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Vermeer, Guardi, Brueghel and Reynolds Lead

Christie's *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale* In London, 8 July 2014



London – Christie's *Old Master & British Paintings Evening Sale* in London on Tuesday 8 July 2014 presents collectors around the world with 69 works by some of the most significant and sought-after artists in the category, many of which have notable provenance, with some offered at auction for the first time. With estimates across price levels, up to £10 million, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £40 million. This auction launches a week of four sales of Old Master paintings and drawings at Christie's in London. Spanning from the early Renaissance to the Enlightenment, these auctions represent Europe's leading artists, whose works continue to influence artists today.

Reflecting the breadth and depth of the Old Master category, this sale presents a rich and varied group of paintings tailored to meet the sustained and growing interests of collectors intent on acquiring works of the highest calibre. The auction includes the landmark sale of **Johannes Vermeer's** *Saint Praxedis* - one of only two works by the artist to remain in private hands - the authorship of which has been endorsed by recent material

technical analysis conducted by the Rijksmuseum in association with the Free University, Amsterdam (estimate: £6-8 million); it is being offered from *The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection with Proceeds to Benefit the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Foundation*, which also includes a number of powerful devotional paintings by Italian and Spanish Baroque masters in the Evening and Day sales. Further highlights include *Venice, the Bacino di San Marco with the Piazzetta and the Doge's Palace* by **Francesco Guardi** From *The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection*, a masterpiece dating from the artist's full maturity (estimate: £8-10 million); *The Road to Calvary*, one of **Pieter Brueghel the Younger's** finest large-scale compositions to remain in private hands (estimate: £5-7 million); and *Portrait of Lady Frances Marsham, later Countess of Romney (1755–1795)* by **Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.**, a remarkably preserved example of the artist's spectacular female full-length portraits of the 1770s, which has never before appeared at auction (estimate: £3-5 million); it is one of five lots being offered in the Evening and Day sales from *The Burton Property Trust*, which showcases the golden age of English portraiture. In addition, a still life by **Willem Claesz. Heda**, which has been in the same family since the early 19th century, presents one of the most significant discoveries in recent years in the realm of 17th-century Dutch still-life painting (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million).

VERMEER



Saint Praxedis by Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675), of 1655, is the earliest dated picture by the artist and one of only two works from his rare oeuvre of 37 known paintings to remain in private hands (estimate: £6-8 million, *illustrated left*). Scientific evidence has endorsed the attribution of this highly charged devotional work to the Delft master. Significantly, the recent material technical analysis conducted by the Rijksmuseum in association with the Free University, Amsterdam, has established that the lead white used in the painting matches precisely with that employed in another early painting by Vermeer - *Diana and her Companions*, in The Mauritshuis, The Hague. Please click [here](#) for the full press release on this work.



This work is offered from *The Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection* with a group of powerful devotional paintings by Italian and Spanish Baroque masters, including *The Annunciation to the Shepherds* by The Master of the Annunciation to the Shepherds (active in Naples, first half of the 17th Century), a masterpiece of 17th-century Neapolitan painting (estimate: £1-1.5 million, *illustrated left*); and an arresting image of *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*,



previously identified as a work by Jusepe de Ribera and more recently reattributed to his talented pupil, Luca Giordano, called Fa Presto (1634-1705) (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000, *illustrated right*). *Proceeds to Benefit the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Foundation*. Please click [here](#) for the full press release on this collection including more details on these two paintings.



Such exemplary connoisseurship is also seen in the collection of the distinguished professor I.Q. van Regteren Altena, formerly the director of the Print Room at the Rijksmuseum which is offered on 10 July. One of the largest groups of Old Master drawings to come to auction in the last 20 years, this collection includes exceptional studies by Rembrandt, Goltzius (*illustrated left*), Rubens and Jacques de Gheyn II, among many others. Please click [here](#) for a separate press release.

