

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO PRESENT THE COLLECTION OF HERBERT AND ADELE KLAPPER IN ITS EVENING SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART



Left: Herbert and Adele Klapper | Right: Pablo Picasso, *Femme accoudée*, pastel on paper, 1921. Estimate: \$10-15 million

New York – Christie's is honored to have been entrusted with **The Collection of Herbert and Adele Klapper**, which will commence on November 11, in the specially titled **Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale, Including Property from the Collection of Herbert and Adele Klapper**. The Klappers embraced a life surrounded by art and beauty with zeal and unwavering enthusiasm. Across their fifty years of marriage, the couple undertook an inspiring journey in business, family, and collecting – a loving partnership that resulted in an extraordinary collection of fine art. The Impressionist and Modern selection encompasses 16 lots. Additional works from the collection will be sold across the American Art Sale taking place in New York on November 20, and in the Old Masters Evening Sale in London on December 6. Together, the collection is expected to exceed \$50 million.

Conor Jordan, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's, remarked: "The story of the collection of Herbert and Adele Klapper is full of joy and love. In a determined way, setting their sights high from the outset of their journey, the Klappers worked together to acquire art of the first tier that would bring happiness and beauty into their family's life. The wealth of playful anecdotes that animates their shared collecting adventure shows they succeeded."

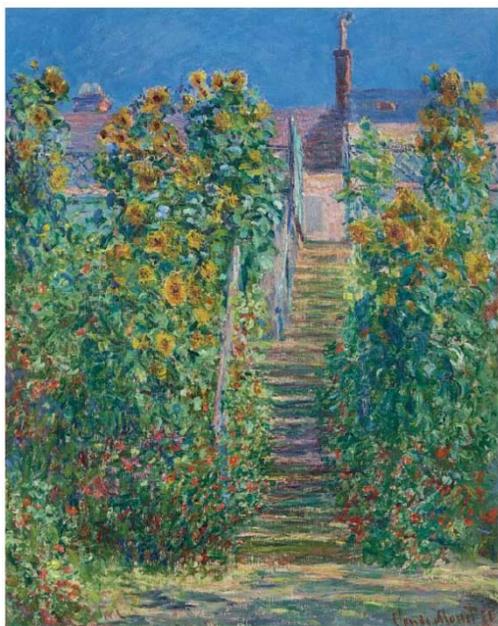
Max Carter, Head of Department, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's New York, continued: "The Klappers were drawn to quality, whether in the masterly detail of Brueghel the Younger's *Netherlandish Proverbs*;

the rich play of color and light in Monet's *L'escalier à Vétheuil*, the last from the series remaining in private hands; or the remarkable modeling of Picasso's grand neoclassical pastel, *Femme accoudée*, the best work of its kind to appear at auction in decades. We are honored to offer the collection they built together, which reflects their exquisite taste as much as their abiding love."

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Herbert J. Klapper was the son of a sewing machine salesman; his future wife, Adele, was born three years later in Brooklyn, the daughter of European immigrants. Both Herbert and Adele Klapper epitomized the aspirational 'American Dream' of the twentieth century. Mrs. Klapper forewent college to help support her family. After returning from military service, Mr. Klapper began to work at his father's sewing machine sales company in Manhattan's Garment District; nearby, Adele Klapper was employed at the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. A chance encounter between the young Herbert and Adele at a local luncheonette provided the spark for what would become a half century of marriage.

The Klappers' tremendous accomplishments in business came after years of unstinting entrepreneurship and hard work, as Mr. Klapper transformed his father's business into Superior Sewing Machine and Supply Corporation, the world's leading purveyor of sewing machine parts and components. In art, Mr. Klapper was able to utilize this same business acumen and attention to detail to the benefit of a remarkable private collection.

Working with prominent gallerists and auction house specialists, the Klappers steadily acquired important examples of Old Master paintings, Impressionist, and Modern art. The couple carefully curated their assemblage to focus on the very best by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Auguste Rodin, Jean Arp, Claude Monet, Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Paul Cézanne, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas.



