

# CHRISTIE'S

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## CHRISTIE'S [THE ART OF THE SURREAL](#) 27 FEBRUARY 2018

RENÉ MAGRITTE, MAX ERNST AND PAUL DELVAUX  
PRESENTED ALONGSIDE WORKS FROM THE  
COLLECTIONS OF: ANTONI TÀPIES, THE EYE OF THE  
ARCHITECT, ABSTRACTION BEYOND BORDERS AND THE  
TRITON COLLECTION FOUNDATION

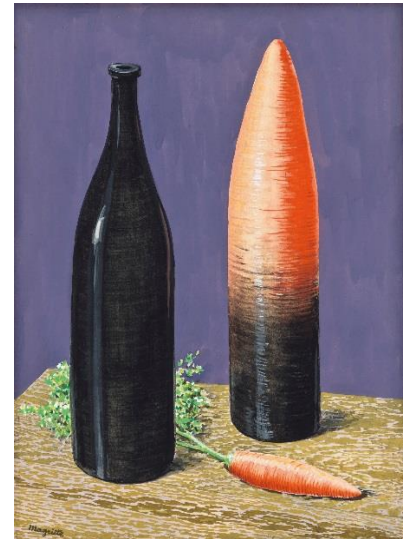
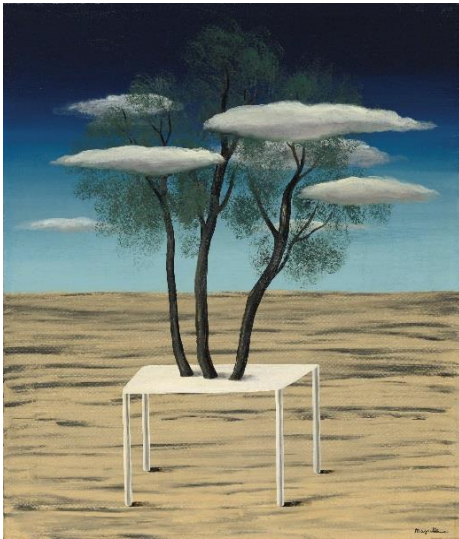


Left: René Magritte, *Le groupe silencieux*, oil on canvas, 1926, estimate: £6,500,000-9,500,000  
Middle: Max Ernst, *Les invités du dimanche*, oil on canvas, 1924, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000  
Right: Joan Miró, *Painting*, oil on canvas, 1925 and 1964, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000

**London** – [The Art of the Surreal](#) sale will follow the [Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale](#) on 27 February 2018, both of which launch '20<sup>th</sup> Century at Christie's', a series of sales that take place in London from 20 February to 7 March 2018. This year's seventeenth edition of our annual *Art of the Surreal* auction is a broad overview of Surrealism, its antecedents and later developments, with 34 lots by 15 artists. A major focal point is the four international collections, [Abstraction Beyond Borders](#), [The Eye of the Architect](#), the collection of [Antoni Tàpies](#) and the Triton Collection Foundation, with highlights including a metaphysical work by Giorgio de Chirico, a transparence by Francis Picabia, four early paintings by Joan Miró and surreal works by Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. The works from the sale will be exhibited in London from 20 to 27 February 2018.

**Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's:** "The seventeenth edition of our annual themed sale *The Art of the Surreal* will include a core of four private, international collections providing surreal masterpieces not seen at auction before, by artists such as de Chirico, Magritte, Miró and Picasso. Magritte's large *Le groupe silencieux* of 1926, one of a handful of large and important early works by the artist, is the highlight of the sale. Picasso's *Figure* of 1930, not seen at auction for half a century, is a powerfully architectural composition relating to MOMA's *Baigneuse* of the same year, which clearly shows Picasso's influence on later artists such as Henry Moore and Francis Bacon."

