

CHRISTIE'S

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A GLIMPSE OF SUMMER:
CLAUDE MONET'S *HAYSTACKS AT GIVERNY*
TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S EVENING SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART
IN NEW YORK ON 14 MAY



Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Les Meules à Giverny*, oil on canvas, painted in 1885 | \$12,000,000- 18,000,000

New York – Christie's is honored to present Claude Monet's *Les meules à Giverny* (*Haystacks at Giverny*), as a highlight of its spring Impressionist and Modern Art *Evening Sale* in New York, taking place on 14 May. This idyllic, summertime view of the countryside in Giverny where Monet made his home is an important precursor to the iconic *Haystacks* series of 1890-91. Estimated at US\$12-18 million, the painting has never been offered at auction previously, and now is being sold pursuant to a settlement agreement between the consignor and the heirs of René Gimpel, the esteemed French art dealer.

Monet painted *Les meules à Giverny* during the high summer of 1885, two years after he had moved with his wife and family to the tiny rural hamlet that is now indelibly linked with his name. On this particular day, Monet set off for La Prairie, a vast pasture near his home, with his wife Alice Hoschedé and their three youngest children, all of whom are featured at the left in the finished painting. The scene's haystacks are the most prominent feature in the landscape; the front face of each haystack is awash in golden light, rendered in vigorous touches of yellow and peach, while the far side has sunken into shades of deep purple and pink.

Adrien Meyer, International Director, Impressionist & Modern Art, remarked: "This magical painting features the rare combination of some of the most iconic subjects by the artist: poplars, haystacks and Alice wandering with her umbrella. At a time of a growing scarcity for legendary subjects by this great master, it is a true event to feature at auction for the very first time such a desirable painting."

Pleased with the success of *Les meules à Giverny*, as well as three earlier depictions of haystacks Monet completed from nearly the same vantage point the previous summer, Monet would famously return to this motif in 1890, to embark on the iconic *Meules* series that became one of the crowning achievements of his long career. For Monet, the haystacks were

indivisible from his sense of national pride; they represented the local farmers' livelihood, the fruits of their labors and their hopes for the future. With their exquisitely nuanced description of the fleeting effects of light, the paintings from La Prairie helped Monet re-assert French Impressionism's vitality at the turn of the century and build new audiences among New World collectors and patrons.

In 1886, Monet's dealer Paul Durand-Ruel purchased the painting direct from Monet's studio and brought it to New York soon after his new gallery opened there in 1888. Frank Thomson, a prominent American railroad executive and one of the earliest patrons of Impressionism in Philadelphia, purchased the painting and added it to his growing collection, and passed it on to his daughter upon his death.

By 1931, the painting had passed into the collection of the prominent French dealer René Gimpel, whose *Journal d'un collectionneur (The Diary of an Art Dealer)* famously chronicles the rise of the modern art market between the two World Wars. A keen observer and a witty, sometimes acerbic writer, Gimpel documented his relationships with cultural luminaries from Picasso to Proust, with competing art dealers, and with American mega-collectors such as Henry Clay Frick, Henry Ford, and John D. Rockefeller. He described visiting the aging Monet at Giverny, where he had the opportunity to admire *Les grandes décorations* – the massive mural series that took him 10 years to complete – and to purchase paintings directly from the artist's studio. During WWII, Gimpel and his sons took active part in the Resistance. René was first interned by the Vichy authorities in 1942 for his underground activities, and released in 1943, but then re-arrested by the Germans in July 1944. Much of his collection was lost or sold under duress. In confinement, he taught English to his fellow prisoners in preparation, he said, for the impending liberation; he died, however, at Neuengamme concentration camp before that day could come. After the war, two of Gimpel's sons, Charles and Peter, founded the Gimpel Fils gallery in London, carrying on their father's celebrated legacy.

Les meules à Giverny is one of three major works by the artist to feature in Christie's upcoming *Evening Sales* in May; Monet's *Paysage de matin (Giverny)*, 1888 will be offered from the prestigious collection of former Goldman Sachs Chairman John C. Whitehead (estimate: \$6-8 million; [see related release](#)). Christie's has also announced Monet's *Le Parlement, soleil couchant* from 1901 (estimate: \$25-35 million) will be among the star lots featured in *Looking Forward to the Past*, an innovative addition to the May sale calendar that explores the most influential artists, movements and works of art of the 20th Century ([see related press release](#)).

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Notes to the Editors:

- In 2014, Christie's achieved global sales of US\$1.2 billion for Impressionist and Modern Art, an increase of 19% over the previous year.
- Christie's holds the world auction for any work by Claude Monet, which was set in London on 24 June 2008 when the artist's 1919 canvas, *Le bassin aux nymphéas* sold for £40.9 million (US\$80.4 million) in its Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale.
- For a full summary of Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale highlights, please see related April 7 press release on our [Press Center](#)

New Sale Dates: The sale dates for the May 2015 Impressionist and Modern auctions have changed. Please see the new schedule below:

- **Thursday, May 14:** Impressionist and Modern Evening Sale at 5:30 p.m.
- **Friday, May 15:** Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper Sale at 10:00 a.m. | Impressionist and Modern Day Sale at 2:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, May 5 – Tuesday, May 19:** Picasso Ceramics Online Only sale

Tour dates for highlights of Christie's Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale

New York: 2 – 13 May 2015

Auction:

New York: 14 May 2015

Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2014 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £916.1 million (\$1.5 billion).

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. 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, New Delhi, 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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