THE COLLECTION OF

ANNE H. BASS

CHRISTIE'S

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ANNE H. BASS

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12 May 2022
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CHRISTIE'S

Mark Hampton, *Dining Room of Anne H. Bass*, 1990. Private collection.

Anne H. Bass. Photo: Talaya Centeno / Courtesy of Fairchild Archive.

The Collection of Anne H. Bass

During her lifetime, Anne Hendricks Bass was acknowledged as much for her refined taste and timeless style as for her thoughtful, elevating generosity. The art in her Mark Hampton-designed Fifth Avenue home reflected her inner life and guiding principles—exquisite balance, curiosity and intellectual and aesthetic rigor.

Her philanthropy was instrumental and deeply personal. She championed The Modern Art Museum of Forth Worth, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The New York Public Library and, perhaps most importantly, The New York City Ballet. Mrs. Bass studied ballet from youth through adulthood and in 2010 directed the documentary *Dancing Across Borders*, which told the story of the young Cambodian dancer, Sokvannara "Sy" Sar's journey from his native country to pursue his dreams of dancing professionally.

Giving to institutions is as much about people as it is ideas. Beauty and perfection, Mrs. Bass understood, were precious, continuously strived for and never to be taken for granted. Her lifelong love of and support for dance and dancers were in service of these ideals. "Dancing," Havelock Ellis wrote, "is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is no mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself."

960 Fifth: Mark Hampton and Anne Bass

ALEXA HAMPTON

The late Anne Hendricks Bass was a powerhouse philanthropist and patron of the arts, a brilliant collector with an uncanny eye, a forever student and connoisseur of art, architecture and gardening, and a design visionary who commissioned and oversaw the creation and completion of—at least—two iconic homes, one in Fort Worth Texas and one in New York.

One of the most striking things about her art collection is how powerfully, although differently, it appeared in her residences. In each, her beautiful paintings spoke to the design that surrounded them to create an individual environment, each special and remarkable. Nothing could communicate more eloquently how works of beauty can reinvent themselves and their chosen settings, over and over again, than the interiors inhabited by Anne Bass.

I am unsure exactly how my father, the late decorator Mark Hampton, first met Anne, both of them Hoosiers born. However they did, and they became lifelong friends. Anne and my father worked for four years on the Fifth Avenue apartment that housed

part of Anne's unequaled art collection. For my father and many observers of his career as a decorator, the result represented one of his most beautiful commissions and collaborations. He was extremely proud of what they achieved, and as you will see in the following pages, her very personal assortment of paintings, drawings and sculpture was an integral part of its environment of enduring beauty. The artwork made the design sing. The whole was entirely more than the sum of the priceless parts; and, all combined, were a reflection of the woman to whom the rooms belonged. Anne and Mark both had God-given style; but, in the creation of these interiors, I believe that their twin commitment to intellectual rigor was at least as important as a desire to create beautiful spaces.

Anne Bass, student of art history and literature at Vassar, was also always interested in the definitive designs of contemporary masters working in their chosen fields. As a young woman, she and her husband, Sid Bass, commissioned a house designed by the modern American master-architect, Paul Rudolph. A Harvard graduate, student of Walter Gropius, and the former chairman of Yale's department of architecture, Rudolph was another intellectual creator who benefited from collaborating with Anne and her quiet devotion to exacting design. It was in this setting that her collection, including her two incredible Rothkos, were displayed.

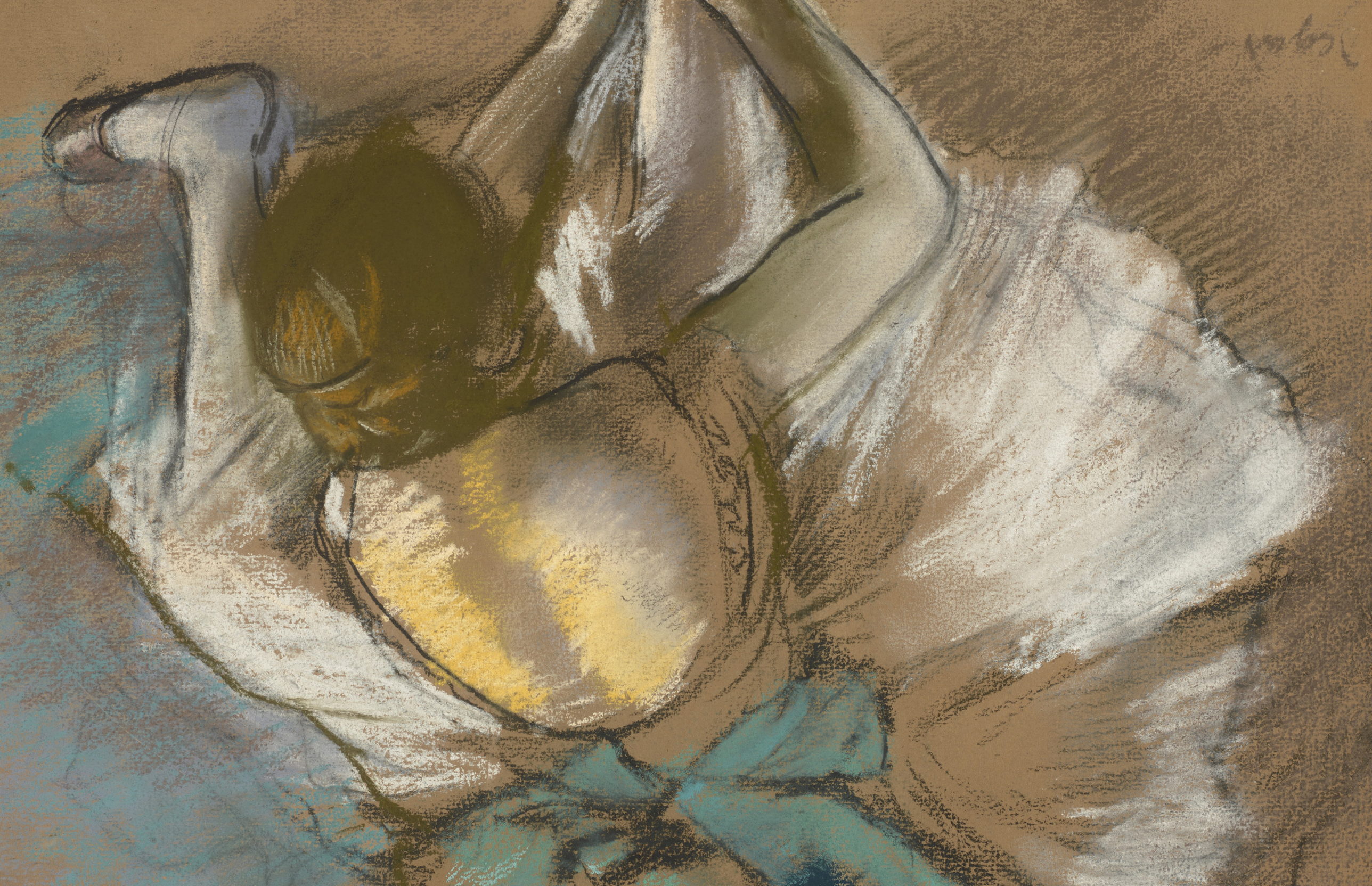
In the context of such a modern setting—horizontal, cantilevered slabs encased in glass and wrapped with white porcelain enamel panels—Anne's collection of art interacted to create the appearance of a sublime gallery in which her family resided. It was a crisp aerated space comprised of modernist volumes: angular, cool and formal.

On Fifth Avenue, in the arms of her building's 1920's architecture, the placement of Anne's collection, still ordered within a strict framework and hung with a steady hand,

does an about face and becomes a warm and intimate expression of its owner. The Rothkos and Louis were provided a foil in their proximity to a stripped but still pristine suite of curvaceous George II furniture covered in an icy neutral damask. The interior color scheme played a supporting character to the big, bravura splashes of color in the paintings, packing a punch of emotion in an atmosphere that is all restrained craftsmanship and sophistication. For my father, creating thoughtful and informed interiors meant understanding their owners and presenting them both as integral expressions of each other.

In the dining room, with its recessive echoes of Anne's Rudolph-designed house, a moody, impressionistic Monet painting of the Houses of Parliament sits amongst the cool mirrored paneled walls, and Mies van der Rohe dining chairs. The yin and the yang of the room is a lesson in such juxtapositions, playing watery landscape against sharp cut beveled edges. The room evades immediate dating. A Georgian mantel, angular elevations and the sheen of steel on the chairs reveal the presence of many canonical design influences; enough, in fact, that pegging its conception is impossible.

The bold opening salvo, however, was and will remain the most stunning, autobiographical declaration delivered by the apartment. Sleek lacquered gray and cream walls atop an antique parquet de Versailles floor, the intimate entry space housed one of the world's most beloved statues in its center: Degas' *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans*. The Degas, partnered with Balthus' *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* and Hammershøi's *Stue (Interior with an Oval Mirror)*—all telegraphed to visitors images of singular, dignified females in contemplation. Anne, herself, a lover, supporter, and student of ballet, and deep thinker, was every inch the beautiful, pensive figures she and my father chose to exalt.



Edgar Degas, *La répétition sur scène*, *circa* 1874. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The H.O. Havemeyer Collection; Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929.

Degas and the Havemeyers

"Whether we admire the exquisite precision of his drawing, the light and air with which he envelopes his compositions in the eighties and early nineties, or the broader touch and the glowing color of his later years, we can never forget that from first to last the eye of the philosopher is penetrating the innermost depth of his subject and that whether he works by analysis or synthesis, his vision reveals to us nature in its truth." So wrote Louisine Havemeyer late in her life about Degas—the artist whose work formed the heart of the extraordinary collection that she and her husband Harry, arguably the most discerning connoisseurs of Impressionism in America in their day, assembled over the course of fifty years (quoted in *Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection*, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993, p. 40).

The Havemeyers' legendary holdings included the largest and most comprehensive ensemble of Degas's art ever amassed—64 oils, pastels, and drawings of consistently superb quality, among them the exquisite *Danseuse attachant son chausson* in Mrs. Bass's Collection, along with a complete set of bronzes and numerous prints. Other than the expatriate Mary Cassatt, Degas was the only one of the Impressionist painters whom the Havemeyers knew personally, and they had enormous respect for him despite his famous irascibility. The very first painting that Louisine purchased was a Degas, at a time when Impressionism was still controversial in France and utterly unknown across the Atlantic; the single most valuable work in the collection was by Degas, as was the last

major canvas that Louisine ever acquired. With the exception of one small landscape, the Havemeyers kept everything that they bought by Degas—there were no mistakes. Upon Louisine's death, she bequeathed 35 of the Degas pictures and all but two of the bronzes to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, part of a magnificent gift of nearly two thousand artworks that transformed the museum's collection and secured the Havemeyer legacy for posterity.

The future Mrs. Havemeyer, née Louisine Elder, began her collecting journey in 1874 at age nineteen, during an extended trip to Paris with her mother and two sisters. An American painter who was boarding near the family introduced them to Cassatt, who had settled permanently in France that spring. Cassatt made a great impression on Louisine, a decade her junior, for her love of art and her adventurous travels. When the Elders returned to Paris the next summer, Louisine renewed her friendship with Cassatt, who was then discovering the budding avant-garde movement of Impressionism—in particular, the art of Degas. In 1877, on Cassatt's advice, Louisine scraped together funds from her allowance to make her inaugural acquisition, Degas's pastel *La répétition de ballet*, possibly at Julien Tanguy's shop (Lemoisne, no. 365). It was the first work by Degas to find a home in America, and the artist was so pleased with the sale that he wrote to Cassatt to thank her for her help.

By the time Louisine married sugar magnate Henry Osborne ("Harry") Havemeyer in 1883, she had amassed a small collection of pioneering modern pictures, including works by Monet, Cassatt, and Whistler. Harry was a collector and connoisseur as well, but he favored paintings by older masters along with Chinese and Japanese decorative arts. For the first decade of their marriage, he was the family's leading art patron, focusing by turns on the Barbizon school, Rembrandt, Corot and Courbet, and finally El Greco and Goya. Louisine, nonetheless, managed to slip in the occasional modern acquisition. In 1889, during a summer sojourn in Paris, she introduced Harry and their three young children to Cassatt, who gifted them a Degas monotype on the occasion. Two years later, Cassatt brought the couple to meet Degas himself in his studio. They purchased a small oil painting, *Le collectionneur d'estampes*, which Degas insisted on retaining for a time to add a few touches; he finally relinquished it in 1894 (Lemoisne, no. 138).

Mary Cassatt, *Louisine Havemeyer et sa fille Electra*, 1895. Shelburne Museum, Vermont. Photo: © Shelburne Museum / Museum Purchase 1996 / Bridgeman Images.

Edgar Degas, *Femme assise à côté d'un vase de fleurs*, 1865. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The H.O. Havemeyer Collection; Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929.

Edgar Degas, *Chez la modiste*, 1882. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The H.O. Havemeyer Collection; Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929.

By the mid-1890s, Impressionism was receiving increasingly favorable critical notice in America, and Harry at long last began to take a serious interest in the work of Degas and his colleagues. Over the next few years, he and Louisine would become the most active collectors of modern French art in America, outpacing their fellow countrymen such as Potter Palmer, Alfred Pope, and Harris Whittemore. Louisine took over as the guiding spirit behind their collecting, which now gave a secondary role to purchases of older masters. "She, of course, was delighted with this turn of events," Frances Weitzenhoffer wrote in her seminal study of the Havemeyer collection. "She had always been confident that in due course her husband would appreciate the artists in whom she herself had believed for many years; now she felt more than compensated for her patience" (*The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America*, New York, 1986, p. 108).

Between 1894 and 1900, the Havemeyers added no fewer than twenty works by Degas to their collection. These included important early oils such as *La Bouderie*, *Ballet de 'Robert le Diable'*, and *La répétition du ballet* (Lemoisne, nos. 294, 335, and 399); a magisterial group of at least eight dancer pastels; a millinery scene for which Mary Cassatt had posed (no. 682); a racehorse pastel, Harry's own choice (no. 1145); and six landscapes in pastel over monotype. Many of their purchases were made through Durand-Ruel, either in New York or in Paris during annual picture-buying expeditions with Cassatt. They also paid frequent visits to Degas's studio, which resulted in periodic acquisitions and a close acquaintance with the artist. "I thought him a dignified-looking man of medium height," Louisine recalled in her memoir, "a compact figure, well dressed, rather dark and with fine eyes. There was nothing of the artistic *négligé* about him, on the contrary he rather impressed me as a man of the world" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 116).

In 1901, Louisine and Harry took a three-month trip through Europe that proved pivotal to the development of their collection. Their travels through Spain and Italy rekindled their interest in the old masters, especially El Greco and Goya; in Paris, they met the dealer Vollard and began to buy work by Cézanne, the only post-Impressionist painter they would ever add to their pantheon. Their abiding focus, however, remained the early French moderns—Degas and Manet above all—and those artists' immediate predecessors Corot and Courbet. "They were particularly responsive to portrayals of people, either as

penetrating studies of character or as engaged in daily pursuits," Weitzenhoffer wrote. "This precept made it possible for their modern works to hang in complete harmony with their older masters; there was an aesthetic kinship among all the Havemeyer paintings and a shared quality of monumentality" (*ibid*., p. 137).

The Havemeyers were engaged in their most intense phase of buying when tragedy struck. On 4 December 1907, Harry Havemeyer died unexpectedly at age sixty. Louisine mourned deeply and took ill herself during the ensuing year. By spring 1909, though, her vitality had rebounded and with it her devotion to collecting. For the next decade, she continued to travel extensively to view art, and she became determined to fill gaps in her collection by adding important works, especially ones that Harry had previously admired. She also campaigned tirelessly to advance the cause of women's suffrage and on occasion combined her two abiding passions—most notably in 1915, when she organized a highly successful loan exhibition of works by Degas, Cassatt, and various old masters to benefit the Women's Political Union.

Many of Louisine's late, great acquisitions were works by Degas. When *Danseuses à la barre* (Lemoisne, no. 408) came up for sale in 1912 from the estate of Henri Rouart, an old friend of Degas, Louisine instructed Durand-Ruel to purchase the picture for her at any cost, a rare exception to her self-imposed restriction against imprudent spending. Durand-Ruel complied, paying nearly $100,000—the record price at the time for a work by a living artist. At the Roger Marx sale in 1914, she again gave Durand-Ruel substantial leeway to bid on her behalf, this time for *La Toilette*, a major pastel of a woman having her hair combed that she considered essential to the collection (no. 847). In 1916, on Cassatt's advice, she acquired two early oils, a ballet scene and a portrait of Berthe Morisot's sister Yves, from the heirs of Degas's friend Michel Manzi (nos. 213 and 297). "I really think it is a chance," Cassatt wrote to Louisine, "and your collection of Degas ought to be very complete with these two pictures" (quoted in *ibid*., p. 231).

Degas died the next year, on 27 September 1917, after a long period of ill health. "His death is a deliverance," Cassatt wrote to Louisine, "but I am sad. He was my oldest friend here, and the last great artist of the 19th century—I see no one to replace him" (quoted in *ibid*., p. 231). Although Louisine made no purchases from the four sales of Degas's studio contents in 1918-1919, his passing gave her the opportunity to acquire his sculpture for the first time, rounding out her comprehensive collection of his work. In 1903, on a visit to Degas's studio, she and Harry had come upon *La petite danseuse de quatorze ans*, the artist's masterwork in three dimensions and the only sculpture that he exhibited during his lifetime. They endeavored to purchase the figure, but Degas refused to part with it on account of the blackening of the wax. He contemplated casting the figure in plaster or bronze for the Havemeyers, but these plans never came to fruition.

Shortly after Degas's death, his heirs contracted with the founder Adrien Hébrard to produce a limited bronze edition from *La petite danseuse de quatorze ans* as well as all 72 of the smaller wax sculptures in the studio that were deemed salvageable. Cassatt reserved the first or "A" series of the casts for Louisine, thus helping to guarantee that the project proceeded. The smaller figurines were completed in 1921, and Louisine traveled to Paris to inspect them in person; *La petite danseuse* was ready the following year, nearly two decades after the Havemeyers had first sought to add it to their collection.

Louisine made her last purchase of a major painting in 1921—an early Degas oil, *Femme assise à côté d'un vase de fleurs* (Lemoisne, no. 125). In 1922, she finalized her will, selecting certain works for her bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and empowering her three children to add more. Of the 64 pictures by Degas that once formed part of the Havemeyer collection, fifty are now in the Met and other major museums. The pastel *Danseuse attachant son chausson* in Mrs. Bass's Collection, which passed to Louisine and Harry's daughter Electra upon her mother's death, is one of only fourteen pictures by Degas with the illustrious Havemeyer provenance to remain today in private hands.

1

EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)

Danseuse attachant son chausson

signed 'Degas' (lower left)
pastel on buff paper
18½ x 16⅞ in. (47.5 x 42.9 cm.)
Executed in 1887

$4,000,000-6,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Boussod, Valadon & Cie., Paris.
Mr. and Mrs. Henry O. Havemeyer, New York (acquired from the above, before 1907).
Electra Havemeyer Webb, New York (by descent from the above, 1929).
Electra Webb Bostwick, New York (by descent from the above, 1960).
Hirschl & Adler Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired from the above, 25 April 1978).
Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired from the above, 1981).
Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London (acquired from the above, 13 March 1981).
Juan Alvarez de Toledo, New York (acquired from the above, 24 March 1982); sale, Christie's, New York, 12 November 1985, lot 22.
Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired at the above sale).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 15 November 1985.

EXHIBITED:

New York, The Grolier Club, *Prints, Drawings and Bronzes by Degas*, January-February 1922, p. 6, no. 33 (titled *Danseuse assise rajustant sa chaussure*).
New York, Acquavella Galleries, Inc., *Edgar Degas*, November-December 1978, no. 42 (illustrated in color).
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, *Degas: The Dancers*, November 1984-March 1985, pp. 93-94 and 141, no. 39 (illustrated in color, p. 96; dated *circa* 1880-1885).
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection*, March-June 1993, p. 333, no. 233 (illustrated, p. 332).
Poughkeepsie, Vassar College, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, *Refining the Imagination: Tradition, Collecting, and the Vassar Education*, April-September 1999, p. 150, no. 58 (illustrated in color, p. 151; dated *circa* 1880-1885).

LITERATURE:

Manzi-Joyant et Cie., ed., *Vingt dessins de Degas*, Paris, 1897, no. 16 (illustrated).
P. Lafond, *Degas*, Paris, 1919, vol. II, p. 75 (titled *Danseuse assise sur une banquette*).
H.O. Havemeyer Collection: Catalogue of Paintings, Prints, Sculpture and Objects of Art, Portland, Maine, 1931, p. 380 (titled *Ballet Girl*).
P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, New York, 1946, vol. III, p. 532, no. 913 (illustrated, p. 533).
L. Browse, *Degas Dancers*, London, 1949, p. 378, no. 119 (illustrated; titled *Danseuse attachant ses rubans* and dated *circa* 1880).
F. Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America*, New York, 1986, p. 130 (illustrated in color, p. 145, pl. 88).
R. Gordon and A. Forge, *Degas*, New York, 1988, p. 197 (illustrated in color; dated *circa* 1880-1885).
J. Heilpern, "The Bass Reserve" in *Vogue*, December 1988, p. 345 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).
L. Schacherl, *Edgar Degas: Dancers and Nudes*, New York, 1997, p. 15 (illustrated in color).

Edgar Degas, *Danseuse, circa* 1895. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

EDGAR DEGAS

Danseuse attachant son chausson

1887

Alive with color, light, and vivid texture, Edgar Degas's *Danseuse attachant son chausson* of 1887 captures a dancer in a moment of repose, as she bends down to tie the ribbon on her ballet slipper. With her feet turned out, and tutu and sash thrown upwards in spectacular relief to create a dazzling halo around her, the dancer pictured in this pose was one of Degas's favorite and most famous views, not only challenging him to display his artistic virtuosity through the depiction of a foreshortened figure, but allowing him to indulge in splendid contrasts of light and form. Relishing the expressive effects of pastel, his favored medium at the time that he created this magnificent dancer in the late 1880s, Degas has portrayed the dancer with long, strident strokes of color and frenetic line, enlisting the paper ground as an active formal component of the tightly cropped composition. As a result, this work, formerly in the legendary Havemeyer family collection, is infused with an incredible sense of life; she is momentarily stationary, yet brims with suspenseful energy, poised at any moment to ascend upright once more and leap back into her performance.

In the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s, Degas avidly pursued the pose seen in *Danseuse attachant son chausson*, capturing dancers alone, as well as integrating them into his multi-figural dancer compositions. The present work is among the finest of a multitude of drawings and pastels that focuses on the single dancer reaching down in this position, each of which explores this pose from a slightly different angle or ever so slightly shifting view point (other examples include

"[Degas] has fallen in love with modern life, and out of all the subjects of modern life he has chosen washerwomen and ballet dancers... It is a world of pink and white, of female flesh in lawn and gauze, the most delightful of pretexts for using pale, soft tints."

EDMOND DE GONCOURT

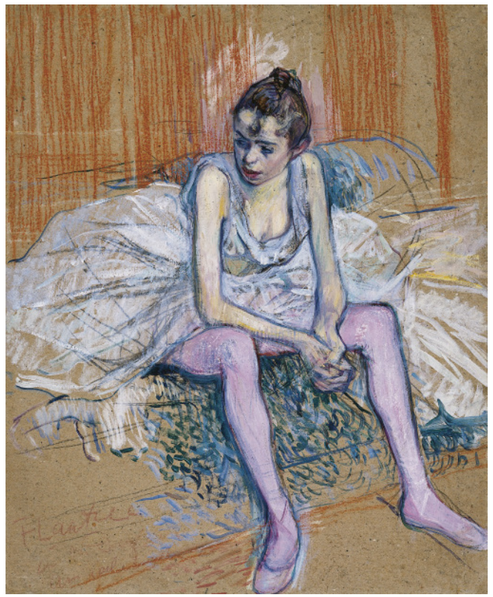
Lemoisne, nos. 530, 531, 600, 826, 826*bis*, 904 and 908).

Robert Gordon and Andrew Forge have described this distinctive, defining motif: "It represented the extreme opposite of the weightlessness and grace of the dancer in action. It is earth-bound; the head hangs, evoking the Baudelairian image of the white bird grounded. This aspect of the pose gave rise to pastels such as *Danseuses au Foyer* (Lemoisne, no. 530; Private collection), in which we are brought close to the dancer's exhaustion. In *L'Attente* (Lemoisne, no. 698; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) the same pose is drawn into a narrative and expresses boredom as the dancer sits waiting beside her mother in black street clothes. The pose shows the figure of the dancer in a highly unfigure-like aspect. Each drawing that he made of it reminds us of his quest for unusual viewpoints, his passion for the oblique. It is as though discovering the dancer at rest like this, unawares, he is able to claim a tighter grip on her, discovering her physical presence piece by piece in an unfamiliar order, the drawing aestheticized by being somehow out of step with familiar figuration" (*Degas*, New York, 1988, pp. 187-188).

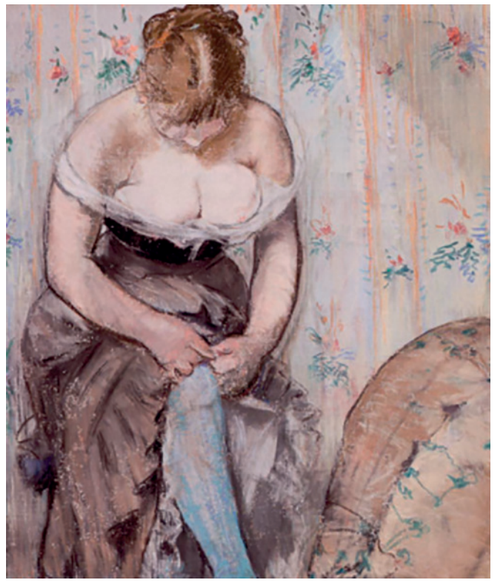
By the time that Degas created *Danseuse attachant son chausson*, his reputation as, "the painter of dancers," was firmly secured. While throughout the 1870s his Impressionist contemporaries, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and to a certain extent, Édouard Manet, had been obsessed with sunlight, seeking to

Edgar Degas, *L'Attente*, *circa* 1882. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena.

Edgar Degas, *Danseuse nouant son brodequin (Danseuse assise se massant le pied gauche)*, *circa* 1881-1883. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Danseuse assise aux bas roses*, 1890. Private collection.



Edouard Manet, *A la toilette*, 1878-1879. Ordrupgaard Museum, Charlottenlund.

capture its effects on the outside world around them, Degas found infinite artistic potential in the shadowy corners of the much revered and frequented Paris Opéra, its stage wings, dressing rooms, and above all, the rehearsal studios. Scenes illuminated by gaslight, rather than sunlight, were his preoccupation.

Degas quickly realized that the ballet offered him a subject that could set him apart from the rest of the avant-garde, as well as facilitating a complete immersion in his primary love: the depiction of the human form. By the mid-1870s, Degas had turned away from solely depicting the polished, perfected idealism of the final performances, instead capturing dancers by day, practising in the rehearsal rooms of the venerated institution. This alternate realm offered Degas an unprecedented and infinite range of figures enacting myriad poses: both balletic, as the dancers rehearsed and performed their steps, and at ease, as they stretched, waited, rested, pulled at their tights or sashes, or tied their slippers.

Yet, access to these rooms was strictly regulated, reserved for an elite and privileged few. While Degas counted a number of these wealthy, well-connected *abonnés* among his closest friends, it would not be until the end of the 1880s that he was finally granted the unrestricted access to the backstage realm of the Opéra that he had so desired. As a result, more frequently he asked dancers to come to his studio and dance and pose for him. In this haloed sanctum, Degas made myriad drawings and studies in a variety of media, immersing himself in his quest to capture the human figure in movement. “In order to appreciate fully the artist’s working methods,” George Shackelford has described, “we should envision him in the studio, surrounded by hundreds of drawings” (*Degas, the dancers*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1984, p. 62). Having amassed a large corpus of poses, Degas subsequently integrated these individual figures into larger, more populated compositions, relishing the endless variations available to him as his imagination took over and he created his symphonic arrangements of dancers.

Degas became captivated by one such pose, that of the dancer reaching over to tie the ribbon of her ballet slipper, or clasp her ankle, as in *Danseuse attachant son chausson*. “Rarely,” Shackelford wrote, “can the repetition and variation of a single motif be better demonstrated than in the pose of the seated dancer leaning forward to adjust her slipper” (*ibid.*, p. 93). While it was the exaggerated compression of the figure in this pose that clearly attracted Degas—the body almost turned in on itself, crouched over, dramatically descendent—it also allowed for a complete indulgence in the myriad textures of

"Rarely, can the repetition and variation of a single motif be better demonstrated than in the pose of the seated dancer leaning forward to adjust her slipper."

GEORGE SHACKELFORD

the dancers' costumes. The net tutu effervesces around the dancer of the present work, petal-like in its fanned display of diaphanous layers. The sash—a feature Degas was so engrossed by that he made a contemporaneous pastel study of this ornate bow (1887, Lemoisne, no. 908*bis*; Musée d'Orsay, Paris)—together with her skirt contrasts with the soft, silky, matte texture of the ballerina's silk tights. Out of this vaporous froth of textures, the skin of her back glows, bathed in light, warm and radiant amid the rest of the composition.

Though seemingly an image of a dancer caught unawares in an instinctive moment of pause, the protagonist of the present pastel remains in a performative stance. Her legs are turned out, her feet at right angles in a pose that shows the relentless discipline of her profession. Even in such moments of downtime or rest, as Lillian Browse noted, a young dancer would, "almost subconsciously, find herself 'turning out' her thighs, stretching her instep, forcing her *pointes* or pulling back her shoulders" (*Degas Dancers*, London, 1949, p. 59). So attuned was Degas to the litany of movements, that these highly nuanced and idiosyncratic details are faithfully captured in every depiction of dancers, making these works, "as true in fact as they are in spirit to the art he has chosen to depict" (*ibid.*, p. 60).

Yet, this motif was not solely the result of a happened upon moment in the rehearsal rooms or Degas's studio. As with so much of the artist's *oeuvre*, this pose also finds its genesis in a work of the past, in particular, it has been suggested, the Louvre's *Hermes Fastening his Sandal*, a Roman marble that he would have been deeply familiar with, having haunted the museum's galleries since his youth.

Edgar Degas, *Danseuses au foyer (La Contrebasse)*, 1887. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

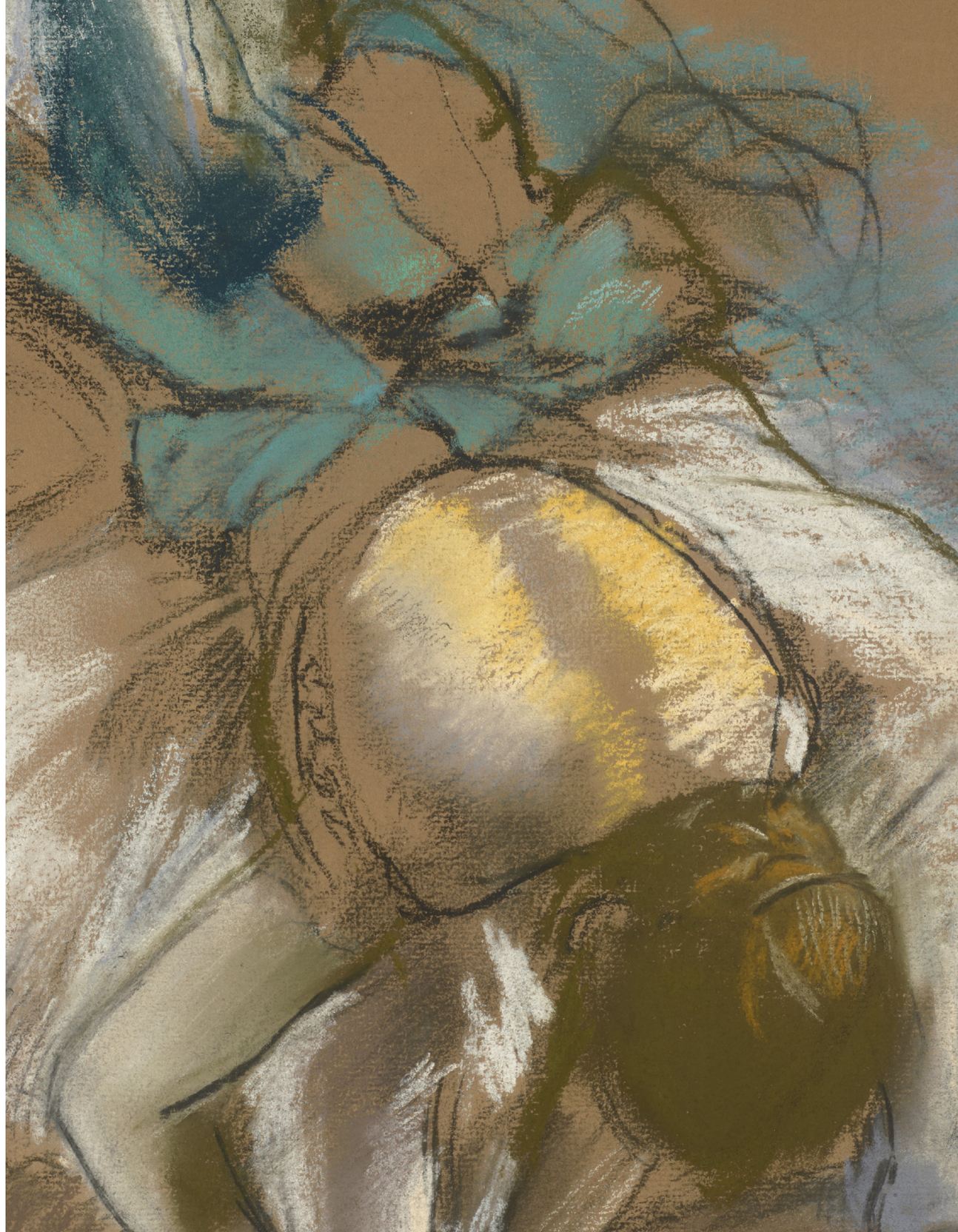
Edgar Degas, *La Salle de danse*, *circa* 1891. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

"Dance is poetry with arms and legs, it is matter, gracious and terrible, animated, embellished by movement."

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Degas rarely made direct references or quotations to the masterpieces of antiquity that he so revered, yet, as Leïla Jarbouai has noted recently, "Other familiar poses from 'classics' of ancient sculpture resurface, completely transformed, in the countless dancers attaching their slippers or massaging their ankles… it is sometimes hard to believe that this is merely coincidence, so similar to the ancient statue is the twist of the body drawn by Degas" ("The Genetics of Dance Gestures in Degas's Work" in H. Loyrette, *Degas at the Opéra*, exh. cat., Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 2019, p. 43).

This pose—at once radical and banal, graceful and monumental, stationary yet expectant with potential movement—was the perfect addition not only to a number of the artist's contemporaneous scenes of dancers waiting or resting, but also to the radical series of "frieze" compositions, or *tableaux en long*, as he called them, that Degas began in 1879 and continued through the subsequent two decades. Rendered on an elongated, horizontal format, in these ballet scenes Degas pictured a coterie of dancers moving in a rhythmic pattern of rise and fall across the canvas, arranged like musical notes on a score. The image of a dancer bending over appears in different guises and from various viewpoints in a number of these works, most notably in The Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Danseuses au foyer (La Contrebasse)*, painted in 1887, the same year as the present work (Lemoisne, no. 905), as well as *Le foyer de la danse* of 1888 (Lemoisne, no. 941; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).



2

EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans

stamped with foundry mark 'A.A.HEBRARD CIRE PERDUE' (on her left thigh)
bronze with brown patina with muslin skirt and satin hair ribbon on wooden base
Height (excluding base): 40½ in. (102.9 cm.)
Original wax model executed *circa* 1879-1881; this bronze version cast in 1927

$20,000,000-30,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Liebman, New York (commissioned from the Hébrard foundry, August 1927);
sale, Parke Bernet Galleries, New York, 7 December 1955, lot 41.
M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York (acquired at the above sale).
Mrs. Charles S. Payson, New York (acquired from the above, 7 December 1955).
Sandra Payson, New York (by descent from the above, 1975).
Wildenstein & Co. Inc., New York (acquired from the above).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 17 May 1985.

LITERATURE:

P. Mantz, "Exposition des oeuvres des artistes indépendants" in *Le Temps*, 1881, p. 3.
J.-K. Huysmans, *L'art moderne*, Paris, 1883, pp. 226-227.
J.-K. Huysmans, *L'art moderne*, Paris, 1908, pp. 250-251.
P. Gsell, "Edgar Degas, statuaire" in *La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe*, December 1918, pp. 374-376 (wax version illustrated, p. 375; titled *La danseuse habillée*).
P. Lafond, *Degas*, Paris, 1919, vol. II, pp. 64-66.
P.-A. Lemoisne, "Les statuettes de Degas" in *Art et décoration*, Paris, 1919, pp. 111-113 (wax version illustrated, p. 112).
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J. Meier-Graefe, *Degas*, London, 1923, p. 60.
P. Jamot, *Degas*, Paris, 1924, pp. 113 and 149 (wax version illustrated, pl. 52).
A. Vollard, *Degas*, Paris, 1924, pp. 111-112.
G. Bazin, "Degas sculpteur" in *L'amour de l'art*, 1931, pp. 294-295 (another cast illustrated, fig. 70; detail of another cast illustrated, fig. 71).
G. Grappe, *Degas*, Paris, 1936, p. 58 (wax version illustrated; dated 1880).
L. Venturi, *Les archives de l'Impressionnisme*, Paris, 1939, vol. II, p. 138, letter 31.
M. Rebatet, *Degas*, Paris, 1944 (another cast illustrated, pl. 102).
J. Rewald, *Degas: Works in Sculpture—A Complete Catalogue*, New York, 1944, pp. 6-8, 14, 15 and 21, no. XX (another cast illustrated, pp. 63-69).
P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1946, p. 128 (another cast illustrated, p. 129).
L. Browse, *Degas Dancers*, London, 1949, p. 370, no. 96 (another cast illustrated, pls. 96-97).
P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1954, p. 113.
J. Rewald, *Degas: Sculpture*, New York, 1957, pp. 16-20 and 114-145 (other casts illustrated, pls. 24-29).
P. Cabanne, *Edgar Degas*, New York, 1958, pp. 66-67 (another cast illustrated).
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Payson, New York, 1960 (illustrated in color).
L.W. Havemeyer, *Sixteen to Sixty: Memoirs of a Collector*, New York, 1961, pp. 264-265.
J. Rewald, *The History of Impressionism*, New York, 1961, p. 451 (other casts illustrated).
H.H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, New York, 1968, p. 68, no. 97 (another cast illustrated).
F. Russoli and F. Minervino, *L'opera completa di Degas*, Milan, 1970, p. 145, no. S73 (another cast illustrated).
J. Adhémar and F. Cachin, *Edgar Degas: Gravures et monotypes*, Paris, 1973, p. XXXI.
C.W. Millard, *The Sculpture of Edgar Degas*, Princeton, 1976, pp. 27-39, 80-82, 98-99 and 119-126 (another cast illustrated, fig. 26).
T. Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind*, New York, 1976, pp. 239-248 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 240, fig. 157).
I. Dunlop, *Degas*, New York, 1979, p. 180 (another cast illustrated in color, fig. 172).
M. Guillaud, ed., *Degas: Form and Space*, Paris, 1984, p. 180 (another cast illustrated in color, fig. 155; plaster version illustrated in color, p. 183, fig. 157).
G.T.M. Shackelford, *Degas, The Dancers*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1984, pp. 65-76 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 64).

