

For Immediate Release
Thursday, 14 June 2012

CHRISTIE'S

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LANDMARK REDISCOVERIES & WORKS OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY LEAD *OLD MASTER & BRITISH PAINTINGS* AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN JULY

Constable's Celebrated Masterpiece *The Lock*

The Pieter and Olga Dreesmann Collection of Dutch Old Master Paintings, including
Rembrandt's *A man in a gorget and cap*

Further Highlights by Lorenzetti, Wtewael, Saenredam, Brueghel, Zurbarán, De Heem and Turner



London – Christie's *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale* on 3 July 2012 features a veritable bounty of riches: 64 works which present international collectors and institutions with landmark rediscoveries and works of exceptional quality, spanning 500 years of European art history. Leading the sale is **John Constable's** (1776-1837) celebrated British landscape *The Lock* (estimate: £20 million to £25 million), from the **Collection of Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza** ([click here](#) for full release). *A man in a gorget and cap* by **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn** (1606-1669) (estimate: £8 million to £12 million) crowns **The Pieter and Olga Dreesmann Collection of Dutch Old Master Paintings**, ([click here](#) for full release). The sale as a whole comprises significant Dutch and Flemish pictures, as well as notable Italian, French, Spanish and German paintings of remarkable quality, importance and beauty. The sale is expected to realise between £61 million and £88 million – the highest pre-sale estimate for a sale of Old Master & British Paintings in auction history.

Further highlights include a remarkable tale of discovery: an unpublished and previously unknown copper panel of *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan* by **Joachim Anthonisz. Wtewael (1566-1638)** which was found in storage during a routine Christie's valuation (estimate: £2 million to £4 million); *Flowers in a glass vase on a draped table, with a silver tazza, fruit, insects and birds*, by **Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606-1684)** (estimate: £1.2 million to £1.8 million); *Apples in a wicker basket, an opened pomegranate on a silver plate and roses, irises and other flowers in a glass vase, on a stone ledge*, by **Juan de Zurbarán (1620-1649)** (estimate: £2.5 to £3.5 million); *Christ between Saints Paul and Peter* by **Pietro Lorenzetti (circa 1306-45)** (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million); and *Mont Blanc from Fort Roch, Val d'Aosta*, a work on paper by **Joseph Mallord William Turner, R.A. (1775-1851)** (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million).

Richard Knight, co-Chairman of Old Master & British Paintings at Christie's and Georgina Wilsenach, Head of Old Master & British Paintings at Christie's London: *"Our sale this July brings together an extraordinarily rich mixture of Old Master and British Paintings – perhaps the most significant in recent years and certainly the most valuable. At the heart of the sale is a highly representative group of Northern European paintings, particularly those of the Dutch Golden Age. And, the sale as a whole boasts exceptional works from all schools and periods, providing so many exciting opportunities for discerning collectors in today's very dynamic market."*

Highlights of the auction:

- An unpublished and previously unknown copper panel, *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan*, 1610 by **Joachim Anthonisz. Wtewael (1566-1638)** is clearly recognized as an indisputable masterpiece of Wtewael's art, and among the greatest and most characteristic examples of the final phase of Dutch Mannerist painting (estimate: £2 million to £4 million, *illustrated right*). A remarkable tale of discovery, this work is offered from the *Property of a French Noble Family* having been found in storage during a routine Christie's valuation. Ingeniously conceived, inventively and audaciously designed it is executed in a highly polished miniaturist style. The painting ideally embodies the full scope of Wtewael's accomplishment. The untouched state of conservation allows every nuance of its refined finish to be read as the artist intended.



Depicting a farcical tale of Olympian adultery, the story of Vulcan's betrayal by Venus and Mars was first told by Homer in the *Odyssey* (8:226-367), then recounted in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (4:171-189). This painting appears to be the third occasion on which Wtewael depicted the subject of *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan* on a small-scale copper. His first attempt at telling the ancient story may have been in a painting, signed and dated 1601, in the Mauritshuis, The Hague; another equally fine example, signed by Wtewael but not dated, is in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. He clearly returned to this subject over this extended period, reflecting the popularity of Ovid's tale - which was widely available to the Dutch public through prose translations and had been reprinted seven times through the first decades of the seventeenth century – providing a ready market of collectors eager to own Wtewael's witty and imaginative interpretations of the story. He rendered each version of the subject afresh creating entirely reconceived and unique works. Though an artist of striking originality, Wtewael did look to important influences in earlier art and the composition of this work is closely modelled on a design of the same subject engraved in 1585 by the Haarlem Mannerist painter and printmaker Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), whilst almost every writhing nude in this picture can be said to pay homage to the genius of Michelangelo.

The oldest record of this painting dates to 1796 when it was sold by Jacob van der Lely - Mayor of Delft - for 13 florins to Gerrit van der Pot van Groeneveld, a wealthy merchant in the sugar trade and renowned art collector residing in Rotterdam and Groeneveld, whose collection was sold in 1808 with 65 pictures going on to form the basis of the newly created Rijksmuseum. Its last appearance at auction was at Christie's in the mid-19th century, passing by descent through succeeding generations to the present owner.

