

For Immediate Release

2 June 2005

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IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART AT CHRISTIE'S IN JUNE



From left to right: Amedeo Modigliani's *Portrait de Jeanne Hébuterne* (estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000), Henri Matisse's *Nature morte, fleurs et tasse* (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) and Alexander Archipenko's *Woman* (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000)

Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale

21 June 2005

London – Christie's London June 2005 sales of Impressionist and Modern Art are led by a number of major consignments from private collections, and are particularly strong in masterpieces from the early part of the 20th century. Virtually every great avant-garde movement is represented in the sale by works of superb quality that have not been seen on the market for many years. These include museum quality works by the Fauves, the Cubists, the German Expressionists and the Surrealists. The 55 lot strong *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* boasts a high number of works consigned from private American collections, as well as from European and other sources. Christie's dominance in the European market for the Impressionist and 20th Century field was highlighted by the London February 2005 sales, which collectively totalled £92.5 million, taking 55% market share against our main competitor, followed by similarly ground-breaking sales in New York in May 2005, which realized £191 million, and achieving 62% market share.

A private collection of five works by Alexander Archipenko, offered by the heirs of Erich Goeritz, is a major offering in the evening sale. Bridging sculpture and painting, and linking Cubism, Futurism and Constructivism, his extraordinarily dynamic, complex and rare 'sculpto-paintings' are highly sought after by collectors, and even more so for the fact that these pieces seldom appear on the market. Archipenko executed in the region of 40 such works, of which only half survived. Among the most prized are those pieces that belonged to Erich Goeritz, whose legendary collection was largely donated to the Tel Aviv Museum seventy years ago. This collection of five major works, formerly on loan to

the museum, along with a fascinating body of notes and correspondence, remains one of the most important Archipenko archives in the world. Highlights include *Woman in Room*, 1917 (estimate: £600,000-900,000) and *Woman*, 1918 (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000).

Amedeo Modigliani's *Portrait de Jeanne Hébuterne* (estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000) is a major highlight of the auction, that has never been offered on the open market, and exhibited rarely in the 85 years since it was painted. Almost a century after he first made his name in the hurly-burly of the Paris art world in the early 1900s, Modigliani remains a legendary figure. The wild child of Montparnasse stumbled towards immortality via bar after bar while painting ground-breakingly modern, yet timelessly elegant, portraits of the people around him. The artist's wild child days were curtailed when he met Jeanne Hébuterne at drawing classes. The teenager, Jeanne, was enthralled and besotted by Modigliani and within a short time the pair were living together, and only a little later, had a child together. The impact of fatherhood on Modigliani was immediate and intense, and a new serenity entered his art. Modigliani had always sought to capture a universal sense of feminine grace. Jeanne personified this, and became his greatest Muse. This brief period of industry and happiness in Modigliani's life did not last. His nickname Modi, a deliberate pun on the French *maudit* ('cursed') soon became all too apt. Modigliani's health deteriorated rapidly in 1920, and he died before Jeanne could give birth, only months after this picture was painted. Distraught at his death, the pregnant Jeanne threw herself from a window.

Painted in 1924, Henri Matisse's *Nature morte, fleurs et tasse* (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) is a lush still life that is filled with the exotic, Ottoman flavours of the harem-like atmosphere that he cultivated in his studio, and in particular in his paintings of Odalisques. The picture is filled with blooming flowers as well as a cup and Oriental ewer, a beguiling mixture of the exotic and the domestic. Dating from his time in Nice, *Nature morte, fleurs et tasse* is bathed in the light of the Mediterranean that had so enchanted the artist. Despite the bold colours of the various objects, the thick *cloisonisme* that had marked so much of his earlier work has given way to a subtler exploration of colourism, with the borders that had earlier surrounded each colour field now dissolved. The appearance of *Nature morte, fleurs et tasse* is particularly exciting as the picture has not been seen on the market since only five years after it was painted, and is offered from a private American Family Trust.

An exceptionally rare and exciting painting from Braque's transitional years, that already hints at the momentous developments that were to lead to Cubism, will be a highlight of the evening sale. As the co-founder of Cubism, Braque was one of the most influential figures in the history of modern art. *Maisons à L'Estaque* (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000) was painted in 1907, a period when Braque began to truly consolidate his artistic styles, surpassing Cézanne's legacy and paving the way for the ground-breaking artistic development of Cubism.