GUARDI

Venice, the Bacino di San Marco with the Piazzetta and the Doge's Palace by Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) *From The Baron Henri de Rothschild Collection* was executed at the height of Guardi's maturity (estimate: £8-10 million, *illustrated right*). Depicting one of the most celebrated prospects of Venice, centering on the Doge's Palace, the calibre of this work is matched by its exceptional condition and provenance. Originally in the collection of The Earls of Shaftesbury this picture entered the Rothschild collection in the second half of the 19th century and has passed by descent in the family to the present owner. Not seen in public since 1954, this work has been toured globally ahead of the auction. Widely considered to be among the artist's masterpieces, it is set to become one of the most valuable paintings by the artist sold at auction. Please click [here](#) for the full press release on this work.



Christie's *Old Master & British Drawings & Watercolours* sale on 10 July will feature another two classic views of Venice, one by Guardi and a watercolour by Turner, alongside works from a number of important private collections including a charming watercolour of Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire, by Turner (estimate: £500,000-800,000, *illustrated left*). To view the e-catalogue for the drawings and watercolours sale please click [here](#).

BRUEGHEL II



The Road to Calvary is a tour de force of **Pieter Bruegel the Younger's** (1564/5–1637/8) early maturity and one of the finest of all his large-scale compositions still remaining in private hands (estimate: £5–7 million). Loosely inspired by an equally monumental rendering of the subject by his father, Bruegel the Elder (1564; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), this painting is one of the Younger's most important and original designs. Only five signed and dated versions of this composition by the Younger are recorded and this is not only the largest, but also the only one to remain in private hands. The vibrancy of the palette and richness of narrative and naturalistic details underline the picture's extraordinary state of preservation. In 2006, when it last appeared on the market, the picture achieved notoriety for setting, by a considerable margin, a new record auction price of £5.16 million, thus establishing a new benchmark for the artist, which has since been surpassed.

REYNOLDS

Portrait of Lady Frances Marsham, later Countess of Romney (1755–1795) by **Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.** (1723–1792) is an exceptionally well preserved example of the artist's female full-lengths of the 1770s, the decade in which he secured his reputation as the dominant artistic figure of the age of George III (estimate: £3–5 million, *illustrated right*).

The portrait is in remarkable condition, retaining much of its original surface texture and rich impasto brushwork, making it possible to fully appreciate Reynolds' supreme talents as an artist. Reynolds' handling of the paint becomes particularly flamboyant in the landscape, which is executed in broad, sweeping strokes of his brush, and in some instances is laid on



directly with a palette knife.

Acquired by the distinguished collector Michael Arthur Bass, 1st Lord Burton, in *circa* 1890 for Chesterfield House, this picture will be offered together with other superb examples of 18th-century British portraiture from the Burton collection, including works by George Romney (1734-1802) and Francis Cotes (1726-1770). *For full details on property from the Burton Property Trust please see page 216 of the e-catalogue [here](#).*

HEDA

In the family of the present owner from the early-19th century, this monumental *pronk* still life by Willem Claesz.



Heda (1594-1680) is one of the most significant discoveries in recent years in the realm of 17th-century Dutch still-life painting (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million, *illustrated left*). Painted in 1644 it has survived in extraordinarily pristine condition. A majestic work by arguably the greatest exponent of the genre, this picture belongs to the phase of the Haarlem master's career when his compositions took on a richer and more elaborate character. A sense of monumentality is achieved in the work by the careful arrangement of objects within a strong pyramidal structure.

IMPORTANT DUTCH CABINET PICTURES FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE COLLECTION

A group of *Important Dutch Cabinet Pictures from a Distinguished Private Collection* is led by a finely executed and beautifully signed still life by **Jacob van Walscapelle** (1644-1727), which is in excellent state and epitomises the jewel-like refinement that characterises the very best cabinet pictures of the Dutch Golden Age (estimate: £600,000-800,000, *illustrated right*). The group also includes other sumptuous still-lives by **Johannes Bosschaert** (*circa* 1606/8-1628/9) (estimate: £500,000-800,000) and **Balthasar van der Ast** (1593/4-1657) (estimate: £250,000-350,000); and lively figure groups by **Dirck Hals** (1591-1656) (estimate: £250,000 - 350,000); and **Adriaen Jansz. van Ostade** (1610-1685) (estimate: £250,000-350,000).



Please click [here](#) to view the full e-catalogue online.

To view the dedicated micro-site for this week of sales please go to www.christies.com/oldmasters

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Website at www.christies.com

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