

CHRISTIE'S

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THE MOST IMPORTANT EARLY MAGRITTE TO COME TO AUCTION IN A GENERATION

Leads
The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale
Christie's London 2014



London – A key date on the international art calendar, Christie's highly anticipated annual evening sale of *The Art of The Surreal* will take place on 4 February, presenting the most valuable group of works to be offered in the category to date. The auction is led by the most important early Magritte to come to auction in a generation, *Les chasseurs au bord de la nuit* (*The hunters at the edge of night*), 1928, which has recently been part of the Museum of Modern Art's 2013 exhibition *Magritte, The Mystery of The Ordinary, 1926-1938* (estimate: £6-9 million, *illustrated top left*). Comprising 54 lots, the sale features works from many important international collections including: *Femmes et oiseaux* (*Women and Birds*), 1968 (estimate: £4-7 million), offered from *Miró – Seven Decades of His Art*; the most significant work by Carlo Carrà to come to auction, *Solitudine* (*Solitude*) (estimate: £2.5-3.5 million), offered from *Modern Masters: Works from an Important Private Swiss Collection*; and *Le regard intérieur* (*The inner gaze*) by René Magritte (estimate: £500,000-700,000) offered from *The Collection of the Late Mrs T. S. Elliot*. A rich and varied sale which is tailored to meet the current tastes of the ever growing number of discerning global collectors of this movement, *La Vénus endormie*, 1943, by Paul Delvaux (estimate: £1.2-1.6 million, *illustrated top right*) is offered alongside other notable works by De Chirico, Dalí, Domínguez, Ernst, Arshile Gorky, Man Ray, Tanguy and Dorothea Tanning. Estimates range from £40,000 to £9 million, with an overall pre-sale estimate of £42,960,000 to £64,550,000. Christie's evening auctions of *Impressionist, Modern and Surrealist Art* on 4 February have a total pre-sale estimate of £137.1 million to £199.5 million (please click [here](#) for separate *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* release).

Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's: "25 years on from holding the inaugural standalone *Dada and Surrealism* sale and 14 years since Christie's established its annual auction in the field, the global demand for this pioneering movement continues to go from strength to strength. Surrealist art now commands the attention of the international art market from across many collecting categories, from *Old Masters* to *Contemporary art*. We are proud to present this rich array of exemplary works, led by a monumental early Magritte and the most significant work by Carlo Carrà ever to come to auction, alongside the outstanding works from the landmark offering of the collection *Miró – Seven Decades of His Art*."



Following the continuing strength of demand for works by **René Magritte** (1898-1967) at Christie's in February 2013, a further group of nine remarkable works by the Surrealist master will be offered in the upcoming auction, led by *Les chasseurs au bord de la nuit* (*The hunters at the edge of night*), 1928, which is the cover lot of *The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale* catalogue. Offered at auction for the first time, it is the most important early Magritte to come to auction in a generation (estimate: £6-9 million, *illustrated left*). Prior to recently being part of the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition

Magritte, The Mystery of The Ordinary, 1926-1938, this work featured in many of the most important monographs and exhibitions dedicated to Magritte, beginning within his own lifetime. It was loaned by a succession of owners who were closely involved with Magritte himself: Gustave Van Hecke, E.L.T. Mesens, Claude Spaak and, from the mid-1950s, the famous William Copley.

Les chasseurs au bord de la nuit, 1928, was painted in the most fruitful year of Magritte's entire career, during the time that Magritte was based in Paris in order to be closer to the Surrealist group around André Breton. It is a reflection of the importance of Magritte's early Surreal works that so many of them are now in museum collections around the world. Of the pictures that Magritte painted in 1928, only around one fifth were painted on the large scale of *Les chasseurs au bord de la nuit*, which was done in the largest format of canvas that he used that year, indicating his appreciation of the importance of its subject. It has been suggested that the atmosphere of this work may owe itself to the works of Edgar Allen Poe. Magritte devoured his writings, not least in the famous translation by Charles Baudelaire, and several of his pictures appear to make references to them. In *Les chasseurs au bord de la nuit*, the walls may recall those in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, a short story at the end of which hot walls are enclosing the protagonist, approaching ever closer. The sense of tension in this work is accentuated by the bulkiness of the figures, adding a sheer physicality to their efforts to free themselves.



