

# FRANSES

HISTORIC TAPESTRIES CARPETS TEXTILES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Dutch Tapestry in the Golden Age 1590-1650

Baroque Masterpieces from the Northern Netherlands  
October 19th - December 14th 2007

Timed to coincide with the Metropolitan Museum's landmark October exhibition *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*. The Franses exhibition has two objectives: to present an exceptional group of Dutch Baroque tapestries which have never been exhibited in the USA before. To challenge the idea that masterpieces of Western tapestry are all in museums and no longer available on the market.

It is widely appreciated that during the seventeenth century in the Dutch Republic there was a golden age of creativity in the visual arts; it is less known that this extended to tapestry. Quite apart from the exceptional and rapidly growing prosperity of this maritime powerhouse, developments in the visual arts were given further impetus by waves of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands. From the third quarter of the seventeenth century religious persecution and intolerance, high taxation and economic chaos led to a mass migration of more than a hundred of thousand people who sought new homes and a stable future in the North. Like many immigrants they were distinguished by their energy, ambition and innovation. Many of these were highly skilled craftsmen - others were artists or wealthy entrepreneurs. The northern towns competed to attract these valuable citizens with encouragement and official concessions or subsidies.

One of the leading beneficiaries of this policy was François Spiering from Antwerp who was given a convent in Delft for his extensive workshops. Like all other great tapestry makers, he appreciated the importance of having an outstanding cartoon or model from which to weave. He arranged for Van Mander - father and son - and Vroom to design the cartoons. For thirty years, from 1590 until 1620, Spiering produced the greatest tapestries in Europe, with international clients ranging from the King of Sweden and Sir Walter Raleigh to the Dutch government - the States General.

The eleven works (collected over twenty years) are the largest group of Dutch weaving ever seen in the US, and include five pieces by François Spiering. These include an extraordinary Romance tapestry depicting Amadis of Gaule, the companion to which was acquired last year by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, (and is being exhibited in their Threads of Splendour show) and The Triumph of David (believed to represent the Governor or Stadtholder Prince Maurits of Orange's triumph over the Spanish) the most important Dutch tapestry remaining in private hands, also a rare 'cartouche' tapestry and a unique 'chimney piece' tapestry or 'overdracht.'

Also included are works from the second generation of Dutch weavings after 1625, when Prince Frederic Henry became Governor and when distinctively Dutch tapestry table carpets, with their naturalistic flowers including tulips, and cushions and valences were produced - depicted frequently in the paintings of Vermeer and other masters.

In the USA these works have been acquired by, among others, Stanford White, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Lord Duveen.

### **PRESS RECEPTION: Thursday October 18th, from 12 noon-8pm**

A full-colour catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

Viewing hours: Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

For additional information/images please contact:

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