

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 20 NOVEMBER 2019

## CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER

### THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF JAYNE WRIGHTSMAN

- PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT PHILANTHROPY
- OLD MASTER PAINTINGS, FRENCH FURNITURE, AND DECORATIVE ARTS
- LIVE AND ONLINE SALES TO BE HELD IN APRIL 2020



Cecil Beaton/Condé Nast/ GettyImages

#### INTERNATIONAL TOUR OF HIGHLIGHTS

Paris | 23-26 November 2019

London | 29 November-4 December & 7-13 December 2019

Hong Kong | March 2020

**New York** – Christie's is honored to be entrusted with The Private Collection of Jayne Wrightsman, with live and online auctions to be held in April 2020, during the Classic Week sales in New York. A paragon of erudition and style, Jayne Wrightsman was a connoisseur and patron of the arts who unequivocally revived the field of French decorative arts in America. She and her husband, Charles B. Wrightsman, built an exceptional collection of furniture and works of art and served as Trustees of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, making transformative gifts to the Museum and establishing The Wrightsman Galleries for French Decorative Arts.

The auctions will include Old Master paintings and sculpture, European furniture and ceramics, Chinese ceramics and works of art, silver and carpets, and other items. Mrs. Wrightsman lived with these items in her elegant home at 820 Fifth Avenue in New York and designated them for sale to benefit philanthropy. The sales are estimated to exceed \$8,000,000.

Selected highlights from the collection will tour in advance of the sales to Christie's galleries in Paris (23-26 November), London (29 November-4 December and 7-13 December 2019), and Hong Kong (March 2020).

**Bonnie Brennan, Christie's Deputy Chairman**, comments, "*Mrs. Wrightsman's unrivalled contributions to culture provide an aspirational model of patronage, connoisseurship, and style. From revitalizing the study of French decorative arts to gifting masterpiece works to her cherished Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jayne Wrightsman stands as one of the most important figures in the history of modern collecting. We are honored to share her singular collecting vision with a global audience and are delighted that her legacy of generosity will carry on through the charitable results of this auction.*"

## COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

A captivating and superb *Odalisque* by **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** (1780-1867) is among the leading paintings in the collection (estimate: \$700,000 - 1,000,000). The jewel-like *Odalisque* is diminutive in scale at 2 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches and is an intimate version of Ingres's revolutionary *Grand Odalisque* of 1814, which is in the Louvre. *Odalisque* is an object of exquisite aesthetic refinement: the delicacy and fluency of the paint handling, flickering lightness and facility of the brushwork and elegance of the color palette are all characteristic of Ingres's finest paintings. The painting also stands as a poignant and personal memento of Ingres's deep and lifelong friendship with Jean-Pierre-François Gilibert (1793-1850), to whom the work was given around 1829.



Among other collection highlights to be previewed in Paris is a grand-scale portrait, *Charles IX (1550-1574), King of France* by **François Clouet** (c. 1510-1572) (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000); a **Louis XVI ormolu-mounted porphyry urn and cover**, probably supplied by the celebrated *marchand-mercier* Dominique Daguerre, the mounts attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, the mounts *circa* 1785, the porphyry vase late 17<sup>th</sup> century (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), part of a group of superb and rare vases in the sale carved from Egyptian porphyry, that most Imperial and talismanic of hardstones; a **Royal Louis XVI bois satiné table de café by Martin Carlin**, supplied to Mesdames, the aunts of Louis XVI, for the château de Bellevue (estimate: \$80,000-120,000); and a **set of four late Louis XV giltwood bergères by Claude II Sené**, *circa* 1770, with Braquenién printed velvet upholstery supplied by Henri Samuel (estimate: \$60,000-100,000)—both of the former were published in Francis Watson's magisterial catalogue of the Wrightsman Collection, published in 1966.

## ABOUT JAYNE WRIGHTSMAN (1919-2019)

Jayne Wrightsman was a brilliant autodidact, peerless in the care and scholarship with which she approached collecting. For a generation of women, Mrs. Wrightsman served as a model of the American patrician *à la Française*: learned, elegant, and exceedingly generous, she embodied both style and substance.

Jane Larkin was born in Michigan in 1919, educated in Beverly Hills, California, and earned a reputation for style and sophistication at a young age. In 1944, Jayne married Charles Bierer Wrightsman (d.1986), the president of the Standard Oil Company of Kansas, and across more than four decades of marriage they developed a passion for collecting and Mrs. Wrightsman became an expert in 18<sup>th</sup> century French decorative arts, European paintings, and 18<sup>th</sup> century French manuscripts, books and bindings. It was in their stunning oceanfront estate Blythedunes, acquired in 1947, in Palm Beach, Florida, where Mrs. Wrightsman first developed her passion for French decorative works of art. Working with decorator Stéphane Boudin of Paris's Maison Jansen, the two redesigned Blythedunes, which swiftly became a meeting place for the uppermost echelons of society, including Palm Beach neighbors such as John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, as well as visiting

dignitaries including the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Cecil Beaton, the Shah of Iran, and art historians Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark.

Ultimately it was the Wrightsmans' magnificent home at 820 Fifth Avenue in New York, one of the city's most storied and iconic interiors, coupled with their exceptional philanthropy, which would propel Mrs. Wrightsman into the pantheon of legendary collectors. In New York her connoisseurship and collecting was fostered by her close relationships with a network of curators and fellow collectors, as well as by her relationships with three of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most esteemed interior decorators—Stéphane Boudin, Henri Samuel, and Renzo Mongiardino. For over six decades, Jayne Wrightsman lived in this stunning *mise en scène* of her own making, in which works of royal provenance in wood, lacquer, gilt bronze and porcelain held court in rooms paneled in magnificent eighteenth-century boiserie, hung with master paintings by Vermeer, Georges de La Tour, El Greco, Tiepolo, Canaletto and others, at times contributing from her personal collection to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Jayne Wrightsman saw every donation and gift as an opportunity to promote art and culture. In addition to her support of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, she was an ardent patron of New York University's Institute of Fine Arts—home to the Jayne B. Wrightsman Professor of Fine Art and the Wrightsman Lecture Series—and served as a Trustee to both The Metropolitan Opera and The Morgan Library, to the latter of which she left at her death a transformational gift of 18<sup>th</sup> century French manuscripts and bindings.

In Britain, where the Wrightsmans kept a London flat for many years, Mrs. Wrightsman gave her support to the historic Rothschild residence at Waddesdon Manor, in addition to serving as a donor to The British Museum. It was during her time in London that she was also an active member of the Roxburghe Club. In 2003, she was honored as an Officer of the most excellent Order of the British Empire. Mrs. Wrightsman was one of the most important patrons of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, where she worked closely with curators to support the creation of a series of period rooms, opened in 2000, in the former apartments of a nineteenth-century Russian foreign minister. In 2013, Mrs. Wrightsman was named an Officier of the Légion d'Honneur for her decades-long commitment to French art and culture; among her many institutional gifts in France was a dressing table, formerly in the collection of Marie Antoinette, presented to Versailles.

*Note to editors:* Details of the auctions will be announced in the preceding months. To register for updates, visit [www.christies.com/wrightsman](http://www.christies.com/wrightsman)

---

**PRESS CONTACT:** Sara Fox | 212 636 2680 | [sfox@christies.com](mailto:sfox@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.*

###

*Images available on request*

**FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:**

