

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL Renoir PAINTINGS IN PRIVATE HANDS

LEADS CHRISTIE'S IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART AUCTIONS IN JUNE 2012

**FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE WORKS BY PICASSO, SIGNAC, GAUGUIN,
VLAMINCK & MAGRITTE**



'The simplest subjects are eternal. A nude woman getting out of the briny deep or out of her bed, whether she is called Venus or Nini, one can invent nothing better' (Renoir, quoted in M. Raeburn (ed.), Renoir, exh. cat., London, 1985, p. 263).

Public Exhibition: 15 to 20 June 2012

Auction: 20 June 2012 at 7pm

London – The *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* will take place on 20 June 2012 at 7pm and will offer 71 lots with a pre-sale estimate of £86,525,000 to £126,740,000. Representing many of the most celebrated artists of the late 19th and 20th centuries, the auction is led by *Baigneuse*, 1888, a sumptuous exploration of Pierre-Auguste Renoir's (1841-1919) most celebrated theme, the female nude (estimate: £12 million to £18 million). Exemplifying the timeless demand for true masterpieces - a trend which continues to be demonstrated in the current market - this work has been part of multiple distinguished collections including that of Robert de Bonnières, Adrien Hébrard and the Prince de Wagram; later owned by the prominent Swiss collector Georg Reinhart. It comes to the market for the first time in 15 years; having previously set the current record price at auction for a nude by the artist, selling for \$20.9 million in New York.

Jay Vincze, International Director and Head of The Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale, Christie's London: *"Impressionist and Modern Art continues to attract international demand as witnessed by February's record week of sales in London and the May auctions in New York which produced some of the highest sell-through rates seen for the category. The auction in June reflects the current demand of collectors, offering rare opportunities to acquire a rich variety of art from distinguished and treasured private collections. Many works are being offered for the first time in a generation, having been unseen in public for decades. The quality, rarity, beauty and strong provenance of these works of art - led by Renoir's masterful nude - highlight the artistic innovation, excellence and influence of this category, together with its international appeal."*

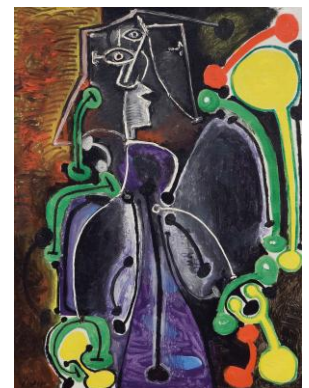
Leading highlights:

Baigneuse*, 1888, by **Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was painted at a moment of release and revelation for the artist; a crucial point in his career which saw him tackling the subject of the female nude, often in the form of a bather as here, with increasing confidence and enthusiasm (estimate: £12 million to £18 million, *illustrated above*). Until his fortieth year Renoir's depictions of nudes are scarce, having only painted a scattering prior to the 1880s. *Baigneuse* acknowledges classical tradition - showing a woman in a pose similar to that of the 'Venus de Vienne' an important fragmentary Hellenistic sculpture in the Louvre – whilst, like Manet, adding a palpable sense of reality. It was exhibited in 1888 at the gallery of his dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, alongside works by fellow Impressionists Gustave Caillebotte, Camille Pissarro and Alfred Sisley as well as James Abbott McNeill Whistler. From this point onwards Renoir's explorations of the female nude had a huge impact on a range of artists, not least because of his ability to fuse beauty with monumentality, creating pictures such as the present lot that are essentially celebrations of an almost timeless sense of beauty; a timelessness that is emphasised by the deliberate lack of props aside from the towel which might be a tunic from any age and the band around the woman's wrist.



* *Femme au chien*, 1962, by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) has not been seen in public since 1973 when it was exhibited at The Art Institute of Chicago in *Major Works from the Collection of Nathan Cummings*, the celebrated collector and food magnate. Having been acquired the following year by the present owner, it is offered from an important private collection for the first time in almost 40 years (estimate: £6 million to £9 million, *illustrated left*). A large and colourful depiction of Pablo Picasso's second wife, Jacqueline Roque, alongside the couple's beloved Afghan hound, Kaboul, *Femme au chien* was painted during a period of great change for Picasso. Having previously abandoned his home near Cannes, because of encroaching development, he finally settled at villa 'Notre-Dame-de-Vie', near Mougins, in 1961, the year of his marriage to Jacqueline. This was the backdrop and possible spur for an incredible explosion of creativity which saw Picasso creating a range of innovative, often vivacious, works. The rich array of textures across the surface of the picture, perhaps pay tribute to the developments in *Art Informel* that had swept through the European avant garde by this time. The painting also clearly references the artist's own work of the period, with Jacqueline's double profile relating to his sculptures in cut and folded steel.

