

RARE OBJECTS OF VERTU IN CHRISTIE'S *CENTURIES OF STYLE* SALE THIS MAY

- Gold boxes rediscovered after 100 years hidden in an attic
- A silver claret jug given by Charles Dickens to his editor



London – Following the success the 2011 sales, Christie's is pleased to announce the that sale of *Centuries Of Style; Silver, European Ceramics, Portrait Miniatures and Gold Boxes* will be held over two days on 30 and 31 May 2012.

GOLD BOXES



This sale contains an interesting and varied array of gold boxes and objects of vertu, which display examples of the many techniques employed by European goldsmiths in the 18th and 19th centuries. Highlights of this section include five boxes from a Scottish country house including a fine Louis XV parcel-enamelled gold snuff-box the interior set with a portrait miniature which is estimated at £15,000-25,000, *illustrated left*. The boxes were found in a trunk in an attic and have not been seen for over a hundred years. The sale also features an important collection of gold boxes from an Italian

private collector which contains a stunning group of jeweled presentation snuff-boxes, including a box presented by Charles, Archduke of Austria, on behalf of Emperor Ferdinand of Austria to William Tierney Clarke the English designer of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge that spans the River Danube between the original towns of Buda and Pest, (estimate: £7,000-10,000). This Italian collection also features a very fine Louis XV enameled gold snuff-box by Phillipe (Le) Bourlier which is expected to realize between £40,000 and £60,000, *illustrated right*.



PORTRAIT MINIATURES



A selection of portrait miniatures from the 17th century to 19th century is highlighted by a portrait of King Henry VIII by Johann Heinrich Hurter (1734-1799) (estimate: £4,000-6,000), *illustrated left*. The miniature is presented with an inscription which indicates that it was destined for the collection of Empress Catherine the Great. On 30 May 1787 Hurter received a substantial sum of 661 louis d'or from the Empress's agent in exchange for fifteen enamel miniatures in ormolu frames. The Empress was unfortunately not impressed with her acquisition despite Hurter supplying her with a total of around forty enamels. Further highlights include a charming pair of miniatures showing the Rev. Dr Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811), the fifth English Astronomer Royal and his wife Sophia Rose (*illustrated right*), by Mrs James Green, Nee Mary Byrne (British, 1776-1845) which are estimated at £2,000-3,000.

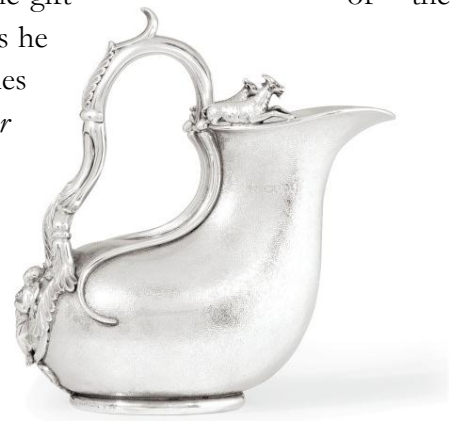


SILVER



A selection of over 200 pieces of silver is highlighted by a Pair of German Royal silver candlesticks, from the 'FA' in Shield Service (estimate: £15,000-25,000), *illustrated left*. Frederick Augustus III, King of Saxony, commissioned the service to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather who lavished large amounts of money on commissions for the Saxon Royal collection. The inventory of the court silver prepared in 1774 records nearly 50 categories of objects and gives an idea of how extensive the service was. This sale offers the opportunity to acquire a piece of Victorian silver gifted by Charles Dickens to his editor. The silver claret-jug is offered with a book of letters from Dickens to the original owner of the

jug, William Henry Wills (estimate: £8,000-10,000), *illustrated right*. The gift of the claret jug to Wills came after a particularly difficult time for Dickens as he had just separated from his wife. In a letter to his editor Dickens outlines the significance of this gift; *"It is not made of perishable material, and is so far expressive of our friendship. I have had your name and mine set upon it, in token of our many years of mutual reliance and trustfulness. It will never be so full of wine, as it is to-day of affectionate regard."* An array of silver designed by Georg Jensen will be on offer including two candelabums dated 1925-1932 and 1986 which are estimated at £5,000-7,000 and £2,500-3,500 respectively. Further highlights include a pair of George III silver-gilt tea-caddies which are intricately decorated with different theatrical scenes and are estimated at £7,000-10,000.



EUROPEAN CERAMICS



The sale showcases a fine selection of European ceramics ranging from the 16th century to the early 19th century. The earliest piece in this section is a lusted maiolica dish from Urbino or Gubbio, dated 1524, which is estimated at £60,000-100,000. British ceramics are represented by a number of pieces of Chelsea botanical porcelain; the botanical wares produced at Chelsea in the 1750s are among the most distinctive made by any 18th century porcelain manufactory. The Chelsea pieces such as the 'Hans Sloane' oval botanical dish (estimate: £25,000-30,000), *illustrated left*, are decorated with bold studies of flowers and insects taken from a combination of graphic sources. A strong selection of Meissen porcelain is led by portrait figure of Hofnarr Fröhlich, (estimate: £8,000-12,000), *illustrated right*. In Dresden he was electoral and royal court juggler, jester and magician and is always shown wearing the dress of the Viennese Fool. Variations to the Hofnarr Fröhlich figure are known but the present example has the unusual and amusing addition of pretzels applied to his jacket.



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