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FROM FIGURATION TO ABSTRACTION:

The Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale, Christie's London 2013

- WINDOWS INTO THE HEARTS OF **MODIGLIANI, PICASSO & CLAUDEL**:
THE LOVERS, AFFAIRS AND MUSES
- DEVELOPMENTS IN IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART:
WORKS BY **RENOIR, KANDINSKY AND MATISSE**



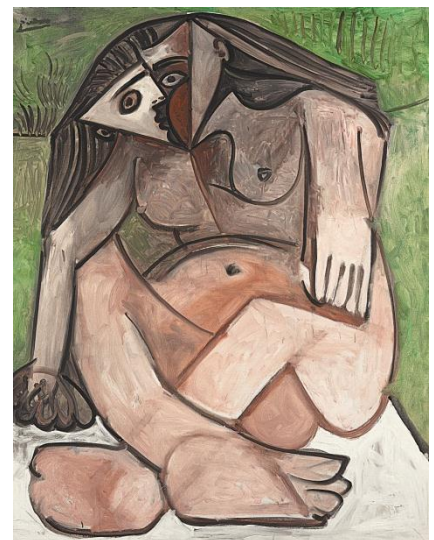
London – Christie's *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* in London on 6 February 2013 marks the start of the first major auctions of the year, meeting current market demands with a particularly strong offering of high quality, rare works. This sale builds on the strength of the international market in 2012 which saw discerning, informed and passionate collectors celebrate the best and rarest Impressionist and Modern Art. The upcoming auction is led by *Jeanne Hébuterne (au chapeau)*, 1919, one of the acclaimed elegant and lyrical portraits that Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) created of his muse and lover (estimate: £16-22 million, *illustrated top centre*). The focused sale of 37 lots highlights the best of the Impressionist movement and the early avant-garde of the 20th century - from figuration to abstraction - with works by a roll call of the most important artists of the period including Renoir, Modigliani, Picasso, Kandinsky and Matisse. Estimates range from £200,000 to £22 million, with a pre-sale estimate of £67,470,000 to £99,710,000. Combined with *The Art of the Surreal* (separate release to follow) Christie's *Evening Auctions* on 6 February have a total pre-sale estimate of £97,870,000 to £145,830,000.

Jay Vincze, International Director and Head of The Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale, Christie's London: *"The market continues to demonstrate that a passion for art is key to many of the greatest acquisitions and collections. The highlights in this sale also point to the significant part which passion plays in many artists' greatest works: Modigliani's dramatically intense and brief romance with his common-law wife and the mother of his daughter Jeanne Hébuterne, which led to his lyrical portrait 'Jeanne Hébuterne (au chapeau)' - the top lot of the sale; Picasso's complex expression of his deep love for Marie-Thérèse Walter in 'Minotaure aveugle conduit par une petite fille' and the happiness his final love Jacqueline brought to his life, in 'Nu accroupi.' Buyers continue to be hungry for the best and rarest works of Impressionist and Modern art. We have ensured that this sale focuses on significant works by the most important artists and are proud to present a rich and focused offering which spans figuration to abstraction, presenting international collectors and institutions with rare and exciting opportunities."*

WINDOWS INTO THE HEARTS OF MODIGLIANI, PICASSO & CLAUDEL: THE LOVERS, AFFAIRS AND MUSES

- It is a tribute to the quality of *Jeanne Hébuterne (au chapeau)*, 1919, by **Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920)** that it was included in the small posthumous retrospective of Modigliani's works held at the XIII Biennale in Venice in 1922, the first such show to take place in his home country (estimate: £16-22 million, *illustrated page one top centre*). The portrait is filled with grace and poise, accentuated by the sinuous curve of Jeanne's neck and the gentle undulation of her body. These qualities point to why some of Modigliani's pictures from this late phase in his short but dramatic and influential career are referred to as 'Mannerist.' *Jeanne Hébuterne (au chapeau)* is a strikingly modern work of art; an idealised image of the artist's lover. Modigliani used portraiture as a means to explore an idealised aspect of humanity, an image of internal as well as external likeness. Jeanne serves as the Muse for an insightful and lyrical exploration of the human spirit, created using a subtle blending of colours that radiate a sense of health. Looking at Modigliani's life and at his work, it becomes apparent that the two were diametrically opposed in terms of atmosphere. The serene calm of *Jeanne Hébuterne (au chapeau)* contrasts starkly with the legendary tales of drunkenness and bohemianism with which Modigliani is now so often associated. Perhaps his works provided a balance to his turbulent lifestyle. There is a near-religious sense of grace instilled in this image of his final great love, her hand raised like that of the Madonna. Modigliani created relatively few paintings during his short life – during which he was increasingly accepted as a pioneer in the world of modern art - and, in comparison with those of his counterparts, his works rarely come to the market.

