

A surrealist painting featuring a man in a dark suit and a bowler hat, seen from behind, looking towards a bright yellow sun in a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground and background consist of dark, silhouetted trees and foliage, creating a dreamlike atmosphere.

THE ART OF THE SURREAL
EVENING SALE

CHRISTIE'S







1912 Francis Picabia

Lali ?
1932 ?













Zdzisław Beksiński
1960

THE ART OF THE SURREAL EVENING SALE

WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020

AUCTION

Wednesday 5 February 2020

at 7.00 pm (immediately following Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale)

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Adrien Meyer

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With thanks to Sandra Carli Karlsson and Antonio Yera for their assistance in researching for the catalogue, Isla McIntyre for her assistance in clearing copyright, and Will Fergie and Richard Olson for their operational support.

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MAX ERNST (1891-1976)

Paysage-effet d'attouchement

signed 'max ernst' (lower right); signed, dated and inscribed 'paysage effet d'attouchement 1934-35 Max Ernst MADE IN FRANCE' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

39% x 31% in. (100 x 81 cm.)

Painted in 1934-1935

£1,500,000-2,500,000

US\$2,000,000-3,300,000

€1,760,000-3,000,000

PROVENANCE:

The artist, until at least 1941.

James Johnson Sweeney, New York, until at least 1968.

Byron Gallery [Charles Byron], New York.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in the 1970s.

EXHIBITED:

Copenhagen, Den Frie Udstilling Bygning, *International Kunststilling, Kubisme = Surrealisme*, January 1935, no. 11, p. 16.

London, New Burlington Galleries, *The International Surrealist Exhibition*, June - July 1936, no. 83.

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, December 1936 - January 1937, no. 368, p. 224; this exhibition later travelled to

Philadelphia, Museum of Art, January - March 1937;

Boston, Museum of Modern Art, March - April 1937;

Springfield, Museum of Fine Arts, April - May 1937;

Milwaukee, Art Institute, May - June 1937; Minneapolis,

University Art Gallery, University of Minnesota, June -

July 1937; and San Francisco, Museum of Art, August

- September 1937.

Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Max Ernst*,

November - December 1959, no. 49, n.p.

New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Dada, Surrealism,*

and Their Heritage, March - June 1968, no. 107, p. 233

(illustrated fig. 186, p. 129).

Turin, Galleria Galatea, *Max Ernst*, October -

November 1969, n.p. (illustrated; titled 'Landscape

with Poetical Effects').

New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Max*

Ernst: A Retrospective, February - April 1975, no. 165,

p. 169 (illustrated; with incorrect dimensions).

Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand-Palais, *Max Ernst*,

May - August 1975, no. 204, p. 162 (illustrated p. 89).

LITERATURE:

C. Zervos, ed., 'Max Ernst, Œuvres de 1919 à 1936', in *Cahiers d'Art*, Paris, 1937, n.p. (illustrated).

Exh. cat., *Max Ernst, Gemälde und Graphik 1920-*

1950, Brühl, 1951, p. 81 (illustrated; titled 'Landschaft mit Getreidekorn').

L'Œil, no. 10, October 1955 (illustrated on the cover).

H. Demisch, *Vision und Mythos in der modernen*

Kunst, Stuttgart, 1959, no. 29, n.p. (illustrated; titled

'Landschaft mit dem Getreidekorn').

J. Gállego, 'Crónica de París', in *Goya*, no. 35, Madrid,

1960, p. 310 (illustrated; titled 'Paisaje').

E. Petrová, *Max Ernst*, Prague, 1965, no. 40.

J. Russell, *Max Ernst, Life and Work*, London, 1967,

no. 66, p. 346 (illustrated; titled 'Paysage au germe de

blé'; with incorrect dimensions and provenance).

U. M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*, London, 1972,

no. 284, p. 211 (illustrated p. 143; titled 'Landscape with

Wheatgerm' and with incorrect dimensions).

E. Quinn, *Max Ernst*, London, 1977, no. 221,

n.p. (illustrated).

W. Spies & S. & G. Metken, *Max Ernst, Werke 1929-*

1938, Cologne, 1979, no. 2148, p. 299 (illustrated).

C. Stokes, 'The Scientific Methods of Max Ernst. His

Use of Scientific Subjects from *La Nature*', in *The Art*

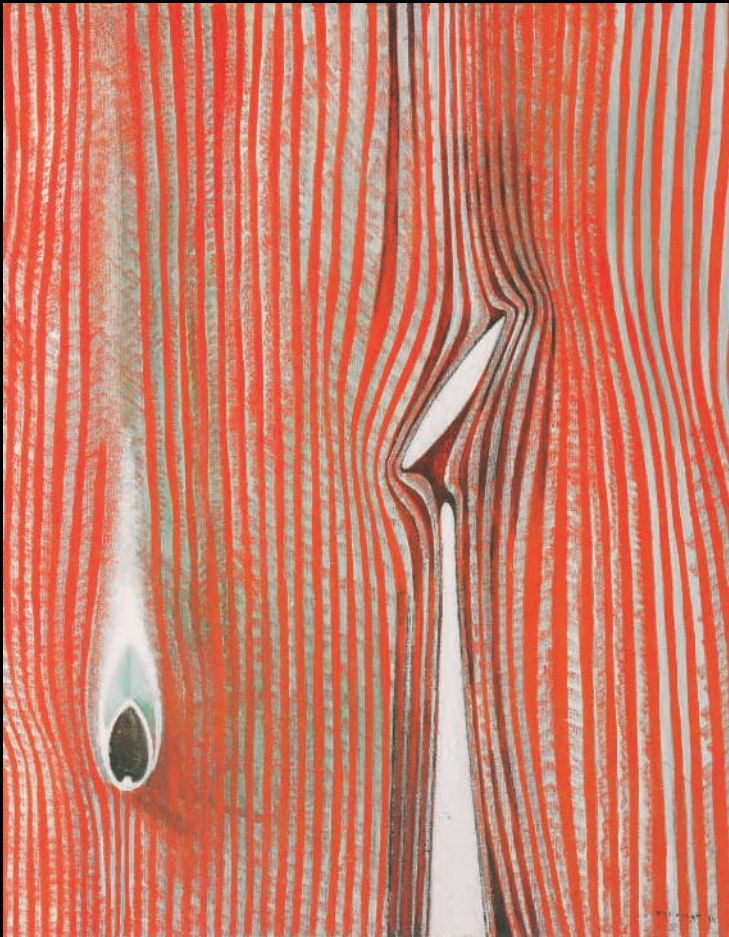
Bulletin, vol. 62, no. 3, 1980, p. 462 (under note 29).

G. & S. Metken, 'Max Ernst', in exh. cat., *Classics of*

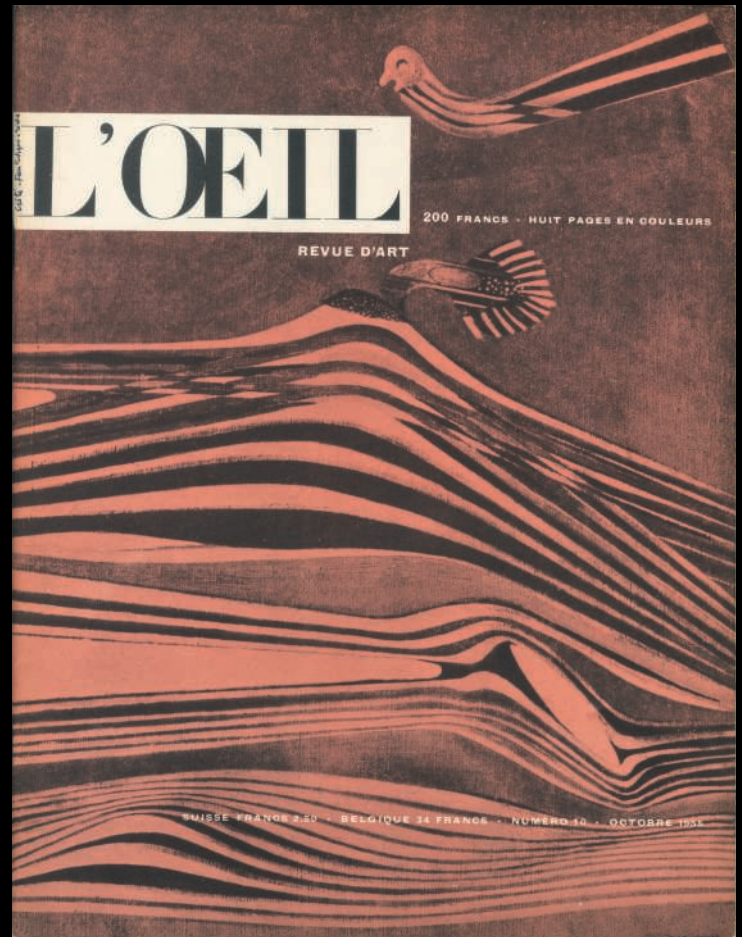
Modern Art, Andros, 1999, p. 127 (illustrated).



MAX ERNST



Max Ernst, *Nageur aveugle: effet d'attouchement*, 1934. Private collection.



Max Ernst, *Paysage-effet d'attouchement*, 1934-35, on the front cover of *L'Oeil Revue d'Art Mensuelle: Numéro 10*, October 1955.

'The last superstition and final sad vestige of the myth of Creation remaining to western culture was the legend of artistic creativity. It was one of the first revolutionary acts of Surrealism to have attacked this myth with straightforward means and in the sharpest manner, and presumably to have destroyed it forever, by absolutely insisting on the purely passive role of the "author" in the mechanics of poetic inspiration and by exposing every type of "active" control through reason, morality or aesthetic considerations as inimical to inspiration.'

– MAX ERNST

In 1934, the same year that he published this forceful acclamation of automatism in art, Max Ernst undertook a series of profoundly inventive paintings (Spies, nos. 2416-2151) that have their basis in photographs and illustrations documenting experiments with the flow of air and water around various objects, which caused the current to deviate from its straight course into dynamic, wave-like patterns. In these scientific images of physical forces at work – of energy visualised – Ernst found a fresh way of seeing, unencumbered by conventional artistic meanings and bearing tantalizing associations with his own passions and inner states. During the preceding years, he had frequently incorporated 'found' images from various scientific journals and encyclopedias into his radical collage practice; now, instead, he recreated and adapted his source material in oils, using the language of physical energy to picture the unconscious and deeply personal phenomena of sexual generation, biological growth, and creative revelation.

In *Paysage-effet d'attouchement*, one of the largest and most elaborate compositions in this series, the rhythmic waves can be construed as both eddies of water and strata of earth deposited over time. A white, wedge-shaped object slices into the landscape at the left, possibly

derived from a diagram of an aircraft wing in transverse section, showing airflow over its surface. Here, the encroaching form has become the *nageur aveugle* (blind swimmer), as Ernst titled a related painting – a proxy for the artist who feels his way forward according to an inner vision, freeing his mind from the constraints of external reality so that the layers of the subconscious can become visible. 'Before he goes into water,' Ernst explained, 'a diver cannot know what he will bring back. A painter does not choose his subject. Imposing one upon himself, be it ever so subversive and exciting, and treating it in an academic manner, would mean producing a work of weak revolutionary effect' (Ernst, quoted in J. Pech, *Max Ernst: Sculptures*, Milan, 1996, p. 69).

The swelling, undulant forms of the present landscape also invoke the contours of the female body or the inner layers of the flesh, like a topographical map to its most secret, buried regions. 'They can be seen as human anatomies,' John Russell has written, 'in which the blind explorer, groping this way and that, has stumbled upon the crevice that leads to the source of creation' (J. Russell, *Max Ernst, Life and Work*, London, 1967, p. 113). The white rod functions as a phallic emblem,



Max Ernst in his studio, 1936.
Photograph by Rogi André.



Joan Miró, *Paysage (Paysage au lapin et à la fleur)*, 1927. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

penetrating the channel of parallel folds and impelling its unseen seed toward the waiting egg at the epicentre of the image. The hill at the top of the landscape takes the form of a human breast, appended to which is a hybrid organism connoting propagation – at once a plant that sprouts from the fertile terrain, its stem bowed in a breeze and its seeds about to scatter, and a hummingbird that appears to drink from the pollen-dusted nipple.

Sailing above this imaginative vision is a larger, more brilliantly coloured bird, this one constituting an alter-ego for the artist himself. Since 1930, Ernst had featured in his work a hallucinatory, avian surrogate known as Loplop, Superior of Birds – ‘a private phantom very much attached and devoted to me’, he explained. Birds, with their ability to pass between the realms of earth and sky, have long served in religious lore as messengers and prophets; Loplop, likewise, functioned as a shamanic guide to Ernst’s imagination and creative process. ‘In identifying the bird with his “self”, while at the same time casting it as a kind of disconnected superego,’ Gisela Fischer has written, ‘Ernst was able not only to evoke the automatic creative process but also to attain something that was always of great importance for him—to merge passivity and activity into a creative principle’ (G. Fischer, *Max Ernst: Retrospective*, exh. cat., Vienna, 2013, p. 163).

The paintings that Ernst developed from scientific studies of flow patterns served him during the ensuing years as a creative wellspring in their own right. In the summer of 1934, as a guest of Giacometti at his home in Maloja, Switzerland, Ernst collected smooth, rounded rocks from the moraine of the Forno glacier and transformed them into painted or carved egg-shaped sculptures, representing the forces

of water and time as undulating waves and biomorphic shapes that envelop the surface of the stone. During 1935-1936, Ernst painted a series of variations on the original theme in which the striated forms are more dense and tangled – the maze of the human consciousness increasingly impenetrable and unknowable – evoking the artist’s apocalyptic forest imagery of these years (Spies, nos. 2172-2175, 2252).

During the same period, Ernst selected *Paysage-effet d’attouchement* for inclusion in a pair of momentous exhibitions, which marked a zenith for Surrealism in the global limelight. In summer 1936, the painting was featured in the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries, London, at which Dalí memorably delivered a lecture while wearing a deep-sea diving suit. Later the same year, it traveled to The Museum of Modern Art in New York for *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, organized by founding director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., which put Surrealism on the map for American audiences. In 1937, the canvas was included in a special issue of *Cahiers d’Art* devoted entirely to Ernst and his work – in effect, a retrospective exhibition in print. ‘It remains a capital document’, Russell has written, ‘and it would be difficult to better either the choice of works for reproduction or the quality of the *éloges*’ (J. Russell, *op. cit.*, 1967, p. 124).

The first recorded owner of *Paysage-effet d’attouchement* was the curator and critic James Johnson Sweeney, an impassioned advocate for innovative and experimental art. Sweeney led the prestigious Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA following the Second World War and subsequently, from 1952 until 1959, served as director of the Guggenheim Museum. The painting passed to the present owner in the 1970s and has never since changed hands on the market.



WAY OUT

WAY OUT

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FRANCIS PICABIA (1879-1953)

Ligustri

signed 'Francis Picabia' (lower left) and inscribed 'LIGUSTRI' (upper right)
oil, gouache and brush and black ink over pencil on panel
59¼ x 37⅞ in. (151.5 x 96.2 cm.)
Painted *circa* 1929

£2,200,000-2,800,000

US\$2,900,000-3,700,000

€2,600,000-3,300,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie de l'Effort Moderne [Léonce Rosenberg],
Paris (no. 1211).

Mr & Mrs Walter Brewster, Chicago, by whom
acquired from the above by 1930.

Ostrander Galleries, Chicago.

Dorothy S. Mundy, Davenport, Iowa, by whom
acquired from the above in 1951.

Private collection, United States, by whom acquired
from the above in July 1966, and thence by descent;
sale, Christie's, New York, 12 May 2016, lot 2C.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Chicago, The Renaissance Society of the University
of Chicago, *Exhibition of Modern French Paintings*,
February 1930, n.n. (titled 'Portrait').

Chicago, The Arts Club, *Late Works of Francis
Picabia*, September - December 2000, p. 11
(illustrated; with incorrect medium).

LITERATURE:

Album Léonce Rosenberg, *Francis Picabia, Jean
Viollier*, pl. 37 (illustrated).

Letter from Léonce Rosenberg to Picabia,
29 October 1930.

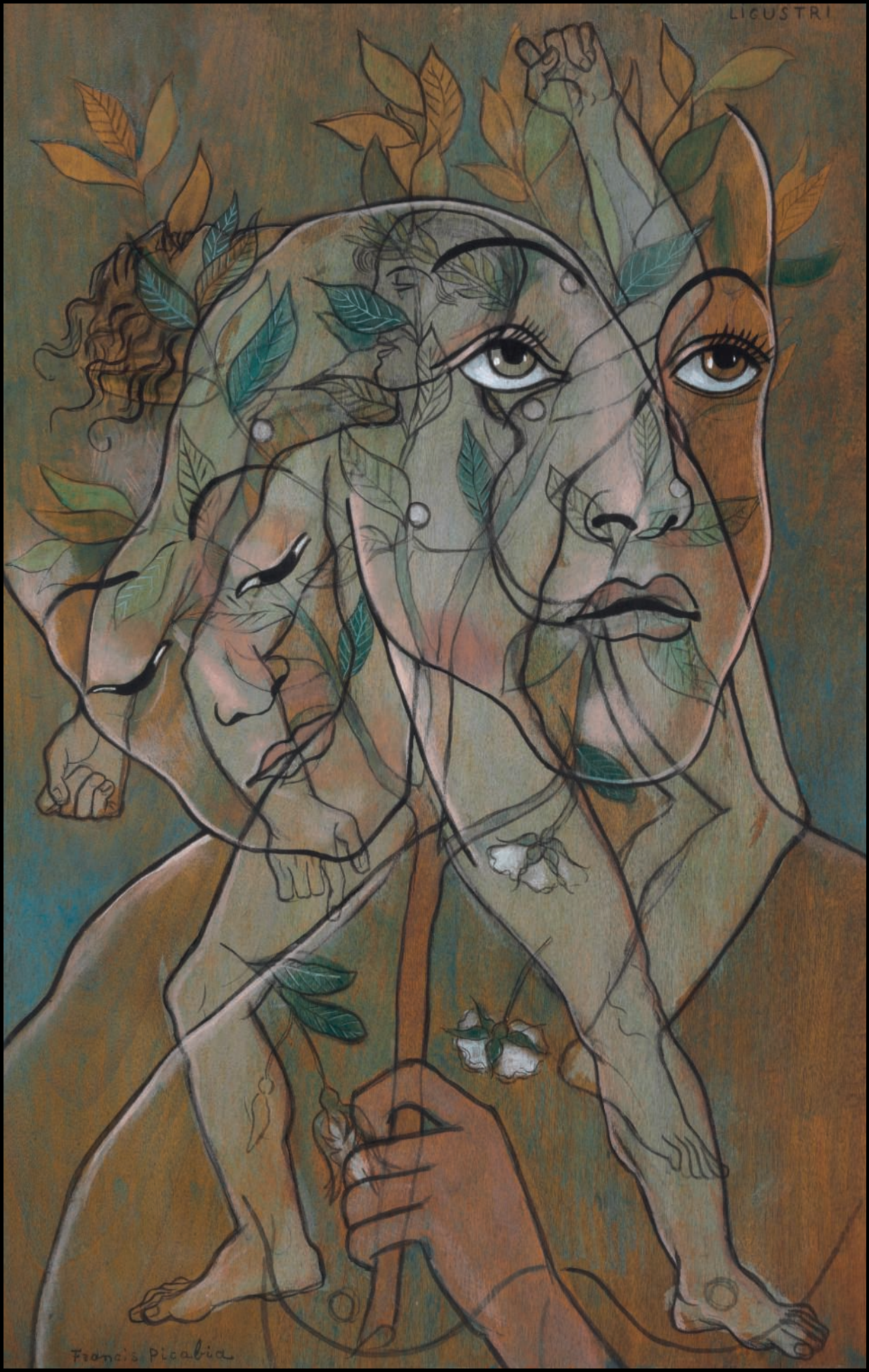
O. Mohler Picabia & M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Francis
Picabia*, Turin, 1975, pp. 172 & 177 (illustrated p. 45).

