

CHRISTIE'S

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GIACOMETTI'S *LA JAMBE* TO BE FEATURED AT CHRISTIE'S IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART EVENING SALE NOVEMBER 7

SEVEN-FOOT-TALL BRONZE SCULPTURE OF A HUMAN LEG ESTIMATED AT \$10-15 MILLION



New York – Among the many captivating highlights of Christie's upcoming *Evening Sale of Impressionist & Modern Art* is **Alberto Giacometti's** *La Jambe* (*The Leg*), a seven foot tall depiction of a disembodied human leg. Modeled in the thin, elongated form for which the artist is best known, *La Jambe* is the artist's final statement in a series devoted to depictions of isolated body parts – a vision inspired by Giacometti's harrowing memories of wartime casualties and the lingering angst that permeated post-war Paris during the late 1940s. Estimated at \$10-15 million, *La Jambe* is offered from a distinguished private European collection, and is among the top examples of modern sculpture to be featured in Christie's November 7 sale in New York.

Giacometti first conceived of the body parts series in 1947, the year in which he embarked on the first of the famously thin, attenuated figures of standing women and walking men that would become icons of the post-war zeitgeist. Zeroing in on individual anatomical features, Giacometti modeled the first three forms in the series: a hand (*La Main*), a nose (*Le Nez*), and a head on a rod (*Tête sur tige*; estimate: \$6-8 million, [also featured in the November 7 sale](#)).

Giacometti had always envisioned a fourth sculpture – the leg – to complete the series, but it would be nearly ten more years before he finished the work and cast it in bronze in 1958. Art historians believe the severed look of the work was inspired by distressing events in Giacometti's past: in 1938, he was struck down by a speeding vehicle on a Paris street, leaving him with a crushed and broken foot and a slight limp for the rest of his life. Later, in 1940, the artist and his brother Diego were forced to flee Paris ahead of advancing German tanks. In the exodus, the two witnessed the gruesome aftermath of earlier attacks, and the images of human body parts strewn across the debris-filled streets never left his mind.

La Jambe is unique among Giacometti's works in that it is neither walking nor standing; it exists in an intermediate state between stillness and motion. Slightly bent at the knee and purposefully flexed, the leg appears ready to push off and

set itself in motion, despite its oversized, firmly planted foot. In scale, *La Jambe* matches the legs of his enormous *Grandes femmes debouts*, the tallest figures he had ever created and which were originally intended for exhibition on the Chase Manhattan Plaza in lower Manhattan – a project left unfulfilled when Giacometti died in January 1966.

Upon its completion in 1958, *La Jambe* was featured in a solo exhibition of Giacometti's newest works at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York. Six signed and numbered bronzes were created, and the version to be offered at Christie's this fall was featured in the major 1965 retrospective at London's Tate Gallery. It has now been in the same private collection for over 35 years, since its acquisition by the present owner from Galerie Beyeler in 1976.

Prices for Giacometti's best works have soared in recent years, in keeping with increasing appreciation and interest among collectors for superb examples of modern sculpture. Within the global auction market, 19 works by the artist have sold above the \$10 million mark, and all five of the artist's top prices at auction have been set within the last five years. In May 2010, Christie's New York sold a 1948 cast of *La Main* – the elongated arm with an outstretched hand from the artist's same series – fetching \$25.8 million against a pre-sale estimate of \$10-15 million.



Photo Ernst Scheidegger © Estate of Ernst Scheidegger

Giacometti in his studio, circa 1960.
The upper part of the plaster version of *La Jambe*
is visible in the foreground.

AUCTION: Christie's New York

7 November 2012 at 7pm

PUBLIC PREVIEW: Christie's, Rockefeller Center Galleries, New York

3-7 November 2012

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The complete e-catalogue for this sale is available online at

<http://www.christies.com/eCatalogues/index.aspx?saleid=23574>

Notes to Editors:

- Christie's previously announced the top lot of its November 7 Evening Sale, **Monet's *Nymphéas*** from 1905, estimated at \$30- 50 million, will be sold to benefit Hackley School in Tarrytown, NY. [See dedicated release here](#)
- **Wassily Kandinsky's *Studie für improvisation 8***, estimated at \$20-30 million, has the potential to set a new record price for any work by the artist at auction. [See the detailed press release here.](#)
- Sixteen modernist works from a distinguished private collection are expected to achieve in excess of \$35 million, led by the **Brancusi masterpiece *Une Muse***, estimated at \$10-15 million. [See dedicated press release here.](#)
- Nine important works by **Pablo Picasso**, including four portraits of his muses, are expected to realize in excess of \$34 million. [See the detailed press release here.](#)
- The NY press preview for this sale is Friday, November 2 at 9:30am. To RSVP, please contact Christie's New York press office.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2012 that totaled £2.2 billion/\$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £413.4 million/ \$661.5 million in the first half of 2012, an increase of 53% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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Images available on request

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