## René Magritte



Left: René Magritte, *L'oasis*, oil on canvas, 1926, estimate: £1,400,000-2,000,000

Middle: René Magritte, *La recherche de l'absolu*, gouache on paper, 1948, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000

Right: René Magritte, *L'explication*, gouache on paper, 1962, estimate: £400,000-700,000

The sale includes seven paintings by René Magritte, led by *Le groupe silencieux*, (1926, estimate: £6,500,000-9,500,000) an important example of his early Surrealist style, and where all the pictorial devices, props and structures that go into the making of a so-called 'figurative' or 'representational' painting have been rendered in an unusual, subversive manner. The work is one of a pioneering series of oil paintings that the artist made between January 1926 and April 1927 in preparation for his first one-man show, held at the Galerie le Centaure, Brussels in the spring of 1927. In conjunction with his deconstruction of the components of landscape and still-life painting there is also a sense that the representation of the human figure has been broken down into parts. This painting is, in this respect, a landmark work that establishes some of the logic and framework of the aesthetic path that Magritte was to follow for the rest of his life. *Le groupe silencieux* is offered alongside *L'état de veille* (1958, estimate: £150,000-200,000), *Nu* (1925, estimate: £100,000-200,000), *La recherche de l'absolu* (1948, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000), *L'explication* (1962, estimate: £400,000-700,000), *Les signes du soir* (1926, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000) part of *Abstraction Beyond Borders* and *L'oasis* (1926, estimate: £1,400,000-2,000,000).

### Pablo Picasso from *The Eye of the Architect*

Pablo Picasso's *Figure* (1930, estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000) is from a series of oil paintings the artist created during his so-called 'bone period'. Depicting totemic, monumental female figures towering against a pale blue sky, these works illustrate the artist's fascination in fusing organic material with a sense of architectural form and structure during this period. The highly sculptural, skeletal-like figure was created in direct response to the monumental seated bather from his 1930 composition *Baigneuse*, now in the Museum of Modern Art. The present work deconstructs form in a manner that goes beyond the cubist idiom which dominated Picasso's pre-war works.

### Max Ernst

Max Ernst's *Les invités du dimanche (The Sunday Guests)* (1924, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) is one of a small number of Dada paintings in which the artist first attempted to move beyond the inspiration of the metaphysical paintings of Carrà and de Chirico and his own experimental work with collage. In this work, Ernst made use of a series of printed images of women's hairstyles as the prompt for the creation of a sequence of bizarre and haunting figurative personages. He was also inspired at this time by the kind of eroto-mechanics of Duchamp and Picabia's machine pictures and deeply interested in alchemy and in alchemical illustration. This work also appears to be highly auto-biographical, perhaps alluding to the *ménage à trois* that existed between Ernst, Paul and Gala Éluard in that period.

### Joan Miró

Joan Miró's *Painting* (1925/1964, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) dates from the early stages of the artist's remarkable series of 'oneiric' or 'dream' pictures, where Miró's radically simplified compositions succeeded in moving beyond pictorial conventions of illusionistic representation and resemblance. Almost forty years

after its creation, Miró added several new characters and details to the composition, having encountered the painting again at the home of his friend and early biographer, the artist Roland Penrose.

### Paul Delvaux

*Le Sabbat (The Sabbath)* by Paul Delvaux (1962, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000), one of the most important paintings from the second half of the artist's career, is being offered by the artist's family. In many ways Delvaux's *Le Sabbat* can be seen as a painterly invocation of the night, the subject that had preoccupied the artist and sustained the mysteries of his art from the 1930s onwards. Delvaux takes the traditional North European subject of *Walpurgisnacht* or the Witches' Sabbath and transforms it into a strangely erotic and rather genteel midnight garden party taking place near a railway junction in a suburb of Brussels.



