

For Immediate Release

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**MONET *NYMPHEAS* AND MODIGLIANI'S *PORTRAIT OF KISLING*
HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART**

**Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale
November 1, 2005**

New York – Christie's evening sale of *Impressionist and Modern Art*, taking place on November 1, will feature works from several major private collections including the Collection of Selma and Israel Rosen, the Edward R. Broida Collection (separate release available), a Private American Collection (separate release available), and the Lee V. Eastman Collection, the sale further presents outstanding single consignments such as a 1907 version of Monet's legendary *Nymphéas* (estimate: \$10 – 15 million); an arresting *Buveuse* by the young and ambitious Picasso (estimate: \$6 – 8 million) and a splendid double act, Modigliani's 1916 portrait of fellow artist Moïse Kisling (estimate: \$6 – 8 million).

Few artists have interlaced their image so much with one theme than Monet with his water lilies. During the last twenty years of his life, Monet devoted himself almost single-mindedly to depicting his Giverny lily-pond, resulting in a stunning ensemble of around 200 canvasses, now widely hailed as landmarks of late Impressionism. An avid gardener, Monet had created the pond in part to fulfill his gardening passion but he also intended it as a source of artistic inspiration. Initially reluctant to paint the water garden, Monet carefully tried his hand at some lily paintings around 1899, only to completely succumb to the lure of his pond after 1900, when it became the predominant theme for the rest of his career. The present *Nymphéas* (estimate: \$10 – 15 million) was painted in 1907 and reveals a splendid and minute grasp of these mysterious flowers which Monet had tenderly observed for some time, before turning them into his hallmark.

Picasso's formidable *Buveuse accoudée* (estimate: \$6 – 8 million), a superb painting the young Spanish artist executed for his first Parisian exhibition at Ambroise Vollard's famous gallery. The model for the painting was probably one of the many prostitutes who frequented the cafes of Montmartre and

who became regular subjects in Picasso's early Parisian scenes. The woman's garish make-up and hardened features mark her indelibly as a member of Parisian demi-monde, and Picasso heightens the effect by showing her in the electric light of a café, giving her skin an ashen, ghoulish glow. The presence of a glass of absinthe adds yet another layer of decadence and desperation. Vollard's exhibition of Picasso's work would bring the artist widespread acclaim and recognition and originated several commissions. However, by the fall of 1901, Picasso took another step in his artistic development and slowly moved towards the monochrome, black outlined figures that would characterize his Blue Period.

Modigliani's portrait, *Moïse Kisling seduto* (estimate: \$6 – 8 million), not only bears art historical importance, it also sheds light on the very animated and bohemian life that existed in Montparnasse during the war years. In all, Modigliani painted several dozen portraits of the writers, artists, dealers and collectors who made up the texture of that particular place at that particular time and the ensemble of these works offers an invaluable visual history of Left Bank culture in those days. The Polish-born Kisling was one of Modigliani's closest friends and staunchest supporters and one of the few people at his bedside when he passed away in 1920. The portrait is a striking character study of the 25-year-old Kisling, depicting him with a reserved yet guileless expression in a slightly ungainly posture. Although the sitter's physiognomic details are unmistakably Kisling's, Modigliani has subjected his model's facial features to a series of pronounced formal stylizations, translating them into his distinctive pictorial idiom.

Property from a Distinguished Private Collection offers Miró's *Le soleil rouge ronge l'araignée*, (estimate: \$6 – 8 million), a work he painted in 1948, after an eight-month stay in the United States. Miró's visit to the States was in connection to a mural commission for the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, organized by his American dealer Pierre Matisse. He spent most of his time in New York and was convinced that his work would 'benefit from the shock.' The Cincinnati mural was exhibited at MoMA in March 1948 and it was around the same time that Miró – back in Barcelona – started working on *Le soleil rouge ronge l'araignée*. This work is a major statement of Miró's mature achievement and clearly proclaims his leading status in post-war painting. Its compelling visual power wielded tremendous influence on those young New York artists who would change the course of modern painting in the second half of the 20th century. From the same collection, the sale also offers Marc Chagall's *Les Musiciens*, executed in 1979 (estimate: \$1.4 – 1.8 million).

Selma and Israel Rosen had an insatiable appetite for the art of their time and their collection offers a fascinating cross-section of European and American artists whose daring compositions of exceptional quality vibrantly show the development of the modern movement in the 20th century. They started their collecting activity in the 1940's with Cubism, only to venture into later phases of art history as time went on. Art as the crystallization of time, as the indicator of man's progress, as

the deepest expression of man's deepest emotion, these were the crucial themes that inspired Selma and Israel Rosen's art collecting journey. Illustrating this philosophy perfectly is Fernand Léger's *La partie des cartes* (estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000), a work Leger created in 1915 while he was serving in the trenches. Léger made drawings whenever he could and would show them to his comrades. The present work is done on a wooden panel taken from a munitions crate. Lacking color pigments, Léger improvised by pasting down scraps of blue, red and yellow paper. He used the subject of the present painting for his most famous war-time composition, *La partie des cartes*, which he completed in November 1917 while convalescing in Paris.