In 1892 Maurice de Vlaminck moved to the area of Chatou, a small suburb on the Seine near the outskirts of Paris. It was here that he painted many of his finest 'fauve' paintings depicting in rich vibrant colours the local landscape and the life of the riverside. *Péniche sur la Seine* (estimate:

£2,800,000-3,500,000), painted in 1905, is an extraordinary work, offered from a US private collection. It dates from the period after his chance meeting with André Derain. In the summer of 1900, the train that both artists were travelling on was derailed and the two men struck up a conversation on the walk to Chatou where they both lived. It was this meeting, and the friendship which ensued, that led to the creation of the so-called 'School of Chatou', a school which was actually more of a friendly partnership. In 1901, they shared a studio in an abandoned restaurant called 'La Venneaux' on the Ile de Chatou and their friendship, as well as a visit to Van Gogh's exhibition at Bernheim-Jeune in 1901, proved a turning point in both of their careers.

Wassily Kandinsky is represented by three works in the sale, the star of which is a wonderful, early and extremely rare gouache, *Entwurf zu Kleine Freuden*, executed in 1913 (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000). This work has been in the collection of a private American collector since the late 1950s and has not been exhibited in public since 1958. One of the most dramatic and comprehensive watercolours from the extraordinary period that marked Kandinsky's final breakthrough into the realm of complete abstraction, and a complete working in itself of many of the key themes and subjects of Kandinsky's art during this climatic period in Murnau, *Entwurf zu Kleine Freuden* is a study for one of Kandinsky's finest and most important paintings, *Kleine Freuden*. This painting is well documented as being one of Kandinsky's favourites; he chose to have his photograph taken in front of it the same year, and also painted a second version, in 1924, so that he could show his young wife, Nina, the nature of his achievement during this great period. *Kleine Freuden* hangs in the Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's *In der Dämmerung* (estimate: £1,200,000-1,600,000) is perhaps the most important work by the artist to appear at auction in recent art market history and leads an impressive group of German and Austrian Art. Painted in 1912, *In der Dämmerung*, dates from the pinnacle of the Brücke movement's experiment with colour and near abstraction. Schmidt-Rottluff moved away from landscape painting in this year and concentrated on the figurative and still life. The sculptural modelling of the nudes show the artist's architectural interests whilst the subject is a clear homage to Gauguin, whose Pacific island paintings Schmidt-Rottluff had seen. The work is offered from the collection of Dr Victor and Hedda Peters, early patrons of Schmidt-Rottluff, and has not been seen on the market for more than 50 years.

Also offered in the evening sale are Pierre Bonnard's *Le déjeuner*, an oil on canvas painted circa 1916 (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000). Kees van Dongen is represented by two Fauvist canvases, *La danse de Carpeaux* (*Le bal masqué à l'Opéra*), an exciting recent discovery, offered from a private Brazilian collection (estimate: £450,000-650,000) and *La dormeuse, Mika nue sur un divan*, 1908 (estimate: £600,000-900,000), offered from a private American collection. Paul Delvaux is represented by *La Vénus endormie* (estimate: £600,000-900,000), a wonderful painting from his best years. A familiar subject in Paul Delvaux's art, this 1943 version of *La Vénus endormie* depicts a semi-naked muse asleep amidst a strangely deserted classical city, its surreal air blurring the boundary between the dreamer and her dream. Kurt Schwitters' rare and large cement, wood, glue and oil assemblage entitled, *Untitled* (*Heavy relief*), 1945, is also offered (estimate: £300,000-400,000).

A group of five Picasso's will also be offered as part of the Evening Sale, spanning his career from 1901, with a work on paper entitled *Couple espagnol* (estimate: £180,000-250,000), to 1972, with *Tête d'homme* (estimate: £600,000-800,000).