- *Nu accroupi*, 1960, by **Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)** is offered from the property of a private American collection (estimate: £3-5million, *illustrated right*). During the course of 1960, when Pablo Picasso was staying increasingly at Château de Vauvenargues, he painted a succession of pictures which explored the theme of the female nude. Painted on 14 February 1960 – Valentine's Day - *Nu accroupi* shows a woman sitting with crossed legs against a verdant backdrop; she appears to be a modernised representation of the bather. The painting invokes similarities to works by Picasso's artistic predecessors – from Rembrandt's masterpiece *Bathsheba* in the Louvre and Lucas Cranach's picture on the biblical subject which Picasso used as a springboard for erotic adventures and variations, to



Edouard Manet's controversial *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Pierre-Auguste Renoir's explorations of the bather and the squatting woman's presence in Eugène Delacroix's *Les femmes d'Alger*. Picasso's diagram-like rendering of the profile, shown with the pared-back, Cubistic triangle of the nose and the curves of chin and lips facing the opposite direction, relates this picture to the portraits that Picasso painted of Jacqueline Roque, the woman whom he would marry the following year. Delacroix's *Les femmes d'Alger* intrigued Picasso in part due to the striking similarity between the female's profile and the features of Jacqueline herself, who appeared a form of reincarnation of this character. Picasso often used this glyph-like rendering of Jacqueline's profile in order to show one side of the face in shadow, a darkness that hinted at her inner duality. This is shown in *Nu accroupi* in the contrast between the two sides of the woman's face. While this may provide an insight into Jacqueline's character, the cross-legged posture of the nude recalls her habit of sitting with her feet up, often with her arms hugging her legs, captured in some photographs from Vauvenargues and the Villa La Californie, adding another personal dimension to *Nu accroupi*.

The aspect of autobiography in *Nu accroupi* is heightened by what appear to be its references to Picasso's own universe, and his older works, as if Picasso was casting an eye back over his own career. With its bold, vigorous brushwork and the earthy ochre and green, *Nu accroupi* takes the legacy of those important earlier works and reveals an artist not only creating a retrospective of his own oeuvre, but also attacking his own legacy as well as those of Rembrandt, Delacroix, Manet and Renoir, re-establishing his avant-garde credentials against the backdrop of the post-war art world.



- *Minotaure aveugle conduit par une petite fille*, 1934, by **Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)** is offered for the first time in a generation from an important European collection, where it has been since the 1980s (estimate: £2.8-3.5 million, *illustrated left*). The artist's greatest biographer John Richardson noted: '[Picasso] identifies above all with the Minotaur, this mythological creature who was half bull and half man, to whom maidens had to be sacrificed. However, Picasso's Minotaur is not always a monster; on the contrary, he is a poignant creature, a victim like himself of misfortune and tragedy - blinded

by fate and love for the little girl - Marie-Thérèse, of course - who leads him around.' Dating from the pinnacle of his involvement with and exploration of the theme of the Minotaur, this rare work on paper on the subject is a showcase for Picasso's exquisite draughtsmanship. The flashes of colour add to the overall effect, introducing the lapis blue of the Mediterranean as well as the brown of the bull's head, the red of the girl's clothes and the vibrant green of her flowers. The profile of the girl unmistakably echoes the features of Picasso's young lover, Marie-Thérèse Walter, who since the late 1920s had been his Muse, ushering a new sensuality into his works and resulting in many of the flowing, fluid depictions of female figures that remain among his most celebrated works. During the mid-1930s, when Picasso's marriage to Olga was causing great problems, in part because of his relationship with *Marie-Thérèse*, he presented the Minotaur increasingly as a tortured victim of persecution and pursuit, wounded, gored or blinded by the world around it.

- *Le peintre*, 1967, by **Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)** is a further allegory of the artist, through which he looks at the continuing influence of Velázquez and Rembrandt who was obsessed with the depiction of self; Picasso

picks up on this and makes the subject his own, resulting in a very powerful painting of a bearded and ruffed figure working at his easel (estimate: £2.5-4.5 million). It is offered for the first time in four decades from the property of a private collector.

