

CHRISTIE'S

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PABLO PICASSO'S *MOUSQUETAIRE À LA PIPE* TO HIGHLIGHT 20TH CENTURY EVENING SALE



Property of a Distinguished American Collector

PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

Mousquetaire à la pipe II

signed 'Picasso' (upper right); dated and numbered '5.11.68. II' (on the reverse)

oil and Ripolin on canvas

57 1/2 x 38 in. (146 x 96.5 cm.) Painted on 5 November 1968

Estimate on Request

NEW YORK – This November, Christie's 20th Century Art Evening Sale in New York will be highlighted by Pablo Picasso's *Mousquetaire à la pipe*, 5 November 1968 (Estimate on request; in the region of \$30,000,000). A leading example of the musketeer series that came to be highly definitive of the artist's late career, this work is remarkable for its inventiveness and variety, its vibrant palette and rich brushwork, dynamism, and overwhelming *joie de vivre*.

Max Carter, International Director and Head of Christie's Impressionist and Modern Art Department, remarked: "In 1968, while much of the world looked anxiously at the future, Picasso, then in his 88th year, harnessed the glories of the past to create his grand, culminant series of musketeers. This November we are honored to offer *Mousquetaire à la pipe II*, one of its outstanding examples, never before seen at auction, leading an array of works across the master's career."

Painted on 5 November 1968, *Mousquetaire à la pipe* is among the most impressive of the great Musketeer series. During a period of convalescence in late 1965, Picasso began to re-read a number of literary classics—including Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. By spring of 1966, the tale had taken up residence in the artist's psyche, and as the following year began, the figure of the musketeer had effectively entered Picasso's repertoire. Part historical and part fantastical, the musketeer figures were vessels through which the artist portrayed himself. They also speak to the close dialogue that Picasso had entered into with Rembrandt; throughout the 1960s he came to increasingly identified with the Dutch artist, who was also fond of inserting himself in various guises into his paintings. Picasso's 1968 group of musketeer paintings marks the peak of Picasso's interest in this subject, and during the fall of this year he produced the finest examples of the genre.

This is one of two musketeer paintings that Picasso painted on 5 November 1968; the other example is in the collection of the Museum Sammlung Rosengart, Luzern. A striking duo, both feature figures with tight curls, beards, and pictured with a pipe. The example on offer portrays a musketeer with a notably grandiose presence, more than filling the near five-foot canvas to tower above the viewer. Just as he had done throughout his career with the figure of the harlequin and the minotaur, Picasso used the musketeer figure as a way of visualizing a heroic stance in life, to affirm his ability—through wit, skill, and creativity—to remain master of his fate during this final stage of his life.

Pre-sale exhibitions:

Preview in Hong Kong: 7 – 12 October

Preview in London: 18 – 21 October

Preview in New York: 30 October – 11 November

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