

# CHRISTIE'S

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## ENCHANTMENTS ACROSS THE AGES - RUSSIAN ART AUCTION - 4 JUNE 2018, LONDON



**A RARE GEM-SET PURPURINE MODEL  
OF A RABBIT**  
BY FABERGÉ, Circa 1900  
Estimate: £50,000–70,000



**BORIS GRIGORIEV (1886-1939)**  
*La Mère Agathe*  
oil on canvas – 92.2 x 73.7 cm  
Estimate: £250,000-350,000



**A LARGE AND RARE SOVIET PORCELAIN  
PROPAGANDA PLATTER**  
By the Imperial Porcelain Factory, and the State  
Porcelain Factory, Petrograd, 1923  
Estimate: £12,000-18,000

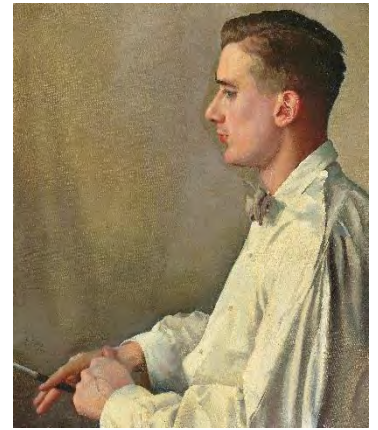
**London** – On 4<sup>th</sup> June, Christie's Russian Art sale will offer a selection of works by numerous highly sought-after artists including Boris Grigoriev, Alexandre Iacovleff, Konstantin Somov, Nicholas Roerich, Dmitry Stelletsky and Yuri Annenkov. Session II will offer Russian Works of Art, including over forty works from the famous workshop of Fabergé, Imperial jewels, rare bronzes, Soviet Porcelain and works by the Imperial Porcelain Factory.

A highlight of the sale, Boris Grigoriev's *La Mère Agathe* is one of the finest and most characteristic of Grigoriev's Breton cycle paintings of the 1920s, which was exhibited at several major exhibitions including at the artist's solo show in the New Gallery in New York (5th December 1924 – 2nd January 1925). As evident in this painting, Grigoriev took care to capture his sitters and this work successfully conveys a strong sense of character in the elderly Breton woman (*illustrated above centre*). Brittany, with its archaic cultural context, the crystalline clarity of medieval architectural forms, and the colourful richness of summer landscapes, provided Grigoriev with novel artistic materials, subjects, textures, and colours. Showcasing the painting at the 24th Annual International Exhibition in Pittsburgh in 1925 and subsequently at Grand Central Art Galleries in New York in 1926 cemented its success and attracted the attention of an illustrious collector called Edgar J. Kaufmann (1885-1955).

## AT HOME



The sale will also feature a group of intimate portraits of Boris Snejkovsky, muse and friend of Konstantin Somov. These romantic depictions were gifted from the artist to the sitter, and kept in the same collection by descent to the present owner. These lots will offer fans and collectors alike the opportunity to acquire very personal snapshots into the life of the renowned Russian artist and have never before been seen on the market. The proffered selection is the last group from The Somov Collection, which was successfully sold by Christie's over three auction seasons

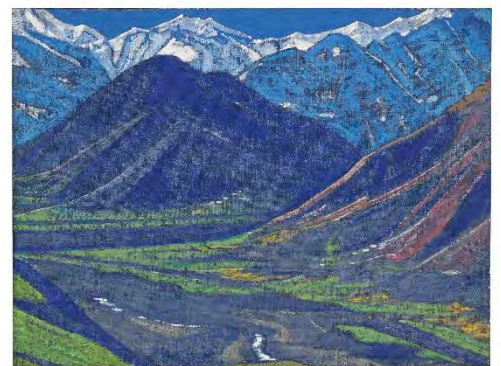


from November 2006 to November 2007. The collection totaled over £15 million and established the world auction record for the artist at £3.7 million for *The rainbow*.

