



# CHRISTIE'S

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**Christie's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations will be launched with**

## *Defining* **BRITISH ART**

LOAN EXHIBITION

**A Month-Long Public Exhibition of Five Centuries of British Art  
London, 17 June to 15 July 2016**

**Great British Masterpieces sold over a period of 250 years by Christie's, including works by Holbein, Stubbs, Landseer, Turner, Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Mackintosh, Lowry, Freud & Auerbach**



**London** – Sold by Christie's in 1788, the circle of Hans Holbein II's outstanding *Portrait of King Henry VIII* (illustrated left) is among the highlights on loan for the landmark *Defining British Art: Loan Exhibition*, open to the public from Friday 17 June to Friday 15 July 2016 in London. *Monarch of the Glen* by Sir Edwin Landseer (illustrated centre), *Proserpine* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (illustrated right), *Huntsmen setting out from Southill* by George Stubbs and *Fun Fair at Daisy Nook* by L.S. Lowry are just four of the masterpieces previously sold at Christie's that will be reunited for one month only to mark the launch of [Christie's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) celebrations. As the companion exhibition to the [Defining British Art: Evening Sale](#) on 30 June 2016, this exhibition will bring together works by some of the greatest British artists, many sold over the last 250 years at Christie's, as well as works by international artists inspired by visits to Britain over the ages, the highlight of which is a view of St. James's by Canaletto (illustrated below).

Ever since James Christie first opened his doors for business in 1766, in St James's London, where the headquarters remain today, Christie's has championed British art and artists, with both Reynolds and Gainsborough among the regular visitors to Christie's salerooms. The greatest masterpieces are those that define the artist; paintings and sculpture that reflect the quintessential nature of that artist's lasting legacy. Christie's *Defining British Art: Loan Exhibition* and *Defining British Art: Evening Sale* will present works which exemplify this.



**Orlando Rock, Chairman, Christie's UK:** *"This exhibition would not have been possible were it not for the passion and huge generosity of those private and corporate collections who have been kind enough to lend their precious works of art to us for the months of June and July. King Street will become, for this short time, a living museum of the very best of British, bringing together a diverse group of masterpieces that have stood the test of time. What an amazing privilege to be UK Chairman and have the opportunity to celebrate this great anniversary with colleagues and collectors by uniting so many of the wonderful works that have been exchanged in these rooms – a testament to the enduring value of art in our society and Christie's role as temporary custodian."*

## 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century

**The Circle of Hans Holbein II's** imposing *Portrait of King Henry VIII*, circa 1540s, is based upon the full-length portrait of the King from Holbein's great wall painting of the Tudor family, executed in 1536-7 for his Palace of Whitehall but destroyed in a fire in 1698 (*illustrated above*). Holbein's portrait of Henry, is one of the most famous portraits of any



British monarch. This portrait was first recorded in the Christie's 24 January 1778 sale of George Byng, 4th Viscount Torrington's 144-piece collection, where it was bought by Charles, 4th Duke of Rutland, from whose family collection it is now being loaned.

**The Lumley Horseman**, circa 1580s, is the earliest known equestrian statue in the history of English sculpture (*illustrated left*). Commissioned by one of the greatest Elizabethan collector-patrons, John, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lumley for Lumley Castle, County Durham, this sculpture holds a unique place in English art and historical portraiture. The rider is Edward III (1312-1377), who Lumley believed was the sovereign during the time the castle was built. Remarkably this sculpture has remained in family hands from its original commissioning to the present day, and was notably retained by the family and

absent from James Christie's sale of the contents of Lumley Castle, 8-11 August 1785. Royal portraiture is also highlighted in *King Charles I* by **William Dobson** from the mid-seventeenth century (*illustrated right*), a portrait of the King, which was first discovered when it was put up for auction at Christie's in 1989. One of three known small portraits of Charles I by Dobson, and painted on one of the coarse canvases he favoured, it dates from the end of the royal court's stay in Oxford.



