

CHRISTIE'S

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHRISTIE'S ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF THE *RENAISSANCE* SALE

FEATURING THE ROTHSCHILD PRAYERBOOK AND WORKS BY
BASSANO, BOTTICELLI, CRANACH, AMBERGER & LOTTO



Jacopo Bassano, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, circa 1562-63 (estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000)

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce the return of the *Renaissance* sale, which will be held on January 29 at 2pm in New York during the series of sales dedicated to Old Master works of art. Devoted to the art that flourished in Europe from 1300 to 1600, *Renaissance* will feature paintings, sculpture and decorative arts from some of the greatest masters of the era who were active throughout Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and France. Artists featured include Jacopo Bassano, Sandro Botticelli, Lorenzo Lotto, Christoph Amberger and Lucas Cranach the Elder, among others. The sale is comprised of 75 lots and expected to achieve \$50 million.

The top lot of the sale is **The Rothschild Prayerbook**, a rare and exquisitely preserved masterpiece of Renaissance art with an illustrious provenance. Returning to the global stage after setting the world auction record for illuminated manuscripts nearly 15 years ago at Christie's London, the prayerbook contains lavish illustrations by the most renowned artists of the day, including full page miniatures of unsurpassed beauty and refined execution. Perhaps the finest

illuminated manuscript remaining in private hands, it is expected to inspire fierce competition, with an estimate of \$12,000,000-\$18,000,000. For a separate press release about the Rothschild Prayerbook, [click here](#).

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

The lead painting in the *Renaissance* sale is the superb and highly important *Adoration of the Shepherds* by **Jacopo Bassano** (Bassano del Grappa c. 1510-1592) *circa* 1562-63, one of the greatest painters of 16th-century Venice alongside Titian, Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese (*illustrated above*; estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000). A rare signed work by the artist, the painting is in extraordinarily fine condition, and served as the prototype for many later depictions of the subject by Jacopo and his workshop. The picture also has an illustrious provenance, having been in the famous Morrison collection of Renaissance works during the 19th-century, and recently exhibited for over a decade at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

The *Adoration of the Shepherds* is a key work in Bassano's *oeuvre*, created at a time when the artist was moving away from his Mannerist phase towards the style of his later period, epitomized by his unwavering embrace of nature and the visible world. The ensemble of the Holy Family surrounded by the three humble shepherds and barn animals is a superb example of Bassano's genius for the portrayal of profound sacramental subjects, his magnificent feeling for color, daring draughtsmanship, and deeply felt connection to the everyday world.

Among other highlights being offered is a poignant and refined depiction of *The Holy Family with Saint Catherine of*



Alexandria by **Lorenzo Lotto** (Venice c. 1480-1556 Loreto), one of the most important and singular masters of the High Renaissance in Northern Italy (*illustrated left*; estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000). The *Holy Family with Saint Catherine of Alexandria* displays the characteristics of Lotto's works which contemporary connoisseurs so admire: his brilliant and high-keyed coloring; the strong and tender emotions conveyed by the figures; and his unconventional approach to traditional Renaissance subject matter. This signed painting, believed to have been executed in the 1540s, was rediscovered and published in 1988, and acknowledged as an important new addition to Lotto's canon. Another version of the subject, signed and dated 1533, is in the Academia Carrara, Bergamo.

The earliest work in the sale is an exceedingly rare survival from the third quarter of the 13th century, *The Madonna and Child Enthroned with two angels*, a tempera and gold on panel from the **Circle Of The Master Of The Crucifix No. 434** (active Tuscany, c. 1230-1250) (*illustrated right*; estimate: \$300,000-500,000). Previously unpublished, this recently discovered panel dates to *circa* 1265-1270, and was created in the Tuscan artistic milieu from which the revolutionary art of Cimabue, Duccio, and Giotto would spring in the following decades. While harkening back to an earlier Byzantine type, the present Madonna is an unusually evolved treatment of the theme with its sense of depth and naturalistic details. The placement of the Madonna's hands, gently inclined head and plaintive gaze add to the emotional tenor of the image, thus providing an early glimpse of the human, earthly aspect of Christ's life which would become the great devotional preoccupation of the Renaissance.





The sale features a never-before-published work by **Sandro Botticelli** (Florence 1444/5-1510) of *The Madonna and Child with the Crown of Thorns and three nails* (illustrated left; estimate: \$700,000-1,000,000). This work dates to the 1480s when Botticelli increasingly simplified the forms in his pictures, thus emphasizing their abstract values. The inclusion of the instruments of the Passion – the Crown of Thorns and nails of the Crucifixion – may reflect the influence of the Florentine preacher Savonarola, and his moral crusade to make Florence a new Jerusalem.

NORTHERN RENAISSANCE

Leading the Northern Renaissance works offered in the sale is the *Portrait of Barbara Schwarz* by **Christoph Amberger** (Augsburg c. 1505-1561/1562), the leading portraitist of the patrician classes in 16th-century Augsburg (illustrated right; estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000). Painted in 1542, this magnificent and beautifully preserved portrait is among the most significant surviving works by Amberger. One of the major masters of the International courtly portrait style prevailing at the time, Amberger, like his near contemporary Hans Holbein, belongs to the generation of German artists following that of Albrecht Dürer.



