

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**N.C. WYETH'S ROBINSON CRUSOE SERIES TO LEAD
CHRISTIE'S FALL 2009 SALE OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS**



Robinson Crusoe (endpaper), oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x 45 ½ in.

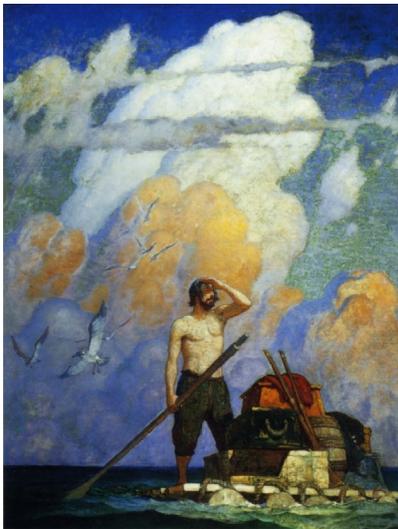
Estimate: \$400,000-600,000

New York – A celebrated series of paintings by Newell Convers (N.C.) Wyeth (1882-1945), one of America's greatest illustrators, will take center stage at Christie's Fall sale of *Important American Paintings* on December 2, 2009. The Robinson Crusoe series of fourteen canvases are the original oil paintings used to illustrate Daniel Defoe's classic novel published by the Cosmopolitan Book Corporation in 1920. This extraordinary suite of paintings will be sold to benefit the Wilmington Institute Library in Wilmington, DE, which has owned the works since the 1920's. It is the first time in memory that a nearly complete set of Wyeth illustrations have been offered to the public. The series is expected to realize in excess of \$3.8 million at auction.

In addition to the N.C. Wyeth illustrations, Christie's will also present for sale the Library's copy of *The North American Indian* by Edward S. Curtis, a complete 40-volume set of illustrated text volumes and photogravures. The set will be a highlight of Christie's *Photographs* sale in New York this fall, and is expected to realize in excess of \$700,000. The sale of the Library's Curtis volumes is a rare instance of a complete set of the *North American Indian* being offered at auction.

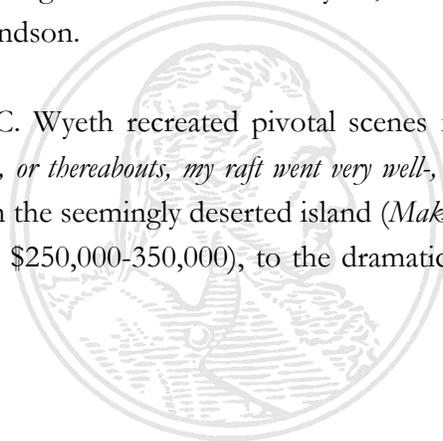
The Board of Managers of the Wilmington Institute Library have directed that the proceeds from the N. C. Wyeth paintings and the Curtis volumes will support the Library's physical plant and endowment. The Wilmington Institute Library was founded in 1788 and is one of Delaware's oldest institutions. Its historic building with its much-photographed Art Deco frieze has anchored downtown Wilmington's Rodney Square for over 85 years.

Eric Widing, Head of American Paintings at Christie's comments: "*Christie's is honored to have been selected to handle the sale of this exceptional series by N.C. Wyeth. These illustrations of Daniel Defoe's classic adventure tale have inspired generations of readers. As full-scale oil paintings, this series stands as testament to Wyeth's great acclaim as an easel painter. From the title page to the closing image, these images bring Defoe's prose to life through vivid color, drama, and action. This is a rare opportunity to acquire an iconic series created by one of America's most venerated artists.*"



In 1922, the Library purchased the 14 paintings directly from the artist as decoration for the library's reading rooms. As a book illustrator and painter, Wyeth was a prodigiously talented artist whose work enlivens an array of beloved adventure novels. Notable among them are *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Last of the Mobicans*, *Robin Hood*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Wyeth's illustrations brought him considerable success. In 1911, with funds earned from his *Treasure Island* illustrations, Wyeth purchased land in Chadds Ford, PA, which became the site of a home and studio that yielded two subsequent generations of exceptional American painters, including the late Andrew Wyeth, his son, and Jamie Wyeth, his grandson.

With the *Robinson Crusoe* suite of paintings, N.C. Wyeth recreated pivotal scenes from the novel, from Crusoe adrift at sea on his raft (*For a mile, or thereabouts, my raft went very well*, pictured above, left, estimate \$300,000-500,000) to his landing on the seemingly deserted island (*Making it a great cross, I set it up on the shore where I first landed*, estimate: \$250,000-350,000), to the dramatic moment when



Crusoe discovers the human footprint in the sand that signals he is not alone (*I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition*, estimate: \$300,000-500,000).

Christie's has a superb track record of selling American Art on behalf of institutions. Over the last three years, 28 museums and non-profits have chosen Christie's to sell works from their collections, including the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown Ohio, and the Saint Louis Art Museum.

Christie's has also been an auction leader in the sale of American books and manuscripts. This season, for example, Christie's assisted the Southworth Library in Dryden, NY with the sale of an original, handwritten manuscript of President Abraham Lincoln's 1864 Victory speech delivered just after his re-election to a second term as president. The sale yielded \$3.44 million and set a new auction record for a Lincoln manuscript, a presidential manuscript, and for any American historical manuscript. Similarly, proceeds from the sale of the speech were directed to the Southworth Library Association to fund construction of a new addition to the library and other projects.

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

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