## IN THE CLOUDS



Christie's is pleased to offer two spellbinding landscapes by the spiritual artist Nicholas Roerich. *Evening, from the Himalayan series* (illustrated left, estimate: £40,000 – 60,000) and *Spring in Kulu* (illustrated right, estimate: £50,000 – 70,000) are archetypal images by the artist and reminiscent of his



exploratory and enchanting journey to India and the Himalayas, which represented the summit of his quest for peace, beauty and truth.

## FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Further paintings charged with enchanting qualities include those created by Dmitry Stelletsy, Alexandre Iacovleff and Oleg Tselkov. Stelletsy is represented with a highly decorative quadriptych entitled *The Hunt*, offered from a distinguished French Collection (illustrated below left, estimate: £40,000-60,000). This stunning composition draws upon Russo-Byzantine pictorial tradition and presents the artist's interpretation of Classical art, as various elements echo the works of Sandro Boticelli and Paolo Uccello. Alexandre Iacovleff's exquisite life-size portrait of a dancer in a Spanish costume (illustrated below centre, estimate £400,000–600,000), possibly Anna Pavlova, captures the viewer with its exceptional quality of detail from the floral-patterned lace, which luxuriously drapes down from the mantilla, to the shine of the silk of the voluminous skirt of the dancer. Oleg Tselkov's *Portrait of group with watermelon* (illustrated below right, estimate: £150,000-200,000) comes from the collection of the proclaimed American essayist and playwright Arthur Miller, and is a power example the artist's way of presenting the harsh reality he faced during the Soviet regime while using tools of the theatre and incorporating the masks inherited from the Commedia dell'arte in this brightly coloured image. This early, pre-immigration painting presents an unmissable opportunity for discerning collectors.



## FABERGÉ ANIMALS



The Russian works of art section will offer 194 lots and is highlighted by a large and important jewelled petrified wood model of a chimpanzee by Fabergé, circa 1915, (illustrated left, estimate: £100,000-150,000). This lot was originally purchased by Lady Paget (1853-1919), who was the daughter of a wealthy Boston hotelier. She was instrumental in organising the first exhibition of works by Fabergé in London in 1904 at the Albert Hall. Lady Paget was one of the most important patrons of Fabergé's London branch and her collection included



some of the firm's most impressive works. The Fabergé animals in the sale are further represented by a rare silver-mounted ceramic duck created in collaboration with the Imperial Stroganov School (illustrated right, estimate: £120,000 – 150,000). Similar ceramic works with Fabergé silver mounts were popular with members of the Imperial family, who had several examples in their collection. Further examples of Fabergé's genius in capturing lifelike and whimsical animals in a diversity of materials include a purpurine glass model of a rabbit (estimate: £50,000 – 70,000, illustrated on page 1 left) and an obsidian and rock crystal sea lion.

## DESK ACCESSORIES

The sale also contains a large selection of functional desk items transformed into works of art by Fabergé's leading workmasters, including photograph frames offered from the collection of the an Important American Collector (estimates from £15,000 – 35,000) and a pen, tray and desk-seal sold from a Royal House (illustrated right, estimates from £3,000 – 15,000). Other interesting functional items by Fabergé include an important brass and copper table lamp, which is a rare example of Fabergé's production during World War I (illustrated right, estimate: £30,000 – 50,000) and a paperknife, ruler and magnifying glass sold by an important collector (illustrated right, estimates from £15,000 – 30,000).



## ENAMEL FAIRYTALES and RARE SOVIET PORCELAIN



Also featured in the sale is a group of Russian enamels with mythical associations and reference to the legendary past including two silver-gilt cloisonné enamel Kovshii, (*illustrated left*, estimate: £8,000 – 12,000, and *illustrated right*, estimate: £40,000 – 60,000). A large and rare soviet porcelain propaganda platter will also be offered (*illustrated right on page 1*, estimate: £12,000-18,000). It is painted after a design by Anton Komashka, and is one of the few works by this artist known to exist.



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### About Christie's

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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.*

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*Images available on request*

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