

For Immediate Release
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CHRISTIE'S

Contact: Matthew Paton mpaton@christies.com

+44 207 389 2664

CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER MONET'S 1906 WATER-LILIES IN LONDON IN JUNE

Most valuable art auction ever to take place in London will also offer Picasso's 'Blue Period' portrait of Angel Fernández de Soto; Gustav Klimt's magnificent portrait of Ria Munk; and further masterpieces by van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso and Magritte



Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale
Wednesday 23 June 2010

London – Christie's announce that they will offer an exceptional water-lily painting by Claude Monet (1840-1926) at the *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* in London on 23 June 2010. *Nymphéas*, 1906, was included in the artist's historic exhibition of the water-lily series in Paris in 1909 and remained in the ownership of the celebrated Durand-Ruel art dealing family for a number of following decades. Offered at auction from a private collection, it is expected to realise £30 million to £40 million.

Following the success of the corresponding sale at Christie's New York on 4 May, where Pablo Picasso's *Nude, Green Leaves and Bust* established a record price for any work of art sold at auction (\$106,482,500 / £70,278,450 / €81,991,525), the *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* on 23 June will present the most valuable art auction ever to take place in London; it will present 63 works of art and is expected to realise £163,670,000 to £231,180,000.

As well as Claude Monet's *Nymphéas*, the auction will also include *Portrait of Angel Fernández de Soto*, 1903, a Blue Period masterpiece by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) which is also expected to realise £30 million to £40 million, and which is being offered by *The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation*, a charity which focuses on the promotion of arts, culture and heritage in Britain. (**Separate press release available on request**).

Giovanna Bertazzoni, Director and Head of Impressionist and Modern art at Christie's, London: *"The strong results at our auctions over the last year, and during the last 6 months in particular, have further fuelled the confidence of vendors; we are witnessing a great willingness from clients to consign works of art of the highest quality. There is a fierce international demand in the art market, particularly for the rarest and the best, and the market itself is now truly global as illustrated at our auction in New York in May where we saw bidding from Russia, China and the Middle East, as well as from Europe and the Americas."*

Nymphéas, 1906, by Claude Monet (1840-1926)

Monet was the most prominent Impressionist painter and is today one of the most celebrated Europeans in art history. In 1890, having finally found fortune to accompany his fame, he bought the house in Giverny in which he had lived since 1883 and with the help of a gardener and a team of assistants, he set about transforming the gardens and building a lily pond to create an aesthetic oasis that would eventually dominate his painting.

Monet only painted the water-garden in Giverny 10 times prior to 1899, perhaps waiting for his landscapes and plants to mature, but in 1899 and 1900 the gardens became a prominent subject for his paintings. He became more and more occupied by the effect of light and the reflections from the water of the pond and became almost obsessed with his depictions of the gardens in Giverny, applying a level of perfectionism that saw him destroy a large number of works with which he was not completely satisfied. This was clearly reflected in a letter that he wrote to his friend Gustave Geffroy in 1908, when he was still occupied with the same theme: *'You must know I'm entirely absorbed in my work. These landscapes of water and reflections have become an obsession. It's quite beyond my powers at my age, and yet I want to succeed in expressing what I feel. I've destroyed some... I start others... and I hope that something will come out of so much effort.'* (Monet, quoted in R. Kendall (ed.), *Monet by himself: Paintings, drawings, pastels, letters*, London, 1989, p. 198).

In 1909 at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris, Monet held an exhibition showcasing his *Nymphéas* paintings for the first time, receiving great, international acclaim. The exhibition was so popular that it was extended by a week, and Robert E. Dell, later the editor of *Connoisseur* magazine and at the time the Paris correspondent of the *Burlington Magazine* proclaimed: *'One has never seen anything*

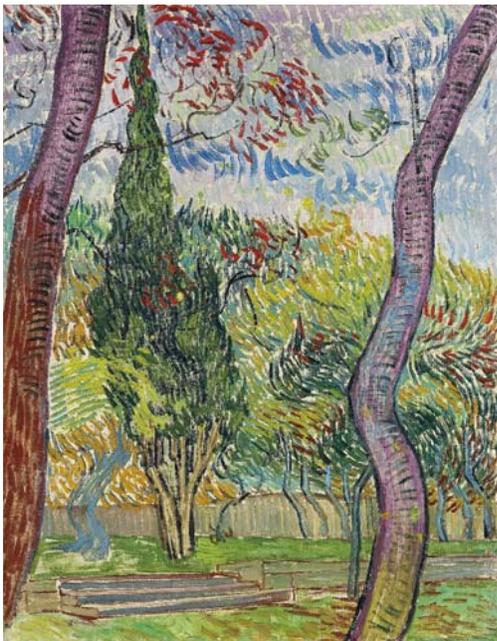
like it. These studies of water lilies and still water in every possible effect of light and at every hour of the day are beautiful to a degree which one can hardly express without seeming to exaggerate... There is no other living artist who could have given us these marvellous effects of light and shadow, this glorious feast of colour' (R.E. Dell, quoted in P.H. Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art*, New Haven & London, 1995, p. 196). Monet's fascination with the gardens at Giverny would culminate with the famous display of monumental water-lilies in the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, a rare, signed and dated study for which sold for £41 million at Christie's London in 2008.

