

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Milena Sales

Tel +1 212.636.2680

[msales@christies.com](mailto:msales@christies.com)

**CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS EXCEPTIONAL VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS  
FROM THE MILLER-PLUMMER COLLECTION**

**Photographs**

**October 8, 2009**



**New York** – This fall Christie's Photographs sales will feature *The Miller-Plummer Collection of Photographs* at Rockefeller Center on October 8. Offered as a single-owner sale and comprising 118 lots, the collection is distinguished for its range and depth from vintage masterpieces to modernist prints, all of impeccable quality. A unique opportunity for collectors around the world, the collection will be offered at a range of attractive estimates starting from \$2,000.

Harvey Shipley Miller and Randall Plummer began collecting photographs in 1973. Amassed over 20 years, this comprehensive collection was inspired by a commitment to assemble a discerning, encyclopedic ensemble of seminal works that exemplify the history and practice of the medium. Regarded as one of the leading private photography collections in the world, it is characterized for its major early works and represents a veritable survey of photographs that were pivotal to the development and evolution of photography.

The sale will include a strong selection of 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs. Among the highlights is an early work by the renowned Philadelphia daguerreotypist Marcus Aurelius Root (1808-1888), *Albert Pritchard Root Asleep by the Flag*, c. 1850 (estimate: \$10,000-15,000), pictured above, which portrays the artist's slumbering infant against a star-spangled background. This tender image, imbued with patriotism and nostalgia, was exhibited in *The Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerreotype* exhibit at the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

An early example of experimentation within the medium is also represented by a work attributed to the circle of Anna Atkins (1799-1871) *Paris Arguta*, from *The Hatton Fern Album*, c. 1850 (estimate: \$9,000-12,000), pictured right. These cyanotypes are early examples of photograms made without the camera and were created by direct or indirect impressions of plants. Victorian England's obsession with ferns spawned a movement called *Pteridomania* or *Fern-Fever* and witnessed the appearance of fern motifs in various manifestations within the fine and decorative arts, including this stunning work.



Among the highlights of the collection is an exceptionally rare group of works documenting the Civil War by Alexander Gardner (1821-1882), *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the War, Volumes I and II* (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). This group represents one of the earliest known photographic records of war known in history.



The exceedingly rare, pictorialist masterpiece by Heinrich Kuehn (1866-1944), *In Bacino di San Marco, Venezia*, c. 1898 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), is considered to be one of only three known to be in existence, pictured left.

A revolutionary artist and innovator in the medium, László Moholy-Nagy (1894-1946) experimented by exposing light sensitive paper with objects overlaid on top to create his *Photogram*, c. 1925, (estimate: \$60,000-80,000). This particular work was purchased from William Larson, source of the best works by the Modernist master acquired directly from the Estate of Moholy-Nagy.

A notable highlight is an early vintage print of Dorothea Lange's (1895-1965) iconic *Destitute Pea Pickers, California (Migrant Mother)*, 1936 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000). A quintessential example of a classic American photographic masterpiece, this work is acknowledged as the face of America during the Depression era.



Other American highlights include a complete set of *Camera Work, An Illustrated Quarterly Magazine devoted to Photography and to the Activities of the Photo-Secession*, 1903-1917, edited by Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) (estimate: \$90,000-120,000); George H. Seeley's (1880-1955), *The Artist*, 1911 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000); Edward Weston's (1886-1958), *Potato Cellar, Lake Tahoe*, 1937 (estimate: \$10,000-15,000),

and *Workers on the Empire State Building*, c. 1930 by Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940), (estimate: \$25,000-35,000).



Among the photographs on offer by classic European masters are Henri Cartier-Bresson's (1908-2004), *Seville, 1933* (estimate: \$40,000-60,000); a *Self Portrait* from 1855 by Hippolyte Bayard (1801-1887) (estimate: \$30,000-50,000); and a 1922 vintage arrowroot print by Eugène Atget (1857-1927) *St. Cloud* (estimate: \$50,000-70,000), that once belonged to The Museum of Modern Art, pictured left.

**Auction:** *The Miller-Plummer Collection of Photographs*, October 8 at 10am

**Viewing:** Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center, October 3-6

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totalled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. For the first half of 2009, art sales totalled £1.2 billion/\$1.8 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 450 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 53 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including 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 Middle East, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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