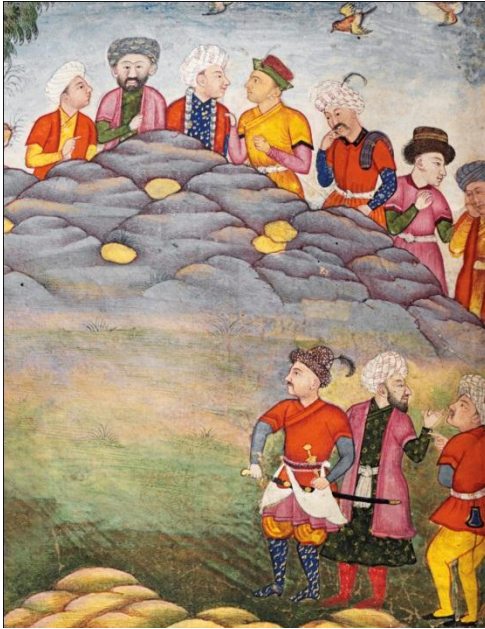


CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 2014

SUMPTUOUS OBJECTS AT CHRISTIE'S ISLAMIC ART WEEK



Khamsa of Nizami, copied in Kashmir or North India, in the early 17th century. Estimate: £200,000-300,000
& The Douglass Mughal 'Millefleurs' prayer rug, Lahore or Kashmir, 18th century. Estimate: £300,000-500,000

October 7 Oriental Rugs & Carpets, King Street

October 9 Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, King Street

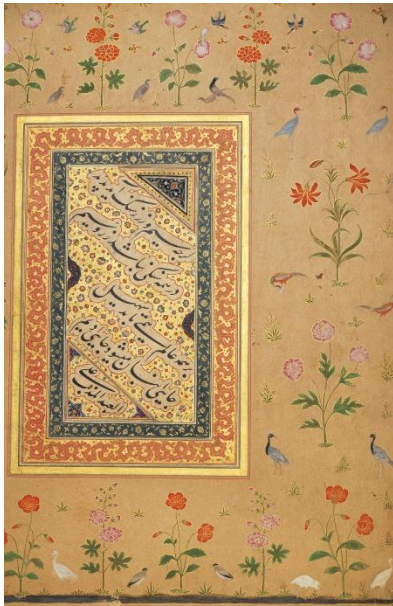
October 10 Arts and Textiles of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, South Kensington

London – Objects tracing the rich cultural heritage of the Islamic and Indian worlds will be offered in a series of three sales at Christie's in London during Islamic Art Week which runs from **7-10 October**. Among the 700 lots on offer within the sales there is particular strength among the works of art from the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman Empires. The sales offer an insight into the diversity of the religious, social and geographical influences on works of art and the craftsmen, artists and patrons who created them.

INDIAN WORLD

One of the highlights in the Oriental Rugs and Carpets sale is the Douglass Mughal 'Millefleurs' prayer rug (lot 50) which dates from the 18th century and was most probably woven in Lahore or Kashmir in northern India. It is part of an exceptionally small and rare group, of which only ten other examples are known. This 'millefleurs' prayer rug, a reference to the delicate floral design worked across the entire field, is woven with wonderfully soft pashmina wool and remains in astonishingly good condition. It is "*one of the most extraordinary of these rare and beautiful weavings*" and is estimated at £300,000-500,000, a reflection of its condition and provenance (illustrated above). Also from

