

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2009

Contact: Erin McAndrew 212.636.2680 emcandrew@christies.com

**MATISSE, GIACOMETTI, AND MIRO
TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S SPRING EVENING SALE
OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART**

**TRIO OF PIVOTAL MASTER WORKS FROM THE ESTATE OF NEW YORK
PHILANTHROPIST AND COLLECTOR CARAL GIMBEL LEBWORTH**



Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale
May 6, 2009

New York – A trio of exceptional modern works by Henri Matisse, Alberto Giacometti, and Joan Miró are among the highlights of this spring's Evening Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art on May 6th. These striking master works – a painting and two sculptures – come from the private collection of the late Caral Gimbel Lebworth, a prominent New York philanthropist and arts patron who amassed dozens of paintings and decorative objects from the leading artists of the 19th and 20th centuries during her lifetime. Lebworth was the daughter of Bernard Gimbel, late chairman of Gimbel Brothers Inc., which once owned Saks & Co. and Gimbels, the famed New York department store immortalized in the popular films *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Elf*.

Christie's
20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020
phone 212.636.2680 fax 212.636.4951
www.christies.com

Among the outstanding Impressionist and Modern works in the Leboworth collection are Giacometti's *Buste de Diego (Stele III)*, an exceedingly rare full-size bronze bust balanced on a tall, narrow plinth (detail on page one, center - estimate: \$4.5-6.5 million); Matisse's *Nu à la serviette blanche* (page one left - estimate: \$2-3 million), an early figure painting that captures the artist at a moment of bold innovation; and Joan Miró's *Maquette pour Personnage*, 1971 (page one right - estimate: \$300,000-400,000), a unique study for a monumental 11-foot wide sculpture completed the following year.

Guy Bennett, International Co-head of Impressionist and Modern Art at Christie's said: "The record-breaking prices Christie's achieved in February for *The Collection of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé* proves there is an avid collector base for high-quality Impressionist and Modern works from notable private collections. Each of the works highlighted here represents an important turning point in the artists' creative progression. We are delighted to have been entrusted with the sale of this brilliantly curated American collection."

A stellar example of Matisse's proto-Fauve period, *Nu à la serviette blanche* has been featured in important exhibitions in Europe and in the United States, including the landmark retrospective show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1992. Here, Matisse experiments with the vivid color palette and lively brushwork that would coalesce into the collective style of the Fauve movement just a few years later. Painted circa 1902-1903, during a period of intense financial hardship for Matisse, the painting was originally owned by the artist Jean Puy, a friend and fellow member of the Fauve circle.



Giacometti's *Buste de Diego (Stele III)*, a moving portrait of the artist's brother Diego, has been in the Leboworth family collection since 1959 and has not been seen in a public exhibition for more than 35 years. Created in 1957-8 and cast in 1958, it is one of only three versions of its kind to incorporate a stele presentation, a clever device Giacometti created to ensure the bust would meet its observers eye to eye. Of the three elevated portraits, this version is the tallest, most massive, and fully characterized work.

As with Matisse's proto-Fauve nude, *Buste de Diego (Stele III)* marks a point of departure and exploration for Giacometti. By the end of the 1940s, Giacometti felt he had exhausted the possibilities inherent in the attenuated, stick-like figures he created during the years immediately after World War II. Seeking to reclaim a more realistic and concrete sense of space, he turned to a series of head studies, using his brother, wife, mother and closest friends as models. With *Buste de Diego (Stele III)*, Giacometti realized his vision of creating a renewed iconic image of the universal modern man.

Miró's *Maquette pour Personnage* is a charming unique study of a monstrous and comical female figure. Created in 1971, the maquette evokes elements of Miró's earlier *Femme* sculptures, but also hints at the grotesque *Mère Ubu* figures that were yet to come. Standing just under a foot high on outsized feet, the painted resin sculpture both engages and confuses with its oddly placed anatomical features. Conceived in the years after Miró opened his Palma studio, this maquette and its resulting monumental sculpture signified Miró's desire to add a new dimension to his art – the creation of larger and more imposing sculptures for public streets, gardens, and squares.

A preview of the highlights from the estate of Caral Gimbel Lebworth will be on view in the lobby gallery at Christie's Rockefeller Plaza from April 20 through 24, 2009.

Auction: **Impressionist and Modern Evening Sale** **May 6, 2009 at 7pm**

Viewing: **Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza** **May 1 - 6, 2009**

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totaled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 70 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

#

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