M.L. Borràs, *Picabia*, London, 1985, no. 541, p. 523
(illustrated fig. 715, p. 362; with incorrect medium).

C. Derouet, *Francis Picabia, Lettres à Léonce
Rosenberg, 1929-1940*, Paris, 2000, no. 37, p. 136
(dated '1930'; with incorrect medium).

O. Mohler Picabia & B. Calté, ed., *Album Picabia
- Olga Mohler Picabia*, Brussels, 2016, p. 43
(illustrated).

W. A. Camfield, B. Calté, C. Clements, A. Pierre &
A. Verdier, *Francis Picabia, Catalogue raisonné*,
vol. III, 1927-1939, New Haven & London, 2019,
no. 1084, p. 206 (illustrated).



LIEUSTRI

Francis Picabia



Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, circa 1478. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

‘Practically no-one knows what to do any more, and so they shout “Long live classicism!”

– FRANCIS PICABIA

Executed in 1929, *Ligustri* is a captivating example of Francis Picabia’s celebrated *Transparencies* paintings, a series of works named for their simultaneous depiction of multiple transparent images, dramatically layered atop one another in an effect reminiscent of multiple-exposure photography. The artist had previously played with superimposition in the illusory cinematographic techniques of his 1924 film, *Entr’acte*, as well as in his paintings from the *Monsters* and *Espagnoles* series, using the effect to plunge his viewers into a hallucinatory, sensual reverie filled with overlapping bodies and converging silhouettes. In paintings such as *Ligustri*, rather than using the painting as a window to another world, normalizing the illusionism at play, Picabia sought to stimulate the imagination by creating a surreal inter-lapping of imagery that confounded traditional reading. He traced the genesis of this fascination with the layering of transparent images to a revelatory moment in a café in Marseille where, on the glass of a window, the reflection of the interior appeared superimposed upon the outside view (Picabia, quoted in D. Ottinger, ed., *Francis Picabia dans les collections du Centre Pompidou Musée d’art Moderne*, Paris, 2003, p. 71).

Picabia drew on a multitude of visual sources for the *Transparencies*, using prints and reproductions of classical sculpture, Renaissance paintings and Catalan frescoes to build his compositions. Picabia’s son, Lorenzo, recalled his father having ‘a trunkful of art books in his studio,’ from which he most likely appropriated the majority of these images (L. Everling, quoted in M. Borràs, *Picabia*, transl. by K. Lyons, Paris, 1985, p. 340). In *Ligustri* the influence of Botticelli is particularly evident, with the linear, delicate beauty of the two female faces reminiscent of figures from both the *Bardi Altarpiece* and *Primavera*, while the tumbling blossoms at the centre of the composition can be linked to the Renaissance master’s iconic painting, *The Birth of Venus*. The



Francis Picabia, *Atrata*, circa 1929. Sold, Sotheby's, London, 26 February 2019 (\$4,941,558).



The present lot.

lithe, muscular bodies whose contours merge with these faces, meanwhile, call to mind sculptures from Greco-Roman antiquity, although their exact sources remain unclear. In the case of each of the figures included in the painting, Picabia reduces their forms to a series of simplified outlines, stripping away the life-like modelling of their bodies and flattening the images in a deliberate denial of painterly illusionism. A defining feature of the *Transparencies* series, this technique creates an otherworldly pictorial space, devoid of the traditional laws of perspective, in which the figures appear to float and overlap one another in an ethereal manner.

The *Transparencies* signalled an exciting development in Picabia's practice where, he claimed, 'all my instincts may have a free course' (Picabia, quoted in W. Camfield, *Francis Picabia: His Art, Life and Times*, Princeton, 1979, p. 233-234). By divorcing his source material from their original narrative and allegorical contexts, the artist forces these figures to enter into new, mysterious relationships with one another. Marcel Duchamp, writing twenty years after the *Transparencies* were created, explained that through this novel and highly original approach, Picabia succeeded in suggesting the third dimension without recurring to mathematical perspective, pushing figuration to new terrains (Duchamp, 'Francis Picabia: Painter, Writer,' pp. 4-5, in *Collection of the Société Anonyme: Museum of Modern Art 1920*, New Haven, 1950, p. 5). This sense of mystery continues in Picabia's choice of titles for the *Transparency* paintings, with a large number, including *Ligustri*, taken at random from Paul Girod's guide to butterflies and moths, *L'Atlas de poche des papillons de France, Suisse et Belgique*. Indeed, the word *ligustri* is derived from the Latin term for the flowering privet shrub, and is commonly used in the names of several different species of moth which feed on the plant. However, the connection between this title and the contents of the painting is never communicated to the viewer, leaving its meaning an enigma to all but the artist.



Francis Picabia, *Sphinx* 1929. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.



Sigmar Polke, *Art Deco*, circa 1974. Kunsthalle, Kiel.

'My present feeling as regards aesthetics comes from the boredom produced by the sight of pictures that seem to me to be congealed on their immobile surfaces, far removed from anything human. This third dimension, which is not a product of chiaroscuro, these transparencies with their secret depth, enable me to express my inner intentions with a certain degree of verisimilitude. When I lay the foundation stone, I want it to remain under my picture and not on top of it'

– FRANCIS PICABIA

Created while the artist was living a hedonistic existence in the South of France, the *Transparencies* have been interpreted as witty and disguised critiques of the lifestyle on the Côte d'Azur, contrasting the frivolous, modern reality of the holiday resorts of the Mediterranean with its elegant Classical past. As with many of Picabia's works from this period, *Ligustri* appears to have been made according to a personal code of imagery that only the artist himself could recognise and interpret. Indeed, in the introduction to an exhibition of his work in December 1930, Picabia somewhat humorously declared that they were expressions of 'inner desire', ultimately intended to be read by himself alone. Here, the sources for many of the figures included in the composition remain a mystery to the viewer, their forms just as likely to have been plucked from a kitsch contemporary postcard as a Renaissance masterpiece. His novel appropriation and subversion of the art of the past to create these personal dream-like worlds was, moreover, a response to what he felt was the increasing monotony of much modern art. In this, the *Transparencies* foreshadow techniques employed by many Postmodern artists of the latter half of the Twentieth Century and were to profoundly influence the work of Sigmar Polke.

Ligustri was acquired directly from the artist in 1930 by the influential art dealer and gallerist Léonce Rosenberg, who staged an important retrospective of Picabia's work in his Galerie L'Effort Moderne in the December of that year. Rosenberg's enthusiasm for the *Transparencies* was reflected by the fact that he commissioned Picabia to create several panels in this style to be included in his ambitious decorative project for his large and elegant flat in the fashionable sixteenth arrondissement. Rosenberg had instigated the project with the intention of making a grand aesthetic statement, bolstering his professional image by dedicating an entire space to new works from artists represented by his gallery. Works by Léger filled the entryway, De Chirico occupied the central hall, while Metzinger took over the lounge. As in *Ligustri*, the *Transparencies* that Picabia contributed to the Rosenberg home were filled with allusions to the art of antiquity, their surfaces rendered in delicate washes of colour to create a fresco-like appearance. Viewed en-masse, these imposing, intricate paintings conjured up a strange, otherworldly atmosphere within the Rosenberg home, their multi-layered superimpositions creating the impression of a continuously expanding space beyond the surface of the walls.



λ*28

FRANCIS PICABIA (1879-1953)

Sans titre (Venise)

signed and dated '1948 Francis Picabia' (lower right)
oil on board
48¼ x 37¾ in. (122.5 x 95.8 cm.)
Painted in 1948

£300,000-500,000

US\$390,000-650,000

€350,000-590,000

'The cycle is complete. Picabia has refound the sap of the Dada epoch, the same disengagement, the same anti-painting painting...In the ascending generations, it is he again who shows the road of complete liberty.'

– MICHEL SEUPHOR

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Paris, by whom acquired directly from the artist *circa* 1950, and thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:

M.L. Borràs, *Picabia*, London, 1985, no. 895, p. 535 (illustrated fig. 1108, p. 490; with incorrect medium; titled 'Venice').

The Comité Picabia has confirmed the authenticity of this work.





Francis Picabia, *Edtaonisl*, 1913. The Art Institute of Chicago.

Painted in 1948, *Sans titre (Venise)* belongs to an important series of abstract and semi-abstract paintings that Francis Picabia made in the aftermath of the Second World War. Greatly underappreciated during his lifetime and only recently becoming recognised for their significance and quality, this late body of work was created as a somewhat sardonic conjunction to the post-war boom in abstract art that took place in the late 1940s in both Europe and the United States.

Executed in a thick, playful and highly textured use of oil, *Sans titre (Venise)* is a pictorial amalgam of painterly form and style. With its spotted flowers, mask-like shapes and colourful linear patterning all coalescing into an abstract, almost fresco-like mosaic of imagery and technique, it is a work that hovers playfully on the borderline between figuration and abstraction. Such pictorial variation and deliberate ambiguity is a feature that is common to almost all of Picabia's so called 'abstractions' from this period. Many of these works derived in some part from figurative sources and were subsequently translated by the artist into varying degrees of abstraction through the process of painting them. In the present work, for example, the interlocking shapes may be interpreted as mask-like forms akin to those worn during the *Carnevale* celebrations in Venice, and contain echoes of such compositions as the artist's 1925 painting *Mi-Carême*. Original, often humorous and distinctly post-modernist in this respect, Picabia's irreverent pictorial approach won him few friends in the immediate post-war era but can today be seen to anticipate later approaches to painting taken by artists such as Sigmar Polke, Andy Warhol and Martin Kippenberger amongst others.



Francis Picabia, *Bal negro*, 1947.
Sold, Sotheby's, New York, 2 May 2012 (\$1,762,500).



Francis Picabia, *Mi-Carême (Mid-Lent)*, circa 1925.
Sold, Christie's, London, 4 February 2015 (\$2,936,121).

In the case of *Sans titre (Venise)*, Picabia may well have been looking back and even appropriating from his own earlier work, revisiting something of the feeling generated by his very first 'abstract' paintings – early masterpieces of 1913 such as *Udnie* and *Edtaonisl*. These were paintings that had come to Picabia's attention once again in 1948, when he was approached by André Breton and Marcel Duchamp and asked to seek these great compositions out, as both were keen for the French state to purchase them. Picabia found *Udnie* in the hands of a dealer, while *Edtaonisl* was discovered rolled up in his own studio, prompting the artist to set about restoring it, in collaboration with Christine Boumeester.

As the Belgian painter Michel Seuphor noted in the preface of Picabia's Paris exhibition of paintings from 1948, it seems that Picabia's re-encounter with these early abstractions had an influence on the paintings he made this year. The rhythm and formal properties of a significant number of Picabia's abstractions from 1948 appear to echo that of these two early masterpieces. Seuphor pointed to this, writing, 'the cycle is complete. Picabia has refound the sap of the dada epoch, the same disengagement, the same anti-painting painting... In the ascending generations, it is he again who shows the road of complete

liberty' (M. Seuphor, *Francis Picabia oeuvres de 1948*, Galerie des Deux Iles, quoted in W. Camfield, *Francis Picabia. His Life, Art and Times*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979, pp. 270-271).

In the lilting rhythm of its disparate, but interlocking forms and their implicit sense of motion, *Sans titre (Venise)* is a work that echoes the pictorial play of *Edtaonisl* and *Udnie*. Here however, there is an overt sense of irreverence in the way in which Picabia has handled his material, using deliberately thick daubs, comical spirals and incised streaks of heavy-set oil. Full of the joy of invention, but slightly mocking in its knowing play with form and material, it was canvases like *Sans titre (Venise)* that particularly annoyed many critics of this period. This was because such works appeared to not be taking the idea of abstraction seriously at a time when it was being heavily championed, in both Paris and New York, as the great new hope for art in a post-apocalyptic era. Such was their ire in fact, that at Picabia's 1948 exhibition Seuphor was prompted to claim that 'there is perhaps no painter more contested today than Picabia' (M. Seuphor, quoted in C. Boulbès, 'Painting, Poetry and Impudent Correspondence', in *Francis Picabia: Our Heads Are Round So Our Thoughts Can Change Direction*, exh. cat., Zurich, 2016, p. 244).

λ*29

SALVADOR DALÍ (1904-1989)

Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat

signed and dated 'Dalí 1960' (lower left)

oil on canvas

18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (45.9 x 57.2 cm.)

Painted in 1960.

Sold together with the study for the present work:

Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat

signed and dated 'Dalí 1960' (lower right)

pen and ink on paper

11 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (28.8 x 32.8 cm.)

Executed in 1960

(2)

£1,500,000-2,500,000

US\$2,000,000-3,300,000

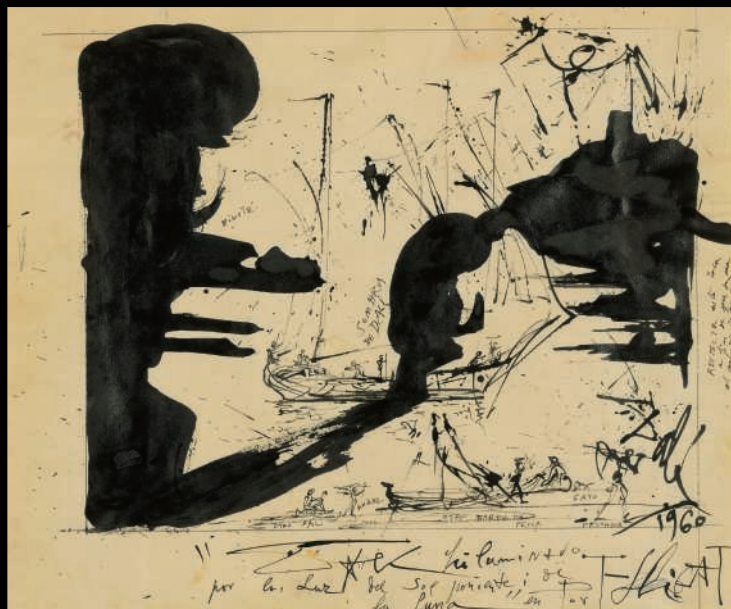
€1,760,000-3,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Walter Leo Ankli, Barcelona, by whom acquired directly from the artist in 1960.

Walter J. Ankli, Barcelona, by descent from the above. Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2010.

Nicolas and the late Robert Descharnes have confirmed the authenticity of both works.



This study sold together with the present lot.





Salvador Dalí, *Paysage de Port Lligat avec anges familiers et pêcheurs*, 1950. Sold, Koller Auktionen AG, 7 December 2012 (\$4,702,731).



Salvador Dalí, *Les gales de Port Lligat*, 1973. Sold, Sotheby's, New York, 2 November 2011 (\$2,266,500).

'Dalí returned home, to the spot he repeatedly said he loved best in all the world, and he was never to regret the decision. Port Lligat, at once Ithaca and Omphalos, immediately became the very centre of his universe, and he was delighted to discover in the bay that reached almost to his doorstep, bounded by the black and jagged island of Sa Farnera, the fleet of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, had anchored early in the sixteenth century. It seemed to him an illustrious omen. Port Lligat means 'tied-in port, and in truth the bay is more like an enclosed lake than a tract of sea. This too pleased Dalí. Here, he felt he would be secure. Here he would make his home, expanding the property as his fortunes improved. And so it worked out.'

– IAN GIBSON

More than any other place on earth, it was the bay at Port Lligat that provided the landscape of Salvador Dalí's hallucinatory vision, where the paranoiac-critical images of his paintings repeatedly seemed to emerge before his eyes, the enigmatic shapes of its hills and rocks giving form to so many of his strange and haunting images. It was the light from the sea and sky around this little-known cove that provided both the clarity and the mystery to his visions and the hazy dissonance of its distant horizon that lent his paintings their all-pervasive aura of warmth and enigma. The landscape of his birth and of his childhood, it was on the beach that stretched up to the door of his little house that he had sat with his nurse, where he had later defied his father and first met Gala. 'I am home only here,' Dalí repeatedly said of Port Lligat, 'everywhere else I am camping out' (Dalí, quoted in I. Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí*, London, 1997, p. 444). In short, Port Lligat was the stage against which Dalí's dreams and visions of life were to play themselves out.

Dalí's deep sense of self-identification with Port Lligat, with Catalonia, with Spain and also perhaps with America too, is the subject of this painting – an important work that functions as an allegorical self-portrait. *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat* (Untitled, Sailing Ship in the bay of Port Lligat) depicts Dalí, whose shadowy profile appears both at the left-hand side of this painting and projected onto the sails of the magnificent, pristine, white sailing ship sitting, like an apparition at the centre of the bay. Painted, circa 1960, it is one of the last of an extensive series of highly important paintings that Dalí made throughout 1950s and early 1960s in which he repeatedly invoked the bay at Port Lligat not just as his home, but as a scene of magic and religious veneration. These ranged from mystical visions of Gala as the Holy Madonna transfiguring over the bay, to images of Christ crucified in accordance with the vision of St John of the Cross. They also included self-depictions such as the exuberantly entitled *Dalí Nude in Contemplation before the Five Regular Bodies Metamorphosed into Corpuscles in which Suddenly Appear the Leda of Leonardo Chromosomatized by the Visage of Gala* of 1954. In all of these works from this period, Dalí's depictions of his Catalan home imbue the area with a manifest sense of the divine.

Opposite: Port Lligat, summer 1955. Salvador Dalí with one of the six oils on canvas for the unfinished film by Robert Descharnes and Salvador Dalí *The Prodigious Story of the Lacemaker and the Rhinoceros*. Photograph by Robert Descharnes.





Salvador Dalí, *Christ de saint Jean de la Croix*, 1951.
Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow.

The same is true of *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat* which is the most grandiose and elaborate example from a series of pictures which centre around the depiction of a small boat washed up on the shore of the bay outside Dalí's window being celebrated by angels. In the paintings *The Angel of Port Lligat*, of 1952, and *Saint Helen of Port Lligat*, of 1956, Dalí had represented the angel as his wife Gala. These paintings appeared to foreshadow in some respects Dalí's depiction of the 'holy' arrival of Columbus in America in the vast masterpiece he worked on between 1958 and 1959: *The Dream of Columbus*. The angels and the fishermen on the shore of Port Lligat were somehow echoes in a local and personal way of the grandeur and significance of Columbus' first landing in America.

