

**BERNHEIMER-COLNAGHI TO EXHIBIT AT  
THE XXV<sup>TH</sup> BIENNALE DES ANTIQUAIRES IN PARIS**

Bernheimer-Colnaghi will bring a superb selection of Old Master Paintings to the **XXV<sup>th</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires** which takes place at the Grand Palais, Avenue Winston Churchill, 75008 Paris, from **Wednesday 15 to Wednesday 22 September 2010**. It is very appropriate that the venerable firm should come to Paris in its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year as its remarkable story began in that city in 1760 when Colnaghi was founded by an enterprising firework manufacturer, Giovanni Battista Torre.

Amongst the fine works on offer will be *The Ill-Matched Lovers* by Lucas Cranach the Elder and Studio (1472-1553). The subject of this exquisitely painted small panel, which depicts a grotesque old man and a knowing, youthful beauty, was a popular theme in 16<sup>th</sup> century art. By presenting a rather erotic image in the guise of a morality lesson, the artist was afforded a degree of licentiousness which might otherwise have been unacceptable. The theme of the deadly sins of lust and avarice personified by a lascivious old man and a young, beautiful woman goes back to antiquity and was probably introduced into German painting by Cranach. (fig. 1)

The gallery has recently acquired a splendid, recently-discovered portrait by Anton Von Maron of James Byres (1733-1817), the Scottish 18<sup>th</sup> century architect, art dealer and antiquary. Byres played a key role in the Roman art market in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, supplying antiquities and Old Master paintings to visiting Grand Tourists. Although trained as an architect, he is best known as a dealer whose triumphs included the sale of the Portland Vase, now in the British Museum, to Sir William Hamilton and of Poussin's series of *Seven Sacraments*, now at Belvoir Castle, which Byres sold to the Duke of Rutland in 1785, both purchased from Roman aristocratic collections. He also owned Poussin's *Assumption*, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. The present portrait, by Anton Von Maron (1733-1808), one of the leading portrait painters in Rome, was probably painted around the time of his election to the Accademia di San Luca in 1768, where he had won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for architectural design in 1762, and features one of his drawings prominently in the foreground. Never previously exhibited, the painting comes from a private collection. (fig. 2)

An artist about whose life little is known is Henri Stresor (1613?-1679). Said to be of German extraction and to have lived in Paris from 1644, he painted in the style of the Le Nain brothers and executed several portraits of Louis XIV and other high-ranking members of Parisian aristocracy. Bernheimer-Colnaghi will be showing *The Oyster Eater*, a fine painting of a young man seated at a draped table laid with oysters and a flagon of wine, that once belonged to Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763-1839). Fesch was the half-brother of Napoleon's mother, Letizia Ramolino Bonaparte, and he formed one of the largest private collections of paintings in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century comprising some 16,000 works, the finest of which were displayed in his Roman residence, the Palazzo Falconieri. (fig. 4)

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a considerable vogue for landscapes showing contrasting seasons or times of the day, and Bernheimer-Colnaghi will be offering *Autumn* and *Winter* by Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728-1808), one of the most accomplished French landscape painters of the period as well as an influential decorative draughtsmen in Europe. Pillement produced his first sets of landscapes in the mid 1750s, during his English period, and undoubtedly the enthusiasm which the English showed for his work gave a major impetus to his landscape painting. His travels in Portugal, Italy and the South of France provided him with a large portfolio of *plein-air* drawings upon which he drew for his vivid reconstructions of the Mediterranean countryside, such as this charming pair of landscapes. (figs. 5a and 5b)

These and many more fine works offered by Bernheimer-Colnaghi will provide an important contribution to the Paris Biennale where the finest examples of antiques, fine art and jewellery have attracted connoisseurs and collectors from around the world every two years for 50 years.

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Celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Colnaghi is the world's oldest commercial art gallery and the only survivor of the grand Old Master galleries in London's Old Bond Street. Paul Colnaghi established the gallery with his partner Anthony Torre in Paris in 1760 and then in 1783 took over the London branch in Pall Mall. As a result of the French Revolution the business was transferred to London, becoming printsellers to King George IV. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the firm had begun dealing in Old Master paintings and drawings and was instrumental in the formation of some of the most important American collections, including that of Isabella Stewart Gardner, Henry Clay Frick and Andrew Mellon. In 2002, the Old Master paintings dealer Konrad O. Bernheimer acquired Colnaghi and joined forces with the renowned Old Master drawings dealer, Katrin Bellinger. Colnaghi continues to operate as one of the world's most important dealerships, specialising in Master paintings and drawings from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To celebrate the anniversary Colnaghi has published an illustrated commemorative history of the gallery, edited by Jeremy Howard, called *Colnaghi – The History*. (separate press release available)

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**Event:** XXV<sup>th</sup> Paris Biennale des Antiquaires, 15 to 22 September 2010  
Stand SO2  
**Opening hours:** Daily 11 am to 8 pm; 16 and 21 September to 10 pm  
**Venue:** Grand Palais, Avenue Winston Churchill, 75008 Paris, France  
**Admission:** €25; concessions €20; catalogue €45  
**Websites:** [www.bdafrance.eu](http://www.bdafrance.eu), [www.colnaghi.co.uk](http://www.colnaghi.co.uk)

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