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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER

A FAMILY VISION: THE COLLECTION OF H.S.H. PRINCESS "TITI" VON FÜRSTENBERG (1919-2006)



Pablo Picasso, *La Lettre (La Reponse)*, oil on canvas, Painted in Paris, 16 April 1923. Estimate on request
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New York – On May 13, Christie's will present a dedicated selection of 11 works from **A Family Vision: The Collection of H.S.H. Princess "Titi" von Fürstenberg** in its Evening Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art. Incorporating a sweeping representation of 20th Century Art, the collection encompasses more than 30 works ranges from Pablo Picasso to Mark Rothko and Andre Derain to Lucio Fontana. Further works will be offered in the Day Sale of Impressionist and Modern Art on May 14, the Morning Sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art on May 16, and in a Paris sale of African Art in October 2019. The personal collection of H.S.H. Princess "Titi" von Fürstenberg reflects her international worldview and passion for culture. During her lifetime, she acquired numerous important examples by some of the greatest names in art history. It was a collection founded not only on Titi's astute connoisseurship, but her expansive curiosity. Nearly a dozen years after Titi's death in 2006, the collection serves as a reminder of her tremendous generosity of spirit and an inspiration to future generations of aesthetics and philanthropists.

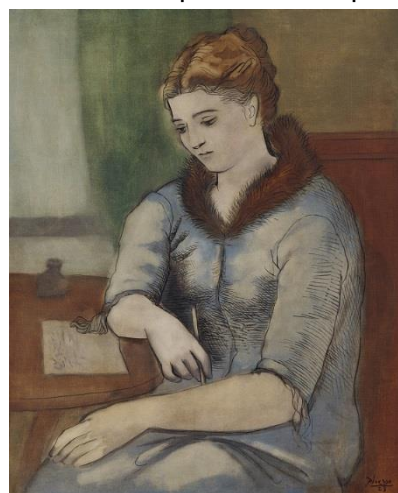
Adrien Meyer, Co-Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, remarked: "HSH Princess "Titi" von Fürstenberg was a passionate collector of the "contemporary art" of her time. Her collection was tirelessly put together with great flair in the 1950's and ranged from a monumental Rothko to a rare 1956 Dubuffet collage painting, from Ernst to

Fontana. It was anchored by a magnificent neoclassical Picasso portrait of Olga (La Lettre (La Reponse)), which had been acquired by her mother Sarah “Sadie” Campbell in 1943 directly from Paul Rosenberg. This collection will appear on the market for the first time as a highlight of the Spring sales allowing Christie’s to pay tribute to Princess Fürstenberg’s remarkable eye.”

A distinguished member of the international beau monde, Princess Cecil Amelia von Fürstenberg personified the lively spirit of her native Texas with an effortless continental flair. Across her nearly ninety years, “Titi,” as she was called, was celebrated for her signature charm, élan, and unwavering commitment to furthering her family’s distinguished record of collecting and philanthropy. Cecil Amelia Blaffer was born in Houston in 1919, the descendent of two of Texas’s most prominent families. Titi’s father, Robert Lee Blaffer, was a founder of Humble Oil, which is now Exxon Mobile; her maternal grandfather, William Thomas Campbell, was among the founders of The Texas Company known today as Texaco. The Blaffer family’s philanthropic and cultural efforts made a lasting impact across the state of Texas. Titi’s mother, Sarah “Sadie” Campbell, was one of the state’s most ardent supporters of the arts and a noted connoisseur. Following her marriage to R.L. Blaffer, Sadie devoted much of her energies to building an extensive private collection of Old Master, Impressionist and Modern pictures—a passion that she passed on to her daughter.

In 1975, Titi married Prince Tassilo von Fürstenberg. At the von Fürstenberg’s residences in Europe, the Bahamas and the United States, Titi earned a reputation as a consummate hostess. She was especially dedicated to philanthropy, providing significant financial donations and personal leadership to institutions including the Houston Symphony Orchestra; the Houston Grand Opera; the Wagner Opera Festival in Bayreuth, Germany; the American Cathedral in Paris and St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Houston, among many others. Titi both preserved and expanded her family’s notable history of philanthropy, folding her own charitable foundation into her mother’s Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, where she served as a trustee for nearly four decades.

