SOTHEBY’S TO SELL A SET OF REMARKABLE 18TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE TRANSPARENCIES WHICH REPRESENT AN EARLY PROTO-CINEMATIC DISPLAY

--- The sale will include Property From The Descendants of Walter Brandt ---

CARMONTELLE, A SET OF FIVE LANDSCAPE TRANSPARENCIES, FROM THE ‘CAMPAGNES DE FRANCE,’ Estimate: £350,000-500,000*

SOTHEBY’S LONDON SALE of Old Master and British Drawings on July 7th and 8th 2011 will present for sale a range of important drawings from the 16th to the 19th centuries. In addition to works by artists Hans Bol, Jacopo Ligozzi, Joseph Mallord William Turner and John Constable, a remarkable highlight of the sale is a set of five astonishingly original landscape transparencies From The ‘Campagnes de France’ by Louis Carrogis called Carmontelle (1717-1806), estimated at £350,000-500,000 (illustrated above and above on page 2).

Commenting on the forthcoming sale, Gregory Rubinstein, Worldwide Head of Sotheby’s Old Master Drawings Department said: We are extremely pleased to be offering these remarkably rare transparencies which not only offer a contemporary account of the French aristocracy during the final years of the ancien régime, but also represent an important step in
the journey towards the emergence of perhaps the most influential art form of the 20th century - the motion picture.

These five landscape transparencies are extremely rare examples of a highly original, but today almost unknown, art form that Carmontelle himself invented, and with which he utterly captivated the French aristocracy during the final years of the ancien régime. Originally, these landscapes, painted on translucent paper, would have formed part of a single, hugely long panoramic landscape, which would have been rolled up, to be viewed by being wound through a backlit viewing box, as a proto-cinematic theatrical event. As the scene unfolded, frame by frame, Carmontelle would provide an entertaining commentary, complete with a description of the events depicted and much imagined dialogue between the protagonists, as well as music and a variety of other sound effects. These panoramic transparencies were conceived as a continuous narrative of a single trip through the landscapes, parks and gardens of the areas on the outskirts of Paris where the artist’s aristocratic audience had their country retreats. Between 1783 and 1790, Carmontelle made nine such enormous transparencies, which he collectively titled Campagnes de France ornées de ses jardins pittoresques appelés jardins anglais. Of the initial series of nine transparencies dating from 1783 and 1792, it appears that none survive complete, and indeed relatively little survives at all. The largest surviving section, in a private collection, measures 20m in length, while the Musée Condé, Chantilly, has a section measuring 12.6m in length, and the Getty Museum, Los Angeles has another measuring 3.77m in length. The five sections now offered for sale are the only other recorded survivals from these crucial works.

Both in their technical originality and in their remarkable blurring of the boundaries between art, theatre and spectacle, these remarkable landscapes embody the essence of the spirit of the Enlightenment. They are also very moving documents of the last days of the French
ancien régime, as they owe not only their subject matter but their very existence to the extraordinary privilege and leisure of the aristocracy in the years leading up to the Revolution. But their significance is not only in relation to their own time. The fact that so few examples of this remarkable precursor of the cinematic film have survived make the present works all the more significant. Over a period of twenty years Carmontelle made 12 rolls, of which only 1 or 2 remain.

Also included in the forthcoming sale is a rare work by Jacopo Ligozzi (1547-1627), entitled A Sultan Standing Beside a Goat: Solimano Imperator de Turchi (illustrated left). An extremely important record of what was known of Turkish dress at the time, this handsome sheet comes from an album of thirty pages, twenty of which are in the Uffizi Florence, ten of which are held in public and private collections. Following the defeat of the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, there was a notable surge in interest in Turkish subjects. The completed album must have been an incredible assembly of exotic images, showing figures in elaborate costumes, often paired with symbolic animals, and sometimes, as is this case with the current drawing, heightened with gold to enhance their preciousness. The subtlety and precision of the artist’s work reflect his early training as a miniaturist, a skill for which he was greatly admired by the Medici court, whom he served ten years. Ligozzi played a central role in the artistic life of the ducal court, executing naturalistic and scientific studies of plants and animals, works on paper and parchment for which he is still admired today. A Sultan Standing Beside a Goat: Solimano Imperator de Turchi is estimated at £150,000-200,000.

