

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

佳士得香港有限公司

For Immediate Release

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**SUPERB AND RARE TIMEPIECES TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S
HONG KONG SPRING AUCTION**

Featuring an exceptional collection of enamel watches and pocket watches from a family trust, and 100 Rolex watches dating from 1920 to today from various collections

Important Watches

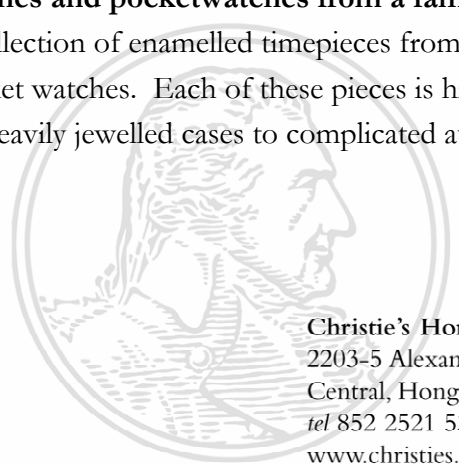
31 May 2005

Hong Kong – Christie's Hong Kong *Important Watches* Spring auction will take place on 31 May at the Hong Kong Convention Centre. An array of extremely rare timepieces ranging from the 19th century to modern day, from enamelled pocketwatches to highly complicated wristwatches by world-renowned watchmakers, will be offered.

This sale features a unique and exceptional collection of enamelled watches and pocketwatches from a family trust. Of particular interest to collectors are 100 Rolex watches dating from 1920 to today from various collections. Also of note are two private collections of modern and complicated wristwatches by famous watchmakers such as Patek Philippe, Breguet, Audemars Piguet and Vacheron Constantin. A selection of limited edition pens from world-renowned manufacturers is also included.

An important collection of enamelled watches and pocketwatches from a family trust

Christie's is delighted to offer an important collection of enamelled timepieces from a family trust, including a fabulous selection of Chinese market watches. Each of these pieces is highly attractive in its own right with exquisitely painted scenes, heavily jewelled cases to complicated automaton features.



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The highlight of the collection is an exceptional and very rare pair of 18k gold and enamel snuff bottles with concealed complicated triple automaton and watch, circa 1820. This pair of gold bottles features finely painted enamelled mirrored images of pastoral scenes populated by young children and their mothers. The most intriguing feature is an exceedingly complicated triple automaton with watch in the lower portion and figures that move when the lids are released. This pair of bottle is highly decorative and very special to connoisseurs (estimate:HK\$2,000,000–2,800,000/US\$250,000–350,000).

Also from the same family trust are two extremely special pocketwatches, both made for the Chinese market and dated circa 1820. One is a rare and important 18k gold and enamel duplex watch signed **Ilbery**, London, No. 6080. The case is adorned with an exquisite and finely painted enamel plaque depicting a Biblical scene, while its mechanism is equally ornate with a highly decorative and engraved gilt movement. The elegance of this watch is matched by its intricate duplex escapement (estimate:HK\$240,000–400,000/US\$30,000–50,000). The other is a magnificent large 18k gold quarter repeating openface cylinder watch by famous watchmakers **Piguet & Meylan**. The sumptuous case was made in the workshop of the Frères Oltramare, famous for their manufacture of gold boxes or cases and is lavishly decorated with miniature enamel plaques depicting floral arrangements amongst a profusion of pearls simulating an urn cascading with flowers set into a dark blue enamel base. The movement is equally intricate with a very rare stem winding repeating mechanism (estimate:HK\$400,000–550,000/US\$50,000–70,000).

An 18th century table clock made for the Chinese market and a magnificent 20th century Mystery clock by Cartier

The first “Chinese Market” watches or clocks were made by Jesuit missionaries during the Ming Dynasty in the late 16th century. The Emperors had an avid interest in horological and astronomical instruments. By the late 18th century, Chinese patrons requested only the finest watches and clocks with complicated features such as the repeating, music or automatons. Such complications were matched by lavishly decorated cases or in the case of clocks, casings with an elaborate repertoire of flora and fauna with garlands and ribbons.

