

CHRISTIE'S

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THE ART OF THE SURREAL ***EVENING SALE 5 FEBRUARY 2020***

HIGHLIGHTED BY RENÉ MAGRITTE'S ***À LA RENCONTRE DU PLAISIR*** ***(TOWARDS PLEASURE)***



René Magritte, *À la rencontre du plaisir (Towards Pleasure)* (1962, estimate: £8,000,000-12,000,000)

London – Christie's annual auction *The Art of the Surreal* will continue on from the *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* on 5 February 2020, marking the launch of '20th Century at Christie's'. Painted in 1962, René Magritte's *À la rencontre du plaisir (Towards Pleasure)* (estimate: £8,000,000-12,000,000) 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. Purchased directly from

the artist shortly after its creation, the painting has remained in the same family collection for over half a century, and is coming to auction for the first time.

Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's: "It is with great expectation that we present this unique masterpiece by Magritte to the market for the first time on behalf of the family who were close friends of the artist and frequent guests at his famous Saturday gatherings of poets and other Surrealist intellectuals. It is probably the most hyper realistically painted and most strikingly poetic composition by the artist that I have had the honour to work with. It is a powerful illustration, just as his best 'L'empire des lumières' paintings are, of the ways in which Magritte deployed realistic looking symbols of a normal, ordinary and conventional life to casually pull us, the viewer, into a familiar setting only to then surprise us, unsettle us, cast his magical spell on us, thereby changing forever our experience of everyday reality."

At its centre stands one of Magritte's most familiar and enigmatic characters, the solitary man in the bowler hat, who appears lost in thought as he gazes upon the landscape before him. The bright glow of the moon casts a subtle sheen on the dome of his hat, while a soft, creeping mist hangs in the middle-distance, blurring the boundary between the forest and the open field. Seen from behind, the gentleman seems captivated by the vista, his stance and positioning amidst the sublime beauty of the natural world calling to mind the compositions of Caspar David Friedrich, although Magritte was no Romantic. There is a palpable sense of mystery and poetry to the scene, an uncertainty as to whether or not the view is real or imagined, and what exactly this figure's role or place is in the world that the artist conjures.

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About Christie's

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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.

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