

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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The Van Cliburn Collection

EXCEPTIONAL ENGLISH FURNITURE,
RUSSIAN WORKS OF ART, SILVER, AND
JEWELRY TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S
NEW YORK ON MAY 17



**“After a concert I would buy something to give me a tangible memory;
for music and memory are indestructible.”**

-Van Cliburn

New York- On May 17, Christie's is honored to present a sale of over 160 exceptional works from the personal collection of Van Cliburn, one of America's greatest pianists. The collection comprises superb examples of English furniture, Russian Works of Art, Silver and Jewelry reflecting Mr. Cliburn's refined taste and the private passion of a sophisticated connoisseur. With estimates ranging from \$1,000 to \$250,000, the total sale is expected to achieve in excess of \$3 million.

Van Cliburn

Van Cliburn (b. 1934) is one of America's greatest pianists and a persuasive ambassador for American culture. Since his historic 1958 victory at the first International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Mr. Cliburn has reached across political frontiers through the universal language of music. In that same year, he appeared on the cover of Time Magazine who billed him “The Texan

Who Conquered Russia.” Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, he began piano studies at age three and was twelve when he made his orchestral debut with the Houston Symphony Orchestra. After graduating from Kilgore High School, he studied at The Juilliard School in New York City. Mr. Cliburn has received more than twenty honorary doctoral degrees. He has provided scholarships at many schools worldwide and has performed for every President of the United States since Harry Truman, as well as for royalty and heads of state in Europe, Asia, and South America. He has received the Kennedy Center Honors, Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Order of Friendship from Russian President Vladimir Putin, Presidential Medal of Freedom, and recently honored with the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama.

Highlights include:

The Cliburn Steinway Piano

This Steinway concert grand piano has always been at the center of the Cliburn home. It is the instrument played by Van’s mother Rildia Bee, and where he spent a considerable amount of his musical life practicing and working. This piano is being sold to honor of Rildia Bee with proceeds benefiting The Juilliard School, New York and The Moscow Conservatory, Moscow, the *almae matres* of Van Cliburn.



A Steinway Model D Ebonized Concert Grand Piano

By Steinway & Sons, circa 1912

Serial number 157754, with an adjustable piano bench

Estimate: \$40,000-60,000

English Furniture

Mr. Cliburn's extraordinary English furniture collection was formed under the attentive guidance of Alistair Stair, proprietor of the legendary firm of Stair & Company. While Alistair may have sparked an interest in the field, the objects chosen by Mr. Cliburn reflect the keen sensibility of its owner. Like many seasoned collectors, he gravitates to seat furniture above all other forms. The rich array of chairs, stools and settees are a sweeping survey of 18th century English design – refined early Georgian forms, the whimsical Chinese and Gothic flavor of Thomas Chippendale's time and the refined classical language of later years – all represented by rare and exceptional examples.

Among the earlier examples is the spectacular pair of George I walnut and marquetry side chairs (estimate: \$70,000-100,000), attributed to the Royal cabinet-maker James Moore, and almost certainly supplied for majestic Shobden Court in around 1720. Mid-18th century carved mahogany and walnut furniture, highly sought after by collectors today, is highlighted by a George II walnut armchair of circa 1740-45 (estimate: \$80,000-120,000), attributed to the maker Giles Grendey, with bold shell-carved back and lion arms. An early George III giltwood suite of circa 1760-65 with beautiful needlework depicting flowers and Chinese vases, comprising two side chairs (estimate: \$60,000-90,000), a settee (estimate: \$80,000-120,000) and a fire screen (\$8,000-12,000), is likely to have been commissioned by the 6th Earl of Coventry – a notably enthusiastic and discerning patron – who was actively refurbishing Croome Court as well as his fashionable London houses after coming to the title in 1751. The sophisticated classicism of the late 18th century is represented in a pair of chairs (estimate: \$60,000-100,000) and settee (estimate: \$25,000-40,000), attributed to the top London makers Mayhew and Ince, part of a substantial commission for the 3rd Earl Darnley for his country seat Cobham Hall in Kent.