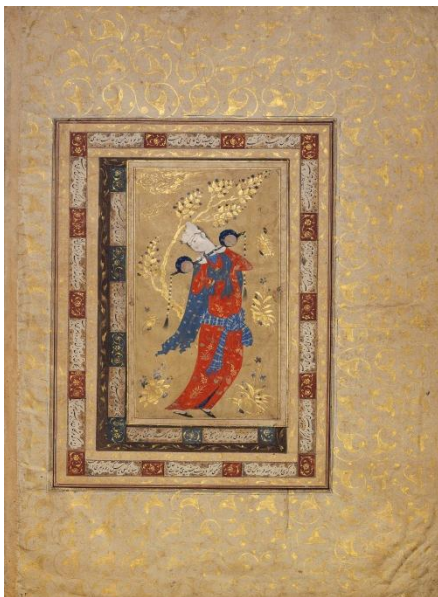
Mughal India is a very elegant Lahore gallery carpet, lot 116, which relates to the famous Girdlers' carpet, commissioned for the Girdlers' livery company in the 1630s. The best of 19th century Indian Revivalist weaving is represented by lot 49 a finely woven ivory ground Agra carpet with a classic large palmette design borrowed from Safavid and Mughal carpet designs (estimate: £30,000-50,000).



Amongst the Indian highlights of the King Street Islamic Art sale is an important and heavily illustrated copy of the *Khamasa* of Nizami (shown on page 1). Copied in Kashmir or North India, in the early 17th century, the manuscript provides a rare window into a hybrid style of painting which was subject to the artistic influences of both the Mughal and the Safavid Courts (estimate: £200,000-300,000). Another highlight of the sale is a folio from a Royal album made for Shah Jahan in around 1650-58. The small and remarkably detailed depictions of exotic birds and flowers that decorate the border illustrate the Emperor's much documented fascination with the natural world (estimate: £40,000-60,000). It is possible that the European *herbaria* of the early 17th century that were bought into the Mughal court by Jesuit missionaries provided the inspiration (illustrated left).

Among the Indian lots in the sale at South Kensington is a finely decorated calligraphic panel which, on further research by Christie's specialist team, was found to be a formal letter from the second ruler of the Mughal dynasty, Humayun (1508-1556) to his son. The official note requests that his 8-year-old son, later Emperor Akbar, ask the ladies of his father's harem to be sent to him at his winter encampment. The document gives a rare insight into the private and domestic lives of these two major figures in India's history. It is offered for sale from a Princely Collection with an estimate of £5,000-8,000. A blue glass dish from Mughal India, a courtly object and a rare survivor from the 18th century, also carries the same estimate.

IRAN



Among the Persian rugs to be offered, is a group of seventeenth century Isfahan carpets from the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection. They are led by a small part-cotton and metal-thread rug (lot 53) which is very unusual and provides a fascinating link in terms of design and structure between the wool Isfahan carpets and the silk and metal-thread 'Polonaise' carpets, woven contemporaneously in Shah Abbas's workshops in Isfahan. It is estimated at £30,000-50,000. Another Safavid highlight in the Oriental Carpet sale is lot 115, a silk and metal-thread 'Polonaise' rug from a private collection, which retains much of its original colour and has an estimate of £50,000-70,000.

In the King Street sale on 9 October, the Iranian section is particularly strong in the Arts of the Book. Amongst the highlights are a fine line drawing attributed to Aqa Mirak, one of the main artists responsible for the production of the celebrated Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*. The drawing depicts a turbaned warrior on horseback locked in battle with a fierce dragon – a popular subject for

Persian draughtsmen of the 16th century (estimate: £50,000-70,000). Two portraits of youths, sold separately though originally from the same album provide another highlight (one illustrated left). Painted in Isfahan in the first decade of the 17th century, each depicts an Indian youth, one holding a *vina* and the other a bottle (one shown here). The paintings come from the collection of Wilfred Jasper Walter Blunt (1901-1987) a teacher and art historian who wrote several books on the Middle East. The paintings are estimated at £15,000-20,000 and £20,000-30,000. The sale also features the second part of a Qajar Princely Collection (the first of which sold in these Rooms, April 2014). The works

on offer were collected by a prominent Qajar aristocrat, official and diplomat during the first years of the 20th century and includes a number of Safavid illustrated manuscripts, led by a copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami in its originally binding (estimate: £100,000-150,000).