The Evening Sale will also feature a group of 18 Impressionist and 8 post-Impressionist works, for which the market remains firm, including works by Monet, Pissarro, Signac and Van Gogh. Vincent van Gogh's *Une lisense de romans*, a large oil on canvas painted in 1888, from a private American collection (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000), is a major highlight. Camille Pissarro's *Paysanne se chauffant* (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000), an exquisite and rare figure picture dated 1883, is offered from a London collection. Aristide Maillol's *Nu debout se coiffant*, a very fine early cast, which is rare and exceptional in its size, patina and definition (estimate: £500,000-700,000), is offered from a private American collection.

Impressionist and Modern Art (day sale)

Wednesday, 22 June

This sale will feature all the great names from the Impressionist and modern art movements, with prices ranging from £2,000-£300,000. Highlights include a rich selection of early impressionist works, led by Claude Monet's still life of fruit, *Prunes et abricots* (estimate: £150,000-200,000) and an early, Renoir landscape painted in the 1860s, *Le Sentier* (estimate: £120,000-160,000). The sale also boasts Edvard Munch's rare and intimate portrait of his brother, Peter Andreas in his Oslo flat, painted *circa* 1882-83. The 20th century section is represented by a strong group of works by Marc Chagall, which reflect his enduring fascination with his unique and personal repertoire of themes and motifs.

Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper

Thursday, 23 June

This sale of *Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper* is dedicated exclusively to drawings, watercolours, pastels and gouaches by the most celebrated artists of the past two centuries, and is much anticipated by young collectors, works on paper specialists, prints and drawings experts, museum curators and connoisseurs. The June sale is led by a museum quality, and unpublished, carnet of drawings begun by Pablo Picasso on his 89th birthday. By this time the undisputed living giant of 20th century painting, the 27 drawings offered demonstrate Picasso's enduring interest in the dynamic and bold figures of the bullfighter, knights, satyrs, and musketeers. The 27 lots range in price from £20,000 to £250,000. The period covered by this sketchbook is unusually rich in contemporaneous paintings, allowing a special opportunity to compare his work on paper with the finished canvas – sometimes executed the very same day. The sketchbook was gifted by Picasso to the son of his lawyer, a diplomat during the Second World War and the sketchbook has remained in the family for the past three decades.

Also offered is Vincent Van Gogh's *The Iron Mill in the Hague, The Hague*, a gouache executed in The Hague in July 1882 (estimate: £250,000-350,000). A rare and important group of works on paper by Paul Gauguin, ranging in price from £2,500 to £30,000 are also offered. Leading the group is *Portrait*

de Meyer de Haan, depicting Gauguin's artist friend, painted 1889-1890 (estimate: £18,000-24,000). The Picasso section of the sale features *Femme-fleur*, 1948, a large pastel depicting his lover François Gilot (estimate: £100,000-150,000). Renoir is represented by a large format crayon executed in the mid 1880s, *Maternité*, a sensitive and delicate portrayal of motherhood, and depicting his first son Pierre (estimate: £180,000-240,000). A number of works by important German artists will also feature in the sale including Lyonel Feininger, Georges Grosz, Emil Nolde and Max Liebermann.

Notes to Editors

Impressionist and 20th Century Art Sales June 2005

Impressionist and Modern Art (evening sale), Tuesday, 21 June

Impressionist and Modern Art (day sale), Wednesday, 22 June

Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper, Thursday, 23 June

Post War and Contemporary (evening sale), Thursday, 23 June

Post War and Contemporary (day sale), Friday, 24 June

Viewing

Impressionist and Modern Art sales will go public view at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1 from 17 June until 20 June 2005. Post-War and Contemporary art sales will go on public view at Christie's, 85 Old Brompton Road SW7 from 18 June onwards. All auctions will take place at Christie's 8 King Street, SW1

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Images available on request

Inaugurated in 2004, **Art Fortnight London** is a special two-week programme aimed at international collectors, curators and museum directors. Consisting of special exhibitions, auctions and cultural events, the fortnight celebrates London's pre-eminence as a centre of the international art market and its reputation as the leading trend setting, cultural capital of the world. This concept is the first effective partnership between the commercial art world with the capital's leading museums and galleries, demonstrating to the world the richness and diversity of London's cultural life. Now in its second year, **Art Fortnight London** will continue to illustrate the breadth and quality of art to see and collect in London, from Old Masters to Contemporary; it will also showcase London's wealth of expertise, academic resources and its reputation for cutting edge art. Full details of all events are available at www.artfortnightlondon.com