Similarly, in *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat*, a mystical sense of arrival is conveyed through the apparition-like image of a pure white sailing ship in the bay outside Dalí's home. Is this ship a ghostly echo of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, whose fleet, Dalí had been delighted to learn, had once anchored in Port Lligat? Dalí's projected shadow seen in the foreground of the painting, and also falling across the bay to become a silhouette on the white sails of this impressive ship, appears to suggest some form of self-identification between Dalí and this angelic vessel.

Dalí has also painted himself wearing the red Barretina cap of Catalonia, proudly identifying himself with his homeland as he was often to do in public when he frequently demanded to be photographed wearing this familiar symbol of Catalan identity. Dalí, in spite of his Surrealist associations and manifest eccentricity was also surprisingly conventional in many of his beliefs. A proud Catalan, he was also a devout Catholic and a faithful servant of the Spanish King. In the 1950s, Dalí was also espousing a belief in what he called 'Nuclear Mysticism'. This was a personal fusion of Catholicism with the new theories of particle physics. It had been Nuclear Mysticism that gave rise to his famous painting *Christ of St John of the Cross*, perhaps his best-known picture of a mystical apparition taking place over a fishing boat and the bay of Port Lligat.



Salvador Dalí, *La découverte de l'Amérique par Christophe Colomb*, 1958-1959. The Salvador Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg.

In *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat* Dalí's shadowy self-projection over the bay and the heavenly sailing ship at its heart appear to suggest a personal connection between Dalí, Catalonia, Port Lligat and the divine, imperial majesty of Catholic Spanish history. It is an image that, through its projected link between Dalí's profile, the bay and the holy white sailing ship, appears to articulate something of the artist's own sense of self-identification with both rural Port Lligat and the grandeur of Spanish history. Dalí's proud, mustachioed profile here seems to extend both physically and metaphorically between the ordinary Catalan fishing folk of Port Lligat and the great Catholic nobles of Spanish history, to figures like Charles V and Christopher Columbus.

Indeed, Dalí had managed to convince himself by this time that Christopher Columbus was himself a Catalan (from Girona, Dalí argued) and had related Columbus's 'holy' discovery of America to his own sense of connection with the United States – the country where he and Gala had lived for so long. There are, therefore, multiple layers of possibility articulated in this otherwise seemingly simple painting of Dalí's elongated shadow reaching out to a white ship in the bay.

Executed in a faux-classical style, the painting is also evocative in some respects of the mysterious shorelines of Arnold Böcklin's paintings, which Dalí so admired. As a result, there is an underlying sense of odyssey and of the metaphorical Mediterranean voyages of antiquity which echoes the pervasive sense of laic mystery inherent in Giorgio de Chirico's paintings. As if in response to this context, it can also be noted that in the right hand corner of *Sans titre, bateau à voiles dans la baie de Port Lligat*, on the crest of the nearest hill and directly in line with his projected profile, Dalí has painted a de Chirico-esque tower. An echo of the same structures that often populated his Catalan landscapes of the early 1930s, here the presence of this tower once again seems to assert the latent sense of mystery and discovery within the Cape Creus landscape. That Dalí always intended this tower to align with the projection of his profile is best indicated in the pen and ink sketch for this painting (also included in this lot), in which the two profiles of Dalí and the tower form the main subject matter of the composition.



MAX ERNST (1891-1976)

Tâches de soleil

signed and indistinctly dated 'max ernst 57' (lower right);
signed, inscribed and dated 'taches de soleil 57 max ernst'
(on the reverse)
oil on canvas
18¼ x 15½ in. (46.2 x 38.3 cm.)
Painted in 1957

£70,000-100,000

US\$90,000-130,000

€80,000-120,000

PROVENANCE:

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 June 1961, lot 13A.
Bild und Buch Gallery, by whom acquired at the above sale.
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1966, lot 177.
Holtzheimer, by whom acquired at the above sale.
Galerie Stangl, Munich.
Conrad Böttcher, Stuttgart, by whom acquired from the above on
14 October 1967, and thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Munich, Galerie Stangl, *Max Ernst*, August - October 1967,
no. 6 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

W. Spies & S. & G. Metken, *Max Ernst, Werke 1954-1963*, Cologne,
1998, no. 3317, p. 140 (illustrated).

Following his return to Europe after years living in exile in America, Max Ernst chose to settle in the small hamlet of Huismes in the Loire Valley, writing shortly after the move: 'It is beautiful and gentle and calm here' (Ernst, quoted in W. Spies and J. Drost, eds., *Max Ernst: Retrospective*, exh. cat., Vienna, 2013, p. 279). It was in this verdant green landscape, surrounded by the idyllic beauty of the French countryside that his paintings reached a new level of harmony and peace, suffused with an almost fairytale atmosphere. Seemingly illuminated from within, *Tâches de soleil* achieves a depth and complexity of surface that calls to mind, through relentless point and counterpoint, the rhythms of the natural world. Indeed, though created at the height of the Abstract Expressionist movement, this painting remains firmly rooted in nature through the presence of the benign animalistic form at its centre, lending the scene a clearly figurative, if distinctly otherworldly reality.



Max Ernst, *Les princes dorment mal*, 1957,
116 x 89 cm. Sold, Sotheby's, New York,
2 November 2011 (\$2,434,500).



λ*31

SALVADOR DALÍ (1904-1989)

Ballerine en tête de mort

signed and dated 'Dali 1932 ?' (upper centre)
oil on canvas
9⁷/₈ x 7³/₄ in. (24.5 x 19.5 cm.)
Painted circa 1939

£300,000-500,000

US\$390,000-650,000

€350,000-590,000

*‘Of a cubist picture one asks: “What does that represent?”
– Of a surrealist picture, one sees what it represents but one
asks: “What does that mean?” – Of a ‘paranoiac picture’
one asks abundantly: “What do I see?” “What does that
represent?” “What does that mean?”’*

– SALVADOR DALÍ

PROVENANCE:

Georges Hugnet, Paris.
Kunsthandel Den Tijd (Leo Dohmen), Antwerp.
Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 30 June 1987,
lot 230.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, *Salvador Dalí*, May -
July 1989, no. 216, p. 278 (illustrated p. 279);
this exhibition later travelled to Zurich, Kunsthaus
Zurich, August - October 1989.
Humblebæk, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art,
Salvador Dalí, December 1989 - March 1990,
no. 21, (illustrated in *Louisiana Revy*, vol. 30, no. 1,
p. 45).
Montreal, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Salvador Dalí*,
April - July 1990, no. 19, (illustrated p. 55).
Bonn, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der
Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *¿Buñuel, Auge des
Jahrhunderts*, February - April 1994 (illustrated p. 217).
Vienna, Kunsthalle Wien, *Surrealismus in Spanien*,
May - July 1995, no. 44, p. 385 (illustrated p. 274).
Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina
Sofía, *¿Buñuel, la mirada del siglo*, July - October
1996, p. 392 (illustrated p. 165; dated '1932?'); this
exhibition later travelled to Mexico City, Museo
del Palacio de Bellas (illustrated); this Artes,
December 1996 - March 1997.
Barcelona, CaixaForum, *Dalí. Cultura de masas*,
February - May 2004, no. 323, p. 186 (illustrated);
this exhibition later travelled to Madrid, Museo
Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, June -
August 2004; St. Petersburg, Florida, Salvador
Dalí Museum, October 2004 - January 2005; and
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,
*It's all Dalí, Film, fashion, photography, design,
advertising, painting*, March - June 2005
(illustrated p. 301).
Paris, Grand Palais, *Une image peut en cacher une
autre, Arcimboldo, Dalí, Raetz*, April - July 2009,
no. 258, p. 306 (illustrated p. 307; dated '1932').
Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum
& Kunstverein, *Gegen Jede Vernunft. Surrealismus
Paris-Prag*, November 2009 - February 2010,
no. 157 p. 210 (illustrated; dated '1932').

LITERATURE:

R. Descharnes & G. Néret, *Salvador Dalí,
The Paintings*, vol. I, 1904-1946, Cologne, 1994,
no. 756, pp. 336 & 759 (illustrated p. 337).
J.-H. Martin, S. Andreae & U. Husmeier, *The
Endless Enigma: Dalí and The Magicians of
Multiple Meaning*, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2003,
p. 247 (illustrated).
G. Beauté, *Little Dalí a l'escola*, Escaldes-
Engordany, 2005, p. 53 (illustrated).
Exh. cat., *Ola Pepin! Dalí, Lorca y Buñuel en la
Residencia de Estudiantes*, Barcelona, 2007,
p. 159 (illustrated).
Exh. cat., *Culture Chanel*, Shanghai, 2011, p. 256
(illustrated in situ).
I. Murga Castro, *Pintura en danza. Los artistas
españoles y el ballet: 1916-1962*, Madrid, 2012,
p. 357 (illustrated).
M. Hamel, 'Les Nuées de Salvador Dalí, ou le
surréalisme mis en scène', in *Les Cahiers du
Musée national d'art moderne*, vol. 121, Paris, 2012,
p. 99 (illustrated).
A. Sánchez Vidal, 'Los ballets dalinianos, de
Bacanal a Sacrificio', in *ARTE Y PARTE*, no. 104,
April-May 2013, p. 24 (illustrated).
Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, ed., *Salvador Dalí:
Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas*, (<https://www.salvador-dali.org/es/>), no. P 500 (illustrated).



Milada Mladova in Leonide Massine's *Bacchanale*, no. 8. Photograph by Maurice Seymore. Jerome Robbins Dance Division Collection, New York Public Library.





Coco Chanel in her apartment at the Rue Cambon, Paris, featuring the present lot on the right hand side. Photograph by George Hoyningen-Huene.

Ballerine en tête de mort (Ballerina in a Death's-Head) emerged during one of the most productive periods of Salvador Dalí's career, as the artist began to explore and experiment with the visual possibilities of his paranoiac-critical method of painting. This technique, which had first emerged in Dalí's semi-autobiographical paintings on the theme of William Tell in the early 1930s, was defined by the artist as a 'spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based upon the critical-interpretive association of delirious phenomena' (Dalí, quoted in A. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, London, 1965, pp. 134-5). Central to this practice was the use of double or simultaneous images, which offered a multitude of potential readings, depending on the viewer's own subjective vision. Rooted in the artist's interests in the field of optics and perception, these highly inventive and suggestive optical illusions were intended to undermine the viewer's unwavering acceptance of the rational world, throwing them into a state of confusion in which reality as they understand it is no longer secure.

Though signed and dated to 1932 by Dalí in 1967, *Ballerine en tête de mort* was actually created in 1939 at the peak of the evolution of the paranoiac-critical technique, and drew inspiration from the artist's work on the ballet *Bacchanale* for Les ballets russes de Monte Carlo. Dalí had become involved with the acclaimed ballet company in the autumn of 1938, during a four-month stay at Coco Chanel's villa, *La Pausa*, in Roquebrune, Cap Martin. Originally titled *Tristan Fou*, the ballet had its roots in an opera project Dalí had been working on in 1934, and was based on the opening scene of Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* from 1845. The artist was fascinated by the composer and his great patron,

the 'mad' King Ludwig II of Bavaria, and sought to present a frenzied, heightened vision of Wagner's work, as seen through 'the deliriously confused brain of Ludwig II of Bavaria, who "lived" all of Wagner's myths with such profound hyperesthesia as to verge on madness' (Dalí, quoted in D. Ades, *Dalí: The Centenary Retrospective*, exh. cat., London, 2004, p. 316). Subtitled *Bacchanale* 'The First Paranoiac Ballet,' Dalí threw himself into preparations for the production, designing the grand stage sets and even composing a *libretto* for the piece.

The female dancer at the heart of *Ballerine en tête de mort* is based on the character of Lola Montez, King Ludwig II's lover, who discovers the monarch's body towards the end of the ballet. Here, the ballerina's supple body appears to meld with the cold, petrified skull that lurks behind her. Adopting a seductive pose, she raises her arms above her head, their shape echoing the curves of the eye sockets, while her willowy torso can also be read as an elongated nasal cavity. She appears to wear a version of Lola's costume from *Bacchanale* – harem trousers beneath a hoop skirt adorned with teeth-like decorations along its circumference – though here, the entire costume is bleached to a luminous shade of white, emphasising the connection between the body of the ballerina and the skull. These striking costumes were designed by Coco Chanel, and were mostly likely conceived during the feverish months of creativity that marked the beginning of the project during Dalí's stay at her home in the South of France. Praising the 'wholehearted enthusiasm' with which she embraced the *Bacchanale*, Dalí was clearly captivated by Chanel's designs, and the ways in which they could interact and engage with the sets he was creating for the production.



Salvador Dalí 'In Voluptate Mors', New York, 1951.
Photograph by Philippe Halsmann.

°λ32

RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

A la rencontre du plaisir

signed 'Magritte' (upper right); inscribed "'À LA RENCONTRE DU PLAISIR'" (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (46 x 55 cm.)
Painted in 1962

£8,000,000-12,000,000

US\$10,400,000-15,700,000

€9,400,000-14,100,000

'...when a man thinks about the moon, he has his own idea of it, it becomes his moon.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Brussels, by whom acquired directly from the artist in July 1962, and thence by descent.

EXHIBITED:

Brussels, Galerie Isy Brachot, *Magritte, cent cinquante œuvres, première vue mondiale de ses sculptures*, January - February 1968, no. 97 (titled 'A la recherche du plaisir').

Humblebæk, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *René Magritte*, October 1983 - January 1984, no. 96; this exhibition later travelled to Høvikodden, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, January - March 1984, no. 80. Lausanne, Fondation de l'Hermitage, *René Magritte*, June - October 1987, no. 94 (illustrated); this exhibition later travelled to Munich, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, November 1987 - February 1988, no. 122 (illustrated).

Ostend, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, *Van Ensor tot Delvaux*, October 1996 - February 1997, p. 323 (illustrated).

Barcelona, Fundació Joan Miró, *Exposition René Magritte*, November 1998 - February 1999, no. 31, p. 179 (illustrated p. 108).

Liverpool, Tate Gallery, *René Magritte, The Pleasure Principle*, June - October 2011, p. 24 (illustrated); this exhibition later travelled to Vienna, Albertina, November 2011 - February 2012.

Helsinki, Amos Rex, *Magritte - Life Line*, February - May 2019.

LITERATURE:

J. Meuris, *Magritte*, New York, 1990, no. 9, p. 7 (illustrated).

D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. III, *Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes, 1949-1967*, Antwerp, 1993, no. 946, p. 361 (illustrated).





Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer above the mists*, 1818. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

'Man is a visible apparition like a cloud, like a tree, like a house, like everything we see. I don't deny him any importance and neither do I accord him any pre-eminence in a hierarchy of the things that the world offers visually.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

Painted in 1962, René Magritte's *A la rencontre du plaisir* (Towards Pleasure) combines several of the artist's most iconic motifs into a single, evocative image, creating an elegant summation of the poetic visual imagination which fuelled his unique form of Surrealism. Executed with a precision and attention to detail that only reinforces the uncanniness of the scene before us, the composition serves as a showcase for Magritte's hyper-realistic style at its best. Purchased directly from the artist shortly after its creation, the painting has remained in the same family collection for over half a century, and comes to auction for the first time in its history.

At its centre stands one of Magritte's most familiar and enigmatic characters, the solitary man in the bowler hat, who appears lost in thought as he gazes upon the twilight landscape before him. The bright glow of the moon casts a subtle sheen on the dome of his hat, while a soft, creeping mist hangs in the middle-distance, blurring the boundary between the forest and the open field. Seen only from behind, this well-dressed gentleman seems captivated by the vista, his stance and positioning amidst the sublime beauty of the natural world calling to mind the compositions of Caspar David Friedrich.





René Magritte, *Le seize septembre*, 1957. Sold, Christie's New York, 11 November 2019 (\$19,570,000).

However, there is a palpable sense of mystery to the scene, an uncertainty as to whether or not the view is real or imagined, and what exactly this figure's role or place is in the world the artist conjures. Executed in Magritte's characteristically descriptive painterly style, all is natural, and yet puzzling, encapsulating the artist's belief that: 'it's not a matter of painting "reality" as though it were readily accessible to me and to others, but of depicting the most ordinary reality in such a way that this immediate reality loses its tame or terrifying character and presents itself with mystery' (Magritte, quoted in H. Torczyner, *Magritte*, New York, 1977, p. 203).

An emblematic, instantly recognisable character, and yet an entirely anonymous one, the bowler-hatted man had first appeared in Magritte's art in 1926, acting as the central protagonist in *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (Sylvester, no. 124). In this painting, the distinctly ordinary figure of the man in an overcoat and bowler hat is seen from behind, walking away from the viewer along the quiet banks of a river, while a naked corpse-like figure hovers in mid-air, following like a macabre apparition that permanently haunts him, no matter the distance he travels. This juxtaposition between the exceedingly ordinary and the strange or otherworldly is among Magritte's earliest explorations

into the inherent mystery underlying everyday appearances, and casts the bowler-hatted man as a central figure in a strange, indecipherable situation. The following year, he appeared again in *Le sens de la nuit* (Sylvester, no. 136) and *L'assassin menacé* (Sylvester, no. 137), although in both there are two figures shown in the iconic headwear. In the latter of these two paintings, the bowler-hatted men remain hidden from view behind a wall, lying in wait to capture a gentleman killer who listens intently to a gramophone while the corpse of his victim lies motionless on a bed behind him. The composition echoes a scene from a 1913 silent film featuring the cult fictional figure of Fantômas, an elegant and mysterious criminal and master-of-disguise who specialized in impossible escapes. Created by the writer Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre, Fantômas appeared in a series of novels and films, throughout which his true identity remained uncertain.

However, unlike Fantômas, who wore a top-hat, mask and tails in his most famous depiction, Magritte opts for a uniform of pure banality for his mysterious male character – a plain black overcoat and the simple, but iconic bowler hat. Explaining this choice, Magritte proclaimed: 'The bowler [...] presents no surprise. It is a headgear lacking originality. The man in the bowler hat simply constitutes the middle-class in its





René Magritte, *Le lieu commun*, 1964. Sold, Christie's, London, 27 February 2019 (\$24,458,982).

'The bowler [...] presents no surprise. It is a headgear lacking originality. The man in the bowler hat simply constitutes the middle-class in its anonymity.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

anonymity' (Magritte, quoted in *Life*, 1966, in D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte: Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. III: Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes, 1949-1967*, London, 1993, p. 206). Originally designed for gamekeepers in the 1840s, the bowler hat had become a familiar part of city-life by the 1920s, adopted by city clerks, civil servants, accountants, bankers, detectives and insurance salesmen alike. It was the extensive popularity of this style that appealed so strongly to Magritte – so commonplace and ordinary, it had become a symbol of bourgeois respectability within the public consciousness. As such, the bowler hat allowed Magritte to create an archetypal figure, an 'Everyman' who represented a broad-section of society and would appear immediately familiar to his audience, whilst simultaneously remaining distinctly anonymous and ultimately unknowable.