Leading the collection is Claude Monet's *L'escalier à Vétheuil*, 1881 (\$12-18 million) – pictured left. With its extraordinary profusion of flowers and foliage, this sun-drenched canvas captures the splendor of high summer in Monet's garden at Vétheuil, a rural hamlet that the artist called home from 1878 until 1881. The staircase at the center of the canvas acts as the compositional anchor for a series of four closely related views of the house and garden, which Monet created during the height of the summer sunshine. The present *L'escalier à Vétheuil* was most likely the first in the series to be created, its close-up view of the unpopulated steps suggesting that the artist set his easel on the upper terrace to capture the view. The decorative quality of the Vétheuil garden scenes very clearly appealed to the contemporary market. Monet sold all three of the plein air canvases within a year or two of their execution, retaining only the National Gallery studio variant for himself. The first owner of the present version was the Pennsylvania Railroad tycoon Alexander Cassatt, the brother of Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt and a pioneering American collector of the New Painting; the canvas entered his collection around 1883, when Monet's work was still little known across the

Atlantic. In the spring of the same year, Monet and his extended family moved downriver to Giverny, where the artist's garden as a subject for modern painting would eventually reach its apogee. *L'escalier à Vétheuil* is the last of the four from the series remaining in private hands: one version hangs in the National Gallery in Washington; D.C., another is in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena; and the third was bequeathed by the legendary California businessman, philanthropist and collector, A. Jerrold Perenchio, to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2014.

Picasso's inspiration in creating the pastel *Femme accoudée*, 1921 (\$10-15 million) – pictured on page one, right – was twofold, as he pursued parallel interests in matters of subject and style. The sitter is the artist's wife Olga, née Khokhlova, whom he met in 1917 while she was a leading dancer in Serge Diaghilev's Les Ballets Russes. They married the following year, and soon after took an apartment on the rue la Boétie, the new epicenter of the Parisian art trade. Sales were making Picasso a wealthy man. On 4 February 1921, Olga presented her husband, with a son as his first-born, the sole male heir on his side of the Ruiz-Picasso family. The grateful artist celebrated the event in

a series of maternity drawings and paintings, while also honoring Olga as a timeless model of graceful, fruitful femininity in figure paintings and portraits.

Picasso typically relished the idea of working against the grain of convention, and contravened “the call to order” in the aberrant facial and body proportions he chose to employ in his classical figures. In *Femme accoudée*, Picasso subjected Olga’s finely boned Slavic features to subtle rococo distortions, widening the space between her eyes while miniaturizing her lips. Present here, too, as a hallmark of Picasso’s classical manner, is the apparent enlargement of the sitter’s arms and hands. Such anti-naturalistic elasticity in plastic forms stems from precedents in Picasso’s earlier figurative styles, as well as his cubist practice, and would prevail throughout his subsequent oeuvre.



Painted on 28 November 1924, Pablo Picasso’s *Buste de femme au voile bleu* (\$8-12 million) – *pictured left*, is among the last of a series of elegant and hauntingly enigmatic neoclassical portraits that the artist painted during the early years of the decade. The sitter’s dark hair, pensive, melancholy gaze, and fine, flawlessly chiseled features immediately bespeak the presence and character of Olga Khokhlova. This painting showcases the culminating, subtle power of expression that Picasso could summon forth while working in the urbane and coolly sensual style of portraiture Olga had inspired in his work. Within months, the artist’s decade-long fascination with classicism would give way to an utterly transformative immersion in the convulsive intensity of the surrealist revolution.

Painted in 1896, *Danseuse* (\$6-8 million) – *pictured right*, is among Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec’s most notable works in the ballet theme. As Lautrec stepped into his studio, he gazed upon his model as she was adjusting the layers of tulle in the ballet tutu she had just put on, in preparation for their working session together. Leaning toward a large mirror, the young woman would have appeared to the artist as if she were bowing to an audience. Her off-center posture, the angled polygon of her shoulders and bent back arms created an impromptu and pictorially perfect contrapposto effect. Quickly appreciating the beauty of the moment, Lautrec would paint his model in precisely this way. The result is this quiet, mysterious painting, a fortuitous success of timing and observation, a sensitive evocation of a lone figure in an intimate, moody ambience. Lautrec’s *Danseuse* includes in its distinguished provenance the renowned German-born dealer Justin K. Thannhauser, whose collection was given its own wing in The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. A subsequent owner was Arthur Murray, a specialist in ball-room dancing, who developed lessons and trained instructors in this activity. In 1938 Murray founded the dance studio franchise that bears his name.



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Public Exhibition:
Hong Kong | October 23-25
New York | November 5-11

Auction:
Impressionist and Modern Evening Sale
11 November 2018
7pm

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