Painted at the zenith of Amberger's career, the portrait was commissioned by Matthäus Schwarz to commemorate his wife's 35th birthday, of which the date, 21 August 1542, is inscribed at upper right. Her costume is rendered with the meticulous attention to minute detail and skill at portraying textures for which Amberger's portraits were prized. While restrained in coloring as befits the dutiful wife of a respected burgher, her clothing reveals its costliness in the rich embroidery, elaborate lacework, and the shimmering black silk of the voluminous sleeves.



A rare, early painting by the South Netherlandish master **Jan Provost** (Bergen-Mons, Henegouwen c. 1465-1529 Bruges) depicts a tender representation of *The Annunciation*, and is in exceptionally fine condition (illustrated left; estimate: \$2,000,000-4,000,000). The courtly, idealized figures are modeled with extraordinary delicacy, and lavish attention is given to minute details, such as the feathers of Gabriel's multicolored wings and the exquisitely-rendered plants and flowers.

The striking painting *Law and Grace* by **Lucas Cranach I** (Kronach 1472-1553 Weimar) and **Lucas Cranach II** (Wittenberg 1515-1586 Weimar) is among the most important images of the Protestant Reformation (illustrated right; estimate: \$1,500,000-2,500,000). Painted in 1536, the panel illustrates Martin Luther's doctrine of justification by faith with explanatory passages from a German translation of the bible written on papers affixed to its lower and upper edges. With its vivid, jewel-toned palette, deep, panoramic landscapes, and expressive figures, *Law and Grace* exhibits all of the stylistic hallmarks that placed Lucas Cranach at the forefront of artistic innovation in 16th-century Europe.





Christie's is honored to be offering the beautiful Northern Renaissance *Virgin and Child*, circa 1470-1480, which was restituted to the **Estate of Max Stern** in March 2013, from the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (*illustrated left*; estimate: \$400,000-600,000). A stunning object of private devotion, this moving representation of the Virgin and Child, set before a golden background, corresponds to a type popularized in 15th-century Northern Europe by the Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden. Depicting a solemn Virgin Mary tenderly cradling the Christ Child in her arms, the painting is South Netherlandish in character, yet exhibits several key traits suggesting a German origin.

The Virgin and Child with Saints Dominic, Augustine, Margaret and Barbara by the **Master of the Plumped-Cheek Madonnas** (active

Bruges, first quarter of the 16th-century) is a highlight among the six works in the *Renaissance* sale offered by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to benefit the European Paintings Acquisitions Fund (*illustrated right*; estimate: \$400,000-600,000).



AGE OF VASARI

The *Renaissance* sale will feature a special selection of 9 works painted in mid to late 16th-century Florence during the so-called "Age of Vasari." Property sold to benefit the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine will include *The Pietà* by **Giorgio Vasari** (Arezzo 1511-1574 Florence) (*illustrated right*; estimate: \$300,000-500,000). Previously unpublished, this *Pietà* is a significant addition to Vasari's corpus of paintings. It is typical of the smaller-scale devotional paintings that Vasari made for friends and private patrons during the earlier years of his career and, in particular, prior to his engagement as court artist to Duke Cosimo de' Medici in Florence in 1555. This work is most likely identifiable as one of two paintings that Vasari made in 1549 for Ludovico da Ragugia, or Ragusa, a Florentine merchant.



Two exquisite paintings by **Alessandro Allori**

(Florence 1535-1607), *Laocoön* and *Noli me tangere*, will also be sold to benefit the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (each estimate: \$400,000-600,000).

Another highlight of the "Age of Vasari" is a *Portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici* (1519-74) by the great Florentine artist, **Jacopo Pontormo** (Pontormo, near Empoli 1494-1556 Florence) (*illustrated left*; estimate: \$300,000-500,000). This imposing portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici was created around 1537- 1538, just after he was elected Duke of Florence in January 1537 at the age of 18. A work of the artist's mature phase, the portrait typifies Pontormo's approach to the genre, in which the elegantly elongated and haughtily posed sitter seems intensely alive as a psychological presence.

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OLD MASTERS WEEK AT CHRISTIE'S

FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE GOYA Y LUCIENTES: GRAPHIC MASTERPIECES FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

New York, 28 January 2014 at 2pm

OLD MASTER PAINTINGS PART I

New York, 29 January 2014 at 10am

RENAISSANCE

New York, 29 January 2014 at 2pm

OLD MASTER PAINTINGS PART II

New York, 30 January 2014 at 5pm

OLD MASTER & EARLY BRITISH DRAWINGS & WATERCOLORS

New York, 30 January 2014 at 2pm

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, reached a total of £2.4 billion/\$3.68 billion in global auction and private sales in the first six months of 2013. In 2012, global auction and private sales totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion, marking the highest annual revenue ever reached by Christie's. 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 over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photography, 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 an emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewelry. Global private sales totaled £465 million/\$711 million in the first half year of 2013, an increase of 13% from the same period last year, breaking the sales record of half year private sales for Christie's and the art market for three consecutive years.

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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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