Following his initial appearance, the bowler-hatted man disappeared from Magritte's *oeuvre* for over two decades, and it was not until the 1950 composition, also titled *A la rencontre du plaisir* (Sylvester, no. 724), that he emerged once again. Here, two figures, one wearing a bowler hat and the other a trilby, are shown before a quiet landscape at dusk. The mysterious relationship between this pair, the clear connection and yet apparent lack of interaction in their passing,

heightens the intense atmosphere of the scene, leaving the viewer baffled as to the possible narratives which may be at play within the picture. As Magritte's art continued to evolve over the course of the following decade, the bowler-hatted man became a recurring leitmotif within his compositions, transported from the dark, threatening situations and disquieting scenes that had marked the 1920s paintings, and instead relocated into an array of familiar yet unexpected settings, the majority of which were marked by an overwhelming sense of quiet tranquillity. This is the case in works such as *La boîte de Pandore* (Sylvester, no. 772) and *Le chant des sirènes* (Sylvester, no. 778), where this enigmatic figure appears to wander through scenes that seem generic and ordinary, and yet radiate a sense of the otherworldly.

During this period the bowler-hatted man appeared with such regularity in Magritte's compositions that, like the leaf-tree or the painting within a painting, he quickly became one of the most instantly recognisable object-icons of the Magrittian universe. A totemic figure, always dressed in the same smart, generic uniform and typically shown half-length, he came to epitomise the banal, normal, everyday aspects of life which, when combined with the surreal world of Magritte's imaginings, served to heighten the mystery of the scenes the artist conjured. Indeed,



René Magritte, *Maitre d'école*, 1955. Private collection.



René Magritte, *L'ami de l'ordre*, 1964. Private collection.

'I have a very limited vocabulary: nothing but ordinary, familiar things. What is "extraordinary" is the connection between them.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

the reassuring ordinariness of the figure serves as a kind of anchor of familiarity around which the strangeness of the artist's unique vision pivots. Ironically, at this time the bowler hat was no longer the omnipresent sartorial choice it had been for previous generations, but rather an increasingly rare sight amongst city dwellers. Simultaneously nobody and, as the artist once described him, 'Mr Everybody', Magritte's bowler-hatted man thus appears like an old-fashioned *flâneur* in paintings such as *À la rencontre du plaisir*, a reassuringly familiar icon from another time, wandering through different realms of reality, a visible but silent witness to the strange worlds that emerge in the artist's paintings. At once a participant and an independent observer, he appears almost as if he is occupying the same space as the viewer, inviting them to enter the dream-world he inhabits, and as such may be seen as something of a proxy-viewer, acting as a bridge or intermediary between the painter and his audience.

In *A la rencontre du plaisir*, the bowler-hatted man occupies the very centre of the scene, once again standing with his back to us, the glow of the moon highlighting the curved top of his hat. Unlike *Les chefs-d'oeuvre ou les mystères de l'horizon* (Sylvester, no. 817) or *Le maître d'école* (Sylvester, no. 818), which both featured crescent moons

floating above the head of bowler-hatted figures, the moon here appears as a full, glowing orb, emitting a light so strong that it appears to illuminate the entire sky. Casting the clouds that surround it alight with its brightness and lending the rest of the skyscape a gentle blue glow, this strange moonlight prompts the viewer to question whether the scene is daytime, the middle of the night, or somehow both. While it may be that the sky is caught in the strange half-light that occurs during the gloaming hour of twilight, the powerful glowing orb appears more like a sun than a moon. This seemingly simultaneous evocation of night and day calls to mind Magritte's famed *L'empire des lumières* series of paintings, in which the artist transformed an ordinary, placid nocturnal street scene by juxtaposing the dark shadows and soft glowing streetlamps of the foreground with a bright blue, sunlit sky above. Creating seventeen versions of this theme in oil, and a further ten in gouache, the subject of *L'empire des lumières* occupied Magritte's imagination repeatedly over the course of fifteen years, reappearing with subtle alterations and variations from canvas to canvas.

Invoking the opening line of André Breton's poem *L'Aigrette*, 'If only the sun would come out at night!', the beauty of this intriguing paradoxical invention lay in its simplicity, (Breton, quoted in S. Whitfield, *Magritte*,



René Magritte, *L'empire des lumières*, 1950. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



René Magritte, *L'empire des lumières*, 1949, 48.5 x 58.7 cm. Sold, Christie's, New York, 13 November 2017, (\$20,562,500).

'I have always felt the greatest interest in night and day, yet without ever having preferred one or the other. This great personal interest in night and day is a feeling of admiration and astonishment.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

exh. cat., London, 1992, p. 228). As Magritte once explained to his friend Harry Torczyner, the concept of the night-day duality was one that held a particular appeal for him: 'If I believe this evocation has such poetic power, it is because, among other reasons, I have always felt the greatest interest in night and day, yet without ever having preferred one or the other. This great personal interest in night and day is a feeling of admiration and astonishment' (Magritte, quoted in Torczyner, *op. cit.*, p. 177). It is this sense of awe and wonder at the sublime beauty of the natural world, the inherent splendour of its cycles and ever-changing character, which lends *A la rencontre du plaisir* its powerfully poetic aura. The bowler-hatted man appears as if he has been struck by the magnificence of the landscape he has happened upon, the unusual light conditions forcing him to stop in his tracks and appreciate the world anew.

However, unlike the *Empire des lumières* compositions, here the nocturnal landscape is not the familiar city streets that recall the artist's home, filled by houses which glow comfortingly with warm lamplight, but rather a mysterious, mist-filled pasture which leads to a dense forest of towering trees. To the left, a heavy curtain is gathered and tied back to reveal the landscape, though it appears to float independently, unanchored to any architectural feature. Hovering just above the ground, and apparently occupying the same space as the bowler-hatted man, this curtain creates a sense that the scene is both interior and exterior, its weighty presence blurring the boundaries between the two. Inspired perhaps by Giorgio de Chirico's use of a similar object in *L'énigme de l'oracle* (1909), such drapery was a common tool in Magritte's pictorial arsenal, inserted into compositions in a manner that complicates our

understanding of the space depicted and indicates to the viewer that everything is not as it may seem at first glance. In this way, the curtain may be seen as a pictorial extension of the artist's distrust in the very nature of perception itself, which led him to state: 'Despite the shifting abundance of detail and nuance in nature, I was able to see a landscape as if it were only a curtain placed in front of me. I became uncertain of the depth of the fields, unconvinced of the remoteness of the horizon' (Magritte, quoted in Whitfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15).

In *A la rencontre du plaisir*, the play between what is hidden and what is visible is amongst the most powerful aspects of the composition, not only in the identity of the central figure, whose face remains turned away, but also in the sense that only a small portion of the scene appears to have been revealed to us. 'There is an interest in that which is hidden and which the visible doesn't show us,' Magritte explained. 'This interest can take the form of a quite intense feeling, a sort of conflict, one might say, between the visible that is hidden and the visible that is apparent' (Magritte, quoted in D. Sylvester, *Magritte*, Brussels, 2009, p. 28). By this, he meant those elements of the image which are known to exist, but which the viewer cannot see – a letter contained inside an envelope, the sliver of landscape concealed by the drapery of a window or, as in the present composition, the facial expressions of the man who stands with his back to us. Indeed, Magritte had little interest in trying to depict the invisible, but rather sought to capture 'the eternal struggle between the gaze and objects ... there comes a time when one visible prevents you seeing another visible' (Magritte, Letter to O. Hahn, November 1964, quoted in Sylvester, *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 401).



René Magritte, *La décalcomanie*, 1966. Private collection.

This theme, which had run like a thread through much of Magritte's work since the early 1930s, is taken in new directions in the present image – not only does the curtain along the left hand edge of the picture constrict our view, cutting off and concealing a segment of the landscape, so too does the bowler-hatted man himself. Positioned between us and the trees, he obscures a small aspect of the landscape, leaving us to speculate whether there is something that remains hidden from view by his body, another presence perhaps, or an incongruous object that occupies a space it would never usually be found. It is this desire to see, to know, to uncover that which is hidden that fuels the viewer's intrigue in such paintings. Building the composition in this way, Magritte transforms the otherwise innocuous scene into an enigmatic tableau that captivates and confounds in equal measure, the combination of elements suggesting a visual riddle that remains ultimately unsolvable, but through which the artist is able to draw our attention to the endless potential for mystery and revelation that exists in the world around us.

A la rencontre du plaisir is a powerful illustration of the ways in which Magritte deployed symbols of a normal, ordinary, conventional life – namely an anonymous bowler-hatted man standing before a quiet, rural landscape – to contradictory ends: to surprise, unsettle and reconfigure the viewer's expectations and thus, their experience of everyday reality. Encapsulating the artist's belief that 'the visible things the world has to offer are rich enough to constitute a poetic language evoking the mystery without which no world or thought would be possible,' the painting is an eloquent meditation on the possibilities of the imagination when faced with an unknowable conundrum (Magritte, letter to A. Bosmans, 4 September 1964, quoted in G. Ollinger-Zinque and F. Leen, eds., *René Magritte: 1898-1967*, exh. cat., Brussels, 1998, p. 18). It was this powerful sense of poetic mystery that appealed to the original owners of *A la rencontre du plaisir*, who were close friends of Magritte and regulars at his weekly Saturday gatherings of friends, poets and intellectuals at his home. Over the course of these evenings, the artist's latest work would be reviewed by all in attendance, and potential titles for the paintings proposed, discussed and assigned. As a result, the owners developed an intimate knowledge of Magritte's work, and it was at one such soirée that they discovered the present composition, and purchased it directly from the artist.

λ*33

ANTONI TÀPIES (1923-2012)

Homenatge a Miguel Hernández

signed, dated and inscribed "'HOMENATGE" 1951
Tàpies' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
45¾ x 28¾ in. (116.1 x 72.8 cm.)
Painted in 1951

£80,000-120,000

US\$104,000-160,000

€94,000-140,000

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Spain.
Galerie Beyeler, Basel (no. 5587), by whom
acquired from the above on 3 December 1968.
Acquired from the above on 7 June 1969, and
thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Barcelona, Galeries Laietanes, *Tàpies*, May 1952,
no. 27.
Mataró, Museo Municipal, *Antoni Tàpies*, January
1953, no. 20.
Basel, Galerie Beyeler, *Spanish artists, Gris, Picasso,
Miró, Chillida, Tàpies*, May - July 1969, no. 53, p. 88
(illustrated p. 65; titled 'Home Nat Ge').
Zurich, Kunsthaus Zürich, *Vereinigung
Zürcher Kunstfreunde, Mitglieder zeigen ihr
meistdiskutiertes Kunstwerk aus eigenem Besitz*,
October - November 1971, no. 133, p. 59 (titled
'nat gem home').

LITERATURE:

A. Cirici, *Tàpies, Witness of Silence*, Barcelona,
1972, p. 359 (illustrated pl. 94, p. 146).
A. Agustí, *Tàpies, The Complete Works*, vol. I, 1943-
1960, New York, 1989, no. 375, p. 170 (illustrated).
A. Franzke, *Tàpies*, Munich, 1992, p. 357
(illustrated pl. 35, p. 65).
A. Tàpies, *A Personal Memoir. Fragments for
an Autobiography (Complete Writings. Vol. I)*,
Barcelona, 2009, p. 240, under note 1.

*'Como el toro he nacido para el luto
y el dolor, como el toro estoy marcado
por un hierro infernal en el costado
y por varón en la ingle con un fruto.'*

– MIGUEL HERNÁNDEZ

Antoni Tàpies's *Homenatge a Miguel Hernández* is not only a powerful composition full of surreal icons, signs and symbols, but an important political and revolutionary cry. Miguel Hernández is one of the greatest and best-loved Spanish poets associated with the literary movements *Generation of '27* and the *Generation of '36*. He was arrested due to his active participation on the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War, and died of tuberculosis while imprisoned in 1942. Tàpies was a great admirer of the poet, writing: 'I became aware of the tragic life and poetry of Miguel Hernández for whom I felt a great esteem and to whom I rendered homage in a painting, as I had done for García Lorca' (A. Tàpies, *A Personal Memoir. Fragments for an Autobiography*, Barcelona, 2009, p. 240). The present work is based on the 23rd sonnet included in Hernández's book of poetry *El rayo que no cesa* (The Unending Lightning), purchased by Tàpies in Paris in 1950. The artist has represented the analogy that Hernández made between the bull and a man in love: he noted the animal is born to be wounded and then killed by a sword during a bullfight, and compares it to the man and how love can hurt in the same deadly way.



Antoni Tàpies, *Jardín Soñado*, 1949. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.



RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Perspective: Le balcon de Manet

signed 'Magritte' (lower right); signed, inscribed and dated "'PERSPECTIVE (LE BALCON DE MANET)." MAGRITTE 1949' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

31½ x 23¾ in. (80 x 60 cm.)

Painted in 1949

£3,500,000-5,500,000

US\$4,600,000-7,200,000

€4,100,000-6,500,000

PROVENANCE:

Alexander Iolas, New York, by whom acquired directly from the artist on 16 September 1949.
Jean and Dominique de Menil, Houston, by whom acquired from the above in 1954.
Alexander Iolas, New York, by whom acquired from the above, between 1961 and 1964.
Mario Tazzoli, Milan, by whom acquired from the above in 1964.
Dr Umberto Agnelli, Turin, by whom acquired from the above, by 1965.
Charles Byron, New York, by whom acquired from the above, circa 1969-1970.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in the 1970s.

EXHIBITED:

New York, Hugo Gallery, *Magritte*, March - April 1951, no. 6.
Dallas, Museum for Contemporary Arts, *René Magritte in America*, December 1960 - January 1961, no. 28, n.p. (illustrated); this exhibition later travelled to Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, February - March 1961.
Sarasota, John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, *René Magritte, Yves Tanguy*, November - December 1961, no. 2; this exhibition later travelled to Macon, Mercer University, January 1962; Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, February - March 1962; Toronto, Art Gallery, March - April 1962; Denver, Art Museum, May - June 1962; Manchester, New Hampshire, The Currier Gallery of Art, August - September 1962; and Allentown, Art Museum, September - October 1962.
Paris, Galerie Alexandre Iolas, *Magritte, Le sens propre*, November 1964, no. 2, n.p.
Arezzo, Galleria Comunale d'arte contemporanea, *Mitologie del nostro tempo*, May - June 1965, p. 39 (illustrated; with inverted dimensions).
New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *René Magritte*, December 1965 - February 1966, no. 47 (illustrated p. 46).

Pierre Mazars: Does Le balcon mean that you're seeking to destroy classical paintings?

René Magritte: Not at all! I merely seek to show something different from those pictures, to use them, and I do not feel the need to ridicule death, since ridicule is a feeling and, consequently, invisible. How could painting, which is visible, portray the invisible?'

– Magritte interviewed by P. Mazars in *Le Figaro Littéraire*, 19 November, 1964

LITERATURE:

Statement of account, dated October 1949, sent by Magritte to Alexander Iolas in a letter, 2 March 1950.
Letter from Magritte to Alexander Iolas, 12 December 1949.
Letter from Magritte to Marcel Mariën, April 1950.
M. Mariën, *Garde-Fou*, 1950 (illustrated).
Letter from Magritte to Alexander Iolas, 1 June 1950.
Exh. cat, *La peinture Belge contemporaine*, Lyon, 1950 (illustrated fig. 31).
La Lanterne, Brussels, 16 April 1951, p. 4 (illustrated).
Letter from Harry Torczyner to Magritte, 2 March 1959.
Letter from Michel Foucault to Magritte, (probably) June 1966.
Letter from Magritte to Michel Foucault, 4 June 1966.
F. Cachin, 'Magritte ou Mandrake contre Maigret', in *Preuves*, Paris, July 1966, p. 80.
A. Pieyre de Mandiargues, 'Un terroriste souriant', in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Paris, 3 September 1967, p. 31.
N. Calas, 'Pearls of Magritte', in *Arts Magazine*, New York, April 1972, p. 48.
M. Foucault, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe, deux lettres et quatre dessins de René Magritte*, Montpellier, 1973, p. 57.
M. Mariën, ed., *L'Activité surréaliste en Belgique (1924-1950)*, Brussels, 1979, pp. 33-34.
D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. III, *Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes, 1949-1967*, Antwerp, 1993, no. 710, pp. 146-147 (illustrated p. 146).





Édouard Manet, *Le balcon*, 1868-1869. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

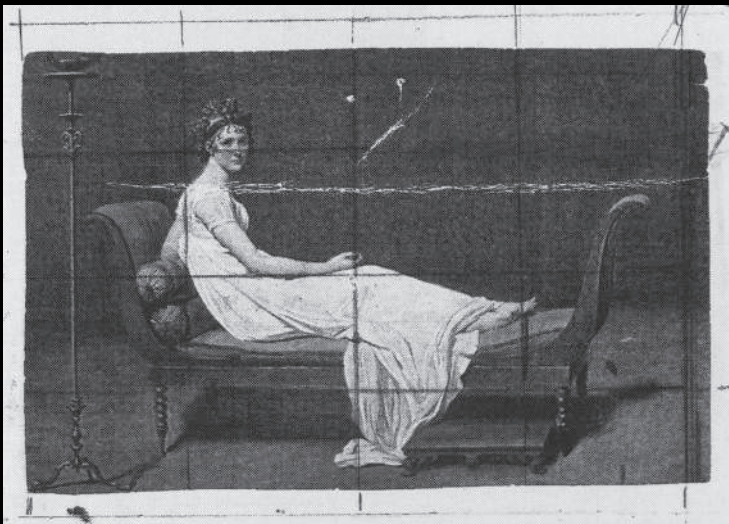
Combining in a single image the themes of life and death, as well as concepts of appropriation and imitation, René Magritte's *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet* of 1949 is the first of a fascinating group of works in which the artist wittily paraphrased a famed masterpiece to create a new and striking painting. Inspired by the great French master, Édouard Manet's celebrated *Le balcon* of 1869 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), Magritte's own invented version sees the fashionable bourgeois sitters transformed into a group of anthropomorphically-formed wooden coffins. The artist has therefore represented the 19th Century protagonists as they would have been in 1949: literally as bodies in coffins. Clearly pleased with the shocking and yet humorous effect of this darkly surreal metamorphosis, as well as the iconoclasm of this subversive act, Magritte subsequently took two more paintings, Jacques Louis David's *Madame Récamier* (1800, Musée du Louvre, Paris) and François Gérard's portrait of the same sitter (1802, Musée Carnavalet, Paris) and, remaining faithful to the other compositional details, likewise turned the female protagonists into wooden coffins (Sylvester, nos. 741 & 742).

The concept of a seated coffin had first appeared in a gouache of 1949 entitled *Perspective* (Sylvester, no. 1307). The Surrealist poet and friend of Magritte, Marcel Mariën, described exactly how this playful composition led to the present *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet*, providing a rare glimpse into the artist's working practice: 'This is how things happened and, as I can truly say, *under my very eyes*. Magritte began by painting a little gouache with a frontal view of a *seated* coffin installed in an armchair. I well remember that when Nougé and I saw it together





René Magritte, *Perspective: Madame Récamier de David*, 1951. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Magritte's squared up postcard of David's *Madame Récamier*, for *Perspective: Madame Récamier de David*. Art Collection, First National Bank of Chicago.

for the first time, our immediate reaction was to burst out laughing, thus reawakening Magritte's own amusement which had necessarily subsided in the interval since he had found the idea. Because the fact is (not the sort of thing to say!) that the image is comic – laughter and death, it is well-known, have always gone hand in hand. Half an hour or so later, there was still louder laughter when Nougé announced the title he had just thought of: *Perspective* (in both the temporal and geometrical senses). Only a few weeks later Magritte had the idea of applying his discovery to famous figures. They had obviously to be seated and easily identifiable through their presence in an equally celebrated setting.

