

CHRISTIE'S

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BRAQUE STILL LIFE TO BENEFIT THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL OF PARIS

Atelier I to be offered in Christie's
May 6 Evening Sale of Impressionist & Modern Art in New York



Georges Braque (1882–1963), *Atelier I*, oil and sand on canvas, 36 1/4 x 28 5/8 in., estimate: \$4-6 million

"These paintings of interiors represented a tremendous immersion in myself. As I painted them I was gripped by a kind of jubilation... I was in the happy state of someone to whom is revealed the harmony of objects between themselves and with man." – Braque, 1962

New York – Christie's *Impressionist & Modern Art* evening sale on May 6 in New York will feature Georges Braque's *Atelier I* (estimate: \$4-6 million). Considered the great valedictory achievement of the artist's final period, *Atelier I* was painted in 1949, and is the first in a sequence of eight canvases depicting the subject of the artist's studio. Purchased by a French collector from the Galerie Maeght shortly after it was painted, this work of art has since been donated to the American Hospital of Paris, a not-for-profit hospital, and will be sold to fund the development of clinical and functional imaging. The sale of a painting marks the first of its kind for the Hospital.

Francis Baily, chair of the Board of Governors, American Hospital of Paris, comments, “As a not-for profit institution, the American Hospital of Paris relies to a large extent on philanthropy to make its development possible. This auction sale is a vivid example of how philanthropy helps the Hospital to strengthen its already remarkable diagnostics equipment capacity so as to remain true to its commitment of providing the best health care with the most advanced technologies.”

Set in the austere interiors of the artist's studios in Paris and Varangeville-sur-Mer, including some ordinary furnishings and possessions, and in the present picture—a singular occurrence in his *oeuvre*—the rendering of another actual painting still in progress, the *Ateliers* are compositions of remarkable depth and complexity, which reveal a profound visual poetry and intriguing philosophical nuances.

Atelier I, as the initial painting in this namesake series, is the "genesis" work, marking the artist's passage into the realm of his chosen theme. Braque's conception of space in this first *Atelier* is straightforwardly rectangular; the insistently vertical and horizontal planar elements suggest a relatively shallow environment, which nonetheless unfolds by means of superimposed forms to a purposeful effect: the presentation of two distinct pictorial images, stepped one above the other, each in itself a painting. The presence of a third painting is additionally suggested by the ornate frame, the side of which is visible along the lower left edge of the composition. The convention of the *Atelier* series offers the artist the opportunity to contemplate the inner, private world of his dedicated occupation, showing his achievements and registering the current state of his art, while revealing the inspired processes of an introspective creative mind. Braque establishes a narrative of time signifying the paintings of his past (the frame), present (the black pitcher, a painting in progress), and future (the white pitcher, the painting as idea).

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