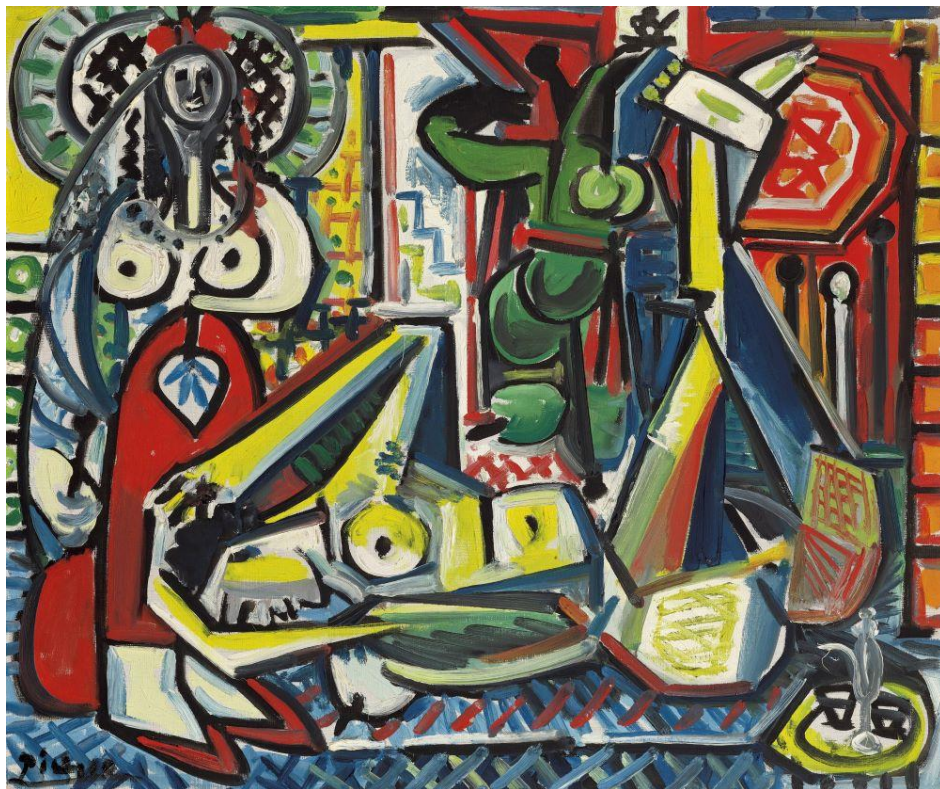


CHRISTIE'S

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PABLO PICASSO'S *LES FEMMES D'ALGER (VERSION 'F')* TO HIGHLIGHT *ONE: A GLOBAL SALE OF THE 20TH CENTURY*



New York – On July 10, Christie's will offer Pablo Picasso's *Les femmes d'Alger (version 'F')*, 17 January 1955 (estimate in the region of \$25 million) in **ONE: a global sale of the 20th century**. The present painting hails from the celebrated series of the 15 canvases that Picasso executed between 13 December 1954 and 14 February 1955 based on Eugène Delacroix's masterwork *Les femmes d'Alger*. Together, these paintings constitute Picasso's single greatest achievement in the decades following the end of the World War II. The full range of these versions adds up to a master class of modernist pictorial forms, revitalized and created anew. Each of the individual canvases is singular in its own right, a marvel of teeming and brilliant invention.

Jessica Fertig, Head of Evening Sale, Impressionist and Modern Art, remarked: “*The Femmes d'Alger paintings are one of Picasso's most important and complex series—demonstrating the influences both from the past in Delacroix and his contemporary with Matisse. It is fitting then that Les femmes d'Alger (version 'F')* leads this groundbreaking sale, bringing together the most important artists of the 20th century

– many of whom count Picasso among their greatest sources of inspiration – and presenting them to a global audience. This is a particularly opportune moment to bring this masterwork to market, as it represents all of the virtues that a strong and judicious market is looking for, including excellent provenance, freshness to market, and extraordinary quality.”

Picasso painted the present *Femmes d’Alger, Version F* on 17 January 1955, around the halfway point in the cycle. It is the culminating, most fully resolved canvas from the first phase of the series, when Picasso favored medium-sized formats. In its brilliant color, spatial complexity, and compositional resolution, *Version F* represents the bridge to the later, larger-scale works in the ensemble and a counterpart to the magisterial *Version O*, which brings the second half of the series to a close.

The fifteen versions of *Les femmes d’Alger* were first exhibited in June- October 1955 at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, installed together as the most recent paintings in a major retrospective of Picasso’s work. The artist assumed that the individual canvases would end up with different collectors. Kahnweiler stipulated to prospective buyers, however, that the fifteen paintings must be purchased as a group, ostensibly on Picasso’s demand, which the artist denied. Victor and Sally Ganz of New York had, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, acquired some of Picasso’s most challenging pictures, including wartime works. They agreed to Kahnweiler’s condition and acquired the whole series in June 1956 for 80 million francs (nearly \$213,000).

“Picasso told us the evening before that Kahnweiler had telephoned him to tell him that one American had just bought all *Les femmes d’Alger*,” Hélène Parmelin recounted. “It had a curious effect on everyone. What on earth would *Les femmes d’Alger* do abroad? The whole harem in one American’s house! These were too many canvases for one man. We wagered he would not keep the lot” (*Picasso Plain*, New York, 1959, p. 79). Picasso and his friends were right: the Ganzes had spent more than they could afford and ultimately only kept *C, H, K, M, and O*. Working through the dealers Eleanore and Daniel Saidenberg, and Paul Rosenberg, they soon sold ten versions to various collectors and museums in America. However, Eleanore and Daniel Saidenberg chose to keep the present painting for their personal collection, where it remained for over half a century. This marks *Les femmes d’Alger version F*’s first time at auction.

In May 2015, *Version O* from the series made auction history when it was sold for \$179.4 million in Christie’s Looking Forward to the Past sale, achieving the highest price for any lot ever sold at auction at the time and setting the world auction record for Picasso.

ONE: A Global Sale of the 20th Century: This July, Christie’s will launch a revolutionary relay-style auction concept. Entitled **ONE: A Global Sale of the 20th Century**, this sale will present masterpiece-level works of 20th Century Art together in a curated live-online hybrid sale, blurring category boundaries and bringing clients together in an unprecedented way.

Launching in Hong Kong, the sale will then transition to auctioneers in Paris and London, concluding in New York. Each city will host a pre-sale public exhibition staged in line with the appropriate regional health advice at the time, complemented by a ground-breaking virtual exhibition and digital marketing campaign to connect with global audiences and support the auction event. Bidders will be able to participate both online, via Christie’s LIVE online bidding channel, and where regional, government advice allows, clients and phone bidders will be welcomed in each saleroom location.

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About Christie’s

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in 2019 that totalled £4.5 billion / \$5.8 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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