H.W. Janson, *Nineteenth-Century Sculpture*, London, 1985, pp. 193-194 (another cast illustrated, fig. 219; dated 1881).
R. McMullen, *Degas: His Life, Times and Work*, London, 1985, pp. 333-336 and 338-339 (another cast illustrated, p. 333; dated 1880-1881).
D. Sutton, *Edgar Degas: Life and Work*, New York, 1986, p. 187 (another cast illustrated, p. 186, pl. 169).
F. Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers—Impressionism Comes to America*, New York, 1986, pp. 242-243 and 256 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 256, fig. 166; dated *circa* 1881).
R. Thomson, *The Private Degas*, London, 1987, pp. 80-86 (another cast illustrated, p. 83, pl. 110).
R. Gordon and A. Forge, *Degas*, London, 1988, pp. 206-207 (another cast illustrated).
J. Heilpern, "The Bass Reserve" in *Vogue*, December 1988, p. 345 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).
J. Sutherland Boggs, *Degas*, exh. cat., Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 1988, pp. 350-352, no. 227 (another cast illustrated, p. 351).
A. Roquebert, *Degas*, Paris, 1988, p. 55 (another cast illustrated, fig. 62).
R. Thomson, *Degas: The Nudes*, London, 1988, pp. 119-121, 125 and 179 (another cast illustrated, pl. 113).
C. Irvine, *Remarkable Private New York Residences*, New York, 1990, p. 11 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, p. 14).
J. Rewald, *Degas's Complete Sculpture: A Catalogue Raisonné*, San Francisco, 1990, pp. 16-19, 35 and 78-79, no. XX (another cast illustrated in color, p. 35; other casts illustrated, pp. 78-79; wax version illustrated, p. 78).
H. Loyrette, *Degas*, Paris, 1991, pp. 387, 391-394, 402, 612-614 and 672.
A. Pingeot and F. Horvat, *Degas Sculptures*, Paris, 1991, pp 188-190, no. 73 (another cast illustrated in color on the cover; other casts illustrated, pp. 34-35 and 188-189).
J.P. O'Neill, ed., *Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection*, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993, pp. 77-79 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 78).
S. Campbell, "Degas, The Sculptures: A Catalogue Raisonné" in *Apollo*, August 1995, pp. 46-47 (another cast illustrated, p. 46; wax version illustrated, p. 64).
J. Sutherland Boggs, *Degas*, New York, 1996, p. 44 (wax version illustrated, fig. 14).
M. Kahane, D. Pinasa, W. Piollet and S. Campbell, "Enquête sur la *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans* de Degas" in *La revue du Musée d'Orsay*, Paris, autumn 1998, no. 7, p. 69, no. 12 (illustrated in color, p. 70; other casts illustrated, p. 63, figs. 20a-c, p. 65, figs. 21a-b and 22, p. 66; other casts illustrated in color, p. 68, figs. 16-17 and pp. 70-71, nos. 1-30).
R. Kendall, *Degas and the Little Dancer*, exh. cat., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, 1998, pp. 25-106 (plaster version illustrated in color on the cover, p. 45, p. 101, fig. 71, p. 107, fig. 82 and p. 155, no. 45; another cast illustrated in color on the back cover, p. 100, fig. 70 and p. 154, no. 44; detail of plaster version illustrated in color on the frontispiece; wax version illustrated in color, p. viii; detail of wax version illustrated in color, p. 76; details of plaster version illustrated, p. 104, fig. 77, p. 105, figs. 78 and 79 and p. 108, figs. 83 and 85; detail of wax version illustrated, p. 108, fig. 84).
J.S. Czestochowski and A. Pingeot, ed., *Degas Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Bronzes*, New York, 2002, pp. 18 and 20-21 (other casts illustrated, figs. 8, 11 and 12); pp. 86-95 (another cast and details of another cast illustrated, figs. 1-10); pp. 100-105 (another cast illustrated, figs. 1-2); pp. 264-267, no. 73 (other casts illustrated; another cast illustrated in color on the cover and frontispiece).
W. Hofmann, *Degas. A Dialogue of Difference*, London, 2007, p. 186, no. 143 (another cast illustrated in color).
S. Campbell, R. Kendall, D. Barbour and S. Sturman, *Degas in the Norton Simon Museum*, Pasadena, California, 2009, vol. II, pp. 278-285, no. 47 (other casts illustrated in color, pp. 279-281; with incorrect provenance).
D. Hampton, *Mark Hampton: An American Decorator*, New York, 2009, p. 132 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, p. 133).
R. Kendall and J. Devonyar, *Degas and the Ballet, Picturing Movement*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2011, pp. 72-84 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 70, fig. 25 and pp. 84-85, fig. 26).
G. Hedberg, *Degas' Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen: The Earlier Version that Helped Spark the Birth of Modern Art*, Stutgart, 2016 (another cast illustrated in color, p. 15, figs. 7-8 and p. 35, figs 22-23; detail of another cast and plaster version illustrated in color, p. 23, figs. 14-15, p. 27, figs. 19-20, p. 41, figs. 33 and 35 and p. 43, figs. 38-39; detail of another cast illustrated in color, p. 26, fig. 18 and p. 40, fig. 32; another cast illustrated, p. 37, figs. 24-26; another cast and plaster version illustrated in color, p. 39, figs. 28 and 30).

Given the importance of this work within the canon of art history, the collected works listed here are only an extract of the extensive literature written on this work.

The wax model of *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans* in Degas's studio, photographed by Gauthier in 1918. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

EDGAR DEGAS

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans

CIRCA 1879-1881

Edgar Degas's *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans* is one of the most recognizable sculptures of modern art. It is the largest work in this medium that the artist ever produced, and the only one that he chose to exhibit in his lifetime. Formally innovative, as well as iconographically daring, this two-thirds life-size depiction of a young ballet dancer caused a sensation when the original wax version was first exhibited in 1881 at the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition in Paris, and continues to compel audiences to this day. Evoking a curious combination of compassion and intrigue, this iconic sculpture is a synthesis of Degas's extensive work on his beloved theme of the dance, a visual encapsulation of the conflicting concepts of artifice and reality that define so much of his art. Just as the dancer stands in a pose of insistent defiance, so too this work can be regarded as a bold visual manifesto: an embodiment of the artist's own, resolute avant-garde independence, and a demonstration of his unceasing fascination with the human form.

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans was originally made in wax, which the artist carefully modeled, adding meticulous detail—even the folds of the dancer's tights gathered behind her knees were sensitively rendered—before coloring the wax so as to simulate real flesh. Degas finally dressed this figure in real life accoutrements: a dancer's cotton faille bodice, linen ballet slippers, a tarlatan tutu comprised of several layers of netting, as well as a wig of real hair, which he scooped into a braid tied with a silk ribbon. This original wax version was never cast in bronze during the artist's lifetime (it is now held in The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.). It was only after his death that twenty-nine casts were made, the majority of which now reside in museums across the world.

Unlike many of the dancers who feature in Degas's myriad works on this theme, the identity of the model for the *Petite danseuse* is known. Marie van Goethem was a daughter of a Belgian tailor and a laundress who lived on the rue de Douai, not far from Degas on the lower slopes of Montmartre. Together with her two sisters, Antoinette and Louise-Joséphine, Marie was a ballet student at the Paris Opéra, one of the many young girls, "petits rats de l'opéra," as they were known, who sought to one day perform on the hallowed stage of this revered institution.

With her petite stature, long legs and arms, and elegant poise, Marie had the ideal proportions for a ballerina. Supposedly proud of her dark hair that she wore loose when she danced, she survived the unrelenting rigors and intense competition of her profession to perform in two Opéra ballets, *La Korrigane* in 1880, and *Namouna* in 1882. After this, she dropped out of the Opéra school due to a lack of attendance; she was later mentioned in a newspaper column of 1887, as a "model...for painters, who is frequently seen at the Brasserie des Martyrs, the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes, and the bar of Le Rat Mort" (quoted in R. Kendall, *Degas and the Little Dancer*, exh. cat., Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, 1998, p. 15).

Marie's identity was established thanks to a note that Degas inscribed on one of the preparatory drawings for the sculpture (Vente III: 341.2; Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Since she turned fourteen in June of 1879, it is thought that Marie likely worked for Degas over the course of the two or so year period in which he conceived and created the *Petite danseuse*. While she featured in the host of drawings, as well as a nude sculpture (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), their artistic relationship went beyond this body of work, with Marie thought to have also served as the model for several other pastels and paintings made around the same time, including *Danseuse au repos* (Lemoisne, no. 573; Private collection) and *La leçon de danse* (Lemoisne, no. 479; Philadelphia Museum of Art).

Degas's remarkable first foray into the medium of sculpture was accompanied by a fascinating series of drawings in charcoal, chalk or pastel through which he likely conceived of his ambitious and daring sculptural project. There exist nine sheets that relate to the finished work, many of which show the figure regarded from multiple angles, as if Degas was formulating his sculptural approach (see J. Sutherland Boggs, *Degas*, exh. cat., Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 1988, p. 345). The first two show Marie full-length, both dressed and nude, with her arms placed across her chest as she reaches to adjust her dress strap (Lemoisne, no. 599, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Vente III: 369, Private collection).

Edgar Degas, *Trois études d'une danseuse*, *circa* 1878-1880. The Morgan Library and Museum, New York.

Edgar Degas, *Quatre études d'une danseuse*, *circa* 1878-1881. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Edgar Degas, *Trois études d'une danseuse*, *circa* 1878-1880. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Over the course of his research, Degas must have hit upon the pose—known as "casual fourth position"—that the *Petite danseuse* is shown holding, for in the second group of seven directly associated sheets, he explored this position exclusively, picturing his model in full-length, again nude and clothed, from a variety of viewpoints, her arms stretched behind her and hands clasped tightly together (Vente III: 277, Private collection; Vente III: 386, Private collection; Vente IV: 287.1, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo; Lemoisne, no. 586*ter*, The Art Institute of Chicago; and Lemoisne, no. 586*bis*, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York). Studies of her head, torso and arms also feature on the sheet inscribed with her name and address (Vente III: 341.2; Musée d'Orsay), and a single drawing exists of studies of just her slippered feet (Vente III: 149; Private collection).

That Degas chose a pose for his dancer that is neither a formal ballet position nor a wholly relaxed posture is not surprising. In his works on the theme of the dance, Degas reveled in capturing these unselfconscious, unplanned movements, spurning the perfection of the performance to instead provide glimpses of his models caught off guard. Marie is shown in one such moment: her eyes appear half closed, as if she is lost in a moment of reverie, or perhaps exhaustion. Nothing Degas did was spontaneous or the result of whimsy. After years studying dancers, he most likely would have carefully invented this indefinable pose to purposefully defy expectation or identification.

Degas had initially intended to show the sculpture in the Fifth Impressionist exhibition held in March 1880. He announced its inclusion in the catalogue, but at the last minute, and for reasons unknown, decided to withdraw it from the show, instead deciding, in a radical move that remains as daring today as it was in 1880, to leave only the work's glass vitrine on display. One critic, Gustave Goetschy, lamented on 6 April 1880: "Everything M. Degas produces interests me so keenly that I delayed by one day the publication of this article to tell you about a wax statuette that I hear is marvelous and represents a fourteen-year-old dancer, modeled from life, wearing real dance slippers and a bouffant skirt composed of real fabric. But Degas isn't an 'Indépendant' for nothing! He is an artist who produces slowly, as he pleases, and at his own pace, without concerning himself about exhibitions. All the worse for us!" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 343).

Anticipation therefore grew around the Sixth Impressionist exhibition held the following spring. Titled simply *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans (statuette en cire)*, Degas added the work two weeks after the exhibition opened, its late inclusion serving only to heighten the wave of

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Photo: Patti McConville / Alamy Stock Photo.

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Photo: culliganphoto / Alamy Stock Photo.

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
Photo: Mervyn Rees / Alamy Stock Photo.

Petite danseuse de quatorze ans in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Photo: Nikki Kahn/The Washington Post via Getty Images.

consternation, adoration, and condemnation with which the work was met by viewers. "Paris could scarcely maintain its equilibrium," Louisine Havemeyer recalled. "His name was on all lips, his statue discussed by all the art world" (quoted in T. Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind*, New York, 1976, p. 239). James McNeill Whistler reportedly "uttered sharp cries and gesticulated in front of the case which enclosed the wax figurine," while Pierre-Auguste Renoir said to Mary Cassatt that this work proved Degas was "a sculptor capable of rivalling the ancients" (quoted in C.W. Millard, *The Sculpture of Edgar Degas*, Princeton, 1976, p. 28).

Petite danseuse earned a host of vociferous supporters and detractors. The unprecedented verisimilitude led the critic J.-K. Huysmans to declare it was, "the only truly modern attempt I know in sculpture," proclaiming, "The fact is that at one fell swoop, M. Degas has overthrown the traditions of sculpture, as he has for a long time been shaking up the conventions of painting" (quoted in G.T.M. Shackelford, *Degas, The Dancers*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1984, p. 676). Charles Ephrussi lauded the sculpture as, "a truly modern effort," while Nina de Villard predicted that it would become "the leading expression of a new art" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 45).

Many also condemned this level of realism. Although the life-like quality of the sculpture's tinted wax surface provoked some comment, the most innovative and audacious feature of the work was its incorporation of actual articles of clothing, which made it seem at once illusory and real. These sartorial elements—which anticipate the use of found materials in Cubism and Dada—constituted an overt challenge to the accepted criteria of sculpture in the late nineteenth century. Contemporary viewers were affronted. Some critics compared the dressed wax figure to a doll, a puppet, or a shop mannequin.

With its distinctive facial features and adolescent anatomy, the *Petite danseuse* also represented a striking contrast to the classicized, figurative sculpture of Degas's day. Eschewing academic tradition, Degas carefully reproduced Marie's physiognomy, making no attempt to idealize the idiosyncratic features of her face and body. Instead he captured, "the nervous curvature of the legs, the solid ankles enclosed in worn shoes, the bony torso—as supple as steel," as one shocked critic described the work (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 19).

Yet it was not just the physical appearance of this daring sculpture that caused consternation: her identity as a dancer and all that this signified to

Edgar Degas, *Danseuse au repos*, *circa* 1878-1880. Private collection.

Edgar Degas, *La Leçon de danse*, 1881. Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Photo: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY.

Edgar Degas, *L'Etoile*, 1876–1877. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

Parisian audiences at this time was also radical. Indeed, in his frank depiction of this little dancer, Degas was consciously and purposefully reveling in a subject loaded with meaning. It is hard to fathom now the central role that the Opéra played in Paris throughout the nineteenth century. The ballet dancers, *abonnés*, spectators, as well as the performances themselves filled gossip columns and critical reviews, inspired illustrations, serial stories, and novels, spawning a cult of personality akin to the Golden Age of Hollywood in the twentieth century, as Richard Kendall has explained (*ibid*., p. 16).

The Opéra was not solely a cultural and artistic institution of the highest measure, it was also a hotbed of state sanctioned vice. It was well known that the wealthy aristocrats, politicians, and other high ranking men of Second Empire and subsequently Third Republic Paris frequented the Opéra to make the acquaintance of the ballet dancers, such liaisons often conducted under the guise of patronage. Indeed, Charles Garnier's ornate Palais Garnier had a *foyer de danse*, a green-room type area created to allow male attendees to mingle with the performers. The notorious "Préfet de la Seine," the renovator of modern Paris as we know it today, Baron Haussmann, famously began an affair with a ballet dancer at the Opéra, and Degas's own brother Achille, had made headlines when he fired a gun at the husband of his former ballet dancer mistress.

The ballerina that Degas depicted in *Petite danseuse* stood as an archetype for the young dancers who were in training to become fully fledged members of one of the *quadrailles* of the Opéra. Often from working class families, these "petits rats" embodied the lure of stardom and the poverty of its pursuit—not only the training but the long term prospects of this profession. The dancers often fell into a life of prostitution, as fictionalized at around the same time by Degas's friend, Ludovic Halévy's novel, *La Famille Cardinale*.

Those who saw this sculpture would have recognized exactly the realities of her profession. As Ephrussi wrote, she represented, "the Opéra rat in her modern form, learning her craft, with all her disposition and stock of bad instincts and licentious inclinations" (quoted in *ibid*., p. 21). In the same vein, Paul Mantz described the dancer's expression as one of "brutish insolence," and asked, "Why is her forehead, as are her lips, so profoundly marked by vice?" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit*., 1988, p. 343). The idea that these moral ambiguities, as well as the viewers' complicity in ignoring the harsh realities of the dancers' situations, should become the subject of modern art was unacceptable for many visitors, their shock reminiscent of the outcry that greeted Edouard Manet's *Olympia*, and its direct, unambiguous implication of the viewer within the scene of prostitution, some decades prior. The glittering veneer of the ballet was

"Paris could scarcely maintain its equilibrium. His name was on all lips, his statue discussed by all the art world."

LOUISINE HAVEMEYER

what nineteenth century Parisians wanted to see: star-like dancers flitting through the air, not the seedier underworld of which the youthful, defiant little dancer was a part.

Following the 1881 Impressionist Exhibition, the wax version of the *Petite danseuse* remained in Degas's studio until his death in 1917. It was never again exhibited during his lifetime, nor reproduced in any form. The possibility of casting the sculpture arose in 1903 when the celebrated Impressionist collector Louisine Havemeyer attempted to purchase the wax original. Degas was concerned about parting with it on account of its condition and proposed producing a bronze or plaster cast instead. Although the sale did not come to fruition, several references in Degas's correspondence—in particular, a letter to the sculptor Albert Bartholomé that begins: "My dear friend, and perhaps caster..."—indicate that the artist seriously considered casting the sculpture at this time.

In the end, however, the casting of the *Petite danseuse* was not begun until 1918, when Degas's heirs contracted the founder Adrien Hébrard to produce limited bronze editions of all seventy-four wax sculptures found during the posthumous inventory of the artist's studio. The first complete set of bronzes, including the *Petite danseuse*, was finished in 1921 and purchased by Louisine Havemeyer.

A total of twenty-nine bronze casts of the sculpture have been identified, over half of which are exhibited today in major museums, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Tate, London, and the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Fourteen casts are each stamped with their own letter (A through S, with several examples missing), and eleven are unlettered; one is marked HER.D., and two are marked HER, indicating that they were to be reserved for Degas's heirs and for the foundry, respectively. A final example, marked *modèle*, is housed in the Norton Simon Museum of Art in Pasadena, and two plaster versions can be found in the Joslyn Art Museum, and The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

3

EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)

Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert

stamped with signature 'Degas' (Lugt 658; lower right)
oil on canvas
36¼ x 16½ in. (92.1 x 41.9 cm.)
Painted *circa* 1887-1890

$1,200,000-1,800,000

PROVENANCE:

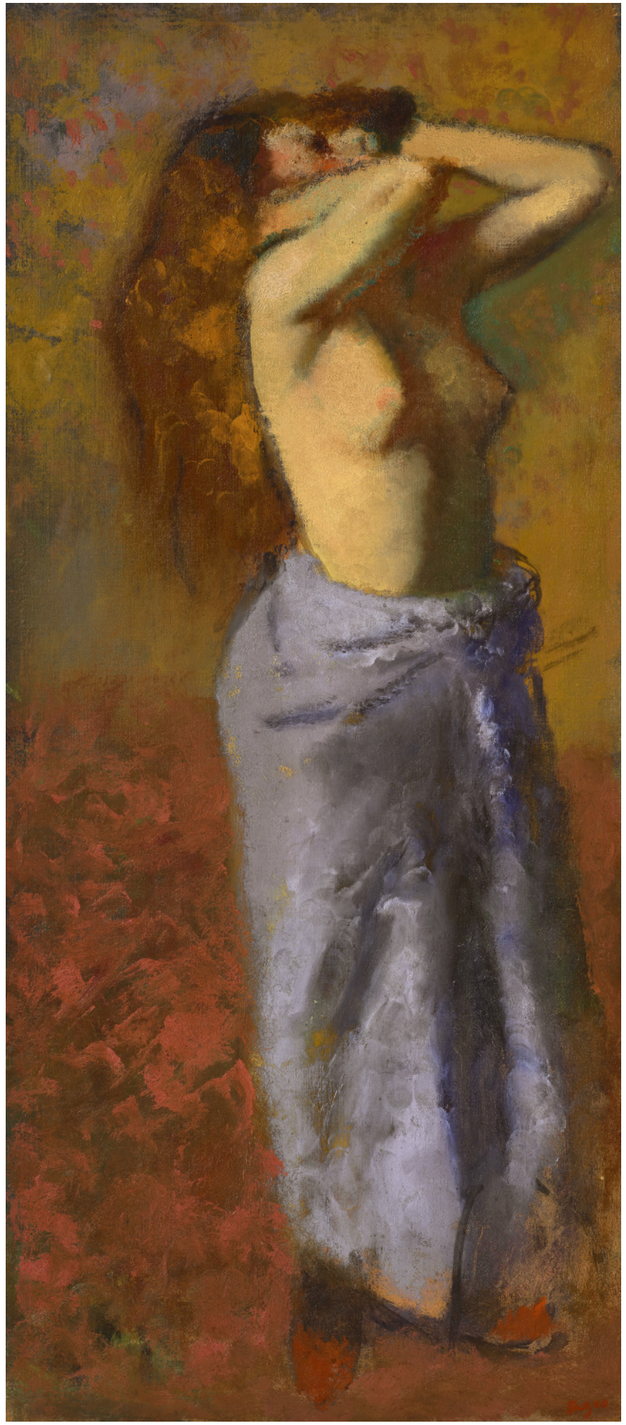
Estate of the artist; First sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 6-8 May 1918, lot 89.
Gaston Monteux, Paris.
Germaine "Nini" Monteux and Bernard Ernest Reichenbach, Paris (by descent from the above); sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 3 June 1937, lot 7.
Bacri (acquired at the above sale).
L. Salavin, Paris (by 1955).
Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired from the above).
John T. Dorrance, Jr., Gladwyne, Pennsylvania (acquired from the above, 1969); Estate sale, Sotheby's, New York, 18 October 1989, lot 21.
Acquired at the above sale by the late owner.

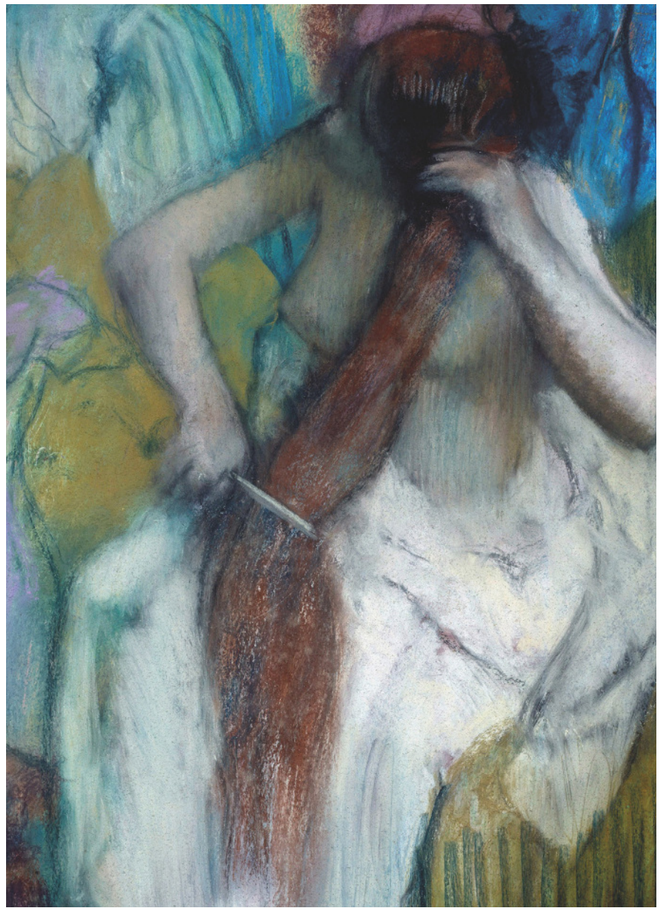
EXHIBITED:

Paris, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, *Degas dans les collections françaises, exposition organisée au profit de la Ligue Nationale contre le Taudis*, 1955, p. 51, no. 122 (illustrated, p. 42; titled *Femme nue à la draperie bleue* and dated 1886).
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Edgar Degas: Exposition organisée au profit de la Société des amis du Louvre*, June-October 1960, no. 44.

LITERATURE:

P.-A. Lemoisne, *Degas et son œuvre*, New York, 1946, vol. III, p. 542, no. 934 (illustrated, p. 543).
F. Russoli and F. Minervino, *L'opera completa di Degas*, Milan, 1970, p. 129, no. 936 (illustrated, p. 128).





Edgar Degas, *Femme se coiffant*, *circa* 1890-1892. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

EDGAR DEGAS

Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert

CIRCA 1887-1890

In the mid-1880s, Edgar Degas made a concerted effort to establish himself as the leading innovator of the modern nude. While this subject had always been a crucial part of his *oeuvre*, first appearing in a classical guise, it was not until the end of this seminal decade of his career that the female nude came to the fore in Degas's art, most often pictured in the form of a bather undertaking her daily ablutions in the private sanctum of her *toilette*, a truly radical setting for this motif.

Painted *circa* 1887-1890, *Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert* is one such work. Rendered on an impressively large scale, this oil—a rare medium for the artist at this time—depicts a bather immersed in a private reverie, her arms raised as if drying her hair or stretching, causing the side of her torso to glow in the light while the rest of her body appears cloaked in dramatic shadow. Unlike other works of this subject from this period, this red-headed woman is not obviously pictured amid the domain of her bedroom but instead appears within an enigmatic, indefinable setting rendered with clouds of luminous color. As a result, the painting is imbued with a timeless quality, referencing the art of the old masters that Degas so revered—recalling Titian's bathing Venus or Ingres's *La Source*—as well as being completely of its time, stripped of mythological or historical context, the towel around her waist a reminder that she is a contemporary woman, not a goddess, nymph or biblical figure.

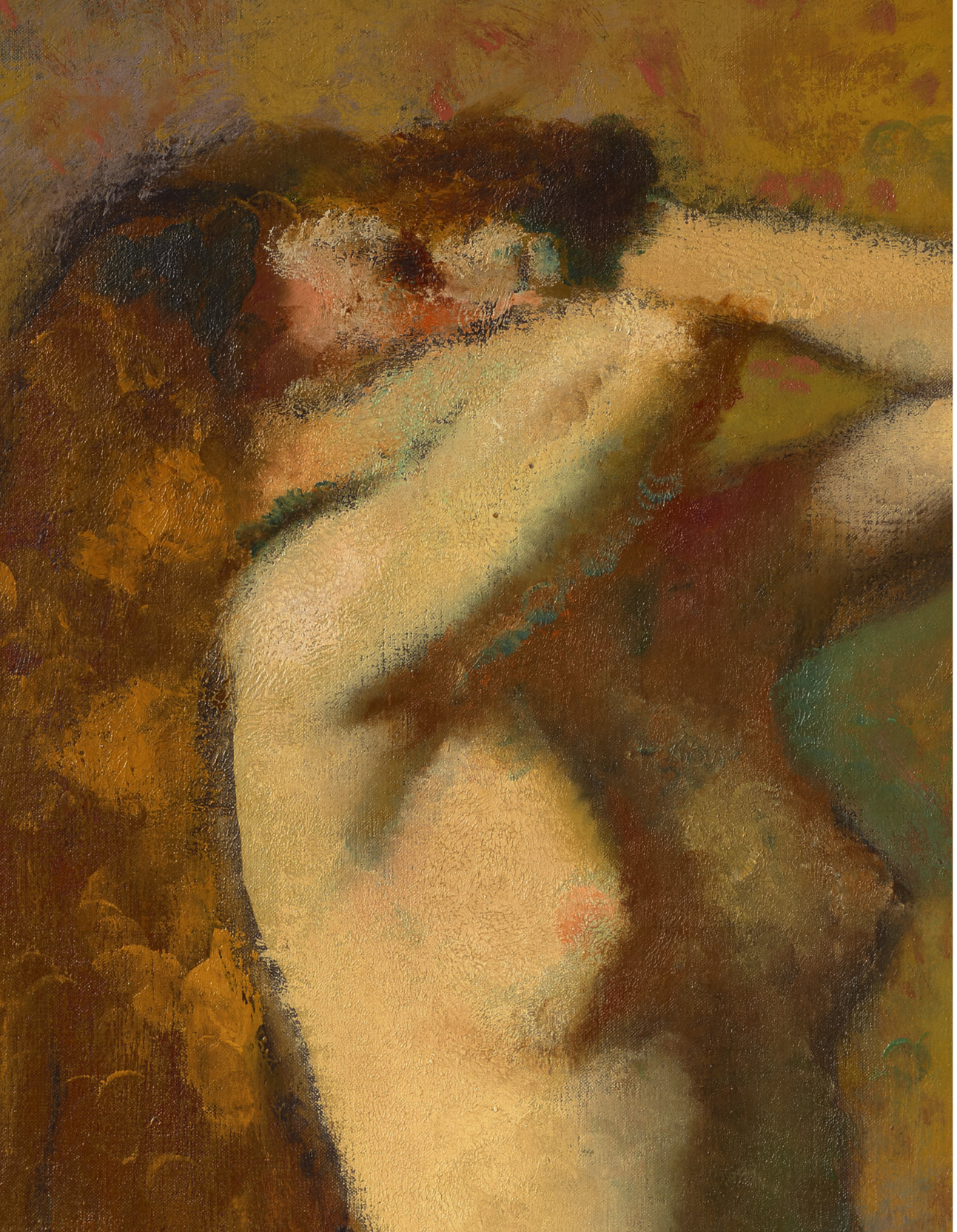
A year before he began the present work, Degas had debuted a number of bathing figures in pastel in the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition of 1886—his submission for which consisted of six female nudes, "bathing, washing, drying themselves, toweling themselves, combing their hair or having it combed," as he described in the catalogue of the show (quoted in R. Kendall, *Degas: Beyond Impressionism*, exh. cat., National Gallery, London, 1996, p. 141). With strikingly original poses captured from often vertiginous viewpoints in closely cropped compositions, these very real, unidealized nudes offered an entirely new conception of this subject during the closing years of the nineteenth century. As in the present work, the identity of the female figure is unknown; likewise, in many of the *toilette* scenes the class of the women was obscure, leaving viewers and critics more familiar with regarding the nude in some form of narrative context, unsure if they were viewing a brothel, a boudoir, or in some cases, a bourgeois bedroom. As Degas explained, "two centuries ago, I would have been painting 'Susannah Bathing', now I just paint 'Women in a Tub'" (quoted in R. Kendall, *Degas by Himself: Drawings, Paintings, Writings*, London, 2000, p. 318).

One of Degas's favorite motif was of a woman with her arms raised to comb or tend to her hair, appearing in multiple nudes, as well as in other subjects of his *oeuvre*. He explored this pose from every angle, relishing the depiction of the woman's loose, tumbling locks. A similar figure appears in the Musée d'Orsay's pastel of the same period (Lemoisne, no. 930), this time appearing seated, a towel likewise tied round her waist while she combs out her long russet colored hair. For Degas, this pose not only offered an opportunity to portray a staged form of feminine eroticism, combined with a radical private domestic setting, but also the chance to immerse himself in the natural poses and self-absorbed gestures of his abluting models, conveying them in compositions that abound with resplendent contrasts of color, texture, line and form, as the present work brilliantly shows.

Indeed, by this time, loose waves of long hair had become synonymous with sensuality and sexuality in the art of both academic and avant-garde painters, a fact that Degas was well aware of and indeed played with in his own iterations of this motif. As Richard Kendall has explained, "Common to all [Degas's] depictions, and perhaps responsible for some of their poignancy, is a rudimentary paradox. On one hand, the act of combing, brushing or attending to the hair is one of the most banal and wearisome of daily routines, associated with personal hygiene as much as glamor. In stark contrast to this banality, hair-combing has a rich and allusive history, intersected by allegorical, literary and

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Source*, 1820-1856. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Pierre Bonnard, *Nu dans un interieur, circa* 1935. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



sexual traditions, many of which were known to Degas" (*op. cit.*, 1996, pp. 218-219).

The upwardly reaching pose of the protagonist of *Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert* also appeared in the guise of Degas's dancers. In a number of the artist's ambitious early ballet scenes of the 1870s, a similarly posed dancer appears, stretching upwards, elbows bent and crossed, in a moment of unselfconscious exhaustion (she appears, for example, on the left hand side of the iconic trio of works, each titled *Répétition d'un ballet sur la scène*, Lemoisne, nos. 340, 400 and 498). This pose had its genesis in the art of the past, specifically a painting that Degas knew by heart: Andrea Mantegna's *Crucifixion* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), in which one of the crucified thieves is found in this same outstretched position. In so much of his work from the 1870s onwards, Degas reveled in blending the art of the past with the contemporary world that he was depicting. "O Giotto, let me see Paris, and you Paris, let me see Giotto," he passionately declared in one of his notebooks, describing this powerful artistic fusion that he often concocted in his compositions (quoted in R. Kendall and J. Devonyar, *Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2011, p. 27).

Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert remained in Degas's possession for the rest of his life. It was sold in the first of the artist's estate sales in 1918. Subsequently it was acquired by Gaston Monteux, a wealthy industrialist, who had homes in Paris and the Cap d'Antibes. Monteux was a prominent collector of modern art. The painting entered the collection of Monteux's daughter, Germaine, and son-in-law, the French lawyer, Bernard Reichenbach, who together inherited and also acquired, a notable art collection. In 1929, after Monteux's death, they built a lavish home, the Hôtel Reichenbach, at 18 rue Alfred-Dehondencq in Paris, designed by a leading architect of the time, Jean-Charles Moreux.

Reichenbach sold works from his collection in a sale at Hôtel Drouot in Paris held in 1937. This auction included the present work, together with masterpieces such as a reclining nude by Amedeo Modigliani, now in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, as well as Henri Matisse's *Jeune fille devant un aquarium*, which was bought by Dr Albert Barnes and now resides in The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, as well as works by Pablo Picasso, Pierre Bonnard, and others. *Femme en peignoir bleu le torse découvert* later entered the collection of John T. Dorrance, Jr., heir to the Campbell Soup Company fortune.

Monet in his third studio, late 1915-early 1916. Photo: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The New York School and Monet

In 1955, The Museum of Modern Art, New York's foremost institution dedicated to contemporary art, appeared to make an about-face: it acquired a work by Claude Monet, the first by the artist to enter its collection. The great Impressionist master was never part of the influential museum's director, Alfred Barr's plan. Dedicated to presenting a cohesive, sequential view of the development of modern art, Barr had positioned a quartet of Post-Impressionists—Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Georges Seurat—as the progenitors of twentieth-century Modernism, placing them at the start of his carefully constructed path that supposedly passed through Cubism and culminated with geometric abstraction. These artists were the stars of the museum's inaugural exhibition in November 1929, and stood at the top of Barr's legendary and now infamous "The Development of Abstract Art" diagram. Monet and his fellow Impressionists were nowhere to be seen, their innovations regarded as a "pre-modern" relic of the nineteenth century.

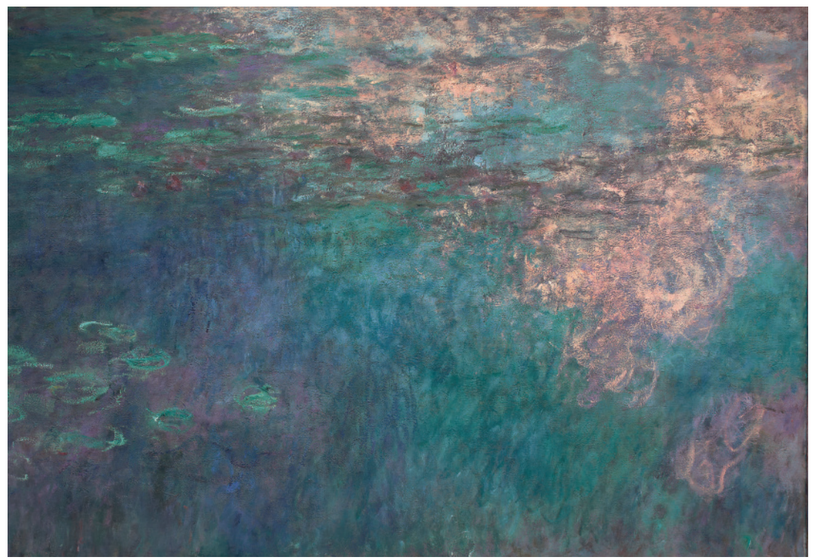
Yet, as the 1950s progressed, a new type of painting emerged in post-war America, one that, with its large scale, immersive "all-over" or color field compositions, made with gestural, instinctive painterly strokes, could not be fully explained through Barr's hermetic, canonical progression of movements and artists. This group, known collectively at first as the New York School, were developing a wholly new approach to art making that was self-consciously and intentionally "non-European". The work of artists including Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Willem de Kooning, and Barnett Newman was entirely abstract, celebrating and exalting the act of painting itself.

At the same time that these artists were rising to prominence in America, so the late work of Monet—the large, near abstract paintings inspired by his water lily pond and garden at Giverny that he produced from around 1914 until his death in 1926—much of which had remained in his studio since his death, was beginning to rouse interest once more. In 1952, the Musée de la Orangerie was renovated, shedding new light on Monet's career-crowning *Grandes Décorations*—a series of eight monumental *Nymphéas* panels that the artist had gifted to the state.

Michel Monet, the artist's son and heir, had also begun to receive inquiries about his father's late works. In 1949, he had lent five of these paintings to the Kunsthalle Basel, and three years later, to the Kunsthaus Zürich, where the museum director of the time, René Wehrli, proclaimed these *Nymphéas* the precursors of abstract art (A. Temkin and N. Lawrence, *Claude Monet Water Lilies*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2009, p. 18). Even more notice was taken when Walter P. Chrysler Jr. acquired a large example in 1950, leading the way for other discerning collectors.

Five years later, Barr presented his idea of acquiring one of the late *Nymphéas* for The Museum of Modern Art. The committee agreed and the group's chairman, James Thrall Soby, together with the curator of museum collections, Dorothy Miller, who were both in Europe at the time, were dispatched to Giverny to choose one. At the end of the year, the Museum's new acquisition (*Nymphéas*, 1914-1926, formerly in The Museum of Modern Art, destroyed in 1958) went on display for the first time as part of an exhibition, *Recent Acquisitions*, where, shown in isolation in a gallery of its own, with curtains flanking the entrance, it was met with rapturous appreciation and praise, its presence causing ripples throughout the international art world.

Why was it that Monet's work occupied a new contemporary relevance at this time? For Monet, his water lilies and their watery habitat had become a pretext for studying the sublime, immersive fields of emotive color, luminous light, and enveloping atmosphere, as the artist painted with sweeping, gestural strokes freed from any representational function, the pigment pulled, layered, swirled across the densely worked surface. Regarded at the time as the genesis of a new form of "pure painting," these late works were therefore the perfect predecessors with which to contextualize the contemporary work of the Abstract Expressionists.



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas* (details), 1914-1926. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

"In the past decade paintings by such artists as Pollock, Rothko, Still, Reinhardt, Tobey, and writings by such artists as André Masson and Barnett Newman have made us see in Monet's huge late pictures and in the smaller, wilder sketches he made for them a purity of image and concept of pictorial space that we now can recognize as greatly daring poetry."

THOMAS HESS

Rothko's large color-field canvases, or Pollock's gestural drip paintings entered into a far more powerful dialogue with Monet's work than with Cézanne's landscapes, for example. In terms of size, the *Nymphéas* that Soby and Miller chose would become for a time the largest work in the museum, spanning five and a half meters in width, more than rivaling Pollock's *Number IA, 1948* and Rothko's *No. 10* that were both in the collection at that time. Though dating from a few years prior to the late *Nymphéas*, the radiant, immersive mist of jewel-like color of Monet's *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* in the present collection illustrates this aesthetic connection—the great wave of chromatic energy that engulfs the viewer when looking at Rothko's *Untitled (Shades of Red)* can be felt in the Impressionist's work. Barr emphasized these connections, coining the phrase "abstract impressionism" ("Over Fifty Newly Acquired Paintings and Sculptures on View at The Museum of Modern Art," 30 November 1955, The Museum of Modern Art, New York).

