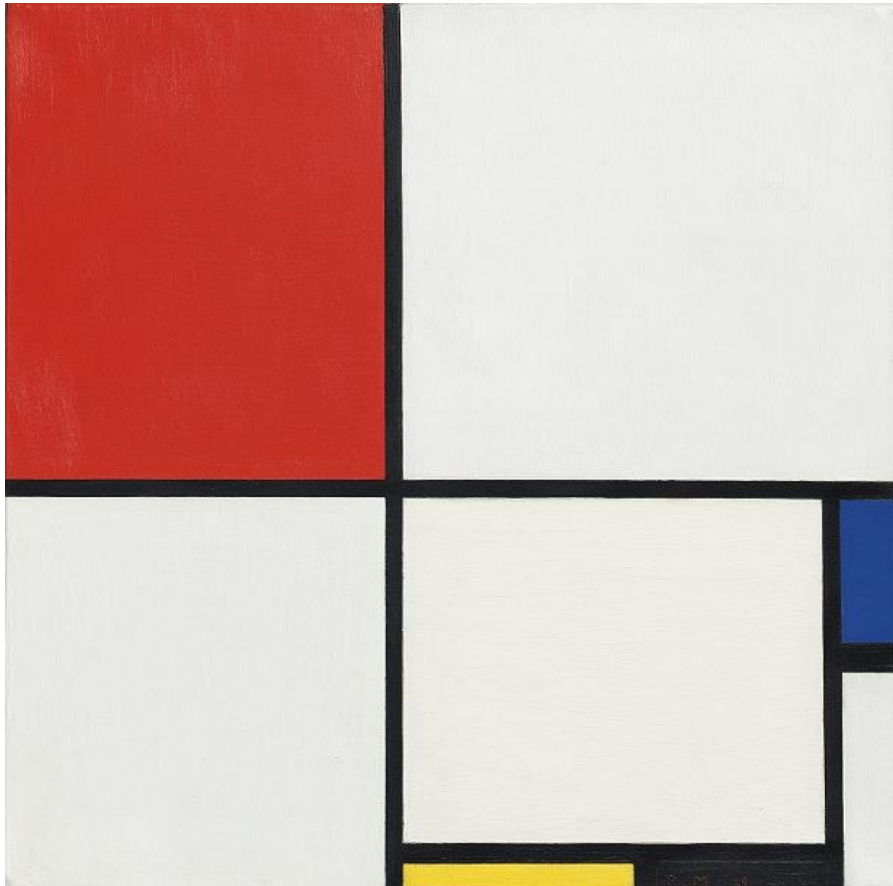


CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS ITS MAY EVENING SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART IN NEW YORK



Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition No. III (Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow and Black)*, oil on canvas, 1929 (estimate: \$15-25 million)

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce further highlights from its major Spring sales of Impressionist and Modern Art in New York this May. Works by the most celebrated artists of the era will be offered for sale across two Evening Sales, two Day sales, and one companion Online-Only sale this season, making it one of the largest and most diverse auctions season for this category in recent memory.

The sale week will launch on Monday, May 11 with a special curated Evening Sale of 20th century art entitled *Looking Forward to the Past*, led by **Pablo Picasso's** 1955 masterpiece *Les Femmes d'Alger, Version "O"* (estimate in the region of \$140 million) and **Claude Monet's** majestic *Le Parlement, Soleil Couchant* (estimate: \$35-45 million; see related releases [here](#) and [here](#)). Christie's Impressionist and Modern art sales will then resume on a new date, Thursday May 14, with Christie's traditional Evening Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art, led by two superb examples from the era: **Monet's** *Les Meules à Giverny* (\$12-18 million) and **Piet Mondrian's** *Composition No. III (Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow and Black)* (\$15-25 million; pictured above), and anchored by offerings from the Collection of John C. Whitehead, the late former chairman of Goldman Sachs ([see previous announcement](#)).

Of the 44 lots to be offered on May 14, 95% have been in private collections for the last decade or more, and 84% of the works have been previously featured in museum exhibitions.

Brooke Lampley, Christie's Head of Impressionist and Modern Art, Americas, remarked: *"This May we are excited to present the broadest possible spectrum of prime examples from the Impressionist and Modern movements – from a classic Impressionist Monet, to the tour de force abstractions of Brancusi and Mondrian – within the context of our new and innovative sale calendar. Every season we witness a growing appetite for exceptionally rare and exemplary works of this period, spanning medium, style and date. This season, we are thrilled to have an amplified sales offering that creates a new context for appreciating the quality and lasting value of this exciting category."*

HIGHLIGHTS

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition No. III (Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow and Black)*, oil on canvas, 1929 (estimate: \$15-25million) – pictured page one.

Painted in 1929, *Composition No. III (Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow and Black)*, is the inaugural canvas in a sequence of nine paintings. All nine depict close variations of the same compositional type, representing the very peak of Mondrian's classicism and the culmination of his efforts to achieve a radically reduced set of formal means comprising straight black lines and planes of primary color or "non-color" (white, black, and gray). With the present painting and the ensuing variants, produced over the course of three years, Mondrian refined these means to the highest degree, attaining a level of purity and balance that would remain virtually unsurpassed in his subsequent oeuvre, as he began instead to explore denser and more syncopated rhythms. Never again in his career would Mondrian achieve this same degree of concentration and clarity; the classical type, which has its inception in the present painting, was the apex. Christie's set the world auction record for Mondrian at Paris on February 23, 2009, with *Composition avec bleu, rouge, jaune et noir*, which sold for 21,569,000 EUR (27,588,898 USD). The 1922 canvas was sold among the Collection of Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé.

Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Les Meules à Giverny*, oil on canvas, 1885 (estimate: \$12-18million) – pictured right

Meules à Giverny was painted as sunset first began its approach, the front face of each haystack is still 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. With its exquisitely nuanced description of the fleeting effects of light, the painting forcefully asserts Impressionism's continued strength and vitality, at a time when many of the movement's pioneering members were abandoning the cause. Paul Durand-Ruel purchased the present painting from Monet in September 1886 and brought it to New York soon after his new gallery opened there in 1888; the very next year, Frank Thomson, a prominent railroad executive and one of the earliest patrons of Impressionism in Philadelphia, added the canvas to his growing collection. [See separate press release here.](#)



Fernand Léger (1881-1955), *Le corsage rouge*, oil on canvas, 1922 (estimate: \$10-15 million) – pictured left

Léger painted *Le corsage rouge* as he pursued his aim during the early 1920s to radically recast the aesthetic conception of beauty in the art of his time. Paintings such as *Le corsage rouge* were indeed striking in their time; they wear the vital, adventurous, and edgy look of authentically contemporary art. Having fabricated these figures as if from indestructible steel and burnished chromium, Léger made them to last, and thusly these women aspire to the ultimate classical ideal—they are timeless and eternal.

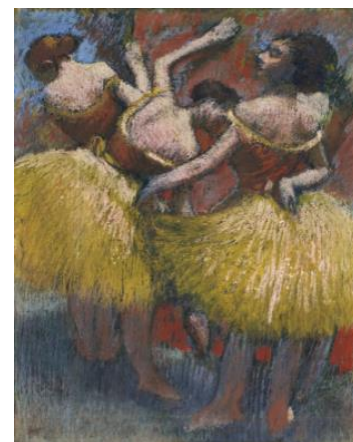
Constantin Brancusi (1867-1957) , *La muse endormie I*, Plaster Original marble version carved in 1909-1910; this plaster version executed by 1912 (estimate: \$8 -12million) – pictured left



Depicting an attenuated female head with pared-down, abstracted features and partially effaced eyes, *La muse endormie* was the first in a long sequence of refined, ovoid heads that would come to define Brancusi's unerringly modern aesthetic. In November 1912, Arthur B. Davies, Walter Pach, and Walt Kuhn spent ten days in Paris, rounding up the best and most advanced art that they could find for the upcoming Armory Show in New York. Thrilled with the radically reduced and vehemently anti-classical sculptural language that Brancusi had developed since late 1907, they selected five of the sculptor's most innovative and emblematic works for inclusion in the landmark Armory Show. One of these was the plaster *Muse endormie* offered for sale here. It traveled to New York in the Armory Show—securing a decisive and enduring place in the annals of twentieth-century modernism.

Edgar Degas (1834-1917), *Trois danseuses*, pastel on joined paper laid down on board, circa 1900 (estimate: \$6-8million) – pictured right

At the turn of the 20th century, after three decades, the dance still reigned supreme in Degas's art; it remained his favorite subject and in the public regard stood fast as his signature theme. *Trois danseuses* is a sterling affirmation of the profound commitment Degas had accorded this theme during his lifetime, and a vigorous display of the grandeur, the splendor, and sumptuousness with which he enriched his late art. The present example is remarkable for its fiery tonality of yellow and red, which Degas moderated with cool blue tones in the fore- and backgrounds, and pink flesh tints in the dancers' bare backs and arms.



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN C. WHITEHEAD

Christie's is honored to present a stellar selection of classic Impressionist paintings, works on paper and sculpture from the 90-piece collection of John C. Whitehead, in both the Evening Sale on May 14 and two day sale sessions on May 15. Among the star works from the Whitehead Collection to be featured within the Evening session are Amedeo Modigliani's *Portrait de Béatrice Hastings* from 1916 (estimate: \$7-10 million) – pictured left and Claude Monet's *Paysage de matin (Giverny)* (estimate: \$6-8million). Together, these works depict the sweeping range of the collection; Modigliani's portrait representing the dynamism of the European Avant-Garde and Monet's landscape evoking the purity of French Impressionism with its revelry in light.

PRESS CONTACT: Rebecca Riegelhaupt | +1 212 636 2680 | RRiegelhaupt@christies.com

NOTE TO EDITORS: 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 STATISTICS: The Evening Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art on May 14 will be comprised of 44 works total, primarily offered from individual private collectors who recognize the strength of the current market for conservatively estimated works of exceptional quality and rarity. Overall, half of the lots featured in the sale have never been offered at auction before.

WORKS OFFERED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 10+ YEARS



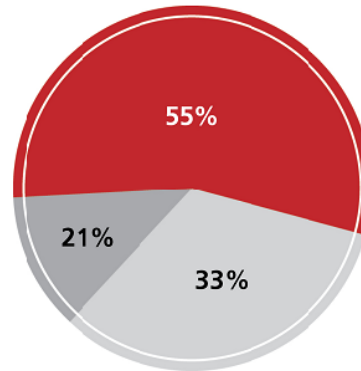
- Offered for the first time in a decade+
- Offered within the last decade

PROVENANCE AND EXHIBITION HISTORY
Works Featured in Museum Exhibitions



- Previously included in a museum exhibition
- Never included in a museum exhibition

New Bidders by Region
Impressionist and Modern Evening and Day Sales and Works on Paper Sales
Last 3 Years, Christie's New York



- Americas
- Asia
- EMERI

In 2014, Christie's global sales of Impressionist and Modern Art totaled \$1.2 billion, an increase of 19% by USD from the previous year. Christie's November sales in New York were highlighted by the sale of Edouard Manet's *Le Printemps (Springtime)* for \$65.1 million to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

About Christie's

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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