



# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | SWITZERLAND  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 2017

1968

## 50 YEARS OF CHRISTIE'S SWITZERLAND

2018



**Geneva / Zurich** – In 1968, Christie's opened its first auction room on the Continent, choosing Geneva as the ideal location. Ten years later, in 1978 Christie's expanded within Switzerland by opening a second representative office in Zurich. Since then, the auction house, founded in London in 1766, has been serving clients across Switzerland from these two locations.

The first auction in Geneva took place on 7 June 1968 offering a collection of Meissen porcelain with European Royal provenance, selling for CHF 1,140,000, with the first Jewellery auction in Geneva held the following year on 1 May 1969.

This first sale was highlighted by the Jewellery collection of Nina Dyer with the Hotel Richemond chosen as the first hotel in Geneva to host a Jewellery auction by any of today's renowned international auction houses. Over 800 people came along to witness the turning point in the importance Geneva holds today in the international luxury auction calendar. The auction of Nina Dyer's collection realized over CHF 12.7 million, an unprecedented sum at the time. It also launched Geneva as Christie's key international saleroom for the next 50 years for the sale of the finest and rarest jewels

The first wine auction in Geneva took place in April 1974 and quickly established themselves as the place to add exceptional rarities to the many important collections Switzerland had to offer. Some prices achieved in the first years included: CHF 1,500 for an Impériale of Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou 1889; CHF 220 for a bottle Chateau Cheval-Blanc 1947 and CHF 250 for a bottle Chateau Lafitte 1945.

The first stand-alone watch auction in Geneva took place on 29 April 1975 and included watches from the collection of Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III of France. The record price for a watch sold in Geneva was established in May 2010, when a PATEK PHILIPPE, reference 1527, manufactured in 1943, sold for CHF 6,259,000. Four years later, in 2014 Christie's organized the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary auction for Patek Philippe, offering 100 watches retracing the history of the firm. In 2017 Christie's became the auctioneer of choice of ONLY WATCH, the most prestigious charity auction in the world of watches.

In 1991 Christie's Zurich was added to the firm's network of auction rooms holding an annual Swiss Art Sale. The first Swiss Art Auction took place on 17 June 1991 and offered paintings as well as works of art and furniture - all Swiss Made. In 1993 the sale became solely for Swiss Art. Milestones for the category included three works by Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) bought by international museums: *Der Holzfäller*, painted 1910 and *Porträt Werner Miller*, painted 1899 by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 2005 and 2018 respectively; and *Traum des Hirten*, painted 1896, part of the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York since 2013. On a contemporary art note, the Swiss Art Auction in 2008 set the reigning world auction record for Fischli Weiss, when "Der Lauf der Dinge" sold for CHF 1'020'000.

**Eveline de Proyart, Vice President Christie's Switzerland and Managing Director Christie's Geneva** commented: *"Over the last 250 years, Christie's has connected art with collectors across the world. For the last 50 years, my colleagues and our predecessors here in Switzerland have continued this tradition with the understanding that the experience of owning beautiful objects is an enriching part of people's personal and cultural life. The office and saleroom opening in Geneva 50 years ago was an early sign of the importance that broadening the reach of the established London-based saleroom would have on the future growth of the company and the auction market. Today, Christie's has a presence in 46 countries, with 10 international sale centers, including Geneva and Zurich. "*

**Jutta Nixdorf, Managing Director Christie's Zurich** added: *"50 years of knowledge and passion has elevated Christie's into a leading position of the Swiss Art market. Furthermore, Christie's has promoted Swiss Art on an international platform offering Contemporary Swiss art in our relevant auctions in London, Amsterdam and New York over the past 40 years. Both representative offices, in Geneva and Zurich, are anchor points for collectors to engage with Christie's around the world. Christie's Switzerland consigns property for sale across our salerooms with Swiss-based specialists for Pre-Columbian to Contemporary Art as well as Furniture and Impressionist Art, alongside the Watches and Jewellery departments."*

During the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year the bi-annual Geneva auctions of Magnificent Jewels, Rare Watches and Fine Wine will take place between 15-17 May and November with the Swiss Art auction on 18 September in Zurich.

### **TOP 3 PRIVATE COLLECTIONS SOLD BY CATEGORY**

- Jewels for Hope: The Collection of Mrs. Lily Safra was offered in May 2012 and realised just under US\$38 million – all proceeds of the auction went to selected charitable foundations.
- A Royal House: a private Royal collection sold in 2006 realizing US\$36.2 million
- A Passion for Jewels: The Collection of a European Gentleman sold in 2014 realizing US\$32 million
- Works from the Zumsteg Collection in 2006, realizing CHF12 million
- The Swiss Art Collection of Ernst Beyeler for the benefit of the Fondation Beyeler in 2011
- The Estate of the late Bruno Giacometti in 2012, realizing CHF3.9 million
- Exceptional Patek Philippe Wristwatches from an important Private Collection totaling CHF 9.7 million in November 2013
- A Private Collection of Important Wristwatches, achieving CHF7.8 million in May 2012
- Important Watches Including a Connoisseur's Vision parts I-IV, realizing CHF18.7 million in Nov 2009- May and 2010 - May 2011

