

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S SALE OF 19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN ART OFFERS MUSEUM-QUALITY PAINTINGS BY BOUGUEREAU, MOREAU, COROT, COURBET, AND OTHERS

**19th Century European Art
April 22, 2004**

New York – Approximately 250 paintings comprising a variety of movements and schools of 19th Century European painting – from major museum-quality works to fine canvases and sculpture – will be offered in Christie's sale of 19th Century European Art on April 22 at Rockefeller Center. Superb examples by artists of the Victorian, Belle Epoque, Barbizon, French Academic, Spanish, Italian, German, Austrian and Orientalist schools are all featured in the sale.

The top lot of the sale is William Adolphe Bouguereau's (French, 1825-1905) *La bohémienne*, 1890 (estimate: \$700,000-900,000), which is being sold by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts to benefit their acquisitions fund. In this portrait, a young gypsy girl sits on Paris' Quai de Tournelle, holding in her lap the instrument of her livelihood, her violin, with the Île de la Cité and Notre Dame in the background. Also in the sale is Bouguereau's *La Tricoteuse*, 1891 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), another portrait of a young girl, in this case standing on a country path, with her knitting in hand. Both paintings are characteristic of Bouguereau's work throughout his *oeuvre* in their elevation of the virtues of labor and deprecation of the ignominy of poverty.

A selection of magnificent canvases by Gustave Courbet (French, 1819-1877) are among the major highlights of the sale. *Le sculpteur*, 1845 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000) and *Guitarrero*, 1844 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000) were created as pendant pieces only to be separated shortly

after their completion and exhibited together only once, in a traveling exhibition in Philadelphia and

Boston in 1959 and 1960. The symmetries and parallels of subject, style, and composition clearly indicate their relationship to one another. The paintings – one of a sculptor at rest, the other of a guitar player – are of the same dimensions and portray their subjects in a landscape of rocks and foliage dressed in colorful historical costume. Both are remarkable for their clarity of contour and detail and show the influence of a formative period of the Style Troubadour, an aspect of Romantic painting that combined the scale and precision of genre painting with subjects drawn from a Renaissance past. A later work, *La Vague (aux trois barques)*, 1869 (estimate: \$250,000-300,000) is a seascape of a storm at sea in which Courbet captures the violence of foam-tipped waves crashing onto the surf.

In his writings, French artist Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) defined himself as a ‘gatherer of dreams,’ fed and inspired by the classical Greek and Roman myths and the Bible. In his youth, his father had given him an illustrated 17th-century copy of the Latin poet Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in which the myth of Narcissus – the vain youth who was transformed into a flower to show the transient folly of beauty and vanity – is told. In Moreau’s *Narcissus*, circa 1890 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), a languid adolescent contemplates his reflection in the water he cups in his hand, enamored of his own reflection. The lush, idyllic setting is completed by a thick carpet of aquatic flowers and plants below and birds and butterflies overhead.

Arthur John Elsley’s (British, 1861-1952) *The Joy of Spring*, 1911, (estimate: \$500,000-700,000) shows children playing with an orphaned lamb in a spring-time setting. Around the turn of the century, Elsley had begun to compose increasingly adventurous multi-figural works on a grander scale, and *The Joy of Spring* is a prime example. With its charming subject matter, vernal palette and joyful tone, it ranks among the masterpieces of this much-loved artist’s output. Another British artist, Henry Herbert La Thangue (1859-1929) is represented in the sale with *Back from the Common, Heyshott, West Sussex*. In works such as this offering, La Thangue catalogued the daily activities of farm laborers in tending livestock, planting and harvesting, and returning from the fields at the end of the day. *The Enchantress* (estimate: \$150,000-250,000), a luxuriant painting in which Arthur Wardle (British, 1864-1949) shows a beautiful woman and tigers, is an example of the artist’s skill in combining the mythological and the exotic.

Daniel Ridgway Knight’s (American, 1839-1924) *Gathering Lilacs* (estimate: \$300,000-400,000) shows a young peasant woman gathering lilacs on a bright spring day. Ridgway Knight’s observation of his models led him to arrive at subtle harmonies of tone and color most effectively seen in a series of canvases dedicated to the theme of harvesters resting, gathering flowers, and enjoying each other’s company or nature itself.

Salle d'examen de doctorat (estimate: \$220,000-280,000) is a magnificent and rare painting by Jean Béraud (French, 1849-1935) in which the artist abandons his characteristic portrayal of women in feminine finery to illustrate a woman in doctoral garb defending her thesis before a group of robed judges. Painted late in the artist's career, the present picture exhibits all of the attention to detail and mastery of brushwork that distinguished the young artist from his very first showing at the Paris *Salon* in 1873. Another work by Béraud, *Le Concert privé*, 1911 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) is an example of Béraud's elegant, incisive, and often wry depictions of the fluttering social milieu of Belle Epoque Paris. This charming scene of an important pianist playing in the drawing room of a private home – a favored form of entertainment among the privileged – shows the artist to be both a master of detail and atmosphere.

Isidor Kaufmann (Austria, 1853-1921), one of the most important of the Jewish genre painters of the 19th century, is known for his depictions of the simplicity of everyday life, often done in small formats and with amazing attention to detail. *Commercial Instruction* (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) shows a father teaching arithmetic to his son – an everyday activity taking place in a typical interior of a Jewish home of the time. The attention to detail is masterful, and the artist's portrayal of the patience of the father and the look of comprehension on the son's face lend an immediacy to the scene. Another work by Kaufmann, *Im Wartezimmer des Bezirksgerichtes* (estimate: \$80,000-120,000), an interior of people of different backgrounds gathered in the same waiting room, is also included in the sale. These two pictures will be included in a special public viewing at Christie's Tel Aviv from April 7 through 10.

Of special note in the sale are three canvases by Victorian women artists. Jane Maria Bowkett's (British, 1860-1885) *Folkestone Beach*, 1875 (estimate: \$180,000-220,000) depicts the southeast coast of Kent, where the artist renders a colorful narrative of families enjoying the seaside resort. Jane M. Dealy (British, 1879-1903), a well-known children's book illustrator and painter of genre scenes, predominantly of children, is represented in the sale with *And She Went to Market All on a Market Day*, circa 1883 (estimate: \$50,000-70,000), and Anna Lea Merritt (British, 1844-1930) with *Dame Frederica Mary Horatia, Wife of Sir Lambton Lorraine with her daughter Jacqueline*, 1884 (estimate: \$20,000-30,000).

Auction:	19 th Century European Art	April 22 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Viewing:	Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza	April 17 - 21

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Images available on request

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