

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**A MASTERPIECE BY ROMANINO, A REDISCOVERED RUBENS,
AND A PAIR OF HUBERT ROBERT PAINTINGS LEAD
CHRISTIE'S OLD MASTER PAINTINGS SALE, JUNE 6**

**Sale Includes Several Stunning Works From Museum Collections,
Sold To Benefit Acquisitions Funds**



GIROLAMO ROMANINO (Brescia 1484/87-1560)

Christ Carrying the Cross

Estimate: \$2,500,000-3,500,000

New York — Christie's is pleased to announce its summer sale in New York of **Old Master Paintings** on June 6, 2012, at 5 pm, which primarily consists of works from private collections and institutions that are fresh to the market. The star lot is the 16th-century masterpiece of the Italian High Renaissance, *Christ Carrying the Cross* (estimate: \$2,500,000-3,500,000) by **Girolamo Romanino**; [see separate press release](#). With nearly 100 works by great French, Italian, Flemish, Dutch and British masters of the 15th through the 19th centuries, the sale includes works by **Sir Peter Paul Rubens**, **Hubert Robert**, **Jan Breughel I**, and his brother **Pieter Brueghel II**, among others. The auction is expected to achieve in excess of \$10 million.

The sale is highlighted by several important paintings long hidden away in private collections, such as an oil-on-panel sketch for *The Adoration of the Magi* (pictured right; estimate: \$500,000 - \$1,000,000), by **Sir Peter Paul Rubens** (Siegen, Westphalia 1577-1640 Antwerp). This unpublished panel comes fresh to market from a private Virginia collection, where it had been in one family for three generations. A powerful composition executed with the bold confidence and refined brushwork that defines Rubens' style, it relates to a large canvas painted by the master *circa* 1626-1627 for the high altar of the Cloister of the Annunciation in Brussels, later



acquired by Louis XIV and now on display at the Louvre Museum. The *Adoration of the Magi* was a subject Rubens frequently interpreted during his career; this sketch constitutes an exciting discovery, shedding new light on the artist's body of work.



Another work by **Sir Peter Paul Rubens** is *Portrait of Ferdinando Gonzaga as a boy*, a vivacious and engaging portrait representing the future Duke of Mantua in his youth (pictured left, estimate: \$500,000 - \$700,000). The identity of the sitter is established by comparison with two other likenesses of him by Rubens; one of which is a portrait now in the Fondazione Magnani-Rocca in Mamiano.

A number of paintings are being sold by major American museums to benefit their acquisition funds, including eleven lots in *Property from the Metropolitan Museum of Art Sold to Benefit the European Paintings Acquisitions Fund*. Among this group is a pair of masterpieces by the celebrated French 18th century landscapist **Hubert Robert** (Paris 1733-1808), *The Ruins* and *The Old Bridge* (pictured below, estimate: \$800,000 - \$1,200,000 for the pair). Painted in the circular format, an exception in the artist's oeuvre, these paintings embody Robert's artistic vision, contrasting an almost fantastical view of the imposing Imperial Roman remains with an inviting and modest river scene set in the French countryside. With a characteristic bright, pleasing palette and ingenious sense of design, Robert created captivating compositions that invite the viewer to meditate on the relationship of man to nature and the transience of human existence without sacrificing the humor and charm that were his hallmarks.



Two other paintings on offer from the Metropolitan Museum of Art are by **Pieter Brueghel II** (Brussels 1564/5-1637/8 Antwerp): *The birdtrap* (pictured left; estimate: \$250,000-\$350,000) and *The Whitsun Bride*



(estimate: \$200,000-\$300,000). The moniker of the first, an iconic Flemish scene of skaters on a frozen river, comes from the small yet distinctive motif of the bird trap on the lower right of the composition. Synonymous with the Brueghel family of painters, the popular motif was copied more than 100 times by members of their studio and followers. While there are many versions by Pieter the Younger, the present lot is numbered among the autograph versions in the catalogue raisonné.

