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CHRISTIE'S REVEALS THE JOHN SHEARER COLLECTION OF IMPORTANT *MEISSEN*, *VINCENNES* AND *SÈVRES*

LONDON, NOVEMBER 2014

London - Christie's is pleased to present the sale of *The John Shearer Collection of Important Meissen, Vincennes and Sèvres* on 25 November 2014. John Shearer (1924–2010) of Wellington, South India, joined the Scots Guards in 1944, becoming Captain of a tank brigade fighting in France, Belgium and Germany. After the war he was briefly stationed in Italy until leaving for London to work as a financier for ship insurance company, Thomas R. Miller. In the late 1960's, with the assistance of one of the most well-respected dealers of the day, 'Bob' Williams (1923-2014), Shearer began forming his remarkable collection, successfully placing Meissen porcelain alongside pieces of Vincennes and Sèvres. With an eye for exceptional quality, impeccable condition and important provenance, the Shearer Collection unites both the French and German porcelain worlds in the pursuit of the rare and beautiful. The collection comprises 49 lots and is expected to realise in excess of £500,000.



Shearer's early **Meissen** acquisitions reflect his life-long passion for all things seafaring, he was drawn to pieces with exquisitely fine maritime scenes in combination with exotic and unusual subjects, illustrated by the Meissen slop-bowl *circa* 1723-24 (estimate: £15,000-20,000, *illustrated left*). Portraying both European subject matter and Eastern elements, these two unusual scenes illustrate a group of merchants trading within a palace interior, overlooking the

water, with a procession of exotic figures and a caparisoned on the other side. The breadth and quality of Shearer's porcelain collection is further conveyed by the Meissen silver-gilt-mounted chinoiserie tankard *circa* 1725 (estimate: £50,000-80,000, *illustrated right*), one of a very few recorded examples with its original porcelain cover. Probably painted by J. G. Höroldt, the tankard is painted in minute detail with a fantastical scene of an Oriental figure seated on an elevated canopied chair, with children, attendants and three other figures at a table on a terrace below.





On the 24 July 1745 Louis XV granted the privilege to the **Vincennes** manufactory to produce porcelain in the style of Saxony. During the reign of Augustus III several gifts of Meissen porcelain were presented to the French court including a Meissen tea and chocolate service given to Marie Leszczyńska, wife of Louis XV in 1737. Throughout the 1730s and early 1740s the French factories of Chantilly and Saint Cloud were unable to rival Meissen, however by 1748 Président de Lévy noted that the products of Vincennes were challenging their German counterparts. In combination with his passion for Meissen porcelain, Shearer turned to the Vincennes and Sèvres factories, one of his early acquisitions includes this rare Vincennes

pot 'a bouillon' *circa* 1746-49, (estimate: £50,000-80,000, *illustrated left*). Portraying a quayside scene, the pot is directly inspired by a Meissen shape and the maritime scenes may be derived from etchings by Stefano Della Bella (1610-1664), an Italian draughtsman and printmaker whose work was also known at Meissen. The period during which Vincennes sought to emulate pieces made at Meissen was short and surviving pieces of this type are rare. By the early 1750s Vincennes had begun to develop and produce porcelain pieces with the *bleu lapis* or *bleu céleste* ground colours that are more associated with the factory and which are well represented within this collection.

In combination with his love of Vincennes and **Sèvres** porcelain, John Shearer was able to also pursue his interest in ornithology. Several pieces within the collection are finely painted with studies of birds exquisitely executed in either gilding or enamels. One of the most important within the collection is the *Dèjeuner 'du Roi'* painted by Louis-Denis Armand l'Aîné (estimate: £15,000-20,000, *illustrated right*), widely regarded as a master of bird painting. With the greatest attention to detail, Shearer's pursuit of royal and aristocratic provenance is encapsulated in the Sèvres lots, particularly in the bleu



céleste ground soup-plate, 1778, from the service of Catherine the Great (estimate: £70,000-100,000, *illustrated left*). The plate is part of the most expensive service ever produced at the factory and was subsequently part of the celebrated collections of Robert Napier and the Earl of Dudley. Shearer's collection is sure to excite present day collectors, who will have the opportunity to acquire beautiful pieces of porcelain of the highest calibre.

PRESS CONTACT

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PUBLIC VIEWING:

Friday 21 November: 12pm – 5pm
Saturday 22 November: 12pm – 5pm
Sunday 23 November: 12pm – 5pm
Monday 24 November: 9am – 4.30pm
Tuesday 25 November: 9am – 10.30am

AUCTION:

*The John Shearer Collection of Important Meissen,
Vincennes and Sèvres*
King Street
Tuesday, 25 November 2014
10:30am

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**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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