That is how – with the help of *humour* – the two Récamiers came into being, David's first with the variant of the bent-over coffin, then Gérard's repeating the attitude in the gouache. Meanwhile, he had also made use of Manet's *Le balcon*, and in that picture the new coffin appeared all the more strange through being accompanied by the three, as it were, regulation coffins' (M. Mariën, 'Activité surréaliste', quoted in D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. III, Antwerp, 1993, p. 146).

Perspective: Le balcon de Manet was the first of this series, created before Magritte returned to the same motif the following year, in an almost identical work of the same name and size, the main difference being the more ornate coffin handles, which is now housed in the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent (Sylvester, no. 721). *Perspective: Madame Récamier de Gérard*, 1950 (Sylvester, no. 741; Private collection), and *Perspective: Madame Récamier de David* (Sylvester, no. 743; Private collection) likewise followed in 1950.



René Magritte, *Perspective*, 1949. Private collection.



René Magritte, *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet*, 1950. Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent.

Manet's *Le balcon* provided Magritte with the perfect subject with which to enact his humorous distortion, transforming the living to the deceased, flesh to wood, Impressionism to Surrealism. Adding a further layer of complexity to this artistic appropriation is the fact that just as Magritte was paraphrasing Manet, so Manet had also been looking to Goya's *Majas al balcón* (circa 1800-1810, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in the creation of his work. Supposedly inspired by an image of people on their balcony at the fashionable seaside resort, Boulogne-sue-Mer, Manet's *Le balcon* pictures four figures, for which the artist used his friends as his models, most notably Berthe Morisot, seated at the front with her startlingly intense gaze.

Manet's painting was shocking when it was first exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1869 for a number of reasons. Firstly, the structure of the composition and the manner of its execution was radical. The turquoise railings slice unapologetically through the centre of the composition, cutting the bodies of the protagonists in two. Not only does the vivid tone of the balustrade and shutters contrast with the bright white of the women's dresses, as well as with the black interior, but the man's blue cravat likewise dazzles against his pristine white shirt and black coat. These violent chromatic contrasts – visual explosions denoted across the composition – were considered scandalous by contemporary French audiences.

In addition, the subject matter itself, though seemingly an innocuous genre scene depicting a fashionable bourgeois group set within an opulent interior, was in fact just as provocative as the composition. None of the figures are interacting with each other, holding distinct

and intense stares in different directions. Unlike traditional scenes of this type, there is no discernible narrative; the viewer is unsure of the figure's relationships to one another, nor able to see what they are all regarding so intently. Each individual is isolated, lost in thought, and seemingly frozen in time, stiff, lifeless and pale; aspects that critics also seized on in their condemnation of the painting.

It has been suggested that it was this strangely lifeless or 'dead' appearance of the figures that attracted Magritte to use this work as part of his *Perspective* series. In his reworking, Magritte remained faithful to the poses of each of Manet's figures, heightening the already present sense of lifelessness by literally portraying these 19th Century Parisians as deceased entities, thereby exaggerating the stilted mood of the original and turning it into a macabre 'séance of coffins'. Every other detail remains perfectly true to the original, bar the dog that stands at Morisot's feet – even the pot of hydrangeas remains in Magritte's version.

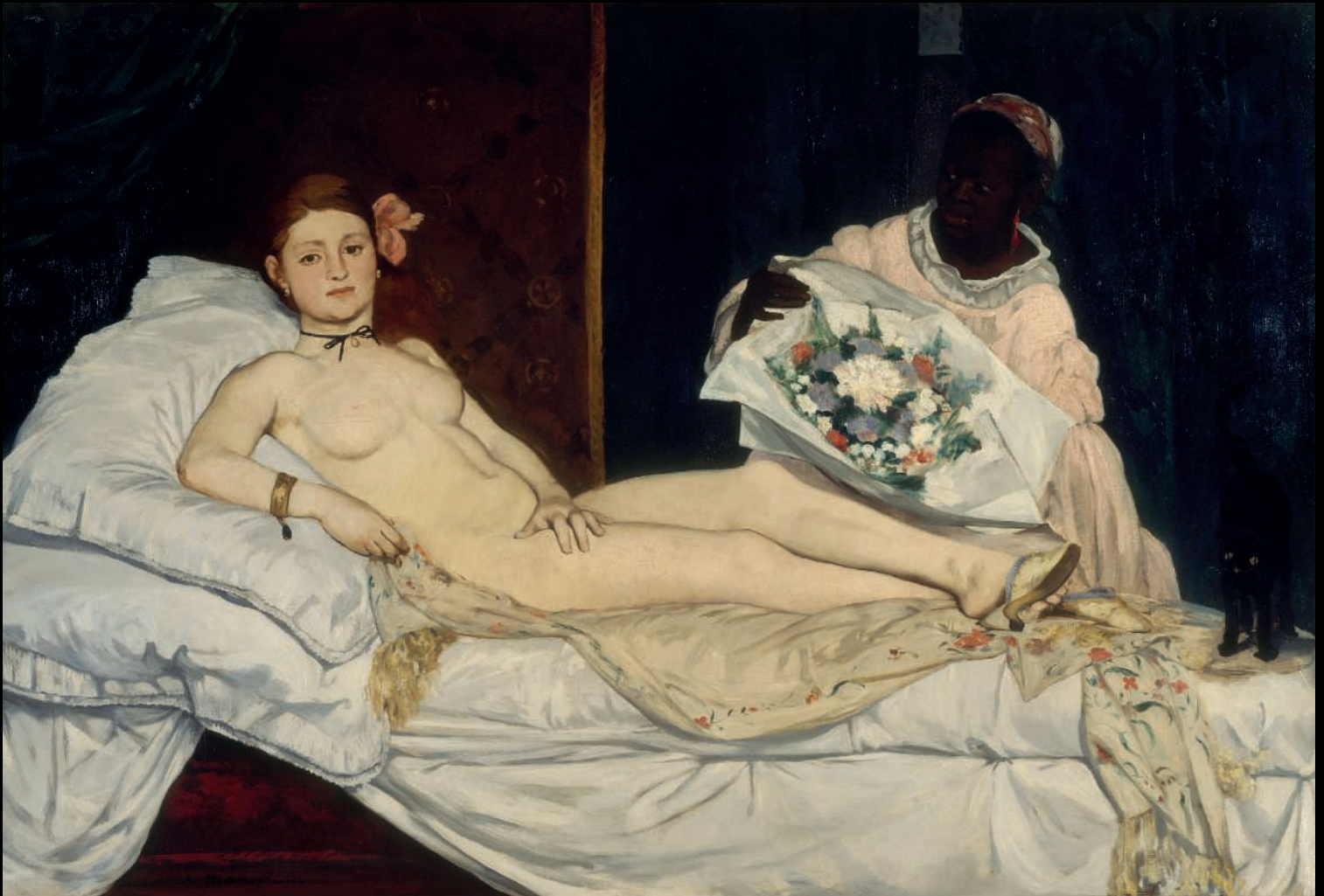
In 1964, the renowned French philosopher, theorist and author of the landmark essay of 1968, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe', Michel Foucault saw *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet* in an exhibition at the Galerie Alexandre Iolas in Paris in 1964. Upon seeing Magritte's painting, he thought he had found an affirmation of his interpretation of Manet's *balcon* as being an evocation of death, writing to Magritte in 1966: 'Will you allow me to put a question to you? Your version of *Le balcon* in which the human figures are replaced by coffins interested me enormously. Manet's picture – particularly the window gaping onto darkness – has something of the "open tomb" about it, and I thought



Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, *Box in a Valise (Boîte-en-Valise)*, 1935-1941. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

I saw in it a sort of modern version of a "resurrection": the progressive emergence from the tomb of a personage divided into three (whose first, masculine, form is scarcely distinct from the shadows, whereas the last, feminine one is shown sitting placidly in sunlit clarity). I would very much like to know (excuse me if I am being indiscreet) what made you see coffins where Manet saw white faces' (M. Foucault, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 146).

On 4 June 1966, Magritte wrote back to Foucault, explaining that there was no other reason for transforming Manet's figures into wooden caskets than simply because the original composition offered a perfect place to depict his coffins. In other words, there was no underlying meaning or symbolism suggested by this metamorphosis, and as he states, even if there was, it should remain a mystery: '... Your question (about my picture *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet*),' he wrote, 'asks for something it already contains: what made me see coffins where Manet saw white faces, is the image displayed in my picture where the setting of *Le balcon* was suitable for the placing of coffins. The "mechanism" which operated in this instance could become the subject of a learned explanation beyond my capacities. Such an explanation would be valid, even certain, but it would still remain a mystery... I think it should be pointed out that these pictures entitled *Perspectives* show a meaning other than the two meanings of the word "Perspective". This word and other words have a definite meaning in a context, but the context - you demonstrated this better than anyone in *Les mots et les choses* - can say that nothing is confused, except the mind which imagines an imaginary world' (Magritte, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 146-147).



Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1865. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

'I think it should be pointed out that these pictures entitled Perspectives show a meaning other than the two meanings of the word 'Perspective'. This word and other words have a definite meaning in a context, but the context – you demonstrated this better than anyone in Les mots et les choses – can say that nothing is confused, except the mind which imagines an imaginary world.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

It is possible that *Perspective: Le balcon de Manet* is not the only time that Magritte looked back to Manet. Indeed, James Thrall Soby has suggested that the artist held a strange, 'incongruous' fascination for his 19th Century predecessor. In Magritte's famous lecture of 1938, 'La Ligne de Vie', when discussing the public's antagonism to contemporary art, he explained, 'There were calls for the destruction of Manet's *Olympia* and the critics accused him of cutting up women because he showed only the upper half of a woman standing behind a bar, leaving the lower part concealed' (R. Magritte, 'La Ligne de vie' in G. Ollinger-Zinque & F. Leen, eds., *René Magritte 1898-1967*, exh. cat., Brussels, 1998, p. 44). By referring to both the scandalous reclining nude, *Olympia*, as well as to *Un bar aux Folies-Bergère* (1882, The Courtauld Gallery, London), Magritte's words call to mind his own multipartite nude figure, *L'évidence éternelle*, which he had painted in 1930 (Sylvester, no. 327; The Menil Collection, Houston). 'It may be far-fetched', Soby has written, 'to say that he did so in an oblique tribute to Manet, and yet Manet's art seems to have haunted him...' (J.T. Soby, *René Magritte*, exh. cat., New York, 1965, p. 140).

It was in the same lecture that Magritte also described a childhood memory, which offers a revealing insight into the origins of the coffin as a motif for his art. 'As a child', he explained, 'I used to play with a little girl in the old provincial cemetery. We would go down into the family vaults, when we could lift their heavy iron doors, and would come up into the light again to find an artist from Brussels at work on a very picturesque path, where broken stone columns were scattered among dead leaves' (R. Magritte, in G. Ollinger-Zinque & F. Leen., *op. cit.*, p. 44).

Magritte's playful appropriation and subversion of a revered work of art encapsulates his own, career-long desire to disrupt and distort our expectations of life and thereby reveal the mystery inherent in the most quotidian or, in this case, recognisable, of objects or images. This manner of appropriation would go on to have a decisive influence on artists of the post-war era, including Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, as well as Pop artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, who similarly employed illusionism as a vehicle for at times playful, humorous, or disquieting pictorial subversions.

JAMES ENSOR (1860-1949)

Baptême des masques

signed and dated 'ENSOR 91' (lower right)
oil on panel
7½ x 9⅞ in. (19 x 24.5 cm.)
Painted in 1891

£1,000,000-1,500,000
US\$1,300,000-2,000,000
€1,150,000-1,800,000

'Hounded by those on my tail, I joyfully took refuge in the land of the fools where the mask, with its violence, its brightness and brilliance, reigns supreme. The mask meant to me: freshness of colour, extravagant decoration, wild generous gestures, strident expressions, exquisite turbulence.'

– JAMES ENSOR

PROVENANCE:

Augusta Boogaerts, Brussels, by 1943.
Julienne Clea-Boogaerts, Brussels, by descent from the above, by 1951.
Anonymous sale, Galerie Giroux, Brussels, 22 March 1952, lot 91.
Private collection, Brussels, and thence by descent.

EXHIBITED:

Brussels, Musée de Peinture moderne, *Les XX, IXe Exposition annuelle*, February - March 1892, no. 5.
Brussels, Galerie Georges Giroux, *Hommage à James Ensor*, October - November 1945, no. 65, p. 22.
London, National Gallery, *The Works of James Ensor*, February - March 1946, no. 27, p. 9.
Paris, Galerie du Siècle, *Ensor, peintures, eaux-fortes*, June 1948, no. 5.
Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, *Rétrospective James Ensor*, June - August 1951, no. 93, p. 32 (illustrated p. 72).
Ostend, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, *Van Ensor tot Delvaux*, October 1996 - March 1997, p. 125 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

J. Du Jardin, 'Le Salon des XX', in *La Fédération artistique*, vol. 19, no. 17, 14 February 1892, pp. 197-198.
The artist's checklist, *circa* 1894, no. 91.
The artist's handlist (*Liber Veritatis*), *circa* 1929-1941, no. f. 37r.
E. Verhaeren, *James Ensor*, Brussels, 1908, p. 116.
G. Le Roy, *James Ensor*, Brussels & Paris, 1922, p. 183.
P. Fierens, *James Ensor*, Paris, 1943, pp. 104 & 164 (illustrated p. 104).
P. Haesaerts, *James Ensor*, New York, 1959, no. 282, p. 379 (illustrated p. 288).
F.-C. Legrand, 'Les lettres de James Ensor à Octave Maus', in G. Ollinger-Zinque, ed., *Bulletin des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, Brussels, 1966, nos. 1-2, p. 37.
G. Ollinger-Zinque, *Ensor par lui-même*, Brussels, 1976, no. 56, pp. 51 & 119 (illustrated p. 119).
H. Todts, in exh. cat., *James Ensor*, Paris, 1990, p. 206.
X. Tricot, *James Ensor, Catalogue raisonné of the Paintings*, vol. 1, 1875-1902, Antwerp, 1992, no. 327, p. 316 (illustrated).
X. Tricot, *Ensoriana*, Antwerp, 1995, pp. 47-48 & p. 53 under note 11.
X. Tricot, *James Ensor, The Complete Paintings*, Ostfildern, 2009, no. 340, pp. 105-107, 217 & 312 (illustrated pp. 105 & 312).
X. Tricot, "'Intrigue" by James Ensor', in exh. cat., *James Ensor by Luc Tuymans*, London, 2016, p. 138.





James Ensor, *Le désespoir de Pierrot (Pierrot le jaloux)*, 1892. Sold, Christie's, Paris, 23 February 2009 (\$6,386,544).

'These masks are ghostly, disturbing, they have every characteristic of life, the same frightened impression that is also sensed in a waxwork museum. And they express all the enigmatic, obscurely mysterious, unpleasant and strangely grotesque side of life.'

– AUGUST VERMEYLEN

Using the carnival with the *commedia dell'arte*, *Baptême des masques* welcomes the viewer into marvellous, fantastical and enigmatic world of the inscrutable Belgian artist, James Ensor. From the mid-1880s onwards, masks and the carnival came to dominate Ensor's work, frequently featuring in his bizarre and often satirical paintings, which are entirely unique within the turn-of-the-century avant-garde. Painted in 1891, *Baptême des masques* encapsulates this preoccupation, its protagonists posed like actors upon a stage, absorbed in what seems to be a strange ritual or baptism. With leering grins, strange masks, enigmatic looks and fanciful costumes, these figures appear amidst an imaginary, almost hallucinatory setting, rendered in a palette of delicate, pearlescent tones.

The inspiration for *Baptême des masques* derives from a photograph taken at around the same time that this work was painted and features Ensor with members of the Rousseau and Nahrath families, standing in the same poses and playful costumes as the figures of the present work. It was likely Ernest Rousseau père who took the photo. Dressed in a flamboyantly coloured costume, Ensor stands in the centre, sporting a military busby and seemingly about to pour something over the horizontal figure below, perhaps enacting a part of this strange baptismal ritual. He is surrounded by others, including his great friend, Ernest Rousseau fils, all of whom are dressed up in Pierrot-like costumes and an assortment of masks, wigs, hats and feather-

like props in this imaginary charade. Each figure is endowed with a distinct pose, role and appearance: from the sideways glances of the white-costumed Pierrots that flank the carefully staged group, to the disquieting presence of the seated and red-cloaked 'grim-reaper' figure that kneels down by the man or 'mask' being 'baptised'.

This playful snapshot provides a glimpse into Ensor's world at this time. Ensor had first met the natural scientist, Ernest Rousseau père and his young wife, a renowned mycologist, Mariette, through her brother, fellow artist, poet and writer, Théo Hannon, with whom he studied at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. He soon became close with the family, particularly with Mariette, who would remain the artist's confidante, and with their son, also named Ernest. This family of scientists and radical thinkers were at the centre of a progressive circle of politicians, intellectuals and writers in turn-of-the-century Brussels. Key figures in the social life of the city, they often hosted and frequented parties and masquerades, for which, as the photograph attests, they enjoyed dressing up.

This friendship had a decisive influence on Ensor's artistic development. Not only did the Rousseaus provide the artist with support and patronage, as well as a second home in Brussels, but, through his association with them, the artist was exposed to a stimulating array of progressive views and thoughts, political,



James Ensor (standing, second from the left) with members of the Rousseau and Nahrath families, circa 1891. Photographer unknown (probably Ernest Rousseau).

scientific and artistic. Already endowed with an anarchist streak and a very distinct way of viewing the world, Ensor's immersion into the Rousseaus' circle further radicalised his thinking and his art, as he increasingly began to paint veiled, often satirical comments and darkly humorous critiques on Belgium's ruling classes, religion and bourgeois conventions and pretensions. By taking a well-known Christian ritual, and simultaneously depicting it in a composition reminiscent of traditional *Lamentations* scenes, in *Baptême des masques* Ensor and his companions were perhaps poking fun at religion, transforming the clergy and worshippers into leering Pierrots and elaborately costumed figures in this strange, macabre masquerade.

It was also through his friendship with both Rousseau and Hannon that Ensor became increasingly immersed in the world of the theatre and pantomime, particularly the *commedia dell'arte*. Rife with both humour and satire, the *commedia dell'arte* was experiencing a revival of interest in the mid to late 1800s. In particular, Pierrot, one of the most popular characters in this form of Italian theatre, had become an almost ubiquitous figure in *fin-de-siècle* Europe, appearing with an unprecedented frequency in both the theatre and the visual arts. In 1886, Ensor's friend, Théo Hannon had written a ballet-pantomime entitled *Pierrot-Macabre*, inspired by the earlier pantomimes of Champfleury, which focused on the darker qualities of this character.

This, as well as numerous other plays and revues that featured the *commedia dell'arte* at this time sparked the artist's imagination, complementing and encouraging his innate predilection for the art of the performance, concealed identities, costumes and masquerades.