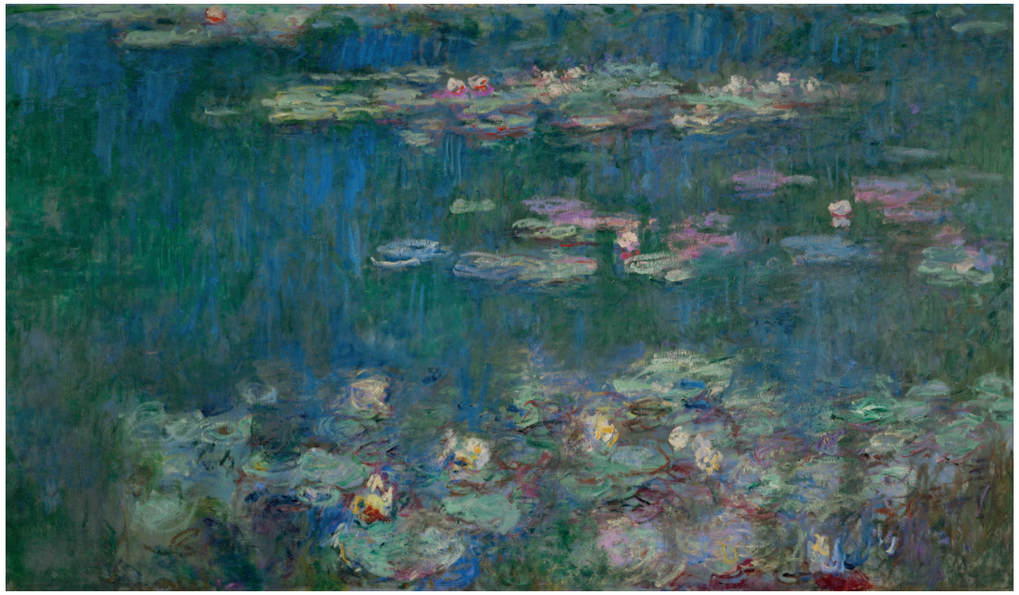
Rothko himself expounded the connection between his and Monet's work. In an interview of 1953, he explained why he saw himself as the Impressionist's heir. "In my work one…finds the direct awareness of an essential humanness. Monet had this quality and that's why I prefer Monet to Cézanne… Despite the general claim that Cézanne had created a new vision and that he is the father of modern painting, I myself prefer Monet.

Monet was for me the greater artist of the two" (quoted in J.E.B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, Chicago, 1998, p. 301). "When people find similarities in my paintings with the works of others," he concluded "it only proves that my work is taking its rightful place in the development of art history" (*ibid*., p. 301).

In 1960, a major exhibition, *Late Monet*, was held at the Museum, followed a year later by Rothko's first retrospective there (the same year that *Untitled (Shades of Red)* in the present collection was painted). Monet's large scale canvases found their contemporary echo in Rothko's own expansively-scaled works. The colorist abstractions of the Impressionist's symphonic compositions, inspired by the atmosphere and light of the world around him, were taken to their farthest extreme in Rothko's art, which was entirely removed from representation with their purely abstract clouds of immersive, floating color. Not long after, in 1964, Rothko was commissioned by John and Dominque de Menil to create a series of canvases to fill what would become known as the Rothko Chapel in Houston. Two years later, Rothko visited Europe, stopping in Paris and making a pilgrimage to Monet's own, immersive "chapel" of Impressionism at the Musée de l'Orangerie.

Critics likewise recognized in Monet's work the same aesthetic and formal qualities as they were witnessing in the work of the Abstract Expressionists: paintings in which the surface, the act of the gesture, and the materiality of paint itself, superseded any kind of representational subject. "Monet is beginning to receive his due," the infamous and at the time enormously influential critic, Clement Greenberg, wrote in an article of 1957. "Recently The Museum of Modern Art and Walter Chrysler Jr. have each bought one of the huge *Water Lilies* that were painted between 1915 and 1925… Even more important, their influence is felt—whether directly or indirectly—in some of the most advanced painting now being done in the country" ("The Later Monet," *Art News Annual*, 26, 1957, in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, Chicago and London, 1993, p. 3).

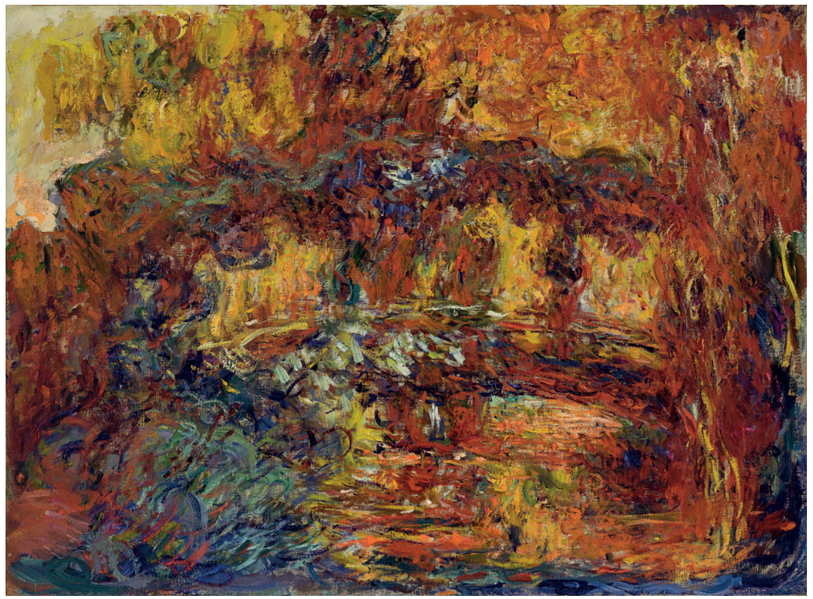
Greenberg had visited Paris in 1954, when he likely visited the Orangerie. For him, these works were the most radical and revolutionary products of Impressionism—works which thoroughly broke with the conventions of illusionism to instead assert the formal



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1914-1918. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Mark Rothko, *No. 10*, 1950. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

Barnett Newman, *Concord*, 1949. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. © 2022 Barnett Newman Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, New York.



Claude Monet, *Le Pont Japonais*, *circa* 1920-1922. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

Jackson Pollock, *Number 1A*, 1948. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA / Photo © Boltin Picture Library / Bridgeman Images.

"Monet's *Nymphéas*, as free of polemic as the Americans' work was a clarion call."

ANN TEMKIN

qualities of pure painting itself. For Greenberg, this provided the perfect vehicle for his analysis and interpretation of the Abstract Expressionists. "Today those huge close-ups which are the last *Nymphéas* say—to and with the radical Abstract Expressionists—that a lot of physical space is needed to develop adequately a strong pictorial idea that does not involve an illusion of deep space. The broad, daubed scribble in which the *Nymphéas* are executed says that the surface of a painting must breathe, but that its breath is to be made of texture and body of canvas and paint, not of disembodied color; that pigment is to be solicited from the surface, not just applied to it. Above all, the *Nymphéas* tell us once again that all canons of excellence are provisional." He concluded, "Right now any one of the *Nymphéas* seems to belong more to our time, and its future, than do Cézanne's own attempts at summing-up statements in his large *Baigneuses*" (*ibid.*, pp. 10 and 11).

In 1958, disaster struck in The Museum of Modern Art. A fire ripped through the building, destroying the *Nymphéas* as well as a smaller work from the series that Barr had added to the collection two years prior. "I will so miss the large picture but any portion of it that can be saved will be enough for me. My heart still aches over the loss," a bereft Dan Flavin wrote at the time (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 31). Immediately Barr looked to acquire another of the large panels, yet as a buyer, he would suffer from the very trend he had helped to create: in 1955, the first *Nymphéas* had cost 4 million francs (then $11,500), just three years later, a triptych cost the equivalent of $150,00 and single panel $83,000 (*ibid.*, pp. 31 and 34). Ultimately the museum bought both a triptych and a single panel, both of which still remain in the Museum to this day.

Not only was it the formal qualities of the *Nymphéas* that gave rise to their renewed admiration and critical appreciation in the post-war years, but the spirit of artistic liberty with which they were created was something particularly pertinent to many at this time. Reviewing the Tate's 1957 retrospective, David Sylvester declared Monet, "the art world's most newly resurrected deity, the painter whose standing has risen more than that of any other as a result of post-war movements in taste," asking his *New York Times* readers, "What is it that makes us find Monet so peculiarly sympathetic? It isn't only that he reminds us of Rothko and Still. It's that he shares a certain basic attitude with us, namely, a desire for complete freedom from the constraints of art... The abstract paintings done today which resemble the late works of Monet are palpably the reflections of personal gestures. They are the artist projecting himself, his impulses, his rhythms" (*About Modern Art: Critical Essays, 1948-97*, London, 1997, pp. 74-76).

Ironically perhaps, the very school of painters to whom late Monet had become associated with in the 1950s had never professed a direct interest or attributed any influence to the French master. While Barnett Newman had mentioned Monet in letters to the then-President of MoMA, William A.M. Burden, as part of his criticism of the Museum's teleological presentation of modern art, the Impressionist was little mentioned by this group. Indeed, while the final product of Monet's final great painting campaign was near abstract canvases, at the very heart of these works stands nature itself. This was the antithesis of the Abstract Expressionists' artistic program at this time—their art came purposefully from within, freed from any ties to the external world.

Nevertheless, there was in the mid-1950s a fascinating moment when Impressionism met Abstract Expressionism, as the dialogue between art's past and present continued to unfold and change. "The pure abstraction of art can go no further," Louis Gillet had written upon seeing Monet's *Nymphéas* in 1909 (quoted in R. King, *Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of the Waterlilies*, London, 2016, p. 44). While he was of course proved wrong by the cavalcade of avant-garde developments that took place over the following years, perhaps there was some prescient truth in his statement. The form of abstraction Monet had hit upon would not be recognized for some four decades later, the pictorial revolution he enacted upon his large panels in his studio in Giverny not truly discovered nor realized until the middle of the century.

Joan Mitchell, *No Rain*, 1976. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

High Noon

DAVID ANFAM

Through clouds like ashes,
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.
– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Simply stated, Mark Rothko's two canvases from The Collection of Anne H. Bass form an extraordinary pair. Extraordinary since they are almost pendants, extremely close kith and kin. The pictures date from successive years, employ vertical formats of nearly the same dimensions, each features three rectangular presences and, in particular, share a palette keyed to redness. It is as if in some sly way Rothko had his mind's eye on the one while painting the other. Nor would it be far-fetched to conclude that the artist thought in these terms – retaining and interweaving pictorial ideas across the years like the parts of some great fugue. For example, consider his verdict on time: "The past is simple; the present is complex; the future is even simpler" (M. Rothko, quoted by W. C. Seitz, Notes from an interview, 22 January 1952. Archives of American Art, Seitz Papers, Box 5). In short, Rothko had a shrewd habit of looking back to the future. In this creative process, he never wavered. His dictum from 1957 confirms the resoluteness, "If a thing is worth doing once, it is worth doing over and again – exploring it, probing it, demanding by this repetition that the public look at it" (M. Rothko, quoted in Ida Kohlmeyer, "About Rothko", *Arts Quarterly*, Oct./Nov./Dec. 1982, p. 59). In this respect, Rothko need not have worried overmuch. The intensity to *Untitled (Shades of Red)* and *No. 1* is such that any sentient viewer must find it hard to avert their eyes from these abstract icons. They appear indelible.

For Rothko, color – no matter how striking – was always a means to an end. Namely, to voice the language of the emotions. “Ecstasy” ranked high among those feelings, as did “tragedy”. Likewise, color per se struck him as merely decorative: his preferred expressive term was “measures” (M. Rothko, quoted in Marjorie Phillips, *Duncan Phillips and His Collection*, Boston, 1970, p. 288). Measures are to color, what scale is to size. Not an inhuman fact but, rather, felt time and space. Thus, among the foremost achievements of his so-called “surrealist” period (the word is a misnomer insofar as it connotes an irrationality alien to Rothko) in the mid-1940s is *Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea* (1944). With a pale rosy glow in its upper background and two humanoid figures that symbolize Rothko’s marriage the following March to Mary Alice (“Mell”) Beistle, this “*slow* swirl” [emphasis mine] celebrates a literal and metaphorical “dawn”, a new beginning at once personal and pictorial. *Vibrations of Aurora* (1944), drives home this message – the titular Roman goddess presides over dawn.

Cut to 1961-62 and much water has flown under the proverbial bridge. Dawn had given way to other hours. Often, the pulse to certain aspects in Rothko’s art quickened a lot. Witness the instantaneity emanating from the current pair of images. Their lyrical brilliance – tangerine yielding to deeper crimsons and all hovering within an indefinable flesh-hued atmosphere – rings out loud, clear and fast. But beware, brightness does not necessarily spell happiness. On the contrary, the mood here may be closer to ecstatic tragedy. If so, then Rothko was recalling one of his foundational texts, Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872).

At risk of writerly recycling, it proves impossible not to invoke *The Birth of Tragedy* because its philosophy, which caused a revolution in classical scholarship, unified existential opposites – a stately tranquil impulse (personified by the Greek god Apollo) and intoxicated, violent energies (the antithetical deity Dionysus). As such, they strike to the core of Rothko’s vision wherein tragic shock waves are born from this simultaneous fission and fusion. Suffice it to quote his undated note: “Apollo may be the God of sculpture [i.e. form-giving]. But in the extreme he is also the God of light

“The past is simple; the present is complex; the future is even simpler.”

MARK ROTHKO

Mark Rothko, *Thru the Window*, 1938-1939. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Mark Rothko, *Untitled (Multiform)*, 1948. Private collection. © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

and in the burst of splendor not only is all illuminated but as it gains in intensity all is also wiped out. That is the secret which I use to contain the Dionisian in a burst of light" (M. Rothko, quoted in Miguel López-Remiro, (ed.), *Mark Rothko: Writings on Art*, New Haven, 2006, p. 143). This script is the drama that unfolds, in a flash, in the two Anne H. Bass compositions. In each, three nimbuses irradiate and electrify one another like uncanny sunbursts. Did Rothko, who had once portrayed a *Crucifixion* (1935), perhaps at some unconscious level still associate the triad with catastrophe-laden spirituality, an emotional darkness at noon?

Whether it be the early 1960s, a decade or two previously or in the remaining years before Rothko's death in 1970, one leitmotif recurs over and again as his prime agent (not to mention its ripple effect far and wide). Red – a hue that for Rothko proved by turns fundamental, changeful and, ultimately, redux. Significantly, scholars of the subject regard this color as primal, cataclysmic ("red next to yellow/will kill a fellow") and, in the Kabbalah, a sign of power and strength (see A. Theroux, *The Primary Colours: Three Essays*, London, 1995, pp. 55, 121, 153–258).

Red lurks there at the outset in the strange, highly significant *Thru the Window*. Already, the blank picture-within-a-picture on its easel is as diminutive as the prophecy its walls and windows foretell was to become engulfing. A decade on, in the crucial "Multiforms" phase, typified by a forceful 1948 work, reds spread resurgent like a bloodbath (should the simile sound melodramatic, remember the "charnel-house" compositions inspired by Greek tragedy and World War Two from just a few years earlier) around a lone ultramarine "actor" (Rothko's own appellation for these shapes). Then, during the 1950s and after, the reds multiply. They wax and wane, shrink and dilate, dematerialize or become denser, brighten and dim. On this score, Rothko left no chromatic stone, so to speak, unturned. Thereafter, ruddiness became his virtual trademark (like many another mature canvas, the 1961 Bass picture is signed and dated on the verso in maroon pigment). Thus, for example it migrated into the cinema – Rothko became friends with the Italian film director Michelangelo Antonioni whose *Red Desert* with its stress on

"We can now see where *Untitled (Shades of Red)* and *No. 1* truly stand. At a dazzling, poised high noon shortly before nightfall."

DAVID ANFAM

static yet charged emptiness he influenced, just as the former admired the latter's film *L'Avventura* (1960) for its moody tension. Closer to the present, an ersatz "Rothko" in varying rufescent shades even featured in the crude but shrewd cable network series *Mad Men* (2007–15). Needless to add, an award-winning play also debuted in 2009 (no matter that its portrayal of Rothko is overly melodramatic) titled… *Red*. Rothko's reds have come to assume a near-universal currency, an ongoing life of their own.

But stop for a decisive moment, that of the two masterpieces at stake. In 1961-62 Rothko was exactly midway in what were to become his climactic three murals projects. First, the series conceived for Manhattan's Seagram Building (1958-59); next, those for Harvard University (commissioned 1961, completed 1962); and the Chapel in Houston that bears his name (posthumously inaugurated in 1971). Although each ensemble is distinctive, they share a somber monumentality conveyed predominantly by an auratic redness that has morphed into multitudinous maroons, ranging from ghostly, almost lilac tints to the indescribable, subfusc purples headed toward crepuscular black in the Chapel. In retrospect, we can now see where *Untitled (Shades of Red)* and *No. 1* truly stand. At a dazzling, poised high noon shortly before nightfall.

Film poster, Monica Vitti in *Le Désert Rouge*, 1964. Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

♦° 4

MARK ROTHKO (1903-1970)

Untitled (Shades of Red)

signed and dated 'MARK ROTHKO 1961' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
69 x 56 in. (175.3 x 142.2 cm.)
Painted in 1961.

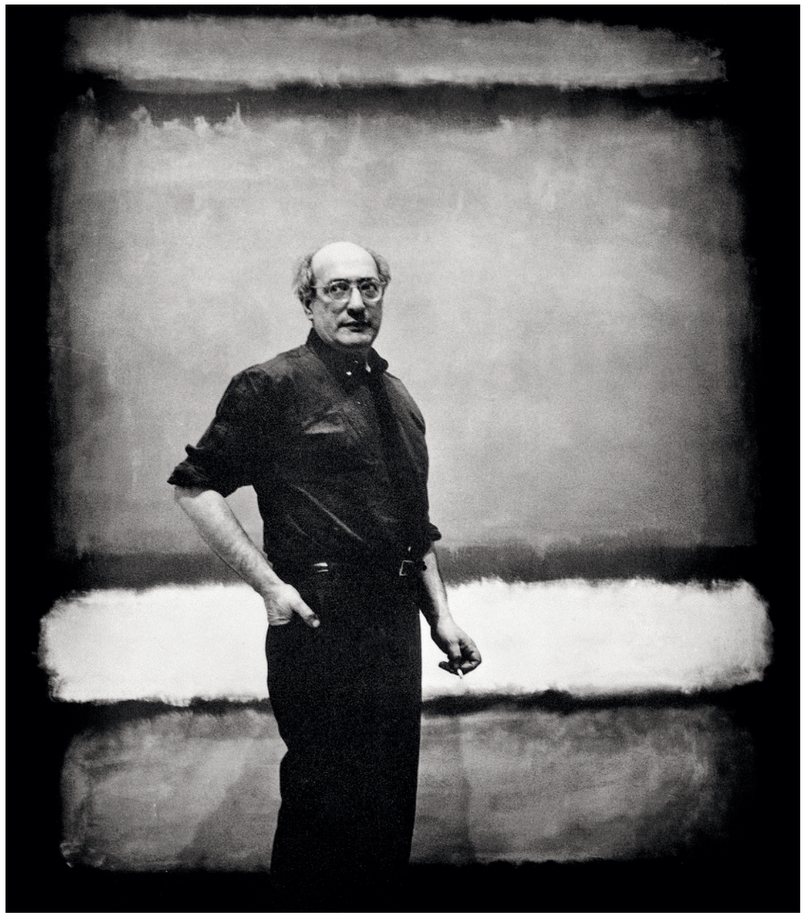
$60,000,000-80,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Mary Lasker, New York.
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 1983.

LITERATURE:

D. Anfam, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas, Catalogue Raisonné,* New Haven, 1998, p. 553, no. 833 (illustrated).



Mark Rothko in his studio, 1961. Photo: Kate Rothko/Apic/Getty Images. © 2005 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Artwork: © 2022 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Kate Rothko/Apic/Getty Images.

MARK ROTHKO

Untitled (Shades of Red)

1961

Painted in 1961, Mark Rothko's *Untitled (Shades of Red)* forcefully captures the mysterious and emotional intensity that lies at the very heart of the artist's work. Haunted by the eternal drama that he believed was an inherent part of the human psyche, Rothko spent his life trying to convey these emotions on canvas, and his floating fields of color became the central elements in many of his most accomplished paintings. One of the most important and influential artists of the twentieth-century, Rothko maintained that his canvases weren't paintings of an experience, they *were* the experience, and standing before paintings such as the present example he sought to induce in the viewer a deep emotional—almost spiritual—connection. *Untitled (Shades of Red)* is a manifest example of the triumph of Rothko's *oeuvre*, and painted the same year as the artist's seminal mid-career retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, it displays the self-assurance of an artist at the height of his painterly powers.

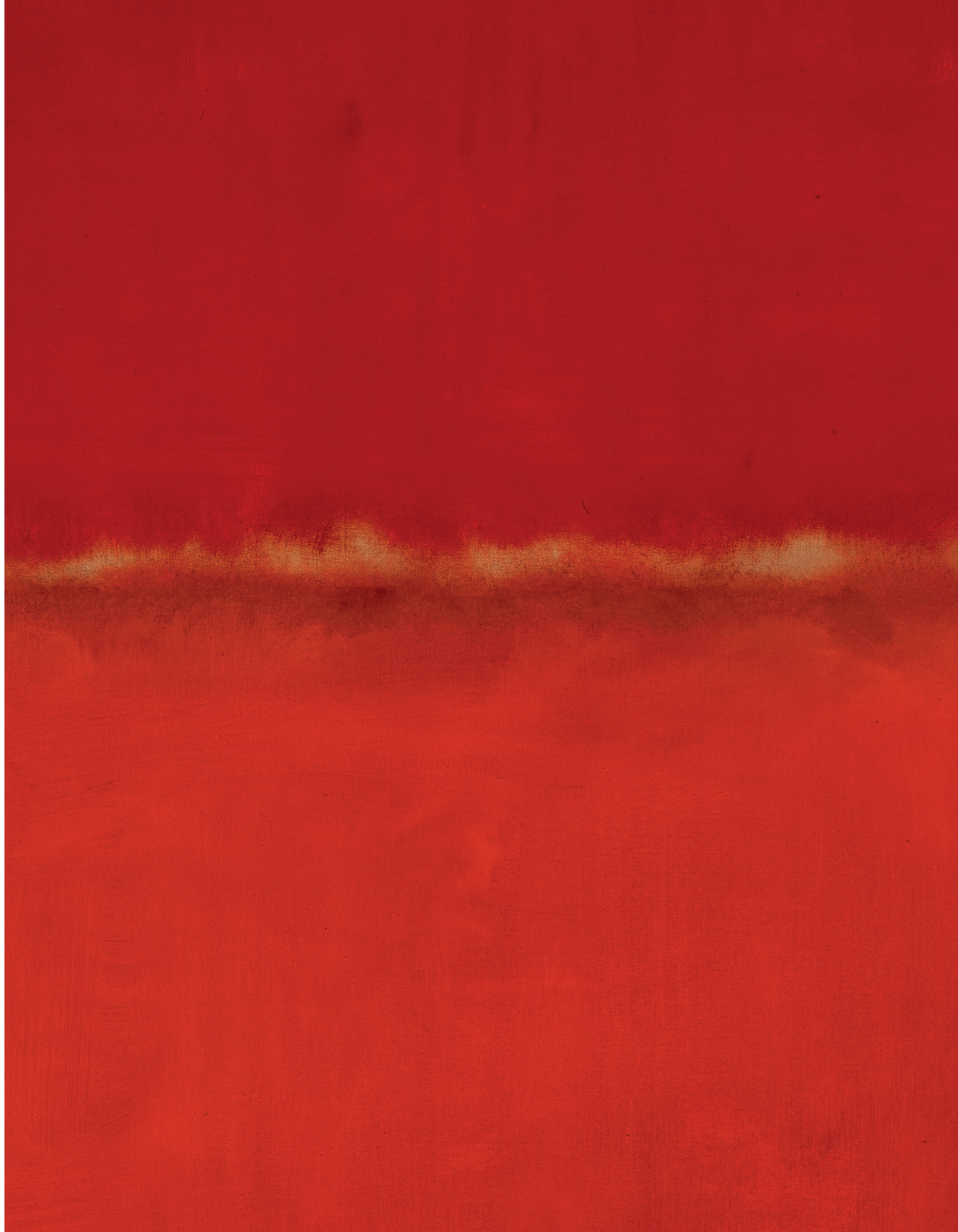
Across this expanse of canvas, Rothko lays down clouds of crimson, red, ruby, scarlet, and deep orange pigment, one on top of one another, resulting in bottomless pools of rich color that appear to reverberate with chromatic energy as the eye passes over them. These shifting planes, constantly churning and roiling, produce a sense of dynamism that continues to play out long after the artist's brush has left the surface of the canvas. Pushing against each other, this trifecta

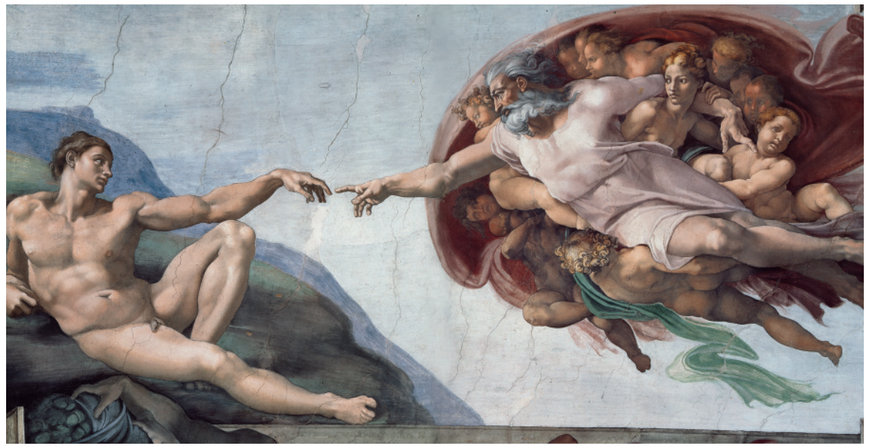
"I think of my pictures as dramas, the shapes in the pictures are the performers. They begin as an unknown adventure in an unknown space. It is at that moment of completion that in a flash of recognition, they are seen to have the quality and function which was intended. Ideas and plans that existed in the mind at the start were simply the doorway through which one left the world in which they occur."

MARK ROTHKO

appears to be in a constant state of expansion, pushing out over the surface like an ever expanding galaxy of celestial gases. Surrounding each of the fields of color are paler areas, sheer veils of pigment that surround the central rectangles of deep red and saturated orange, revealing what is regarded by many as one of his greatest accomplishments: his ability to contain a vast array of colors of differing hues in differing proportions all on the same plane.

It is here, around the edges of each of these bodies of color, that Rothko's tempestuous painterly energy is readily exposed; individual layers of paint bleed into each other revealing the rawness and vitality of the artist's unmistakable process. Unlike the center of the blocks of color where a more harmonious co-existence results in rich fields of color, around the edges the tussle between order and chaos is played out to its ultimate conclusion. Throughout much of his career, Rothko struggled with his own inner demons, caught between the competing forces of order and chaos, and it is here, on the surface of the canvas, and in these contrary planes of color that he sought to confront and tame these forces once and for all.





Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Sistine Chapel Ceiling: The Creation of Adam*, 1511-1512. Vatican Museums and Galleries, Rome.

"...transcendental experiences become possible... pictures must be miraculous... a revelation, an unexpected and unprecedented resolution of an eternally familiar need."

MARK ROTHKO

It is in these areas, where the competing color fields came into direct contact with each other, that Rothko felt that his paintings truly reached the apex of their power, "colors push outward in all directions," he said or "contract and rush inward. Between these two poles you can find everything I want to say" (Rothko, in conversation with A. Jensen, 17 June 1953 in J.E.B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography,* Chicago, 1993, p. 301). In 1961, the year that the present work was painted, the curator Peter Selz organized what would become one of Rothko's most influential early retrospectives for The Museum of Modern Art in New York. In his introductory essay, Selz described these passages in almost miraculous terms: "These 'shivering bars of light' assume a function similar to that loaded area between God's and Adam's fingers on the Sistine ceiling. But Rothko's creation can no longer be depicted in terms of human allegory. His separated color areas also create a spark, but now it takes place in some sort of revolving atmospheric universe rather than between Michelangelo's man and his God. Rothko has given us the first, not the sixth, day of creation" (*Mark Rothko,* exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961, p. 12). Selz continued, "The surface texture is as neutral as possible. Seen close up and in a penumbra, as these paintings are meant to be seen, they absorb, they envelope the viewer. We no longer look *at* a painting as we did in the nineteenth century; we are meant to enter it, to sink into its atmosphere of mist and light, or to draw it around us like a coat—or a skin."

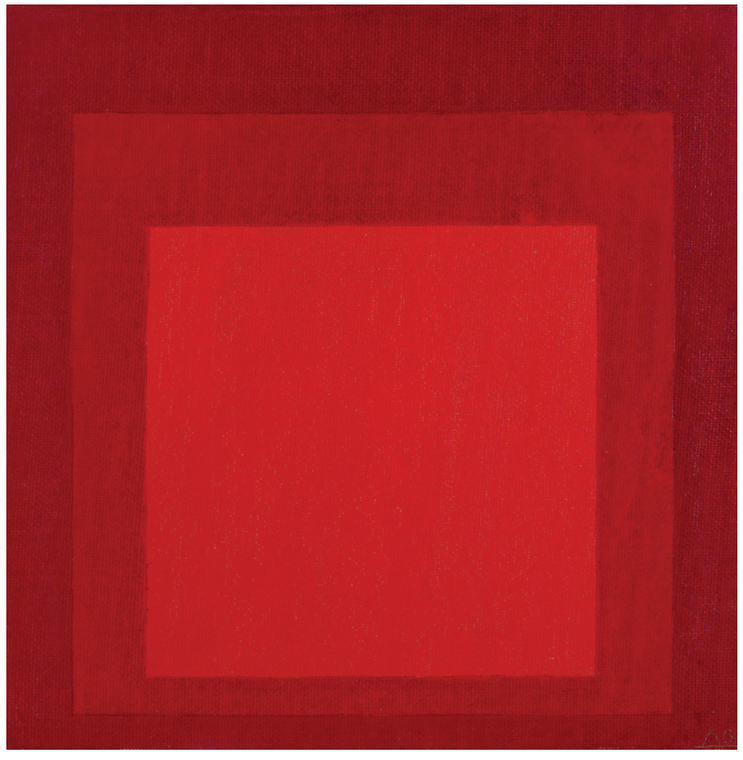
Untitled (Shades of Red) emanates the same sense of ethereal light that radiates from Rothko's best works. The artist always maintained that his paintings possessed their own inner source of light that illuminated any room in which they were placed, an effect achieved by an intensive process of laying down numerous translucent washes of pigment. Rothko would rub down each of these using a soft brush—or sometimes even a rag—before using a dry brush to "scrub in" the primary wash. The resulting "disembodied" colors stem from the optical mixture between the usually strong tincture of the pigment and the lightness of the scoured fabric support, "the hues become aftermaths—as when the flaming orange-reds are no more than 'breathed' onto the surface so that they vacillate between ardency and pale, vaporous transience" (D. Anfam, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas. Catalogue Raisonné*, 2001, London, p. 93).

The effect of this process produces the luminosity that Rothko so admired in the works of two of his favorite artists, namely Rembrandt and Henri Matisse. In Rembrandt, Rothko admired the inner radiance that illuminated his subjects, be they portraits, mythological scenes, or landscapes, and from Matisse, he was enraptured by the depth and intensities of the French artist's colors, particularly his reds. Rothko was particularly enamored with Matisse's 1911 painting *The Red Studio* and he visited the painting at the Museum of Modern Art every day for months, often overcome by the intensity of Matisse's planes of red. "You become that color," Rothko later remarked, "you become totally saturated with it" (quoted in J. Baal-Teshuva, *Mark Rothko: Pictures as Drama*, Cologne, 2003, p. 38). Such was Rothko's admiration for the French master that he later named a 1954 painting, *Homage to Matisse*.

Rothko's process reached its peak during the period in which the present work was painted. The late 1950s and early 1960s proved to be a particularly significant period for the artist having come off the back of his commission to paint the Seagram Murals in 1958. The story of Rothko's murals is one of the central legends of his career and has become the kind of fable that impregnates and often threatens to dominate the history of any great artist's life. It is however nonetheless a remarkable and particularly pertinent story because the Seagram commission and the unfolding drama that surrounded Rothko's eventual rejection of it—after having worked on the project for nearly two years—encapsulates and reveals two important parameters of Rothko's character and artistic temperament. The Seagram commission threw Rothko's long held personal keenness to create a complete painterly environment into direct conflict with his deep-rooted principles. Ultimately, the overt luxury of the Four Seasons

Henri Matisse, *L'Atelier rouge*, 1911. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *The Oath of the Batavians, From the History of Tacitus, Claudius Civilis leads the conspircy of the Batavians against Roman Emperor Vespasian*, 1662. National Museum, Stockholm.



Josef Albers, *Study for Homage to the Square*, 1969. Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany. © 2022 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © Albers Foundation / Art Resource, New York.

"Rothko had reduced painting to volume, tone and color, with color as the vital element."

HAROLD ROSENBERG

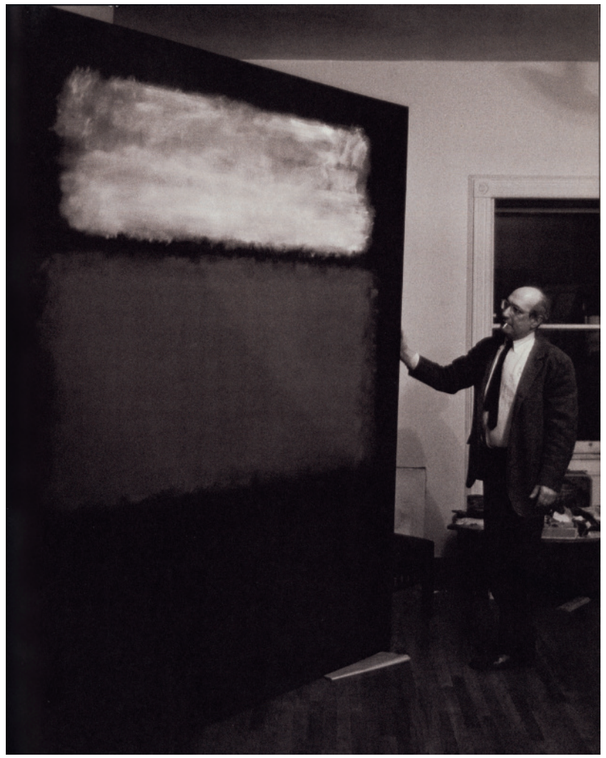
restaurant proved too much for Rothko's conscience and this, alongside the fact that he feared that the solemn paintings that had devised for it would come to be seen as mere decoration, led to his pulling out of the project in 1960.

A significant influence on Rothko's *oeuvre* is the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, and it is said that in his paintings he tried to bring together the two opposing forces of the universe—order and dynamism—that the German philosopher identified. It was with the aim of establishing a similar state of harmonious détente between these two central organizing principles of existence that Rothko painted, hoping to generate within the reductive format of his abstract forms a profound expression of these dual elements compacted into a single unity. Conflicting the romanticism and heightened emotionalism of the rich and expansive horizon-like landscape vistas of his color-drenched rectangles with a strict rational vertical grid-like progression of form compressed onto a rectangular canvas, the dynamism of confrontation is all important in Rothko's work. Such dynamism is often defined and characterized by the nature of the shimmering edges of his colored forms and the "personality" that they give to the work as a whole. "In a way my paintings are very exact," Rothko explained in his lecture to students at the Pratt Institute in New York in 1958, "but in that exactitude there is a shimmer, a play...in weighing the edges to introduce a less rigorous, play element...The tragic notion of the image is always present in my mind when I paint and I know when it is achieved, but I couldn't point it out—show where it is illustrated. There are no skull and bones.

I am an abstract painter" (quoted in J.E.B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, Chicago 1993, p. 395).

Untitled (Shades of Red) was painted the same year as the artist's seminal exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1961. It brought together what was—up to that point—the largest exhibition of the artist's work, including fifty-five drawings, works on paper, and paintings along with the first ever public installation of the *Seagram Murals*. Writing in the catalogue, Selz identified Rothko's humanist values as being the most astonishing aspect of the artist's paintings. "These silent paintings with their enormous, beautiful, opaque surfaces are mirrors, reflecting what the viewer brings with them," he wrote. "In this sense they can even be said to deal directly with human emotions, desires, human relationships, for they are mirrors of our fantasy and serve as echoes of our experience" (quoted in a Museum of Modern Art press release, 18 January, 1961. Available from https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/2788/releases/MOMA_1961_0003_3.pdf [accessed 12/4/2022]).

What Rothko achieved with color accomplished something utterly original and its mesmerizing affect came from a lifetime of accumulated experience. When asked during the hanging of his retrospective exhibition how long it took him to paint a picture, Rothko dryly responded "I'm 57 years old, and it took me all that time to do it" (quoted in J.E.B. Breslin, *op. cit.*, p. 326). He would work fast, and then would sit sometimes for hours or days, contemplating the success of the painting before making any necessary adjustments. Through his progressive layering of brushstrokes Rothko hoped to "breathe" his colors into the work and give the surface its own animated sense of life. "This kind of design may look simple," Rothko once said, "but it usually takes me many hours to get the proportions and colors just right. Everything has to lock together" (quoted in J. Fischer, "The Easy Chair: Mark Rothko, Portrait of the Artist as an Angry Man," 1970, in M. Lopez-Ramiro, ed., *Mark Rothko: Writings on Art*, New Haven, 2006, p. 133), and it is with works such as *Untitled (Shades of Red)* that this accomplishment is on full display.



Mark Rothko, 1962. Photo: Kurt Blum. Photo: © 2005 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Artwork: © 2022 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

♦° 5

MARK ROTHKO (1903-1970)

No. 1

signed and dated 'MARK ROTHKO 1962' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
69 x 60 in. (175.3 x 152.4 cm.)
Painted in 1962.

$45,000,000-65,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.
Mary Lasker, New York (1962); sale, Christie's, New York, 5 May 1982, lot 45.
Acquired at the above sale by the late owner.

LITERATURE:

M. Hayot, "La peinture americaine contemporaine," *L'Oeil 328*, November 1982, p. 56 (illustrated).
P. Kunkel, "Gauging the Contemporary Art Market," *Architectural Digest*, March 1983, p. 54 (illustrated).
W. Schmalenbach, *Bilder des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1986, p. 309, no. 373 (illustrated).
D. Anfam, *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas, Catalogue Raisonné*, New Haven, 1998, p. 566, no. 711 (illustrated).

Mark Rothko, 1964. Courtesy Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona © 2022 Hans Namuth Estate.
Artwork: © 2022 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

MARK ROTHKO

No. 1

1962

No. 1 is listed as the first canvas that Mark Rothko painted in 1962, a pivotal year in which the artist produced some of his most vital and vivacious works. Dominated by a central field of intense orange, this large-scale painting displays the full force of Rothko's creativity, from the floating passages of penetrating color to the animated brushwork that results in its iridescent surface. The rich, warm red and orange hues that are so prevalent in *No. 1* are also emblematic of the experiential nature of Rothko's art—a physical manifestation of what one critic called the "immediate radiance" of these paintings. Famously, Rothko is quoted as saying that he wanted his paintings to have "presence" so that when you turned your back on such a work, you "feel that *presence* the way you feel the sun on your back" (M. Israel, quoted in J.E.B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, New York, 1993, p. 275). *No. 1* exhibits this quality to spectacular effect.

Across the surface of the painting Rothko lays down three large clouds of saturated color. Anchored by a large passage of baking orange hues, the composition subsumes the viewer into an intense field of vibrant color. This highly active core is complemented by two narrower bands of deeper red and orange that express the upper and lower edges of the composition. The upper field appears more ephemeral; a spectral passage of red pigment that allows the delicacy of Rothko's brushwork to become evident, particularly around the periphery of the form. The lower band of color is a deeper, more concentrated, orange—the result of the artist laying down multiple layers of pigment, resulting

"I am only interested in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom and so on—and the fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I communicate those basic human emotions..."

MARK ROTHKO

in a greater density of color. Around these interior passages, Rothko has applied a delicate, almost transparent, veneer of pigment; here, the larger chromatic fields begin to dissolve as they migrate outwards towards the edges of the canvas, dissipating the visual energy into more neutral hues. Rothko always insisted that it was here, where the edges of his painterly passages met, that the true essence of his paintings could be witnessed.

