

CHRISTIE'S

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CLAUDE MONET'S *LA GARE SAINT-LAZARE, VUE EXTÉRIEURE* TO LEAD CHRISTIE'S *IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART EVENING* SALE

20 JUNE 2018



Claude Monet, *La Gare Saint-Lazare, Vue extérieure*, 1877,
Estimate on Request

London – Claude Monet's iconic *La Gare Saint-Lazare, Vue extérieure* of 1877, will lead Christie's *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* on 20 June 2018. This magnificent painting, executed in 1877 as part of Monet's celebrated 'Gare Saint-Lazare' series will be offered for sale from 'The

Collection of Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass' (Estimate on Request). Works from this esteemed collection were sold in New York in November 2017 where a highlight was Vincent van Gogh's *Laboureur dans un champ*, which sold for \$81,312,500, the second highest price achieved for a work by the artist at auction.

The present work, *La Gare Saint-Lazare, Vue extérieure*, belongs to a series of 12 canvases painted in 1877 depicting the busy railway station which had been modernised and extended in the late 1860s. By 1870 the Gare Saint-Lazare was handling over 13 million passengers a year and had become a major transit point for the vibrant city. The modern age of steam trains, iron railway bridges and extensive public transport was perfectly captured in this remarkable series of Monet's steam-filled, atmospheric impressionist masterpieces. Gare Saint-Lazare paintings are frequently shown in major retrospectives, are much reproduced, and are included in the permanent collection of many of the most celebrated museums in the world. Of the 12 Monet painted in 1877, three still remain in private hands and nine are in public institutions. These include: The Fogg Art Museum; The Art Institute of Chicago; The National Gallery, London; The Musée Marmottan, Paris; and The Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Two of these museum works are currently included in London's National Gallery exhibition *Monet & Architecture*, a pioneering show that examines Monet's career through the lens of the architecture that he painted. *La Gare Saint-Lazare, Vue extérieure* was recently on loan to the Kimbel Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

The entire series, 'Gare Saint-Lazare', was created in a short period of intense creativity: in just three months between January and March 1877. The subject would turn out to be Monet's last confrontation with modernity, before he abandoned the painting of modern life, and started to pursue pure landscape painting. While the works in the group differ in size, viewpoint and handling, the series marks the first occasion whereby the artist committed himself to the pursuit of a single subject through a long sequence of variations. This would come to be one of the defining aspects of Monet's practice for the rest of his career. In April 1877, Monet included several of his recently painted Gare Saint-Lazare canvases in the Third Impressionist Exhibition.

The group depicts the station from a variety of different positions, at different times of day and in different atmospheric conditions. In *La Gare Saint-Lazare, Vue extérieure*, Monet has moved outside the covered interior area of the Gare Saint-Lazare, into the midst of the platforms; the railway track weaving a dynamic, serpentine path through the foreground of the scene, as two trains move through the bustling station. One emerges from beneath the *Pont de l'Europe* made famous by Monet's illustrious impressionist counterpart Gustave Caillebotte. Captured with a combination of loose, staccato brushstrokes, as well as areas of more refined architectural detail, steam, people, the surrounding architecture of the city, and the structure of this newly constructed beacon of modernity all come together in this vivid, rapidly executed scene of modern life. Architecture and atmosphere combine to create a painting that has become an icon of its time. Before he painted the present work, Monet had been living and working in Argenteuil, just outside of Paris. Having immersed himself in rural Montgeron in the summer of 1876, he returned to Paris in the new year, eager to capture the subjects and scenes of the bustling urban landscape of modern Paris. Caillebotte paid the rent for him to live in a small ground floor apartment near the Gare Saint-Lazare, and just three months later, the series of 12 works was complete.

Jussi Pylkkänen, Global President, Christie's: "This superb painting describes Monet at his impressionist best, capturing in quick, bold brushstrokes the energy of metropolitan Paris as described by the sound and fury of the glorious steam trains as they left the Gare Saint Lazare on their journeys northwards out of the city. Painted in situ from the platform of the station, several of these urban *plein-air* paintings served as the centrepieces of the important Third Impressionist

Exhibition in April 1877. It is an honour to exhibit and offer for sale this magnificent painting from The Collection of Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass, in whose collection it has hung for so many years. Only three works from this critically acclaimed series remain in private hands and it is a particular honour for Christie's to handle the sales of two of these within a month of each other in London and New York."

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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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