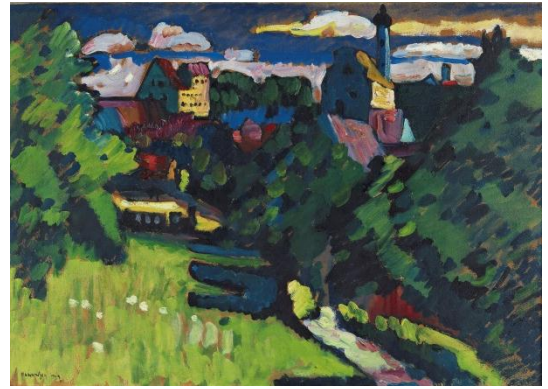
- *L'abandon* is an early cast of one of **Camille Claudel's (1864-1943)** masterpieces and most-recognised sculptures (estimate: £700,000-900,000, *illustrated right*). It originated in a large-scale sculpture created at the height of her involvement with Auguste Rodin, having previously studied under his supervision. They shared a tumultuous relationship which has been immortalised in books and in film. A new film is being released in 2013 with Juliette Binoche as the sculptress looking back over her career and life; the Musée Camille Claudel is also due to be opened in her native Nogent-sur-Seine in 2013. The original theme of the large-scale sculpture from which *L'abandon* is derived was called *Çacountala*, and was based on a Sanskrit play by Kalidasa, in which a couple is separated by an enchantment. Claudel shows the moment of reunion and rediscovery. While Claudel was clearly influenced by the teachings of Rodin, two decades her senior, he appears to have also been spurred on by her works. He would later create compositions showing male figures kneeling before women, echoing *L'abandon*, including *L'éternelle idole*, made by 1891. The sale also features a work by Rodin *Buste de Victor Hugo*, 1883 (estimate: £200,000-300,000). A further important work by a female artist – which feature relatively rarely in Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sales – is *Après le déjeuner*, 1881 by Berthe Morisot (estimate: £1.5 - 2.5million).



DEVELOPMENTS IN IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART: WORKS BY RENOIR, KANDINSKY & MATISSE

- *L'ombrelle*, 1878, by **Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)** was painted during the height of Impressionism (estimate: £4-7million, *illustrated page one top left*). In this radiant painting, Pierre-Auguste Renoir depicts the quintessential Impressionist subject of the fashionably attired *Parisienne* within a scene of abundantly flowering nature. A celebration of both female elegance and natural beauty, the subject provided bountiful opportunities for Renoir to deconstruct form and experiment with palette. The variegated brushwork consisting of thick and swirling impasto and small dabs of spontaneous and audaciously applied paint, make *L'ombrelle* one of the artist's most experimental works of the latter part of the decade. The picture exemplifies Renoir's ideal of harmoniously integrating a figure into an outdoor setting, and of capturing the myriad effects of light and shade in a range of dazzling colours. *L'ombrelle* relates to a sequence of exuberantly painted canvases depicting women in garden settings that Renoir executed in the years immediately following the very first Impressionist exhibition of 1874. Having first explored the theme of the woman with an umbrella or parasol as early as 1867, in *Lise à l'ombrelle*, these later works may have been inspired by the example of Claude Monet, whom Renoir had visited at his home in Argenteuil during the summer months of 1873 to 1875. Coming to the market for the first time in almost 25 years, *L'ombrelle* has excellent provenance, having been owned by Erwin Davis, one of the earliest American collectors of Impressionism, who lived in New York and donated two of Edouard Manet's pictures to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as early as 1889. It was subsequently owned by the Boston collector and philanthropist, Robert Treat Paine II, who bequeathed many significant works to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

- The landscapes that **Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)** painted in Murnau between 1908 and 1909 reflect the first full flowering of his art and mark the beginning of the artist's epic pioneering journey into abstraction. His 1909 painting *Murnau - Ansicht mit Burg, Kirche und Eisenbahn*, epitomises the way that he magnified and intensified colour to the point where it begins to float freely and operate as a dynamic, abstract and interactive pictorial entity on the painting's surface (estimate: £5-7 million, *illustrated right*).



Kandinsky's works from these years are the first in Kandinsky's oeuvre to demonstrate his independence from the influences of Van Gogh, Gauguin and French Fauvism and the emergence of a new and wholly unique vision. Near-autonomous colour set deliberately against contrasting dark shadows presents a near panoramic overview of the leafy skyline of the small and sleepy Bavarian town of Murnau as seen from the rear of the house that Kandinsky shared with his lover and fellow pioneering artist Gabriele Münter. Kandinsky's discovery of Murnau proved the catalyst for his liberation of colour from form; it also prompted his renewed affection for folk art and inspired his profound sense of the 'spiritual.' Heightening his use of colour to a level of expressionistic intensity, and broadening his brushstrokes to the point where each mark takes on a formal function of its own within the work, Kandinsky's Murnau landscapes rapidly grew to become increasingly abstract statements about the nature of painting itself.