It is also here that we can see in full force the subtle nuances of the artist's painterly practice. To achieve the radiance that Rothko required, he would lay down numerous washes of thin, almost translucent, pigment that he would burnish with a soft cloth or brush. Finally he would apply the final, primary layer of pigment with a stiff, dry brush, scouring the surface to leave a richly burnished effect. In *No. 1* in particular, the traces of these different layers can be seen in the undulating layers of underpainting that constantly roil up towards the surface. There is a constant shifting of color, as differing areas of pigment give way to saturated passages of high-keyed intensity. It was Hubert Crehan, in one of the first reviews of the artist's paintings, who wrote about the "immediate radiance" of Rothko's paintings. "We have in our time become aware of the reports of the great billows of colored light that have ripped asunder the calm skies over the atolls of

J.M.W. Turner, *Sunset, circa* 1830-1835. Tate Gallery, London. Photo: Tate, London / Art Resource, New York.

Thomas Cole, *The Pilgrim of the World at the End of his Journey*, 1846–1848. Smithsonian American Museum of Art, Washington, D.C. Photo: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC / Art Resource, New York.

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, *circa* 1620. Galleria Degli Uffizi, Florence. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, New York.

the calmest ocean. We have heard of the terrible beauty of that light, a light softer, more pacifying than the hues of a rainbow and yet detonated as from some wrathful and diabolical depth. The tension of the color-relationships of some of the Rothko paintings I have seen has been raised to such a shrill pitch that one begins to feel in them that a fission might happen, that they might detonate" ("Rothko's Wall of Light: A Show of His New Works at Chicago," *Arts Digest*, no. 29, 1 November 1954, p. 19).

Rothko's ultimate aim was to break down the traditional and long established barriers that existed in art, and he wanted the viewers of his paintings to undergo an almost religious experience when stood before them. In evolving this idea, the artist was profoundly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's text *The Birth of Tragedy*. Rothko's abstract paintings play on the dualism inherent in human nature that Nietzsche had identified as composed of Apollonian and Dionysian forces. The Apollonian represents the force of becoming, of precise definition, of the sculptural arts and of universal order while the Dionysian represents an unstable and wild force, the musical arts, disintegration and chaos. The duality of light and darker areas in the present work echoes these hostilities. In painting *No. 1's* main passages of color in competing colors, they vie with one another for dominance, seeming to both emerge from and recede into the painting's more neutral background, evoking this perpetual struggle. As the eye responds to this shifting play of undefined form and color, the viewer's mind enacts an emotive drama, yet Rothko holds the whole together in a fragile balance using the calm serenity of the pale ground. In this way, he counterpoints Apollonian order and refinement with the more unstable Dionysian energy of the shimmering oblongs, creating an overwhelming sense of the sublime.

This had been a conflict which consumed Rothko for much of his career. His earliest art was motivated by a search for a style that was his own and which could be used to express what the artist called the "tragic and timeless" nature of the human condition. Finding ideas similar to his in the Greek tragedies, he turned to the epic plays of Aeschylus and Euripides in the early 1940s, channeling these ancient characters and narratives into the Surrealist works that followed. Plumbing elements of Greco-Roman art with increasing infusions of automatic writing, the signs, symbols and ethereal hazes of these nascent works hinted at the collective mysteries of existence, but remained rooted in the kind of figuration that characterized the material world. As a result, Rothko's works began to take on a more abstract dimension in the mid-1940s. He expunged representational elements for the irregular, amorphous washes of color in the *Multiforms*. In 1949, this tendency received

“Rothko said that he wanted a presence, so when you turned your back to the painting, you would feel that presence the way you feel the sun on your back.”

MURRAY ISRAEL

"...color is his sole medium....Rothko's concern over the years has been the reduction of his vehicle to the unique colored surface which represents nothing and supports nothing else."

ROBERT GOLDWATER

ultimate clarification in the classic format that Rothko pursued in the present work. Early on, the artist intuitively understood his direction; in a letter to the *New York Times* dated July 7, 1943 he wrote, "We favor the simple expression of complex thought. We are for the large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to reassert the picture plane. We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth" (quoted in M. López-Remiro, *Writings on Art*, New Haven, 2006, p. 36). Read in relation to the present work, this statement seems perfectly pitched for the classic work that would ensue throughout Rothko's subsequent *oeuvre*.

Rothko wanted his work to possess the same gravitas and force as an Old Master painting. Whilst it may not possess the narrative theatre of Caravaggio's *The Martyrdom of St. Matthew* (San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome) or Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (Uffizi, Florence) for example, the emotional drama that plays out across the surface of *No. 1* is undeniable. That this is done with the simple rendering of pigment upon canvas is all the more remarkable. Across its expansive surface Rothko stages a multiplicity of events where edge and ground interact; hues are assimilated and contrasted; and textures are opposed and

Barnett Newman, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, 1950-1951. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 Barnett Newman Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Clyfford Still, *PH-370 (1946-H-No. 2)*, 1946. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. © 2022 City & County of Denver, Courtesy Clyfford Still Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © Smithsonian American Art Museum / Art Resource, New York.

blended. Its optical effects elicit an emotional response that resonates with Rothko's ambition to create a total experience for the viewer, where tactility is emotional and opticality is empathic. "I am interested only in expressing basic human emotions," Rothko once said. "Tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on—and the fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I *communicate* those basic human emotions. ...The people who weep before my picture are having the same religious experience I had when painting them" (quoted in J. Elderfield, "Transformations," in G. Phillips and T. Crow, eds., *Seeing Rothko*, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 101).

Rothko's layering of thin coats of paint and his approach to pictorial form have as their goal to create both a physical as well as an emotional relationship between the work of art and the viewer. As the art historian Stephen Polcari declared, "Rothko managed to intensify and make immediate... a pictorial environment, form, and theater of emotion" ("Mark Rothko: Heritage, Environment and Tradition," in *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1988, p. 59). It is as if here Rothko creates a visual environment in which discrete elements – the warmth of color, the surface agitation, and the indeterminate space – coalesce to create a charged atmosphere that stimulates the viewer to a pitch of excitation, what the art historian Jeffrey Weiss called the "abstract theater of emotions and ideas" (*Mark Rothko*, New Haven and London, 2000, p. 10). The viewer's affective response to formal qualities lies at the heart of Rothko's pictorial structures and translucent colors. Stacking the thinly painted rectangular forms in such color associations as we find in the present work puts pressure on characteristics of luminosity and hue, creating an equivalent *frisson* of emotion in the viewer. In addition, Rothko's reduction of forms, allows complexity in other elements, such as light against dark, opaqueness opposed to translucently, smooth contrasted with brushy textures, and a tension between varieties of saturation levels. In the present work, Rothko renders characteristic a touch that elicits an empathic, emotional response and when integrated as convincingly as it is with shape, brings about a merging of elements that the artist Gerhard Richter noted when he commented that "The mystery and incomprehensibility of Rothko's paintings is based on the specificity of the structures, the transcendental effect, and the viewer's contemplation" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 365). Thus, *No. 1* is a quintessential example both of Rothko's ability, as Richter has affirmed, to "create [...] a special art for us, and no one else will do such paintings again. I believe Rothko will be important for centuries to come" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 366).

6

MORRIS LOUIS (1912-1962)

Lower Spectrum

Magna on canvas
89 x 133½ in. (226.1 x 339.1 cm.)
Painted in 1958.

$1,500,000-2,500,000

PROVENANCE:
André Emmerich Gallery, New York.
Kasmin Ltd., London.
Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, London.
M. Knoedler & Co., New York.
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 1983.

EXHIBITED:
New York, French & Company, *Morris Louis*, April-May 1959, no. 18.
Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Toward Color and Field*, October-November 1971.
New York, M. Knoedler & Co., *Morris Louis Veils*, October-November 1983.

LITERATURE:
D. Upright, *Morris Louis: The Complete Paintings*, New York, 1985, pp. 142 and 201, no. 104 (illustrated).

Morris Louis, *circa* 1940. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

MORRIS LOUIS

Lower Spectrum

1958

Painted in 1958, Morris Louis's *Lower Spectrum* is a dazzling example of the artist's celebrated *Veil* paintings. Executed on a grand scale, the diaphanous cloaks of burnished bronzes, warm oranges, glowing red and radiant gold envelop the viewer in swaths of glorious ethereality. Using his unique method of combining gesture with pouring paint directly onto unprimed canvas, the *Veil* paintings marked a major turning point in Louis's career and led to increased acclaim and recognition for the artist in an art world dominated by Abstract Expressionism. His bold new direction grew out of this tradition, but signaled an important shift towards a more contemplative, color-based movement. In paintings such as the present example, Louis allowed the color to possess and celebrate its own innate properties and qualities, unrestrained by the will of the artist and able to maintain its own flow and life across the surface of the canvas.

Lower Spectrum is distinguished by a kaleidoscope of warm burnished tones that are enriched with torrents of warm red and soft yellow pigment flowing in waves that ripple across the surface of this impressively-scaled canvas. Exactly how he achieved this effect is open to conjecture as Louis often worked in private, refusing to allow anyone to witness his exact process. But by laying down gossamer thin layers of acrylic paint he built up complex patterns of pigment. His exacting skill in creating these layers of color and concluding them with

a final burnished tone recalls an inner light emerging from the darkness, softened by the texture of the individual threads of the canvas. *Lower Spectrum* belongs to a series of *Veils* known as the "triadic Veils"—distinguished by the pair of internal lines left by the vertical braces of the works stretcher—which in the case of this particular work characterize the sharper distinctions between the color areas, taking the form of spiked and jagged peaks and evoking the tectonic forms of Clyfford Still's paintings.

Louis began his revolutionary *Veils* in 1954 and produced several different iterations of this unique form over the next few years. Clement Greenberg's exhibition of the *Veils* at the French and Company Gallery in New York in the spring of 1959 (an exhibition which included the present work) marked the triumphant revelation of this important series to an unsuspecting New York Art world, with the influential museum curator William Rubin declaring it "one of the most significant [exhibitions] in years" (quoted by D. Upright, *Morris Louis: The Complete Paintings*, New York, 1985, p. 20). Critics marveled at these bronzed "scrims," with one eulogizing how "he...began with the subdued tonalities of the bronze triadic Veils, developing a wide range of smoldering color effects: intense hues flicker around the edges of the bronzed masses" (M. Swain, *ibid*., p.17).

One critic at the time succinctly summed up the excitement that these new works generated in an art-world that was dominated by the impact of Abstract Expressionism, "Veils of pale, refined color, laid on as thin as can be, surge with monumental grace on these large, strangely dramatic canvases, like chiffon back drops in the dream sequence of some symbolist play. Louis translates the chromatic calculations of Rothko into something that might be called chromatic mysticism. These pictures are esthetic to the last degree, and none the less unsubstantially beautiful for that" (S. Preston, "Sculpture and Paint: Contemporary Artists In Different Mediums," *New York Times*, 26 April, 1959, p. X17).

Morris Louis redefined a relationship between the viewer, the canvas and the pigment which had remained largely unchanged for centuries. Inspired by the work of the French Impressionists and the atmospheric paintings of the English painter J.M.W. Turner, Louis conveys the same sense of awe-inspiring power. As Clement Greenberg proclaimed, "Louis spills his paint on unsized and unprimed cotton duck canvas, leaving the pigment almost everywhere thin

Clyfford Still, *PH-957*, 1957. Clyfford Still Museum, Denver. © 2022 City & County of Denver, Courtesy Clyfford Still Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Mark Rothko, *No. 16 (Red, Brown, and Black)*, 1958. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

"The fabric, being soaked in paint rather than merely covered by it, becomes paint in itself... The effect conveys a sense not only of color as somehow disembodied, and therefore more purely optical, but also of color as a thing that opens and expands the picture plane."

CLEMENT GREENBERG

enough, no matter how many different veils of it are superimposed, for the eye to sense the threadedness and wovenness of the fabric underneath. But 'underneath' is the wrong word. The fabric being soaked in paint rather than merely covered by it, becomes paint in itself, color in itself, like dyed cloth; the threadedness and wovenness are in the color" (quoted in M. Fried, *Morris Louis*, New York, 1970).

With Greenberg as his champion, Louis emerged as the pre-eminent artist in the Color Field movement. Their primary concerns were the unfettered power of color, often delivered in undulated waves of pure pigment that emphasized a feeling of flatness and the preservation of the picture plane as a two dimensional surface. The emphasis on the elemental nature of paint and its properties put Louis at the very heart of the New York School of painting, and *Lower Spectrum's* successful combination of incredible delicacy produced on such a scale acts as a fitting tribute to Louis's efforts to redefine the frontiers of painting.

Balthus. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.
Photo: © BnF, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

Balthus and Hammershøi: Through the Window

A lover's never so beautiful
as when we see her appear
framed by you; because, window,
you make her almost immortal.

She was in a window mood that day:
to live seemed no more than to stare.
From a dizzy non-existence she could see
a world coming to complete her heart.

So wrote the great Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, whose haunting verses are replete with imagery of windows (*The Complete French Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. A. Poulin, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1979, pp. 29-31 and 41). The two passages above both come from *Les Fênetres*, a series of fifteen poems that Rilke—writing in French late in his life—began in 1922, inspired by evenings spent with his lover "Merline". In the first excerpt, the window transforms the object of the poet's gaze—his beloved—into a framed image of herself, exalted and enduring. In the second, the window provides a metaphor for the act of seeing, mediating between subject and object, between inner life and external experience, and thus transfigured into the syntax of visual art.

Rilke provides perhaps the only biographical link between Hammershøi and Balthus, two artists of different times and places whose paintings, as manifest in Mrs. Bass's Collection, are yet linked by significant, recurring motifs—most notably the window—and by a profound affinity of artistic means and vision. Rilke first saw Hammershøi's work at an exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1904 and was deeply impressed. He visited the artist soon after in Copenhagen and planned to publish an article about his art, which never

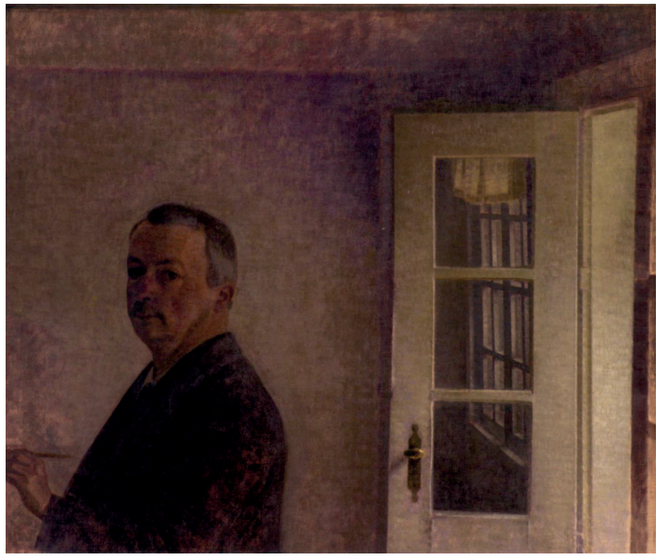
came to fruition. Rilke wrote admiringly about Hammershøi in a letter to the artist's leading patron Alfred Bramsen dated 10 November 1905: "His work is long and slow, and whensoever one studies it, that moment will always be an occasion for speaking about the important and essential in art" (quoted in A. Hemkendreis, "The Essence of Things: Hammershøi as Seen Through the Eyes of Rainer Maria Rilke," in *Hammershøi and Europe*, exh. cat., Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 2012, p. 166).

Hammershøi died in 1916 at age 51, and his exquisitely distilled, presciently modern art was swiftly overshadowed by louder, more impetuous strands of avant-garde painting. The central role that windows play in Hammershøi's interiors—as a vehicle for light, a conveyor of mood, and a building block in the compositional architecture—is perhaps one aspect that drew Rilke to the Danish painter's art.

The sensitive, discerning, and insightful pairing of Balthus's *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* and Hammershøi's *Stue* (*Interior with an Oval Mirror*) illuminates the profound signifying potential of the window motif. In both paintings, the austerity of the interior contrasts with the luxuriance of the world outside—rendered directly in the case of the Balthus, with its view of a sun-drenched landscape, and made implicit in the Hammershøi through the soft light and delicate sprig of greenery that enter the room through the open window. In each case, the window mediates between the intimacy of the domestic realm and the expansiveness of nature, a construct that would deeply engage modern painters such as Matisse and Bonnard as well. Both Hammershøi and Balthus depict the female model from the rear, emphasizing her self-absorption in her own thoughts.

The theme of the woman at the window has a long tradition in northern European painting that informed both Hammershøi and Balthus's paintings. In seventeenth century Dutch art such as that of Vermeer, windows are most often shown foreshortened and at oblique angles—a source of light without views, as in Hammershøi's *Stue* (*Interior with an Oval Mirror*). In the early nineteenth century, the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich inaugurated the motif that Balthus took up in *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*—that of the woman seen from behind, gazing through a window that

Balthus, *Autoportrait*, 1940. Private collection. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Self-Portrait, The Cottage Spurveskjul*, 1911. Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

Balthus, *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, 1955.

Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Interior, Strandgade 30*, 1901. Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover.

runs parallel to the picture plane. "In it, the Romantics found a potent symbol for the experience of standing on the threshold between an interior and the outside world," Sabine Rewald has written. "The juxtaposition of the close familiarity of a room and the uncertain, often idealized version of what lies beyond was immediately recognized as a metaphor for unfulfilled longing" (*Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century*, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2011, p. 3).

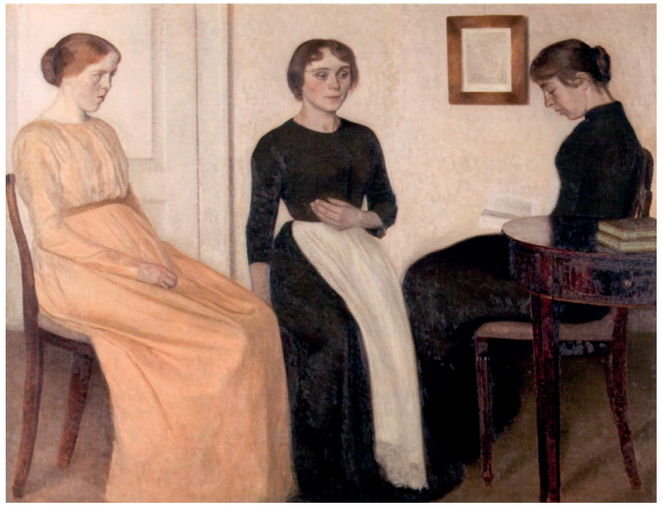
The enduring appeal of Friedrich's influential compositional schema for a modern painter such as Balthus lies in the inherent self-reflection of the motif. The rectangular shape of the canvas perfectly echoes the painted window as a view onto the world, and the viewer's angle of vision corresponds to that of the model. In Hammershøi's *Stue* (*Interior with an Oval Mirror*), where the window is rendered obliquely rather than straight-on, this self-referential function is assumed instead by the mirror, which articulates the separation between reality and representation.

Hammershøi painted numerous interiors on the Friedrich prototype as well, including one in which the woman at the window adopts a very similar posture to Balthus's model in *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, with her elbows on the sill and one knee resting on a chair (*Interior, Strandgade 30*, 1901; Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover). In Balthus's version, the young woman looks out yearningly from her domestic perch on an exotic landscape that promises adventure beyond her reach. In the Hammershøi, by contrast, the window opens only onto another window, short-circuiting the play between interior and exterior that traditionally underpins the theme. Hammershøi depicted the bourgeois interior as a carefully delimited and controlled domain—a place of sanctuary, capable of holding the outside world at bay. At the same time, he accentuated the self-sufficiency of the pictorial space and the autonomy of the work of art, anticipating—like Cézanne—the rise of abstraction over the course of the new century.

The motif of the window, beloved of Rilke, is just one of numerous points of kinship between the art of Hammershøi and Balthus. The three paintings by these artists in the Collection—*Stue* (*Interior with an Oval Mirror*), *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, and Balthus's magisterial *Trois soeurs*—all convey a palpable sense of stillness and silence, creating the subtly mysterious impression of time suspended. In each one, the composition is distilled to the essentials, stripped of anecdotal detail; color is subordinated to line, with a rectilinear scaffolding that frames the figures and imbues them with an enduring, monumental presence. All three paintings, likewise, exude the harmony and restraint of classical art. Balthus's model in *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* is blocked out in red and blue, like one of Masaccio's figures; his *Trois soeurs*, painted at the Villa Medici, has the texture and tonality of Renaissance fresco. In *Stue* (*Interior with an Oval Mirror*), the small, framed artwork on the rear wall, although difficult to distinguish, may represent a drawing of a plaster bust on a pedestal, seen in left profile—an avatar of classicism, presiding over the room like a guardian spirit.

Hammershøi and Balthus were both consummately modern painters who nevertheless worked against the grain of their day. Hammershøi, whose professional career spanned the mid-1880s through his death in 1916, adopted an exquisitely delicate palette of gray and brown tones at a time that brilliant, strident color was taking the art world by storm. Balthus, in turn, was a dedicated figure painter and forthright admirer of the Renaissance during an era that saw the persistent rise of abstraction. Together, the three paintings by these artists in Mrs. Bass's Collection offer a penetrating look at the uniquely personal vision of their makers—a window into their world.

Balthus, *Les trois soeurs*, 1964.



Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Three Young Women*, 1895. Ribe Art Museum, Denmark.

Balthus and Frédérique Tison at Chassy, 1956.
Photo: Loomis Dean / The LIFE Picture Collection / Shutterstock.

A Master's Masterpiece

NICHOLAS FOX WEBER

In Balthus's world, windows are magical. Beyond being the means by which light enters an interior—a miracle to this artist whose goal as a painter was to be "Mozartian"—they give the opportunity to gaze at the sky and the horizon and the infinite richness of the world outside. They invite musing and fantasy; they intoxicate the dreamer. They provide both respite and stimulus, comfort and inspiration.

And for Balthus they had an atavistic charm and allure. When he was a young teenager, his mother and her lover, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, had done a book called *Windows*: the ten engravings by her, the poems by him. The poems are dedicated "à Mouky et à Baladine," an inside joke since Mouky and Baladine were one and the same person, the use of two names for her a chance to suggest two different modes of one personality, the sort of duality essential to the world in which Balthus was nurtured. The pictures invariably show young women looking out windows, absorbed in their thoughts. We don't know the source of their emotional trance, but, locked in their positions like statues, entirely preoccupied by their own thoughts, in hypnotic states, these transfixed creatures are, we cannot help thinking, in a reverie induced by love.

Baladine Klossowska—while still married to Balthus's father, Erich Klossowski—was obsessively in love with the poet who sometimes returned her ardor full force and on other occasions insisted on his separateness from the woman who craved being with him at every minute. She would write him long letters about looking at flowers on a window ledge and thinking of him, about imagining him when he was not there.

"The blossoming flowers and the laden branches of a tree, seen in a soft summer breeze, are animated with a vivacity that is all the richer for being encased in the sturdy geometry of the room's interior and against a backdrop of the light-covered columns of the distant outbuilding."

NICHOLAS FOX WEBER

The young Balthus lived in the grips of that love affair. He saw his mother ecstatic and tortured, and he had his own wonderful relationship with Rilke. Balthus, at age twelve, had done a series of illustrations telling the story of a cat gone missing; Rilke liked it so much that he wrote a preface to the story—his first writing in French rather than his native German—and saw to its publication, which he eventually sent to friends ranging from Pierre Bonnard to André Gide. Rilke adored young Balthus; he was also close to Balthus's older brother, Pierre Klossowski—he arranged for Pierre to go to Paris and become Gide's secretary—but it was Balthus with whom he had the closest bond. Balthus was exceptionally bright, artistically skilled, and mischievous—he would skip school and lie about it—and Rilke was enchanted by the boy's originality as well as his audacity. And Balthus provided the added delight that he was born on a February 29, which gave Rilke reason to write him, when it was not a leap year, about the mysterious and invisible crack of time between midnight on February 28 and the start of March 1, the sort of non-existence that was neither real nor false, as a source of delight.

The poems that Rilke wrote about windows were full of passion, even if it was often an unfulfilled ardor, a mixture of bliss and anguish:

> Il suffit que, sur un balcon
> Ou dans l'encadrement d'une fenêtre,
> Une femme hésite..., pour être
> Celle que nous perdons
> En l'y ayant vue apparaître.

Another poem begins:

> Tu me proposes, fenêtre étrange, d'attendre;
> Déjà presque bouge ton rideau beige.
> Devrais-je, ô fenêtre, à ton invite, me rendre ?
> Ou me défendre, fenêtre ? Qui attendrais-je ?

Such are the roles that these openings in the wall play in the art of Balthus, and nowhere more than in *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*.

After the Second World War, during which Balthus was in exile from Paris, safely harbored in Switzerland, he was known to claim that he needed a château "the way a Frenchman needs his baguette." His mother and Rilke had, after all, managed to rent a romantic Swiss castle; different from most people, attracted to grandeur, these characters expected nothing less. He found what he was looking for in a tumbledown château at Chassy, in the Morvan region of Burgundy, and he repaired there with Frédérique Tison, who was the young daughter of his brother's wife. This is the setting for *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*.

Balthus had no pretentions about the realities of his life in the château, even if it had splendid turrets—he told me that he had to chop the firewood himself, and we talked about the pleasures of this task on cold winter days when the wood snaps open under the axe—and he struggled to sell enough paintings to pay the rent. But this was the period in which he transformed himself into a titled nobleman. Some of his old friends, like Alberto Giacometti and André Derain, were not amused—"amused" being Balthus's favorite adjective for his preferred state of being—but Balthus assumed a title, that of "Le Comte Klossowski de Rola." There were different theories among his cohorts as to

where the invented “de Rola” came from. Some posited that it was from Rolle, the Swiss city which was the birthplace of Balthus’s wife, Antoinette de Watteville, while others thought it came from the name of a character in a novel by Alfred de Musset; whatever its origins Balthus took his invention very seriously. (The first time that I ever spoke with him, on a phone call in which I organized our first meeting, and a man with a gravelly voice answered the phone, I, knowing the requisites of the game, asked, “Est-ce que je peux parler ave Le Comte de Rola?” The response was a clear, emphatic, “C’est lui-même!”) Once he left Chassy to become Director of France’s Villa Medici, he would be able to live the life of a Count with all the trappings—he had a uniformed major domo, an affectation that Giacometti ultimately found unbearable—but here in Burgundy, he was still living modestly. He was also painting exquisitely.

In the 1930s, Balthus had often painted, he told me, with “a wish to shock.” He made one large canvas of a woman being forced to a window ledge by an invisible attacker, and painted *La leçon de guitare*, a painting so scandalous that it had to be shown in a private room of the Left Bank gallery where it was first exhibited, in 1934, and would, in the 1980s, be deemed unfit to be shown to the public when Balthus’s exhibition from the Centre Pompidou in Paris moved to The Metropolitan Museum in New York, giving Balthus a rage toward American puritanism. He had always painted with a superlative technique, but he used it for a very different purpose once he settled in Burgundy. Now he was focused on using it not to startle the viewer but to provide a vision of quietude and of the glories of light, both as perceived outside a window and inside on plain plaster walls. *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* is one of his masterpieces of that time period. Possessed of a rare tranquillity, it has the tonality of work by Balthus’s beloved Piero della Francesca, whose work he had copied diligently in Florence when he was eighteen following a visit with Rilke in his castle. While it is an oil on canvas, it has the translucence of a fresco. The blossoming flowers and the laden branches of a tree, seen in a soft summer breeze, are animated with a vivacity that is all the richer for being encased in the sturdy geometry of the room’s interior and against a backdrop of the light-covered columns of the distant outbuilding.

Balthus, *La Fenêtre*, 1933. Eskenazi Museum of Art, Indiana University. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: The Artchives / Alamy Stock Photo.

“This was the essence of Balthus at his best, the qualities that made him one of the masters of the last century: steadfast authority blended with deep sensitiveness, dexterity with structure, a daunting reality concurrent with an ethereality in combination with a sense of the unknown. *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* is a master’s masterpiece.”

NICHOLAS FOX WEBER

In Balthus’s previous work, there had often been a threatening element, a sense of imminent danger or even of a crime in process. But now Balthus’s vision of life has a post-war bounty, a springtime lushness. Life is burgeoning: in the vista, in the young woman, painted so deftly, bent over the window ledge.

Balthus told me that Picasso, who had bought his large 1942 masterpiece *Les Enfants*, said that he wished that Balthus could paint his interiors for him. And Françoise Gilot told me that, between Balthus and Picasso, there was no saying “which one was the greater liar.” But it is not impossible that Picasso said it, and, if he did not, it is telling that Balthus had the fantasy. The perspective, the texture, the richness of the rhythms, and the verisimilitude of the country-style side chair on which the Frédérique has placed her knee, are sublime. So is the rendering of the folds of her skirt; when Balthus orchestrated the visible so as to make its plastic truths palpable, he had a technique that was that of a master. He organized what the eye takes in as precisely as he constructed his own persona. There is a forceful truthfulness to those walls and corners and glass shutters; there is the mystery of the unknown in Frédérique’s dreamy state. This was the essence of Balthus at his best, the qualities that made him one of the masters of the last century: steadfast authority blended with deep sensitiveness, dexterity with structure, a daunting reality concurrent with an ethereality in combination with a sense of the unknown. *Jeune fille à la fenêtre* is a master’s masterpiece.

7

BALTHUS (1908-2001)

Jeune fille à la fenêtre

signed and dated 'Balthus 1955' (lower right)
oil and Casein on canvas
76¾ x 51¼ in. (195 x 130 cm.)
Painted in 1955

$4,000,000-6,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Claude Hersent, Meudon (acquired from the artist, by 1956).
Hélène Anavi, France (acquired from the above); Estate sale, Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., London, 27 March 1984, lot 33.
Marlborough Fine Art, Ltd., London (acquired at the above sale).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, *circa* 1985.

EXHIBITED:

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Balthus*, December 1956-February 1957, p. 33, no. 31 (illustrated; titled *The Window*).
Venice, Palazzo Grassi, *Balthus*, September 2001-January 2002, p. 352, no. 107 (illustrated in color, p. 353).
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Balthus: Cats and Girls*, September 2013-January 2014, p. 134, no. 36 (illustrated in color, p. 135).

LITERATURE:

Y. Bonnefoy, *L'Improbable*, Paris, 1959, p. 72 (illustrated).
J. Russell, *Balthus*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery, London, 1968, p. 26 (illustrated; titled *The Window* and dated 1958).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1978 (illustrated in color, pl. 24).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1982, p. 135 (illustrated; illustrated again in color, p. 78).
S. Klossowski de Rola, *Balthus*, London, 1983 (illustrated in color, pl. 47).
G. Régnier, *Balthus*, exh. cat., Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1983, pp. 184 and 364, no. 45/148 (illustrated in color, p. 185; illustrated again, pp. 296 and 364).
B. Foucart, "Artiste-Peintre figuratif" in *Beaux-Arts*, November 1983, p. 36 (illustrated in color).
J. Heilpern, "The Bass Reserve" in *Vogue*, December 1988, p. 345 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).
C. Irvine, *Remarkable Private New York Residences*, New York, 1990, p. 11 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, pp. 10 and 14).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990 (illustrated, pl. 25).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990, p. 138 (illustrated; illustrated again in color, p. 70).
K. Kisaragi, S. Takashina and K. Motoe, *Balthus*, Tokyo, 1994 (illustrated, pl. 34).
X. Xing, *Balthus*, Shanghai, 1995 (illustrated in color, pl. 36).
S. Klossowski de Rola, *Balthus*, New York, 1996, p. 156, no. 60 (illustrated in color).
C. Roy, *Balthus*, Paris, 1996, p. 168.
V. Monnier and J. Clair, *Balthus: Catalogue Raisonné of the Complete Works*, Paris, 1999, p. 171, no. P 253 (illustrated).
A. Vircondelet, *Les chats de Balthus*, Paris, 2000, p. 44 (illustrated in color, p. 45).
D. Hampton, *Mark Hampton: An American Decorator*, New York, 2009, p. 132 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).

Frédérique Tison at Chassy. Photograph by Loomis Dean. © Loomis Dean.

BALTHUS

Jeune fille à la fenêtre

1955

In *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, Balthus depicted Frédérique Tison leaning out the open window of his second-floor studio, her back turned to the viewer and her left knee resting on a chair to help her balance. The profusion of sunlit foliage visible through the window contrasts with the unadorned interior; raking light illuminates Frédérique's left shoulder and arm, as though tempting her to venture outside. She cocks her head at a pensive three-quarter angle, dangling her arms over the windowsill in order to glimpse more of the garden below. "Balthus's *Jeune fille* looks like she is waiting for something or someone," Virginie Monnier has written, "and we wonder what is keeping her from going down to the farmyard" (exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 352). Evoking the nineteenth-century Romantic motif of the woman at a window, with its connotation of unfulfilled desire, the present canvas is rendered in a softly ethereal manner and imbued with the characteristically Balthusian element of anticipation and mystery.

The setting for this poignant scene is the Château de Chassy, a fourteenth-century manor house in Burgundy where Balthus lived and worked from 1953 to 1961. He came upon the castle, isolated in rural landscape, while driving one day through the mountainous region of the Morvan. An imposing, turreted structure, long abandoned and hopelessly dilapidated, Chassy offered Balthus a long-sought refuge from the hubbub of Paris and the opportunity to cultivate his art at a remove from the modern world. He purchased the property for a trifle, assumed the appropriately seigneurial title Count Klossowski

de Rola, and set about restoring the château to something of its former glory. “Whatever the struggles, the move facilitated a great period for Balthus’s work,” Nicholas Fox Weber has written. “His achievement at Chassy reflected a tranquility and equanimity that had nothing to do with the rugged living conditions reported by visitors” (*Balthus: A Biography*, New York, 1999, p. 426).

In 1954, Balthus was joined at Chassy by his step-niece Frédérique, whose mother Denise, a war widow, was married to the artist’s older brother Pierre, a novelist and painter. For the next seven years, until Balthus left Chassy for Rome, Frédérique was his abiding model and muse. He depicted her in nearly forty oil paintings and innumerable drawings, more than he did any of his other sitters. She is easily recognized by her classic profile and long dark hair, whiling away the days in spacious, light-filled interiors. “Frédérique henceforth reigns over these premises,” Jean Leymarie wrote, “occupying the various rooms of the house with her various poses, as she reads, plays cards, daydreams, looks out of the window, or grooms herself.” (*op. cit.*, 1982, p. 66).

Jeune fille à la fenêtre is the first of two large-scale canvases depicting Frédérique at the window that Balthus painted at Chassy. The second, dated 1957, is housed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and was painted in the east-facing, ground-floor salon of the château rather than the west-facing, second-story studio (Monnier and Clair, no. P277). In both works, the rectangle of the window echoes the frame of the canvas, functioning as a sign of the contemplative process of painting. The well-defined geometry of the casement clearly separates interior and exterior, establishing the perimeters of our visual experience and lending permanence to the sun-infused landscape. The wainscoting and open shutters delineate the corner of the room so that the model, and by extension the viewer, are protectively enclosed.

The emotional experience that Balthus captures in the two versions of *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, though, is markedly different. In the Metropolitan’s composition, instead of leaning forward into the open air, Frédérique stands upright, slightly back from the window and with both hands on the sill. “Rather than going out,” Monnier has noted, “she looks like she wants to absorb the sun that is turning her hair golden, to invite spring and its light scents to come into the drawing room” (exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 352). In the present painting, Balthus’s model, seems to long for adventures beyond the circumscribed confines of the domestic realm. This palpable sense of yearning is sublimated in Balthus’s

Balthus, *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, 1957. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

Edward Hopper, *Room in Brooklyn*, 1932. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. © 2022 Heirs of Josephine Hopper / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. Photo: Museum of Fine Art, Boston.

Salvador Dalí, *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, 1925. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

second treatment of the theme, where Frédérique appears entirely at peace as she takes in the view through the window.

In The Metropolitan Museum of Art's painting, the outdoor scene prevails over the space of the room, occupying the greater part of the canvas. Seen half-length, Frédérique functions in the composition principally to embody the act of looking that the window connotes. Through her eyes, we gaze at the landscape beyond—a classically receding sequence of courtyards, level with the first-floor window, framed by the decoratively arching branches of a maple tree. In the present *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, by contrast, the interior predominates over the smaller frame of greenery. Rather than looking past Frédérique onto the garden, the viewer is invited to share her space. Her full figure is visible, and her bright red sweater, breaching the typically inviolable plane of the window, acts as the painting's focal point.

The prosaic, rural landscape around Chassy, moreover, is here rendered exotic and unfamiliar. A jungle-like tangle of branches and foliage forms a screen across the foreground, affording only discrete, tantalizing glimpses of the building elevated on a hilltop in the distance—in actuality, a barn. The scene is bathed in the soft, roseate glow of afternoon rather than the clear, silvery light of morning. In contrast to the carefully cultivated, plainly legible vista of the Metropolitan's painting, the vista in the present canvas suggests unknown territory, heightening the Romantic connotation of longing for the faraway and invoking the necessity of losing oneself to fantasy. "A Balthusian secretiveness remains," Weber has written. "To give sumptuously yet to withhold, to order and cultivate while dissembling: this is Balthus's way" (*op. cit.*, 1999, p. 483).

The eight years that Balthus spent at Chassy marked a turning point in his art. He was now financially secure, thanks to a syndicate of collectors who supported him, and he began to work consistently on a larger scale. Deep in the countryside, attuned to rural rhythms and seasonal rites, he pursued a mounting interest and innovative handling in landscape painting, and he imbued his stately interiors with light and luminous color. The erotic content of his art became less overt, and the atmosphere of tension, provocation, or outright menace that had characterized his earlier work gave way to a dreamy languor.

This sea-change is manifestly evident in Balthus's evolving treatment of the woman at the window theme. In 1933 and 1935, he painted a pair of disquieting, darkly sinister canvases in which the window provokes the same powerful

The present work in The Museum of Modern Art's *Balthus* retrospective, December 1956-February 1957. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: The Museum of Modern Art. © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

"In the young, dark-haired Frédérique, friends of the artist saw the incarnation of Brontë's willful Cathy. Instead of roaming the Yorkshire moors, Frédérique had the meadows and fields of the Morvan for her amusement, while Balthus, as Heathcliff, had become the lord of the manor. At Chassy, Balthus never went in search of a theme."

SABINE REWALD

qualms that we feel at the edge of a precipice. The earlier of these paintings depicts a young woman with her back to an open window, bracing herself against an impending fall as she attempts to evade an unseen attacker (Monnier and Clair, no. P72; Eskenazi Museum of Art, Bloomington). In the second painting, *Lady Abdy*, the model pulls the drapery aside and steps up onto the baseboard, looking over her shoulder towards the viewer as she contemplates a plunge over the sill (no. P80; sold, Christie's New York, 9 November 2015, lot 18A). In both works, the view through the window is enclosed and claustrophobic, suggesting confinement rather than freedom.

In *Jeune fille à la fenêtre*, the window is no longer a locus of physical danger and psychic disorder but rather a stimulus to imagination and a metaphor for art. "Balthus's vision, so harsh two decades earlier, is now lyrical and idealized," Weber has written. "It is the path taken by so many artists, composers, and writers in the course of their lifetimes: this move toward lightness and simplicity, from the earthbound to the heavenly sphere, from the tangible to the amorphous. Rembrandt, Beethoven, Henry James: each progressed toward abstraction and ethereality, from the specific toward the general" (*ibid.*, p. 482).

8

VILHELM HAMMERSHØI (1864-1916)

Stue (Interior with an Oval Mirror)

signed with initials and dated 'VH 1900' (lower right)
oil on canvas
21⅝ x 18⅛ in. (55 x 46 cm.)
Painted in 1900
$1,500,000-2,500,000

PROVENANCE:
Georg S. Bendix, Copenhagen (probably acquired from the artist, before 1916);
Estate sale, Winkel & Magnussen, Copenhagen, 20 May 1947, lot 23.
Anon. sale, Sotheby's, London, 14-15 March 1989, lot 51.
L. & R. Entwistle and Co., Ltd., London.
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 1989.

EXHIBITED:
(possibly) Copenhagen, *Den Frie Udstilling*, 1908.
Copenhagen, Kunstforeningen, *Arbejder af Vilhelm Hammershøi*, April 1916, p. 14, no. 153 (titled *Stue med en kvindelig figur, der bærer en bakke*).
Copenhagen, Kunstforeningen, *Udvalg af Vilh. Hammershøis arbejder*, January 1930, p. 11, no. 45 (titled *Stue*).