The perfect example is this George III ormolu and paste-set musical automaton table clock, circa 1790. By repute, this clock was presented to the Chinese Emperor by George III, circa 1790 and was brought back to England by Lord Amhurst after 1900. The clock is richly decorated with garlands and flowers throughout with various tiers consisting of a central baldachin and two rectangular movement casings adorned with automaton features such as a kneeling man striking the bell, revolving trees and figures and animals moving in an English landscape. The various

automaton features are flanked by recumbent lions and elephants which are thought to be emblems of the British Royal Crown. This splendid clock also has music playing every three hours (estimate:HK\$800,000–1,200,000/US\$100,000–150,000). Many of these marvels were made for the Imperial Palace in Beijing and can be seen in the Palace Museum collections.

Likewise, mystery clocks have fascinated adults and children since their invention in the 19th century.

Cartier perfected the art of illusion in the mystery clocks since 1913. The mechanism of these clocks is hidden in the frame such that the hands seem to float in space without any connection to the movement. The illusion is a result of the hands being set into two rotating crystal discs with toothed metal rims that are propelled by gears in the clock case. Since every part of the clock had to be hand-made, each one took from three to twelve months to finish, employing not only the watchmaker but also the designer, the ‘orfèvre-boîtier’, the enameller, the lapidary, the setter, the engraver and the polisher.

The elegant Mystery clock by **Cartier** on offer dates to circa 1980 and is ingeniously designed with silver, lapis lazuli and rock crystal embellishments. This modern version takes about seven months to manufacture and continues to exercise its enchantment on collectors with its clean and sleek design and bejewelled hands (estimate:HK\$1,200,000–2,000,000/US\$150,000–250,000). Mystery clocks have been favourite gifts to notables including Queen Mary and Joseph Stalin.

A special collection of Rolex wristwatches dating from 1920s to today

Rolex is one of the most well-known brands of the watch mass market. The Rolex Oyster, the first waterproof watch, is omnipresent at watch retailers and auctions across the globe. It remains one of the best-selling watches since the model was immortalized by Mercedes Gleitze who swam the Channel in 1927.

Christie's Hong Kong is pleased to offer 100 **Rolex** timepieces from various collectors with vintage to modern models, including two 18k gold self-winding triple calendar wristwatches with moonphase: ref. 8171 and ref. 6062.

Both ref. 8171 and 6062 are automatic, but ref. 8171 has a snap on back, while ref. 6062, the Oyster version, has a water-resistant-type screw back. The ref. 8171 is considered very rare as it was produced in a small series between 1949 and 1952. In this sale, an 18k yellow gold, ref. 8181 (estimate:HK\$320,000–480,000/US\$40,000–60,000) is in extremely good condition.

The ref. 6062, on the other hand, was the first Rolex wristwatch to integrate day, date, month and moonphase. It was produced in a small series in the 1950s and examples with the star-shaped numerals on the dial are particularly rare. The model to be offered in this sale is in 18k yellow gold from circa 1952 and is distinguished by its original star dial (estimate:HK\$400,000–650,000/US\$50,000–80,000). A similar model in 18k pink gold with star numerals was sold at Christie's Geneva in May 2004 for 465,600 Swiss francs and has established a world record for any Rolex watch.

No **Rolex** collection is complete without the ubiquitous Cosmograph Daytona “Paul Newman” so named after the actor who wore one of these models in the 1968 motor-racing film “Winning”. The model on offer is a rare 14k gold, ref. 6241 from circa 1967 (estimate:HK\$200,000–280,000/US\$25,000–35,000).

Complicated watches from various private collections

Wristwatches with highly complex mechanisms, limited editions and unique pieces continue to be greatly sought-after by watch collectors for their perceived values of craft and rarity, and the combination of tradition and innovation.

Patek Philippe is synonymous with technical superiority and this sale features several finest wristwatches produced by this watch manufacturer. The highlight of this sale is undoubtedly a very rare limited edition platinum self-winding minute repeating wristwatch with black dial, ref. 5029 (estimate:HK\$2,000,000–3,000,000/US\$260,000–390,000). This ref. 5029 was produced in 1997 to commemorate the opening of the new **Patek Philippe** factory in Geneva and only 30 examples were produced, 10 in 18k gold, 10 in 18k pink gold and 10 in platinum.

