

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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**A RICH ARRAY OF VICTORIAN & BRITISH IMPRESSIONIST ART
INCLUDING DRAWINGS & WATERCOLOURS
AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN DECEMBER**



London – Christie's are pleased to present a superb array of *Victorian & British Impressionist Art Including Drawings & Watercolours* to the international market on Wednesday 16 December 2009. The sale is led by *Eve*, a magnificent and monumental painting by **Solomon J. Solomon**, R.A., P.R.B.A. (1860-1927), which is estimated to realise between £700,000 and £1,000,000, *illustrated above*. Offered at auction by Ealing Council, who will use all proceeds of the sale to support culture and heritage in the Borough, this is the first opportunity for collectors, institutions and dealers around the globe to acquire the work. Further highlights range from *An English Merrymaking in olden times* by **William Powell Frith** R.A. (1819-1909) (estimate: £300,000–500,000), which is offered for the first time in over a century from the renowned collection formed in the late 19th Century by the 5th Earl of Carysfort, at Elton, Cambridgeshire; six lots by **Henry Herbert La Thangue**, R.A. (1859-1929) from *The Nightingale Collection*, led by *In the Orchards, Haylands, Graffham*, (estimate: £300,000-500,000) and nine works, predominantly watercolours, by **Sir Alfred James Munnings** P.R.A. (1878-1959) from *The Colonel F.E. Walter Collection*, which are led by the oil *Horses and gypsy Caravans* (estimate: £200,000-300,000). Elsewhere, in addition to Sporting and Scottish art, key lots include *Our Lady of Promise (La Madonna di Promessa)* by **Edward Reginald Frampton** (1870-1923) (estimate: £120,000-180,000); *The Morning ride* by **Dame Laura Knight**, R.A. (1877-1970) (estimate: £150,000-250,000) and the recently discovered *Portrait of Sir Alfred Munnings* by **Harold Knight**, R.A. (1874-1961) (estimate: £30,000-50,000).

Solomon J. Solomon, who studied at the Royal Academy Schools, the Munich Academy and École des Beaux Arts, was stylistically influenced by his teacher Alexandre Cabanel and Frederic, Lord Leighton. An artist known for meticulous execution, his dramatic mythological and biblical works were carefully researched and, as demonstrated by the present canvas, often on a very grand scale; *Eve* measures 122 x 56 in. / 310 x 142cm. Regarded as an innovative portrait painter, Solomon's roll call of well-known sitters included King George V, Queen Mary and Prince Edward (later King Edward VIII). One of the very first Jewish Royal Academicians, Solomon went on to become the President of the Royal Society of British Artists. Many of his key works are held in public institutions such as The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and the Art Gallery of New South Wales; *Eve* is Solomon's last significant work to come to the market. The painting depicts the biblical subject of Eve's miraculous creation from a rib-bone of the sleeping Adam (Genesis, Chapter 2, versus 21-23); a theme which has been frequently explored in western art, with notable examples including Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling and Raphael's Loggia of the Vatican.

The Royal Academy was one of the only venues where the public gaze could legally fall upon the nude female form and works such as Solomon's idealised *Eve*, which is charged with melodrama and seductive beauty, were very popular indeed. The Ben Uri exhibition catalogue of 1990 noted that *Eve*, like Solomon's *Judgment of Paris* 1891, would have positioned the artist as a 'serious contender in the competition to paint the most beautiful nude.' Boasting dynamic, painterly, brushstrokes and glowing with a sumptuously rich palette, *Eve* exemplifies both Solomon's ability to capture the luminous tonality of human flesh and also the 'bravura' of his work which is stylistically reminiscent of salon painting.

Victorian paintings were often allegorical, utilising symbolism to convey moral messages, with the resulting works thought to reflect the refined sensibility of the artist himself. Wings, as seen in *Eve*, were a repeated symbol in Solomon's *oeuvre*, such as *An Allegory* and *The Awakening*. These wings, which Solomon's daughter Mary noted were part of her father's studio props, can be 'read' as signaling spiritual value, which was central to the Victorian focus on the *Sublime*.



