

# CHRISTIE'S

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## CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS THE SECOND ANNUAL *LA MÉNAGERIE* AUCTION OF SCULPTURE AND DESIGN



François-Xavier Lalanne (1927-2008), *Oiseau de jardin à bascule*, copper plated and polished steel, 1974.  
Estimate: \$1,300,000 - 1,800,000

**NEW YORK** – On December 4, Christie's will present *La Ménagerie*, a curated auction featuring works of sculpture and design based on artists' interpretations of animals and wildlife, as part of the marquee 20th Century Week. From the powerful and elegant to the playful and irreverent, the sale features a dynamic selection of 29 works from artists spanning the 20th century to present day. Highlighted by masterworks by **François-Xavier Lalanne** as well as a selection of ten important bronzes by **Rembrandt Bugatti**, *La Ménagerie* also includes works by **Diego Giacometti**, François Pompon, Judy McKie, and Joseph Csaky, among other important artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Estimates range from \$3,000-4,000 for Riccardo Scarpa's carved mahogany owl, *Hibou* from 1945 to \$2.5-3.5 million for the sale's top lot, a flock of 10 *Moutons* by François-Xavier Lalanne.

Among the sale's top lots is François-Xavier Lalanne's unique *Oiseau de jardin à bascule*, 1974 (estimate: \$1.3-1.8 million) – *pictured above*, a uniquely wonderful bird-shaped rocking chair which exemplifies Lalanne's alluring inspiration found in nature, coupled with his interest in animals and their dynamic capacity for movement. The present work was exhibited at the seminal exhibition, *Les Lalanne: Domesticated Beasts and Other Creatures*, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in East London in June and July of 1976. For *Oiseau de jardin à bascule*, Lalanne found inspiration in the French "piau", a small, sparrow that populates the streets of Paris. Every detail speaks to the artist's ingenuity in reimagining the bird: the nuances of the copper-

plating metal echo the beautiful chestnut-brown feathers, and the movement of the rocking chair reflects the characteristic jittering of the bird. The viewer is welcomed to rock gently on the sparrow's back, with its wings rising up to create a resting spot for elbows, and the hollow body providing a cozy and comfortable nook to settle in.

Since first conceived in Paris in 1965, François-Xavier Lalanne's sheep have become the artist's most iconic and iterative creation. Leading the sale, this particular flock of ten, *Troupeau de Moutons* (\$2.5-3.5 million), embodies the fantastical and all-encompassing magical kingdom that Les Lalannes imagined and crafted throughout their lives. Composed of five types varied in size and demeanor—the *Agneaux*, the *Brebis*, the *Moutons Transhumant*, the *Moutons de Pierre*, and the *Bélier*, a strong ram—each is personified and individualized, presenting its own unique character and personality, thus adding to the flock's overall surrealist and whimsical presence.



The sale presents a selection of 10 works by Rembrandt Bugatti, featuring an important private East Coast collection. The birds, deer, felines and elephants offered in the sale show how Bugatti's close relationship with his subjects, established while studying them at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris or at the Antwerp zoo, gave his sculptures a great accuracy and expression. Stories were told of animals responding to Bugatti's presence with affection, the wild seeming tame in his presence. Leading this selection, Bugatti's impressive *Lionne de Nubie* epitomizes this special bond he created with felines: his rendering of the mighty lioness captures the animal in all her majesty. Another highlight is the artist's masterful *Femme au chat*. (\$1-1.5 million). Conceived circa 1906 and cast in 1909, this work offers a rare depiction of a human by the artist. Although the artist's subjects were most commonly animals, between 1906 and 1908 the young artist realized a series of nudes, both male and female. Conceived during

this period, *Femme au chat* pairs the female nude with a domestic cat, as the girl sits holding the animal out in front of her. Bugatti's sensitivity to the animal is readily apparent. While many of the artist's other nudes from this period are more static, *Femme au chat* is a unique example in which Bugatti expertly crafts an interaction between man and beast.

Bugatti's work will also be underscored by *Éléphant au repos* (\$700,000-900,000) and *Petit Éléphant au repos* (\$120,000-180,000), which likely marks the first time that these two sculptures have stood together in public since the landmark 1929 *Exhibition of Animal Sculpture by R. Bugatti* organized by Sir Robert (Bertie) Abdy, 5th Baronet, at the galleries of Messrs Abdy & Co., 11 Carlos Place, Grosvenor Square, London. This famed exhibition was only the second solo retrospective organized after Rembrandt's tragic death in 1916.



Among the contemporary highlights is Judy Kensley McKie's *Jaguar Bench*, 1992 (\$100,000-150,000). Judy Kensley McKie is a leading figure in the American studio furniture movement. After more than twenty years of working in wood, McKie began casting in bronze after a friend working with a foundry in Berkeley, California, suggested bronze as a new medium for her imagery. This particular cast was commissioned as part of a larger group of five 'Jaguar' benches that resided in a private park in Paris, France. The present 'Jaguar' bench, beautifully displays McKie's talent to combine whimsy with superb craftsmanship. The finely cast creature, enhanced with a rich, dark

brown patina, is normally a fearsome beast in nature.

## Further Highlights Include:



Diego Giacometti (1902-1985)  
*Chat maître d'hôtel*  
bronze with brown patina  
Conceived circa 1967  
Estimate: \$100,000-150,000



François-Xavier Lalanne (1927-2008)  
*Chien assis*  
bronze with reddish brown patina  
Executed circa 1982  
Estimate: \$180,000 -220,000



François Pompon (1855-1933)  
*Perdreau rouge*  
bronze with reddish brown patina  
Conceived in 1924 and cast by 1927  
Estimate: \$60,000-80,000



Rembrandt Bugatti (1885-1916)  
*Lionne de Nubie*  
bronze with reddish brown patina  
Conceived circa 1909-1910 and cast by 1934  
Estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000



Rembrandt Bugatti (1885-1916)  
*Cerf bramant*  
bronze with reddish brown patina  
Conceived circa 1905 and cast by 1910  
Estimate: \$200,000-300,000

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