

CHRISTIE'S

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THE COLLECTION OF PEGGY AND DAVID ROCKEFELLER

DIEGO RIVERA'S *THE RIVALS*, 1931, ESTIMATE: \$5-7MILLION

- First time to market and the most important Rivera offered at auction in decades
- Commissioned by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller; the work has never left the Rockefeller family
- Included in Rivera's first solo exhibition at MoMA in 1931 and rarely exhibited since 1937
- Completed aboard ship that transported Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to New York
 - Marked the beginning of Rivera's relationship with the Rockefeller family



Left: Diego Rivera (1886-1957), *The Rivals*. Oil on canvas. 60 x 50 in. Painted in 1931. \$5,000,000-7,000,000
Right: Pictured *in situ* at the Rockefeller's home in Ringing Point, Maine.

AUCTION | MAY 2018 | NEW YORK TOUR | APRIL 6-12 | LOS ANGELES

TOURS AND EXHIBITIONS PRESENTED BY VISTAJET

New York—Christie's announces the masterpiece by **Diego Rivera**, *The Rivals* (estimate: \$5-7million), as a highlight of the **Collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller**, included in the May 2018 auction. The work will be featured in the exhibition of collection highlights at Christie's Los Angeles from April 6-12, which is part of the global tour presented by private aviation company VistaJet. The full collection preview will be held at Christie's Rockefeller Plaza beginning April 28.

"Virgilio Garza, Head of Latin American Art, Christie's: "Diego Rivera painted episodes of history, past and present, in panoramic frescos where social, political and economic forces were at play. But it is the easel works that reveal a Rivera less motivated by ideology and more by his love for the common man, sense of place and tradition. *The Rivals*, inspired by a local festivity from the state of Oaxaca, is masterfully expressed through the interplay of planes and colors, beautifully delineated figures, and shapes reduced to their essence. Not only is this an iconic image presenting one of Rivera's most

treasured subjects, its provenance is impeccable. The painting is Rivera's calling card to New York, debuting at his MoMA exhibition in 1931 and rarely exhibited since 1937, this will be the first time for it to appear at auction, making it a truly exciting opportunity for the market."

This large-scale oil painting was completed at a milestone moment in the artist's career. The 1930s represented a significant decade for Rivera, during which time the artist completed his most impressive mural commissions in the United States. The latter solidified his reputation as the leading artist of the Mexican mural movement while helping galvanize the appreciation of Mexican art and culture in the United States. This painting also marked the beginning of his relationship with the Rockefeller family, which would later span generations. Commissioned by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, *The Rivals* was completed in a makeshift studio aboard the *Morro Castle*—the ship that transported Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to New York ahead of Rivera's first exhibition at MoMA. The painting was passed down to David and Peggy Rockefeller in 1941 as a wedding gift and has never left the family.

In this dynamic scene, Rivera puts his unparalleled skills as a painter and colorist on full display. The theme, so profoundly Mexican, is infused with the modern use of multiple planes coupled with the artist's chromatic sensibility. This painting reflects Rivera's innovative approach to art-making through his ability to translate the subject of a regional narrative using a modern artistic language. The result is Rivera at his best and establishes him as the forerunner for a modern art movement to come directly from the Americas to the world. The vibrant tones and the sinuousness of certain compositional elements embody the style and sensual qualities which would become iconic to the artist.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND: DAVID ROCKEFELLER AND LATIN AMERICA

Diego Rivera would eventually accept the commission to execute the murals (*Man at the Crossroads*) in the RCA Building at Rockefeller Center, which was under construction. Through his mother's introduction to the imposing but charismatic Rivera, who visited their family home on 54th Street with his partner Frida Kahlo, the young David Rockefeller became familiar with the Mexican painters' work and also with José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo. He would later recount, "My lifelong appreciation of Mexican art and culture soon spread to all of Latin America."

David Rockefeller attributed his interest in Latin America and Latin American art to two people – his mother, Abby, and his older brother, Nelson A. Rockefeller. Abby taught all her children to respect and appreciate the art of all times and all places. Nelson absorbed that lesson and applied it powerfully in Latin America, where he played a critically significant role as both a private businessman and American diplomat from the late 1930s to the mid- 1950s. Peggy and David spent a second honeymoon in Mexico in early 1946 just after David returned from his Army service in Europe before he started work at Chase National Bank; David says, "We especially wanted to see Rivera's murals...I always found him to be a very sympathetic person, and I liked his painting." The couple embarked on a six-week journey where they explored the country meeting artists and discovering places like San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Manzanillo, Puebla, and Oaxaca.

During their lifetime, David and Peggy Rockefeller were surrounded by extraordinary works both in the privacy of their homes and in David's office at Chase National Bank. He commissioned, like his mother Abby, major artists to create works for the Chase Manhattan Bank Art Program. His fervent belief in the importance of corporate support for the arts was the impetus for the Chase collection, which today holds over 30,000 works (many by renowned Latin American masters including Fernando Botero and Omar Rayo) in 450 corporate offices around the world.

In addition to their support for the arts, David and Peggy Rockefeller have designated funds from the sale to go to a group of 12 charities, among them the [David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University](#); [Americas Society](#) and the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), which have active programs throughout Latin America.

Notes for Editors:

- The exhibition of the collection will be open starting April 28 with sales to take place from May 7-11 at Christie's New York.
- Designated philanthropies include the American Farmland Trust, Americas Society/Council of the Americas, Council on Foreign Relations, The David Rockefeller Fund, Harvard University, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Museum of Modern Art, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller University, The Stone Barns Restoration Corporation – Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture.
- The most valuable collection ever previously offered at auction was the Collection Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé in 2009 at Christie's Paris which achieved more than US\$400 million.
- [David Rockefeller's \(Giving Pledge\) statement](#), confirming his commitment to philanthropy
- Follow [@christiesrockefeller](#) on Instagram and www.christies.com/rockefeller for coming auction details

CHRISTIE'S PRESS CONTACTS:

NEW YORK: Sara Fox | + 1 212 636 2680 | sfox@christies.com
LONDON: Hannah Schweiger | +44 207 389 2664 | hschweiger@christies.com
HONG KONG: Lavina Chan | +852 2978 9919 | lavinachan@christies.com

VISTAJET PRESS CONTACT:

EU and GLOBAL RELEASES: Jennifer Tyler | T: +44 (0) 203 617 3077 | jennifer.tyler@vistajet.com
ASIA: Amy Yang: T: +852 2901 0502 | M: +852 9080 3985 | amy.yang@vistajet.com
USA: Michael Salamanca | M: + 1 212 636 2680 | michael.salamanca@vistajet.com

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2017 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$6.6 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

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

About VistaJet



VistaJet is the first and only global aviation company. On its fleet of silver and red business jets, VistaJet has flown corporations, governments and private clients to 187 countries worldwide. Founded in 2004 by Thomas Flohr, the company pioneered an innovative business model where customers pay only for the hours they fly, free of the responsibilities and asset risks linked to aircraft ownership. VistaJet's signature Program service offers customers a bespoke subscription of flight hours on its fleet of mid and long-range jets, to fly them anywhere and at any time. More VistaJet information and news at vistajet.com.

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