An English Merrymaking in Olden Times, 1847 by **William Powell Frith** (estimate: £300,000-500,000), illustrated left, is unusually well documented, having been detailed in the artist's autobiography in 1887. Offered fresh to the market and with excellent provenance, this painting was originally exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847. It met considerable acclaim from Turner, who considered it to be 'beautifully drawn, well composed, and well coloured' and *The Times*, which reported it to be 'one of the happiest pictures of rustic enjoyment that can be conceived.'

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Motivated by a need to execute a work of notable importance, which would justify his election to the position of Associate of the Royal Academy two years earlier, Frith drew literary inspiration from Milton's poem *L'Allegro*. Bringing the scene forwards by 100 years from the original setting, the artist illustrates aspects of the poem whilst retaining the compositional signature as essentially his own invention. A charming scene set on a village green, the focal group is balanced with smaller vignettes and anecdotal details. Stylistically, Frith was keen to convey the importance in which he held studying directly from nature. The picture is being offered by the heirs of the 5th Earl of Carysfort who formed a distinguished collection of Victorian and Old Master pictures, two of which were exhibited in the memorable *Treasure Houses of Britain* exhibition at the National Gallery of Art Washington and the Royal Academy London in 1985.

The group of six lots by **Henry Herbert La Thangue**, consist of five paintings and nine works on paper. They were amassed by Moses Nightingale, a businessman who was a committed patron of the artist. Considered to be ‘brilliant’ by his friend George Clausen, La Thangue’s talent was recognised by Frederic, Lord Leighton who, as President, wrote him a letter of introduction to the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where he studied under Jean-Léon Gerome. Displaying the hallmarks of his French training, La Thangue’s works celebrate the play of sunlight on his chosen subjects.



As exemplified by *In the Orchards, Haylands, Graffham* (estimate: £300,000-500,000) illustrated left, La Thangue focused on rural idylls and utilised local people as models. The farms and orchards of Lavington Down and Petworth, in West Sussex, provided the locations for his observations of the many stages within processes such as harvesting apple crops. This resulted in works which act as a metaphor for rural harmony in the face of industrialisation. Noted for his enviable ability to anchor an entire composition with a single figure’s pose, the other figurative works offered include *Girl with Jars* (estimate: £100,000-150,000) and nine

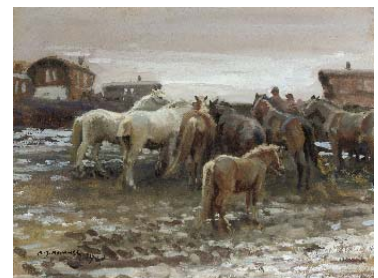


rare charcoal studies on paper of *A Girl with a Jar*, offered as one lot (estimate: £2,000-3,000) example illustrated right. The remaining three works all celebrate local topography be it in Italy, Spain or France: *Veronese shepherdess, Lake Garda* (estimate: £30,000-50,000); *Moonrise in Spain* (estimate: £10,000-15,000); *Provençal Lane, Martigues* (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and *A hillside village in Provence* (estimate: £5,000-8,000).



A fellow artist who much admired La Thangue was **Sir Alfred Munnings**. Nine early works by Munnings, are offered from *The Colonel F.E. Walter Collection*, comprising eight superb watercolours and one stunning oil, *Horses and gypsy caravans*, 1911 (estimate: £200,000-300,000) illustrated left. It is very rare for such a collection by Munnings to come to the market. Executed shortly after the artist’s return from studying in Paris, the spontaneous, more fluid style employed throughout this group reflects the influence of the Impressionist techniques he had observed

there. These works were largely composed during his travels through East Anglia with a band of horses and ponies, a caravan and grooms, which he stationed and painted upon finding a location which inspired him. Providing evocative documents of country life pre-World War I, the watercolours featured range from *The Camp*, 1911 (estimate: £20,000-30,000); *The fringe of the fair*, 1911 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) illustrated right; *When the wind blows cold*, 1910 (estimate: £15,000-25,000) and *The road to the fair* (estimate: £25,000-35,000), to *A foal grazing, another horse behind* (estimate: £4,000-6,000); *A country Lane* (estimate: £3,000-5,000); *Homeward bound* (estimate: £4,000-6,000) and *A lady with a fan* (estimate: £1,000-1,500).