LITERATURE:
S. Michaëlis and A. Bramsen, *Vilhelm Hammershøi, Kunstneren og hans Værk*, Copenhagen, 1918, p. 97, no. 200 (titled *Stue*).

We are grateful to Susanne Meyer-Abich for her assistance in cataloguing the present work.

Hammershøi in his apartment at Strandgade 25, Copenhagen, 1913. Photographer unknown.

VILHELM HAMMERSHØI

Stue (Interior with an Oval Mirror)

1900

In December 1898, Vilhelm Hammershøi moved with his wife Ida to an apartment in a seventeenth-century house at Strandgade 30, in the old Christianshavn quarter of his native Copenhagen. The flat had numerous large windows of varying orientations that let in the cool, distinctly Scandinavian light, perfect for the artist known in his day as "the painter of tranquil rooms." Ultimately it was the austerely decorated rooms of the Strandgade 30 which would form the motif that would make up about a third of the artist's *oeuvre*. With an acute economy of painterly means, Hammershøi transformed spare, elegant interiors into images of haunting stillness and restrained poetic power, with a presciently modern character that remains deeply resonant today.

The present work, dated 1900, was probably painted in the middle of the three front rooms of the apartment which looked out on to the Strandgade. The contents of the interior have been limited to a few carefully selected objects—a rosewood side table holding a ceramic pitcher and a stemmed silver dish, an oval mirror hanging beside the window, a single framed artwork over the closed door leading to the next room. By limiting the objects in the room and reducing their forms to the bare essentials, with door handles removed and paintings blurred, the artist seeks to focus the attention of the viewer on repeated geometric form and the reflection of light on different surfaces within the composition. The artist's wife, Ida, is also depicted, seen from behind balancing a white

platter on her hip. Typical of Hammershøi, the room is described from a slightly skewed vantage point which creates a sense of dissonance between the painting and the viewer. Ida's figure, slightly to the right of the natural center of the composition, further adds to this distancing effect.

Hammershøi's interiors have an obvious precedent in seventeenth-century Dutch painting in the work of Johannes Vermeer, Pieter Elinga and Emanuel de Witte. In this, he followed in the footsteps of the previous generation of Danish painters, including Christoffer Eckersberg. Quite unlike either of these antecedents, however, Hammershøi's paintings are not concerned with the moral virtue of housekeeping or fetishizing the objects within the home. Instead, with Hammershøi, the items within the interior become one, their strict underlying geometry and limited palette unifying the elements of the composition into a single poetic whole.
In the present work, the artist contrasted the repeated structure of rectangular forms—the door, the molding, the painting and the frame of the window—with rounded ones, with both the mirror and the side table, the silver cup, and the platter, repeating the same shape at different angles. In a fascinating way, the artist's wife thus becomes a mediating presence between these recurring motifs. Her upright posture and the pleats in her dress repeat the verticals of the rectangular forms, and yet the oval mirror above the curved leaf of the table forms an hourglass shape which also echoes the feminine contours of her body. Hammershøi himself indicated the importance of this underlying geometric structure in his paintings, saying, "What makes me select a motif is just as much the lines in it, what I would call the architectonic attitude in the picture. And then the light, naturally... but when I select a motif I think that first and foremost it's the lines I look at" (quoted in P. Vad, *Vilhelm Hammershøi and Danish Art at the Turn of the Century*, New Haven, 1992, p. 401). In this aspect of Hammershøi's work he anticipates the geometrical abstraction of Piet Mondrian.

The interior is gently illuminated with cool raking light from a window at the far left. The light plays in subtly different ways across the varied surface textures in the room, glinting off the polished wood of the table and the silver cup, while absorbing into the matte black cloth of Ida's day dress. Hammershøi's distinctive short, blocky brushstrokes further emphasize the fall and play of light within the interior. Although windows appear frequently in Hammershøi's paintings, they rarely reveal a view outside; often rendered opaque by glare or shadow, they form a barrier between interior and exterior, protecting but also isolating the room from the world beyond. In the present painting, the placement of the window at a right angle to the picture plane blocks the window's glass from view, leaving only a narrow strip of the window frame visible.

Johannes Vermeer, *Girl Reading a Letter by an Open Window, circa* 1659. Gemaeldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Gemaeldegalerie Alte Meister/Herbert Boswank/ Art Resource, NY.

Caspar David Friedrich, *Woman at the Window*, 1822. Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen / Joerg P. Anders / Art Resource, New York.

René Magritte, *La reproduction interdite*, 1937. Museum Boijmans von Beuningen, Rotterdam.
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Photo: Banque d'Images, ADAGP / Art Resource, NY.

However, here, the plane of the window is broken by the thin branch and leaves of a houseplant, an unusual addition and one of the few living still-life objects to appear in Hammershøi's paintings, jutting into the room.

The painting creates the palpable sense of a timeless, frozen moment, charged with ambiguity and subtle mystery. Ida seems to have paused as she passes through the room, her head cocked at the slightest angle, pensive and yet unreadable. Hammershøi's solitary female figures have often been described as *unheimlich*, imperfectly translated as uncanny. This sense of uncanniness is heightened precisely because of their lack of narrative within the picture. As just another element in the painting's still life of objects, the female figure in the present work is suspended in an unresolvable state for the viewer. Poul Vad described this tension in Hammershøi's work as well, stating, "The woman's non-action underscores the moment's enchantment, that time stands still, that emptiness is fullness" (*ibid*., p. 203).

Hammershøi may have been private, but he was not reclusive. He traveled repeatedly to Paris, London, and the Netherlands, took part in group exhibitions across Europe, and was in touch with the international art world of his time. His reputation grew as a result of the paintings he produced during his time at Strandgade 30, and he soon numbered among his admirers such contemporary cultural luminaries as Serge Diaghilev and Rainer Maria Rilke. Although he eschewed the obsession with color that gripped the avant-garde at this time, his work suggests a dialogue with the *intimiste* subject matter of Edouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard, and possibly with the Symbolist painters as well. His figures' estrangement from their interior settings can also be understood to anticipate the sense of isolation later explored in the work of the Surrealists, including René Magritte.

"The continuing fascination of Hammershøi's interiors," Susanne Meyer-Abich has concluded, "lies precisely in an irresolvable tension between a representation of concrete objects carefully selected from the world surrounding the artist and a compositional rigor focusing on thin glazes of muted color, an arrangement of objects and figures which negates the narrative context of everyday life, and a structure of lines. These compositional elements appeal to modern eyes trained on abstract art, while the subject matter carries the weight of art historical tradition. The result has often been described as 'stillness.' Yet the meaning of the word relates to sound or movement rather than to what is actually happening: we are made to pause in perception and absorb the enigma—and delight—of a purely visual experience outside the realm of abstraction" (Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Interior with an Easel*, sale catalogue, Christie's, New York, 31 October 2018, lot 14).

9

BALTHUS (1908-2001)

Les trois soeurs

signed and inscribed 'Balthus 1965 Collection Frederique Tison' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
51⅛ x 68⅞ in. (130.5 x 175 cm.)
Painted in 1964

$1,500,000-2,500,000

PROVENANCE:
Frédérique Tison, Chassy, France (acquired from the artist).
Tony Curtis, Los Angeles (by 1968).
Thomas Ammann Fine Arts, Zürich (by 1976).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 31 January 1984.

EXHIBITED:
Paris, Musée des arts décoratifs and Knokke-le-Zoute, Municipal Casino, *Balthus*, May-September 1966, no. 50 and 46, respectively.
New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Balthus: "La chambre turque," "Les trois sœurs," Drawings and Watercolors*, March-April 1967, no. 4.
London, Tate Gallery, *Balthus*, October-November 1968, p. 40, no. 59 (dated 1965-1966).
Marseille, Musée Cantini, *Balthus*, July-September 1973, no. 44.
New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Acquisition Priorities: Aspects of Post-War Painting in America*, October 1976-January 1977, p. 37, no. 24 (illustrated in color; dated 1966).

LITERATURE:
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1978 (illustrated in color, pl. 41).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1982, p. 137 (illustrated; illustrated again in color, p. 107; dated 1966).
G. Régnier, *Balthus*, exh. cat., Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1983, p. 377, no. 216 (illustrated).
J. Heilpern, "The Bass Reserve" in *Vogue*, December 1988, p. 348 (illustrated in color; dated 1966).
C. Irvine, *Remarkable Private New York Residences*, New York, 1990, p. 11 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, p. 15).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990 (illustrated, pl. 42).
J. Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990, p. 136 (illustrated; illustrated again in color, p. 95).
X. Xing, *Balthus*, Shanghai, 1995 (illustrated in color, pl. 61).
C. Roy, *Balthus*, Paris, 1996, p. 200 (illustrated in color).
V. Monnier and J. Clair, *Balthus: Catalogue Raisonné of the Complete Works*, Paris, 1999, p. 191, P 325 (illustrated).
J. Leymarie, M.-P. Colle, S. Lorant and B. Saalburg, *Balthus: Las tres hermanas*, Mexico City, 2000, p. 41 (illustrated in color; details illustrated in color, pp. 73 and 124; dated 1964-1966).
J. Clair, ed., *Balthus*, exh. cat., Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2001, p. 344 (illustrated in color, fig. 7).

Marie-Pierre, Béatrice, and Sylvia Colle with their grandfather in Biarritz, 1948. Photographer unknown.

BALTHUS

Les trois soeurs

1964

Between 1954 and 1964, Balthus painted five group portraits, three smaller studies, and a dozen drawings on the theme of *Les trois soeurs*—three adolescent sisters, mingling together in an intimate interior. The present version of the composition is one of the two culminating works from the series, which constitutes the most extended and ambitious meditation on a single subject that Balthus ever undertook. "*The Three Sisters* is among Balthus's masterpieces," Nicholas Fox Weber has written. "Subtle yet authoritative, and unique in its delicacy, it encapsulates a realm of human existence into which few observers have so daringly or skillfully ventured" (*Balthus: A Biography*, New York, 1999, p. 472).

The models for *Les trois soeurs* were the daughters of Balthus's late friend and dealer Pierre Colle, who had died in 1948. The genesis of the project dates to 1952, when Balthus paid a visit to Colle's widow Carmen Baron, the hostess of an avant-garde artistic salon on the rue de Varenne in Paris. The artist's goal was to buy back *La jupe blanche*, a provocative portrait of his wife Antoinette and one of the masterpieces of his early career, which he had sold to Colle shortly before the dealer's passing (Monnier and Clair, no. P103). Carmen requested a portrait of her three daughters in exchange for returning the canvas, and Balthus readily agreed.

The eldest of the Colle girls, Marie-Pierre, visited Balthus in his studio at 3, cour de Rohan in Paris for some preliminary sittings early in 1954. Work on the portrait only commenced in earnest that summer, though, when Balthus spent a holiday with the Colle family at Le Chapelet, their villa

in Biarritz. Every morning, before the three sisters were permitted to go to the beach, they were enlisted to pose in the music room, clad in summer outfits from Carmen's friend Christian Dior. "We didn't pose for Balthus because he was the great painter of the century," Marie-Pierre later recalled. "We posed because he was a friend of the family" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 462). To sweeten the deal, they were provided with boxes of chocolates—further gifts from Dior—to sample while they sat for Balthus.

The artist left Biarritz with a trove of drawings of the three girls together. Marie-Pierre, enthroned in the center of the composition, appears self-possessed, her foot resting on the sofa with insouciant ease. The middle sister, Béatrice, sits curled up on the floor and Sylvia, the introspective one of the family, is enfolded protectively in an armchair, absorbed in a book.

Back in his studio at Chassy, Balthus worked up these studies into three preliminary oil paintings that feature the girls alone or in pairs (Monnier and Clair, nos. P231-233). The next year, in 1955, he painted the first two group portraits of the sisters, first in earthy tones on an elongated canvas (no. P234) and then, on a larger scale, with more compact proportions and lighter color harmonies (no. P253). In both versions, the pictorial space is flattened and frieze-like, and the figures are linked through a regular succession of half-round arcs that draws the eye across the canvas. "These riveting canvases show Balthus at his most eloquent and revealing," Weber has written. "*The Three Sisters* is not so much the real world as Balthus's version of the real world. The art that emerges is serene but tense, totally languid but charged up" (*op. cit.*, 1999, p. 473).

During the ensuing years, Balthus remained close with the Colle family. "If he had to be in town for a few days, he stayed at Carmen's, where he had his own room," recalled the British-born sculptor Raymond Mason, who frequented her salon in Paris. "He was the favorite of the household; indeed, if truth be told, he was the darling child of the entire company, who considered him a rare, quintessential artist" (quoted in J. Clair, ed., *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 125). In 1959, Balthus began a new oil version of *Les trois soeurs*, which he took with him—still unfinished—when he moved to Rome two years later as the newly appointed director of the Académie de France (Monnier and Clair, no. P327). Marie-Pierre Colle visited him in Rome in November 1963, renewing his interest in the theme. The next year, he brought the third oil in the series to completion and painted two

Georges Seurat, *Poseuses*, 1886-1888. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Photo: Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia.

Balthus, *Le Salon (II)*, 1942. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

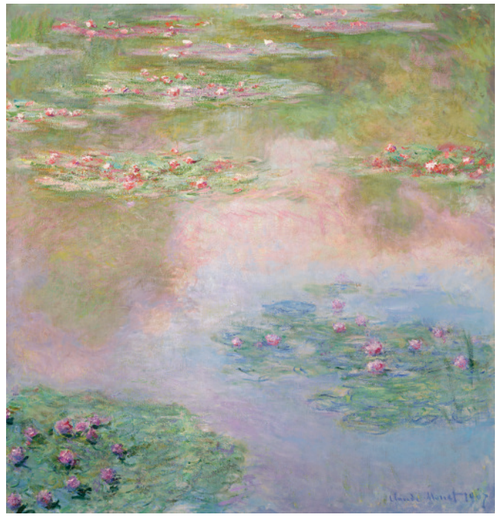
"Then I would like to describe the place where one can meet Balthus, the Villa Medici... a place in which one seems to take a journey back through time, immersed within and protected by the unbroken flow"

FEDERICO FELLINI

subsequent, culminating works—the present canvas and a close variant (no. P326; sold, Christie's London, 24 June 2014, lot 44).

In the final two versions of *Les trois soeurs*, the setting is no longer the music room at the Colle sisters' home in Biarritz but rather the director's salon at the Villa Medici, the site of the Académie de France and Balthus's own residence for sixteen years. During his tenure in Rome, Balthus undertook an extensive program of conservation at the famous villa, stripping the interior of centuries of decorative accretions to restore its original Renaissance character, monumentally stark and austere. He then painted the vast expanses of bare wall to harmonize with the surviving cycle of Cinquecento frescoes, using matte, muted hues such as the signature blue of the salon, which he scraped with the bottom of a glass bottle to add texture and to create an effect of age. The aesthetic ideals that guided Balthus's restoration work at the Villa Medici are reflected in the delicacy of palette and subtly luminous surface of the present *Trois soeurs*.

Abandoning the frieze-like horizontality of the early versions of the composition, Balthus now arranged the figures pyramidally, emphasizing the psychological relationships among the three sisters. At the apex of the composition is Marie-Pierre, here seated proudly frontal rather than slouching languorously to one side. Bookish Sylvia, quiet and self-contained, has been moved from the left to the right; she is counter-balanced by spirited Béatrice, who has taken up and begun to leaf through a volume of her own, perched over a table in a dynamically canted pose that derives from *Les enfants Blanchard* (Monnier and Clair, no. P100; Musée Picasso, Paris). A network of perpendicular lines and planes defines the pictorial space that surrounds the three sisters, forming a grid-like underpinning for the contrasting diagonals of limbs and torsos. "What guided me, indeed, is my 'personal mathematics'," explained Balthus, "the admiration that Piero [della Francesca] with his 'harmonies of angles' has inspired in me" (quoted in J. Leymarie *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 16). Subsumed within an abstract geometry and imbued with the spirit of the Renaissance, the Colle sisters appear timeless and absolute. At the same time, Balthus evoked through his highly personal vision each sister's powerful individuality—the fundamental quality of her own interior world. "With the passing of the years," Marie-Pierre affirmed, "we more resembled those three adolescents captured by the painter, in the essence that he was able to express. We became more and more ourselves: we are ourselves" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 126).



Clockwise from top left:

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907.

Claude Monet, *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne*, 1891.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, 1900-1903.

Monet in America

The three exquisite paintings by Claude Monet in the Anne H. Bass Collection span the breadth of the artist's mature *oeuvre*, from his bucolic paintings of the French countryside in the early 1890s, to his rhapsodic views of a foggy London, and the ethereal, meditative visions of his beloved gardens at Giverny. Together, these works not only illustrate the importance the artist placed on working in series, a practice which occupied him throughout the last three decades of his career, but also the importance of the growing market for his work among American collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, all three paintings made the journey across the Atlantic early in their histories—*Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne* was purchased by Henry Sayles from Boston in 1892, *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* entered the collection of Elizabeth and William Lowell Putnam in 1907, and *Nymphéas* was acquired by James W. Viles of Chicago in 1909. At a time when the French public still remained largely skeptical of Monet's visionary aesthetic, the enthusiastic response of such forward-thinking American collectors helped to establish a healthy demand for the artist's work in the United States, which would prove essential to his international reputation, and ultimately, his success.

The first recorded showing of a Monet painting in America came in April 1866, when the Parisian dealer and publisher Alfred Cadart included a work by the young painter in an exhibition of French art at the Derby Gallery in New York. As the show was primarily focused on an older generation of painters who had come to prominence in the first half of the century, namely Gustave Courbet, Theodore Rousseau and Camille Corot, there

"For the moment people want nothing but Monets, apparently he can't paint enough pictures to meet the demand ... everything he does goes to America at prices of four, five and six thousand francs."

CAMILLE PISSARRO, 1891

is little reference to Monet's work in reports on the exhibition. Though opportunities to see the artist's work in America were sporadic over the course of the following two decades, each exhibition which featured his work helped to contribute to Monet's growing reputation amongst collectors on the East Coast of America, where paintings by Courbet, Jean François Millet and the Barbizon School enjoyed a wide popularity. From New York to Boston, Philadelphia to Chicago, connoisseurs embraced the bold new visual language of the Impressionists, seeing in their carefully observed landscapes an exciting evolution of technique, style and subject, and a freshness of vision.

Monet's growing appreciation across the Atlantic was fueled in part by the enthusiasm of American painters who had encountered his work while visiting France. Chief amongst the expatriate artists heralding Impressionism to their fellow countrymen were John Singer Sargent, Tom Perry, Theodore Robinson and the Philadelphia-born Mary Cassatt, who was the only American artist to take part in the Impressionist Exhibitions during the 1870s and 1880s. Though an avid follower of Degas, her enthusiasm for Monet's style led Cassatt to acquire one of the artist's 1870s views of Trouville from the bankruptcy sale of the textile merchant Ernest Hoschedé in 1878 (*La plage* à *Trouville;* Wildenstein, no. 157). Perhaps more importantly though, Cassatt was responsible for introducing many of the figures within her social circle to the Impressionists. For example, she was instrumental to the development of the collection of her brother Alexander, who had made his money

Claude Monet, *Le Pont, Amsterdam*, 1874. Shelburne Museum, Vermont. Purchased by Louisine Waldren Elder (later Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer) in 1874. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

Claude Monet, *La plage à Trouville*, 1870. Private collection. Purchased by Mary Cassatt in 1878. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

Paul Durand-Ruel in his gallery in 1910. Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.

in the railway industry, guiding his purchasing, putting him in contact with dealers, and facilitating several important sales. In 1883 she advised him that "Monet is coming up," appealing to his business-side by illustrating the promising future his investments held (quoted in E.M. Zafran, "Monet in America," in *Claude Monet (1840-1926): A Tribute to Daniel Wildenstein and Katia Granoff*, exh. cat., Wildenstein, New York, 2007, p. 83). Alexander's Impressionist paintings were greatly admired by a number of his colleagues on his return to America, and Cassatt would assist several of them, including Frank Graham Thomson, in their subsequent buying activities.

Cassatt was also an advisor and friend to the young Louisine Waldron Elder, whom she had met in 1874, when the nineteen-year-old was visiting Paris with her mother and sisters. Cassatt encouraged her friend's passion for the avant-garde art of the period and in 1877, with assistance from her sisters, Louisine purchased her first group of Impressionist works, including a Degas pastel and Monet's *Le Pont, Amsterdam*, 1874 (Wildenstein no. 306; Shelburne Museum, Vermont). By the time of her marriage to the sugar magnate Henry O. Havemeyer in 1883, Louisine had built a small but significant collection of modern paintings, and though her husband was slow to embrace her more advanced aesthetic tastes, by the 1890s the couple were among the foremost purchasers of Impressionist art in America, paying high-prices for masterpieces by the leading artists of the school.

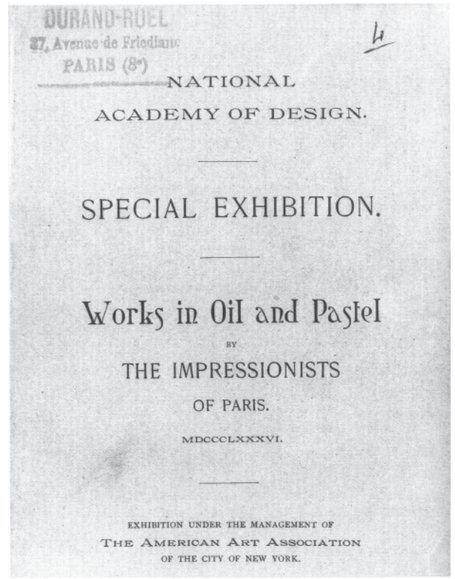
While these first collectors of Monet's work made most of their early purchases in Paris, often while travelling through Europe or visiting the French capital for business, in the 1880s a few intrepid dealers made the corresponding journey across the Atlantic, taking a financial gamble and bringing the Impressionists directly to the American market. One figure who would prove instrumental to the appreciation for Monet's art in the United States was Paul Durand-Ruel, who had met the artist in London in 1871, and subsequently became his primary dealer. Having previously mounted exhibitions in Germany, England, Austria and Holland, he tested the waters in America by sending three landscapes to the *American Exhibition of Foreign Products, Arts & Manufactures* in Boston in September 1883. Though the paintings were lost amidst the thousands of other exhibits in what was essentially a large trade show, the exhibition was still an important stepping stone for the dealer. Though Durand-Ruel did not make any successful sales, the event granted him the

opportunity to make a number of important acquaintances, laying the groundwork for his ambitious plans for officially expanding his business to America.

Particularly important in this context was his meeting with James F. Sutton, one of the founding directors of the American Art Association, who made it his mission to promote art and culture across the country. Believing a large-scale, dedicated showing of Durand-Ruel's holdings would "create a sensation in America," Sutton invited the dealer to put together a large exhibition showcasing Impressionist artists for the New York organization, committing the association to covering all of the costs incurred in transporting the works to America (quoted in *ibid*., p. 86). Though the ambitious undertaking took several years to organize, when it finally opened on 10 April 1886, it included an astounding 289 works by a wide variety of artists. Though Monet had been reluctant to send pictures to the event, Durand-Ruel had persuaded him that the venture was a worthy undertaking, and when the exhibition opened, the artist was represented by no fewer than forty-eight compositions, including *La Gare Saint-Lazare* (Wildenstein, no. 438; Musée d'Orsay, Paris), the largest number of paintings by any artist in the show. Writing in *The Cosmopolitan*, Luther Hamilton proclaimed the exhibition to be "One of the most important artistic events that ever took place in this country" (quoted in *ibid*., p. 88).

Describing the event, another observer in *The Critic* reported: "Every visitor to the exhibition at the American Art Galleries during the past week has brought away with him an impression of strange and unholy splendor, or depraved materialism, according to the depth of his knowledge and experience... It is seldom that what is virtually an entire school of art is transported bodily from one country to another; yet this has been done in the case of the impressionists... Some of the most delicious landscapes ever painted are to be seen in this exhibition. Claude Monet (not Manet) leads the school and after him come Sisley, Boudin, Pissarro, and others... whatever is exquisite, tender, subtle in landscape art is found in Monet's works here exhibited" (quoted in *ibid*., p. 88).

The exhibition proved so popular with visitors that it was extended for another month, transitioning to the National Academy of Design in late May. It marked an important turning point in American trends for collecting, as the Impressionists officially supplanted



Title page of the catalogue of the exhibition "The Impressionists of Paris" organized by Paul Durand-Ruel in New York, 1886.

Claude Monet, *La Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. This work was included in Paul Durand-Ruel's 1886 exhibition "The Impressionists of Paris" in New York. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

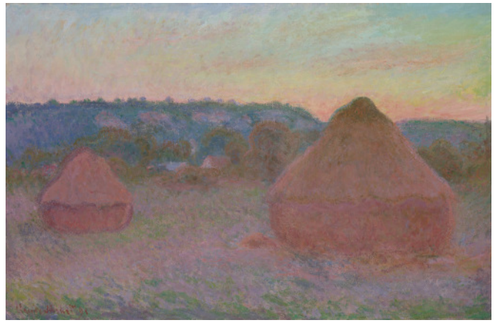
the Barbizon and Academic painters as the chief representatives of French art, while Monet was officially proclaimed as the leading proponent of the movement. For Durand-Ruel, the exhibition confirmed that his instincts had been correct—writing to Henri Fantin-Latour, he proclaimed that the event illustrated that audiences across the Atlantic were "less ignorant, less hide-bound than our French collectors," and eager to spend money on these new artists (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 88). Durand-Ruel singled out a handful of important collectors as essential to the exhibition's success: "Only a small number of collectors—but a group whose taste commanded considerable respect in America—such as Messrs. Spencer, Havemeyer, Fuller, Seney, Erwin Davis, Fitzgerald and Lawrence came many times to study the paintings carefully, finally buying a few pictures. It did not mean a fortune for me, but I counted the exhibition a real success" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 91).

This comment from Durand-Ruel points to another essential factor in the rising popularity of Monet in America, namely the role played by collectors themselves in promoting the artist's work amongst their social networks. Most of these figures were seen as upstanding members of their communities, leaders in their respective professional fields, and influential in their city's cultural scenes. Through their personal relationships with neighbors, acquaintances and colleagues they had a direct influence on collecting tastes in the United States, showcasing their acquisitions in their homes during dinner parties and society events, bringing Impressionism to a new audience of interested parties who sought to emulate their example. In this way, Monet became very much the artist *in vogue* amongst the American collecting class during the 1890s. This is perhaps best seen in the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Potter Palmer of Chicago. A pioneering retailer, real-estate magnate and owner of the city's grandest and most luxurious hotel, Potter Palmer was a savvy businessman who had made his fortune through bold innovation, while his wife Bertha was considered the undisputed leader of the city's high society.

The Palmers were voracious in their collecting habits: having attended Monet's seminal exhibition of the *Meules* paintings in Paris in 1891, the couple would go on to acquire nine different works from the acclaimed series, four of which now reside at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1892 alone, they acquired twenty-two Monets, bringing their total collection to over fifty of his paintings. The compositions were hung in the grand

gallery at their mansion on Lakeshore Drive, nicknamed "the Castle," were the couple hosted glittering parties and extravagant events that attracted the great and good of high society from across the East Coast. The Palmers were aware of the visibility their collection had amongst their peers—in 1893, the display in the main gallery showcased their rich holdings of Impressionist work alongside examples of Romanticism and the Barbizon School, as a complement to the public art exhibition of the World's Columbian Exhibition, staged in Chicago from May to October that year. The Palmers would no doubt have hosted visiting dignitaries, wealthy businessmen, and leading characters from the *beau monde* over the course of the World's Fair, all of whom would have been exposed to Monet's most daring recent canvases at their home. As a result of the Palmer's promotion and their status as key taste-makers, Monet soon became one of the most fashionable artists in America.

Following these trends, there was a marked increase in the exhibition of Monet's paintings across the East Coast of the United States over the course of the ensuing decade. Each show was accompanied by great debate in the local press, which furthered the public's interest in the artist and made him a household name across the country. Private social clubs, in particular, became important exhibition venues for Impressionism, with branches of the Union League Club in New York and Chicago, and the St. Botolph Club in Boston, hosting key early exhibitions of the artist's work. At their core, these clubs were founded as venues in which like-minded gentlemen with an interest in art and literature could mix, enjoy lively conversations and debates on the latest developments in these fields, share new ideas and experience the most cutting-edge avant-garde art in the club's private galleries. One such member, William H. Fuller, who had purchased Monet paintings at Durand-Ruel's 1886 exhibition, organized a showing of the artist's works at the Union League Club of New York, where he was chairman of the Art Committee. Featuring thirty-four paintings by the artist, the event marked Monet's first solo-exhibition in America. Writing in the pamphlet for the exhibition, Fuller explained the allure the artist's unique painterly style held for many collectors at the time: "Monet sees nature with nobody's eye but his own, and he paints what he sees and what he feels with precision and fervor, and with intense personality" (quoted *ibid.*, p. 95).



Claude Monet, *Deux meules, declin du jour, automne*, 1890. The Art Institute of Chicago (formerly in the collection of Mr & Mrs Potter Palmer). Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

Claude Monet, *Meules, effet de neige, soleil couchant*, 1890-1891. The Art Institute of Chicago (formerly in the collection of Mr & Mrs Potter Palmer). Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

Claude Monet, *Meules, fin de l'été, effet du soir*, 1890. The Art Institute of Chicago (formerly in the collection of Mr & Mrs Potter Palmer). Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

Claude Monet, *La Meule*, 1890-1891. The Art Institute of Chicago (formerly in the collection of Mrs Bertha Palmer). Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

This show was followed by another one-man exhibition in April 1892, at the St. Botolph Club in Boston, one of the most esteemed artistic organizations in the city, which counted prominent artists, musicians, writers, businessmen, politicians and collectors among its members. Twenty-one paintings by Monet were displayed in the society's exhibition rooms, almost all of which were loaned to the club by local collectors. For many involved, the exhibition represented an educational venture, illustrating their desire to share the beauty of the Impressionist school with a wider public, and enlighten new audiences to Monet's genius. The exhibition was a resounding success—according to Desmond Fitzgerald, one of the key organizers, thousands of visitors flocked to see the show during its two week run. This marked an important turning point in Monet's public reception amongst the American public, leading the Union Club of Philadelphia to stage a similar showing in 1893. The success of these ventures would lead the Art Institute of Chicago to host Monet's first monographic museum show in the United States in 1895, a powerful endorsement of the artist's talents, which was followed in 1903 by their acquisition of the 1896 composition, *Mauvais temps, Pourville* (Wildenstein, no. 1423; Private collection), making them the first institution in America to purchase a work by the artist for their permanent collection.

The group of collectors who had sought out and acquired Monet's work through the 1880s and 1890s, soon saw the results of their tireless endeavors to promote the artist, as a new generation of buyers began to emerge at the dawn of the twentieth century. Figures from across different sections of society, from lawyers to publishers, retailers to writers, began purchasing Monet's paintings, resulting in consistently high prices for the artist's work. His ongoing popularity is evidenced by the numerous articles published in American newspapers throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, detailing the latest developments in Monet's personal and professional life. Indeed, by the time the International Exhibition of Modern Art—colloquially known as the Armory Show—opened in New York in February 1913, Monet was widely considered a member of the artistic establishment by the American public, holding an important position within the great pantheon of art history. Standing in stark opposition to the daring Cubist, Futurist and Expressionist compositions on show, the five Monet paintings included in the exhibition represented the official acceptance of Impressionism by American audiences, as the former rebel of the French art world became the respected grand master of modern art.

10

CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)

Le Parlement, soleil couchant

signed and dated 'Claude Monet 1903' (lower left)
oil on canvas
32 x 36¼ in. (81.2 x 92 cm.)
Painted in 1900-1903
$40,000,000-60,000,000

PROVENANCE:
Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris (acquired from the artist, May 1904).
Elizabeth and William Lowell Putnam, Boston (acquired from the above, 1907).
Anna and Augustus Lowell Putnam, Boston (by descent from the above).
Katharine and Harvey H. Bundy, Boston (by descent from the above, until at least 1962).
Private collection, United States.
Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired from the above, 1982).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 22 January 1982.

EXHIBITED:
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Monet: Vues de la Tamise à Londres*, May-June 1904, p. 11, no. 28.
Berlin, Paul Cassirer, *Monet*, 1904, no. 10.
Toledo Museum of Art, *Opening of the New Galleries Devoted to the Permanent Collections of Paintings and Sculpture and Exhibition of One Hundred Paintings by the Impressionists*, November-December 1905, p. 6, no. 54.
Montreal, The Art Gallery, *French Impressionists*, February 1906, no. 7.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *An Exhibition of Paintings by Claude Monet*, August 1911, no. 35.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Impressionist and Barbizon School*, 1919-1920, no. 2 or 42.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Monet: Memorial Exhibition*, January 1927, no. 60.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Special Loan Exhibition of Monet*, 1962.
New York, Acquavella Galleries, Inc., *Claude Monet*, October-November 1976, no. 60 (illustrated in color).

LITERATURE:
R. de Bettex, "Échos de partout. Cl. Monet" in *La République française*, 10 May 1904, p. 1.
R.M. Ferry, "Notes d'art. La Tamise par M. Cl. Monet" in *La Liberté*, 18 May 1904, no. 13.889, p. 3.
L. Venturi, *Les archives de l'Impressionnisme*, New York, 1939, vol. I, p. 393, letter 280.
D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et catalogue raisonné*, Lausanne, 1985, vol. VI, p. 186, no. 1604 (illustrated, p. 187); p. 365, letters 1723 and 1724; p. 427, doc. 170 and p. 428, doc. 196.
J. Heilpern, "The Bass Reserve" in *Vogue*, December 1988, pp. 347 and 388 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).
C. Irvine, *Remarkable Private New York Residences*, New York, 1990, p. 11 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, p. 10).
D. Wildenstein, *Monet: Catalogue raisonné*, Cologne, 1996, vol. VI, pp. 712-713, no. 1604 (illustrated, p. 710).
D. Hampton, *Mark Hampton: An American Decorator*, New York, 2009, p. 132 (illustrated in color *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home).

A view of the Houses of Parliament and the Thames River in London, England, *circa* 1900. Photographer unknown. Photo: Archive Photos/Archive Photos/Getty Images.

CLAUDE MONET

Le Parlement, soleil couchant

1900–1903

"There's no land more extraordinary for a painter" (quoted in G. Seiberling, *Monet in London*, exh. cat., High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1988, p. 58). Claude Monet's emphatic passion for England's capital is magnificently displayed in his monumental, landmark series, the *Vues de Londres*. Started in London in 1899 and completed in Giverny in 1904, this series remains today among his greatest achievements, as he transformed the city into magical, elegiac visions at once timeless and modern.

Charing Cross Bridge, Waterloo Bridge, and the Houses of Parliament served as the principal subjects of this seminal group, each landmark a pretext for symphonic, often near abstract combinations of light and color. A host of both subtle and dramatic meteorological conditions—from the soft, gray morning light, to spectacular, fog-filled evening skies streaked pink, purple, and orange by the setting sun—gave rise to a theater of effects that Monet reveled in from his vantage point at the Savoy Hotel and St. Thomas's Hospital. The largest series of paintings the artist had yet produced, numbering almost a hundred canvases, the *Vues de Londres* pushed Monet to the extremes of his artistic powers, testing the fundamental Impressionist tenet of capturing the ephemeral, fleeting atmospheric effects of nature.

Crowning this series are the nineteen paintings of the Houses of Parliament, of which *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* is one of the finest (Wildenstein, nos. 1596-1614). Begun in either 1900 or 1901, on his second or final painting

campaign in the capital, and completed in 1903, this painting shows the golden orb of the sun, having burnt through the impenetrable cloak of clouds and fog to cast the scene into an atmospheric array of jewel-like violets and lilacs, cobalt and inky blues, and deep pink tones. Dwarfing the tugboat that noiselessly crosses the river, the majestic, windowless silhouette of the Houses of Parliament appears mystical, the rising and falling pattern of towers seemingly both emerging from the sulphurous light and at the same time, dissolving into the expansive, still waters of the Thames, London's silent witness of epochs past.

Among the most rich and deeply colored works of the series, this painting shows Monet's mastery at capturing the velvety darkness that gradually engulfs the vista, the "hair's breadth" moment between day and night, "when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty," as Thomas Hardy once described (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, London, 1892, p. 120). For Monet, this moment offered him not only mental, but artistic liberty, as his subject was transformed upon his canvas into a transcendent and wholly immersive vision of color, light, and pigment, rendered in expressive, passionate brushstrokes.

Le Parlement, soleil couchant was one of the thirty-seven works that Monet chose to include in his critically acclaimed exhibition, *Monet: Vues de la Tamise à Londres*, held at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in 1904. Today, it is one of only four of this Parliament series to remain in private hands. Other works now reside in museums including the Musée d'Orsay, Paris; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the Kunsthaus, Zürich.

The idea of an extended series set in London had been percolating in Monet's mind for some years prior to his first painting campaign there in 1899. In 1880, he had written to the critic Théodore Duret, "When you come through Paris you can advise me on what the chances could be for me in coming to spend several weeks in London where I could paint some aspects of the Thames" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 34). Yet, it was not until 1887 that the artist actually traveled to London, spending a twelve day sojourn in the city, where he especially admired his friend James McNeill Whistler's famed *Nocturnes* depicting the Thames and the thick fogs that surrounded it. It seems that these works planted the seed for Monet's own series. He described his desire to return "to paint some *effets* of fog on the Thames" (quoted in R. Thomson, *Monet and Architecture*, exh. cat., National Gallery, London, 2018, p. 171).

Claude Monet, *La Tamise et le Parlement*, 1871. The National Gallery, London. Photo: National Gallery, London, UK / Bridgeman Images.

Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834*, 1834. The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, New York.

"Everyone is awaiting with impatience his series of London impressions," wrote the artist's Impressionist comrade, Camille Pissarro in 1891, confirming that the London series was still playing on Monet's mind through the 1890s (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 37). After a brief stay in the capital in 1898 due to his son Michel's ill health, Monet arrived in London in September of the following year, accompanied by his wife, Alice Hoschedé and her daughter, Germaine, ostensibly for a month-long holiday, though one for which he had made sure to bring his paint supplies.

The artist and his family installed themselves in the Savoy Hotel, the fashionable establishment set on the banks of the Thames just behind the Strand. They took a suite of rooms on the 6th floor with a balcony overlooking the river. From here the heart of London stretched before them, the panorama bathed in the pale winter sun diffused through a dense atmosphere of mist mingled with coal smoke from domestic fires and industrial furnaces. Looking to the right, Monet would have seen the Houses of Parliament rising impressively beyond the iron structure of Charing Cross railway bridge, complete with steam trains running back and forth, and to the left, the monumental, looming arches of Waterloo Bridge framed by a plethora of factory chimneys complete with bellowing plumes of smoke that lined the banks of the river eastwards into the City and beyond. This vantage point held two of his three London motifs, all of which were recent constructions amid the ever-expanding expanse of the turn-of-the-century capital. Thrilled with his setup, Monet quickly converted one of their rooms into a studio, leaving his family to sightsee together, while he explored the artistic potential of his new surroundings.