A further highlight is Hans Bol’s (1534-1593) landscape gouache An Elegant Hunting Party Before The Abbey of Rouge-Cloître, Near Brussels. In this superbly detailed and refined drawing, we see an elegant – possibly royal – hunting party enjoying the pleasures of every type of field sport, in front of a grand, moated monastery, with a road to the right
leading off towards a distant city. Bol’s spectacularly elegant and beautiful landscape gouaches, often extensively heightened with gold, include some of the greatest achievements of late 16th-century landscape painting. Combining elements and qualities from much earlier traditions of manuscript illumination with an observational clarity that owes much to Pieter Breugel, Bol was a unique artistic personality. Identifiable landscape views such as this are extremely rare in his work, and no gouache of comparable importance by the artist has come to the market in the last decade. Illustrated above to the right, the work is estimated at £150,000-250,000.

**An Allegorical Figure of Prudence** is one of two rare works for sale by Francesco Primaticcio (1504-5-1570). Trained at the court of Mantua, Primaticcio brought to the hugely important and influential Fontainebleau School the working methods of Raphael’s workshop.

Estimated at £120,000-180,000, this very beautiful drawing (illustrated left) is a preliminary study by Primaticcio for one of the figures adorning the doors of armoires in the Cabinet du Roi of François I at Fontainebleau, part of the decorative scheme that was the most important commission of the artist’s career. Prudence and her companions in this group of monochrome drawings are among the finest works of Primaticcio, revealing not only his imaginative invenzione but also his great technical skill, and they encapsulate the refinement and elegance of the Fontainebleau school.

Also by Primaticcio is the drawing **Aeolus Confining or Liberating the Winds** (illustrated below to the right), estimated at £100,000-150,000. This work is a preparatory study for one of the four rectangular paintings on the ceiling of the second bay of the Galerie d’Ulysse.
at Fontainebleau. The gallery was destroyed in the 18th century, so an understanding of the *ensemble* depends upon these surviving preparatory drawings, as well as copies and engravings after the paintings and some written descriptions. Primaticcio’s drawings not only offer a record of this important cycle, but also reveal his working method and the precision of his instructions to Nicolò dell’Abate and his assistants.

**Property from the descendants of Walter Brandt**

Walter Brandt was a collector with flair and determination. The compelling qualities of the Brandt collection have long been recognized – its extraordinary diversity and the sheer individuality of its watercolours and drawings, which are very evident in the group here. Once into his stride, Walter Brandt’s appetite for the right work by the artist was prodigious.

Highlighting the Brandt collection is **Joseph Mallord William Turner**’s *Recto: Burg Soonerck On The Rhine, Germany; Verso: Burg Nollig On The Rhine, Germany*, estimated at £60,000-80,000 (illustrated left). These spontaneous and energetic sketches retain the vitality of the artist who, despite being in the later years of his life, demonstrates all the excitement and passion for recording landscapes, which remain so moving and inspirational today. Turner first visited the Rhine in 1817 and travelled through the areas many times over the next twenty-five years, depicting it in many works. The present watercolour was painted with the wonderful addition of a second pencil sketch on the verso of the sheet. Burgh Sooneck lies a few miles north of Bingen and is one of the oldest castles on the most picturesque part of the Rhine.
A further highlight from the Brandt collection is John Robert Cozen’s *The Lesser Valley From The North, Switzerland*, estimated at £40,000-60,000 (illustrated below to the right). Cozens depicts the valley of Ober-Hasli from the Kirchet ridge in between Meiringen and Innertkirchert, Switzerland. From this high viewpoint the artist achieves not only a sense of grandeur but also one of serene peacefulness.

The sale’s various owner component will also be highlighted by John Robert Cozen’s *View of the Grand Chartreuse*, estimated at £200,000-300,000 (illustrated left). In 1783 Cozens crossed the Alps at Mt. Cenis and travelled past the Grande Chartreuse, before returning home to England. This watercolour is based on a sketch by Cozens executed ‘on the spot’ on the 28th October 1783. The drawing forms part of the seven *Beckford Sketch-Books* sold at Sotheby’s, London on the 29th November 1973 (Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester).

Also included is John Constable’s *A Willow Beside Water, A Church Beyond*, estimated at £4,000-6,000. This watercolour is one of three recorded sheets of the same compositions on which Constable has constructed a view incorporating a building along a gnarled tree. The clue to the purpose behind this watercolour may be the fact that it is fully signed and dated. It has been suggested that Constable this for inclusion in a Lady’s album of drawings and prints. It is known that he often undertook such tasks as he wrote to John Martin on 26th November 1830, *were it not for ladies (a)burns, I know not what we poor landscape painters would do.*

* Estimates do not include buyer’s premium

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