

**SOTHEBY'S ANCIENT SCULPTURE AND WORKS OF ART SALE SOARS ABOVE PRE-SALE HIGH ESTIMATE**

**58 LOTS TOTAL £6.8m / \$8.7m (est. £2.7 - 3.9m)**

MARBLE FUNERARY PORTRAIT OF A ROMAN POET COMMANDS £4.2m / \$5.3m (est. £1.5 - 2m)

SOTHEBY'S HOLDS NINE OF THE TOP TEN PRICES FOR ANCIENT MARBLES AT AUCTION, INCLUDING THE TOP THREE HIGHEST PRICES EVER ACHIEVED



**London, December 2018:** This week, as the art world turned its focus to works from the more distant past, Sotheby's sale of Ancient Sculpture and Works of Art achieved a remarkable £6.8 million, far surpassing the pre-sale estimate (£2.7 - 3.9 million) and achieving the highest total for the series since the sales were introduced here in May 2016. 55 of the 58 lots were sold, making for an exceptional sell-through rate of 95% - with 76% of lots selling above the pre-sale high estimate. Sotheby's leads the market for ancient marbles, holding nine of the top ten prices at auction, and the top three highest prices ever achieved.

The sale was led by an exceptional portrait of Roman poet, dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C. ([lot 39](#)). Originally thought to be a likeness of Virgil, the rare statue of a professional poet from the early years of the Empire depicts a semi-deified individual, bare-breasted and enthroned, holding a scroll as if it were a sceptre. The funerary portrait includes an indentation on the reverse, hollowed out to contain the ashes of the deceased. Discovered before World War Two, the sculpture has passed through the hands of prestigious art dealers in Italy and in the United States, before entering the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, in 1936. It has been on view at the Antikenmuseum in Basel for the past ten years (more information is available [here](#)).

Further highlights include:

- A fragmentary Greek Marble Grave Stele inscribed for Hedeia, Attic, circa 375-350B.C ([lot 14](#), sold £298,000, est. £120,000-180,000)
- A Roman Marble Figure of the Muse Erato or Terpsichore, circa 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D. ([lot 26](#), sold £250,000, est. £150,000-250,000)
- A Roman Imperial Marble Sarcophagus, excavated by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos in 1828. Upon its installation at Stowe House, the Duke removed the bones of the Roman

youth who lay within, replacing them with the bones of his recently deceased pet pug, Harlequin ([lot 48](#), sold £40,000, est. £25,000-35,000).

Please find the top ten results attached.

The full catalogue is available to view [here](#).

Images are available to download [here](#).

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