

For Immediate Release

4 January 2006

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MUSEUM-QUALITY WORKS LEAD THE FEBRUARY EVENING SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART AT CHRISTIE'S



Chaim Soutine (1893-1943)
Le bœuf écorché, circa 1924
Estimate £4,200,000 – 4,800,000



Camille Pissarro (1830-1903)
Péniches sur La Seine à Bougival, 1871
Estimate £2,000,000 - 3,000,000

Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale

Christie's King Street

6 February 2006

London – Seminal works by major European artists will be offered in Christie's prestigious evening sale of *Impressionist and Modern Art* on Monday 6 February 2006. Incorporated within this evening sale, will be two dedicated sections, *German and Austrian Art* alongside *The Art of the Surreal*. The sale follows the record breaking sale totals set in New York in November 2005, and is expected to realise in excess of £46 million.

“As in previous years, an outstanding array of works of art has been gathered, in what promises to be an exciting sale. We are thrilled to be offering a number of museum-quality paintings including Soutine's powerful ‘Le boeuf écorché’ and Pissarro's lyrical ‘Fenaison à Eragny’, which was last publicly exhibited over a century ago,” said Jussi Pykkänen, President of Christie's Europe.

One of the highlights of the sale is Chaïm Soutine's powerful *Le boeuf écorché*, circa 1924 (estimate: £4,200,000-4,800,000), from one of the artist's most highly celebrated series of paintings. Soutine first came across Rembrandt's painting of a beef carcass when studying and painting Old Masters in the Louvre. Tackling the same subject, and imitating Rembrandt's painterly treatment and rich palette, Soutine concentrates the subject into a far more extreme and penetrating analysis. The tight composition ensures that the carcass fills the canvas, forcing us to confront the body, the blood and its implications. This is Soutine's only known example of a full beef carcass to come up for auction, the others being found in prestigious museums around the world.

The evening sale boasts two important works by Camille Pissarro. The masterpiece *La Seine à Bougival*, dates from Pissarro's return from exile in London in 1871, and captures the bustle of commerce and activity on the river (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000). It is filled with a light and freshness that had arguably been lacking in his earlier paintings and highlights the influence that contemporary artists like Sisley, and the English artist John Constable, were to have on his work. *Fenaison à Eragny* is a beautiful and absorbing harvest scene, painted in 1891 (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000). Pissarro had moved to Eragny in 1884 largely in search of an area where old practices had not been supplanted by new technology. However, failing eyesight caused him to work more in his studio than from life, resulting in a new style. This vibrant work bears all the hallmarks of his great late works, with its subtle play of colour and gentle, feathery texture.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's atmospheric painting of his older brother, *Portrait de Pierre-Henri Renoir*, 1870 is also offered (estimate: £1,500,000-2,000,000). This work dates from the inception of the Impressionist movement, using lush, feathery brushstrokes to create a shimmering portrait. Renoir emphasizes his brother's bourgeois credentials through the use of the plush materials of the chair and walls, and features his gold watch chain. While ornamental decorations in the background reflect Pierre-Henri's enthusiasm for Oriental wares.

One of the last and most fully developed of Georges Braque's early and cubist landscapes *L'église de Carrières Saint Denis*, 1909 (estimate: £600,000-800,000) will be offered in the evening sale. Suffused with a gentle light and a rhythmic appreciation of form, Braque's delicate brushwork and muted tones are deftly used to create the illusion of form within space. It was during this period that Braque attained true artistic maturity, abandoning Fauvism in favour of the influence of Cézanne. This work dates from after his initial meeting with Picasso, but predates the intense friendship and collaboration between the two artists, that only a short-time afterwards, would result in full-blown Cubism.

Alfred Sisley's paintings of South Wales are his only seascapes. In the summer of 1897, Sisley stayed to the north-west of Cardiff, in Penarth and at Langlands Bay, where the atmospheric and rugged landscape inspired seventeen works including *Lady's Cove - Langland Bay - Le Martin* (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Between December 1883 and July 1884, Vincent van Gogh explored the subject of weavers at length. This example *Weavers: The whole Loom, facing right* was painted in Nuenen in January 1884 or shortly afterwards (estimate: £400,000-600,000).

Christie's Impressionist and Modern Art Day sale, 7 February 2006

Highlights include Picasso's *Tete de femme en gris* (estimate: £350,000-450,000), a group of works by Karl Hofer together with early Paris scenes by Maurice Utrillo such as *La caserne*, 1914 (estimate: £40,000-60,000) and *Rue a Sannois* (estimate: £40,000-60,000).

"There is an increasing demand for works priced between £100,000-300,000, where quality is matched by market-freshness," said Conor Jordan, Head of Sale. *"A significant number of new buyers are emerging for Impressionist works, both in Russia and in the Far East, while modern and 20th century works of art continue to appeal across the board, with equal demand in both the US and Europe. We are finding that the market for Picasso, Léger and Miró is stronger than ever with competition for examples in all price ranges. In addition, we are seeing consistent demand for works priced under £100,000, contrary to uneven purchasing that took place two years ago."*

Christie's Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper sale, 9 February 2006

A formidable collection of works by Fernand Léger will be offered including *Le remorqueur, étude*, 1917 (estimate: £150,000-200,000). Other highlights include Edgar Degas' *Deux jockeys* (estimate: 100,000-150,000), Vincent van Gogh's *Etudes de personages* (estimate: £100,000-150,000), Henri Matisse's *Vue de Paris* (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *Marin écrivant* (estimate: £2,500-3,500).

"The niche market for Impressionist and Modern works on paper is very strong with dedicated private collectors particularly in Europe. In addition, preparatory studies continue to be highly desirable," said Head of Sale Giovanna Bertazzoni.

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Images available on request

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