Titi’s personal collection reflects her international worldview and passion for culture. During her lifetime, she acquired numerous important examples by some of the greatest names in art history, including Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, Fernand Léger, Lucio Fontana, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. It was a collection founded not only on Titi’s astute connoisseurship, but her expansive curiosity with works from Europe, America, India, and Africa. Nearly a dozen years after Titi’s death in 2006, the collection serves as a reminder of her tremendous generosity of spirit and an inspiration to future generations of aesthetics and philanthropists.

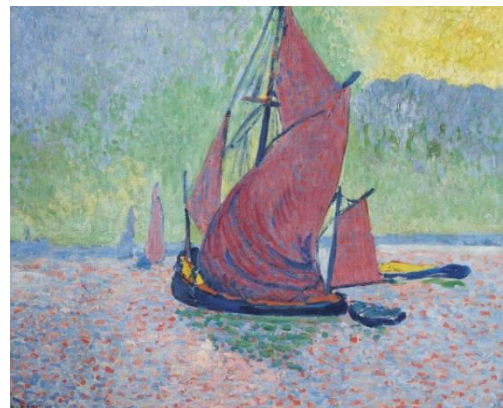


Leading the sale is Pablo Picasso’s *Le Lettre (La Reponse)*, 1923 (estimate upon request) – *pictured left*. During the early months of 1923, Picasso completed a trio of large, exquisitely refined portraits of his wife, the Russian-born ballerina Olga Khokhlova. Two are rendered with oils, including the present version and a second version in the National Gallery, and one with pastel. However, all three share a supremely delicate, restrained touch that heightens the sitter’s pensive air, bringing forth her innermost reality. In the present portrait, the most enigmatic of the group,

she has paused in a moment of reverie in the midst of writing a letter, pen in hand and inkwell before her on the desk; her private thoughts remain a mystery to us, and likely to Picasso as well, but she shares them here with some unknown confidante.

This canvas was one of 16 pictures by Picasso to feature in a landmark exhibition in New York and Chicago—the artist’s first solo showing in America—during the winter of 1923-1924. The impresario of the exhibition was the dealer Paul Rosenberg, who had represented Picasso since 1918.

Also highlighting the selection is Andre Derain’s *Les Voiles Rouges*, 1906 – *pictured right*. In the spring of 1906, André Derain embarked on an important



painting campaign to London, the results were a radical reimagining of the cityscape, a unique series of paintings filled with bold passages of bright, saturated colour that transformed the familiar landmarks of the English capital into Fauvist visions. The portion of the river Thames illustrated in *Les Voiles Rouges* is featured in just one other London composition, the atmospheric *Effets de soleil sur l'eau*, in which the shimmering, dancing play of light on the river is captured in a dazzling mosaic of vibrant greens and golds. Considered together, both *Les Voiles Rouges* and *Effets de soleil sur l'eau* represent a clear departure from the bustling atmosphere of Derain's paintings of the river as it winds its way through the city. Executed in thick layers of wide, slab-like touches of colour, *Les Voiles Rouges* reflects the bold experimental approach of Derain's technique during this period, in which, Derain shunned the extreme rigour and analytical precision of the Neo-Impressionist's pointillism in favour of a more intuitive brushstroke.



Nicolas de Staël's *Ciel* – pictured left – was painted in 1953, in the middle of a brief period that yielded many of the artist's most celebrated works. It was during this year that the artist participated in the Venice Biennale, and "...was considered by many to be the most significant new painter to emerge in post-war Europe." (A. Bowness, *Nicolas de Staël*, London, 1981, p. 5). This productive stretch was ushered in by the artist's newfound use of the spatula as his central tool in the application of paint. This new means of working allowed him to lay down larger planes of color than he had before. Through these thick and broad swaths of color, de Staël's *Ciel* evokes a blustery sky atop a thin sliver of land. Whereas other examples of de Staël's landscapes and seascapes are often marked by stacked horizontal planes of sky, land and sea, *Ciel's* unique composition is produced by triangular and diagonal applications of paint and a tilted horizon line, drawing similarity to other periods of de Staël's career when he represented movement through the utilization of figuration or lively brushwork.

Further Highlights to Include:



MARK ROTHKO (1903-1970)
No. 16/No. 12 (Mauve Intersection)
 oil on canvas
 Painted in 1949
 \$2,000,000-3,000,000



JEAN (HANS) ARP (1886-1966)
Entité ailée
 polished black granite
 Conceived in 1961 and carved by 1963; unique
 \$1,800,000-2,500,000

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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.

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