

# CHRISTIE'S

POST-SALE RELEASE | LONDON  
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## CHRISTIE'S EVENING SALE OF *IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART* REALISES

£ 85.7 million / \$146 million / €107.2 million

*JA – WAS? – BILD ('YES-WHAT?-PICTURE')*, 1920, BY KURT SCHWITTERS  
SMASHES PREVIOUS RECORD PRICE AT AUCTION FOR THE ARTIST, SELLING FOR  
£13,970,500 / \$23,777,791 / €17,463,125



**London** - The *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* took place on the evening of 24 June at Christie's London, realising £85,784,000 / \$146,004,368 / €107,230,000 and selling 67% by lot and 71% by value. The top price was paid for *Ja – Was? – Bild ('Yes-What?-Picture')*, 1920, by Kurt Schwitters which sold for £13,970,500 / \$23,777,791 / €17,463,125 setting a new world record price for the artist at auction (estimate: £4-6 million, *pictured above*). In total, 22 works of art sold for over £1 million / 32 for over \$1 million.

**Jay Vincze, International Director and Head of The Impressionist and Modern Art Department, Christie's London:** *"This sale was led by the exceptional 1920 Kurt Schwitters, 'Ja – Was? – Bild ('Yes-What?-Picture)'; which soared to extraordinary new heights achieving £13.9 million / \$23.7 million / €17.4 million and smashing the previous auction record price for the artist (£1.3 million / \$2 million). This work was part of the remarkable Langen Collection and follows on from the great success of the New York sales in May; the collection tonight achieved £20,335,000 / \$34,610,170 / €25,418,750 against a pre-sale estimate of £9.6-14.1 million. The auction as a whole presented an eclectic mix of exciting and rare impressionist, avant-garde and modernist works, many of which had not been seen on the market in a generation or more. Discerning collectors competed in a selective market for rare works by Matisse, Marc and Giacometti. Surrealism continues to excite new and established collectors across geographies and strong prices were achieved for Magritte, Ernst and Miró."*

### Further leading highlights of the sale:

- *Femme de Venise II* by **Alberto Giacometti**, which was conceived in 1956 and cast in the artist's lifetime, sold for £9,042,500/ \$15,390,335/ €11,303,125 (estimate: £8-12 million). Offered from an *Important Private Collection*, it displays an extraordinary and rare golden patina, the present cast belongs to the renowned series of sculptures by Giacometti known as the *Femmes de Venise*, comprising nine individual but closely related figures cast in bronze, which played a significant role in establishing Giacometti's fame and reputation as the most important sculptor of the Post-war era.
- *L'artiste et le modèle nu*, 1921, by **Henri Matisse** realised £6,802,500/ \$11,577,855/ €8,503,125 (estimate: £7-10 million). It shows one of the most celebrated subjects painted by Matisse: the artist and his model. Painted during the early years of Matisse's time in Nice, this picture provides a rich tapestry of colours and sings with a sense of light, warmth and sensuality. *L'artiste et le modèle nu* has featured in almost every major exhibition and monograph of Matisse's work from the last few decades and was also shown publicly only shortly after its execution; in part this is due to the relative scarcity of pictures showing the artist in the act of painting. Despite the extensive literature surrounding this picture, it has changed hands only a few times. It was first owned by the celebrated American collector John Quinn; it appears to have been acquired at his posthumous auction by Ruth and Harry Bakwin, in whose hands it remained for almost six decades until it was sold to the present owner in 1985.
- *Kinderbild (Katze hinter einem Baum)* (*Children's Picture (Cat behind a Tree)*), 1910-11, a very rare work by **Franz Marc**, sold for £6,242,500/ \$10,624,735/ €7,803,125 (estimate: £5-7 million). This work was offered among *Property from The Ahlers Collection*. It was formerly on long-term loan to the Sprengel Museum in Hannover and more recently to the Franz Marc Museum in Kochel am See One, where it was one of the most famous and popular paintings in the museum. This deceptively simple painting is one of Marc's first great painterly triumphs in what would turn out to be his lifelong search to create a sophisticated and vitalising art in which the basic elements of picture-making - form, colour and symbol - were to be synthesised into a single, harmonious and unified expression of spiritual resonance and joy.
- *Femme à la voix de rossignol dans la nuit*, executed in 1971, by **Joan Miró** achieved £4,562,500/ \$7,765,375/ €5,703,125 (estimate: £4-6 million). This work presents some of Joan Miró's most characteristic themes on a dramatic scale and with grand simplicity of means. Birds, women and the night had, since the very beginning of his career, constituted some of the most poetic ingredients of Miró's universe. In this work the artist's imagination forged a new scenario in which these three symbols are united in a single evocative image: the woman has stolen the nightingale's song, as the night envelops her.
- *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves* a watercolour and pencil on paper, painted in 1902-1906 by **Paul Cézanne** (1839-1906) sold for £3,554,500/ \$6,049,759/ €4,443,125 (estimate: £3.5 – 4.5 million). The commanding presence of Mont Sainte-Victoire, jutting high above the plain to the east of Aix, Cézanne's ancestral home, is the most prominent regional feature of the Provençal landscape. The rugged ridge line of this mountain's looming slopes was a compelling motif which Cézanne returned to throughout his career. The present watercolour is part of the last – and arguably the most important – series of landscapes that Cézanne painted of this seminal motif.
- *Les trois soeurs*, painted in 1963-1964, by **Balthus** (Balthasar Klossowski de Rola 1908-2001) realised £3,218,500/ \$5,477,887/ €4,023,125 (estimate: £3 - 4 million). This painting is the culmination of his work

