

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER ITEMS FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF CLAUDE MONET

WORKS BY MONET PRESENTED ALONGSIDE
PAINTINGS AND OBJECTS HE ACQUIRED

*"Perhaps it surprises you to see pictures other than
my own paintings and Japanese prints? I love all beautiful things."*

Claude Monet, 1924



Sacha Guitry, *Claude Monet, Giverny*, 1915, gelatin silver print, aristotype

London – Christie's will offer objects and artworks from the personal collection of Claude Monet in Hong Kong on 26 November 2017. In addition to being the very first sale dedicated to Impressionism organised in Asia, the auction which will be transmitted in real time in our Parisian auction room so that our European based clients may also attend the sale and participate. Titled *Dear Monsieur Monet*, the collection, preserved by Rolande Verneiges, an unrecognised yet protected daughter of Claude Monet's son Michel, presents an intimate and family driven insight into one of art history's most beloved artists. Hidden from the rest of the world, these works have only been seen in catalogue reproductions.

The auction will include early works by Claude Monet that trace his artistic development, ranging from early sketches to pastels and some of the first examples of the artist working in series. These are presented alongside pieces from his own collection by the revered artists, and friends of Monet, including Édouard Manet, Eugène Boudin, Auguste Rodin, Paul Signac among others. Through Japanese prints, personal items and photographs of the artist it is possible to become immersed in the private world of Claude Monet, glimpsing intimate details of a very public figure. *Dear Monsieur Monet* will be on view in Paris from 7 to 10 of September before touring to Shanghai, Beijing, London and New York. Prices range from \$500 to \$3,000,000 providing an opportunity for collectors of all stages to acquire pieces from the man considered the godfather of Impressionism.



Monet's youth is persevered in two primary sources: loose and scattered sheets of his earliest sketchbooks and the memoirs of Théophile Béguein Billecoq, whose contacts with him during holidays in Le Havre provide the only known first hand testimony of this period. The sketchbook in 1857 is of the most important records of Monet's artistic activity during the 1850s, providing valuable insights into his development as a draftsman at this early stage. *Croquis d'enfants* (1857, estimate: \$20,000-30,000) is a leading example of these notable studies. The very accomplished drawing *Barques échouées sur la plage* (circa 1860-61, estimate: \$50,000-80,000) testifies how Monet outperformed his masters by executing a drawing as detailed as any of his oil paintings would be.

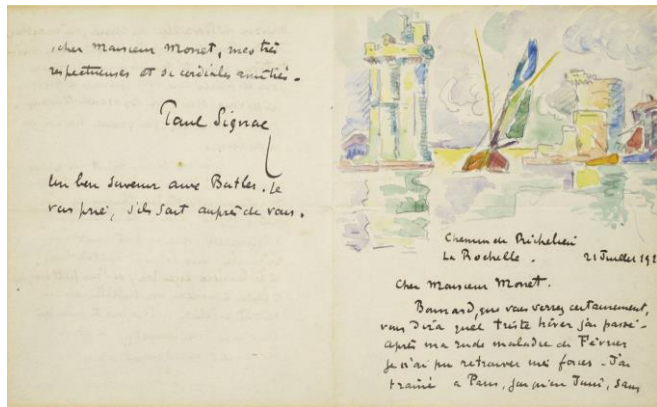
Monet's close friendship with Boudin from the late 1850s onwards exposed him to one of the most important pastel-makers of the day. Largely self-taught, like Monet himself, Boudin was prodigious in his use of the graphic medium, making hundreds of informal studies in his sketchbooks and on independent sheets, as well as elaborate compositions. The Boudin watercolours in Monet's collection were therefore typical of the taste and style of this artist who was such a passionate painter of beaches, harbours and piers.

A small group of pastels by Monet add a number of entirely new motifs to his oeuvre. Among them are views of Yport, such as *Yport, la nuit* (circa 1860, estimate: \$150,000-250,000), which is the only recorded night scene by the artist. They record the play of light and weather above a largely featureless stretch of ground. *Falaises des Petites-Dalles* (1884, estimate: \$1,500,000-2,500,000) was created in solitude, facing impossible weather, but whether under rain or wind, Monet was constantly in a quest of light. Those coastal expeditions were a milestone in his career and changed the course of his art. As the giant cliffs were painted with different viewing angles and weather forecast, *Falaises des Petites-Dalles* can represent the first steps towards the painting in "series".



