

CHRISTIE'S

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A NEW YORK VIEW

BLACKWELL'S ISLAND* BY EDWARD HOPPER TO LEAD CHRISTIE'S MAY SALE OF *AMERICAN ART



Edward Hopper, *Blackwell's Island*
oil on canvas, 35 x 60 inches
Painted in 1928
Estimate: \$15,000,000-20,000,000

New York – Christie's New York is pleased to announce that the May 23rd *American Art* sale will be led by the magnificent, large-scale painting, *Blackwell's Island*, by Edward Hopper. The work, which has never been offered at auction, has been exhibited at renowned institutions, such as The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute. More recently, *Blackwell's Island* was included in the first major retrospective of the artist's work at the Grand Palais in Paris from October 2012 through February 2013. An impressive five feet wide, the work was painted in 1928 and is estimated at \$15-20 million.

A native of Nyack, Edward Hopper was drawn to the New York's East River and used the banks and bridges as his subject several times between 1911 and 1935. Originally known as Hog Island and today known as Roosevelt Island, *Blackwell's Island* has a rather notorious history. Its varied architecture and isolation is likely what attracted Hopper to the locale.

Elizabeth Sterling, Head of American Art at Christie's in New York said: *"Painted in 1928, a watershed year for Hopper both creatively and critically, Blackwell's Island is a visually striking painting that embodies the haunting aesthetic and tension that characterize the artist's best work. Unlike his contemporaries who were drawn to the vibrant energy of a bustling metropolis, Hopper focused on the quiet aspects of the city. Even his choice of architecture, as seen in Blackwell's Island, was of an earlier age than the new skyscrapers such as the Chrysler Building, which captivated his peers. Hopper's unique aesthetic distinguished him from his contemporaries and makes him one of the most important artists of the 20th century."*

Blackwell's Island acts much as a film still, a hallmark of Hopper's most celebrated works, creating a suspended narrative that continually engages the viewer's psyche and imagination as one tries to reconcile oneself with a scene that eludes resolution. Hopper's dramatic effects of light and shadow on buildings silhouetted against a band of largely cloudless sky add to the pervasive and haunting silence of the painting. The swirling band of cobalt blue water acts as a physical barrier between the viewer and the subject, symbolizing a psychological distance and creating a sense of unease. The river also allowed Hopper to introduce an element of motion into an *oeuvre* that is primarily dominated by stillness, the flowing currents contrasting with the static architecture.

Blackwell's Island is a superb and important painting that manifests Hopper's unique aesthetic, which defined him as an artist, distinguished him from his peers and garnered him critical acclaim that continues to this day.

"My aim in painting is always, using nature as the medium, to try to project upon canvas my most intimate reaction to the subject as it appears when I like it most; when the facts are given unity by my interest and prejudices. Why I select certain subjects rather than others, I do not exactly know, unless it is that I believe them to be the best mediums for a synthesis of my inner experience."

-Edward Hopper

VIEWING:
Christie's,
20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York
18-22 May 2013

AUCTION:
Christie's Sale of
American Art
Thursday, 23 May 2013

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**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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