

Press Release

**CHRISTIE'S**

**For Immediate Release**

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**A THOROUGHLY MODERN MONET BRIDGES THE OLD  
AND THE NEW THIS MAY AT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK**



**Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale  
May 6, 2008**

**New York** – Christie's International is delighted to announce the sale of Claude Monet's *Le Pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil*, one of the greatest Impressionist pictures left in private hands. Painted in 1873, *Le Pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil* is a rare and luminous masterpiece of high Impressionist style and a hugely significant work in Monet's oeuvre (estimate on request). The work will be sold

during Christie's New York Impressionist and Modern Art Evening sale on May 6. The picture may break the world auction record for the most well-known and sought-after Impressionist painter.

Guy Bennett, Head of Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's Americas, says: "This is the truly exceptional Impressionist picture the market has been waiting for. Appearing at auction for the first time in a generation, and with a highly compelling subject matter, this masterpiece by Monet will provide a cornerstone of our May Evening Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art. Comprising all the elements of a great Impressionist work, the picture will attract both private and institutional collectors. Its sale will be a great moment for the market and will provide a sturdy barometer for works that truly are the best of the best."

Argenteuil was a picturesque suburban town just outside Paris and its surroundings provided this central motif for Impressionism. In the early 1870s, Monet, Renoir and Sisley all painted in the town, giving rise to its status as the *locus classicus* of Impressionism. At that time, it had become a center for pleasure-boating by the affluent Parisian middle classes, and the sailing boats in the picture allude to this new status. Monet rented a house in the town, close to where this picture was painted.

The painting is full of the novelty and drama of Monet's fascination with modernity and art. The scene is dominated by the railroad bridge, spanning the image from left to right and stretching the already elongated horizontal canvas. Although monumental and industrial, the bridge is not an unwanted, obtrusive element in the composition, but is seemingly admired by the bystanders on the left bank.

A testimony to modern engineering, the bridge at Argenteuil, with the two trains running over it, the boats passing underneath, and the men on the footpath, provide motifs that celebration the arrival of the modern, of progress and of man's ability to shape the future. The work conveys an idealistic view of the calm union of the old and the new, the rural and the industrial, of work and of pleasure. It is a painting that speaks of the new challenges and hopes of a society embracing the modern with confidence and optimism.

**Auction: Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale**  
**Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries, New York**

**May 6, 2008**  
**May 2 - 6**

#### **International Exhibition**

- Christie's London: February 22-27
- Hyatt Hotel, Hong Kong: April 4-5



### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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*Images available on request*

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