

# CHRISTIE'S

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## CHRISTIE'S LAUNCHES SPRING PHOTOGRAPHS SALES IN NEW YORK WITH THE LANDMARK SALE OF *the deLIGHTed eye: Modernist Masterworks from a Private Collection*



Left: László Moholy-Nagy, *Fotogramm*, 1925, \$200,000-300,000

Right: Alvin Langdon Coburn, 'The Eagle' (Vortograph), 1917, \$200,000-300,000

New York – On April 4, 2013, Christie's will commence its spring Photographs sales in New York with ***the deLIGHTed eye: Modernist Masterworks from a Private Collection***. This extraordinary collection of 70 vintage prints executed mainly between 1900 and 1925 was formed by a private collector based in South America with his advisor, Jill Rose, who later became Vice President of the International Center of Photography. In building the collection, it was their intent to focus on photographers who had been keenly influenced by the artistic revolution in Western Europe at the turn of the century, and who in turn profoundly affected the history of the medium. The sale expects to realize in excess of \$5.2 million.

*"I love my collections as living beings and that is why I have always named them. I call this one "the deLIGHTed eye." One reason for the name arose from the fascination I have for photographs' new and ingenious use of light, so very much freer than in contemporary painting. In addition, these photographs have delighted my eyes. And they have not only given me joy but have also enlightened me about today's art. That is my perspective and these are the experiences that I would like to share with the viewer of "The deLIGHTed eye." – Carlos Alberto Cruz, from his essay "the deLIGHTed eye" (International Center of Photography exhibition catalogue, 1985)*

The collection initially took its form when the collector and Rose put together a 'wish list' of elite photographers and gathered reproductions of ideal images by this influential group. Using this list as a guide, they acquired extraordinary photographic masterpieces, their first purchase being a unique photogram by László Moholy-Nagy from 1925 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) – *pictured above, left*. Additional highlights include prints by Eugène Atget, Constantin Brancusi, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Man Ray, Christian Schad, Edward Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Weston.



## Edward Weston

*Nude, 1925*, palladium print (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) – *pictured left*, is one of Edward Weston's finest and most important nudes, yet very little-known. A very rare print, it was probably only published once – on the November 1980 cover of an auction catalogue for a New York Photographs sale. The sitter is Miriam Lerner, a young Los Angeles socialite, with whom Weston began a passionate affair just two weeks after he arrived in California after leaving Tina Modotti in Mexico.

## Edward Steichen

*Bricks, c. 1922*, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) – *pictured right*, is one of a highly-prized series that the artist made of the view from his apartment window on West 86th Street in New York. It is a rare example of Steichen working within the Modernist idiom, where his viewpoint screened out as many extraneous details as possible, leaving the viewer to focus on the strong vertical shaft between the two walls and the pattern of bricks. The photograph owes a debt to Alfred Stieglitz's *From My Window* series done at '291'.



## Alfred Stieglitz

Alfred Stieglitz was the single most influential figure in the development of early 20th century American photography. He guided the remarkable transition from Pictorialism to Modernism and made New York City an important center for both. *From the Back Window - '291' - N.Y., Summer 1914*, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) – *pictured left*, is an important example of how Stieglitz's style changed in a four-year period that included the 1913 Armory Show, and his subsequent departure from Pictorialism. *From the Back Window* can be regarded as a transitional work – an incorporation of the influences from the Armory Show evident in Stieglitz's new work. His series of photographs from '291' are among his most prized works, each a formal and objective study in delineating shapes and expressing structure.

## Alvin Langdon Coburn

Alvin Langdon Coburn is represented by a Vortograph titled *The Eagle, 1917*, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) – *pictured on page one, right*, which was originally part of a larger group in the collection of George Eastman House, Rochester, New York. Coburn's career as a Vorticist photographer began in London in 1917 and lasted for only about a month. Anxious to disprove the common notion that the camera could not be truly abstract, he made 18 Vortographs which are now prized for their rarity, their power and the fact that they take abstraction just about as far as it can go in photography. The resulting images, exhibited at the Camera Club in London, prompted the Vorticist painter Ezra Pound to proclaim in his introduction for the exhibition catalogue that 'the camera is freed from reality.'



## Francis Bruguière

Francis Bruguière was of America's most innovative photographers. His cut-paper experiments compare in importance with Alvin Langdon Coburn's more famous Vortographs as pioneering examples of pure photographic abstractions. *Experiment from 'The Way,' c. 1925*, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) – *pictured right*, was taken by Bruguière in New York during the last year he worked on his first experimental film, *The Way*. The image is powerful, dramatic and macabre, with five overlapping views of the sitter's face wearing a frenzied expression and filling the frame.



## Constantin Brancusi

*Two Sculptures: 'Le Nouveau Né II', 1920 and 'L'Enfant Dormant', 1906, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$70,000-90,000) – pictured left, was one of a group of studies discovered in Paris in the late 1970s. One of the finest and most complex examples from the artist's large body of photographs, the print is in an unusually large format. The photograph is an exquisite document of conception and purpose, not simply a record of completed work.*



## Tina Modotti

This print of *Texture and Shadow*, palladium print (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) – pictured right, is the only one in private hands. The only other known print is in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Neither print was titled by Modotti, but her close friend, the journalist Carleton Beals, used this title when publishing the image in 1929. Dated between 1924 and 1926, the present image is the purest of Modotti's abstractions, a stunning juxtaposition of darkness, light and material.



## Man Ray

*Francis Picabia, Grande Vitesse, 1924, gelatin silver print (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) – pictured left, depicts the painter Francis Picabia and brilliantly captures the excitement that he felt when driving fast in what is probably his favorite Mercer. Picabia liked to have his friend Man Ray photograph him in extravagant cars. The image was published in *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1925.*



## Additional Highlights Include:



Man Ray, *Marcel Duchamp (Monte Carlo Banknote)*, 1921  
gelatin silver print on carte postale  
Estimate: \$200,000 – 300,000



Paul Strand, *Akeley Motion Picture Camera*, New York, 1922  
2 gelatin silver prints, flush-mounted back-to-back  
Estimate: \$250,000-\$350,000

Claude Cahun, *Self Portrait in Sailor's Hat*, 1920  
printing out print  
Estimate: \$40,000-60,000



Eugène Atget, *Tree Roots, St. Cloud*, c. 1915  
arrowroot print  
Estimate: \$50,000-70,000



Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Ringelnatter*, 1925  
gelatin silver print  
Estimate: \$60,000-80,000



František Drtikol, *Nude Abstraction*, c. 1924  
gelatin silver print  
Estimate: \$70,000-90,000



Adolph de Meyer, *Chrysanthemums*, c. 1907  
bromoil print  
Estimate: \$100,000-150,000



Andre Kertesz, *Chairs, Jardin de Luxembourg*, 1918  
gelatin silver print on carte postale  
Estimate: \$200,000-300,000



Man Ray, *Untitled Rayograph*, 1923  
gelatin silver print photogram  
Estimate: \$250,000-350,000

**PRESS CONTACT: Rebecca Riegelhaupt | +1 212 636 2680 | [rriegelhaupt@christies.com](mailto:rriegelhaupt@christies.com)**

#### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2012 that totaled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 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 totaled £631.3 million/\$1 billion in 2012, an increase of 26% on the same period last year.

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*\*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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