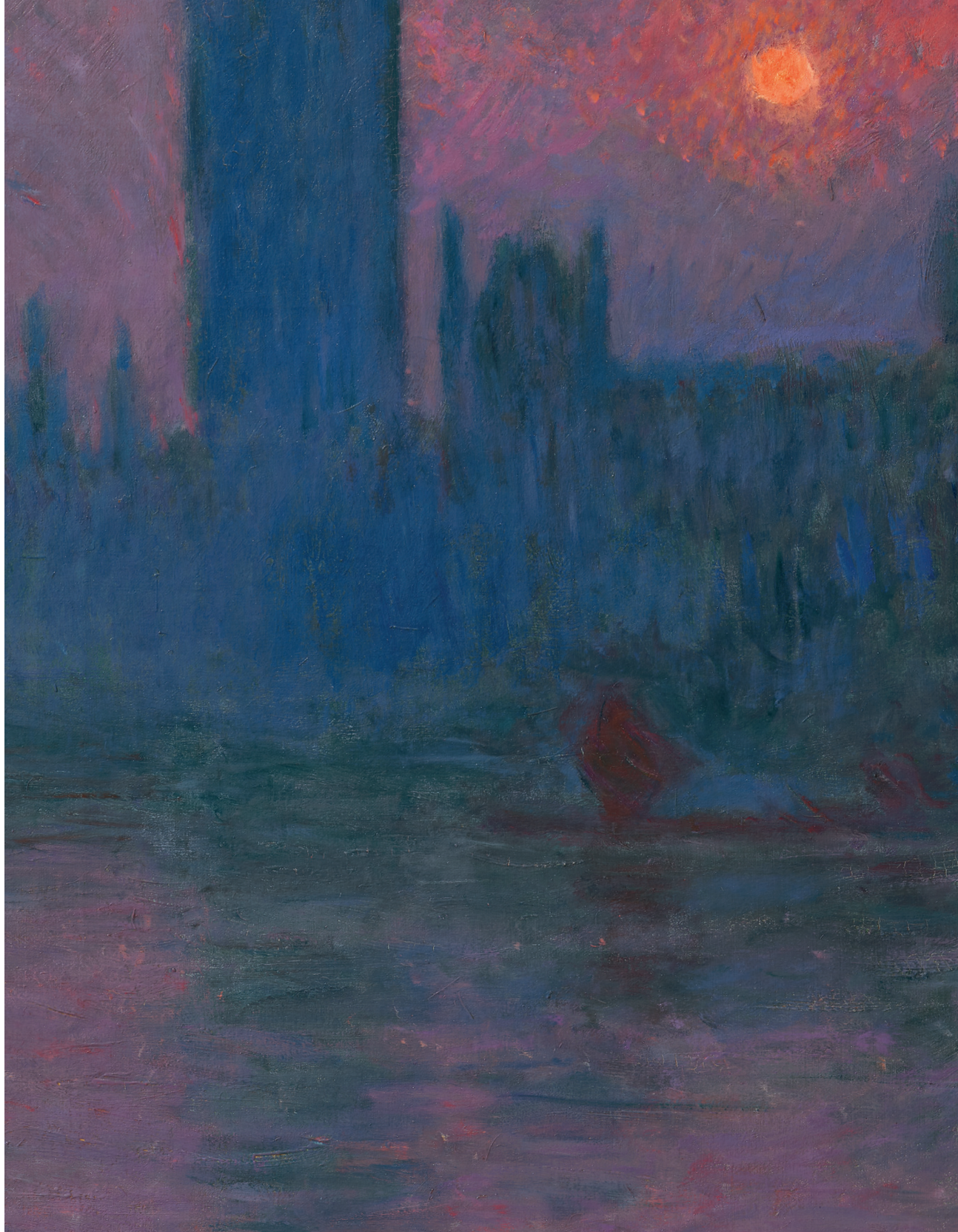
This was not the first time Monet had depicted the rapidly growing Victorian metropolis. He had spent what he later described as a "miserable time" in the city in 1870-1871, during *les années terribles* of the Franco-Prussian War. While there, Monet painted five works of London, one of which depicts the Houses of Parliament (Wildenstein, no. 166). Yet, after so many years immersed in the serial depiction of rural France, his *Meules* and *Peupliers*, and even to an extent the gothic façade of Rouen Cathedral, it was in many ways a surprising move for the artist to return to the modern metropolis, a subject he had more or less abandoned after his great Gare Saint-Lazare group of the late 1870s. Even more unusual was his decision to cross the Channel for such an endeavor, when he could have found such modern vistas in his own country.

There are several reasons that explain Monet's choice, not least his long term yearning to capture the extraordinary and famed light effects that the city offered during the winter months.

Monet's desire to create a London body of work could merely have been practical—he liked both the city and British culture, and his son also happened to be living there. At the same time, the artist, who turned sixty in 1900, was in the midst of revisiting old motifs, returning to themes and locations that he had painted earlier in his career—the Normandy coast, as well as the Seine, and now, London—"to create a kind of synthesis where I would sum up, in one canvas, sometimes two, my impressions and sensation of the past," he explained (quoted in *Impressionists: French Artists in Exile 1870-1904*, exh. cat., Tate Britain, London, 2017, p. 230). In addition, the Dreyfus affair had divided France, leaving many, including Monet, disillusioned by their country.

Monet's interest in London at this time also stemmed from the fact that some of the greatest landscape painters in the history of the genre were English, most notably John Constable and J.M.W. Turner. Monet is known to have studied these artists' work during his stay in London in the early 1870s, and two decades later, he spoke admiringly of Turner, referring specifically to the 1844 canvas, *Rain, Steam, and Speed: The Great Western Railroad* (National Gallery, London), with its dramatic effects of light and atmosphere. "Monet was ultimately doing battle with Turner," Paul Hayes Tucker has written. "No one could paint atmospheric effects in England without having Turner as a point of comparison. Few landscape painters in the history of art had been as inventive or as passionate, or had captured nature's elusive ways with as much power and poetry. Few were as individualistic or as moody, and few loved the sea more. Turner, therefore, was a soulmate, a guide, and a special challenge for Monet. If one were going to be a truly great landscape painter, this was necessary business to settle" (*Monet in the '90s: The Series Paintings*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1989, pp. 264, 266-267).

Filled with enthusiasm for his new project, Monet returned to London in February 1900. Almost immediately a new motif caught his eye. This time the artist had traveled to the capital alone for what would be a three month stay, settling once more in the Savoy, where he was at first dismayed to find his previous rooms requisitioned by Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's daughter, to house officers wounded in the Boer War. To appease the artist, the hotel gave him identical rooms on the floor below so as not to disrupt the view of his previously elected motifs. Thanks to his friendship with the well-connected Mary Hunter, who took the artist under her wing, inviting him to lavish dinner parties and presenting him to London society, Monet was introduced to Doctor Joseph Franck Payne. As a result of this fortunate meeting, Payne facilitated access for the artist to St. Thomas's Hospital, situated on the South Bank



Vincent van Gogh, *La nuit étoilée*, 1888. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

André Derain, *Westminster, Londres*,1905. Musée de l'Annonciade, St. Tropez. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: Bridgeman-Giraudon / Art Resource, NY.

next to Westminster Bridge, with a perfect view of the Houses of Parliament on the opposite bank.

Monet visited the hospital for the first time on 10 February 1900, soon after his arrival in the city, writing to his wife Alice the next morning: "I saw there some superb things and I am welcome to work wherever I want" (D. Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 1985, letter 1503). The following day, perhaps already conceiving of pictures such as *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, Monet walked to the hospital, "to see the sunset" (*ibid.*, letter 1504). Soon after, he told Alice, "today I met the director of the hospital who has kindly received me and has given me the permission to paint where I want and I would have started tonight had the fog not been so thick... I don't have a proper room, but rather an immense reception hall where I can leave my things, since I will need to paint *en plein air*, or at least on a protected terrace" (*ibid.*, letter 1505).

Monet was immediately captivated by the vista of Sir Charles Barry's recently rebuilt neo-Gothic palace. While he had included this elaborate and ornate complex of buildings in the background of a number of his Charing Cross Bridge scenes, the Houses of Parliament now became the sole protagonist. A few days later, he began painting the scene for the first time, excitedly describing to Alice a scene that could well have been the inspiration for the present work, "at 5 o'clock, thanks to a superb setting sun in the fog, I started working at the hospital. If only you could see how beautiful it was and how much I would have wanted you next to me on that terrace; they told me it was cold, I did not realize as I was rapt in my enthusiasm for my work...but how difficult it is going to be!" (*ibid.*, letter 1507).

From this time onwards, Monet divided his days between his three distinct motifs: in the morning and early afternoon he would work from the Savoy on the views of Waterloo and Charing Cross Bridges, before later crossing the bridge to the hospital, where he continued to work on the views of Parliament, backlit and silhouetted by the gradually setting sun. According to Daniel Wildenstein, at first, Monet painted Parliament at its widest, including the Victoria Tower and the Central Spire, as well as a smaller tower on the far right (Wildenstein, nos. 1596-1602) (see D. Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 704). In another five paintings, including the present work, Monet turned slightly to the left, eliminating from the composition the majority of the spires to instead include more of the ethereal expanse of the river and sky on the other side (Wildenstein, nos. 1603-1607). To paint the remaining seven canvases in the series, he shifted his angle of vision to the left further still, resulting in the spires' complete disappearance (Wildenstein, nos. 1608-1614).

Despite sharing near identical subject matter, no two works of this group are the same—each one rendered in a distinct palette and evoking a different mood. Sometimes Parliament and the river appear enveloped in a soft gray fog, other times they remain resolute amid dramatically windswept or storm laden skies. Gulls sweep through two of the compositions, their presence adding a Romantic drama (Wildenstein, nos. 1612-1613), and in another, the sky threatens to crack open, filled with dazzling streaks of golden light (Wildenstein, no. 1603).

With each day that passed, the "pretty red ball" of the sun, as Monet had once described (D. Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 1985, letter 1597), moved gradually higher, meaning that the striking effect of Parliament backlit by the setting sun would soon cease to exist for the year. Another work of the group, now in the Kunstmuseen, Krefeld (Wildenstein, no. 1602), features the same coin-sized sun, this time hanging lower and closer to the turrets, a sign that the present *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* was begun later in Monet's campaigns, the sun ascendant as spring inched closer. "Time marches on and the sun too, so that when the day comes that it decides to appear, it will no longer be in the same place" (*ibid.*, letter 1525).

The Houses of Parliament offered Monet a different kind of motif to the bridges of his other series. Aside from the obviously contrasting compositional effects of the structure and appearance of these subjects, this site was also imbued with an alternate symbolic resonance. Trains and vehicles pass in a cavalcade across Monet's visions of Charing Cross and Waterloo Bridge, while river traffic moves beneath them, all of which charge these scenes with an energy, and above all, an unmistakable modernity. By contrast, as *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* encapsulates, the Parliament works are endowed with a solemnity and stillness that lends them a greater sense of monumentality and timelessness. Appearing, "like specters, their towers rising to various heights as if replicating some ancient hierarchy or medieval form of competition," the Palace of Westminster appears otherworldly in these works, the vivid color and atmospheric effects that surround it transforming bricks and mortar into ethereal visions (P.H. Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art*, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 169).

Yet more than solely the edifice they depict, with all its symbolic resonance, it is nature itself that is rendered extraordinary in these works. Monet has conveyed to the viewer the magical power of light and its ability to transform the tangible into the intangible. Color too is lent a new role in the theater of painting; no longer solely descriptive, but expressive and mystical. Rendered on a large scale, with open, impassioned, and visible brushwork, with these works, Monet broke new ground in the realm of painting, the example of which would come to serve as a vital influence on future generations of artists.

While Monet could enforce a clear painting routine for himself during his days in London, the weather remained steadfastly out of his control, much to his frustration, anguish, and at times, awe, all of which he often conveyed to Alice in his copious correspondence. For an artist who had built his career upon mastering the depiction of the elusive, fleeting effects of atmosphere on the landscape, Monet found the depiction of London one of his greatest challenges so far. "This is not a country where you can finish a picture on the spot," he wrote dejectedly to Alice during his last visit to the city in 1901, a reflection of the fact that even after two extended stays, the weather could still outfox him. "The effects never reappear. I should have just made sketches, real impressions" (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *Monet in the 20th Century*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1998, p. 27).

At one minute there could be bright sun, the next gray skies and drizzle, all the while the quintessential, near omnipresent London fog draped itself over the city and its inhabitants. As a result, Monet worked across numerous canvases at the same time, returning to one he had previously been forced to abandon due to a change in the effects of the weather. "Today was a day of terrible struggle, and it will be the same until the day I leave," he wrote on 18 March 1900. "Only I needed more canvases, for the only way of achieving something is to start new ones for all kinds of weather, all kinds of harmonies, it is the real way, and, at the beginning, one always expects to find the same effects again and finish them, hence these unfortunate alterations which are useless" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 232).

While the capricious London weather was clearly a source of angst for the artist, there was one aspect in particular, the fog, that beguiled Monet, as it had for many artists before him. "What I like most of all in London is the fog," he told the dealer René Gimpel. "Without the fog, London would not be a beautiful city. It's the fog that gives it its magnificent breadth" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 258). He quickly learnt the city's routines: on Sundays, the dense smog would not appear until later in the day, when domestic smoke took the place of that which was usually emitted from the factories. "Then the sun rose so blindingly one could not see," Monet described on one such occasion. "The Thames was just golden. God it was beautiful, so good that I went to work in a frenzy following the sun and its reflections on the water. During that time the kitchens lit up. Thanks to the smoke, fog got up, then clouds, etc." (D. Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 1985, letter 1593).

Alvin Langdon Coburn, *Houses of Parliament*, 1909. Royal Photographic Society, London.
Photo: SSPL / National Media Museum / Art Resource, New York.

Though Londoners found the fog an unpleasant hinderance, visitors found this meteorological condition a source of rapt fascination. "And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become *campanili*...and the whole city hangs in the heavens and fairyland is before us...", Whistler had evocatively described in his famous "Ten O'clock" lecture of 1885 (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 228). Likewise, for Monet, the fog conjured a kaleidoscopic array of subtly harmonious color, which he sought to convey in his paintings. "The fog in London assumes all sorts of colors; there are black, brown, yellow, green, purple fogs, and the interest in painting is to get the objects as seen through all these fogs. My practiced eye has found that objects change in appearance in a London fog more and quicker than in any other atmosphere, the difficulty is to get every change down on canvas" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 230).

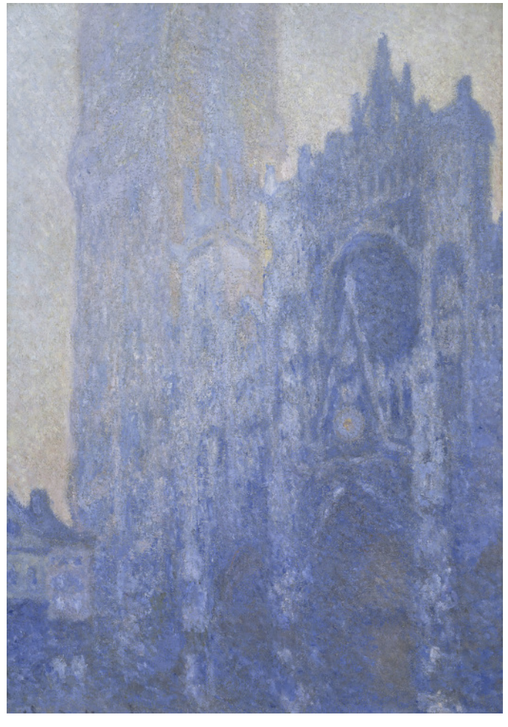
After three campaigns in London, Monet decided to finish the series in his studio at Giverny rather than returning to the Savoy Hotel. The series continued to cause Monet great difficulty, and he worked on it at Giverny for nearly three more years. In March 1903, he wrote to his dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, "No, I'm not in London unless in thought, working steadily on my canvases, which give me a lot of trouble. I cannot send you a single canvas of London, because, for the work I am doing, it is indispensable to have all of them before my eyes, and to tell the truth not a single one is definitively finished. I work them out all together or at least a certain number, and I don't yet know how many of them I will be able to show, because what I do there is extremely delicate. One day I am satisfied, and the next everything looks bad to me, but anyway there are always several good ones" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 80).

Monet finally exhibited thirty-seven paintings of London at Durand-Ruel's gallery in May 1904: eight views of Charing Cross Bridge, eighteen of Waterloo Bridge, and eleven of the Houses of Parliament, including the present canvas. The exhibition was a resounding success. Marc Joël of *La Petite Loire* called it "marvelous...one of the most beautiful demonstrations of pure art," while Georges Lecomte believed that Monet had never "attained such a vaporous subtlety, such power of abstraction and synthesis" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 267). "In his desire to paint the most complex effects of light," another critic wrote, "Monet seems to have attained the extreme limits of art. He wanted to explore the inexplorable, to express the inexpressible, to build, as the popular expression has it, on the fogs of the Thames. And worse still, he succeeded" (*ibid.*, p. 267).

Of the three London series, Monet seems to have been most satisfied with *Le Parlement* works. He included more than half of the Parliament canvases in the 1904 exhibition and asked a higher price for them than for the paintings of Charing Cross or Waterloo Bridge. The views of Parliament were well-received by critics. As the poet Gustave Kahn wrote, "Parliament appears as though constructed of different densities. Here, in the sunset, it looks like a great green forest; its pinnacles, in their hazy outlines, look like foliage; thick clouds—violet, green, blue, streaked with purple and blood—roll across calm waters that reflect both the building and the sky, in a convent-like peace and solitude. And here, it appears woven in violet mist; behind it, in deep perspective, the forest of factory towers; it looks like a palace of Thule, a temple of silence, mystically conjured up, outlined, in the magic of the hour, in the ringing and brutal city, by Claude Monet's precise art" (G. Kahn, "L'Exposition Claude Monet," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, 1 July 1904).

Anticipating the success of the Parliament series, Durand-Ruel purchased nine of the finest, including the present work, just before the opening of the exhibition in May 1904. Over the course of the following years, many of these paintings were acquired by prominent collectors such as Henry O. Havemeyer, Isaac de Camondo, and Sergei Shchukin. The present work was acquired from Durand-Ruel by the prominent Boston lawyer, William Lowell Putnam in 1907. He also acquired another of Monet's London series, *Waterloo Bridge, effet de brouillard* (sold, Christie's New York, 13 May 2021, lot 8B), from his sister, Amy Lowell. It remained in his family's collection until at least 1962.

At the turn of the century, in the heart of London, Monet found some of the most spectacular and elusive vistas of his career. The ethereal dimension of pictures such as *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, the palette of rich hues and the atmospheric mysteriousness would pave the way to Monet's ultimate artistic achievement: his *Nymphéas*. Volatile, capricious and unpredictable, the atmosphere of London, made of shifting fogs and subtle light effects, had provided Monet with a subject worthy of his most daring ambition. Octave Mirbeau commented: "It's a miracle. It's almost a paradox that one can, with impasto on canvas, create impalpable matter, imprison the sun... And yet, it's not a miracle, it's not a paradox: it's the logical outcome of the art of Claude Monet" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1988, p. 96).



Claude Monet, *Le Portail et la tour d'Albane à l'aube*, 1894. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photo: © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston / Tompkins Collection / Bridgeman Images.

Gerhard Richter, *Milan: Cathedral*, 1964. Private collection. © Gerhard Richter 2022.


GOLD FLAKE

Monet's *Le Parlement*

The present lot.

Claude Monet, *Londres, le Parlement effet de soleil dans le brouillard*, 1900-1901 (W. 1596). Private collection. Photo: akg-images.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, effet de soleil*, 1900-1901 (W. 1597). Brooklyn Museum, New York. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, 1900-1901 (W. 1598). The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Photo: National Gallery of Art.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, symphonie en rose*, 1900-1901 (W. 1599). Pola Museum of Art, Hakone.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, tours de Westminster*, 1900-1901 (W. 1600). The Art Institute of Chicago. Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, symphonie en bleu*, 1900-1901 (W. 1601). High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Photo: Courtesy of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, coucher de soleil*, 1900-1901 (W. 1602). Kunstmuseen, Krefeld.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, 1900-1901 (W. 1603). Private collection.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, ciel orageux*, 1900-1901 (W. 1605). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, reflets sur la Tamise*, 1900-1901 (W. 1606). Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, coucher de soleil*, 1900-1901 (W. 1607). Kunsthaus Zürich. Photo: Kunsthaus Zürich, Geschenk Walter Haefner, 1995.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, effet de brouillard*, 1900-1901 (W. 1608). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Le Havre.

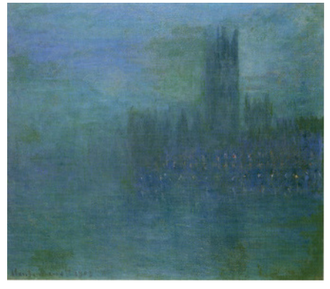
Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, effet de brouillard*, 1900-1901 (W. 1609). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/ Art Resource, New York.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, trouée de soleil dans le brouillard*, 1900-1901 (W. 1610). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, effet de brouillard*, 1900-1901 (w. 1611). Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, les mouettes*, 1900-1901 (W. 1612). Princeton University Art Museum. Bequest of Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb 1979-54.

Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, les mouettes*, 1900-1901 (W. 1613). Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. Photo: HIP / Art Resource, NY.



Claude Monet, *Le Parlement, effet du soir*, 1900-1901 (W. 1614). Private collection.

11

CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)

Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne

signed and dated 'Claude Monet 91' (lower right)
oil on canvas
39¼ x 25⅝ in. (101 x 65.7 cm.)
Painted in 1891

$30,000,000-50,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris (acquired from the artist, January 1892).
Henry Sayles, Boston (1892); sale, American Art Association, New York, 14 January 1920, lot 50.
Durand-Ruel Galleries and M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York (acquired at the above sale).
Stephen C. Clark, New York (acquired from the above, January 1920).
Private collection, New York; sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, 30-31 March 1949, lot 85.
Mr. and Mrs. Kurt F. Pantzer, Indianapolis (1949); Estate sale, Christie's, New York, 19 May 1982, lot 17.
Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired at the above sale).
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 19 May 1982.

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Monet*, March 1892, no. 13.
Boston, St. Botolph Club, *Monet*, February 1899, no. 14.
Boston, Copley Hall, *Monet*, March 1905, no. 54.
Boston Museum of Fine Arts, *Exhibition of Paintings by Claude Monet*, August 1911, no. 7.
St. Louis, Carroll-Knight Gallery, Inc., *Exhibition of Paintings by American, French and English Artists*, 1946, no. 6.
Wilmington, Society of Fine Arts, *Exhibition of French Paintings*, January-February 1948, no. 29.
South Bend, Notre Dame University Art Gallery, *The Great Century: France, 1800-1900*, November 1959 (illustrated).
Indianapolis, John Herron Museum of Art, *Indiana Collects*, October-November 1960, no. 63 (illustrated).
The Dayton Art Institute; Davenport Municipal Art Gallery; Ithaca, Cornell University, White Art Museum; West Virginia, Huntington Galleries; Seattle, Charles and Emma Frye Museum; Phoenix Art Museum; Reno, University of Nevada; The Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego and Atlanta Art Association, *Monet and the Giverny Group*, January 1961-January 1962, no. 26.
Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *La peinture française: Collections américaines*, May-September 1966, pp. 62-63, no. 69 (illustrated, p. LV, pl. 53).
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LITERATURE:

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C. Mauclair, *L'Impressionnisme: Son histoire, son esthétique, ses maîtres*, Paris, 1904, p. 88 (illustrated).
G. Grappe, *Claude Monet*, Paris, 1909, p. 59.
C. Léger, *Claude Monet*, Paris, 1930 (illustrated, pl. 27).
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D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et catalogue raisonné*, Lausanne, 1979, vol. III, p. 148, no. 1297 (illustrated, p. 149); pp. 263-264, letters 1128, 1131, 1133 and 1135.
G. Seiberling, *Monet's Series*, New York, 1981, p. 362, no. 6.
J. Herbert, *Christie's Review of the Season*, New York, 1982, p. 119 (illustrated in color).
R. Gordon and A. Forge, *Monet*, New York, 1983, p. 292 (illustrated in color, p. 166).
C. Irvine, *Remarkable Private New York Residences*, New York, 1990, p. 11 (illustrated *in situ* in Mrs. Bass's home, p. 10).
P.H. Tucker, *Monet in the '90s: The Series Paintings*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1990, pp. 132-133 and 277, note 35.
D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Catalogue raisonné, supplément aux peintures, dessins, pastels*, Lausanne, 1991, vol. V, p. 48, no. 1297.
P.H. Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art*, London, 1995, p. 146, no. 164 (illustrated with incorrect image).
D. Wildenstein, *Monet: Catalogue raisonné*, Lausanne, 1996, vol. III, p. 519, no. 1297 (illustrated in color, p. 508).
D. Wildenstein, *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism*, Cologne, 1999, p. 280.
V. Russell, *Monet's Landscapes*, London, 2000, p. 109 (illustrated in color).
M. Conforti, *The Clark Brothers Collect: Impressionist and Early Modern Paintings*, exh. cat., Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 2006, pp. 138 and 338, no. 301.

Claude Monet, *Un tournant de l'Epte*, 1888. The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

CLAUDE MONET

Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne

1891

During the spring of 1891, Claude Monet discovered an intriguing new subject in a stretch of elegant poplars lining the banks of the river Epte, just two kilometers south of his home at Giverny. Inspired by their towering forms and the regular rhythm of their placement along the water's edge, he began a concentrated series of paintings which placed the poplar as the central protagonist within the composition. Building on the development of his experiments in the *Meules* series (Wildenstein, nos. 1266-1290), which had occupied him over the course of the previous winter and were likely completed around the same time as the poplar paintings were begun, Monet set out to capture the trees in a variety of light conditions, tracking the changes in their shape, form and color as they transitioned from early spring, through the height of their summer growth, and into early autumn. Executed in an array of rich, vigorous brushstrokes, their forms overlapping and intertwining across the canvas, *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne* is among the most dynamic and richly worked paintings in the series, capturing the trees as the season shifts and their leaves turn a golden-red hue.

The *Peupliers* series emerged at an important moment in the artist's personal life. Just a few months prior, the house Monet had been renting for almost a decade, *Le Pressoir,* had gone on the market and he had seized the opportunity to settle permanently in the idyllic hamlet of Giverny, purchasing the dwelling and its surrounding plot of land outright. "[I] would never find a parallel situation," he told his dealer at the time, Paul Durand-Ruel, "nor so beautiful

an area" (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *Monet in the '90s: The Series Paintings*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1989, pp. 81-84). Over the course of the following decade, Monet would dedicate himself almost exclusively to the depiction—and intentional celebration—of the pastoral surroundings of Giverny, as he reveled in the natural beauty of this corner of France. While the poplars had featured prominently in two canvases from 1887 (Wildenstein, nos. 1155-1156), and appear in the background of nearly half of the *Meules* paintings, the discovery of the stretch of trees along the Epte prompted a new creative outpouring for the artist. The natural location of the trees on the banks of the river as it wound its way through the landscape had captured Monet's imagination, and inspired him to create extraordinary, dynamic compositions in which the poplars are depicted in staggered arcs as they disappear into the distance.

With their strict linearity and intrinsic decorative elegance, the poplar held an obvious aesthetic allure for Monet—indeed, the trees had long been a recurring feature within his paintings of the landscape, from his views of Argenteuil from the 1870s, to more rural pastures and open fields of Giverny through the 1880s and early 1890s. A common feature within the French countryside during the nineteenth century, poplars were typically found lining the entrance routes to grand châteaux, or used along rural roads as windshields for tilled fields, while land owners around the country planted them as a form of fencing to demarcate property boundaries. Svelte and elegant, they grew quickly—generally twenty-five to thirty feet in a little over a decade—making them a popular investment for speculators, while their ability to quickly absorb large amounts of water made them a perfect addition to river banks as protection against flooding. Moreover, following the French Revolution, the poplar had become a symbol of liberty, largely due to its name, and ceremonial plantings were common on important anniversaries. As such, the tree became an emblem of the stability, beauty and fecundity of rural France within the public imagination.

In June however, Monet's progress was threatened by news that the village of Limetz, which owned the trees along the Epte, intended to auction off the bank of poplars. They had been planted on communal land as a cash crop, and by June 1891 had reached an appropriate height for harvest. The artist's request to delay the August sale was refused by the mayor, and in a letter of 28 July, Monet lamented that there remained "quantities of new canvases which I must finish" (quoted in J. House, *Monet: Nature into Art*, New Haven, 1986, p. 201). It was only on the day of the auction itself that he came

Claude Monet, *Les meules à Giverny*, 1885. Private collection.

up with a solution, striking an agreement with a local timber merchant: “I asked him how high a price he expected to pay,” Monet later told a biographer, “promising to make up the difference if the bid went over his amount, on the condition that he would buy the trees for me and leave them standing for a few more months” (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art*, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 146). The arrangement proved successful—when the gavel came down, Monet and the lumber merchant were co-owners of the poplars, with the artist proclaiming, “my wallet felt the damage” (quoted in D. Wildenstein, *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism*, Cologne, 1996, p. 280).

This anecdote reveals not only the monetary investment Monet was willing to place in his motifs, a practice that would be seen most clearly in his later compositions of the gardens at Giverny, but also his continued commitment to painting *en plein air*, directly before the motif. Although he would finish all of the poplar paintings in his studio, direct observation of the trees in their natural setting and their shifting character under different weather conditions, seasons, and times of day remained central to Monet’s working methods. This is seen most clearly in works such as *Peupliers au bord de l’Epte, automne*—the successful delay in harvesting the poplars allowed Monet to observe the trees as fall began to slowly transform the countryside, causing the foliage to change to a rich, reddish-gold, as the warm rays of summer gave way to cooler, crisper tones in the soft autumnal sunlight. Indeed, the effects of the changing seasons appears to have been Monet’s primary focus in the *Peupliers* series, with the artist subtitling most of the paintings with an indication of what season they represented, as they charted the shifting character of the landscape from spring, to summer, to fall.

The twenty-four paintings in the *Peupliers* series (Wildenstein, nos. 1291-1313) were all created from almost the exact same vantage point, near a spot where the Epte bends back on itself twice to create a distinctive S-shape. Whereas the *Meules* series had focused on isolated grainstacks, an effect which endowed them with a greater sense of weight and monumentality, it is in their sheer numbers and their relationship to one another that the poplars achieve their greatest effect. Most of the series focuses on a screen of tall, slender poplars in the foreground, while behind, looping away along the river bank, the rest of the trees make up a beautiful arabesque pattern. In the present composition, the sweep begins behind the bushy tree in the background on the left, moving first to the right and then to the left to touch each side of the scene, before finally culminating in the upper right corner,

with the poplars gradually growing in size as they approach the viewer. Rather than looking directly across the river at the poplars, Monet turned slightly to the left to accentuate the rise and fall of the trees as they followed the curving bank, generating a dynamic sense of movement and depth within the composition.

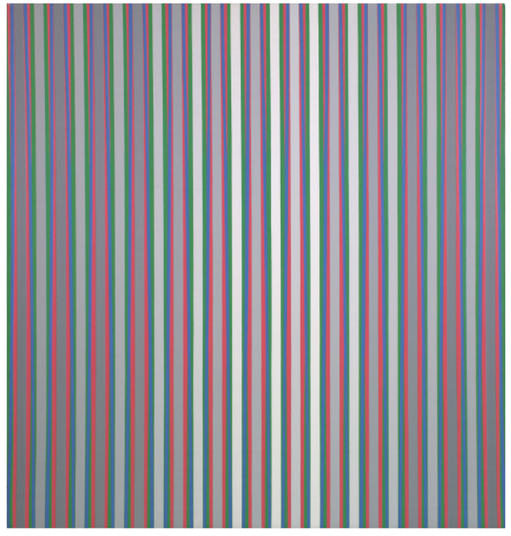
The low vantage point that Monet adopts throughout the series, just slightly above the level of the water, suggests that the artist worked from the *bateau atelier* that he had built during his years at Argenteuil, anchoring it in the center of the river Epte as he painted. The boat allowed the artist to bring a myriad of canvases, painting supplies, and even an easel with him to the site, and would have made the commute from the house at *La Pressoir* to the poplars much easier—rather than walking, Monet was able to row from his home directly to this section of the river, as a tributary ran through his property. Looking up at the trees from the deck of the boat in this way allowed Monet to stretch the poplars and their reflections from the bottom of the canvas almost to the top, silhouetting their straight, nearly leafless trunks dramatically against the sky to create a tension between the screen of trees in the foreground, which forcefully asserts the surface of the canvas, and the graceful line of poplars that recedes into the distance. Given the absence of any horizon line in *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne,* depth is indicated primarily by this staggering of the trees, as well as by the differentiated shadows in the foliage, which consist of a myriad of small strokes in green, blue, yellow and orange tones.

Between 1 March and 10 March 1892, fifteen of the *Peuplier* series were exhibited at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris, including *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne*. While the exhibition of the artist's *Meules* series the previous year had included several compositions by the artist which dealt with other subjects, for this show Monet chose to limit the display to the *Peupliers* alone. Presenting the suite of paintings *en-masse* in this way would, he believed, create a greater visual impact, and encourage visitors to fully appreciate the subtle differences from composition to composition. The show was a resounding triumph, and the *Peupliers* were extraordinarily well-received by collectors and critics. In a review of the exhibition, George Lecomte affirmed Monet's attachment to nature, and wrote that the artist "seems more and more to abstract the durable character of single things from complex appearances and, by a more synthetic and pre-meditated rendering, to accentuate meaning and decorative beauty" (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 143). In a letter to the artist, Octave Mirbeau was even more dramatic, describing the new paintings

Claude Monet, *Le bateau lavoir,* 1875-1876. The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Photo: Barnes Foundation.

Utagawa Hiroshige, *Numazu: Twilight (Numazu, tasogare zu), from the series Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road (Tokaido gojusan tsugi no uchi), circa* 1833. Art Institute of Chicago. Photo: Art Institute of Chicago.

Barnett Newman, *The Beginning*, 1946. The Art Institute of Chicago. © 2022 Barnett Newman Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY.



Bridget Riley, *Sequel*, 1975. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. © Bridget Riley 2022. All rights reserved. Photo: Albright-Knox Art Gallery / Art Resource, NY.

as “absolutely admirable, a series in which you [Monet] renew yourself... and... attain the absolute beauty of great decoration” (quoted in *ibid*., p. 142). Moreover, Mirbeau expressed the undeniable power of these images, which clearly overwhelmed him. As he explained, in front of these paintings, he felt “complete joy... an emotion that I cannot express, so profound [was it] that I wanted to hug you... Never did any artist ever render anything equal to it” (*ibid*., pp. 142-143).

For many contemporary commentators, the *Peupliers* paintings owed a great debt to Monet’s interest in Japanese art, which was at its height in the 1890s. The artist had begun to collect Japanese woodcut prints as early as 1871, and by the time that he painted the present series, the walls of his house at Giverny were covered with them. The Japanese were widely seen by French observers as masters at extracting decorative patterns from nature, and Théodore Duret went so far as to claim that the *Peupliers* had been inspired by the sweeping curves of trees in Utagawa Hiroshige’s *Numazu: Twilight (Numazu, tasogare zu)*, from the series *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road (Tokaido gojusan tsugi no uchi)* (*circa* 1833-1834). But as is true with all of Monet’s work, these paintings were not a direct response to any such singular source, nor Japanese prints in general—their surfaces are more manipulated, their colors more varied, as he artfully invoked Eastern sensibilities while remaining true to his native French roots and individual creative sensibilities. Indeed, in *Peupliers au bord de l’Epte, automne,* the entire canvas is filled with overlapping, darting brushstrokes, in a dynamic display of Monet’s skills with a paintbrush. Though at first glance they may suggest a certain spontaneity of execution, these richly worked surfaces were carefully constructed, underpinned by striking color harmonies that enhanced the decorative effect of the finished composition.

Although Monet’s paintings of Giverny are steeped in pride for *La belle France*, many of them did not remain in the country for long. In April 1886, eager to broaden his customer base, Durand-Ruel had mounted an exhibition of French Impressionist painting in New York, which marked the first large-scale introduction of the art of Monet and his colleagues to American audiences. The show was a great success—“one of the most important artistic events that has ever taken place in this country,” the reviewer for *The Cosmopolitan* proclaimed—and by the time it closed, Durand-Ruel was thoroughly committed to the American market (quoted in E.M. Zafran, “Monet in America” in *Claude Monet: A Tribute to Daniel Wildenstein and Katia Granoff*, exh. cat., Wildenstein & Co. Inc., New York, 2007, p. 88).

"Finally, the vigorous talent of M. Claude Monet, who for a long time limited himself, but with what power of evocation! to the rendering of the fugitive intensities of ephemeral natural effects, seems more and more to abstract the durable character of things from complex appearances and, by a more synthetic and premeditated rendering, to accentuate meaning and decorative beauty."

GEORGES LECOMTE

Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne was among Monet's most recent works to catch the attention of these new American collectors. Durand-Ruel purchased the painting directly from Monet in early 1892, after which it was swiftly acquired by the Boston-based collector Henry Sayles. A wealthy banker and broker, Sayles was an active member of the city's art scene and an avid collector, with a deep enthusiasm for the art of Gustave Courbet, Jean-François Millet and pastoral scenes by the Barbizon school. Encouraged by his artist friends, he began to enhance his collection to include more avant-garde works by the French Impressionists, purchasing Monet's *Poste de douaniers à Dieppe* (1882; Wildenstein, no. 735) in the summer of 1891, before adding *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne* in 1892. The painting remained with Sayles for the rest of his life, at which point it joined the esteemed art collection of Stephen C. Clark, before being purchased in 1949 by Mr. and Mrs. Kurt F. Pantzer of Indianapolis, who also owned an impressive collection of watercolors by J.M.W. Turner. *Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, automne* was acquired by Mrs. Bass in 1982, and it quickly became a cherished center-piece of her collection.

Monet's *Les Peupliers* in Museum Collections

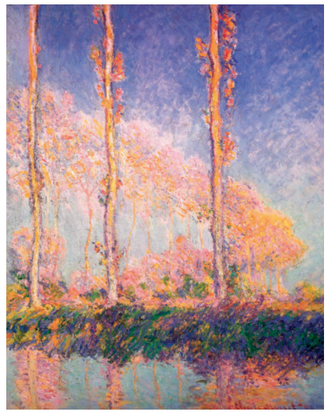
The present lot.

Claude Monet, *Les peupliers, effet blanc et jaune*, 1891 (W. 1298). The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo: Art Resource, New York.

Claude Monet, *Les Peupliers au bord de l'Epte*, 1891 (W. 1300). Tate Galleries, London.

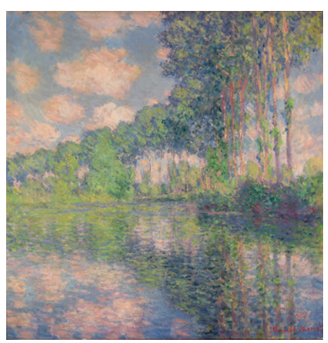
Claude Monet, *Effet de vente, série des peupliers*, 1891 (W. 1302). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Claude Monet, *Les trois arbres, été*, 1891 (W. 1305). The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo. Photo: Art Resource, New York.



Claude Monet, *Les Peupliers, trois arbres roses, automne*, 1891 (W. 1307). The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Claude Monet, *Les quatre arbres*, 1891 (W. 1309). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Claude Monet, *Peupliers sur les bords de l'Epte*, 1891 (W. 1310). The National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh. Photo: National Galleries of Scotland.

Claude Monet, *Peupliers*, 1891 (W. 1313). The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Photo: © Fitzwilliam Museum / Bridgeman Images.