Also by **Patek Philippe** are two highly sought-after complicated wristwatches ref. 3970E and 3450 First Series. The first is an 18k white gold perpetual calendar chronograph wristwatch with moonphase from 1994 (estimate:HK\$520,000–620,000/US\$650,000–800,000). The other is an 18k gold self-winding perpetual calendar wristwatch with moonphase from 1981 (estimate:HK\$650,000–950,000/US\$80,000–120,000). According to literature, only 244 examples of ref. 3450 were produced between 1981 and 1986. The first series features a red leap year indicator on the dial, such as the present watch on offer; whereas the second series featured Roman numerals. Both watches are particularly coveted by collectors of modern wristwatches.

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of **IWC (International Watch Company)** in 1993, the brand produced its most complicated watch, Il Destriero Scafusia or the Schaffhausen Warhorse – a

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platinum minute repeating, perpetual calendar, split second chronograph, tourbillon wristwatch with moonphase. The watch in the sale is number 79 in a very limited edition of 125 examples only (estimate: HK\$1,500,000–2,200,000/US\$190,000–280,000). In October 2003, Christie's Hong Kong established a world record price at auction of the same watch with a unique midnight blue dial at HK\$2,527,750/US\$326,000.

Many famous watchmakers and jewellery houses combine the beauty of diamonds and gemstones with technical sophistication and excellent craftsmanship to create timepieces which showcase creative designs and the dazzling magnificence of the stones. Amongst jewelled watches, the *King Kalla* is undoubtedly the most lavish and grandiose example.

A combination of excellent technology and scintillating diamonds, the *King Kalla* is the largest in the *Kalla* series in the **Vacheron Constantin** range of Haute Joaillerie watches, produced during the late 80s and the early 90s. The *King Kalla* is extremely rare. It is believed that fewer than 10 examples were ever made due to the difficulties in matching the number of top quality diamonds used, which is reflected in the high retail price. The present stunning *King Kalla* in 18K white gold is produced utilizing 192 square-cut or cut-cornered rectangular-cut diamonds in the case and bracelet totalling a weight of 103.37 carats (estimate on request).

Cartier is not only a world-renowned jeweller, but is also an innovator of the most elegant and classical watch models such as the ever popular Santos, the Tonneau, the Baignoire, the Tortue and the Tank watch. The contemporary re-editions of all these models are still the best-selling watches a century after their creation. Included in the sale is a spectacular lady's 18k pink gold and pink diamond-set *Crash* watch. First launched by **Cartier** in 1967 in a very limited edition, this watch was inspired by the pliable watches of Salvador Dali, a surrealist painter. The re-edition of the *Crash* as pavé-set diamond dress watches is a huge success and while demand continues to be high, the production remains very small, rendering this model extremely desirable. The present model with its pink gold and pink diamonds is even more difficult to come by and will certainly attract a lot of attention amongst the ladies (estimate: HK\$350,000–450,000/US\$45,000–58,000)

The *Important Watches* sale also features many wristwatches by **Graff**, **Cartier**, **Jaeger LeCoultre** and **Franck Muller**, along with an array of classical and modern designs to be sold without reserve. Limited edition pens from **Montblanc** will also be offered.

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Pre-sale Exhibitions:

Kuala Lumpur	Shangri-La Hotel	May 3–4
Jakarta	Christie's	May 3–4
Singapore	Grand Hyatt Singapore	May 6–7
Shanghai	Portman Ritz-Carlton	May 9–10
Beijing	St. Regis Beijing	May 12–13
Bangkok	Four Seasons Hotel	May 17–18
Taipei	Fubon Life Assurance Building	May 21–22
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	May 27–30

Auction:

Important Watches, May 31 at 11:00am & 2:00pm
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

More information about Important Watches can be found on christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. 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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*Images available upon request
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