The work to be offered at Christie's is the largest of 9 surviving works painted by Monet in 1906, and one of only 5 from the same year shown at the celebrated exhibition in Paris. It remained in the collection of the Durand-Ruel family for a number of decades and was acquired by the present owner a decade ago at Christie's New York in May 2000.

Giovanna Bertazzoni, Director and Head of Impressionist and Modern art at Christie's,

London: *"Claude Monet's water-lily paintings are amongst the most recognized and celebrated works of the 20th century, and were hugely influential to many of the following generations of artists. We are honoured to be able to present this exceptional 'Nymphéas', which was subsequently shown at the great exhibition of 1909 and which was then kept in the collection of the Durand-Ruel family for a number of the following decades. It is extremely exciting that with this work, the Blue Period Picasso, Klimt's portrait of Ria Munk and van Gogh's 1889 masterpiece, we will be presenting at auction celebrated works from the most formative years of four of the most important and influential artists of the last century."*

Further highlights of the auction:

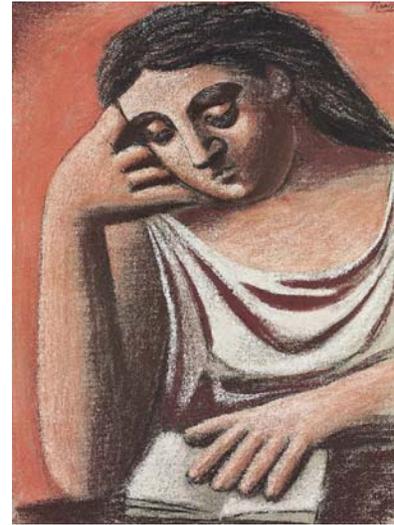


- *Portrait of Angel Fernández de Soto*, 1903, a Blue Period masterpiece by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) is expected to realise £30 million to £40 million, and is being offered by *The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation*, a charity which focuses on the promotion of arts, culture and heritage in Britain.

- *Frauenbildnis (Portrait of Ria Munk III)*, one of the last great female portraits painted by **Gustav Klimt** (1862-1918), is expected to realise £14 million to £18 million.

- *Parc de l'hôpital Saint-Paul*, 1889, by **Vincent van Gogh** (1853-1890) was painted during the artist's voluntary confinement at the asylum of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, one of the richest and most important periods of his career. Offered at auction having been in the same distinguished European collection since the 1960s, it is expected to realise £8 million to £12 million (*illustrated left*).

- *Le baiser*, 1969, by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) was painted during a particularly fertile and productive period in the artist's career and is the culmination of a series of important works in which he explores this theme. Exhibited at the celebrated exhibition of the Picasso's work at Palais des Papes in Avignon in 1970, it is expected to realise £8 million to £12 million.



- *La Liseuse*, circa 1921, by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973) is an important, highly-finished and richly-coloured pastel from an important period in the artist's career. Acquired by the present owner in 1968, it is expected to realise £6 million to £9 million (*illustrated right*).

- *Nu à la chaise longue*, 1923, is an important and colourful work by **Henri Matisse** (1869-1954) which was formerly in the collection of the industrialist and celebrated collector Henri Canonne.



Unseen in public since the year after it was painted, it is offered at auction for the first time (estimate: £5.5 million to £8.5 million).

- *Schwangeres Weib*, 1919, an impressive masterpiece by **Otto Dix** (1891-1969), is expected to realise £4 million to £6 million and is offered at auction having been in the same collection since the early 1970s (*illustrated left*).

- *Les barricades mystérieuses*, 1961, by **René Magritte** (1898-1967) is an instantly striking, large scale work measuring 80.6cm x 128 cm, and combining two of the most recognisable and striking motifs of the artist; the day / night duality of *L'empire des lumières* and the leaf / trees of *La géante*. It is expected to realise £3 million to £4 million.

The full catalogue for the auction is available to view online at www.christies.com

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com