- Another previously unpublished work is *Christ between Saints Paul and Peter* by **Pietro Lorenzetti** (circa 1306-45) (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million, *illustrated right*). Recognised as a mature work by the artist, it is exceptionally rare as it dated to the early *trecento* – before 1320. It has not been subject to restoration in modern times and is believed to be the *predella* below the *Madonna and Child enthroned with a Donor* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which is stylistically very similar.



- Documented since 1764, *Flowers in a glass vase on a draped table, with a silver tazza, fruit, insects and birds*, circa 1671, has long been acknowledged as one of **Jan Davidsz. de Heem's** (1606-1684) masterpieces (estimate: £1.2 million to £1.8 million, *illustrated left*). In the context of his flower still-lives, an aspect which the artist did not fully explore until the 1650s, this is a veritable *tour-de-force*, dazzling both in terms of its dynamic composition and the almost unbelievable finesse of its execution. These qualities can be appreciated much as the artist originally intended, by virtue of the excellent state of preservation of this work, which was composed with De Heem's characteristically meticulous attention to balance and detail.

A consummate observer of nature, De Heem relishes in the depiction of each element and their different forms and textures. The artist's rigorous control over his medium and the extraordinary level of refinement that he achieved was unrivalled by any of his contemporaries. Offered from a European private collection, this exquisite work comes to the market for the first time in over 90 years, having been bought in 1921 by the great grandfather of the present owners, to whom it has passed by descent.

- *Apples in a wicker basket, an opened pomegranate on a silver plate and roses, irises and other flowers in a glass vase, on a stone ledge*, is a grand and monumental still-life executed by **Juan de Zurbarán** (1620-1649), one of the most creative, gifted but short-lived painters of the genre anywhere in Spain (estimate: £2.5 to £3.5 million, *illustrated right*). First published in 1997, it was soon described by Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez as 'one of the finest works to have been painted by Juan de Zurbarán.' Juan de Zurbarán's *oeuvre* was only properly identified in 1938, when a still-life in the Khanenko Museum of Western and Oriental Art in Kiev, previously considered a work of his father and teacher Francisco, was cleaned to reveal Juan's signature and the date 1640. Since then a small *oeuvre* has been reconstructed, which reveals this canvas to be among the most impressive and the only one to feature a bouquet of flowers in a vase.



In terms of composition alone this picture, dating to circa 1643-9, is considered Juan de Zurbarán's grandest work. The inclusion of a central dominating basket of fruit is a feature often used by and possibly taken from the slightly older Madrid painter of still-life, Juan van der Hamen y León (1596-1631). It is from this artist who Zurbarán may also have taken the exciting compositional device of placing elements on ledges set at different levels, which is highly unusual in his work but is used here to such powerful effect. Offered from the property of an important European collection, this picture formerly belonged to the distinguished collector and art historian Denys Sutton (1917-1991).

- *Mont Blanc from Fort Roch, Val d'Aosta*, a magnificent watercolour by Joseph Mallord William Turner, R.A. (1775-1851) is the culmination of a group of large watercolours depicting Swiss views that Turner completed over a number of years following his first visit to the Continent in 1802, during the short interlude in the Napoleonic Wars due to the Peace of Amiens (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million, *illustrated right*). Collectively they are among the greatest achievements of his career and represent a pivotal moment in European landscape



painting, the turning point from the classical tradition to a developed romantic sensibility. This important work comes to the market for the first time in a decade, from the *Property of a Private European Collector*.

Elsewhere in the sale highlights, which further reflect the breadth and depth of the sale, include: a finely preserved panel, *The Virgin and Child enthroned with angels, with Saints Dorothea and Barbara*, circa 1470, by **The Master of the Pottendorf Votive Panel (active circa 1465-1470)** which is one of the earliest painted examples of this type in Austrian art (estimate: £500,000-800,000). *A view of Assendelft*, 1634, is an extraordinary and highly significant rediscovery and addition to the oeuvre of **Pieter Jansz. Saenredam (1597-1665)**, the most important architectural painter in seventeenth-century Holland (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Fewer than sixty paintings by the artist are known, of which the vast majority – in contrast with the present work - are his distinctive, stark, church interiors. There is a group of five works of remarkable quality by **Pieter Brueghel II (1564/5-1637/8)**, including *Summer: The Harvesters*, 1623 (estimate: £2 million to £3 million); *A winter landscape with the Massacre of the Innocents* (estimate: £1.5 million to £2.5 million) and *The Wedding Dance*, 1625 (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million). *Saint Mark* by **Carlo Dolci (1616-1687)** formed part of a set of the Four Evangelists, which together constitute a formidable highpoint in the artist's output (estimate: £450,000-650,000). *The Destruction of the Palace of Armida*, 1737, by **Charles Coypel (1694-1752)** is a unique masterpiece of French narrative painting of the eighteenth century and the pinnacle of the artist's oeuvre (estimate: £500,000-700,000).

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