## 18<sup>th</sup> Century

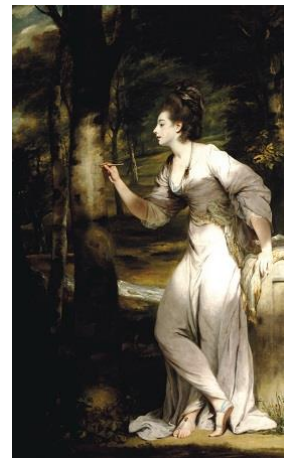
In 1746 **Canaletto** moved from Venice to London, embarking on a period in his career where he would produce spectacular views of the capital, two of which are included in the Defining British Art exhibition: *The Old Horse Guards, London, from St. James's Park, with numerous ladies and gentlemen and a parade of soldiers*, 1749, (*illustrated above*) and *The Banqueting House and Holbein Gate, Whitehall, with Equestrian Statue of King Charles I*, 1754/55. Canaletto's extraordinary pictures of London, including these two outstanding masterpieces from his English period, inspired a



generation of English topographical artists. Exhibited alongside these views of London are a magnificent pair of George II Ormolu three-light candelabra, circa 1758-65, designed by James 'Athenian' Stuart for John, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Spencer, an ancestor of the late Princess Diana, and intended for the chimneypiece in the Painted Room at Spencer House (*illustrated left*). A renowned example of an eighteenth-century aristocratic private palace, and built in the same year as the establishment of Christie's, Spencer House became the temporary headquarters for Christie's in 1941 after a bomb seriously damaged the King Street premises. A further great English landscape on display will be *Huntsmen setting out from Southill* by **George Stubbs**, the greatest of all British horse painters. This is the finest from a series of



three pictures commissioned in 1767 by George Byng, 4th Viscount Torrington, showing outdoor servants going about their work at Southill, Torrington's estate in Bedfordshire. Appearing at auction at Christie's three times between 1778 and 1929, George Stubbs' work will be reunited in this exhibition with the aforementioned circle of Hans Holbein II portrait, having also been sold at George Byng, 4th Viscount Torrington's 1778 Southill sale. **Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Portrait of Joanna Leigh, Mrs. Richard Bennett Lloyd*, 1775-1776, (illustrated right)** celebrates the nuptials of Joanna Leigh, heiress of Northcourt House, to Richard Bennet Lloyd. Acquired by Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild in 1869 for 800 guineas, then one of the highest prices paid for a portrait by Reynolds at auction, this remarkable work has remained in the Rothschild's collection, housed permanently at Waddesdon Manor.



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## 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Executed on a monumental scale for a watercolour and close-framed like an oil painting, **Joseph Mallord William Turner's *Lake of Lucerne*, 1815**, is an example of Turner's art at his most magnificent and sublime. *Lake of Lucerne* has been in two of the most distinguished Turner Collections of the nineteenth century and has passed through Christie's doors three times. Its first owner Walter Fawkes, who purchased the work from the Royal Academy for 120 guineas in 1815, is credited with persuading Turner to go to Switzerland and the Alps, where this spectacular piece was painted. Landscape features heavily in the work of **Sir Edwin Landseer**, with few canvasses better known than the *Monarch of the Glen*, 1851, (illustrated above) a portrait of a royal stag set against a dramatic Scottish Landscape, a creature of great nobility and command over his environment. Exhibited concurrently with the Great Exhibition, where Britain displayed her manufacturing prowess to the world, the picture subliminally reflected the confidence of a nation on the cusp of Empire. Purchased from the artist by celebrated sportsman Lord Londesborough for 350 guineas, it was sold by his widow Lady Otho Fitzgerald in 1884 for 6,200 guineas at Christie's and then sold again at Christie's in 1892 for