12

CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)

Nymphéas

signed and dated 'Claude Monet 1907' (lower right)
oil on canvas
37 x 35¼ in. (93.8 x 89.3 cm.)
Painted in 1907

$35,000,000-55,000,000

PROVENANCE:

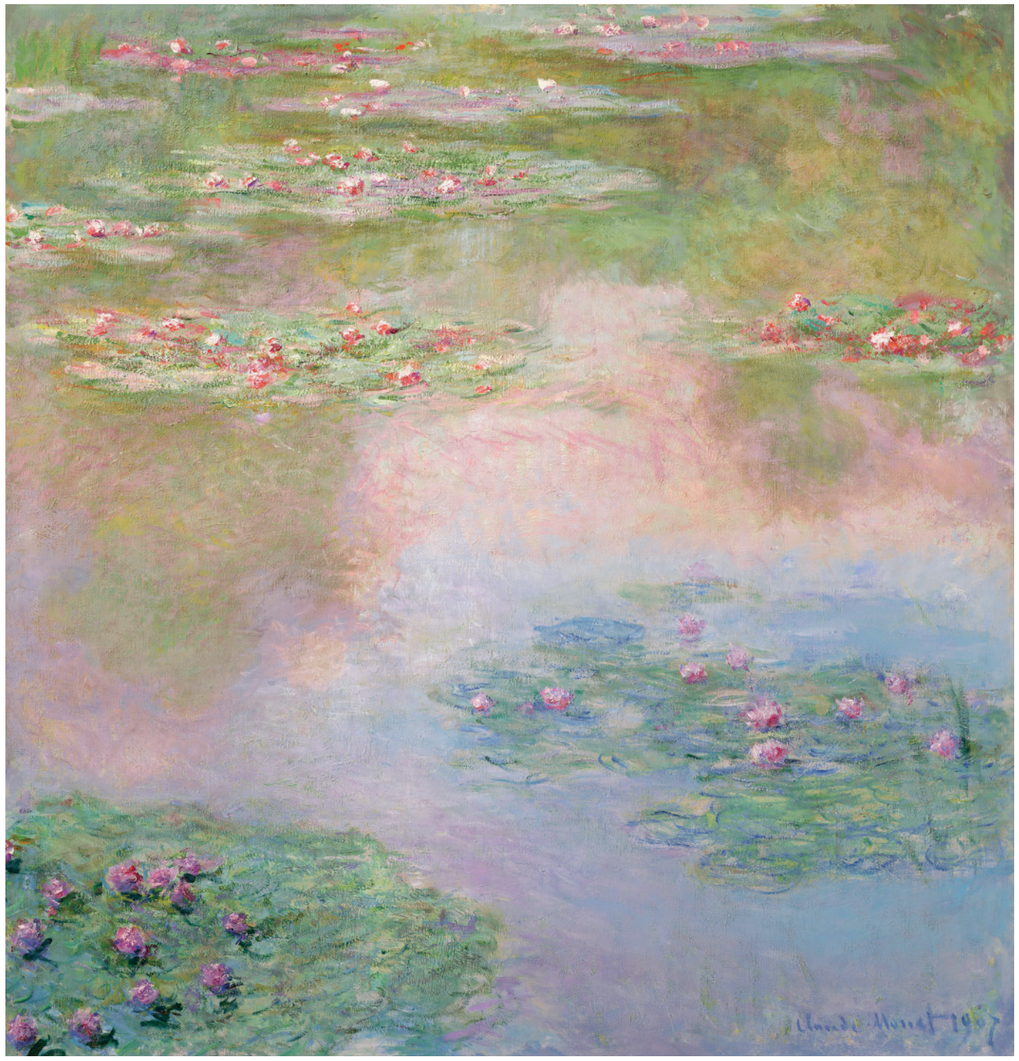
Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie. and Galerie Bernheim-Jeune et Cie., Paris (acquired from the artist, June 1909).
James W. Viles, Chicago (acquired from the above, October 1909).
Durand-Ruel Galleries, New York (acquired from the above, 1910).
Arthur B. Emmons, Newport (acquired from the above, 1911); sale, American Art Association, New York, 14 January 1920, lot 38.
Scott and Fowles, New York (acquired at the above sale).
Helen Swift Neilson, Chicago (probably acquired from the above).
The Art Institute of Chicago (by bequest from the above, February 1946).
E. and A. Silberman Galleries, New York (acquired from the above, December 1947).
Gabriel Fodor, Switzerland (acquired from the above, 1947).
Wildenstein & Co. Inc., New York.
Acquired from the above by the late owner, 31 May 1984.

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Les Nymphéas: Séries de paysages d'eau par Claude Monet*, May-June 1909, no. 28.
New York, Gagosian Gallery, *Monet: The Late Works*, May-June 2010, p. 112 (illustrated in color, p. 53).

LITERATURE:

"Mouvement des arts: Collections Emmons, Flanagan Sayles et autres à New York" in *La chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, 29 February 1920, no. 4, p. 32.
"Revue des ventes" in *Le journal des arts*, 21 February 1921, p. 3.
L. Venturi, *Les archives de l'Impressionnisme*, Paris, 1939, vol. I, pp. 421-425, letters 327-332.
G. Bazin, *L'époque Impressionniste*, Paris, 1953 (illustrated, pl. 73).
D. Rouart, J.-D. Rey and R. Maillard, *Monet: Nymphéas, ou les miroirs du temps*, Paris, 1972, p. 160 (illustrated).
D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et catalogue raisonné, peintures*, Lausanne, 1985, vol. IV, p. 218, no. 1698 (illustrated, p. 219); pp. 376-377, letters 1885, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891 and 1897; p. 429, doc. 213 and 217.
D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Catalogue raisonné, supplément aux peintures, dessins, pastels*, Lausanne, 1991, vol. V, p. 53, no. 1698.
P. Georgel, *Claude Monet nymphéas*, Paris, 1999, p. 45 (illustrated in color).
D. Wildenstein, *Monet: Catalogue raisonné*, Cologne, 1996, vol. IV, p. 775, no. 1698 (illustrated in color, p. 774).
J.-D. Rey and D. Rouart, *Monet Water Lilies: The Complete Series*, Paris, 2008, p. 125 (illustrated).



Monet's water-lily pond at Giverny, *circa* 1933. Photo: A. E. Henson / © Country Life Picture Library.

CLAUDE MONET

Nymphéas

1907

During the final two decades of his long career, Monet devoted himself with single-minded focus to painting the hauntingly beautiful water garden that he had designed and cultivated at his home in rural Giverny. In some two hundred canvases, he captured the shifting relationships among water, reflections, and light that continually transformed the surface of his lily pond, the infinity of nature matched only by the prodigious breadth of his own creativity. "His repeated treatment of the reflective surfaces of his pond," Benedict Leca has written, "and the kaleidoscopic color variations of its flora visible above and beneath mirrored water served as an interminable canvas, where both motif and metaphor of reflection combined directly in the service of self-definition" (*Monet in Giverny: Landscapes of Reflection*, exh. cat., Cincinnati Art Museum, 2012, p. 41). While these valedictory paintings affirm Monet's life-long belief in the primacy of vision and experience, they are at once more abstract and more profound than anything he had previously painted—a prescient and visionary art for the new, modern century.

Monet had moved to Giverny with his future wife Alice Hoschedé and their combined eight children during the last days of April 1883. Situated at the confluence of the Seine and the Epte, about forty miles northwest of Paris, Giverny at the time was a tranquil farming community of just three hundred residents. Monet found a sprawling, pink stucco house to rent on two acres of land, just a few hundred meters from the Seine. When the property came up for sale in 1890, he bought it at the asking

price, "certain of never finding a better situation or more beautiful countryside," as he wrote to his dealer Durand-Ruel (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *Monet: Life and Art*, New Haven, 1995, p. 175).

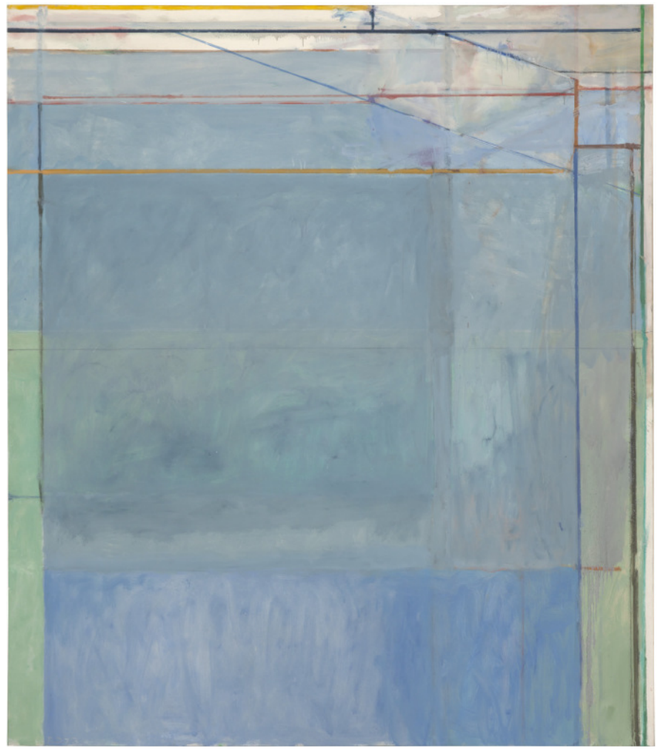
A dedicated gardener all his life, Monet's first priority upon purchasing the estate was to replace the vegetable plots in front of the house with flower beds, sparing neither time nor expense to transform the acreage into a paradise of vivid color and heady fragrance. Three years later, he acquired an adjacent piece of land beside the river Ru and successfully applied to the local government for permission to divert the tributary and dig a pond for aquatic plants. By autumn, he had converted nearly a thousand square meters into an eastern-inspired water garden—hushed, mysterious, and contemplative—with a lily pond spanned by a wooden footbridge and encircled with an artful arrangement of flowers, bushes, and trees.

Although Monet created the water garden in part to fulfill his passion for horticulture, he also intended it as a source of artistic inspiration. In his petition to the authorities, Monet specified that the pond would serve "for the pleasure of the eyes and also for the purpose of having subjects to paint" (quoted in *Claude Monet: The Late Work*, exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 23). That it did, ultimately surpassing the flower garden in his hierarchy of subjects. "That Monet would have preferred the water garden over the flower garden is understandable," Paul H. Tucker has written. "It offered him the ultimate in variety: an infinite array of color; constantly changing reflections; continual tensions between surface and depth, near and far, stability and the unknown, with everything bathed in an endlessly shifting but ever-present light" (*Monet in the 20th Century*, exh. cat., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1998, p. 41).

Monet did not begin work on his *Nymphéas* series immediately, though. "It took me some time to understand my water lilies," he later recalled. "A landscape takes more than a day to get under your skin. And then all at once, I had the revelation—how wonderful my pond was—and reached for my palette. I've hardly had any other subject since that moment" (quoted in *Claude Monet*, exh. cat., Osterreichische Galerie, Vienna, 1996, p. 146).

Between 1893 and 1899, Monet made only ten images of the lily pond, possibly because he was waiting for the plantings to mature. He may also have wanted to cement his national stature by concentrating on subjects that were more distinctly French—Rouen Cathedral, the Norman coast, and the Seine—before embracing his own horticultural fantasia. After the searing and divisive events of the Dreyfus Affair, though, Monet turned away from the glories of France

Claude Monet, *Le pont japonais*, 1899. Princeton University Art Museum.



Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park #60*, 1973. Anderson Collection at Stanford University.

and sought sustenance, both aesthetic and moral, in the personal landscape of his gardens. "By tending to his own garden so meticulously and so diligently and by producing paintings of such startling beauty," Tucker has explained, "Monet was affirming one of the most important principles of eighteenth-century thinkers, most specifically Voltaire—namely, that nature was the source of all goodness and wisdom and that each person should cultivate his own garden" (exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 26).

In 1899-1900, Monet painted eighteen views of the water garden, his first extended treatment of the theme (Wildenstein, nos. 1509-1520, 1628-1633). These focus on the motif of the Japanese bridge, lending the composition a stable geometric structure and traditional linear perspective. It was not until 1904, following the completion of his London series, that Monet shifted his gaze downward to the surface of the pond, yielding a radically destabilized vision of shifting, disintegrating forms. The plane of the water now tilts toward the vertical, and the world beyond exists only in mirror-image. "The reflections of the sky and the surrounding landscape, the surface of the water and plants in the depth of the pond, the reflected and the real landscape," Karin Sagner-Düchting has written, "are combined into a new, virtual, even simultaneously expanded, landscape space that refers far beyond reality and that is complex, ambivalent, and indefinable" (*Monet and Modernism*, exh. cat., Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich, 2001, p. 68).

Having established the essential compositional scheme for his water lily series, Monet began to work with unbroken intensity. Between 1905 and 1908, he painted more than sixty *Nymphéas*. Within the limitations he had set for himself, he devised a dazzling array of variations, altering the arrangement of the lily blossoms, increasing or reducing the amount of reflected material, and exploring a wide range of lighting effects. "I have painted these water lilies a great deal," he later explained. "The effect varies constantly, not only from one season to the next, but from one minute to the next, since the water-flowers themselves are far from being the whole scene; really, they are just the accompaniment. The essence of the motif is the mirror of water, whose appearance alters at every moment, thanks to the patches of sky that are reflected in it and give it its light and movement. So many factors, undetectable to the uninitiated eye, transform the coloring and distort the planes of water" (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 11).

Monet painted the present *Nymphéas* in 1907, in the middle of this intensely creative period. After spending the winter months re-touching the previous year's output in his studio, he was eager to return to the water garden as soon

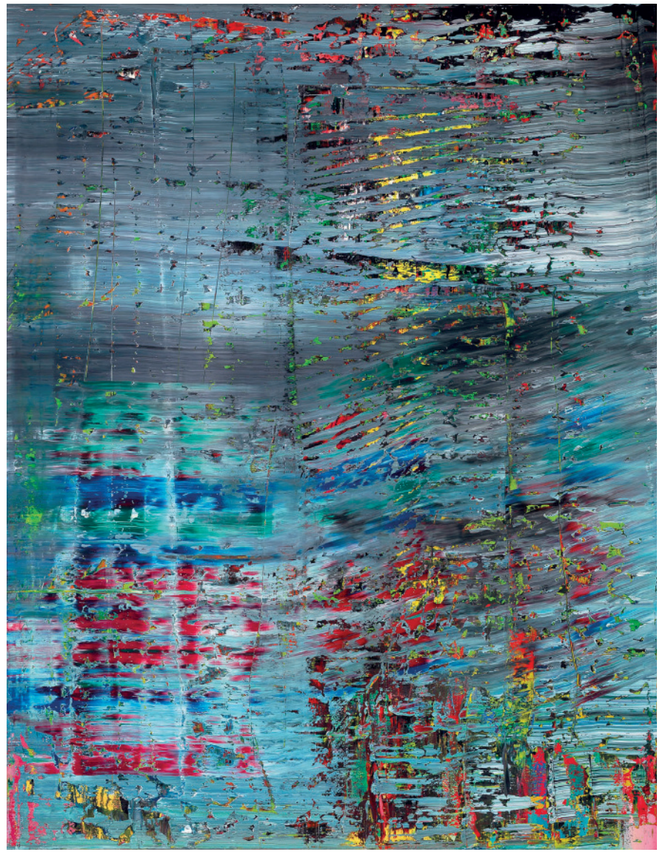
"This is the famous water lily garden, with its ornamental lake surrounded by willows... When the sunlight plays upon water, it resembles—damascened as it is with the water lilies' great round leaves, and encrusted with the precious stones of their flowers—the masterwork of a goldsmith who has melded alloys of the most magical metals."

ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE

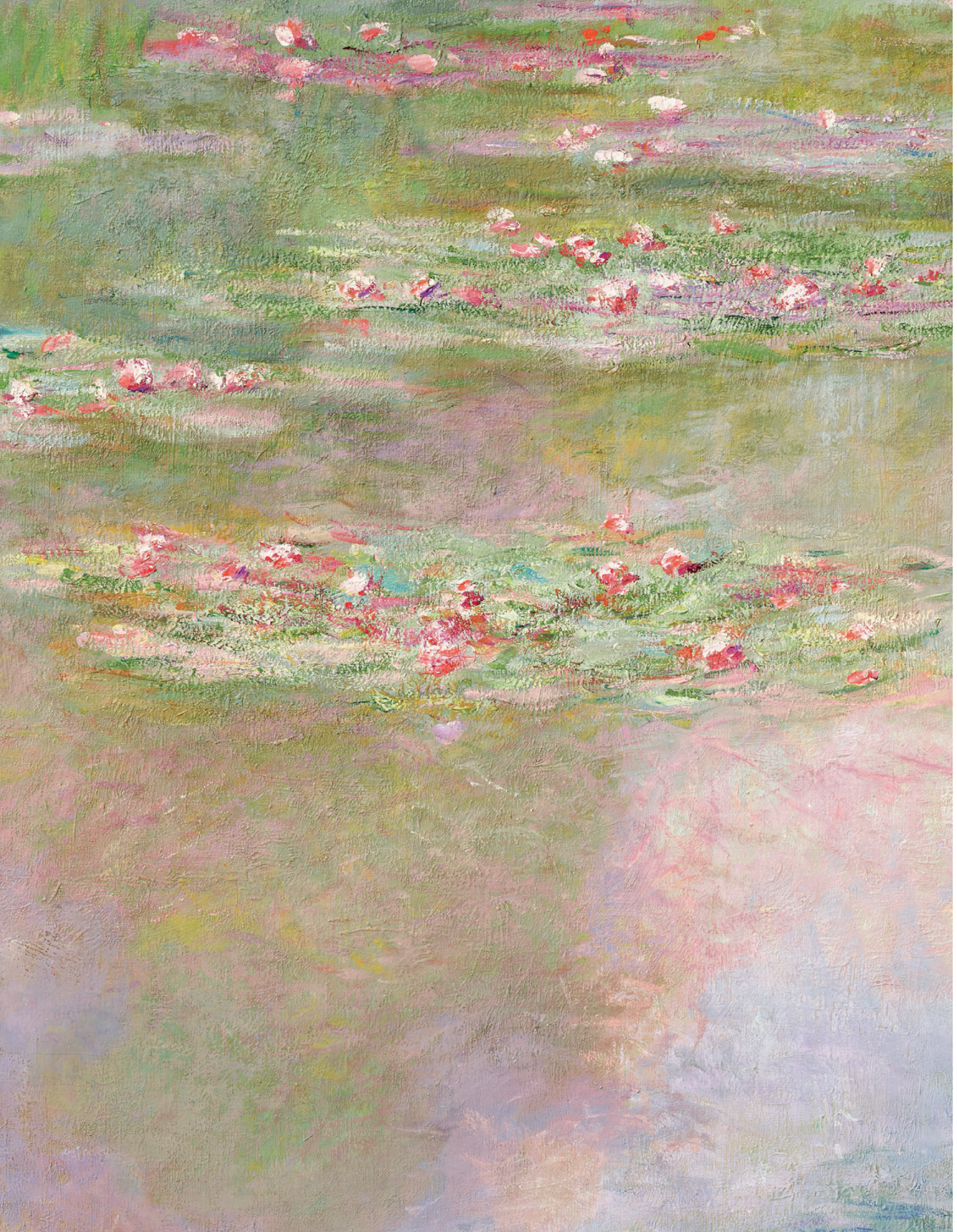
as the weather allowed. Between April and September, he was so absorbed in his work that he wrote only six letters, an uncharacteristic silence. "Here all goes well," he finally reported to Durand-Ruel in early autumn. "I have worked, and I am still working, with passion." Pleased with his progress, he tendered an invitation to the dealer to come and see the latest paintings at Giverny. "They are still a sort of groping research," he claimed, "but I think that they are among my best efforts" (quoted in D. Wildenstein, *op. cit.*, 1996, vol. 1, p. 379).

Monet created two different sub-series of *Nymphéas* during 1907. The first, which includes the present canvas, was painted in the morning or early afternoon (Wildenstein, nos. 1694-1702). The pictures in this group depict lilies with wide-open blossoms floating on the surface of the water, in which unified masses of reflected foliage surround a central expanse of light. The paintings in the second set, more pronouncedly vertical in format and produced closer to sundown, are characterized by a long stream of light that traverses the full height of the canvas, slicing its way through clusters of lily pads and swirling eddies of vegetation (Wildenstein, nos. 1703-1717).

The latter paintings are dramatic in their contrasts and brooding in their mood—so much so that Durand-Ruel worried when he eventually



Gerhard Richter, *Abstraktes Bild (712)*, 1990. Private collection. © Gerhard Richter 2022.



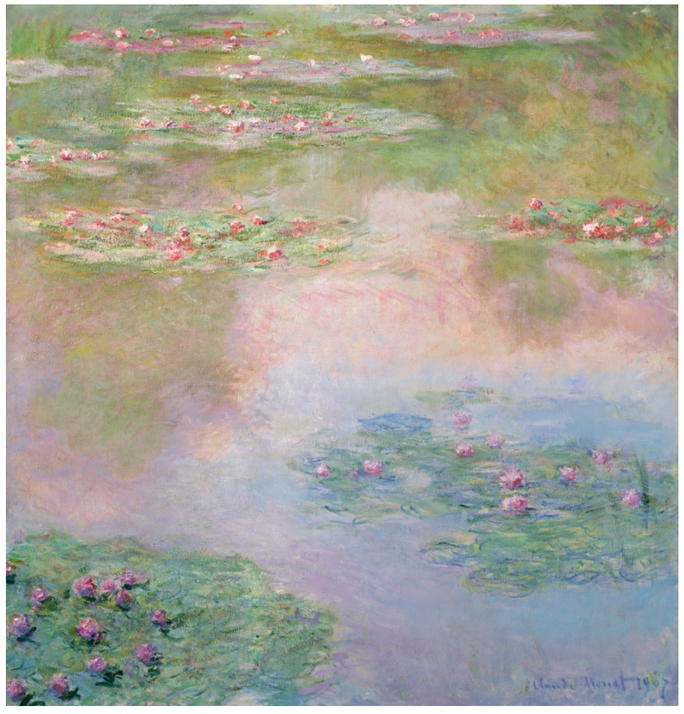
saw them about their marketability. In the present canvas and the related *Nymphéas*, by contrast, Monet mitigated the value differences between the horizontally striated islands of lilies and the vertical reflections, producing an effect of integration and harmony. Conventional spatial recession, indicated by the diminishing scale of the blossoms and lily pads, is played against the flat surface of the canvas, which Monet emphasizes through his vigorous, textural brushwork. The flowers themselves are rendered with the most impasto to give them a sculptural presence, affirming their position on the top of the pond, while in the watery areas, thin layers of color are laid on top of one another to suggest the refractions of light and the changing hues in the pond's depths.

Monet and Durand-Ruel had originally agreed on a date of 1907 for the inaugural exhibition of the *Nymphéas* series. The artist, though, repeatedly postponed the show, "full of fire and confidence," he told the dealer, and determined to keep working (quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 47). When the exhibition finally opened in May 1909, it was stunning success—well worth the wait. Forty-eight views of the lily pond were featured, more than Monet had ever exhibited from a single series; the present painting was no. 28 in the group. Critics marveled at how transcendent and nearly abstract the pictures appeared, even by comparison with Picasso and Braque's latest Cubist experiments. "His vision increasingly is simplifying itself," wrote the critic Jean Morgan, "limiting itself to the minimum of tangible realities in order to amplify, to magnify the impression of the imponderable" (*Le Gaulois*, 5 May 1909; quoted in exh. cat., *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 29).

Monet could not have hoped for a better response. After the close of the exhibition, though, there followed nearly five years in which the artist—exhausted from the intense work leading up to the show, and then suffering from a sequence of personal tragedies—barely picked up his brushes. It was not until spring 1914 that he returned to the water garden in earnest. "I have thrown myself back into work," he wrote to Durand-Ruel in June, "and when I do that, I do it seriously, so much so that I am getting up at four a.m. and grinding away all day long" (quoted in P.H. Tucker, *op. cit.*, 1995, p. 204).

Although Monet completed well over a hundred new paintings of the lily pond between 1914 and his death in 1926, he kept the vast majority of these late views in his studio, neither exhibiting them nor offering them for sale. The culmination of the series was the *Grandes Décorations*, twenty-two mural-sized canvases totaling more than ninety meters in length, which Monet completed just months before his passing and donated to the French State. The Musée de l'Orangerie, newly remodeled to house this magnificent bequest, opened to great fanfare the following year.

The *Nymphéas* of 1907 in Museum Collections



The present lot.

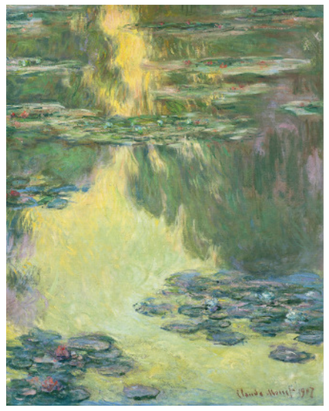
Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1695).
Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil Museum, Cairo. Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1696).
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. Photo: Alamy Images.

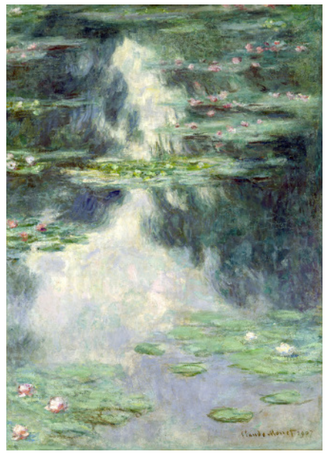
Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (w. 1697).
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1699). Pola Museum of Art, Hakone.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1703).
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

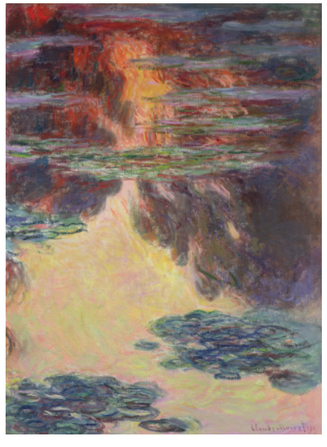


Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1706).
Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art, Sakura.



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1710).
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photo: © Israel Museum, Jerusalem / Bridgeman Images.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1713).
Kuboso Memorial Museum of Arts, Osaka.
Photo: Bridgeman Images.



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1714).
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1715).
Artizon Museum, Ishibashi Foundation, Tokyo.
Photo: © Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images.

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907 (W. 1716).
Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Gothenburg.

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For certain auctions we will accept bids over the Internet. For more information, please visit **https://www.christies.com/buying-services/buying-guide/register-and-bid/**. As well as these Conditions of Sale, internet bids are governed by the Christie's LIVE™ Terms of Use which are available at **https://www.christies.com/LiveBidding/OnlineTermsOfUse.aspx**.

(c) Written Bids
You can find a Written Bid Form at any Christie's office, or by choosing the sale and viewing the **lots** online at **www.christies.com**. We must receive your completed Written Bid at least 24 hours before the auction. Bids must be placed in the currency of the saleroom. The **auctioneer** will take reasonable steps to carry out written bids at the lowest possible price, taking into account the **reserve**. If you make a written bid on a **lot** which does not have a **reserve** and there is no higher bid than yours, we will bid on your behalf at around 50% of the low **estimate** or, if lower, the amount of your bid. If we receive written bids on a **lot** for identical amounts, and at the auction these are the highest bids on the **lot**, we will sell the **lot** to the bidder whose written bid we received first.

C CONDUCTING THE SALE

1 WHO CAN ENTER THE AUCTION

We may, at our option, refuse admission to our premises or decline to permit participation in any auction or to reject any bid.

2 RESERVES

Unless otherwise indicated, all **lots** are subject to a **reserve**. We identify **lots** that are offered without **reserve** with the symbol • next to the **lot** number. The **reserve** cannot be more than the **lot**'s low **estimate**.

3 AUCTIONEER'S DISCRETION

The **auctioneer** can at his or her sole option:

(a) refuse any bid;

(b) move the bidding backwards or forwards in any way he or she may decide, or change the order of the **lots**;

(c) withdraw any **lot**;

(d) divide any **lot** or combine any two or more **lots**;

(e) reopen or continue the bidding even after the hammer has fallen; and

(f) in the case of error or dispute related to bidding and whether during or after the auction, continue the bidding, determine the successful bidder, cancel the sale of the **lot**, or reoffer and resell any **lot**. If you believe that the **auctioneer** has accepted the successful bid in error, you must provide a written notice detailing your claim within 3 business days of the date of the auction. The **auctioneer** will consider such claim in good faith. If the **auctioneer**, in the exercise of his or her discretion under this paragraph, decides after the auction is complete, to cancel the sale of a **lot**, or reoffer and resell a **lot**, he or she will notify the successful bidder no later than by the end of the 7th calendar day following the date of the auction. The **auctioneer**'s decision in exercise of this discretion is final. This paragraph does not in any way prejudice Christie's ability to cancel the sale of a **lot** under any other applicable provision of these Conditions of Sale, including the rights of cancellation set forth in sections B(3), E(2)(i), F(4), and J(1).

4 BIDDING

The **auctioneer** accepts bids from:

(a) bidders in the saleroom;

(b) telephone bidders;

(c) internet bidders through Christie's LIVE™ (as shown above in paragraph B6); and

(d) written bids (also known as absentee bids or commission bids) left with us by a bidder before the auction.

5 BIDDING ON BEHALF OF THE SELLER

The **auctioneer** may, at his or her sole option, bid on behalf of the seller up to but not including the amount of the **reserve** either by making consecutive bids or by making bids in response to other bidders. The **auctioneer** will not identify these as bids made on behalf of the seller and will not make any bid on behalf of the seller at or above the **reserve**. If **lots** are offered without **reserve**, the **auctioneer** will generally decide to open the bidding at 50% of the low **estimate** for the **lot**. If no bid is made at that level, the **auctioneer** may decide to go backwards at his or her sole option until a bid is made, and then continue up from that amount. In the event that there are no bids on a **lot**, the **auctioneer** may deem such **lot** unsold.

6 BID INCREMENTS

Bidding generally starts below the low **estimate** and increases in steps (bid increments). The **auctioneer** will decide at his or her sole option where the bidding should start and the bid increments.

7 CURRENCY CONVERTER

The saleroom video screens (and Christies LIVE™) may show bids in some other major currencies as well as US dollars. Any conversion is for guidance only and we cannot be bound by any rate of exchange used. Christie's is not responsible for any error (human or otherwise), omission or breakdown in providing these services.

8 SUCCESSFUL BIDS

Unless the **auctioneer** decides to use his or her discretion as set out in paragraph C3 above, when the **auctioneer**'s hammer strikes, we have accepted the last bid. This means a contract for sale has been formed between the seller and the successful bidder. We will issue an invoice only to the registered bidder who made the successful bid. While we send out invoices by mail and/or email after the auction, we do not accept responsibility for telling you whether or not your bid was successful. If you have bid by written bid, you should contact us by telephone or in person as soon as possible after the auction to get details of the outcome of your bid to avoid having to pay unnecessary storage charges.

9 LOCAL BIDDING LAWS

You agree that when bidding in any of our sales that you will strictly comply with all local laws and regulations in force at the time of the sale for the relevant sale site.

D THE BUYER'S PREMIUM AND TAXES

1 THE BUYER'S PREMIUM

In addition to the **hammer price**, the successful bidder agrees to pay us a **buyer's premium** on the **hammer price** of each **lot** sold. On all **lots** we charge 26% of the **hammer price** up to and including US$1,000,000, 20% on that part of the **hammer price** over US$1,000,000 and up to and including US$6,000,000, and 14.5% of that part of the **hammer price** above US$6,000,000.

2 TAXES

The successful bidder is responsible for any applicable taxes including any sales or use tax or equivalent tax wherever such taxes may arise on the **hammer price**, the **buyer's premium**, and/or any other charges related to the **lot**.

For **lots** Christie's ships to or within the United States, a sales or use tax may be due on the **hammer price**, **buyer's premium**, and/or any other charges related to the **lot**, regardless of the nationality or citizenship of the successful bidder. Christie's will collect sales tax where legally required. The applicable sales tax rate will be determined based upon the state, county, or locale to which the **lot** will be shipped. Christie's shall collect New York sales tax at a rate of 8.875% for any **lot** collected from Christie's in New York.

In accordance with New York law, if Christie's arranges the shipment of a **lot** out of New York State, New York sales tax does not apply, although sales tax or other applicable taxes for other states may apply. If you hire a shipper (other than a common carrier authorized by Christie's), to collect the **lot** from a Christie's New York location, Christie's must collect New York sales tax on the **lot** at a rate of 8.875% regardless of the ultimate destination of the **lot**.

If Christie's delivers the **lot** to, or the **lot** is collected by, any framer, restorer or other similar service provider in New York that you have hired, New York law considers the **lot** delivered to the successful bidder in New York and New York sales tax must be imposed regardless of the ultimate destination of the **lot**. In this circumstance, New York sales tax will apply to the **lot** even if Christie's or a common carrier (authorized by Christie's that you hire) subsequently delivers the **lot** outside New York.

Successful bidders claiming an exemption from sales tax must provide appropriate documentation to Christie's prior to the release of the **lot** or within 90 days after the sale, whichever is earlier. For shipments to those states for which Christie's is not required to collect sales tax, a successful bidder may have a use or similar tax obligation. It is the successful bidder's responsibility to pay all taxes due. Christie's recommends you consult your own independent tax advisor with any questions.

E WARRANTIES

1 SELLER'S WARRANTIES

For each **lot**, the seller gives a **warranty** that the seller:

(a) is the owner of the **lot** or a joint owner of the **lot** acting with the permission of the other co-owners or, if the seller is not the owner or a joint owner of the **lot**, has the permission of the owner to sell the **lot**, or the right to do so in law; and

(b) has the right to transfer ownership of the **lot** to the buyer without any restrictions or claims by anyone else.

(c) If either of the above warranties are incorrect, the seller shall not have to pay more than the **purchase price** (as defined in paragraph F1(a) below) paid by you to us. The seller will not be responsible to you for any reason for loss of profits or business, expected savings, loss of opportunity or interest, costs, damages, **other damages** or expenses. The seller gives no **warranty** in relation to any **lot** other than as set out above and, as far as the seller is allowed by law, all warranties from the seller to you, and all other obligations upon the seller which may be added to this agreement by law, are excluded.

2 OUR AUTHENTICITY WARRANTY

We warrant, subject to the terms below, that the **lots** in our sales are **authentic** (our **"authenticity warranty"**). If, within 5 years of the date of the auction, you give notice to us that your **lot** is not **authentic**, subject to the terms below, we will refund the **purchase price** paid by you. The meaning of **authentic** can be found in the glossary at the end of these Conditions of Sale. The terms of the **authenticity warranty** are as follows:

(a) It will be honored for claims notified within a period of 5 years from the date of the auction. After such time, we will not be obligated to honor the **authenticity warranty**.

(b) It is given only for information shown in **UPPERCASE type** in the first line of the **catalogue description** (the "**Heading**"). It does not apply to any information other than in the **Heading** even if shown in **UPPERCASE type**.

(c) The **authenticity warranty** does not apply to any **Heading** or part of a **Heading** which is **qualified**. **Qualified** means limited by a clarification in a **lot**'s **catalogue description** or by the use in a **Heading** of one of the terms listed in the section titled **Qualified Headings** on the page of the catalogue headed "Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice". For example, use of the term "ATTRIBUTED TO..." in a **Heading** means that the **lot** is in Christie's opinion probably a work by the named artist but no **warranty** is provided that the **lot** is the work of the named artist. Please read the full list of **Qualified Headings** and a **lot**'s full **catalogue description** before bidding.

(d) The **authenticity warranty** applies to the **Heading** as amended by any Saleroom notice.

(e) The **authenticity warranty** does not apply where scholarship has developed since the auction leading to a change in generally accepted opinion. Further, it does not apply if the **Heading** either matched the generally accepted opinion of experts at the date of the auction or drew attention to any conflict of opinion.

(f) The **authenticity warranty** does not apply if the **lot** can only be shown not to be **authentic** by a scientific process which, on the date we published the catalogue, was not available or generally accepted for use, or which was unreasonably expensive or impractical, or which was likely to have damaged the **lot**.

(g) The benefit of the **authenticity warranty** is only available to the original buyer shown on the invoice for the **lot** issued at the time of the sale and only if on the date of the notice of claim, the original buyer is the full owner of the **lot** and the **lot** is free from any claim, interest or restriction by anyone else. The benefit of this **authenticity warranty** may not be transferred to anyone else.

(h) In order to claim under the **authenticity warranty** you must:

(i) give us written notice of your claim within 5 years of the date of the auction. We may require full details and supporting evidence of any such claim;

(ii) at Christie's option, we may require you to provide the written opinions of two recognised experts in the field of the **lot** mutually agreed by you and us in advance confirming that the **lot** is not **authentic**. If we have any doubts, we **reserve** the right to obtain additional opinions at our expense; and

(iii) return the **lot** at your expense to the saleroom from which you bought it in the **condition** it was in at the time of sale.

(i) Your only right under this **authenticity warranty** is to cancel the sale and receive a refund of the **purchase price** paid by you to us. We will not, under any circumstances, be required to pay you more than the **purchase price** nor will we be liable for any loss of profits or business, loss of opportunity or value, expected savings or interest, costs, damages, **other damages** or expenses.

(j) **Books.** Where the **lot** is a book, we give an additional **warranty** for 21 days from the date of the auction that any **lot** is defective in text or illustration, we will refund your **purchase price**, subject to the following terms:

(a) This additional **warranty** does not apply to:

(i) the absence of blanks, half titles, tissue guards or advertisements, damage in respect of bindings, stains, spotting, marginal tears or other defects not affecting completeness of the text or illustration;

(ii) drawings, autographs, letters or manuscripts, signed photographs, music, atlases, maps or periodicals;

(iii) books not identified by title;

(iv) **lots** sold without a printed **estimate**;

(v) books which are described in the catalogue as sold not subject to return; or

(vi) defects stated in any **condition** report or announced at the time of sale.

(b) To make a claim under this paragraph you must give written details of the defect and return the **lot** to the sale room at which you bought it in the same **condition** as at the time of sale, within 21 days of the date of the sale.

(k) **South East Asian Modern and Contemporary Art and Chinese Calligraphy and Painting.**
In these categories, the **authenticity warranty** does not apply because current scholarship does not permit the making of definitive statements. Christie's does, however, agree to cancel a sale in either of these two categories of art where it has been proven the **lot** is a forgery. Christie's will refund to the original buyer the **purchase price** in accordance with the terms of Christie's **Authenticity warranty**, provided that the original buyer notifies us with full supporting evidence documenting the forgery claim within twelve (12) months of the date of the auction. Such evidence must be satisfactory to us that the property is a forgery in accordance with paragraph E2(h)(ii) above and the property must be returned to us in accordance with E2h(iii) above. Paragraphs E2(b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) and (i) also apply to a claim under these categories.

(l) **Chinese, Japanese and Korean artefacts (excluding Chinese, Japanese and Korean calligraphy, paintings, prints, drawings and jewellery).**
In these categories, paragraph E2 (b) – (e) above shall be amended so that where no maker or artist is identified, the **authenticity warranty** is given not only for the **Heading** but also for information regarding date or period shown in **UPPERCASE type** in the second line of the **catalogue description** (the **"Subheading"**). Accordingly, all references to the **Heading** in paragraph E2 (b) – (e) above shall be read as references to both the **Heading** and the Subheading.

3 NO IMPLIED WARRANTIES

EXCEPT AS SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPHS E1 AND E2 ABOVE, NEITHER THE SELLER NOR THE CHRISTIE'S GROUP MAKE ANY OTHER WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, ORAL OR WRITTEN, WITH RESPECT TO THE LOT, INCLUDING THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, EACH OF WHICH IS SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIMED.

4 YOUR WARRANTIES

(a) You warrant that the funds used for settlement are not connected with any criminal activity, including tax evasion, and you are neither under investigation, nor have you been charged with or convicted of money laundering, terrorist activities or other crimes.

(b) Where you are bidding on behalf of another person, you warrant that:

(i) you have conducted appropriate customer due diligence on the ultimate buyer(s) of the **lot**(s) in accordance with all applicable anti-money laundering and sanctions laws, consent to us relying on this due diligence, and you will retain for a period of not less than 5 years the documentation evidencing the due diligence. You will make such documentation promptly available for immediate inspection by an independent third-party auditor upon our written request to do so;

(ii) the arrangements between you and the ultimate buyer(s) in relation to the **lot** or otherwise do not, in whole or in part, facilitate tax crimes;

(iii) you do not know, and have no reason to suspect, that the funds used for settlement are connected with, the proceeds of any criminal activity, including tax evasion, or that the ultimate buyer(s) are under investigation, or have been charged with or convicted of money laundering, terrorist activities or other crimes.

F PAYMENT

1 HOW TO PAY

(a) Immediately following the auction, you must pay the **purchase price** being:

(i) the **hammer price**; and

(ii) the **buyer's premium**; and

(iii) any applicable duties, goods, sales, use, compensating or service tax, or VAT.

Payment is due no later than by the end of the 7th calendar day following the date of the auction (the "**due date**").

(b) We will only accept payment from the registered bidder. Once issued, we cannot change the buyer's name on an invoice or re-issue the invoice in a different name. You must pay immediately even if you want to export the **lot** and you need an export licence.

(c) You must pay for **lots** bought at Christie's in the United States in the currency stated on the invoice in one of the following ways:

(i) **Wire transfer**
JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.,
270 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017;
ABA# 021000021; FBO: Christie's Inc.;
Account # 957-107978,
for international transfers, SWIFT: CHASUS33.

