

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S CELEBRATES RETURN OF 10TH CENTURY STATUES TO CAMBODIA AT OFFICIAL CEREMONY IN PHNOM PENH

Christie's Representatives Honored for Facilitating Return of a Khmer Sculpture

Christie's – On Tuesday 3 June 2014 Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia Sok An hosted Christie's as part of a grand ceremony at the Council of Ministers in Phnom Penh to celebrate the return of three 10th century statues to the people of Cambodia. At the ceremony, Christie's representatives were conferred the title of Commander of the Royal Order of Sahametrei, a distinguished honor offered in acknowledgment of Christie's role in facilitating the return of one of the statues, an important 10th-century Koh Ker gray sandstone figure of *Balarama*.

Steven Murphy, Christie's Chief Executive Officer, commented: *"This ceremony signifies a successful conclusion to a complex situation. Christie's believes it can play a useful role in appropriate circumstances in helping to facilitate the resolution of certain cultural property issues between source countries and collectors where we actively engage with all affected parties to find fair solutions. On behalf of Christie's, I congratulate Cambodia on the successful return of an important work of art related to its cultural heritage."*

Martin Wilson, Chairman of Christie's Cultural Property Committee and General Counsel, stated in his speech at the ceremony: *"We share your great enthusiasm and passion for the art of your country and are therefore delighted to be here today for this special celebration. Questions of repatriation are complex and solutions do not always present themselves. We have found that with sensitivity, mutual co-operation and a shared commitment to art, a way forward can often be found. This is such a case. As we can all see, this is a beautiful work of art. But beyond its artistic value there is also something just as important. It has a story to tell. It is the story of an amazing culture and the history of its people over many centuries. Wherever it has travelled it has told that story and now this journey back to Cambodia is the latest – but certainly not the last - chapter in that story."*

After Christie's sold the important monumental figure in 2009, the work was identified as one of a group of figures created in the Koh Ker dynastic period for the Khmer temple in Cambodia, from which it had been improperly removed. Following negotiations with all parties, Christie's secured agreement to restitute the statue to Cambodia.

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