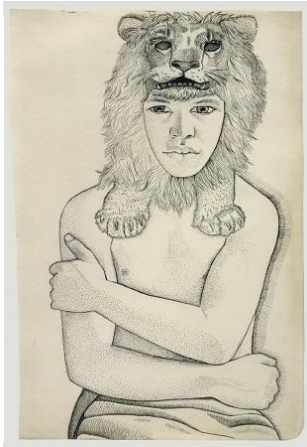
6,900 guineas, with other notable works by the artist that had been acquired by H.W. Eaton, Lord Cheylesmore. A very different aspect of British art is represented by **Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones's *Love Among The Ruins***, which was executed in 1873 when he was at his most Italianate and remains one of the greatest examples of Burne-Jones's art, created during the most fertile and inventive phase of his career (illustrated left). Having been sold at Christie's in 1904, it returned to Christie's in 2013 where it created a sensation, realising five times its

pre-sale auction estimate, establishing a new world record for the artist, the Pre-Raphaelites, and any work on paper by a British artist. **Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Proserpine*, 1877, (illustrated above)** exemplifies the compulsively worked and obsessive depictions of his great loves, Jane Morris depicted here. Torn, life-long, between a desire to be both a poet and a painter, Rossetti has penned a sonnet in Italian that is seen in the upper right of the picture, which concludes in translation 'Woe's me for thee, unhappy Proserpine!'. Sold in 1888 for £745, it returned to Christie's in 1964 where it was sold to L.S. Lowry, then England's most popular painter, for £5,250. Just one year after the first sale of *Proserpine*, **Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed this dark stained oak high-backed chair (illustrated right)** for the refurbishment of Miss Cranston's Argyle Street Tearoom, Glasgow; a commission begun in 1898 and completed the following year, in collaboration with George Walton, who designed the Luncheon Room.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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Commissioned by the publishers MacGibbon & Kee to illustrate Rex Warner's *Men and Gods*, a book of tales translated and retold from Ovid, *Hercules*, 1949, by **Lucian Freud** is a fine display of Freud's virtuosic draftsmanship, with his characteristic sensual emphasis on large, almond-shaped eyes and full lips (*illustrated left*). This simple composition contains all the concentrated energy that would come to define Freud's matchless and uncompromising career. Before its sale at Christie's London in 1989, *Hercules* was owned by Lincoln Kirstein, collector, philanthropist and co-founder of the New York City Ballet. The world at play is a subject that is the most successful of **L.S. Lowry's** output after the Second World War and which he went on to feature extensively throughout his later career. *Fun Fair at Daisy Nook*, 1953, is L.S. Lowry's impressionist masterpiece, and one of only three

known works of this most popular of subjects. Purchased the year after the artist died by Charles Forte, the hotelier and a keen collector of Lowry's work, *Fun Fair at Daisy Nook* was subsequently purchased by the present owner at Christie's on 16 November 2011 from *The Lord Forte Collection of Works by L.S. Lowry*, a group of paintings which represent the most important group of works by the artist to be sold at auction. In complete contrast to the joviality of L.S. Lowry's work, *Head of E.O.W.*, 1955, by **Frank Auerbach** is an extraordinary and intense vision, previously sold at Christie's in 1996. Turbulent, molten layers of ochre and umber bring forth the heavy head of Frank Auerbach's lover Stella West, full name Estella Olive West, inclined mournfully to the right of the composition; the paint is almost impossibly thick, accumulated over hundreds of sittings to bring forth the very essence of her physical being. In comparison to this haunting work is **Francis Bacon's** *Three Studies for a Self-Portrait*, 1975, (*illustrated below*) a rare self-portrait triptych that Bacon painted in his Paris studio on the Rue de Birague. One of relatively few paintings known to have been painted by Bacon in the French capital, it is a defining work that stands as a testament to the important emotional relationship Bacon had with the city. *Three Studies for a Self-Portrait* is one of an outstanding series of stark, piercing and analytical triptych self-portrait paintings that Bacon created during this period. The work was purchased from Bacon's French gallerist Claude Bernard in 1976, and remained in the same private collection unseen by the public until June 2008.



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### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2015 that totalled £4.8 billion / \$7.4 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. 2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. 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 350 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.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 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.

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