* *Femme assise*, 1949, dates to another key period in Picasso's private world, when his partner Françoise Gilot was heavily pregnant with their daughter Paloma (estimate: £5 million to £7.5 million). A celebration of the impending miracle of birth, the canvas is exploding with colour and darting lines, which perhaps point to Mili's famous photographs taken at this time, in which he encouraged Picasso to 'draw' in the air with an electric light.' This work maps not only the development of Picasso's representations of his partner Françoise but also his longstanding exploration of the theme of the sitting woman. Offered from a private Californian Collection, *Femme assise* was formerly part of the impressive collection of the American steel magnate and philanthropist Leigh B. Block.

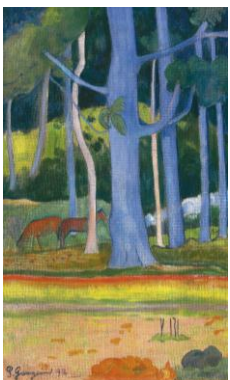
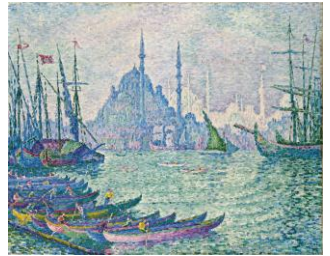


* Only the second etching ever created by Picasso, *Le repas frugal* is one of the greatest works in the history of printmaking. A key example from the virtuoso's early career, executed when aged 23, it is perhaps the quintessential and final Blue Period icon (estimate: £1.5 million to £2.5 million, *illustrated one page 3*). A superb rich early impression, it is one of only two known impressions dated 1904. Dedicated to his close



friend and fellow-artist, the Catalan sculptor Enric Casanovas, the work has exceptional provenance having remained in Casanovas' family long after his death (1948) until finally being sold in 1963; going into the collections of Dr Oscar Stern and Dr Otto Schäfer, before being bought by the present owner in 1992. Depicting a gaunt man from Picasso's time in Barcelona, who reappears in different guises until 1905, the print also portrays Madeleine, the artist's lover. The apparent misery of the scene is alleviated by the couple's tender embrace and the woman's knowing smile.

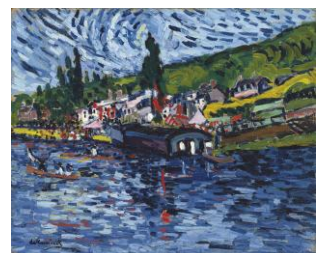
* *La Corne d'or. Les Minarets* by Paul Signac (1863-1935) comes to the market for the first time in almost a century; having been acquired in the late 1920s it has remained in the same private collection to the present day (estimate: £4 million to £6 million, *illustrated right*). A masterful composition, rich in pictorial rhythm and exhibiting the artist's signature Neo-Impressionist brushwork, this chromatically dazzling opalescent work, from 1907 belongs to an important series of twelve paintings depicting Constantinople (Istanbul), across the Golden Horn estuary. From the same series, *La Corne d'Or, Constantinople*, 1907, was sold at Christie's London in February 2012 for £8.7 million, becoming the 2nd highest price for the artist at auction. The present work is a very accomplished example of Signac's mature style, having moved on from a meticulous Pointillism, inspired by Seurat, towards a focus on chromatic brilliance and a sense of overall harmony; the rich romanticism of such works captivated Signac's artistic counterparts, such as Le Corbusier.



* *Paysage aux troncs bleus*, is a recently rediscovered painting by Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), dating to his historic first trip to Tahiti, in 1892 (estimate: £3 million to £5 million, *illustrated left*). The intense highly interpretative palette epitomises Gauguin's greatest pictures from this voyage. Unrecorded in literature on the artist, it has remained in the same private Norwegian collection for over half a century and has not been seen in public since 1955. The late 1880s and early 1890s marked an important shift in the critical appreciation of Gauguin's work, with an increasing number of artists and collectors seeking out opportunities to see and buy his work. The present work illustrates a new-found certainty in Gauguin's work, a confidence which he reflected

upon his return to France the following year saying that he was: "older by two years, but twenty years younger; more barbarian than when I arrived, and yet much wiser."