Apart from the seating furniture, a spectacular highlight is the pair of George II giltwood mirrors of circa 1750 (\$150-250,000). These are attributed to Matthias Lock, who was described in contemporary accounts as 'the famous Matthias Lock, the most excellent wood carver.' The elaborate frames, carved with wonderful dramatic masks, relate closely to his published designs.



A Pair of George I Walnut and Marquetry Side Chairs

Attributed to James Moore, circa 1720

Estimate: \$70,000-100,000



A Pair Of George II Giltwood Mirrors

Attributed To Matthias Lock, Circa 1750

Estimate: \$150,000-250,000



An Early George III Giltwood Settee

The Needlework Circa 1715, The Frame Circa 1760-65
And Designed To Accommodate The Earlier
Needlework

Estimate: \$80,000-120,000

Russian Works of Art

Van Cliburn's encounters with Russia, its history and its people led to mutual admiration, connected by a love of great art and beauty. His collection of Russian Works of Art is a true testament to this unending relationship. The collection is comprised of objects that Van Cliburn personally selected, reflecting Russia's rich cultural history, which spans from the early 19th to early 20th centuries. Represented by some of the finest silversmiths and suppliers to the Russian Imperial Court, including Fabergé and Nicholls & Plincke, the works include some notable Imperial commissions, such as the dowry services of Olga and Maria Nikolaevna, the daughters of Emperor Nicholas I.



A Russian Parcel-Gilt Silver Two-Handled Bowl

Marked K. Fabergé with the Imperial Warrant, Moscow, 1908-1917, scratched inventory number 39738

Estimate: \$50,000-70,000



**A Russian Silver Soup Tureen, Cover And Stand
From The Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna Service**

Mark Of Nicholls & Plincke, With The Workmaster's Mark Of Carl Tegelsten, St. Petersburg, 1840

Estimate: \$80,000-120,000



A Russian Silver-Gilt Presentation Charger

Maker's Mark Cyrillic 'IZ,' possibly for Ivan Zaitsev, Moscow, 1826

Estimate: \$120,000-180,000

Silver

The silver in the Van Cliburn Collection reflects both the passion of the connoisseur and the lifestyle of the sophisticated host. The most striking facet of the Cliburn Collection is the superb assemblage of works by Paul Storr, the greatest English goldsmith of the Regency period. Led by the magnificent pair of candelabra bearing London hallmarks for 1810 (pictured below), the Storr group includes objects suitable for the grandest entertainments anywhere in the world.



A Magnificent Pair of George III Silver Four-Light Candelabra

Mark of Paul Storr, London, 1810

Estimate: \$250,000-350,000



A Monumental William IV Silver Presentation Vase

Mark of Paul Storr, London, 1831

Estimate: \$100,000-200,000



The Duke of Brunswick Service

A Set of Twenty-Four Early Victorian Silver Dinner Plates

Mark of John Mortimer & John Samuel Hunt, London, 1840

Estimate: \$40,000-60,000

Jewels

The collection of jewelry that Van Cliburn collected for himself and for his mother was built with a true understanding and a fondness for wearable jewels. Works from the most esteemed jewelry houses, such as Buccellati, Cartier, and Van Cleef & Arpels, are all represented.



An antique emerald, diamond, silver and gold brooch, circa 1880

Estimate: \$6,000-9,000



A Diamond And Yellow Gold Piano Brooch

Estimate: \$3,000-5,500



A Pair Of Sapphire, Diamond And Platinum Cufflinks, By Van Cleef & Arpels

Estimate: \$5,000-8,000



An Art Deco diamond and platinum bracelet

Estimate: \$10,000-15,000

Auction: The Van Cliburn Collection
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

May 17, 2012
May 12-16, 2012

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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