Miró – Seven Decades of His Art is an outstanding collection of 85 works showcasing seven decades of **Joan Miró's** (1893–1983) rich and dynamic career, which will be offered on 4 and 5 February. This is one of the most extensive and impressive offerings of works by the artist ever to come to auction. An important figure in 20th century art, Miró was highly influential for a huge number of artists, from Picasso to Pollock. Most often associated with Surrealism, Miró's work has an appeal that transcends traditional categories, with today's market seeing collectors of both Impressionist & Modern Art and Post-War & Contemporary Art compete for his paintings, works on paper and sculptures. The property was formerly in a private corporate collection and is now being sold by decision of the Portuguese Republic.

Highlighting Miró's incredible ability to innovate, the works feature a wide range of materials and techniques as well as his key themes and subjects, from poetry and dreams to music and stars, women and birds. He was an artist who allowed himself to be influenced by a range of things, from music, poetry and then hallucinations induced by hunger during his early years in Paris, to patterns made by chance, to the materials themselves. The top

two lots are both monumental works: *Femmes et oiseaux* (*Women and Birds*), 1968 (estimate: £4-7 million, *illustrated right*) and *Peinture*, 1953, (estimate: £2.5-3.5 million, *illustrated page 2*). With estimates ranging from £10,000 to £7 million, this collection provides collectors at every level with a remarkable opportunity to not only add key works to established collections but for new collectors and enthusiasts to buy their very first work from Miró's rich oeuvre. The works will be offered across three sales: *The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale*, 4 February; *Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sale* and *Impressionist and Modern Art Works on Paper Sale*, 5 February; the complete collection is expected to realise in excess of £30 million. [Please click here for separate release.](#)



Modern Masters: Works from an Important Private Swiss Collection comprises an exceptional and historic group of works which will be offered across all four King Street sales on 4 and 5 February. The Surrealist works in the collection are led by the most significant work by **Carlo Carrà** to come to auction, *Solitudine* (Solitude), started in 1917 (estimate: £2.5-3.5 million, *illustrated left*) and *L'Oiseau-nocturne*, 1939, by **Joan Miró** (estimate: £1-1.5 million, *illustrated below right*). Collections often reflect their collectors' tastes and histories, but seldom do they also reflect their friendships and relationships as much as the 22 works of art assembled by a private Swiss couple. Behind almost all of these works are tales of friendship, as the collectors came to know many of the artists who are represented, meeting a number of the leading figures of the avant garde from the 1920s onwards. Living a reality confined merely to dreams for many, they were able to meet Constantin



Brancusi, to see Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* while it was in its studio, to support the impoverished and embattled Piet Mondrian and to entertain Hans Arp on a regular basis. Two published authors, who were authorities in their field, the couple were prominent in the cultural milieu of Switzerland and Europe as a whole, particularly in the middle decades of the 20th century. Coming to the market for the first time, the collection as a whole is expected to realise in the excess of £30 million. [Please click here for separate release.](#)



Painted in 1943, *La Vénus endormie* is a deeply absorbing and poetic vision of one of **Paul Delvaux's** most celebrated themes, dating from his greatest period (estimate: £1.2-1.6 million, *illustrated left*). Asleep outdoors in the midst of a vast and impossible classical temple complex, the Venus of the title is the object of veneration and worship. Strange supplicants, like priestesses, surround her, each seemingly

oblivious to the others' presence as they assume their ritualistic positions on the terrace. It is in this disjointedness that Delvaux's art derives its unique power. Unlike the Surrealists, Delvaux invents relatively little, choosing instead to create a peculiarly otherworldly atmosphere in his paintings by the Romanesque idealisation of his women, their apparent lack of relation on to the other, and their dreamlike existence in a perfectly ordered pseudo-classical architectural landscape. These all combine to conjure up a vision of a world filled with its own, unique haunting poetry.

Notes to Editors:

Please click [here](#) to view the e-catalogue for the full Art of the Surreal Evening Sale

Pre-sale estimates for Impressionist, Modern & Surrealist works offered in the February auctions:

<i>Impressionist & Modern Evening Auction</i>	4 February	£94,150,000 - 134,900,000
<i>The Art of the Surreal Evening Auction</i>	4 February	£42,960,000 - 64,550,000
<i>Impressionist & Modern Works on Paper</i>	5 February	£6,313,500 - 9,283,500
<i>Impressionist & Modern Day Sale</i>	5 February	£11,814,000 - 17,343,000
<i>Impressionist & Modern, South Kensington</i>	7 February	£1,491,000 - 2,204,300
	TOTAL	£156,728,500 - 228,280,800

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Images available on request

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