

For Immediate Release

October 8, 2003

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**CHRISTIE'S FALL SALES OF IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART OFFER
RARE AND EXQUISITE MASTERPIECES BY MODIGLIANI, VAN GOGH, LEGER,
AND CAILLEBOTTE**

Impressionist & Modern Art

November 4 & 5, 2003

New York – An exquisite nude by Modigliani, a masterpiece of Cubism by Léger, and three stunning works by Van Gogh – all painted in Arles in the span of less than eight months – are among the important works of art to be offered in Christie's evening sale of Impressionist & Modern Art on November 4 at Rockefeller Center.

Amedeo Modigliani ranks among the greatest painters of the female nude in the 20th century, and those that he painted between 1916 and 1920, fewer than 30 in all, are the most celebrated pictures in the artist's oeuvre. Working in a unique manner that synthesized elements of Mannerist, primitive, and contemporary art, Modigliani devised a style at once abstract and sensual, sublime and earthy. The result is a series of paintings extraordinary for their combination of idealized beauty, sensitive psychological characterization, and frankly erotic appeal. Nu couché (sur le côté gauche), 1917 (estimate: \$20,000,000–25,000,000), is among the finest examples from this period ever to come to auction. The subject of the present picture reclines on a bed, the warm luster of her skin contrasted with the cool white sheets and accentuated by the rich dark background.

Christie's evening sale also will include three magnificent works by Vincent Van Gogh, all painted in Arles between April and November 1888, the extraordinary period during which Van Gogh developed his mature style and incorporated elements of his recent fascination with japonisme into several of his compositions. L'Allée des Alyscamps (estimate: \$12,000,000–18,000,000) is a magnificent canvas depicting Les Alyscamps (The Elysian Fields), an ancient Roman cemetery consisting of a long promenade lined with poplars and stone sarcophagi. It is among the first works that he made following the arrival of Paul Gauguin, who worked side-by-side with Van Gogh during a nine-week period that gave rise to intense aesthetic exploration and unprecedented productivity for both painters.

Le pont de Langlois à Arles (estimate: \$6,000,000–8,000,000) is an extremely rare watercolor by Van Gogh that is particularly distinguished by its forceful palette, bold design, and exceptionally fresh condition. Van Gogh's views of the Langlois Bridge at Arles are among the most celebrated and recognizable paintings from his sojourn in the South. In his depictions of the drawbridge, he abandoned the loose, painterly brushwork of his Paris period for the firm, stylized contours and broad planes of color that he admired in Japanese prints. Nature morte, branche d'amandier (estimate: \$3,000,000–4,000,000), another example from Van Gogh's early days in Arles, is a jewel-like still-life that occupies a pivotal place in the artist's oeuvre. An exquisite rendering of a flowering almond branch in a glass, the painting embodies the excitement that Van Gogh felt upon arriving in Provence and witnessing firsthand the extremely intense colors of the landscape.

The Cubist masterpiece La femme en rouge et vert (estimate: \$10,000,000–15,000,000), painted in Paris in 1914, is the final flowering of Fernand Léger's groundbreaking series Contrastes de formes, which he started just the year before, on the eve of the first World War. Discovered to have been looted during World War II, the painting was recently restituted from Paris' Centre Georges Pompidou, where it had been entrusted, to the heirs of Léonce and Paul Rosenberg. (see separate press release)

Gustave Caillebotte's Chemin montant, painted in Trouville in 1881 (estimate: \$6,000,000–8,000,000), is among the undisputed masterpieces of Caillebotte's career. Depicting a fashionable bourgeois couple strolling along a verdant country path, it represents a complex synthesis of two main components of Caillebotte's oeuvre – his urban figure paintings from the 1870s and his landscape and garden scenes from the following decade. Chemin montant is also a very rare example of a major Impressionist canvas to have disappeared from the public eye for more than a century. Until its exhibition in 1994 upon the occasion of the international retrospective Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionists, the picture hadn't been seen since 1882, when it was displayed in the 7th Exposition des Artistes Indépendants. Discreetly preserved in a private French collection, the painting's existence was known to art historians only from that exhibition's checklist. Another work by Caillebotte, Voiliers sur la Seine à Argenteuil, 1893 (estimate: \$700,000–900,000),

features the artist's own boat, the "Roastbeef," which he successfully raced in several regattas in the early 1890s.

The sale includes several sculptures by pre-eminent modern sculptor Henry Moore, led by *Three Piece Reclining Figure: Draped*, which was conceived in 1975 and cast during the artist's lifetime (estimate: \$4,000,000–5,000,000). A bronze with brown patina approximately 14 feet in length, *Three Piece Reclining Figure: Draped* is a highly inventive example from a series begun in the 1960s by the artist, who was fascinated during this time by the possibilities of separating the elements of a reclining figure. Also by Moore are *Maquette for King and Queen*, a small-scale sculpture conceived in 1952 and cast during the artist's lifetime (estimate: \$500,000–700,000), and *Seated Woman: Thin Neck*, the fourth cast in a series of seven that was conceived in 1961 and cast before 1963 (estimate: \$500,000–700,000).

Other important highlights of Christie's evening sale of Impressionist & Modern art include Maurice de Vlaminck's *La Seine, 1905* (estimate: \$1,500,000–2,000,000), a fine example from a seminal series of Fauve landscapes that Vlaminck made between 1905 and 1907 at Chatou, a small town in the Seine valley about nine miles northwest of Paris; and two superb floral still-lives of 1865 by Henri Fantin-Latour: *Vase de fleurs avec une tasse de café*, (estimate: \$1,400,000–1,800,000) and *Vase de fleurs avec un plat de fraises* (estimate: \$1,200,000–1,600,000).

Impressionist & Modern Art Day Sale and Works on Paper

Once again Christie's day sale of Impressionist & Modern Art will offer an array of works from all of the major schools and movements of Impressionist and Modern art, priced for the middle market. Important highlights include Pablo Picasso's *Coucher de soleil, 1908* (estimate: \$350,000–450,000), a gouache and watercolor painted in the hamlet of La Rue-des-Bois that reflects the oppressively hot summer weather Picasso suffered at the time; Louis Marcoussis' *Le bar du port, 1913* (estimate: \$200,000–300,000), a landscape painting of carefully balanced rhythms in the artist's Cubist forms; and Alexander Archipenko's *Dancers, Version 3*, conceived in 1912 and cast circa 1960–64 (estimate: \$250,000–350,000), a bronze that is innovative in its demonstration of movement in sculptural form.

Auctions: *Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale* November 4 at 7 p.m.
 Impressionist & Modern Art Day Sale November 5 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Viewing: *Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza* October 31 - November 4

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Images available on request
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