(ii) **Credit Card**
We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and China Union Pay. Credit card payments at the New York premises will only be accepted for New York sales. Christie's will not accept credit card payments for purchases in any other sale site.

(iii) **Cash**
We accept cash payments (including money orders and traveller's checks) subject to a maximum global aggregate of US$7,500 per buyer.

(iv) **Bank Checks**
You must make these payable to Christie's Inc. and there may be conditions. Once we have deposited your check, property cannot be released until five business days have passed.

(v) **Checks**
You must make checks payable to Christie's Inc. and they must be drawn from US dollar accounts from a US bank.

(d) You must quote the sale number, your invoice number and client number when making a payment. All payments sent by post must be sent to:
Christie's Inc. Post-Sale Services,
20 Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020.

(e) For more information please contact our Post-Sale Services by phone at +1 212 636 2650 or fax at +1 212 636 4939 or email PostSaleUS@christies.com.

(f) Cryptocurrency (if applicable): You may either pay for a **lot** in the currency of the sale or by a cryptocurrency permitted by us. The invoice will set forth the **purchase price** in the currency of the sale and where permitted by us, a specified cryptocurrency. Partial payment in cryptocurrency is not permitted. Where the **purchase price** is payable in a specified cryptocurrency, the invoice will include both the amount due in the currency of the sale as well as a cryptocurrency amount. The cryptocurrency amount will be calculated by us based on the most recent published CME CF Ether-Dollar Reference Rate (BRR and ETHUSD_RR) index rate as determined by us, and will be disclosed in the invoice. The amount of cryptocurrency specified in the invoice is the amount of cryptocurrency that must be paid to us if that is the payment option you select regardless of whether the conversion rate at the time of auction or when you pay the invoice or at any other time is different. In the event that we are required to return any amounts to you hereunder, you agree to receive such amounts in the fiat amount of the **saleroom**.

2 TRANSFERRING OWNERSHIP TO YOU

You will not own the **lot** and ownership of the **lot** will not pass to you until we have received full and clear payment of the **purchase price**, even in circumstances where we have released the **lot** to you.

3 TRANSFERRING RISK TO YOU

The risk in and responsibility for the **lot** will transfer to you from whichever is the earlier of the following:

(a) When you collect the **lot**; or

(b) At the end of the 30th day following the date of the auction or, if earlier, the date the **lot** is taken into care by a third party warehouse as set out on the page headed 'Storage and Collection', unless we have agreed otherwise with you.

4 WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT PAY

(a) If you fail to pay us the **purchase price** in full by the **due date**, we will be entitled to do one or more of the following (as well as enforce our rights under paragraph F5 and any other rights or remedies we have by law):

(i) we can charge interest from the **due date** at a rate of up to 1.34% per month on the unpaid amount due;

(ii) we can cancel the sale of the **lot**. If we do this, we may sell the **lot** again, publically or privately on such terms we shall think necessary or appropriate, in which case you must pay us any shortfall between the **purchase price** and the proceeds from the resale. You must also pay all costs, expenses, losses, damages and legal fees we have to pay or may suffer and any shortfall in the seller's commission on the resale;

(iii) we can pay the seller an amount up to the net proceeds payable in respect of the amount bid by your default in which case you acknowledge and understand that Christie's will have all of the rights of the seller to pursue you for such amounts;

(iv) we can hold you legally responsible for the **purchase price** and may begin legal proceedings to recover it together with other losses, interest, legal fees and costs as far as we are allowed by law;

(v) we can take what you owe us from any amounts which we or any company in the **Christie's Group** may owe you (including any deposit or other part-payment which you have paid to us);

(vi) we can, at our option, reveal your identity and contact details to the seller;

(vii) we can reject at any future auction any bids made by or on behalf of the buyer or to obtain a deposit from the buyer before accepting any bids;

(viii) we can exercise all the rights and remedies of a person holding security over any property in our possession owned by you, whether by way of pledge, security interest or in any other way as permitted by the law of the place where such property is located. You will be deemed to have granted such security to us and we may retain such property as collateral security for your obligations to us; and

(ix) we can take any other action we see necessary or appropriate.

(b) If you owe money to us or to another **Christie's Group** company, we can use any amount you do pay, including any deposit or other part-payment you have made to us, or which we owe you, to pay off any amount you owe to us or another **Christie's Group** company for any transaction.

5 KEEPING YOUR PROPERTY

If you owe money to us or to another **Christie's Group** company, as well as the rights set out in F4 above, we can use or deal with any of your property we hold or which is held by another **Christie's Group** company in any way we are allowed to by law. We will only release your property to you after you pay us or the relevant **Christie's Group** company in full for what you owe. However, if we choose, we can also sell your property in any way we think appropriate. We will use the proceeds of the sale against any amounts you owe us and we will pay any amount left from that sale to you. If there is a shortfall, you must pay us any difference between the amount we have received from the sale and the amount you owe us.

G COLLECTION AND STORAGE

(a) You must collect purchased **lots** within seven days from the auction (but note that **lots** will not be released to you until you have made full and clear payment of all amounts due to us).

(b) Information on collecting **lots** is set out on the storage and collection page and on an information sheet which you can get from the bidder registration staff or Christie's Post-Sale Services Department on +1 212 636 2650.

(c) If you do not collect any **lot** within thirty days following the auction we may, at our option

(i) charge you storage costs at the rates set out at **www.christies.com/storage**.

(ii) move the **lot** to another Christie's location or an affiliate or third party warehouse and charge you transport costs and administration fees for doing so and you will be subject to the third party storage warehouse's standard terms and to pay for their standard fees and costs.

(iii) sell the **lot** in any commercially reasonable way we think appropriate.

(d) The Storage conditions which can be found at **www.christies.com/storage** will apply.

(e) In accordance with New York law, if you have paid for the **lot** in full but you do not collect the **lot** within 180 calendar days of payment, we may charge you New York sales tax for the **lot**.

(f) Nothing in this paragraph is intended to limit our rights under paragraph F4.

H TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING

1 SHIPPING

We would be happy to assist in making shipping arrangements on request. You must make all transport and shipping arrangements. However, we can arrange to pack, transport, and ship your property if you ask us to and pay the costs of doing so. We recommend that you ask us for an **estimate**, especially for any large items or items of high value that need professional packing. We may also suggest other handlers, packers, transporters, or experts if you ask us to do so. For more information, please contact Christie's Post-Sale Services at +1 212 636 2650. See the information set out at **https://www.christies.com/buying-services/buying-guide/ship/** or contact us at PostSaleUS@christies.com. We will take reasonable care when we are handling, packing, transporting, and shipping a. However, if we recommend another company for any of these purposes, we are not responsible for their acts, failure to act, or neglect.

2 EXPORT AND IMPORT

Any **lot** sold at auction may be affected by laws on exports from the country in which it is sold and the import restrictions of other countries. Many countries require a declaration of export for property leaving the country and/or an import declaration on entry of property into the country. Local laws may prevent you from importing a **lot** or may prevent you selling a **lot** in the country you import it into.

(a) You alone are responsible for getting advice about and meeting the requirements of any laws or regulations which apply to exporting or importing any **lot** prior to bidding. If you are refused a licence or there is a delay in getting one, you must still pay us in full for the **lot**. We may be able to help you apply for the appropriate licences if you ask us to and pay our fee for doing so. However, we cannot guarantee that you will get one. For more information, please contact Christie's Post-Sale Services Department at +1 212 636 2650 and PostSaleUS@christies.com.
See the information set out at **https://www.christies.com/buying-services/buying-guide/ship/** or contact us at PostSaleUS@christies.com.

(b) You alone are responsible for any applicable taxes, tariffs or other government-imposed charges relating to the export or import of the **lot**. If Christie's exports or imports the **lot** on your behalf, and if Christie's pays these applicable taxes, tariffs or other government-imposed charges, you agree to refund that amount to Christie's.

(c) **Endangered and protected species**
Lots made of or including (regardless of the percentage) endangered and other protected species of wildlife are marked with the symbol ~ in the catalogue. This material includes, among other things, ivory, tortoiseshell, crocodile skin, rhinoceros horn, whalebone certain species of coral, and Brazilian rosewood. You should check the relevant customs laws and regulations before bidding on any **lot** containing wildlife material if you plan to import the **lot** into another country. Several countries refuse to allow you to import property containing these materials, and some other countries require a licence from the relevant regulatory agencies in the countries of exportation as well as importation. In some cases, the **lot** can only be shipped with an independent scientific confirmation of species and/or age, and you will need to obtain these at your own cost.

(d) **Lots containing Ivory or materials resembling ivory**
If a **lot** contains elephant ivory, or any other wildlife material that could be confused with elephant ivory (for example, mammoth ivory, walrus ivory, helmeted hornbill ivory) you may be prevented from exporting the **lot** from the US or shipping it between US States without first confirming its species by way of a rigorous scientific test acceptable to the applicable Fish and Wildlife authorities. You will buy that **lot** at your own risk and be responsible for any scientific test or other reports required for export from the USA or between US States at your own cost. We will not be obliged to cancel your purchase and refund the **purchase price** if your **lot** may not be exported, imported or shipped between US States, or it is seized for any reason by a government authority. It is your responsibility to determine and satisfy the requirements of any applicable laws or regulations relating to interstate shipping, export or import of property containing such protected or regulated material.

(e) **Lots of Iranian origin**
Some countries prohibit or restrict the purchase, the export and/or import of Iranian-origin "works of conventional craftsmanship" (works that are not by a recognized artist and/or that have a function, (for example: carpets, bowls, ewers, tiles, ornamental boxes). For example, the USA prohibits the import and export of this type of property without a license issued by the US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. Other countries, such as Canada, only permit the import of this property in certain circumstances. As a convenience to buyers, Christie's indicates under the title of a **lot** if the **lot** originates from Iran (Persia). It is your responsibility to ensure you do not bid on or import a **lot** in contravention of the sanctions or trade embargoes that apply to you.

(f) **Gold**
Gold of less than 18ct does not qualify in all countries as 'gold' and may be refused import into those countries as 'gold'.

(g) **Watches**
Many of the watches offered for sale in this catalogue are pictured with straps made of endangered or protected animal materials such as alligator or crocodile. These **lots** are marked with the symbol Ψ in the catalogue. These endangered species straps are shown for display purposes only and are not for sale. Christie's will remove and retain the strap prior to shipment from the sale site. At some sale sites, Christie's may, at its discretion, make the displayed endangered species strap available to the buyer of the **lot** free of charge if collected in person from the sale site within 1 year of the date of the auction. Please check with the department for details on a particular **lot**.

For all symbols and other markings referred to in paragraph H2, please note that **lots** are marked as a convenience to you, but we do not accept liability for errors or for failing to mark **lots**.

I OUR LIABILITY TO YOU

(a) We give no **warranty** in relation to any statement made, or information given, by us or our representatives or employees, about any **lot** other than as set out in the **authenticity warranty** and, as far as we are allowed by law, all warranties and other terms which may be added to this agreement by law are excluded. The seller's warranties contained in paragraph E1 are their own and we do not have any liability to you in relation to those warranties.

(b) (i) We are not responsible to you for any reason (whether for breaking this agreement or any other matter relating to your purchase of, or bid for, any **lot**) other than in the event of fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation by us or other than as expressly set out in these **condition**s of sale; or (ii) give any representation, **warranty** or guarantee or assume any liability of any kind in respect of any **lot** with regard to merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, description, size, quality, **condition**, attribution, **authenticity**, rarity, importance, medium, **provenance**, exhibition history, literature, or historical relevance. Except as required by local law, any **warranty** of any kind is excluded by this paragraph.

(c) In particular, please be aware that our written and telephone bidding services, Christie's LIVE™, **condition** reports, currency converter and saleroom video screens are free services and we are not responsible to you for any error (human or otherwise), omission or breakdown in these services.

(d) We have no responsibility to any person other than a buyer in connection with the purchase of any **lot**.

(e) If, in spite of the terms in paragraphs I(a) to (d) or E2(i) above, we are found to be liable to you for any reason, we shall not have to pay more than the **purchase price** paid by you to us. We will not be responsible to you for any reason for loss of profits or business, loss of opportunity or value, expected savings or interest, costs, damages, or expenses.

J OTHER TERMS

1 OUR ABILITY TO CANCEL

In addition to the other rights of cancellation contained in this agreement, we can cancel a sale of a **lot** if : (i) any of your warranties in paragraph E4 are not correct; (ii) we reasonably believe that completing the transaction is, or may be, unlawful; or (iii) we reasonably believe that the sale places us or the seller under any liability to anyone else or may damage our reputation.

2 RECORDINGS

We may videotape and record proceedings at any auction. We will keep any personal information confidential, except to the extent disclosure is required by law. However, we may, through this process, use or share these recordings with another **Christie's Group** company and marketing partners to analyse our customers and to help us to tailor our services for buyers. If you do not want to be videotaped, you may make arrangements to make a telephone or written bid or bid on Christie's LIVE™ instead. Unless we agree otherwise in writing, you may not videotape or record proceedings at any auction.

3 COPYRIGHT

We own the copyright in all images, illustrations and written material produced by or for us relating to a **lot** (including the contents of our catalogues unless otherwise noted in the catalogue). You cannot use them without our prior written permission. We do not offer any guarantee that you will gain any copyright or other reproduction rights to the **lot**.

4 ENFORCING THIS AGREEMENT

If a court finds that any part of this agreement is not valid or is illegal or impossible to enforce, that part of the agreement will be treated as being deleted and the rest of this agreement will not be affected.

5 TRANSFERRING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You may not grant a security over or transfer your rights or responsibilities under these terms on the contract of sale with the buyer unless we have given our written permission. This agreement will be binding on your successors or estate and anyone who takes over your rights and responsibilities.

6 TRANSLATIONS

If we have provided a translation of this agreement, we will use this original version in deciding any issues or disputes which arise under this agreement.

7 PERSONAL INFORMATION

We will hold and process your personal information and may pass it to another **Christie's Group** company for use as described in, and in line with, our privacy notice at **www.christies.com**/about-us/contact/privacy and if you are a resident of California you can see a copy of our California Consumer Privacy Act statement at **https://www.christies.com/about-us/contact/ccpa**.

8 WAIVER

No failure or delay to exercise any right or remedy provided under these Conditions of Sale shall constitute a waiver of that or any other right or remedy, nor shall it prevent or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy. No single or partial exercise of such right or remedy shall prevent or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy.

9 LAW AND DISPUTES

This agreement, and any non-contractual obligations arising out of or in connection with this agreement, or any other rights you may have relating to the purchase of a **lot** will be governed by the laws of New York. Before we or you start any court proceedings (except in the limited circumstances where the dispute, controversy or claim is related to proceedings brought by someone else and this dispute could be joined to those proceedings), we agree we will each try to settle the dispute by mediation submitted to JAMS, or its successor, for mediation in New York. If the Dispute is not settled by mediation within 60 days from the date when mediation is initiated, then the Dispute shall be submitted to JAMS, or its successor, for final and binding arbitration in accordance with its Comprehensive Arbitration Rules and Procedures or, if the Dispute involves a non-U.S. party, the JAMS International Arbitration Rules. The seat of the arbitration shall be New York and the arbitration shall be conducted by one arbitrator, who shall be appointed within 30 days after the initiation of the arbitration. The language used in the arbitral proceedings shall be English. The arbitrator shall order the production of documents only upon a showing that such documents are relevant and material to the outcome of the Dispute. The arbitration shall be confidential, except to the extent necessary to enforce a judgment or where disclosure is required by law. The arbitration award shall be final and binding on all parties involved. Judgment upon the award may be entered by any court having jurisdiction thereof or having jurisdiction over the relevant party or its assets. This arbitration and any proceedings conducted hereunder shall be governed by Title 9 (Arbitration) of the United States Code and by the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards of June 10, 1958.

10 REPORTING ON WWW.CHRISTIES.COM

Details of all **lots** sold by us, including **catalogue description**s and prices, may be reported on **www.christies.com**. 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. We regret that we cannot agree to requests to remove these details from **www.christies.com**.

K GLOSSARY

auctioneer: the individual **auctioneer** and/or Christie's.

authentic: a genuine example, rather than a copy or forgery of:

(i) the work of a particular artist, author or manufacturer, if the **lot** is described in the **Heading** as the work of that artist, author or manufacturer;

(ii) a work created within a particular period or culture, if the **lot** is described in the **Heading** as a work created during that period or culture;

(iii) a work for a particular origin source if the **lot** is described in the **Heading** as being of that origin or source; or

(iv) in the case of gems, a work which is made of a particular material, if the **lot** is described in the **Heading** as being made of that material.

authenticity **warranty**: the guarantee we give in this agreement that a **lot** is **authentic** as set out in paragraph E2 of this agreement.

buyer's premium: the charge the buyer pays us along with the **hammer price**.

catalogue description: the description of a **lot** in the catalogue for the auction, as amended by any **saleroom notice**.

Christie's Group: Christie's International Plc, its subsidiaries and other companies within its corporate group.

condition: the physical **condition** of a **lot**.

due date: has the meaning given to it paragraph F1(a).

estimate: the price range included in the catalogue or any **saleroom notice** within which we believe a **lot** may sell. Low **estimate** means the lower figure in the range and high **estimate** means the higher figure. The mid **estimate** is the midpoint between the two.

hammer price: the amount of the highest bid the **auctioneer** accepts for the sale of a **lot**.

Heading: has the meaning given to it in paragraph E2.

lot: an item to be offered at auction (or two or more items to be offered at auction as a group).

other damages: any special, consequential, incidental or indirect damages of any kind or any damages which fall within the meaning of 'special', 'incidental' or 'consequential' under local law.

purchase price: has the meaning given to it in paragraph F1(a).

provenance: the ownership history of a **lot**.

qualified: has the meaning given to it in paragraph E2 and **Qualified Heading**s means the paragraph headed **Qualified Heading**s on the page of the catalogue headed 'Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice'.

reserve: the confidential amount below which we will not sell a **lot**.

saleroom notice: a written notice posted next to the **lot** in the saleroom and on **www.christies.com**, which is also read to prospective telephone bidders and notified to clients who have left commission bids, or an announcement made by the **auctioneer** either at the beginning of the sale, or before a particular **lot** is auctioned.

subheading: has the meaning given to it in paragraph E2.

UPPER CASE type: means having all capital letters.

warranty: a statement or representation in which the person making it guarantees that the facts set out in it are correct.

IMPORTANT NOTICES AND EXPLANATION OF CATALOGUING PRACTICE

IMPORTANT NOTICES

∆ Property Owned in part or in full by Christie's

From time to time, Christie's may offer a **lot** which it owns in whole or in part. Such property is identified in the catalogue with the symbol ∆ next to its **lot** number. Where Christie's has an ownership or financial interest in every **lot** in the catalogue, Christie's will not designate each **lot** with a symbol, but will state its interest in the front of the catalogue.

º Minimum Price Guarantees

On occasion, Christie's has a direct financial interest in the outcome of the sale of certain **lots** consigned for sale. This will usually be where it has guaranteed to the Seller that whatever the outcome of the auction, the Seller will receive a minimum sale price for the work. This is known as a minimum price guarantee. Where Christie's holds such financial interest we identify such **lots** with the symbol º next to the **lot** number.

○ ♦ Third Party Guarantees/Irrevocable bids

Where Christie's has provided a Minimum Price Guarantee it is at risk of making a loss, which can be significant, if the **lot** fails to sell. Christie's sometimes chooses to share that risk with a third party who agrees prior to the auction to place an irrevocable written bid on the **lot**. If there are no other higher bids, the third party commits to buy the **lot** at the level of their irrevocable written bid. In doing so, the third party takes on all or part of the risk of the **lot** not being sold. **Lots** which are subject to a third party guarantee arrangement are identified in the catalogue with the symbol ○♦.

In most cases, Christie's compensates the third party in exchange for accepting this risk. Where the third party is the successful bidder, the third party's remuneration is based on a fixed financing fee. If the third party is not the successful bidder, the remuneration may either be based on a fixed fee or an amount calculated against the final **hammer price**. The third party may continue to bid for the **lot** above the irrevocable written bid. Where the third party is the successful bidder, Christie's will report the **purchase price** net of the fixed financing fee.

Third party guarantors are required by us to disclose to anyone they are advising their financial interest in any **lots** they are guaranteeing. However, for the avoidance of any doubt, if you are advised by or bidding through an agent on a **lot** identified as being subject to a third party guarantee you should always ask your agent to confirm whether or not he or she has a financial interest in relation to the **lot**.

¤ Bidding by interested parties

When a party with a direct or indirect interest in the **lot** who may have knowledge of the **lot**'s **reserve** or other material information may be bidding on the **lot**, we will mark the **lot** with this symbol ¤. This interest can include beneficiaries of an estate that consigned the **lot** or a joint owner of a **lot**. Any interested party that successfully bids on a **lot** must comply with Christie's **Condition**s of Sale, including paying the **lot**'s full **Buyer's premium** plus applicable taxes.

Post-catalogue notifications

In certain instances, after the catalogue has been published, Christie's may enter into an arrangement or become aware of bidding that would have required a catalogue symbol. In those instances, a pre-sale or pre-**lot** announcement will be made

Other Arrangements

Christie's may enter into other arrangements not involving bids. These include arrangements where Christie's has made loans or advanced money to consignors or prospective purchasers or where Christie's has shared the risk of a guarantee with a partner without the partner being required to place an irrevocable written bid or otherwise participating in the bidding on the **lot**. Because such arrangements are unrelated to the bidding process they are not marked with a symbol in the catalogue.

EXPLANATION OF CATALOGUING PRACTICE

Terms used in a catalogue or **lot** description have the meanings ascribed to them below. Please note that all statements in a catalogue or **lot** description as to authorship are made subject to the provisions of the **Condition**s of Sale, including the **authenticity warranty**. Our use of these expressions does not take account of the **condition** of the **lot** or of the extent of any restoration. Written **condition** reports are usually available on request.

A term and its definition listed under '**Qualified Headings**' is a **qualified** statement as to authorship. While the use of this term is based upon careful study and represents the opinion of specialists, Christie's and the consignor assume no risk, liability and responsibility for the **authenticity** of authorship of any **lot** in this catalogue described by this term, and the **authenticity warranty** shall not be available with respect to **lots** described using this term.

PICTURES, DRAWINGS, PRINTS AND MINIATURES

Name(s) or Recognised Designation of an artist without any qualification: in Christie's opinion a work by the artist.

QUALIFIED HEADINGS

"Attributed to ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion probably a work by the artist in whole or in part.

"Studio of .../"Workshop of ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work executed in the studio or workshop of the artist, possibly under his supervision.

"Circle of ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work of the period of the artist and showing his influence.

"Follower of... ": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work executed in the artist's style but not necessarily by a pupil.

"Manner of... ": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work executed in the artist's style but of a later date.

"After ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a copy (of any date) of a work of the artist.

"Signed .../"Dated .../ "Inscribed ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion the work has been signed/dated/inscribed by the artist.

"With signature .../"With date .../ "With inscription ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion the signature/ date/inscription appears to be by a hand other than that of the artist.

The date given for Old Master, Modern and Contemporary Prints is the date (or approximate date when prefixed with 'circa') on which the matrix was worked and not necessarily the date when the impression was printed or published.

CHINESE CERAMICS AND WORKS OF ART

When a piece is, in Christie's opinion, of a certain period, reign or dynasty, its attribution appears in uppercase letters directly below the Heading of the description of the **lot**.

e.g. A BLUE AND WHITE BOWL
18TH CENTURY

If the date, period or reign mark mentioned in uppercase letters after the bold type first line states that the mark is of the period, then in Christie's opinion, the piece is of the date, period or reign of the mark.

e.g. A BLUE AND WHITE BOWL
KANGXI SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND OF THE PERIOD (1662-1722)

If no date, period or reign mark is mentioned in uppercase letters after the bold description, in Christie's opinion it is of uncertain date or late manufacture.

e.g. A BLUE AND WHITE BOWL

QUALIFIED HEADINGS

When a piece is, in Christie's opinion, not of the period to which it would normally be attributed on stylistic grounds, this will be incorporated into the first line or the body of the text of the description.

e.g. A BLUE AND WHITE MING-STYLE BOWL; or
The Ming-style bowl is decorated with lotus scrolls...

In Christie's **qualified** opinion this object most probably dates from Kangxi period but there remains the possibility that it may be dated differently.

e.g. KANGXI SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND PROBABLY OF THE PERIOD

In Christie's **qualified** opinion, this object could be dated to the Kangxi period but there is a strong element of doubt.

e.g. KANGXI SIX-CHARACTER MARK IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND POSSIBLY OF THE PERIOD

FABERGÉ

QUALIFIED HEADINGS

"Marked Fabergé, Workmaster ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work of the master's workshop inscribed with his name or initials and his workmaster's initials.

"By Fabergé ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion, a work of the master's workshop, but without his mark.

"In the style of ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion a work of the period of the master and closely related to his style.

"Bearing marks ...": in Christie's **qualified** opinion not a work of the master's workshop and bearing later marks.

JEWELLERY

"Boucheron": when maker's name appears in the title, in Christie's opinion it is by that maker.

"Mount by Boucheron": in Christie's opinion the setting has been created by the jeweller using stones originally supplied by the jeweller's client.

QUALIFIED HEADINGS

"Signed Boucheron / Signature Boucheron": in Christie's **qualified** opinion has a signature by the jeweller.

"With maker's mark for Boucheron": in Christie's **qualified** opinion has a mark denoting the maker.

Periods

Art Nouveau 1895-1910

Belle Epoque 1895-1914

Art Deco 1915-1935

Retro 1940s

HANDBAGS

Condition Reports

The condition of **lots** sold in our auctions can vary widely due to factors such as age, previous damage, restoration, repair and wear and tear. **Condition** reports and grades are provided free of charge as a courtesy and convenience to our buyers and are for guidance only. They offer our honest opinion but they may not refer to all faults, restoration, alteration or adaptation. They are not an alternative to examining a **lot** in person or taking your own professional advice. **Lots** are sold "as is," in the condition they are in at the time of the sale, without any representation or **warranty** as to **condition** by Christie's or by the seller.

Grades in Condition Reports

We provide a general, numeric condition grade to help with overall condition guidance. Please review the specific condition report and extra images for each **lot** before bidding.

Grade 1: this item exhibits no signs of use or wear and could be considered as new. There are no flaws. Original packaging and protective plastic are likely intact as noted in the **lot** description.

Grade 2: this item exhibits minor flaws and could be considered nearly brand new. It may never have been used, or may have been used a few times. There are only minor condition notes, which can be found in the specific condition report.

Grade 3: this item exhibits visible signs of use. Any signs of use or wear are minor. This item is in good condition.

Grade 4: this item exhibits wear from frequent use. This item either has light overall wear or small areas of heavy wear. The item is considered to be in fair condition.

Grade 5: this item exhibits normal wear and tear from regular or heavy use. The item is in good, usable condition but it does have condition notes.

Grade 6: this item is damaged and requires repair. It is considered in fair **condition**.

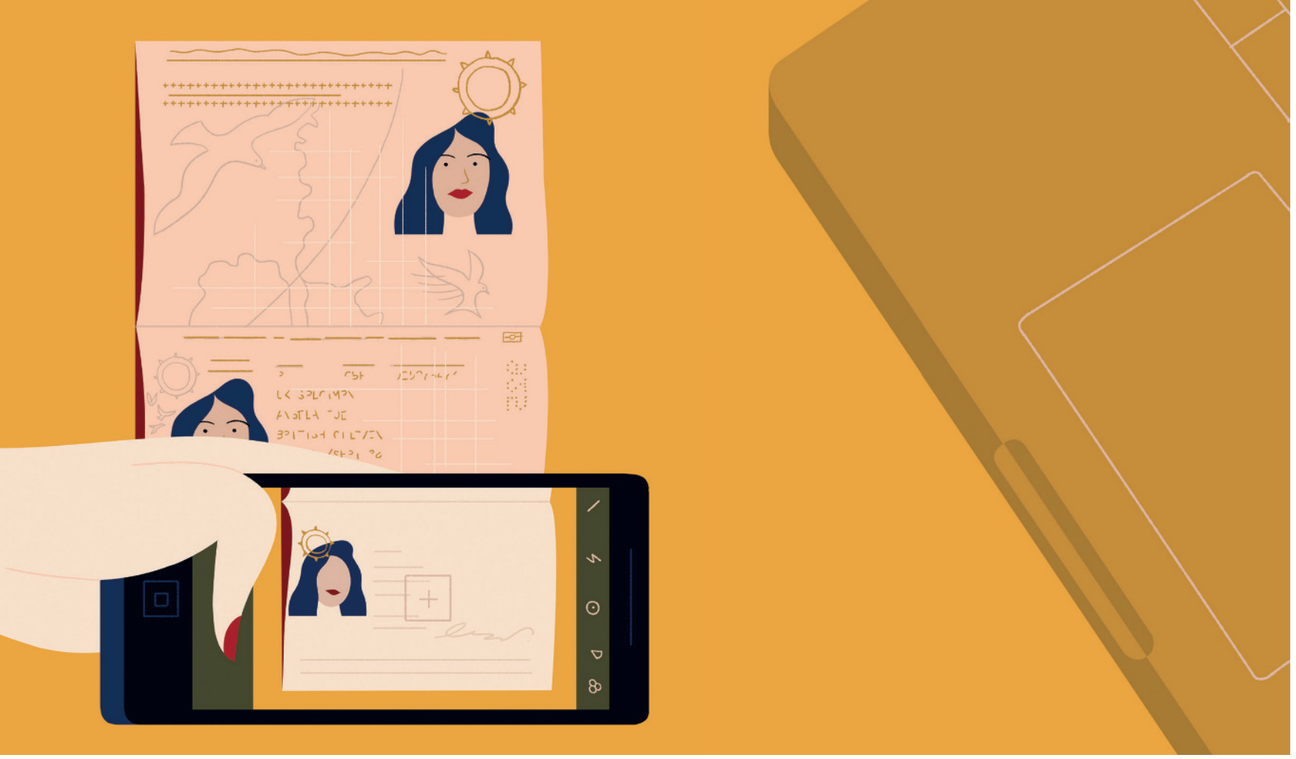
Any reference to condition in a catalogue entry will not amount to a full description of condition, and images may not show the condition of a **lot** clearly. Colours and shades may look different in print or on screen to how they look in real life. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have received and considered any **condition** report and grading.

References to "HARDWARE"

Where used in this catalogue the term "hardware" refers to the metallic parts of the bag, such as the buckle hardware, base studs, lock and keys and /or strap, which are plated with a coloured finish (e.g. gold, silver, palladium). The terms "Gold Hardware", "Silver Hardware", "Palladium Hardware" etc. refer to the tone or colour of the hardware and not the actual material used. If the bag incorporates solid metal hardware this will be referenced in the **lot** description.

POST 1950 FURNITURE

All items of post-1950 furniture included in this sale are items either not originally supplied for use in a private home or sold as collector's items. These items may not comply with the provisions of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989, 1993 and 2010, the "Regulations"). Accordingly, these items should not be used as furniture in your home in their current condition. If you do intend to use such items for this purpose, you must first ensure that they are reupholstered, restuffed and/or recovered (as appropriate) in order that they comply with the provisions of the Regulations.



IDENTITY VERIFICATION

From January 2020, new anti-money laundering regulations require Christie's and other art businesses to verify the identity of all clients. To register as a new client, you will need to provide the following documents, or if you are an existing client, you will be prompted to provide any outstanding documents the next time you transact.

Private individuals:

- A copy of your passport or other government-issued photo ID
- Proof of your residential address (such as a bank statement or utility bill) dated within the last three months

Please upload your documents through your christies.com account: click 'My Account' followed by 'Complete Profile'. You can also email your documents to info@christies.com or provide them in person.

Organisations:

- Formal documents showing the company's incorporation, its registered office and business address, and its officers, members and ultimate beneficial owners
- A passport or other government-issued photo ID for each authorised user

Please email your documents to info@christies.com or provide them in person.

CHRISTIE'S

SYMBOLS USED IN THIS CATALOGUE

The meaning of words coloured in **bold** in this section can be found at the end of the section of the catalogue headed 'Conditions of Sale'

o
Christie's has a direct financial interest in the **lot**. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.

Δ
Owned by Christie's or another **Christie's Group** company in whole or part. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.

♦
Christie's has a direct financial interest in the **lot** and has funded all or part of our interest with the help of someone else. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.

¤
Bidding by parties with an interest.

•
Lot offered without **reserve** which will be sold to the highest bidder regardless of the pre-sale **estimate** in the catalogue.

~
Lot incorporates material from endangered species which could result in export restrictions. See Paragraph H2(b) of the Conditions of Sale.

■
See Storage and Collection pages in the catalogue.

Ψ
Lot incorporates material from endangered species that is not for sale and shown for display purposes only. See Paragraph H2(g) of the Conditions of Sale.

φ
Please note that this **lot** is subject to an import tariff. The amount of the import tariff due is a percentage of the final hammer price plus buyer's premium. The buyer should contact Post Sale Services prior to the sale to determine the **estimate**d amount of the import tariff. If the buyer instructs Christie's to arrange shipping of the **lot** to a foreign address, the buyer will not be required to pay the import tariff. If the buyer instructs Christie's to arrange shipping of the **lot** to a domestic address, if the buyer collects the property in person, or if the buyer arranges their own shipping (whether domestically or internationally), the buyer will be required to pay the import tariff. For the purpose of calculating sales tax, if applicable, the import tariff will be added to the final hammer price plus buyer's premium and sales tax will be collected as per The Buyer's Premium and Taxes section of the Conditions of Sale.

Please note that **lots** are marked as a convenience to you and we shall not be liable for any errors in, or failure to, mark a lot.

3/02/2022

STORAGE AND COLLECTION

PAYMENT OF ANY CHARGES DUE

Specified **lots** (sold and unsold) marked with a filled square (■) not collected from Christie's by 5.00pm on the day of the sale will, at our option, be removed to Christie's Fine Art Storage Services (CFASS in Red Hook, Brooklyn). Christie's will inform you if the **lot** has been sent offsite.

If the **lot** is transferred to Christie's Fine Art Storage Services, it will be available for collection after the third business day following the sale.

Please contact Christie's Post-Sale Service 24 hours in advance to book a collection time at Christie's Fine Art Services. All collections from Christie's Fine Art Services will be by pre-booked appointment only.

Please be advised that after 50 days from the auction date property may be moved at Christie's discretion. Please contact Post-Sale Services to confirm the location of your property prior to collection.

Tel: +1 212 636 2650
Email: PostSaleUS@christies.com

Operation hours for both Christie's Rockefeller and Christie's Fine Art Storage are from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday.

COLLECTION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Lots will only be released on payment of all charges due and on production of a Collection Form from Christie's. Charges may be paid in advance or at the time of collection. We may charge fees for storage if your **lot** is not collected within thirty days from the sale. Please see paragraph G of the Conditions of Sale for further detail.

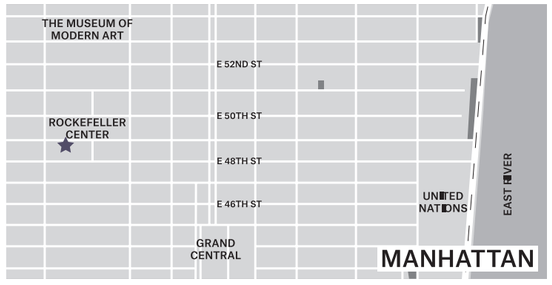
Tel: +1 212 636 2650
Email: PostSaleUS@christies.com

SHIPPING AND DELIVERY

Christie's Post-Sale Service can organize domestic deliveries or international freight. Please contact them on +1 212 636 2650 or PostSaleUS@christies.com.

Long-term storage solutions are also available per client request. CFASS is a separate subsidiary of Christie's and clients enjoy complete confidentiality. Please contact CFASS New York for details and rates: +1 212 636 2070 or storage@cfass.com

STREET MAP OF CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK LOCATIONS



Christie's Rockefeller Center
20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 10020
Tel: +1 212 636 2000
PostSaleUS@christies.com
Main Entrance on 49th Street
Receiving/Shipping Entrance on 48th Street
Hours: 9.30 AM - 5.00 PM
Monday-Friday except Public Holidays

Christie's Fine Art Storage Services (CFASS)
62-100 Imlay Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231
Tel: +1 212 974 4500
PostSaleUS@christies.com
Main Entrance on Corner of Imlay and Bowne St.
Hours: 9.30 AM - 5.00 PM
Monday-Friday except Public Holidays

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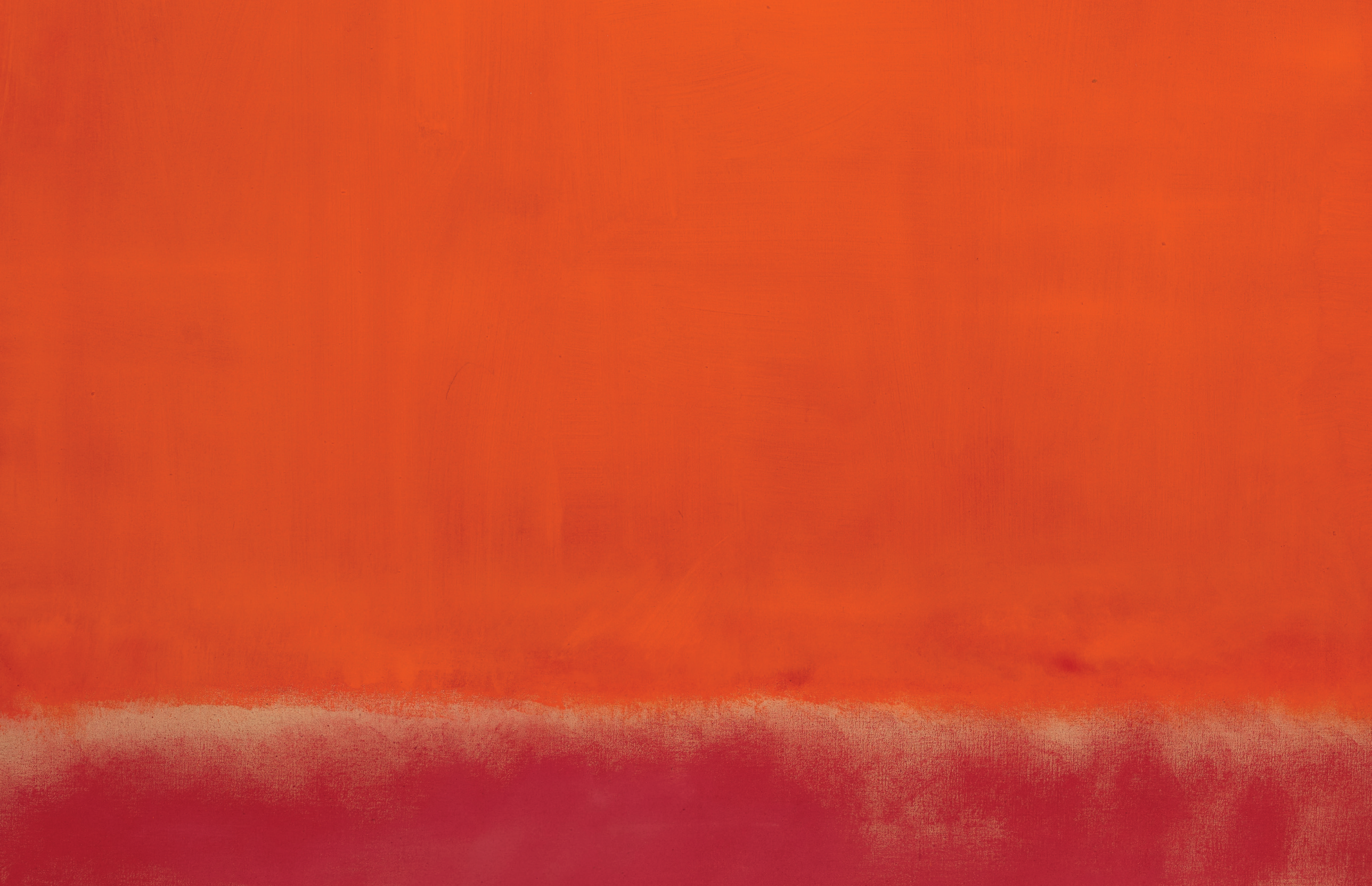

CHRISTIE'S