

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Rik Pike 212.636.2680 rpik@christies.com

TWO HASSAM MASTERWORKS LEAD FALL AMERICAN PAINTINGS SALE

Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture

December 2, 2004

New York – Christie's New York Fall auction of Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture takes place on Thursday December 2. Featuring 131 lots, the sale is led by two Childe Hassam paintings, and also includes important works by other American masters, including Milton Avery, George Bellows, Sanford Robinson Gifford, Winslow Homer and Georgia O'Keeffe. The auction is expected to realize around \$20 million.

Childe Hassam

Mrs. Hassam in the Garden was painted by Childe Hassam in 1896 and is estimated at \$2,500,000-3,500,000. Hung in a Park Avenue apartment for the last 35 years, this work has never been on public view and comes fresh to the market. An important addition for Hassam scholars and an enticing prospect for collectors, this rediscovered masterwork is representative of Hassam's best garden paintings.

Depicting Hassam's wife in the act of trimming lilac blooms, the painting is characterized by a fluid naturalism with assured brushwork and a refined sense of color. Demonstrating his maturing Impressionist technique, the work is of compelling grace and beauty – and will provide an exciting sale focus on December 2.

Once part of the Sinatra Family collection, *Cathedral Spires, Spring Morning* was painted in 1900 and is estimated at \$2,000,000-3,000,000. The painting depicts a bustling Fifth Avenue in Manhattan on a bright spring day, looking to the southwest corner of Fifty-Third Street, with St. Patrick's Cathedral towering in the background.

Hassam's paintings of Fifth Avenue in New York have long been acknowledged as masterworks of American Impressionism and this work is among the artist's largest and finest canvases of this famous thoroughfare.

Christie's experience with the Sinatra Family began in 1989 with the offering of a number of paintings from the Collection of Frank Sinatra, including a record-setting Hassam also depicting Fifth Avenue. This painting – not included in that sale – was given to the current vendor, the University of Southern California, by the Sinatra Family in 2001.

Other Highlights

Winslow Homer is well featured in the sale, including *The Return of the Gleaner*, 1867 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), an oil painted while in France and showing the influence of the Barbizon school on his technique and subject matter; *Morning – The Morning Mist*, 1892 (estimate: \$300,000-500,000), from a famous series of watercolors executed during his travels through the Adirondack Mountains and considered among the masterworks of his career; and *Sailing a Dory*, 1880 (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) another watercolor, almost modern in its simplicity, depicting a boy standing in a boat drifting quietly under sail.

Modernist works include Georgia O'Keeffe's *The Red Maple at Lake George*, 1926 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), an early example of her vibrant, simplified abstracted images of natural imagery that were central to her signature style; Milton Avery's *Outdoor Painter*, 1949 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), a picture that typifies his bold abstractions of the 1940s and 50s that were critical forerunners to American high Modernism; and George Bellows' *Rock Bound*, 1913 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), an exuberant oil painted on Monhegan Island, Maine that celebrates the primal energy of the ocean.

A historically-significant oil, *Equestrian Portrait of George Washington* by Rembrandt Peale, is an early example of his imposing equestrian portraits of the first President (estimate: \$600,000-800,000). Celebrating the hero of the Revolution, the work depicts Washington as Leader of the Continental Army, typically serene as a battle rages in the background. Also on offer is another painting by Rembrandt Peale, depicting Washington in the style of the artist's well-known porthole portraits (estimate: \$400,000-600,000).

Landscape highlights include *Landscape, Rockland County, California* (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) and *Campfire Site, Yosemite* (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), both by Albert Bierstadt and painted in 1872 and 1873 respectively; *The Beach at Cohasset* by Sanford Robinson Gifford (estimate: \$500,000-700,000); and *Evening: By the River* by Maxfield Parrish, a highly imaginative and almost magical landscape, painted in 1930 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000).

Auction: Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture
December 2 at 10am, 2004

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center
November 27 – December 1

More information about Christie's sale of *Important American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* 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.

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