

CHRISTIE'S

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THIS OCTOBER CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS A PERFECT STORM OF 19th CENTURY EUROPEAN ART IN NEW YORK



New York - On October 29, Christie's New York will offer an exceptional range of *19th Century European Art*. The sale will present examples of the classic tradition of Europe as well as the exotic allure of the Orient, and will feature some of the most sought-after artists of the 19th Century including William-Adolphe Bouguereau, Giovanni Boldini, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and Wilhelm Kuhnert. In total, the sale will offer 95 lots of great quality and beauty, and is expected to realize in excess of \$13million.

Among the sale's highlights are four works by William-Adolphe Bouguereau that span the course of his accomplished career. Leading the sale is the artist's remarkable *Marchande de grenades*, (estimate: \$2.5-3.5million) – *pictured on page 1, left*. In the 1870s, Bouguereau painted a small number of Orientalist works of which the present lot is arguably the most sophisticated example. Having already made a name for himself with his poignant portraits of the French peasantry, Bouguereau began experimenting with Eastern subjects in 1870. In *Marchande de grenades*, the young pomegranate-seller sits on the ground near the distinctive Bab Zuwayla, the southern gate of the Fatimid city of al-Qahira built in Cairo in the late 11th century. The vantage point of the painting suggests that the girl is at the entrance of the Tentmakers Market, looking north along the side façade of the 15th century Zawiya-Sabil, built by the Sultan Farag ibn Barquq. Although Bouguereau never traveled to the Orient, the specificity of the painting would lead anyone to believe that the artist had

traveled to Cairo and familiarized himself with the city's people and architecture. Indeed, a finished drawing of *Marchande de grenades* at the Ashmolean Museum suggests that Bouguereau dedicated a great deal of time to ensuring that the painting was accurate. The map that is pictured at right, depicts where the painting is placed in modern Cairo.



Also featured in the Bouguereau selection is *Le petit câlin* (estimate: \$1.2-1.8million) – pictured left. With its tender subject, luminous light and remarkable precision, *Le petit câlin* is the artist at his best. In *Le petit câlin*, Bouguereau captures a fleeting, intimate moment between a mother and child. Rather than a formal portrait, he paints the two figures in an



unconventional transitional pose; the young mother turns her head to look adoringly at her child who twists and squirms on her lap. With this relaxed portrayal, Bouguereau enhances the humanity of his subject, creating a sincere picture of maternal love. *Le petit câlin* exemplifies the high praise given to Bouguereau's work by the writer Adrien Désamy in the arts journal *L'art contemporain* in May 1879, 'It is said that no one is better versed than Victor Hugo to speak of women and children, one can similarly exclaim, that in our times, no one is more skilled to paint women and children like M. Bouguereau.'

Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *Ask me no more* (estimate: \$2-3million) – pictured below, right, was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in 1906, when the artist was at the zenith of his career. *Ask me no more*, which takes its title from a poem by the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, is a quintessential Alma-Tadema subject. Depicting a pair of lovers seated on a marble bench overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, the picture is almost the last in which Alma-Tadema painted his ever-popular theme of a young couple suffering the palpitations of romance, although a watercolour version, entitled *Youth*, followed in 1908. *Ask me no more* was the only picture he showed at the Royal Academy in 1906.

Among the sale's selection of sporting art are three examples from Wilhelm Kuhnert, including *Brüllender Löwe* (estimate: \$300,000-500,000), which translates to "Roaring Lion" – pictured page 1, right. Kuhnert's extraordinary talent was noticed early on by his teachers, who advised him to dedicate his art to capturing the essence of wildlife. The young artist enthusiastically embraced their advice and in pursuit of his chosen genre, he traveled extensively in Africa and



the East, spending a significant amount of time in Ceylon and East Africa, where he was captivated by the wild beauty of the landscapes and their equally exotic denizens. The writer and critic J. G. Millais wrote, *'there is no finer exponent of African mammals than Wilhelm Kuhnert. We who have traveled do not need to be told that his studies from nature are correct. His lions, elephants, zebras and antelopes are so real that we feel we are gazing at them on the plains of East Africa. The landscapes are simple but intense. Sunlight is there, and the tree and grass are just those that grow in the habitat of these species...'*



Giovanni Boldini is represented by *Suonatrice di lira e ascoltatrice (Woman Playing a Lyre and a Listener)* (estimate: \$1-1.5million) – pictured right, a consummate example of the Rococo revival. Two women wrapped in ruffled layers of pink and white silks relax on a settee in the midst of an ornate room delicately balanced by a unifying palette of pastel hues. From the cream-colored doors opening onto other sumptuous rooms just beyond our view to the golden sphinx proudly spreading its wings on the guéridon, the painting pulsates with opulent splendor. Sold by Boldini's esteemed dealer Adolphe Goupil to William Henry Crocker, who is credited with bringing Impressionism to California, *Suonatrice di lira e ascoltatrice* is also exceptional for its provenance. The painting has remained within this venerated art-collecting family throughout its history and has not been seen publicly since its inclusion in a 1959 exhibition at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

Additional Highlights Include:



Charles Burton Barber (British, 1845-1894)
Trust, oil on canvas, 1888
 Estimate: \$180,000 - 220,000



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (French, 1796-1875)
Deux femmes jouant avec un enfant, oil on canvas, 1870-1871
 Estimate: \$800,000 – 1,200,000



William-Adolphe Bouguereau (French, 1825-1905)
Pandore, oil on canvas, 1890
Estimate: \$600,000 - 800,000



John William Godward, R.B.A. (British, 1861-1922)
A Pompeian Lady, oil on canvas, 1891
Estimate: \$300,000 - 500,000

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