Paul Delvaux, *Le Sabbat*, oil on canvas, 1962, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000

### Works from the Collection of Antoni Tàpies

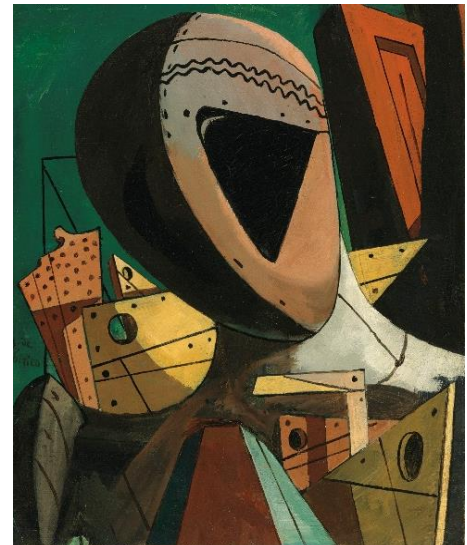
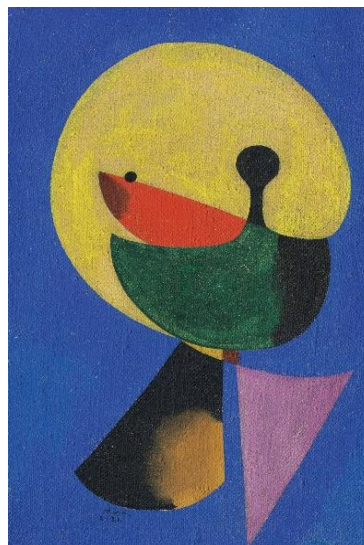


Left: Joan Miró, *Tête d'homme*, oil on panel, 1932, estimate: £800,000-1,200,000

Middle: Joan Miró, *Painting*, oil on canvas, 1926, estimate: £600,000-900,000

Right: Paul Klee, *Weibsteufel, die Welt beherrschend. (She-Devil, Dominating the World)*, watercolour and oil transfer drawing on paper laid down on the artist's mount, 1921, estimate: £200,000-300,000

### The Eye of the Architect

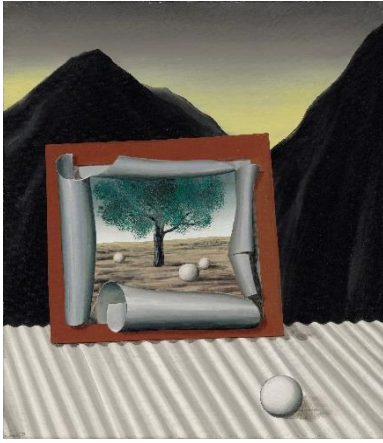


Left: Pablo Picasso, *Figure*, oil and charcoal on panel, 1930, estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000

Middle: Joan Miró, *Tête d'homme*, oil on canvas, 1931, estimate: £700,000-1,000,000

Right: Giorgio de Chirico, *Testa di manichino*, oil on canvas, 1916-17, estimate: £800,000-1,200,000

## Abstraction Beyond Borders



Left: René Magritte, *Les signes du soir*, oil on canvas, 1926, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000

Middle: Francis Picabia, *Iris*, gouache on panel, 1929, estimate: £800,000-1,200,000

Right: Pablo Picasso, *Le cirque*, oil on canvas, 1933, estimate: £600,000-900,000

Further artists representing the range of the movement include Wifredo Lam, who developed a style that was a synthesis of Cubism, Surrealism, and Afro-Cuban sources. Painted in 1944, *Sans Titre* (estimate: £300,000-500,000) boldly depicts this evolution within the artist's oeuvre. *Morphologie Psychologique de l'angoisse (La veille de la mort)* (1938, estimate: £700,000-900,000) is among the very first of Roberto Matta's 'psychological morphologies', a seminal series that he began in the summer of 1938. Dating from the final months of André Masson's acclaimed Spanish period, *Corrida mythologique* (1936, estimate: £800,000-1,200,000) stands as a highly dramatic, personal reflection of the intense anxiety the artist felt regarding the Spanish Civil War. The sale also includes works by Salvador Dalí, Oscar Domínguez, Roland Penrose and Yves Tanguy.

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Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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