

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Sara Fox

sfox@christies.com

tel +1 212 636 2680

**CHRISTIE'S JANUARY SALE, *THE ART OF FRANCE*,
CELEBRATES 18th CENTURY FRENCH PAINTINGS**

FEATURING MASTERPIECES BY JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD



Jean-Honoré Fragonard (Grasse 1732–1806 Paris)

The Good Mother

estimate: \$5-7 million

New York — Following the sale of Old Master Paintings on January 25, 2012 at 2pm, Christie's will hold a specialized sale, **The Art of France**, dedicated to 18th century French paintings including a rich selection of works by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, among others. That same afternoon, at 5pm, Christie's will present a sale of **Wines of France** (separate press release to follow).

Leading the sale is one of the most beautiful of **Jean-Honoré Fragonard's** (Grasse 1732–1806 Paris) small-scale domestic scenes, *The Good Mother* (estimate: \$5-7 million). This oval-shaped painting pairs its harmonious subject with a composition that envelops the happy family in the natural yet domesticated surroundings of a verdant park with banks of hollyhocks and summer flowers, sparkling Mediterranean light and an arching bower. Similar in sensibility and technique to Fragonard's famous suite of paintings *The Progress of Love* (The Frick Collection), the painting offered for sale is the prime version of a subject that was a particular success for the artist.



A delightful pair of paintings offered by **Jean-Honoré Fragonard** is *Le Jour (Day)* and *La Nuit (Night)* (estimate: \$2-3 million). This pair of decorative paintings, depicting a flight of *putti* playing in the sky by day and bedding down in the clouds at night, combines the charmed virtuosity of Fragonard's mythological vein with the expansiveness of his best-known work, with each panel measuring almost five feet in width. Last exhibited to the public in 1953, the works are emerging from the private collection in which they have been held for more than half a century.



Another highlight from **Jean-Honoré Fragonard**, reflecting the influence of Rembrandt, is the painting *Head of an old man* (estimate: \$300,000-500,000). An exceptional work by the Rococo master which exhibits the influence of 17th century Dutch painting that Fragonard absorbed early in his career, this moody studio portrait of a simply dressed man, his characterful face turned to one side and half caught in shadow, was for many years attributed to Rembrandt or one of his followers.

Louis-Léopold Boilly's (La Basse 1761–1845 Paris) whimsical painting, *A trompe-l'oeil with a cat and a wooden log through a canvas, fish hanging from the stretcher*, is an excellent example of the artist's skill (estimate: \$150,000-250,000). In the late 18th century, *trompe-l'oeil* painting thrived in Flanders and the provincial centers of northern France where Boilly was born, far from the influence of Paris and the Royal Academy with their elevated and idealistic expectations of painting. To Boilly, however, *trompe-l'oeil* was not a low genre but the vehicle for sophisticated humor, intellectual conundrums and spectacular virtuosity. This canvas is one of the artist's wittiest and most captivating.





A delightful pair of paintings by **François Boucher** (Paris 1703–1770) is offered in the sale, *The Little Gardener* and *The Little Shepherdess* (estimate: \$400,000-600,000). The paintings served as the models for two chair back patterns that were woven at the Gobelins tapestry works as part of the “Country Children” series of designs.

Auctions:	<i>Old Master Paintings Part I</i>	January 25, 2012 at 10am
	<i>The Art of France</i>	January 25, 2012 at 2pm
	<i>Wines of France</i>	January 25, 2012 at 5pm
	<i>Old Master Drawings</i>	January 26, 2012 at 10am
	<i>Old Master Paintings Part II</i>	January 26, 2012 at 2pm
Public Exhibition:	January 21-25, 2012	

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2011 that totaled £2.0 billion/\$3.2 billion. In 2010 it achieved global auction and private sales of £3.3 billion/\$5.0 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 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 450 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 \$100 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai 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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