

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK | 28 APRIL 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAJESTY OF THE AMERICAN WEST

THOMAS MORAN'S *THE GRAND CANYON OF THE COLORADO*
TO BE OFFERED IN CHRISTIE'S MAY SALE OF AMERICAN ART



Thomas Moran (1837-1926), *The Grand Canyon of the Colorado*, oil on canvas, 29½ x 60 in., Estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000

"Of all places on earth the great canyon of Arizona is the most inspiring in its pictorial possibilities." –Thomas Moran

New York – Christie's sale of *American Art* on May 22 will feature Thomas Moran's (1837-1926) magnificent large-scale painting *The Grand Canyon of the Colorado*. Painted in 1904, the work is one of Moran's most ambitious oils of the subject from the period. This canvas presents an awe-inspiring panorama and manifests Moran's romantic and inspirational vision of the American West. *The Grand Canyon of the Colorado*, which has been exhibited at both the Royal Academy in London and the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., has not been offered for sale in over two decades. At \$8-12 million, this is the highest pre-sale estimate assigned to a work by Thomas Moran at auction, reflecting the superb quality and rarity of this masterwork.

Liz Sterling, Christie's Head of American Art, said, "*Christie's is thrilled to offer The Grand Canyon of the Colorado by Thomas Moran as a highlight of our spring sale. A true visual architect of the American West, Moran has the unique ability to convey his own veneration and wonder at the breathtaking landscapes through his dramatic depictions of the Western panorama, undoubtedly his favorite subject. In addition to being vital to the creation of the national park system, works such as The Grand Canyon of the Colorado transformed the allure of the West in the American psyche into an integral part of the American identity.*"

Moran first visited the Grand Canyon in 1873 as part of John Wesley Powell's expedition. The artist eagerly accepted Powell's invitation to join the excursion, as he was planning a pendant for his painting *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*, which Congress had purchased for the Capitol the previous year. Moran was immediately captivated by the unique and dramatic light, color and topography of the Grand Canyon and later wrote, "*Of all places on earth the great canyon of Arizona is the most inspiring in its pictorial possibilities.*"

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado is a masterwork of Moran's mature style and represents the artist at the height of his abilities. Although he visited the Grand Canyon many times and created multiple of images of the geologic wonder over the course of five decades, few are as richly complex or as monumental in scale as this painting, which captures the sublime beauty of the area in its expanse of rugged peaks and atmospheric valleys. Throughout, he employs his characteristic keen attention to light, color, and detail and the high vantage point underscores the vastness of the Canyon. Moran studied at a time when the strict realist theories of John Ruskin were lauded and, though adhering to the auspices of precise geologic transcription, it is evident that he was far more interested in capturing and conveying the emotional effect the landscape inspired.

THOMAS MORAN AT AUCTION

The current world auction record for a work by Thomas Moran is *Green river of Wyoming*, which sold at Christie's in 2008 for \$17.7 million, against a pre-sale estimate of \$3.5-5 million. In addition to setting a record for the artist, it also set the record price for any 19th century work of American Art at auction.

PRESS CONTACT: Jaime Bernice | +1 212 636 2680 | jbernice@christies.com

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth 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.*

###

Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