* *Les régates à Bougival*, 1905, by Maurice de Vlaminck (1876-1958) dates from the height of the short-lived but highly-influential Fauve movement. This is reflected by Vlaminck's choice of highly-keyed oils, often of pure colour, to evoke a lush, mosaic-like and visually intense vision of a boat race on the Seine near Paris (estimate: £3.5 million to £4.5 million, *illustrated below*). It was during the same year that the movement gained its name, meaning 'Wild Beasts', when they exhibited their works at the Salon d'Automne. Combining the Fauve aesthetic, with its firework-like dashes of rich lapis and gold, with the theme of Vlaminck's beloved Seine, this is a key work from the artist's oeuvre. Providing an excellent insight into the development of the Fauve aesthetic, it is filled with swirling movement; the brushstrokes recalling the pictures of one of Vlaminck's great heroes, Vincent van Gogh, whilst also highlighting Vlaminck's efforts to push the use of pure colour to new extremes. Offered from a distinguished private collection, it comes to the market for the first time in two decades.



This season Christie's, with eight works by René Magritte in all media, will present the most important group of works by the Surrealist master since the Harry Torczyner sale in 1998.



* In *Le monde des images*, circa 1961, the Belgian Surrealist René Magritte (1898-1967) tackles one of his favourite themes: the way we see the world (estimate: £2 million to £3 million, *illustrated left*). The sunset is bathing the sea in red; scattered on the ground by the wall under the window are brittle shards of glass; upon the glass, frozen upon its surface is the view still seen through the window. It provides a clear disjoint between the way we see the world and the way it is being presented. Magritte had first begun to explore similar themes of duplicated, simultaneous realities as early as 1931, in his picture *La belle captive*; it is a tribute to the power of these images of windows that the theme would recur several times in Magritte's career, remaining a clear source of fascination and inspiration. Offered from an important private European collection, it was acquired by the present owners in 1962 shortly after it was painted, the same year that it was last seen in public.

* *Les jours gigantesques* is one of the most memorable, powerful and disturbing images in Magritte's entire oeuvre (estimate £800,000-1,500,000, *illustrated right*). Offered for the first time in 60 years, from an important private European collection, it was painted in 1928, at the height of his involvement with the Paris Surrealist group. This is one of the artist's first great pictorial subversions of reality and belongs among a number of highly important paintings from this period when his art was exploring dark and sinister themes connecting eroticism, violence and subconscious.



The Surrealist section of the sale also features important works by Paul Delvaux (1897-1994), Joan Miró (1893-1983) and Max Ernst (1891-1976).

Christie's is proud to present a distinguished private collection of 14 bronze sculptures by Edgar Degas (1834-1917), with estimates from £15,000 to £2.5 million. Degas's sculptures provide the viewer with a crucial perspective upon his work and working methods as he sculpted throughout his career. This important group features examples of all of the most celebrated and iconic themes explored by this trailblazing artist, who had been linked to Impressionism yet whose legacy continues to this day. Sculptures of the thoroughbred horses that so fascinated Degas feature here alongside his other most recognised themes: bathers, and of course the ballet dancers that feature in the majority of the works. The highlight of the collection is Degas' *Etude de nu pour la 'Petite danseuse de quatorze ans'*, conceived in 1878-79, which relates to his single most famous work, the sculpture of the little dancer aged fourteen (estimate: £1.8 million -2.5 million).



From the property of the University of New England in Portland and Biddeford, Maine, five works by South African artist Irma Stern (1894-1966) will be sold during the London Impressionist and Modern Art sales, to benefit the Campus Art Collections. The group is led by *The Flower Market, Cape Town*, 1924 which will be offered during the *Evening Sale* (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). For the press release on these works please click [here](#).

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

Pre-sale estimates for Impressionist and Modern works offered in the June auctions:

<i>Impressionist and Modern Evening Auction</i>	£86,525,000 - £126,740,000
<i>Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper</i>	£6,673,700 - £9,634,300
<i>Impressionist and Modern Day Sale</i>	£11,890,000 - £17,845,000
<i>Impressionist and Modern (South Kensington)</i>	£1,347,800 - £1,974,200
<i>Picasso Ceramics: The Madoura Collection</i>	£1,789,800 - £2,689,750
TOTAL:	£108,226,300 - £141,038,250