It is therefore no coincidence that the *commedia dell'arte* and in particular, the character of Pierrot began to appear in Ensor's work in the late 1880s. In the present composition, a 'pierrotade', as Xavier Tricot has described, it is the character, or at least the costume of Pierrot that features most obviously (X. Tricot, 'Pierrot au Théâtre des Masques', in *Ensoriana*, Antwerp, 1995, p. 47). Two figures are sporting the voluminous white outfit, complete with the elaborate ruff, that Pierrot was most commonly seen wearing. A similar and closely related work of the same date, *Réunion de masques (Mascarade)* (Tricot, no. 341) was likely also based on a contemporary photograph of Ensor and his friends and features the same flamboyantly attired Pierrot amidst a multi-figure composition. As in the present work, the figure of Ensor also appears, engaged in the same ritualistic pouring of liquid over the central figure. *Duel de masques* (Tricot, no. 382), painted in either 1892 or 1896, is the third of this closely linked group, featuring the same horizontal figure, perhaps this time lifeless following a duel – an event that took place in Hannon's *Pierrot-Macabre* – amongst a troupe of costumed figures.



James Ensor, *Squelette arrétant masques*, 1891. Sold, Sotheby's, Paris, 7 December 2016 (\$7,913,843).



Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Pierrot, dit autrefois Gilles*, 1718-1719. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Many at this time regarded Pierrot, a quintessential symbol of melancholy and loneliness, as a stand-in for the fate of an artist, who was similarly seen as an outcast, striving to create work which the wider public did not understand nor appreciate. Misunderstood and derided by critics, Ensor continually depicted this character in his art, leading some to suggest he was purposefully and personally alluding to this symbolism. By using these well-known theatrical figures, Ensor could invest his surreal scenes with layers of narrative, as well as social commentary and satire, leaving the viewer searching for meaning amidst these fantastical gatherings of characters that he dreamt up with his friend Rousseau.

The troupe of characters in *Baptême des masques* includes two Pierrot-esque characters accompanied by a variety of other individuals sporting masks that were likely inspired by those worn by the riotous revellers of the Ostend carnival. Ensor's hometown, Ostend, was famous for its annual Mardi Gras carnival, the most elaborate in Belgium. Every year, this seaside town was transformed into a whirling spectacle of colour, its inhabitants donning garish, ghoulish masks and flamboyant costumes and indulging in bacchanalian reverie. The theatrical masquerade of the carnival beguiled Ensor. And as a result this theme – at once theatrical, joyous and vibrant, grotesque and sinister – became the lens through which he depicted the world, allowing him to reveal the darker, underside of society and the madness and disorder that lies inherent in mankind.

'I have joyously shut myself up in the solitary domain where the mask holds sway,' he wrote, 'wholly made up of violence, light, and brilliance. To me, the mask means freshness of colour, sumptuous decoration, wild unexpected gestures, very shrill expressions, exquisite turbulence' (Ensor, quoted in I.



James Ensor, *Duel de masques*, 1896. Private collection.

Pfeiffer & M. Hollein, *James Ensor*, exh. cat., Frankfurt, 2005-2006, p. 34). Ensor had grown up surrounded by these ornate masks, as well as a plethora of other objects – skulls, Chinese porcelain, skeletons, old books, prints and shells – all of which were sold in his mother's souvenir shop in Ostend. These masks and their strange, often grotesque beauty, as well as their ability to conceal, transform and liberate their wearer, sparked Ensor's imagination. With masks he could ridicule, satirise, scorn or simply observe different factions of society as well as social convention, while at the same time, create art that was wholly unique, colour-filled and infused with an often-disquieting sense of the surreal. The latter was a quality he revelled in, using the provocative, unsettling effect of his sometimes-sinister masked figures as a weapon to shock the hostile public out of their complacency; 'I also liked these masks because they injured the public that gave me such a bad reception', he once explained (Ensor, quoted in *ibid*, p. 35).

A testament to its importance within Ensor's oeuvre, *Baptême des masques* was first exhibited in the 1892 *Les XX* exhibition, held in Brussels. *Les XX* or *Les Vingt* was an important avant-garde group based in Brussels that Ensor amongst others including Théo Van Rysselberghe, Willy Finch and Fernand Khnopff, had founded in 1883. By 1888, Ensor's allegiance to the group had begun to wane however, as his fellow artists turned increasingly to a Neo-Impressionist technique. In defiance of his colleagues, Ensor remained dedicated to his unique artistic style. The artist's friend and long-term confidante, Augusta Boogaerts, or as Ensor called her, 'La Sirène', was the first owner of this painting, a reflection of the importance this work clearly held for the artist. It remained in her collection until her death, at which point it passed to Julienne Clea-Boogaerts.



James Ensor, *Les masques singuliers*, 1892. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Les fleurs de l'abîme

signed 'Magritte' (lower left); inscribed and numbered "'LES FLEURS DE L'ABIME" (II)' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas
21¼ x 28¾ in. (54.1 x 73 cm.)
Painted in 1928

£1,200,000-1,800,000

US\$1,560,000-2,350,000

€1,400,000-2,100,000

'One cannot speak about mystery, one must be seized by it.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

PROVENANCE:

Galerie L'Epoque [Paul Gustave Van Hecke], Brussels, by 1929.
Galerie Le Centaure, Brussels, 1929.
(probably) Jean Bastien, by 1931.
Claude Spaak, Brussels, by whom acquired in the 1930s.
Obelisk Gallery, London.
Harry Torczyner, New York, by whom acquired from the above in 1961, until at least 1979.
Christian Fayt, Knokke.
Private collection, Brussels, by whom acquired from the above in the late 1980s, and thence by descent to the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

(probably) Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Guiette, Magritte, Picard*, December 1931 – January 1932, no. 30.
(probably) Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Exposition René Magritte*, May – June 1933, no. 23.
Brussels, Galerie des Éditions La Boétie, *Surréalisme*, December 1945 – February 1946, no. 72.
London, Obelisk Gallery, *Magritte: Paintings, Drawings, Gouaches*, September – October 1961, no. 7, p. 10 (illustrated p. 11).
Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, *The Vision of René Magritte*, September – October 1962, no. 5 (illustrated).
New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *René Magritte*, December 1965 – February 1966, no. 9 (illustrated p. 25); this exhibition later travelled to Waltham, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, April – May 1966; Chicago, Art Institute, May – July 1966; Pasadena, The Art Museum, August – September 1966; and Berkeley, University Art Museum, University of California, October – November 1966.
New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, *Exhibition of Paintings by René Magritte*, December 1977, no. 4a.

Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Rétrospective Magritte*, October – December 1978, no. 79 (illustrated).
New York, Arnold Herstand, *René Magritte: Paintings*, November – December 1986, n.n.
Ostend, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, *René Magritte*, June – August 1990, no. 21, pp. 122 & 270 (illustrated p. 123).
Berkeley, University Art Museum, University of California, *Anxious Visions - Surrealist Art*, October – December 1990, p. 287 (illustrated p. 85, pl. 104).
Verona, Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Palazzo Forti, *Da Magritte a Magritte*, July – October 1991, no. 33, p. 273 (illustrated p. 83; with incorrect dimensions).
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, *Magritte*, March – June 1998, no. 62, p. 92 (illustrated).
Barcelona, Fundació Joan Miró, *Exposició René Magritte*, November 1998 – February 1999, no. 27, p. 177 (illustrated p. 104).
Humblebaek, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, *René Magritte*, August – November 1999, no. 20, p. 78 (illustrated p. 28); this exhibition later travelled to Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, December 1999 – March 2000; and San Francisco, Museum of Modern Art, May – September 2000, pp. 43 & 100 (illustrated p. 43, pl. 16).
Paris, Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, *Magritte*, February – June 2003, p. 75 (illustrated).
Mexico City, Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes, *El Mundo Invisible de René Magritte*, March – July 2010 (illustrated p. 92).

LITERATURE:

G. Marlier, 'Du Trompe l'œil', in *Le Centaure*, no. 7, Brussels, 1 April 1929, p. 180 (illustrated).
S. Dalí, 'Documental-Paris-1929', in *La Publicitat*, Barcelona, 23 May 1929, p. 1.
P. Colin, *La Peinture belge depuis 1830*, Brussels, 1930, pl. 414, p. 428 (illustrated).
J. Reichardt, 'René Magritte', in *Apollo Magazine*, vol. LXXXV, no. 440, October 1961, p. 115 (illustrated).
P. Waldberg, *René Magritte*, Brussels, 1965, p. 340 (illustrated p. 59).
H. Torczyner, *Magritte, The True Art of Painting*, London, 1979, pp. 74 & 143 (illustrated pl. 90, p. 74).
D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. I, *Oil Paintings, 1916-1930*, Antwerp, 1992, no. 239, pp. 286-287 (illustrated p. 286).
R.-M. Jongen, *René Magritte ou la pensée imagée de l'invisible, réflexions et recherches*, Brussels, 1994, p. 92.
Exh. cat., *Magritte*, Montreal, 1996, p. 69 (illustrated).
D. Sylvester, *Magritte*, Brussels, 2009, pp. 116, 284 & 421 (illustrated p. 116).
B. Soltzfus, 'Ekphrasis in Magritte and Verne, Voyages extraordinaires to the Center of Art', in *The Comparatist*, vol. 35, May 2011, pp. 69 & 83.





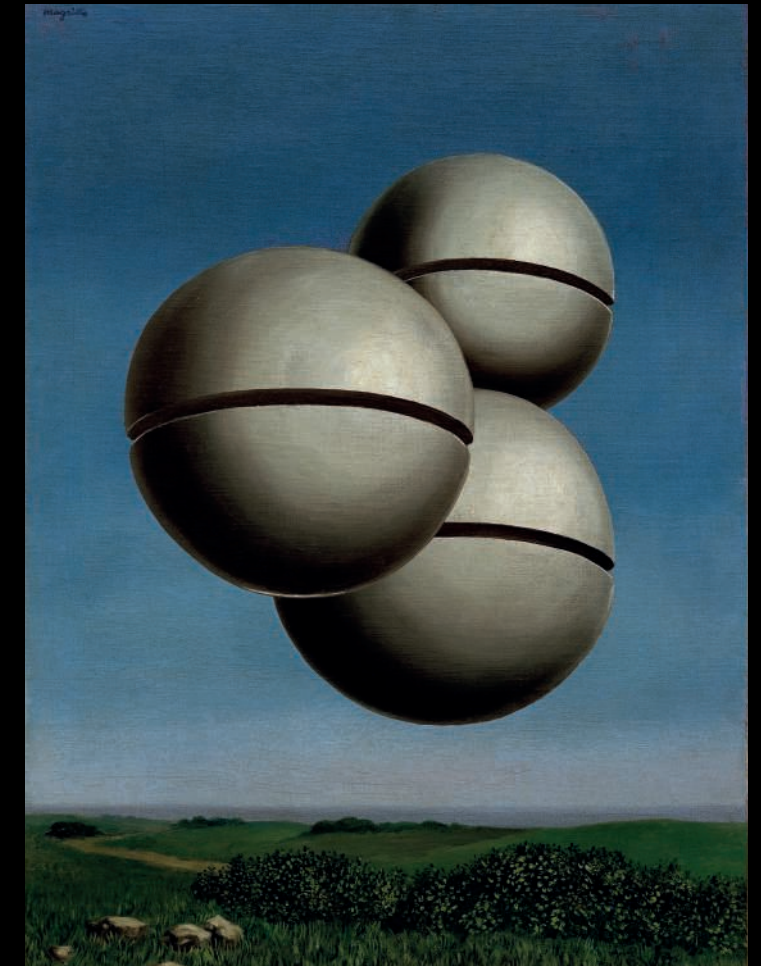
René Magritte, *La coquetterie*, 1928. (Self-portrait taken in a photo booth, Paris).



René Magritte, *L'automate*, 1928. Private collection.

Infused with an eerie sense of disquiet, *Les fleurs de l'abîme* (The Flowers of the Abyss) is a captivating composition that emerged during one of the most productive and innovative years of René Magritte's career. The artist had moved from Brussels to Paris in the autumn of 1927, drawn to the French capital's lively art scene and in particular, the hive of artists and writers active in the city's Surrealist circles. It was here that Magritte's visual language truly began to solidify, as he boldly set out to challenge and undercut established traditions of representation in painting and forge a distinctive new path within Surrealism. Discussing this period of his career, Magritte explained: 'The pictures painted [...] from 1926 to 1936 were also the result of a systematic search for a disturbing poetic effect which, produced by the deployment of objects taken from reality, would give the real world from which they were borrowed a disturbing poetic meaning through a quite natural interchange' (Magritte, quoted in D. Sylvester, *Magritte*, Brussels, 2009, p. 284). Featuring one of the artist's most iconic leitmotifs, the spherical iron sleigh bells known as *grelots*, *Les fleurs de l'abîme* centres around such an intriguing juxtaposition of elements, as the organic and the decidedly man-made are fused together to form an uncanny, mysterious plant that feels at once disconcertingly familiar and yet completely alien.

While Magritte's early correspondence from Paris suggests he was already personally acquainted with several key Surrealist figures before moving to the city, including André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Benjamin Péret, it was not until his arrival in the French capital that he was able to truly engage with the visual artists involved in the movement. It was thanks to his close friend Camille Goemans, who had arrived in Paris shortly before Magritte, that the artist came to know Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Jean Arp and Salvador Dalí. Exposure to such different approaches to image-making stimulated Magritte's creativity, resulting in a period of intense artistic evolution that led to



René Magritte, *La voix des airs*, 1931. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

a series of breakthroughs, including his explorations on the theme of metamorphosis and the emergence of his infamous 'word paintings' which played with the connections between image and language in unexpected ways. However, Magritte remained something of an outsider to the Surrealists during this time, both intellectually and geographically, living as he did in the suburbs rather than the centre of the city and deliberately staying away from the automatic techniques of his contemporaries. This allowed him to cultivate a highly personal aesthetic, rooted in strange disjunctions and disconcerting juxtapositions, that remained distinctly his own.

Central to Magritte's artistic practice at this time was the adoption of common-place, everyday objects, from the pipe to the tuba, the iron sleigh-bells to the *bilboquet*, which were then placed in improbable situations or transformed through a series of visual conundrums to generate enigmatic, multi-layered scenes. The *grelot* was a central protagonist in these works, and had first appeared within the artist's oeuvre in the 1926 composition *Le gouffre argenté* (Sylvester, no. 87), floating freely within a strange chasm that can be glimpsed through a gap in the stage-like wall. These familiar jingle bells, typically found on the harnesses of horses or decorating sleighs, were rooted in memories from the artist's childhood, and appeared in a variety of guises throughout Magritte's oeuvre, floating in the air in strange configurations (Sylvester, nos. 240 & 241), placed reverentially in a wicker chair (Sylvester, no. 298), or as nodules on strange rippling pieces of sheet metal (Sylvester, no. 330). Here, the artist re-locates the bells, placing them in a cluster at the centre of a small plant in such a manner that their shiny metallic forms appear to be budding flowers or ripe fruit, rather than the cold, hollow vessels they are. Clinging to the side of a sheer cliff, just beyond the edge of the plateau above, the plant appears enticingly out of reach, its verdant green leaves and lustrous bell-flowers drawing our attention, but ultimately remaining beyond our grasp.



The cover of *La Révolution Surréaliste* No. 12, 1929.



René Magritte, *La voix des airs*, 1928.
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.



René Magritte, *Le présent*, 1938. Private collection.

'Instead of being astonished by the superfluous existence of another world, it is our one world, where coincidences surprise us, that we must not lose sight of.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

For Magritte, part of the appeal of using the *grelot* lay in the fact that it was a distinctly mass-produced item, its smooth finish and distinctive shape fabricated to a standardised format. In comparison to the *bilboquet*, which was often altered or anthropomorphised by the artist to enhance its visual intrigue, the *grelot* appears almost perfectly uniform across its many appearances within Magritte's oeuvre, its spherical shape sharply consistent, its profile unchanging from canvas to canvas. This deliberate consistency accentuates the banality of the object, making its dislocation to such strange contexts all the more powerful, whether they be enlarged to massive proportions and suspended in mid-air, seen drifting weightlessly through a strange landscape, or nestled in the centre of a fleshy cluster of leaves atop a rocky outcrop. In this transformation of the exceedingly ordinary into the curiously extraordinary, *Les fleurs de l'abîme* illustrates one of the key concepts which drove Magritte's art at this time: 'Our secret desire is for a change in the order of things,' he explained, 'and it is appeased by the vision of a new order... the fate of an object in which we had no interest suddenly begins to disturb us' (Magritte, quoted in S. Whitfield, *Magritte*, exh. cat., London, 1992, p. 110).

Here, the dislocation of the *grelots* is somewhat disconcerting, as if their perfect forms and enticing, reflective surfaces belie a potentially threatening secret. The dark, folding, rippling mountainous terrain, reminiscent in many ways of the slag heaps that dotted the landscape around the artist's childhood home of Hainaut, lend the scene a foreboding atmosphere, whilst simultaneously emphasising the incongruity of the fertile, blooming plant within this otherwise barren environment. In this way, the composition appears to fulfil Magritte's vision for the bells, which he outlined in 'La ligne de vie' in 1938: 'I'd

prefer to believe that the iron bells hanging from our fine horses' necks grew there like poisonous plants on the edge of precipices' (Magritte, quoted in H. Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, transl. R. Miller, New York, 1977, p. 93). As such, *Les fleurs de l'abîme* shares the same dark intensity that was a hallmark of Magritte's paintings from this Parisian period, carrying overtones of suspense, anxiety and danger as to what may happen next in the enigmatic narrative he proposes. This overwhelming sense of unease is accentuated by the inherent mystery of the *grelot* itself, its characteristic jingle-jangle caused by an object concealed within the perfect sphere, which we can perceive through the sound it makes, but which we cannot see. Instead, we can only catch a glimpse of its shadowy form through the narrow slit that bisects the bell as it dances around the inside of the sphere.

It is this interplay between the perceptible and the imperceptible, the visible and the invisible, which allows *Les fleurs de l'abîme* to resonate so powerfully in the imagination of the viewer. These innocuous, joyful bells are suddenly transformed into silent, hybrid forms that captivate and confound in equal measure, causing us to question our understanding of their very nature. In this way, Magritte suggests the endless potential for mystery and revelation that exists in the world around us, presenting a scene so unexpected and jarring that it demands our attention and prompts us to reconsider our reality. Indeed, the image proved so striking that Salvador Dalí chose to highlight the composition in one of his reports on the contemporary art scene in Paris, published in the Catalan newspaper *Le Publicitat* in May 1929. While the motif of the *grelot*-plant would appear in several subsequent works by the artist through the 1930s and 40s, it would never again be granted such prominence within the composition, nor carry such a menacing aura.



RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Le baiser

signed 'Magritte' (lower left)
gouache on paper
10% x 13¼ in. (27 x 33.8 cm.)
Executed *circa* 1957

£2,400,000-3,400,000
US\$3,100,000-4,400,000
€2,800,000-4,000,000

PROVENANCE:

Alain Tarica, Paris.
Galerie Isy Brachot, Brussels.
Private collection, Switzerland, by whom acquired from the above *circa* 1983; sale, Christie's, London, 7 February 2005, lot 73.
Private collection, London, by whom acquired at the above sale, and thence by descent; sale, Christie's, London, 2 February 2010, lot 116.
Private collection, Europe, by whom acquired at the above sale; sale, Christie's, London, 23 June 2015, lot 7.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Lausanne, Fondation de l'Hermitage, *René Magritte*, June - October 1987, no. 114, p. 207 (illustrated; titled 'L'Oiseau bleu' and dated '*circa* 1962'); this exhibition later travelled to Munich, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, *René Magritte*, November 1987 - February 1988, no. 119.
San Francisco, Museum of Modern Art, *René Magritte, The Fifth Season*, May - October 2018, p. 150 (illustrated pl. 61, p. 138)

LITERATURE:

D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. IV, *Gouaches, Tempéras, Watercolours and Papiers Collés, 1918-1967*, Antwerp, 1994, no. 1433 (illustrated p. 200).
K. Conley, *Surrealist Ghostliness*, Lincoln, 2013, p. 245, under note 15.



magritte



René Magritte, *La clairvoyance*, 1936. Private collection.

'The art of painting, as I see it, makes possible the creation of visible poetic images. They reveal the riches and details that our eyes can readily recognise: trees, skies, stones, objects, people, etc. They are meaningful when the intelligence is freed from the obsessive will to give things a meaning in order to use or master them.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

Executed circa 1957, *Le baiser* (The Kiss) presents a variation on one of René Magritte's most poetic motifs: the *oiseau de ciel*, or 'Sky-Bird,' whose form, captured mid-flight, appears to be hewn from the very environment it inhabits. No longer made of flesh and feathers, the bird instead appears to be cut from the very sky itself, its body filled with the twinkling stars and crescent moon of a nocturnal landscape. Appearing almost like a silhouette or cut-out, the *oiseau de ciel* introduces a pool of night into an otherwise daylight scene – the surrounding sky is clouded over, its soft light suggesting an early morning scene. As such, the bird is transformed from an ordinary avian into a magical creature, becoming a portal, a route to another place, another time zone, another world. As with Magritte's most successful images, *Le baiser* prompts the viewer to perceive everyday reality in a new light, while also introducing a contemplative note. Here, Magritte takes the bird and uses it to prompt the viewer into questioning the wonders of flight, something so everyday that it takes a cue such as *Le baiser* for us to reassess and truly appreciate its inherent magic. If a bird as common-place as a dove or pigeon can achieve flight, it should be cause for wonderment, and yet seldom is; by creating this stunning and moving image of the nature of flight, Magritte restores some of our awe in this incredible ability.

Opposite: René Magritte in his library, Rue des Mimosas, Brussels.
Photographer unknown.





René Magritte, *L'idole*, 1965. Private collection.



René Magritte, *La promesse*, 1950. Private collection.



René Magritte, *Le printemps*, 1965.
Sold, Christie's, London, 4 February 2008 (\$5,322,263).

While the subject had first emerged in the artist's 1940 composition *Le retour*, now in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, the *oiseau de ciel* gained international recognition largely through the adoption of the motif by the Belgian national air carrier, Sabena. In the case of the Sabena image, entitled *L'oiseau de ciel* and painted in 1966, the silhouette of a bird was shown filled with a cloudy, day-lit sky against a dark background. The present gouache, created on an uncommonly large scale relative to Magritte's usual practice, is most closely related in its content and composition to *Le baiser* (Sylvester, no. 769) of 1951, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. However, here the artist proposes a complete inversion of the earlier scenario, with night replacing day in the body of the bird, while the surrounding seascape remains bathed in the soft light of the overcast sky. As such, these two works may be considered pendant pieces, exploring a contrasting but similar visual conundrum that causes us to question our very understanding of the world around us. The sky-bird, soaring above the empty beach while the waves gently lap the shoreline, suggests not only a world beyond that which we can see, but also the artificiality of the scene that we can, which now appears like a flat stage-set behind which another reality lies.

Of course, the idea of flight was one which was bound to appeal to Magritte. From 1926, he had been engaged in an almost comprehensive programme of investigation into the essential properties of a range of subjects taken from the 'everyday' world. Absorbing the fundamental characteristics of these objects and themes, the artist would then reconfigure them through a variety of scenarios and concepts, in an effort to jolt the viewer out of their implicit acceptance of the world as they perceive it. As the artist explained, these pictures had been 'the result of a systematic search for an overwhelming poetic effect through the arrangement of objects borrowed from reality, which would give the real world from which those objects had been borrowed an overwhelming poetic meaning by a natural process of exchange' (Magritte in 1938, quoted in H. Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, trans. R. Miller, New York, 1977, pp. 215-16).

It is through such a 'process of exchange' that the bird in *Le baiser* is transformed into an object of wonder, its shape and pose so familiar, and yet its form so unexpected and improbable, that the assumptions and associations we have are upended. Over the course of his artistic career, Magritte became increasingly adept at converting his vision of the mysteries of the world into pictures that, through their icon-like simplicity, conveyed their messages all the more strikingly. Where some of his earlier Surreal pictures boasted a wealth of details and juxtapositions, from the 1930s onwards he pared back the individual elements retained within his compositions and in so doing, created more impactful images that through their very simplicity, became all the more puzzling. In *Le baiser*, Magritte distills the motif down to a single fundamental interplay between the bird and its surroundings, inserting the seemingly impossible into the otherwise ordinary, banal scene. Like a nesting doll, we are faced with a number of uncertainties by its presence and materiality, each one leading us to more questions rather than answers.

There is a logic, albeit one skewed through the prism of Magritte's meandering explorations of his subjects, in the idea of a bird being shown as made of air. Magritte himself explained that the elements that comprise his works are not stand-ins for other meanings, nor products of the worlds of dream and the subconscious that had so fascinated other artists associated with the surreal. 'In the images I paint, there is no question of either dream, escape or symbolism,' Magritte explained. 'My images are not substitutes for either sleeping or waking dreams. They do not give us the illusion of escaping from reality... I conceive painting as the art of juxtaposing colours in such a way that their effective aspect disappears and allows a poetic image to become visible. This image is the total description of a thought that unites - in a poetic order - familiar figures of the visible: skies, people,



René Magritte, *La grande famille*, 1963. Utsunomiya Museum of Art, Utsunomiya.

'Instead of being astonished by the superfluous existence of another world, it is our one world, where coincidences surprise us, that we must not lose sight of.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

trees, mountains, furniture, stars, solids, inscriptions, etc.' (Magritte, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 224). As such, Magritte appears to be applying some pataphysical notion of gravity and the nature of flight to this subject, genuinely exploring the possibility of the *oiseau de ciel* and how such a thing might look.

In a sense, this variation of one of Magritte's recognised themes provides a fascinating insight into his practice, especially in relation to his gouaches. For while he sometimes created works on paper that were essentially reprisals of subjects previously explored in oil, he would often choose to vary them in unexpected ways, creating works that were unique and individual in their own right, rather than identical copies. This was especially true of the commissioned pictures he painted during precisely the same period that *Le baiser* was executed for the American collector Barnet Hodes. As Magritte explained to Hodes, his works needed to be 'rethought' rather than merely reproduced. In *Le baiser*, Magritte extends his musings on the theme of the *oiseau de ciel*, testing its power in a completely new context, and discovering the potentially endless iterations of the motif, which he could then translate into ever more intriguing juxtapositions.

JAMES ENSOR (1860-1949)

Scènes de la Vie du Christ

each signed 'Ensor' (*recto*) and titled (*verso*)
coloured pencil and wax crayon on paper
The complete set of 32 drawings executed
between 1910-1915

£800,000-1,200,000

US\$1,000,000-1,600,000

€940,000-1,400,000

Frontispiece, 1915

i. *L'annonciation*, 1912

ii. *L'adoration des Mages*, 1913

iii. *Le massacre des Innocents*, 1913

iv. *La fuite en Egypte*, 1913

v. *La Sainte Famille*, 1914

vi. *La circoncision*, 1913

vii. *Le baptême du Christ*, 1912

viii. *Le Christ et les Docteurs*, 1912

ix. *Le denier de César*, 1912

x. *Laissez venir à moi les petits enfants*, 1910

xi. *Le Christ chassant le démon du corps d'un possédé*, 1914

xii. *Le Christ apaisant la tempête*, 1910

xiii. *La pêche miraculeuse*, 1913

xiv. *Le Christ marchant sur la mer*, 1911

xv. *L'entrée à Jérusalem*, 1912

xvi. *La Cène*, 1911

xvii. *Le baiser de Judas*, 1912

xviii. *Ecce Homo*, 1911

xix. *Le Christ livré aux critiques*, 1910

xixb. *Le Christ livré aux critiques: Plan*, 1910

xx. *La flagellation*, 1915

xxi. *La montée au Calvaire*, 1912

xxii. *L'élévation en croix*, 1913

xxiii. *Le Christ entre les larrons*, 1914

xxiv. *La descente de croix*, 1912

xxv. *Le retour du Calvaire*, 1915

xxvi. *Pietà*, 1914

xxvii. *Le Christ et les anges*, 1913

xxviii. *L'ascension*, 1913

xxxix. *Le Saint-Esprit éclairant les apôtres*, 1913

xxx. *L'assomption*, 1913

xxxi. *La vierge adorée par les anges*, 1913

PROVENANCE:

François Franck, Antwerp, by whom acquired directly from the artist, probably before 1921.
Louis & Evelyn Franck, Antwerp, Gstaad & London, by descent from the above and thence by descent to the present owner.

LITERATURE:

Letter from Ensor to François Franck, 8 July 1921.
Letter from Ensor to Count René Philippon, 22 December 1926.
J.N. Elesh, *James Ensor*, New York, 1982, no. 141.
X. Tricot, ed., *Lettres*, Brussels, 1999, p. 306.
N. Hostyn, *La Collection du Musée des Beaux-Arts Ostende*, Brussels, 1999, p. 177 (the lithographs illustrated pp. 178-187).
E. Linhart, in exh. cat., *James Ensor*, Frankfurt, 2005, p. 60 (the lithographs illustrated pp. 60-65).
X. Tricot, *James Ensor, The Complete Paintings*, Ostfildern, 2009, p. 178.
X. Tricot, *James Ensor, The Complete Prints*, Roeselare, 2010, no. 139 (the lithographs illustrated pp. 253-262).

The Comité Ensor has confirmed the authenticity of these works.



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viii



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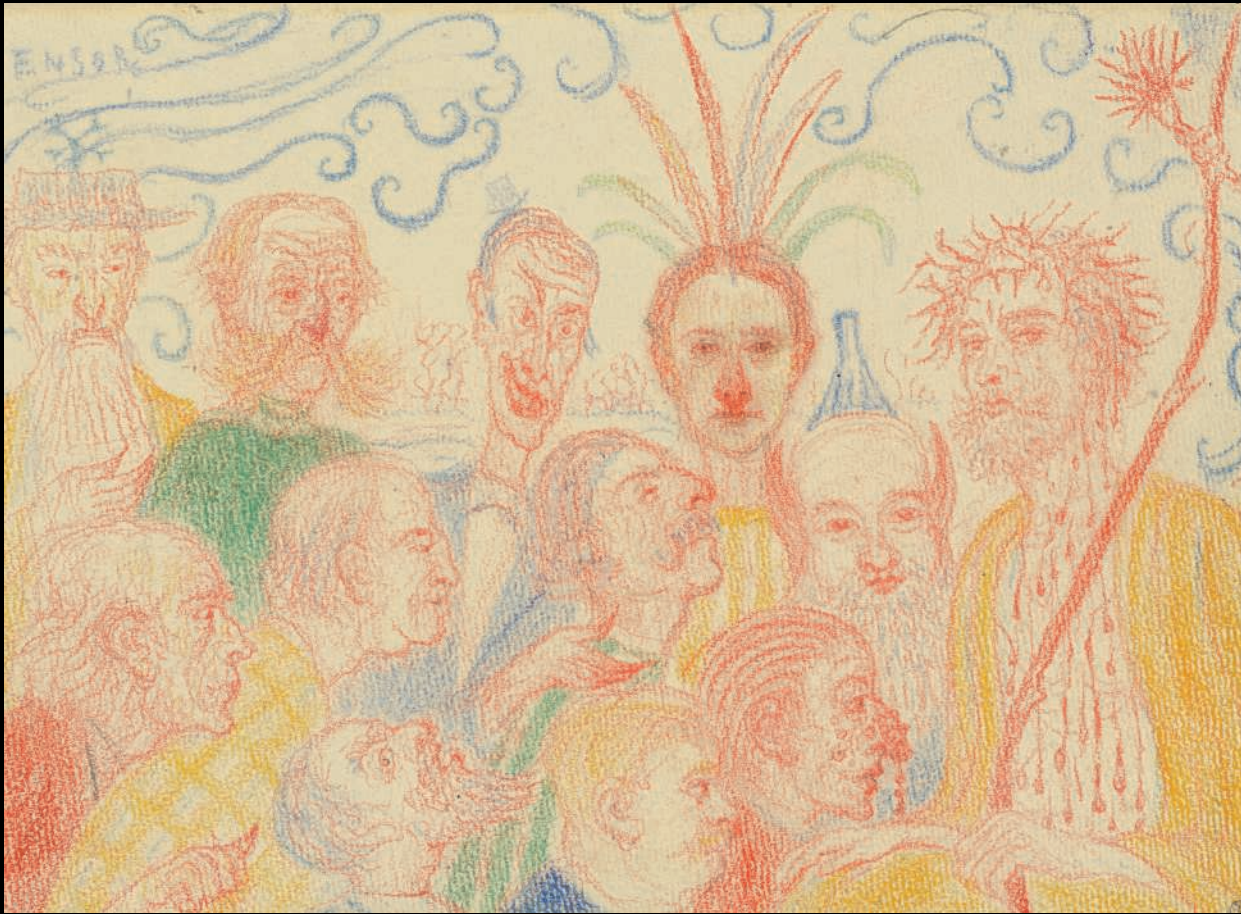
xvi

'Ensor drew this series using the many different stylistic tools and themes from the life of Christ with which he was already familiar: the repertoire of caricature-like figures, the world of masks, the calligraphic ornamentation, or the ability to create, in just a few gentle strokes, an inspired vision of light. He used all of these elements as material for free association, through which the artist no longer sought to legitimise his claim to genius, but rather, guided by the powers of his lively imagination, simply realised.'

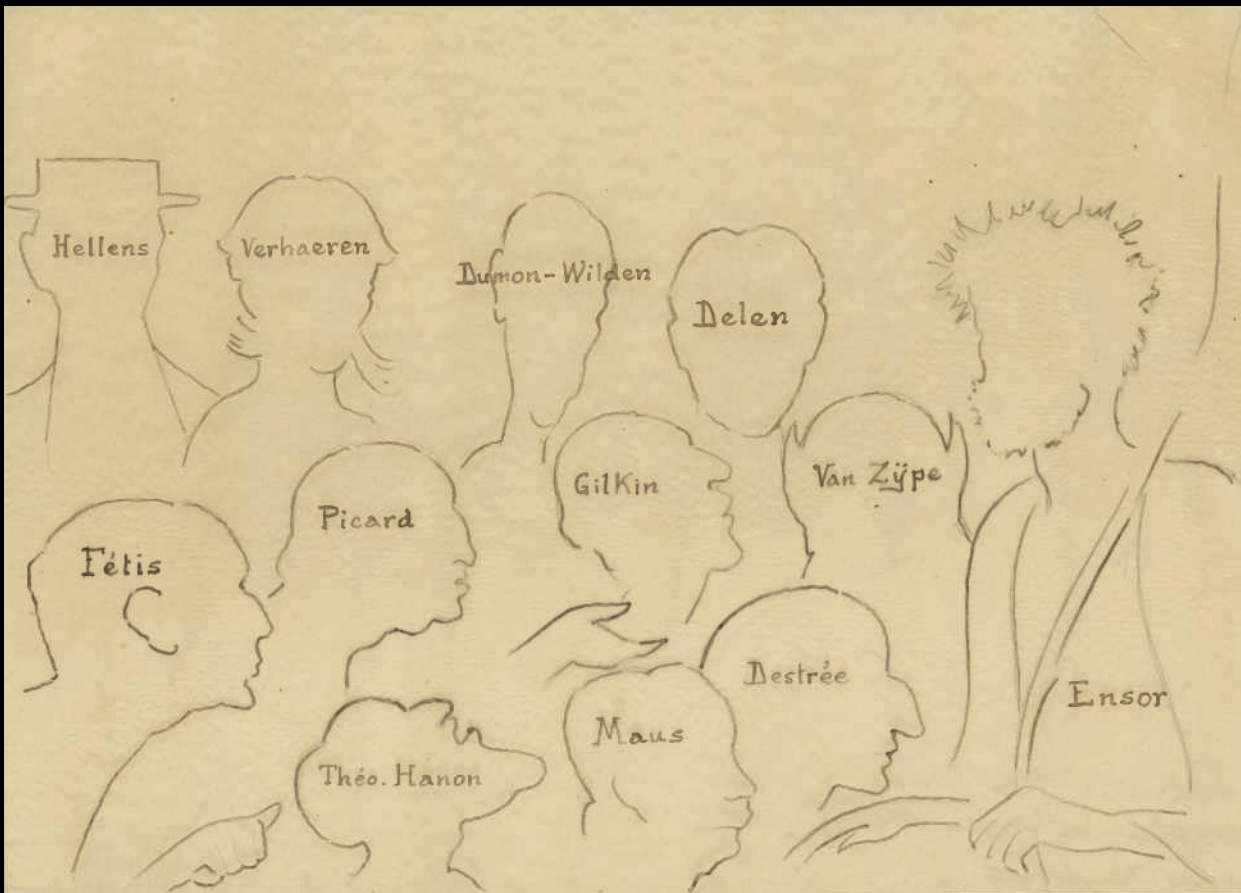
– EVA LINHART

A deeply personal depiction of the life of Christ, James Ensor's *Scènes de la vie du Christ* is a monumental series of thirty-two coloured drawings, created between 1910 and 1915. Ranking amongst the artist's most important graphic work, this large, cohesive group of works is probably the only series of drawings to remain as a complete set within Ensor's *oeuvre*. Religion, specifically Christianity, had occupied a central position throughout Ensor's career; this theme appearing as a means of satire and social critique, as well as providing a powerful symbol – that of Christ – with which to identify himself. Illustrating the iconic cycle of images that tell the story of Christ's life, from the Annunciation to the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Assumption of the Virgin, here Ensor brings together the leading motifs and stylistic features of his distinctive artistic repertoire, turning these well-known images into fantastical, humorous, surreal and sometimes scatological scenes filled with masked, caricatured and grotesque figures that are depicted with swirling lines and luminous colours. Many of these drawings are based on great masterpieces of Ensor's career, providing a fascinating view of the artist's development throughout his career: just as the life of Christ is illustrated, so Ensor's own artistic path can be traced through this series of works. In 1921, *Scènes de la vie du Christ* was used as the model for an album of thirty-two lithographs, which was published in three editions by the Galerie Georges Giroux in Brussels to honour Ensor on his sixtieth birthday. The gallery also staged a large exhibition of the artist, an event essential in founding Ensor's reputation.