Munnings settled in Newlyn, Cornwall in 1911, where he painted *Polperro* (estimate: £15,000-20,000) in which he explores the challenge of capturing the impression of the evening lights on the shimmering harbour water. Works by other Newlyn ‘school’ artists include **Dame Laura Knight’s** atmospheric watercolour *The Morning Ride* (estimate: £150,000-250,000) illustrated left, which is offered for sale for the first time in over 40 years. An important *plein air* work, it is executed on an impressively large scale. Imbued with great charm, the scene is both nostalgic and gentle in content, style and tone. The second, dramatic Knight is *Storm over our town*,

Malvern (estimate; £40,000-60,000). The third, *Le Carnival* (estimate: £20,000-30,000), is a joyful ballet scene; the canvas which, for nearly a century, has covered the recently discovered, remarkably fresh, **Harold Knight** portrait of the young *Sir Alfred James Munnings Reading* (estimate: £30,000-50,000), for full details please see separate press release.



The Grand Parade, Bertram Mills Circus at Olympia, 1932 (estimate: £100,000-150,000) is an important early work by one of Britain's leading Post-Impressionists, **Edward Seago**, R.W.S., R.B.A. (1910-1974) illustrated left. It was painted at a time when the artist was fully immersed in circus life; having been captivated by the atmosphere, colour and romance of the circus ring. A work with a most appropriate provenance, it was given by the artist to Bertram Mills and has subsequently belonged to two of the most important circus names of the later 20th

Century: Jimmy Chipperfield and most recently Gerry Cottle, who is offering it for sale to raise funds for a new, spectacular circus. Painted on a monumental scale, the work gives a sense of the grandeur and glamour of Bertram Mill's Christmas season at Olympia which was attended by the Royal Family.

Elsewhere, amongst the other rich and varied works offered is **E.W. Frampton's** large and impressive Victorian painting *Our Lady of Promise* (£120,000-180,000); *Four Loves I found, A Woman, a Child, A Horse and a Hound*, 1922 by **George Spencer Watson**, R.A., R.W.S., R.O.I. (1869-1934) (estimate: £100,000-150,000), which is on the market for the first time, having passed from the artist by decent to the late Mary Spencer Watson, and the highly emotive **Sir Walter Langley**, R.I. (1852-1922) watercolour *Waiting for the boats* (estimate: £15,000-20,000).

Topographical works on paper, providing beautiful depictions of regional and foreign climes, include a strong section focusing on Scotland such as *The Bridge near Dalmailly, Argyll* by **Myles Birkett Foster**, R.W.S. (1825-1899) (estimate: £7,000-10,000); **John Ruskin**, H.R.W.S. (1819-1900) *The Castle Rock, Edinburgh* (estimate: £6,000-8,000); *Edinburgh from Calton Hill* by **Edward Alfred Angelo Goodall**, R.W.S. (1819-1908) (estimate: £4,000-6,000) and *Head of the West Bow, Edinburgh* by **Louise Rayner** (1832-1924) (estimate: £4,000-6,000). Amongst the other examples are six works by **Edward Lear** (1812-1888): *Philae Egypt*, 1854 (estimate: £15,000-20,000); *The Temple of Isis on the Island of Philae, Egypt*, 1854 (estimate: £12,000-18,000); *The Pass of Tyrana, Albania*, 1851 (estimate: £15,000-20,000); *Eze Côte d'Azur, France*, 1865 (estimate: £8,000-12,000) and *Lake Thun with Schloß Oberhofen* (estimate: £3,000-5,000).

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Images available on request

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Sale dates and public viewing: *Victorian & British Impressionist Art Including Drawings & Watercolours*

Viewing: 11 - 16 December 2009: Christie's London, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT

Sale: 16 December 2009: Christie's London, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT

***For further details on Ealing Council's Heritage and Culture Programme please contact:**

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