Also from the Rosen Collection is Joan Miró's *Grand composition avec personnages*, executed in 1937 (estimate: \$700,000-900,000), when the artist had already received a commission from the Spanish Republican government to create a mural for Spain's pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Fair. The present work may be Miró's response to the bombing of Guernica, or more generally to the countless outrages suffered by Spanish civilians, and its tenebrous mood of menace recalls Goya's *Los Desastres de la Guerra*. However, in Miró there is no exploitation of suffering, there is mainly an effort to bring aid and comfort to mankind. Miró was on the side of the life principle itself. Other works from the Rosen Collection included in the sale are Jean Arp's *Constellation de quatre formes blanches et d'une noire*, circa 1931 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), a work that reflects the artist's search for forms that evoke the hidden mysteries of life and its innate poetry and Paul Klee's exquisite drawing *Scene am Wasser*, 1922 (estimate: \$380,000-450,000). Other works from the collection will be offered in the evening sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on November 8.

From the Estate of Frances Leventritt, the sale will offer two painting by Alberto Giacometti and a Degas bronze, *Arabesque sur la jambe droite* (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). The Leventritts, a quintessential New York couple, built their collection based on a passionate love for art and the guidance of renowned dealers such as Pierre Matisse and Sam Kootz. Giacometti's *Nature morte aux sculptures*, 1950 (estimate: \$700,000-1,000,000) was painted just when the artist was discovering his new engagement with the figure in space and embarked upon a series of sculptures. The atelier still life paintings mark the course of this process, taking as the subject the many plaster heads and figures that filled Giacometti's studio. *Nature morte aux pommes*, painted in 1957 (estimate: \$450,000-650,000) recalls his renewed interest in working from life and the obvious influence of Cézanne's lessons concerning the object-space relationship.

The sale further features Picasso's *Sylvette au fauteuil vert*, 18 May 1954 (estimate: \$4 – 6 million), part of a well-known series of 31 paintings and drawings Picasso made in April and May 1954 of Sylvette David, one of the most recognizable sitters of Picasso's oeuvre; Fernand Léger's *Esquisse pour Le Grand Dejeuner*, 1920-21 (estimate: \$3.5 – 4.5 million), one of a group of 4 complete oil studies for one of his most important works, *Le Grand Dejeuner* of 1921, and marking a move towards a more

classicized style; and Cézanne's *Pommes et Gâteaux*, 1873-77 (estimate: \$3.5 – 4.5 million), one of the artist's highly coveted still-lives, showing apples, a fruit Cézanne was particularly drawn to as he once exclaimed "With an apple, I want to astonish Paris."

On November 2, the Day sale and Works on Paper sale will offer paintings, sculpture and drawings. From the Collection of Katharine and Morton G. Schamberg, the Day sale offers Picasso's *Nature morte au cruche*, 1937 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), a painting laden with erotic symbolism and referring to the artist's relationship with Marie-Thérèse Walter. In 1929, Pierre Bonnard received the commission to paint *Mademoiselle Isabelle Lecomte de Noüy* (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), a young woman not only related to the artists Jean Lecomte de Noüy and Felix Vallotton but also to the illustrious family of gallery-owners, the Bernheim family. Bonnard did two versions of the portrait and the present painting is the one the family has chosen to live with until now. From the Collection of Lee V. Eastman is Henri Matisse's drawing *Odalisque étendu, au fauteuil turc* (estimate: \$300,000-400,000), a prime example of his signature style of draftsmanship. A splendid Klee drawing, *Der Aussichts Felsen* (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) from the Collection of Selma and Israel Rosen, represents a recollection of Klee's Sicilian holidays and the strong impression the 'very original facades' made on the artist. Further included are Henri Le Sidaner's *La boutique de vieux porche* (estimate: \$350,000-450,000); Pablo Picasso's drawing *Joueur de clarinette* (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), a raucously, bucolic fantasy; and Edgar Degas' delicate *Groupe de danseuses*, drawn circa 1898 and showing his fascination with the movement of the Greeks (estimate: \$350,000-450,000).

Auction: Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale

November 1 at 7 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

October 28 – November 1

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Images available on request

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

More information about Christie's sale of *Impressionist and Modern Art* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

