

CHRISTIE'S

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | NEW YORK | 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

CHRISTIE'S ANNOUNCES THE COLLECTION OF JAMES AND MARILYNN ALSDORF

A MULTI-CATEGORY COLLECTION FROM RENOWNED CHICAGO ART PATRONS

CATEGORIES INCLUDE IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN, POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY, AMERICAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN ART, OLD MASTER DRAWINGS, ASIAN WORKS OF ART AND MORE



GLOBAL TOUR OF HIGHLIGHTS:

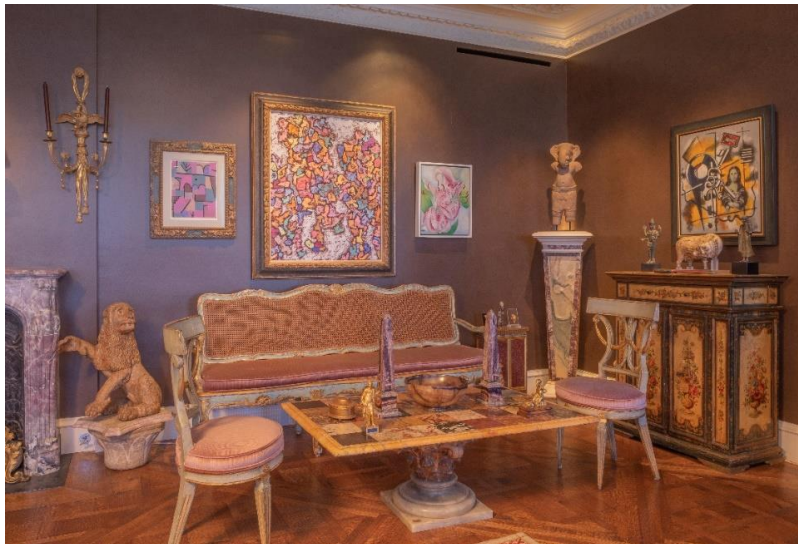
Taipei: 1 – 4 October
London: 2 – 4 October
Hong Kong: 3 – 8 October; 22 – 25 November
Chicago: 16 – 19 October
Los Angeles: 29 – 31 October

“We looked for objects to delight our eyes and souls.” — Marilyn Alsdorf

New York – Christie's is honored to announce it has been entrusted to auction The Collection of James and Marilyn Alsdorf. Known for their generosity of spirit as significant arts patrons in their hometown of Chicago, James and Marilyn Alsdorf spent their 38-year marriage building a wide-ranging collection marked by both quality and diversity across a broad range of categories. With works spanning antiquity to the Renaissance, 19th century Impressionism, mid-20th century Surrealism, and modern masters, the Alsdorfs' home was akin to an encyclopedic museum of art. The Collection will be offered at Christie's Rockefeller Center in New York beginning November 2019 and continuing into spring 2020. The first highlights from the collection, which is expected to realize in excess of \$50 million in total, will be unveiled on 1 October, which marks the start of a global tour of highlights ahead of initial sales in November.

Marc Porter, Christie's Chairman, Americas, remarks: *"The Alsdorf Collection is an example of cross-category collecting at its finest, with a wide span of artwork and objects from all eras and areas of the world, crowned by true masterpieces in the collecting realms of antiquities, works on paper, European and Latin American Art, and Indian and Southeast Asian Art. For those who knew Marilyn Alsdorf, her diversity of interests and insistence on quality and rarity were thoroughly in keeping with her devotion to education and access to the arts. As one of the great visionaries in the Chicago arts community, she committed her time, attention and money to Chicago's major arts institutions. We look forward to honoring this inspiring legacy on behalf of the Alsdorf Estate this fall and spring, as we introduce this exceptional array of artworks and objects from their personal collection to the world."*

Bridget Alsdorf, granddaughter of James and Marilyn Alsdorf, explains: *"As a couple, my grandparents were the picture of elegance, and they had impeccable taste, but to their family and many friends they were known for their warmth, wit, and humor. Studying and collecting art was their all-consuming passion, and it brought them all over the world. Their spirit of adventure was unique; they went places that few collectors at the time were curious and confident enough to explore. But they were not strategic in their collecting. They were guided by what fascinated them and gave them pleasure, by knowledge and instinct, and they were an incredible team. My grandmother, in particular, had a brilliant curatorial eye. The way she staged relationships — stylistic and thematic — between objects from wildly divergent times and places was unlike anything I've seen."*



Alsdorf living room in Chicago

SELECT COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

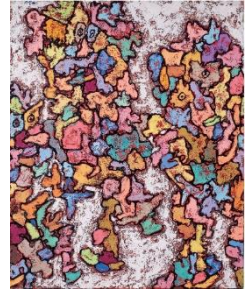
IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART | NOVEMBER 11



Joan Miró's *'La Publicitat' et le vase de fleurs*, painted 1916-17, shows a young artist assimilating various strands of modernism in the early years of the 20th century and stands as a rare-to-market example of his early talent. Executed in oil and newspaper collage on canvas, this work established the Spanish-born Miró as a singular and significant artist of his generation (estimate: \$2,000,000 – 3,000,000). Additional highlights in the category include **Pablo Picasso's** *Portrait de Marie-Thérèse*, a pen and ink and wash on paper portrait of the artist's mistress and muse, executed on 23 October 1937 (estimate: \$800,000 – 1,200,000), and **René Magritte's** moody 1957 oil on canvas work *Le seize Septembre (The sixteenth of September)* (estimate: \$7,000,000 – 9,000,000).

POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART | NOVEMBER 14

The title of **Jean Dubuffet's** *Palinodie*, 1961, is a French word meaning a poetic retraction (estimate: \$3,000,000 – 5,000,000). It harkens back to Dubuffet's close relationship with members of the Parisian intelligentsia and marks a turning point in his artistic practice towards the "irreal," rather than the literal depictions of his previous portraiture. Additionally, this work belongs to a subseries of the Paris Circus works called "Légendes" and was created in 1961, a celebrated year for the artist.



AMERICAN ART | NOVEMBER 20



Georgia O'Keeffe's *Pink Spotted Lilies*, 1936, is a beautiful example of the artist's ingenious manipulation of color, form and composition (estimate: \$1,200,000-1,800,000). Reflecting the pictorial strategies that O'Keeffe had developed as an avant-garde American modernist, *Pink Spotted Lilies* maintains a heightened realism that pushes her iconic subject of the flower to the edge of abstraction. The result is a powerful visual impact which complements the Surrealist works in the Alsdorf Collection.

LATIN AMERICAN ART | NOVEMBER 20-21

Frida Kahlo's *The Flower Basket*, 1941, offers an exceptional and rare still life which suggests a kinship with such diverse sources as 17th-century Dutch still life paintings and traditional Aztec and Mayan iconography. Likewise, this intimate work replete with symbolic imagery reflects upon a significant chapter in the artist's complex relationship with fellow artist and husband Diego Rivera (estimate: \$3,000,000 – 5,000,000). Executed in oil on copper, only two works of this kind exist, with the other held by the artist's eponymous museum in Mexico City. Kahlo's depiction of a hummingbird floating above a rich floral bouquet reflects a renewed hope and period of happiness in her life after reuniting with the famous Mexican mural painter whom she married in 1929 and from whom she was briefly divorced from 1939-1940. Kahlo gifted this work to Hollywood film star Paulette Goddard before it was acquired decades later by Marilyn Alsdorf.



OLD MASTER DRAWINGS | JANUARY 2020

A selection of Old Master Drawings which will be offered in January in New York will include fine French and Italian works from the 18th century. A beautiful example among the core group of French drawings in the collection is **François Boucher's** *Female nude playing a flute* (estimate: \$20,000-30,000), as well as works by **Jean-Baptiste Oudry**. Sheets by celebrated draftsmen **Giovanni Battista** and **Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo** are among the highlights of the Italian drawings collection.

SPRING 2020 SALES

Future sales across Asian Art Week in the spring of 2020 will include remarkable works of Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art, Furniture & Decorative Art, Japanese Art, as well as Chinese Paintings and Chinese Works of Art. Highlights include *A Rare and Magnificent Bronze Figure of Shiva Vinadhara* from South India dating from the early 11th century (estimate: \$1,000,000 – 1,500,000), *A Guan-style Pear-shaped Vase* dating to the Qianlong period (1736-1795, estimate: \$100,000 – 150,000), and *A Very Rare Marble Head of Buddha*, Northern Qi-Sui dynasty (550-610, estimate: \$600,000 – 800,000).

JAMES AND MARILYNN ALSDORF

After the couple married in 1952, they quickly discovered a shared passion for cultural exploration and collecting, which for them was not a hobby but a way of life. They were able to widely share their odyssey of life-long global discovery through the generous contributions the couple made to the arts community of Chicago and beyond.

During his lifetime, business executive James Alsdorf served as president of the Cory Corporation of Chicago, which became the largest manufacturer of glass coffee equipment and was later sold to Hershey Food Corporation. Together, James and Marilyn Alsdorf operated Alsdorf International Ltd., an export and investment business started by his father in 1911. But it was their global art collecting expeditions that brought the couple the most joy. Whether it was socializing with Henri Matisse and Alberto Giacometti or visiting the awe-inspiring temples of Southeast Asia, each experience gave them a deeper appreciation for works of international origin.

Beginning in 1964, the couple joined a small group of fellow art enthusiasts in establishing the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, which opened its doors in 1967. After her husband's passing in 1990, Marilyn Alsdorf became known as "the queen of the Chicago arts community" and in 1997 donated 400 Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian works to the Art Institute of Chicago, the museum for which James Alsdorf served as chairman of the board in the 1970s. A subsequent 2006 donation by Mrs. Alsdorf to the AIC made possible the Renzo Piano-designed renovation of what is now the Alsdorf Galleries for Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian Art at the museum.

Marilynn Alsdorf's passion for collecting never ceased, and she continued to collect works by René Magritte, Wassily Kandinsky, Frida Kahlo, and others before passing away peacefully at the age of 94 in 2019. The Collection of James and Marilyn Alsdorf affords the rare opportunity to acquire museum-quality works with the esteemed provenance of two of America's leading cross-category connoisseurs.

Note to Editors:

Additional details of future sales of property from the Alsdorf Collection will be announced closer to the sale dates.

Christie's has previously announced the following highlights of its upcoming fall season, including its flagship 20th Century Week sales:

- [The Clarke Collection](#)
- [The Collection of Terry Allen Kramer](#)
- [The Collection of Eileen and I.M. Pei](#)
- [The Collection of Richard L. Weisman](#)

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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.*

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Images available on request

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