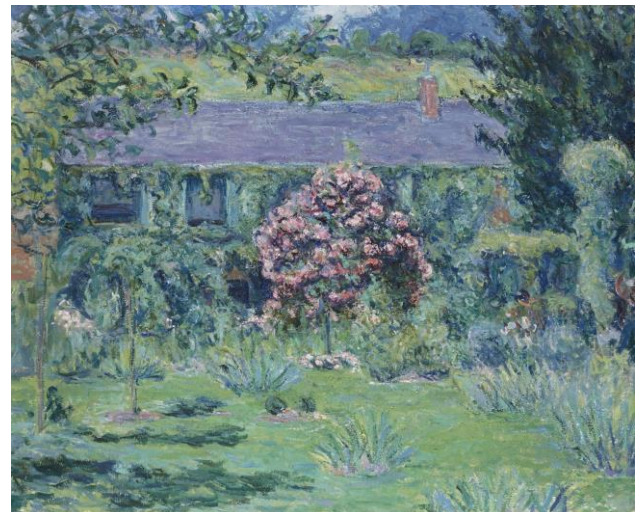
Three examples of *Trois arbres à Giverny (Peupliers)* (1887, estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000, *illustrated left*) are held at the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris. The majesty of the trees is enhanced by the contrast between the verticality of the poplars and the horizontality of the meadow. The tree poplars can be seen as representing the three stages of life, referencing modernity in the use of symbolism in the composition.

Alongside the selection of works by Claude Monet are paintings and drawings by his friends and students. Auguste Rodin's *Salomé* (circa 1895-97, estimate: \$50,000-80,000, *illustrated right*) is a re-discovered study for the lithograph of the frontpiece of the Octave Mirbeau's *Jardin des supplices* edited by Ambroise Vollard in 1899. *Salomé* is unique in Monet's collection since it was probably the only drawing given by Rodin to Monet in 1897 together with bronzes and paintings.



Signac finally met Monet in 1883, listening to Claude Monet's advice and painting the effects of light *en plein air* with broken colour and rapid brushstrokes. Monet would continue to influence Signac until 1886 and in addition to *Nice (jour de marché)* (circa 1926, estimate: \$20,000-30,000) a letter addressed to his friend Claude Monet (executed in La Rochelle, 21 July 1920, estimate: \$50,000-100,000, *illustrated left*) reveals the humour of Signac who wrote: "It's picturesque enough to make even a cubist or a neo-Davidian foam at the mouth! And the treatment has really done me good: my strength is returning and work picking up"

After many successful Impressionist exhibitions, Giverny started to attract worldwide painters and although Monet did not have a specific teaching role, he had relationships with some American artists such as John Leslie Breck and Louis Ritman, whose oil on canvas *Still-life with flowers and apples* (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) was in Monet's collection. The artist's stepdaughter, Blanche Hoschedé, became his model and pupil, staying by his side in Giverny until his death. She also became the guardian of both the house and the memory of the artist. Painted a short time after his death *La maison de Monet à Giverny* (circa 1925, estimate: \$100,000-150,000) pays tribute to Monet's final series *The House at Giverny Under the Roses* and uses the same vantage point as his work.



Claude Monet's collection of Japanese prints numbered 231 pieces at the end of his life. He tastefully selected the Masters of the 18th and 19th centuries in an eclectic collection that featured 36 artists focusing on the three major artists Hokusai, Hiroshige and Utamaro. Even if Monet never servilely recopied Japanese engravings, he carefully analysed the prints to give a new start to his own painting. Beyond the representation of the Japanese way of life and iconography, Monet was also influenced by their representation of nature. The winter scenes became and remained a point of fascination throughout his career.

Several original photographs of the artist in his home at Giverny are also offered, showing the artist at ease in his surroundings. One such image portrays Claude Monet together with his second wife Alice Hoschedé in St Mark's Square in Venice in October 1908. A continental two-handled Jardinière (estimate: \$1,000-2,000) can be seen in the painting *The Artist's Garden at Vétheuil* (1880), which is included in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Included alongside this is a pair of the artist's spectacles (estimate: \$1,000-1,5000, *illustrated right*) and a French silver fruit knife.



Adrien Meyer, Co-Chairman of the Impressionist and Modern Department: "The items in the auction *Dear Monsieur Monet* have remained with the family of Claude Monet right until this day. It is a huge honour for Christie's to offer these re-discovered pieces at auction for the first time. This collection provides an intimate insight into the life of Monet the artist and Monet the collector. Not only can we witness the development of Monet's style but we trace what inspired him to strive for ground-breaking modes of representation."

Tour Dates:

Paris, 9 Avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris, 8-15 September 2017
London, 8 King Street, London SW1Y 6QT, 30 September – 7 October 2017
New York, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York NY 10020, early November 2017
Beijing, No. 82, Jinbao Street, Dong Cheng District, Beijing, 3-4 November 2017
Shanghai, 97 Yuanmingyuan Road, Huangpu District, Shanghai, 7-9 November 2017
Hong Kong, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, 24-26 November 2017

PRESS CONTACTS:

Sara Macdonald | +44 (0)20 7752 3136 | saramacdonald@christies.com
Beverly Bueninck | +33 (0)1 40 76 84 08 | bbueninck@christies.com
Alexandra Kindermann | +41 44 268 1019 | akindermann@christies.com

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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