

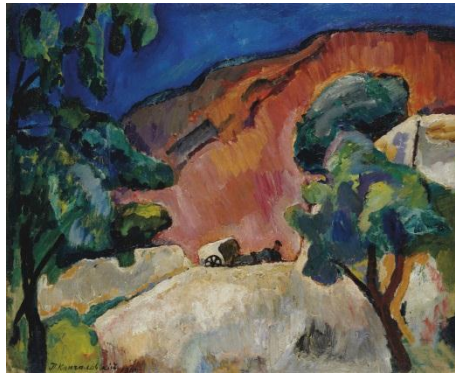
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## 40 YEARS OF RUSSIAN ART SALES AT CHRISTIE'S



A Jewelled Two-Colour Gold and Guilloché Enamel Imperial Presentation Snuff-Box  
Marked K. Hahn, with the workmaster's mark of Carl Blank, St Petersburg, 1899-1904  
3¼ in. (8.2 cm.) wide  
Estimate: £150,000-250,000



Petr Konchalovsky (1876-1956)  
*Spanish landscape*  
oil on canvas  
25½ x 31¾ in. (65 x 81 cm.)  
Painted in 1910  
Estimate: £600,000-800,000



Alexandre Iacovleff (1887-1938)  
*Portrait of Salomé Andronikova (1888-1982)*  
sanguine on paper  
37½ x 28½ in. (95.5 x 62.5 cm.)  
Drawn in 1922  
Estimate: £150,000-200,000

**London** – Christie's announces the auction of *Russian Art* to take place on 28 May 2012 in London, and marking 40 years of Russian Art Sales at Christie's. The auction will offer a rich selection of paintings and decorative works of art, the majority of which have been consigned from private sources, and will include masterpieces from many of the major movements in the development of Russian Art including Classic 19<sup>th</sup> Century Art, the Ecole de Paris, the Ballets Russes and the Avant-

Garde. Highlighted by over forty works of art by Fabergé and rare silverwork, the sale will also feature an impressive selection of Russian works of art, many of which are distinguished by their important Imperial provenance.

The sale is led by **Zinaida Serebriakova's** (1884-1967) sensational *Reclining nude* (£800,000-1,200,000) which was painted in 1930 following the artist's



emigration to paris. Born into an erudite and artistic family, her father was the sculptor Evgeny Lanceray and her uncle on her mother's side was the painter Alexandre Benois. Serebriakova's work, and in particular her nudes, is distinguished by an alluring combination of warm femininity and technical excellence.

Also executed in Paris, **Alexandre Iacovleff's** (1887-1938) exquisite 1922 sanguine of the famed nude of Russia's Silver Age, Salomé Andronikova (1888-1982 / estimate £150,000-200,000) is appearing at auction for the first time. The beautiful and intelligent Andronikova was a source of tremendous inspiration to painters such as Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin and Vasilii Shukhaev and for the poets Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelshtam.

In the wake of their highly successful tour to Moscow for the Christie's exhibition at Mouravieff-Apostol Mansion, attended by over 4000 people, the sale on 28 May presents **Ivan Aivazovsky's** (1817-1900) romantic seascape *Searching for survivors* and emotive *Ox cart crossing a flooded plain* (estimates: £250,000-350,000 and £400,000-800,000), in addition to **Petr Konchalovsky's** (1876-1956) 1910 masterpiece, *Spanish landscape*. Konchalovsky's vibrant depiction of Spanish terrain, which appears on the market for the first time, was first presented to the public at the iconic inaugural Jack of Diamonds exhibition that same year and provides the opportunity to acquire not only a master work by the artist but furthermore an important piece of Russian Art history (estimate: £600,000-800,000).

**Alexander Volkov's** (1886-1957) *Demon*, in which the artist's veneration for Mikhail Vrubel's creative genius is palpable, also appears on the market for the first time (estimate: £300,000-500,000). Painted in 1916, this striking work was exhibited at the state Tretyakov Gallery in 2007. Executed the same year, **Léon Bakst's** (1866-1924) passion for the Orient expresses itself in a comparable riot of colour in *The Yellow Sultana*, one of the finest examples of this supremely talented artist's work to appear on the market in recent history (estimate: £350,000-450,000).



