antique couches used by the Romans for feasting, and in 1764, the cabinet-maker James Lawson invoiced Dundas for a suite based on the Adam design and including two sofas, six armchairs and two stools; the chairs had cost £12.10.6 each.

The pair to be offered on 18 June 2008 remained at Moor Park until 1919 and was sold at Christie's in 1942. They are expected to realise £250,000-£400,000.

The Foremark Hall Cabinet by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779)

Foremark Hall in Derbyshire was an impressive Georgian mansion built for Sir Robert Burdett, 4th Bt. (1716-1797). The house having been completed, Thomas Chippendale was commissioned to furnish it over an eight year period from 1766 to 1774 at considerable cost, the final bill amounting to £505.15.6. The mahogany secretaire-cabinet supplied by Chippendale remained in the house until 1939 when it moved to another home, remaining in the ownership of the same family. Its importance was lost for many years and in 1997, Anthony Coleridge published an article in *Furniture History Society Journal* reinstating its Chippendale authorship. It was subsequently included in the exhibition *The Art of Thomas Chippendale: Master Furniture Maker* at Harewood House, Yorkshire, in 2000. Offered at auction for the first time, it is expected to realise £500,000-£800,000.



The Cannons Chandelier attributed to James Moore (d. 1726)



The 1st Duke of Chandos (1674-1744) made his fortune as Paymaster General to the Duke of Marlborough's army and became a great and enthusiastic patron of the arts. He commissioned a princely mansion, Cannons, which was completed along with a chapel by James Gibbs (1682-1754), a Scot who had trained in Italy and become one of Britain's most influential architects. In 1725, Daniel Defoe, the great English author, wrote of Cannons that '*the inside of the house is as Glorious, as the outside is Fine, and if I may call it so, royally Furnished... two things extremely add to the Beauty of this House, namely the Chapel, and the Library.*' The chapel's resident composer was George Frederic Handel, and it was lit by two magnificent twelve-light chandeliers most probably supplied

by James Moore who had worked extensively for Chandos' patron at court, the Duke of Marlborough. The chandelier is made of gilded limewood and is adorned with a ducal coronet and griffins, loyal supporters of Apollo, god of light and patron of music. It is recorded in an inventory of 1725 as one of a pair, and was sold for £2.2s in 1747 following the death of the Duke. The chandelier was purchased by Cholmley Turner for the chapel at Kirkleatham where it has remained ever since. It is expected to realise £300,000-£500,000.

A George III Mahogany Commode, attributed to Wright and Elwick, based on designs by Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779)

This magnificent serpentine bombé commode from circa 1760 is expected to realise £200,000-£300,000. Wright and Elwick of Wakefield in Yorkshire were followers of their great contemporary and fellow Yorkshireman Thomas Chippendale and were commissioned to furnish Wentworth Woodhouse in Yorkshire in the 1750s and 1760s. The present commode borrows many designs from Chippendale's '*Gentleman's and Cabinet-maker's Director*' of 1762. It was acquired in the 1950s and has been in the possession of the same family ever since.





The Chicheley Mirrors attributed to Mr. Odell

A pair of George I giltwood mirrors, with scrolling decorations and foliage, are expected to realise £200,000-£300,000. The mirrors are included in an inventory of Chicheley Hall, Buckinghamshire, in 1755 and are no doubt amongst pieces supplied to Sir John Chester, Bt., in 1722 when a payment in the accounts is directed to '*Mr Odell for glasses and gold carved frames, a carpet etc.*' at the cost of £132. They have remained at Chicheley ever since and have never before been offered at auction.

A George II walnut side table in the manner of William Kent (*circa* 1685-1748)

This side table is designed in the Roman fashion that was popular during the reign of George II, and is centred by a lion-mask flanked by its pelt. Its style was popularised by William Kent, one of the great architects and furniture designers of the 18th century who had spent an influential decade in Italy in his early career. It was formerly in the possession of Percival Griffiths whose collection of English furniture is considered to be one of the greatest ever assembled in the last century. Following Griffiths' death it was sold at Christie's in 1939 to Frederick Poke and has passed by descent. It is expected to realise £100,000-£150,000.



A pair of George III Ormolu and white marble candelabra by Matthew Boulton (1728-1809)



Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) was an English entrepreneur, manufacturer and engineer from Birmingham who is known for crafting decorative objects of the highest quality, and for financing the inventor James Watt's steam-engine, a business deal which earned him great financial reward. His works were received by Catherine the Great and in the 1770s, he promoted his innovative objects in a series of sales at Christie's. The present candelabra from *circa* 1770 are of exceptional design and craftsmanship, and are made from ormolu and white marble, measuring 39cm in height. They are expected to realise £70,000-£100,000.

A pair of George III giltwood and painted satinwood pier tables in the manner of Thomas Sheraton

An impressive pair of George III pier tables *circa* 1790 will be offered with an estimate of £80,000-£120,000. Each of the tables has a D-shaped top decorated with a ribbon-entwined border, floral swags and a half-medallion enclosing a medallion of a classical maiden, and fluted tapering legs headed by Ionic capitals. They represent the altogether lighter and more feminine style of the late 18th century that followed on from that of Thomas Chippendale.



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Images available on request

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- The auction of *12: Exceptional Furniture* will be on public view at Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT from 12 to 18 June 2008. For general enquiries, contact Christie's on +44 (0)207 839 9060 or visit www.christies.com
- On 18 June, Christie's will offer the private collection of the late Hon. Simon Sainsbury, one of Britain's most generous philanthropists and discerning collectors who assembled throughout his lifetime one of the finest private British collections of the 20th century (see separate release).
- The current record for British furniture is held by The Anglesey Desk which sold at Christie's, London in July 1993 for £1.76 million (\$2.62 million).

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction 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 conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales 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 \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.