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'A Masterpiece of Collecting' — Christie's Auctions Porn

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This story from a British newspaper caught my eye. It seems that one of the world's most notable and extensive collections of pornography (styled as "erotic art") is going on the auction block in Paris. Here's the gist of the story from [*The Telegraph*](#) [London]:

Christie's in Paris is the sort of place where even Louis XVI would have felt underdressed. The glacial young women behind the desk, whose matching uniforms make them look like two of the early Supremes, are faultlessly coiffeured, sublimely correct. The austere neo-Classical architecture and wood panelling exude the very strong impression that vulgarity - let alone hanky-panky - will not be tolerated.

Yet this aesthetic holy of holies is currently housing a collection of what the sale room likes to call "historical erotica" but is basically the biggest collection of very naughty books in private ownership. They are to be auctioned next week in what is the first sale of its kind for Christie's and nerves are a little frayed at the stately auction house which is anxious not to develop a reputation for peddling smut.

It seems that images of art offered for auction are generally placed on the Internet at Christie's site, but "not in this case."

The collection was put together by the late Gerard Nordmann, whose widow has decided to sell the collection of more than 1,200 "items."

More:

The collectors of this genre are, perhaps unsurprisingly, a discrete lot, but since the erotic theme is one of more or less universal application, Christie's says it is expecting a big response.

Whatever you think of the content, it is certainly a masterpiece of collecting, bringing together works of great rarity and value.

The big question, of course, is precisely what "value" these items represent. The late Mr. Nordmann may have put together this "masterpiece of collecting" but, in the end, it stands as one more monument to the confusion of the arts. Nothing that degrades, perverts, and demeans the Creator's gift of sex can be truly beautiful or valuable.

Christians can be guilty of a sex-denying prudishness that also robs the Creator of His glory in the gift of sex. This also requires careful Christian attention.

But what kind of perversity is represented in the collecting of a world-class library of erotica, worthy of auction at Christie's? This is Mr. Nordmann's legacy. And, whether they are comfortable with the public relations or not, Christie's is now a glorified smut dealership.

LINK TO NEWS ARTICLE: Warning, explicit descriptions and edited images. [*The Telegraph*](#), April 20, 2006.

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