

CHRISTIE'S

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The Collection of Victoria, Lady de Rothschild

ONLINE, 18 NOVEMBER – 9 DECEMBER 2021



Victoria, Lady de Rothschild's Drawing Room, including Johnny Swing's *One Cent Couch* (estimate: £50,000-80,000)

London – A celebration of the taste and style of a champion of art and design, Christie's will offer *The Collection of Victoria, Lady de Rothschild* in an online sale that opens for bidding on 18 November and closes on 9 December. Presenting a fresh and dynamic aesthetic that reflects Victoria's discerning eye, the sale comprises over 200 lots, spanning the 20th and 21st centuries, featuring important modern design by André Sornay and notable works by contemporary designers Yoichi Ohira, Johnny Swing, Ingrid Donat and Mattia Bonetti, alongside works of art by Dora Maar, Henry Moore and Irving Penn, as well as a curated collection of over twenty contemporary Japanese bamboo baskets by Tanioka Shigeo and Minoura Chikuhō, amongst others. The sale is led by Johnny Swing's *One Cent Couch*, a custom commission for Victoria for her personal collection and an impressive example of the important series by the designer (estimate: £50,000-80,000). Spanning Christie's Luxury Week and Classic Week sales, highlights from this auction will be on public view at Christie's headquarters in London from 18 November to the 8 December. With estimates ranging from £500 to £80,000, the sale is expected to realise in excess of £1 million. Selections of Victoria's jewellery will be sold alongside the collection, in *Jewels Online: The London Edit* which will be open for bidding between 12 November to 26 November 2021.

Anthony, Jessica and David de Rothschild commented: *“Our Mother had a wonderful eye and an ability to mix the most unlikely pieces to produce an incredible narrative. She was always so excited by her new finds and the way in which they would sit together creating a reaction from whoever was viewing them. Her collection was thought-provoking and inspiring and invited you into a world of her own. Above all she loved beautiful things and loved sharing them with people.”*

Tomasz Starzewski, London couturier and interior designer commented: *“It was a huge honour and a delight to be commissioned by Victoria to decorate her Chelsea apartments. We had been close friends for over twenty years, enjoyed travelling together and I was forever intrigued by what caught her inquisitive eye. To me Victoria was a true visionary. She had an exceptional taste and never failed to spot the hidden gem. A decorator’s responsibility is to take on the style of a client and I felt that her drawing rooms should incorporate both living space and the feel of a gallery, an appropriate way to pay tribute to Victoria’s vision. Pieces could come in and out – create added interest and dialogues between the works of art – everything could be interchangeable – the whole point was nothing was fixed. A true collector collects not for an audience but for themselves.*

The collection starts with the Viennese Secession – the beginning of modern design, with the Hoffman chairs and ends with Johnny Swing’s unique Couch. Victoria was fascinated by the medium used, rather than their functionality. These contradictions are evident throughout the collection as was her whimsical sense of humour, which showed all the way through to her wardrobe, from her fabulous shoes and her signature polka dot socks to the fabrics of her scarves. We all waited with baited breath at Christmas to see the extraordinary gift-wrapped presents using Japanese handmade papers uniquely tied with vintage ribbons. Victoria was immensely feminine with the drive to appreciate all that surrounded her. She will be greatly missed by so many.”

Benedict Winter, Head of Sale and Marta de Roia, Lead Design Specialist, Christie’s commented: *“Christie’s is thrilled to offer works from Victoria, Lady de Rothschild’s eclectic yet refined collection. A doyenne of the field of design and art commission in London over the last forty years, her unique take on collecting shines through with key pieces by celebrated contemporary designers sitting comfortably with historic design and her signature contrasting materiality. The interiors of her London home brilliantly capture her vision, her eye for detail and the never-ceasing appetite of a true collector.”*

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Victoria had the clarity of vision to know what she wanted when she saw it. Her inherent connoisseurship and the natural flair of her ‘eye’ was evidenced by the sale of an important *Bone Chair* by Joris Laarman (b. 1979) which was offered for sale from her collection at Christie’s in 2019 and set a new world record price for a piece of 21st Century Design, selling for £707,250 against an estimate of £400,000-600,000.

