

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK SPRING SALE OF IMPORTANT AMERICAN PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, AND SCULPTURE TOTALS \$16,820,400

Works by Milton Avery, Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Cole Lead Sale

Three New World Auction Records Set; Works Deaccessioned from Montclair Art Museum and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Yield Solid Results

New York – Christie's *Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* Sale achieved a total of \$16,820,400, with works by Milton Avery, Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Cole commanding the highest prices. Three new world auction records were set for American artists Edwin Willard Deming, Charles H. Humphriss, and Eric Pape.

Eric Widing, Head of American Paintings at Christie's, states: *"Today's auction demonstrated that American collectors remain hungry for high-quality works by the country's most venerated artists. Many of the sale's top lots sold above their high estimates and attracted competitive bids from the crowded saleroom, and from phone and online bidders. We are particularly pleased with the strong prices achieved for works consigned by the Montclair Art Museum and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, as well as other works with distinguished provenance including Eastman Johnson's The Old Mount Vernon of 1857. Fittingly, this last painting was purchased by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and will join the permanent collection at George Washington's historic home."*

Milton Avery's *Sketching by the Sea* was the top lot of the sale, selling for \$2,210,500. The bright, abstract composition made its first appearance at auction today after more than six decades in a private collection. Painted in 1944, this masterful work is representative of an artistic turning point in Avery's career, when he transformed his art and fully developed the distinct lexicon of shapes, forms, and interlocking patterns that came to define his most notable works. This painting was one of five Avery works featured in the sale, all of which drew competitive bids and strong sale prices. The second highest price of \$350,500 was achieved for Avery's *Melon Vendor*, followed by *Sun Worshipper*, a 1945 work that sold for \$290,500.

Works by the 19th century American painters Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Cole also achieved strong results. Bierstadt's compelling nighttime scene, *Oregon Trail*, drew \$1,762,500, followed by Thomas Cole's lyrical *View in Kaaterskill Clove* of 1826, which sold for \$1,022,500. Eastman Johnson's superlative 1857 painting, *The Old Mount Vernon*, achieved \$662,500; it had been held by The Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York, Inc. since it was gifted to the organization in 1912.

In keeping with recent sale seasons, Western art continued to perform well, with solid results achieved for two works on paper by the Cincinnati-based artist Henry Farny, including *Indian Encampment* of 1892, which sold for \$482,500 and *Mountain Pass* of 1894, which realized \$458,500. An occasional visitor to the American West, Marsden Hartley was a prominent member of the Stieglitz circle. He became captivated by the Southwest, and in 1919, he created *New Mexico*, a painting not seen on the market in nearly 90 years, which drew \$662,500.

Rounding out the strong results for Western art were record-setting prices for Charles H. Humphriss and Edwin Willard Deming. Humphriss's iconic bronze, *The Sun Dial*, realized \$76,900, and Deming's large-scale ceremonial scene, *Dance at San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico*, realized \$56,250. Both works were sold by the Montclair Art Museum to benefit their acquisition endowment fund. A second Humphriss bronze, *Indian's Appeal to Manitou*, also consigned from the museum, sold for \$16,250, above its high estimate.

The lure of the sea drew in a number of collectors, beginning with *Cloud Shadows*, a vivid depiction of Monhegan Island and its harbor by George Bellows, which achieved \$962,500. Similar strong results were achieved for seascapes by other Ash Can and Impressionist artists, such as William James Glackens's *Wickford Harbor, Rhode Island*, of 1909, which realized \$458,500, and Edward Henry Potthast's playful *Wading*, which sold for \$386,500. Both works were consigned by the Montclair Art Museum. The final record of the day was set by Eric Pape, a classically-trained painter who settled in Boston in 1898. His coastal view, *Early Morning, Annisquam, Massachusetts*, sold for \$62,500.

Images available at ftp.us.christies.com/American%20Paintings/2171

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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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