Arts of the Islamic World
INCLUDING FINE CARPETS AND TEXTILES

AUCTION IN LONDON WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2009 | 10.30 AM & 2.30 PM

EXHIBITION
Friday 27 March | 9 am - 4.30 pm
Sunday 29 March | 12 noon - 5 pm
Monday 30 March | 9 am - 4.30 pm
Tuesday 31 March | 9 am - 4.30 pm

EMBARGO ON IMPORTATION OF PERSIAN/IRANIAN WORKS OF ART TO THE U.S.A.

Those clients considering purchasing Persian/Iranian works of art with the intention of importing them to the U.S.A. should contact the relevant U.S. Government Department regarding the proper importation of such items. The Islamic Department does however remains Available to assist buyers with such queries, as far as practicable. Buyers should be aware that Sotheby’s does not represent that the approval will be granted.

34-35 NEW BOND STREET LONDON W1A 2AA
This folio is a superb example of 'Abbasid luxury Qur'an production at its most stylish point in the late 9th century. It is perhaps possible to define this style (equating to Déroche's group 'D' style) as the mature 'Abbasid Kufic', with the script displaying the 'elegant beauty' that Déroche mentions in the catalogue of the Nasr D. Khalil Collection (Déroche 1992, no.21). Manuscipnts with this kind of austere beauty seem to emphasise the power and significance of the text through the execution of a confident hand, the use of horizontal stretching (mahas) abstracts some of the letters which underlines the centrality and iconic status of the word of the Qur'an. The vertical letter-forms provide a visual balance to the horizontal elongation but for the time being they are not the focus. Other features of the script which characterise the style include a relatively wide and even spacing of the letters along the lines and of the lines on the page; a typical horizontal format for the text area and page; few or no original letter-points, and a regular visual rhythm. These leaves from the same manuscript were sold in these rooms, 9 April 2006, lot 9; 24 October 2007, lot 8 and 19 April 2007, lot 4. Other related leaves and manuscripts are as follows: Qaimwey, Musée des Arts Islamiques (Carthage, no.503); Nasr D. Khalil Collection, London (Déroche 1992, no.21); 1 of 43 folios exhibited in Berlin 2006 in the exhibition Ink and Gold (Fraser and Kwatowski, no.7); Sotheby's, 29 April 1994, lots 15 & 16; 15 October 1997, lots 2 & 3, Bernard Quarat, lot 121, lot 4.

This leaf originates from the same manuscript as those exhibited at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin during the Ink and Gold Exhibition (see Fraser and Kwatowski 2006, pg.101, cat.81). A luxury manuscript made in North Africa when Qur'an production was at its apogee. These folios are recognisable from their strong and disciplined hand, as well as the exaggerated spacing that can be seen here. They are also distinguishable by the numbering of the folios at the top and bottom corners, and in the lower corner, as seen on this page, and in those displayed at the Museum für Islamische Kunst. Other sections from this Qur'an are in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (James 1981). The Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran (Ms. 4289 Linga 1976, no.5), and the Pera Museum, Istanbul.

Other folios from this Qur'an displaying these features have come to auction, including a leaf bearing the illuminated heading of Surat al-Fatiha, sold in these rooms 9 April 2008, lot 15 and a leaf of the Surat Nuh sold in these rooms, 24 October 2002, lot 4.