A CELEBRATION OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

An avid collector, Victoria was a buyer who didn’t need an intellectual explanation about a work, instead it was a matter of what ‘moved’ her. She loved buying at fairs such as Collect, PAD, and Masterpiece, among others, which provided windows to the new generation of artists. Victoria bought quickly, with a clear eye, but notably the pieces that she was most drawn to took a long time to make, craftsmanship was key. For Victoria it wasn’t about the material itself so much as it was about what happened to the material and throughout the collection, there is an incredible thread of artisans and



how each work was made. This is highlighted by her appreciation for the Japanese aesthetic in arts and crafts, particularly in baskets (*illustrated left*) and Japanese glass (*illustrated and detailed below*). Examples of the baskets include Tanioka Shigeo (b. 1949), *Basket* (estimate: £8,000-12,000), *Forest*, 2002 also by Tanioka Shigeo (b. 1949), using the Kumimono technique (estimate: £7,000-10,000), and *Butterfly II*, 2003 by Minuora Chikuho (1934-2010), using the Kushime technique (estimate: £7,000-10,000).

SENSUOUS LINES, FUNCTIONALITY AND CONTRADICTIONS



A delicacy runs throughout the collection, even when materials are industrial there is a femininity and a sensuous fluidity of line, such as a Marc Fish, Mokume-Gane console table (estimate: £15,000-20,000, *illustrated above left*), which co-existed elegantly beneath *Sweetie*, for 'Vogue', January 2003 by Irving Penn (1917-2009) (estimate: £12,000-18,000 *also illustrated above left*). Much of the seating has curving shapes and movement, or is juxtaposed with soft sheepskin cushions: a Gianfranco Frattini, Corner sofa, model 830 (estimate: £6,000-8,000, *illustrated above centre*) and a Robert Josten set of ten dining chairs (estimate: £2,000-3,000, *illustrated above right*).

Functionality also runs as a theme, highlighted by things that have an autonomous function but are turned into a piece of art such as: Johnny Swing's *One Cent Couch* (estimate: £50,000-80,000, *illustrated page one and from behind above centre*) and *Half-dollar 'Butterfly' chair*, 2007 by Swing (estimate: £20,000-30,000, *illustrated right*) – with the relative low value of the monetary content used for each also amusing Victoria; or *2 hrs. 22 mins and 6 secs* made of video tape picture by Robert Currie (b.1976) (estimate: £1,000-2,000, *detail illustrated below*)



Victoria's love of a variety of mediums, often contrasting and in contradiction, is a theme which can be observed throughout her collection, including where metal, wood and glass works were mixed and displayed alongside one another as they are in the picture to the left, which includes vases *Calle di Venezia N.14*, 2009, by Yoichi Ohira (b. 1946) (estimate: £20,000-30,000) and *Respiro No.3 - Murrine*, 2008, Yoichi Ohira (b. 1946), (estimate: £18,000-

25,000), both hand-blown glass executed by master glassblower Andrea Zilio and master cutter and grinder Giacomo Barbini.

FROM ART DECO TO ART



Victoria, Lady de Rothschild was not limited to a single time period and fully integrated Art Deco works such as two André Sornay (1902-2000) *mirroring sideboards*, circa 1930 in black lacquered wood (estimate: £12,000-18,000 *partially illustrated on page 3*) and a set of four 'Bridge' armchairs and games table, circa 1930s (estimate: £12,000-18,000, *illustrated left*), working well in relatively close proximity to *table de chevet 'disque'*, by Ingrid Donat (b. 1957) which was made in 2008 (estimate: £10,000

- 15,000, *illustrated in part above*), and a 'You and Me' table, 1994 by Elisabeth Garouste (b. 1949) and Mattia Bonetti (b. 1953) (estimate: £7,000-10,000), all of which is watched over by *Two Standing Figures* by Henry Moore, O.M., C.H. (1898-1986), a screenprint on Irish linen, signed in ink, dated '49' made by Ascher Ltd (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

Elsewhere in the collection, other notable artworks include *Buste de femme a la plante* (thought to be Nusch Éluard), painted circa 1937-38 by Dora Maar (1907-1997) (estimate: £20,000-40,000, *illustrated right*). Further Art Deco pieces include a pair of mirrored frames, with a *papier-peint* panel featuring birds and flower bouquets, 1934, by Armand-Albert Rateau (1882-1938); one of the pair was behind Victoria's bed (estimate: £40,000-60,000).



JEWELLERY



A selection of Victoria, Lady de Rothschild's jewellery will be sold in *Jewels Online: The London Edit* which will be open for bidding from 12 November to 26 November 2021. Highlights include, from left to right: *an art deco rock crystal, diamond, pearl and onyx tassel brooch*, circa 1920 (estimate: £25,000-35,000), *an art deco coral and rock crystal bracelet* by Cartier, circa 1935 (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and *a pair of smoky quartz and diamond 'Gordons' cuff bracelets* by Herz Belperron, 1991-1998 (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

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Notes to Editors

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