### **TOP 3 NOBLE PROVENANCE JEWELS LOTS SOLD**

- The Archduke Joseph diamond, sold in November 2012 for US\$21.4 million
- Le Grand Mazarin, sold in November 2017 for US\$14.4 million
- The Begum Blue, sold in November 1995 for US\$7.7 million

### **TOP 3 NOBLE PROVENANCE WATCH LOTS SOLD**

- Eric Clapton's Patek Philippe, reference 2499/100 sold for CHF3.4 million in November 2012
- Mr. Havas', also known as the founder of AFP (Agence Presse France) Breguet, No 217, sold for CHF3.2 million in May 2016
- The Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia Patek Philippe, reference 2497 sold for CHF2.9 million in May 2017

### **TOP 3 WINE LOTS SOLD**

- Château Cheval Blanc, 1947, 1 Impériale sold for CHF298,500 in 2010, a record price for an Impériale
- Château Mouton-Rothschild millésime 1945, 12 bouteilles sold for CHF161,000 in 2012
- Romanée-Conti millésime 1945, 1 bouteille sold for CHF109,250 in 2011

## **TOP 3 SWISS ART WORKS BOUGHT BY MUSEUMS**

- Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), *Der Holzfäller*, 1910, sold to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, in 2005
- Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), *Traum des Hirten*, 1896, sold to the Metropolitan Museum, New York, in 2013
- Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), *Porträt Werner Miller*, 1899 sold to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, in 2018

## **View on the collecting developments in the 4 categories over the past 50 years**

### **Sabine Kegel, Head of Watches, Christie's Geneva:**

"Until the 1980s the watch auction market was focused on pocket watches, wristwatches playing a minor role only. This trend changed in the late 1990s/early 2000 with the latter now enjoying enormous popularity worldwide. At the time, the collectors market consisted of a comparatively small group of experienced and educated horological connoisseurs, knowing how to recognize important factors such as rarity, condition, and provenance.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, demand and prices particularly for rare timepieces have been constantly increasing. We see an extraordinary number of first time buyers, often young generation, and from more and more countries participating in our watch sales. Especially on the high end, the amount of "new blood" getting into the vintage watch world is unprecedented, a trend we expect to continue."

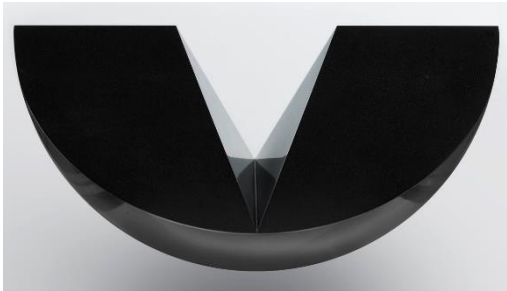
### **Jean-Marc Lunel, Head of Jewellery, Christie's Geneva**

"In the eighties and nineties, buyers were mostly trade clients purchasing Antique jewelry, colorless diamonds and Art Deco jewels but in the past 15 years we saw a shift in the market with private clients competing at the highest level to buy vintage and signed jewels and more recently pieces from two periods which had been neglected for decades: the Art Nouveau and the Retro periods of jewelry. The tremendous success of Beyond Boundaries, a unique Art Nouveau and Art Deco private Jewelry collection of 110 pieces sold 100% underlines this unprecedented enthusiasm for these categories, rousing passion for what is rare and beautiful in the market.

Over the last 10 years we also witnessed increasing buying activity from Asia and in parallel record prices set for Kashmir sapphires, Burmese rubies and Colombian emeralds of the finest quality. Classical jewels by famous jewelry houses such as Cartier, Boucheron, Chaumet, Tiffany, Harry Winston and Van Cleef & Arpels are still highly sought after and we are also seeing an increasing demand for pieces designed by contemporary jewelers such as Edmond Chin, JAR, Viren Baghat and Wallace Chan.

Coloured diamonds have reached new levels, achieving up to 10 times the prices seen only a decade ago. On May 18, 2016 Christie's Geneva sold the Oppenheimer Blue diamond for the price of a Picasso - a Fancy Vivid Blue diamond of 14.62 carat, set at \$57.5million the then new world record price for any jewel or gemstone ever sold at auction and was Christie's top lot for the first half of 2016.

## **MADE IN 1968 AND SOLD AT CHRISTIE'S SWITZERLAND**



### **SWISS ART**

Max Bill (1908-1994)

Zwilling als Viertelkugel, 1968

Sold for: CHF 204,000

Swiss Art Sale 21 March 2011, lot 133

### **JEWELS**

A brown and dark brown enamel and gold snake belt, by Bulgari  
second half of 1960s

Sold for: CHF 225,442

Magnificent Jewels Sale 11 November 2014, lot 378



### **WATCHES**

Rolex, Cosmograph Daytona, Paul Newman model  
reference 6241

Sold for: CHF495,750

Important Watches Sale 13 May 2013

### **WINE**

1 LITER Chartreuse Verte, V.E.P., 1968

Sold for: CHF 881

Fine Wine Sale November 2016

Not illustrated in the catalogue

---

### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2017 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$6.6 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

###

*Images available on request*

**FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:**