- The final flowering of **Kandinsky's** abstraction is presented in *Balancement*, 1942 (estimate: £5-8 million, *illustrated page one top centre*). The paintings that Wassily Kandinsky made in Paris during the Second World War are arguably the finest of his career. Complete and fascinating worlds of abstraction seemingly teeming with strange organic, biomorphic or microcosmic life, they mark the culmination of the great twentieth century pioneer of abstraction's epic, life-long journey into the world of non-objectivity. *Balancement* is one of the very last large-scale works on canvas that the artist produced in Paris during the Second World War; it is rare for such a canvas to have remained in a private collection, with many now in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. It is a large-scale reworking in colour of an earlier drawing that Kandinsky had made in 1941 and evidently wished to develop in scale and colour. Kandinsky's use of predominantly pastel colours and a subtle background can be seen to reflect his intuitive response to the different light of Paris. For the first time, the subject of his art appeared to be a vision of life and nature as a complete and comprehensive entity discernible in all its fascinating glory and complexity beneath the outward veil of materialism. The scale, grandeur and originality of Kandinsky's late abstraction established him once again as the most radical and forward-thinking abstract artist of the period.

- *Jeune fille à la moresque, robe verte*, 1921, by **Henri Matisse (1869-1954)** dates from near the beginning of his time in Nice, a period that would last for the large part of the following two decades (estimate: £2.5-3.5 million, *illustrated below*). In his Nice paintings, Matisse abandoned some of the rigidity that had marked many of his more recent pictures, instead invoking a world of light, colour and even eroticism. This explosive celebration of the *joie de vivre* marked a welcome contrast to the tension that had pervaded France during the First World War. These paintings were the result of a new development in his work, combining opulent ornamentation, which evoked the realm of the senses, with structures that allowed him to explore the potential of colour both in its own right and also to convey a sense of space. Matisse was exploring the visual

language of representation by assembling a composition that allowed him to highlight dual purpose - in this case of the diagonals - creating the fictive sense of space while also highlighting the complex yet coherent patterns of paint upon the picture surface. It was executed near the beginning of Matisse's collaboration with Henriette, one of his most important muses who introduced a lithe theatricality to Matisse's works and often took on the role of the Odalisque. In this work she is in costume, wearing the billowing *gandoura*, leaning on the windowsill next to a bowl of flowers, turning her head towards the viewer, and by extension, the painter. This lends the picture an incredible sense of immediacy, through which Matisse plunges the viewer into the sensual world of the South. These aspects combined to create the 'synthesis' that Matisse was seeking. This picture occupies a seminal place within the artist's oeuvre, having featured in a number of important collections over the years, including those of Marcel Kapferer, Lillie P. Bliss and Ralph F. Colin among others.



- *La danse*, 1938, by **Henri Matisse (1869-1954)**, with its collaged 'cut-out' borders is one of his very earliest works to point toward his growing fascination with 'cut outs' and the potential of a medium that went on to occupy him for the last decade and a half of his life, constituting some of his most recognisable works (estimate: £2.2-3.4 million, *illustrated left*). At the centre of *La danse* is an exquisitely-rendered gouache reprisal of one of Matisse's most acclaimed masterpieces, the 1910 oil painting of the same title which is now in the

Hermitage, St. Petersburg. Created for Matisse's Russian patron Sergei Shchukin, the oil remains one of his most acclaimed masterpieces and saw the artist returning to a theme he had explored the previous year in a painting now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Notes to Editors: Please click [here](#) to view the e-catalogue for the full Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale.

Pre-sale estimates for Impressionist, Modern & Surrealist works offered in the February auctions:

<i>Impressionist & Modern Evening Auction</i>	6 February	£67,470,000-99,710,000
<i>The Art of the Surreal Evening Auction</i>	6 February	£30,880,000-46,870,000
<i>Impressionist & Modern Works on Paper</i>	7 February	£5,366,500-7,858,500
<i>Impressionist & Modern Day Sale</i>	7 February	£10,006,000-14,636,000
<i>Impressionist & Modern, South Kensington</i>	8 February	£1,493,800-2,175,500
TOTAL:		£115,216,300-171,250,000

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2012 that totaled £2.2 billion/\$3.5 billion. 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions 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 \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £413.4 million/ \$661.5 million in the first half of 2012, an increase of 53% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth 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. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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