on a subject that had occupied him for a decade. Depicting three sisters caught at the delicate crossroad of puberty, this painting brings an intimate, composed atmosphere to the pantheon of young girls of Balthus's art. Discarding the violence and tension that at times envelop the young girls who populate Balthus's art, *Les trois soeurs* aims at depicting that ineffable, unspoken bond which unites the sisters in the carefree days of their youth. At the same time, the picture is suffused with a light that recalls Renaissance frescoes as well as the mysterious ambience that cuts to the heart of Balthus's unique, poetic vision.

- *Painting (The Circus Horse)* by **Joan Miró** (1893-1983) sold for £2,994,500/ \$5,096,639/ €3,743,125 (estimate: £1.4 -2 million). Composed with a remarkable economy of means it was executed by Joan Miró in 1925, at the time of the artist's limited yet significant involvement with Surrealism.
- *La côte de Varengeville*, by **Claude Monet** (1840-1926) sold for £2,882,500/ \$4,906,015/ €3,603,125 (estimate: £1.5-2.5 million). This work dates from 1882, a year in which Claude Monet made two campaigns to the Norman coast near his own home, Le Havre. These two trips, the first made alone and the second with his and Alice Hoschedé's families, resulted in a series of exquisite landscapes, many of which are now in prestigious museum collections throughout the world. Offered from The *Bebe and Crosby Kemper Collection*, *La côte de Varengeville* itself has a highly distinguished early provenance: already, by the beginning of the Twentieth Century, it had been owned successively by two important American collectors, Catholina Lambert and Henry Lee Higginson; it was shown, only nine years after completion, in Boston's prominent J. Eastman Chase gallery.
- *Nacktes Mädchen vor grünem Sofa*, 1908, by **Ernst Ludwig Kirchner** sold for £2,322,500/ \$3,952,895/ €2,903,125 (estimate: £2-3 million). From the property of a *Distinguished German Collection*, this is one of the artist's first celebrated Brücke group paintings of naked models in the studio. It is also one of his first attempts to create a heightened sense of reality through an aesthetic fusion of flattened colour, simplified form and raw subject matter.

## Notes to Editors:

### **Pre-sale estimates for Impressionist & Modern works offered in the June auctions:**

<i>Impressionist &amp; Modern Evening Auction</i>	24 June	£96,450,000 - £141,450,000
<i>Impressionist &amp; Modern Works on Paper</i>	25 June	£5,713,000 - £8,657,000
<i>Impressionist &amp; Modern Day Sale</i>	25 June	£13,435,000 - £19,647,000
<i>Picasso Ceramics</i>	26 June	£672,100 - £999,600
<i>Impressionist &amp; Modern, South Kensington</i>	27 June	£1,055,000 - £1,571,100
		<b>TOTAL £117,325,100 - £172,324,700</b>