In addition to the Metropolitan's property, Christie's will offer paintings from The Art Institute of Chicago, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). LACMA has consigned a superb, large-scale landscape by the 17th century Dutch master, **Philips de Koninck** (Amsterdam 1619-1688) and **Adriaen van de Velde** (Amsterdam 1636-1672); once in the collection of Napoleon's niece, Letitia Bonaparte, *A Forest Clearing with Cattle* (estimate: \$400,000-\$600,000) is a major work by an artist rarely found in today's art market.

The sale includes an exquisite small oil painting on panel that was recently reattributed to **Philippe de Champaigne** (Brussels 1602-1674 Paris) by Christie's experts. *The Holy Family with a Sparrow* (pictured right; estimate: \$200,000-300,000) is a creative reinterpretation of a drawing by Raphael depicting the Virgin and Child with St. Elizabeth and St. John, who playfully hands a small bird to the Christ Child. Champaigne studied the drawing when it was in the celebrated collection of the Parisian banker Everhard Jabach (1618-1685), some 2,000 sheets of which were later purchased for the collection of Louis XIV in 1671. The Raphael drawing today belongs to the Cabinet des Dessins of the Louvre.



Collectors of delicate floral still life paintings will be delighted by *A still life of an ornamented stoneware jug holding a bouquet of roses and lilacs...* (pictured left; estimate: \$500,000-\$700,000) by the 17th century Flemish master **Jan Breughel I** (Brussels 1586-1625 Antwerp). The painting has been dated to around 1618 by the scholars Klaus Ertz, Marie-Louise Hairs, Fred Meijer and Sam Segal, when Jan Breughel the Elder completed a number of works with similar compositions, such as *Flowers in a Basket and a Vase*, now in the National Gallery of Art,

Washington, D.C. In both works, the bright blue, yellow, pink, red and white blossoms and thick greenery form a dramatic silhouette against the simple black background.



Another dazzling floral composition is the back cover lot of the catalogue: *A vase of flowers with a bird's nest on a marble ledge*, from 1820 (pictured left; estimate: \$250,000-\$350,000) by **Jan Frans van Dael** (Antwerp 1764-1840 Paris), who worked in Paris and became one of the most influential flower painters in the first decades of the 19th century. His delicate and naturalistic treatment of the individual flowers evokes the golden age of Dutch and Flemish floral still life painters, but updated with a lighter palette of pinks, blues and yellows. His skill was acknowledged by the prestige of his patrons, including the Empress Josephine, as well as Marie-Louise Bonaparte, Louis XVIII and Charles X.

The sale includes three major Spanish paintings, led by one of European art's most recognizable and deeply felt trompe-l'oeil images, *Veronica's Veil* (pictured right, estimate: \$250,000-350,000), by the great Spanish master **Francisco de Zurbarán** (Fuente de Cantos, Badajoz 1598-1664 Madrid). Zurbarán's masterpiece is both a subject for meditation and an object of veneration, and he painted versions of it for the private devotions of pious collectors throughout his career. The blackness of the background acts as a foil for the face of Christ, and accentuates the sculptural effect that was one of the artist's aims. Another powerful composition, *The Archangel Michael Vanquishing the Devil*, (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) has been recently restored and definitively confirmed by scholars as painted by Zurbarán, with perhaps the involvement of his atelier. The large picture (60 1/8 x 42 1/8 in.) reveals an almost Raphaelesque classicism, with the dynamic figure of the archangel Michael negotiating a diagonal line across the entire canvas.



In a variation on the floral still-life genre, anthropomorphic fruit and flower paintings were popularized by 16th century Milanese painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo. Many artists who followed produced works in this fanciful motif, but the masterful handling of the still life elements in the four-piece set attributed to one of Arcimboldo's followers: *Four anthropomorphic figures: An allegory of the four seasons* (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), suggests that they were created by an accomplished painter of considerable skill, perhaps even the 17th century Roman artist, Giovanni Stanchi. The inclusion of background elements lends the figures an almost uncanny presence, further distinguishing the present group from other artists' work.

Auction: Old Master Paintings, Christie's New York, 6 June 2012 at 5pm
Viewing: Christie's New York, 20 Rockefeller Center, 2 – 5 June 2012
e-catalogue: <http://www.christies.com/eCatalogues/index.aspx?saleid=23544>

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