

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 16 JANUARY 2020

THE ART OF THE SURREAL EVENING SALE '20TH CENTURY AT CHRISTIE'S'

5 FEBRUARY 2020



René Magritte, *A la rencontre du plaisir (Towards Pleasure)* (1962, estimate : £8,000,000-12,000,000) and
René Magritte *Le baiser (The Kiss)* (circa 1957, estimate: £2,400,000-3,400,000)

London – Christie's [The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale](#) will directly follow the [Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale](#), launching '20th Century at Christie's' on 5 February 2020. The Surreal season is highlighted by René Magritte's poetic masterpiece *A la rencontre du plaisir (Towards Pleasure)* (1962, estimate: £8,000,000-12,000,000, *illustrated above, left*), which has remained in a private collection for over 50 years and has never been offered on the market until now. A total of seven paintings by Magritte are presented, spanning his oeuvre from 1928-62 with estimates ranging from £350,000 to £8,000,000. Further highlights include a new discovery, Salvador Dalí's *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat* (1960, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000), Max Ernst's *Paysage-effet d'attouchement* (1934-35, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000) and Francis Picabia's *Ligustri* (1929, estimate: £2,200,000-2,800,000).

[The Day and Works on Paper sales](#) will follow on 6 February together with the online-only sale dedicated to *Picasso Ceramics*, which is open for bidding from 30 January to 7 February 2020. The works will be on view in the King Street galleries from 30 January to 5 February 2020.



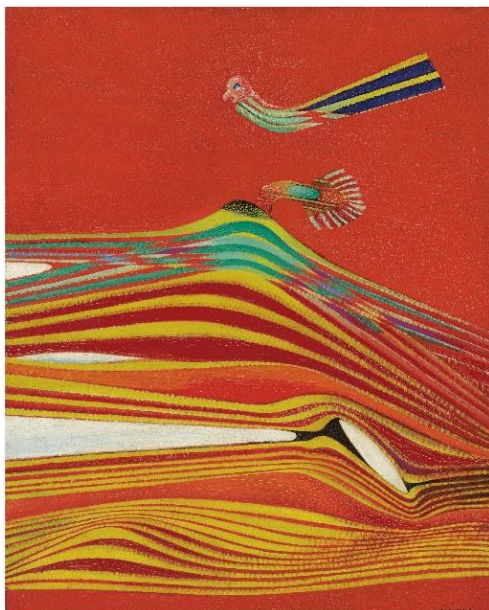
RENÉ MAGRITTE

Leading a group of seven works by René Magritte, [A la rencontre du plaisir \(Towards Pleasure\)](#) (illustrated, page one, left) combines several of the artist's most iconic motifs into a single, evocative image, creating an elegant summation of the poetic imagination which fuelled his unique form of Surrealism.

Perspective: Le balcon de Manet of 1949 (estimate: £3,500,000-5,500,000, illustrated above, right) was inspired by Édouard Manet's *Le balcon* of 1869 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), and sees the fashionable sitters, including his friend Berthe Morisot, humorously depicted in their wooden coffins depicted in their original positions. Featuring one of the artist's most iconic leitmotifs, the spherical iron sleigh bells known as grelots, *Les fleurs de l'abîme* (1928, estimate £1,200,000-1,800,000, illustrated above, left) centres around the juxtaposition of man-made and organic elements. Executed circa 1957, *Le baiser (The Kiss)* (estimate: £2,400,000-3,400,000, illustrated page one, right) presents the oiseau de ciel, or 'Sky-Bird,' whose form, captured mid-flight, appears to take its shape from the very environment it inhabits. The group is completed by *Le roman populaire* (1944, estimate: £700,000-1,000,000), *Le somnambule* (1946, estimate: £600,000-900,000) and *Sans titre (La partition)* (1962, estimate: £350,000-550,000).

SALVADOR DALÍ

More than any other place on earth, it was the bay at Port Lligat that provided the landscape of Salvador Dalí's hallucinatory vision. A newly discovered work and self-portrait, *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port*



Lligat (1960, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000, *illustrated page two, right*) is the most grandiose and elaborate example from a series of pictures created by the artist that centre around the depiction of a small boat washed up on the shore of the bay outside Dalí's window and being celebrated by angels.

MAX ERNST

In 1934 Max Ernst undertook a series of paintings that have their basis in photographs and illustrations documenting experiments with the flow of air and water around various objects. *Paysage-effet d'attouchement* (*illustrated page two, left*) is one of the largest compositions in this series, never previously offered at auction. The painting was first owned by curator and critic James Johnson Sweeney, who led the Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA following the Second World War and subsequently served as director of the Guggenheim Museum. It was included in the seminal *First International Surrealist Exhibition* at the New Burlington Galleries in 1936 in London and, later that year, in *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* at MoMA organised by Alfred Barr, which put Surrealism on the map in the US.

FRANCIS PICABIA

Created in 1929, *Ligustri* (estimate: £2,200,000-2,800,000, *illustrated, right*) forms part of the artist's acclaimed *Transparency* series, so-named for their simultaneous depiction of multiple transparent images, dramatically layered atop one another in an effect reminiscent of multiple-exposure photography.



JAMES ENSOR

In the same private collection for 70 years, *Baptême des masques* (1891, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000, *illustrated below, left*) is a superbly executed oil from James Ensor's most sought-after period. It infuses the carnival with the *commedia dell'arte*, subjects that both dominated Ensor's work from the mid-1880s onwards. The artist has included himself in the composition, standing in military attire and busby hat, amongst a group of close friends from the Rousseau and Nahrath families, absorbed in what seems to be a strange ritual or baptism.

A deeply personal depiction of the life of Christ, Ensor's *Scènes de la Vie du Christ* (1910-15, estimate: £800,000-1,200,000, *illustrated below, right*) is a monumental set of 32 drawings. The figure of Christ provided Ensor with a powerful symbol, one with which to identify himself. The set was acquired in its entirety directly from Ensor by his friend and patron François Franck, a famous Antwerp interior decorator and art collector. It has remained together and in the same family since.



PRESS CONTACT

Sara Macdonald | +44 (0)20 7752 3136 | saramacdonald@christies.com

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in the first half of 2019 that totalled £2.2 billion / \$2.8 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.*

###

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