An Iranian dagger, the hilt made of lapis lazuli and the blade a fine example of 'Damascus' steel is illustrated on the cover of the South Kensington sale catalogue. The blade is deeply carved with inscriptions, and the quality of the piece suggests it may well have been a princely commission (shown above - estimate: £5,000-7,000). The piece is signed and the maker was known to have made armour for the Iranian ruler Nadir Shah Ashtar (r. 1736-47). The sale includes a variety of manuscripts with Qu'ranic material, scientific texts and calligraphy all well represented, many from private collections.



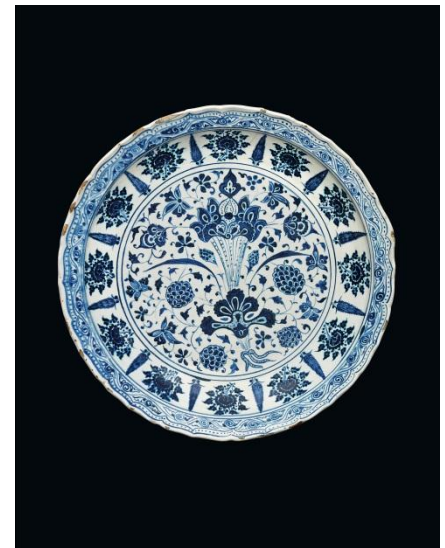
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE



Of the Ottoman carpets in the Oriental Rugs and Carpets sale, the highlight is undoubtedly lot 25 the exceptionally long 'Lotto' carpet (shown here) – a magnificent example belonging to a rare group of large format 'Lotto' carpets. The 'Lotto' carpets are named after the Italian Renaissance artist, Lorenzo Lotto, who included a number of these carpets in his compositions. A similar example to our carpet is displayed in the Bargello Museum in Florence. Another highlight is lot 24, a Cairene medallion rug, the design of which is more commonly found in Cairene prayer rugs. This rug is exceptionally drawn and demonstrates how Cairo's carpet workshops adapted to accommodate the taste of the new Ottoman regime after the fall of the Mamluk dynasty, combining Turkish design aesthetics with the materials and techniques of Mamluk carpet production. Lot 23 is one from a small group of Karapinar rugs woven in Central Anatolia in the late 17th or early 18th century. The refined silhouette and striking use of colour make this a particularly beautiful example (estimate: £20,000-30,000). Much later in date are the highly sophisticated silk and metal-thread Koum Kapi rugs woven at the beginning of the 20th century. Named after the area in Istanbul where the Armenian weavers based themselves, the Koum Kapi weavings are renowned for their extraordinary finesse and technical brilliance, and often directly copying the 16th century Persian designs that became widely available from the late 19th

century due to their publication in books on Oriental Carpets. Lot 112 is an exceptional Koum Kapi with a wide variety of brocaded details (estimate: £30,000-50,000).

Following the record-breaking sale of a remarkable early Iznik bowl last season for £1.4million, the King Street sale will include a very rare mid-15th century dish, which is one of the earliest surviving Ottoman pottery vessels. Although tiles from this period are known almost no pottery vessels survive. A number of the decorative elements on our dish, such as the elegant cypress trees, later become popular in the famous pottery of Iznik but their appearance here is amongst the earliest known. It was discovered by Christie's team recently in a private Greek collection. It is estimated at £120,000-180,000 (shown here). The sale also features two private collections of Iznik which include a striking fish scale dish from 1580 (£25,000-35,000), a large



Iznik pottery tankard decorated with repeated bands of clouds (estimate: £15,000-25,000) and a tile spandrel (shown here: £20,000-30,000).

In the South Kensington sale is a manuscript offering prayers in honour of the Prophet Muhammad, with a number of illuminations including that of the two Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina. Dating from 1762-63, the manuscript was written and illustrated in Turkey and is estimated at £5,000-8,000.

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