As ever, Christie's Russian sale is characterized by the high quality of works on offer from a broad variety of movements and periods. The offering of superb paintings of Russian traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century art is led by **Orest Kiprensky's** (1778-1836) *Portrait of Prince Mikhail Alexandrovitch Galizine* (1804-1860), which was painted in 1833 in Rome and is an extremely rare and important rediscovery of a portrait known only from literature (estimate: £200,000-300,000).

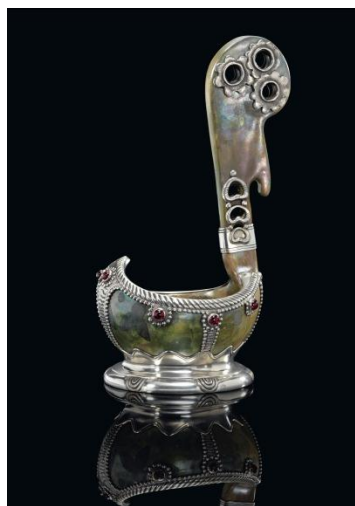
## RUSSIAN WORKS OF ART

Christie's sale offers a range of truly exceptional Russian works of art from distinguished private collections, most of which have never before appeared at auction. The sale is led by a newly discovered Imperial Presentation snuff-box with the cypher of Emperor Nicholas II that was commissioned from the Imperial court jeweler, Hahn between 1899 and 1904. During the reign of Nicholas II, only 280 Russian subjects and 90 foreign dignitaries received Imperial Presentation snuff-boxes with the Emperor's jewelled cypher. Of these, only 59 were produced by the court supplier Hahn. According to family tradition, the present Imperial snuff-box descended from a Persian religious dignitary during the Qajar Dynasty (1785-1925). The emphasis that Russia placed on diplomatic relations with Persia throughout the years preceding World War I led to the presentation of a variety of opulent gifts. The Shah of Persia, Muzaffar al-Din, paid two state visits to Russia in 1900 and 1902. The Shah travelled with a vast entourage and the cabinet prepared a commensurately large quantity of gifts, including two diamond-set Imperial snuff-boxes by Hahn, to award during his visit in 1900 (estimate: £150,000-£250,000).



Christie's May sale is also highlighted by a Fabergé two-colour gold and silver-mounted guilloché enamel desk clock, that is being offered from a distinguished Parisian private collection for the first time in decades (estimate: £80,000-£120,000, illustrated left). This distinctively enamelled clock dates to Fabergé's later production and is an excellent example of the firm's increasingly modern design, where all ornament is pared down to simple stripes echoing the rectangular form of the clock

The sale also offers two exceptionally rare kovshi, never before seen at auction. One is a very early silver kovsh, dating from the 17th century which has been part of a private collection since the 1930s (estimate: £30,000-£50,000, illustrated right). According to the inscription, this kovsh was presented to Ivan Nezhdanovskii by the 'Great Sovereigns' for his service as the head of customs collection in Yaroslavl between 1689 and 1690. Based on the inventory number, the



second kovsh was made in 1900 and serves as an early example of neo-Russian design and Fabergé's innovative approach, using new materials (estimate: £15,000-£20,000). Fabergé started working closely with the Imperial Stroganov School in 1900, when the workshop won a gold medal at the Paris exhibition for its famous experimental ceramics. Luster-glazed earthenware vases and kovshi, like the present lot, are among the workshop's most prominent pieces and exemplify the collaborative work of the Imperial Stroganov School, under the direction of Georgy Monakhov, and Fabergé's Moscow branch.

### **Notes to editors:**

#### **RUSSIAN ART**

8 King Street

Sale date: 28 May 2012, 10.30am & 2.30pm

Viewing dates: 25 May, 9.00-4.30pm

26-27 May, 12.00-5.00pm

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions 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 \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories,

with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More 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.

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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*Images available on request*

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