Though Ensor had depicted religious subjects and themes during his days as a student at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, it was not until the late 1880s and early 1890s that he began to use religion and religious allegory as a vehicle for social critique in his art. In his work from this period, Ensor frequently employed satire to attack the bourgeois conventions and beliefs of late 19th Century Brussels and point to the social injustices he believed pervaded modern-day life. At this time Belgium was a strongly



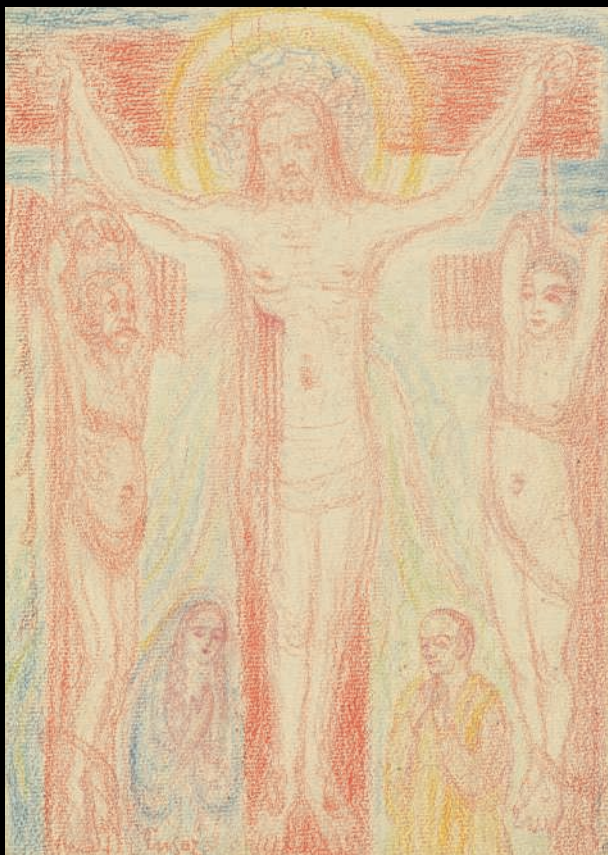
xix(a)



xix(b)



xxiv



xxiii

Catholic country, where the church was intertwined with affairs of the state and politics. Engaged in a world of liberals, socialists, scientists, artists and free thinkers, Ensor developed a loathing of institutionalised religion, using his art as a means of illustrating this. Religion as well as science were for Ensor, 'cruel goddesses, drenched in tears and blood', and art was his means of expressing this anti-authoritarian position (Ensor, quoted in H. Todts. 'A Capricious Artistic Quest for bliss: Postmodernist "avant la lettre"', in *James Ensor by Luc Tuymans*, exh. cat., London, 2016-2017, p. 23).

As with so much of Ensor's art, things are never as they seem. In this series of drawings, the Holy family appear as if in a frenzied hallucination, the protagonists rendered with exaggerated and caricatured faces as if images from a strange nightmare. Combining the sacred and the profane, religion and modern-day life, allegory and description, these biblical figures are given the carnival masks of Ensor's home, transformed from their popular depictions into deeply subjective visions from the artist's psyche.

One of his most important works, *L'entrée du Christ à Bruxelles* of 1889 (Tricot, no. 293; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and formerly in the same collection as these drawings) announced this new direction in Ensor's art. Instead of depicting Christ entering Jerusalem, here he is entering Ensor's home town, Ostend, in the midst of the famed Mardi-Gras carnival. The writhing mass of the crowd – composed of masked figures that represent Belgium's ruling classes – dominates the scene, dwarfing the image of the saviour, who is hardly visible behind this surging group of garishly coloured figures and their array of banners that reference both the past and contemporary day. Indeed, it is this image of Christ that also serves as a symbol of the artist himself. Regarded as a self-portrait of Ensor, here he has portrayed his conception of himself as a man ignored and overlooked,

a visionary who is isolated among those who do not understand nor care about his practices – in this case Belgian society. *L'entrée à Jérusalem* (xv) appears in the present group of works, yet here without as much of the scathing personal critique, as Christ and his donkey are clearly identifiable right in the centre of the people-filled composition.

Rendered with sweeping lines of blues, reds and greens, *Le Christ apaisant la tempête* (xii) is similarly based on a seminal early work of the same name painted in 1891 (Tricot, no. 329). In these Turner-esque visions of abstract light and colour, Christ and his disciples are pictured crossing the Sea of Galilee. Ensor shows the moment in which Christ has awakened during the storm and enacts a miracle, calming the turbulent waters. 'At the same time', art historian and curator, Eva Linhart has written, 'it becomes obvious that the painting in this picture is intended to express Ensor's understanding of himself as an artistic genius. In an analogy to God, the painter passionately creates a storm of colour, which he simultaneously tames by transforming the paint – initially a material without shape or form – into a wonderful, light-intensive, visual event' (E. Linhart, in I. Pfeiffer & M. Hollein, eds., *James Ensor*, exh. cat., Frankfurt, 2005-2006, p. 99).

Another earlier landscape, *Le Christ marchant sur la mer* of 1885 (Tricot, no. 273), also inspired the drawing of the same name in the present group of works (xiv). In the oil, a marine landscape is shown framed by a triumphant rainbow. While the image of Christ himself is absent, Ensor was proving that he, like Christ himself, held supernatural abilities; in this case, the ability to transform materials – in paint upon canvas – into enthralling evocations of light and space. This was therefore one of the earliest works in which Ensor identifies with the figure of Jesus, using this analogy to demonstrate his own 'divine' artistic powers. The drawing features the same compositional structure, though this time Christ himself is pictured, his halo radiant amid the deep blue sea that stretches behind him.

In one of the works – *Le Christ livré aux critiques* (xixa) – the image takes on a direct personal meaning. Here, Ensor has once again depicted himself as the figure of Jesus, looking out at the viewer, with a crown of thorns and what appear to be drops of blood running down his unclothed torso. The artist, or Christ, is met by a crowd of Belgian art critics, writers and art historians – most of whom Ensor had known for years. Many of the figures are depicted in strange, brightly coloured costumes, poses and adorned in masks and headpieces. Each figure has been identified in a plan of the composition (*Le Christ livré aux critiques: Plan*, xixb): on the back row, from left to right stand the bearded figure of the writer, Franz Hellens, the poet and critic, Émile Verhaeren with a wide moustache, Dumont-Wilde, and the Flemish art historian and curator, Ary Delen, who is sporting a strange headpiece. In the second row, the music critic, François-Joseph Fétis brandishes a knife, appearing next to the writer, lawyer, and founder of the Libre Académie de Belgique, Edmond Picard,



xii



xiii



xiv



James Ensor, *L'entrée du Christ à Bruxelles en 1889, 1888*. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

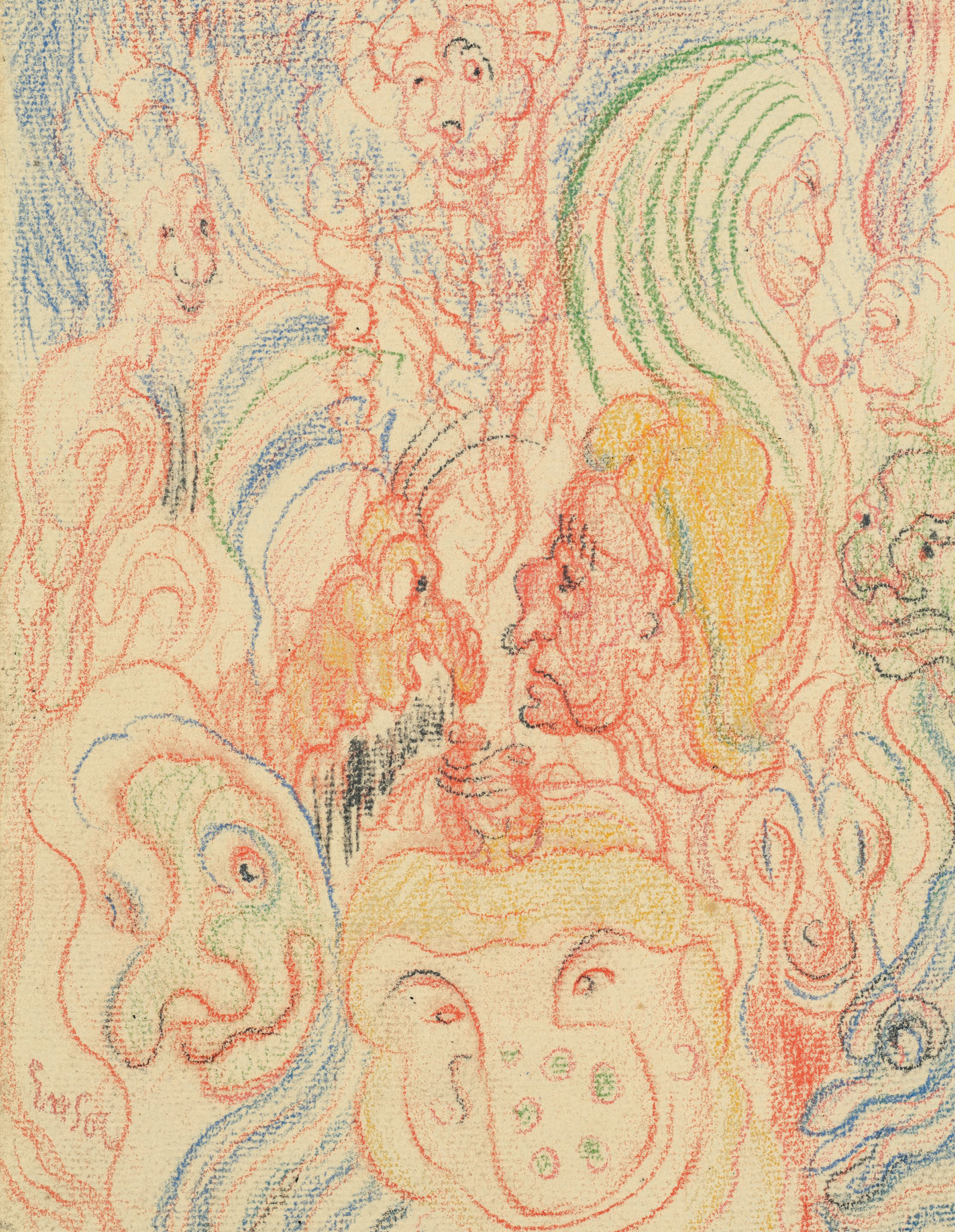
'I see a great unity in my art. Humility of the painter before nature; imagination peopled with dreams; works presenting palpable figures or forms, nourished and bathed in atmosphere; bodies broadly conceived; a line which is breathed, formed and drawn by the wind; broken colour; gestures magnified and deformed by mirage...'

– JAMES ENSOR

followed by the poet, Iwan Gilkin and Auguste Van Zype; and in the front row, Théo Hannon, a close friend of the artist, stands next to fellow founder of *Les XX*, the radical Belgian-based avant-garde group of the early 1880s, Octave Maus, beside whom Jules Destrée, a critic and politician, is positioned. All seem to be humbly kneeling down in service of artist-Christ figure before them.

Yet, while humour and satire still abound in this work, the caustic and hostile tone of his earlier religiously themed paintings has lessened. As Eva Linhart has written of this group of works, 'This series bears the style of serene rupture unique to many of his later works. The aggressiveness and sustained programmatic quality that characterise the early depictions of Christ have given way to a lyrical tone. What was formerly a conflict-ridden clash between humanity and its saviour, the theme of existential suffering through art and through its critics, has been softened in this series into a kind of affectionate teasing' (E. Linhart, *ibid.*, p. 60).

Having remained in the same collection for almost a century, *Scènes de la vie du Christ* was acquired directly from Ensor by the famous Antwerp interior decorator, art collector and patron, François Franck. Franck met Ensor in 1905, introduced to the artist through the poet and critic Emma Lambotte, who was also a major patron of his work, and the two quickly became friends. Together with Ensor, Franck and his brothers founded *Kunst van Heden*, a group conceived as a counterpart to the alliance of avant-garde artists known as *Les XX* in Brussels. Over the course of their friendship, Franck acquired a large collection of many of Ensor's greatest works, a number of which he gave to the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. These drawings subsequently passed to Franck's son, Louis, who like his father, amassed an important collection of modern art, including work by Van Gogh, Cézanne and Picasso, and have remained in the same family's collection until the present day.



ROBERTO MATTA (1911-2002)

Eupure

signed, dated and inscribed "'Eupure" Fev. 1944.
Matta' (on the stretcher bar); signed and dated
again 'Matta 44' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
50 x 38 in. (127.2 x 96.5 cm.)
Painted in February 1944

£350,000-550,000

US\$450,000-720,000

€410,000-650,000

PROVENANCE:

Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York (no. 1743).
Acquavella Gallery, New York (no. 383).
Private collection; sale, Christie's, New York,
18 November 2009, lot 28.
Private collection, Midwest, by whom acquired at the
above sale.

EXHIBITED:

Yokohama, Museum of Art, *Masson et Matta: Les deux
univers*, April - June 1994, no. 9 (illustrated p. 42).

The Matta Archives have confirmed the
authenticity of this work.

*'If we admit that we are entering a new world in which there are laws that we
do not understand,... in such a world it is the task of the poet and the artist to
represent this new physics where we must now live and which is revolutionary.'*

– ROBERTO MATTA





Roberto Matta, *The Vertigo of Eros*, 1944. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

If we admit that we are entering a new world in which there are laws that we do not understand,' Matta once reasoned, 'in such a world it is the task of the poet and the artist to represent this new physics where we must now live and which is revolutionary' (Matta, quoted in *Roberto Matta: Paintings and Drawings, 1937-1959*, exh. cat., Los Angeles, 1997, n.p.). The experience of the Second World War was profoundly unsettling for Matta, and as a result, he began to integrate imagery with a deeply existential and cataclysmic feeling to the psychic hermeticism of his earlier work. The artist lived out the war years in New York, serving as a chief conduit between the European Surrealists in exile and the emerging American Abstract Expressionists, who found a powerful imperative in the visionary reach and apocalyptic spectres of his landscapes from the early to mid-1940s. *Eupure* belongs to a series of paintings that Matta worked on over the first half of the decade called *Psychological morphologies* (later, *Inscapes*) that project his internalisation of the collective anxiety and psychological shock of the atomic age, almost uncannily prefigured in the vaporous light and fragmented planes of colours that swirl in its infinite, perspectival space.

Matta's paintings spanning the period from roughly 1943 to 1945 resonate on a cosmic scale, conjuring a new iconography of world-consciousness in which strange, astral bodies drift fatefully through agitated and often fantastic spaces. His works from these years, as Elizabeth A. T. Smith and Colette Dartnall have noted, incorporate 'a more muted luminosity and a pronounced, clearly architectural indication of structure', a galaxy of shapes that include 'both geometric patterns and soft-edged forms, evoking the confines of architecture and the womb as well as the organic and vast nature of the universe' (E. A. T. Smith & C. Dartnall, "'Crushed Jewels, Air, Even Laughter": Matta in the 1940s', in *Matta in America: Paintings and Drawings of the 1940s*, exh. cat., Chicago, 2001, pp. 22-23).



Roberto Matta, *To Escape the Absolute*, 1944. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2004.

Eupure bears a striking familial resemblance to the monumental *Le Vertige d'Eros*, 1944 (The Museum of Modern Art, New York), one of the defining images of Matta's *oeuvre* and for which it may have served as a model, as its title suggests. With *Le Vertige d'Eros*, the more intimately-scaled *Eupure* counts among what Smith and Dartnall consider 'the first works in which Matta's focus on floating planes and planet-like shapes becomes central and in which he abandons the horizon line for deep perspective, underscoring a sense of disequilibrium'. In the present work, the dynamic, torquing space is held in a liminal state of suspension, its serial striations and sinuous lines rotating around a genital egg shape that hovers mysteriously at its centre. 'The patterns created by the concentric lines suggest labyrinths, which in turn connote freedom and captivity,' according to Smith and Dartnall. 'Matta often used such lines in his work to represent the passage of time and the bonds of connection between space, time, and beings' (E. A. T. Smith & C. Dartnall, *ibid.*, 2001, pp. 22-23).

The cosmic oneness of Matta's universe is sensitively rendered in the spinning, prospecting space of *Eupure*, a moving meditation on the unravelling condition of the contemporary world filtered through the surreal abstractions and deepest recesses of the artist's psyche. The lambent transparencies of its surface impart an eerie glow to the floating planes of colour, cast in sombre tones of taupe and seal brown; the spindly lines that crisscross the surface, radiating from one space to another, suggest the recessive depths of this universe and its elemental interconnectedness. A metaphor of perpetual evolution, of the shape-shifting forces that create and defy equilibrium, *Eupure* is ultimately a distillation of Matta's universalism, vested in the anguish of his own experience and expressed within the most intimate space of his painting. 'Rather than being a cosmonaut,' the artist once declared, 'I consider myself to be a beingonaut', the ultimate traveller in the inner space of human consciousness (Matta, quoted in C. Cernuschi, 'Mindscapes and Mind Games: Visualising Thought in the Work of Matta and his Abstract Expressionist Contemporaries', in *Matta: Making the Invisible Visible*, exh. cat., Boston, 2004, p. 61).

λ40

MAX ERNST (1891-1976)

Jeune homme traversant une rivière prenant par la main une jeune fille et en bousculant une autre

signed 'max ernst' (lower right)
oil on canvas
18⁷/₈ x 15¹/₂ in. (47.8 x 38.3 cm.)
Painted in 1927

£300,000-400,000

US\$390,000-520,000

€350,000-470,000

'Max Ernst died on August 1, 1914. He came back to life on November 11, 1918, as a young man who wanted to be a magician and to find the myth of his era.'

– MAX ERNST

PROVENANCE:

Galerie van Leer, Paris.
Galerie André François Petit, Paris.
Galleria Odyssia, Rome.
Luisa Laureati Briganti (Galleria dell'Oca), Rome.
Giuliano Briganti, Rome, a gift from the above.
Galleria Notizie, Turin, by whom acquired from the above.
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1976.

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Galerie Van Leer, *Max Ernst*, March - April 1927, no. 36.
Bologna, Galleria de' Foscherari, *Max Ernst*, November - December 1970, no. 36 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

A. Breton, *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, Paris, 1928, p. 41 (illustrated).
Labyrinthe, vol. I, no. 6, 15 March 1945, pp. 4-5 (illustrated).
W. Spies, S. & G. Metken, *Max Ernst, Werke 1925-1929*, Cologne, 1976, no. 1116, p. 167 (illustrated).





Max Ernst, *La horde*, 1927. Sold, Sotheby's, London, 19 June 2013 (\$3,285,065).

Among the very earliest works that Max Ernst made using his revolutionary *grattage* technique in 1927, *Jeune homme traversant une rivière prenant par la main une jeune fille et en bousculant une autre* (Young man crossing a river taking one girl by the hand and jostling another) is a richly atmospheric and prophetic vision. Applying the logic of *frottage* to paint, Ernst scraped pigment across canvas laid over a textural surface to conjure organic, semi-automatic forms, which he defined and enhanced with subsequent hand-painting. The present work's three characters march across a churning, honeycombed river, silhouetted against a yellow-lit pale blue sky. The man pulls one girl behind him, while lifting his leg to shove another girl in front. Twining strokes of red, yellow and green highlight muscular contours within their dark, frieze-like outlines. Their eyes are blank apertures onto the sky. This image of marauding and barbarism is closely related to works like *La horde* (Spies, no. 1132; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam) and *La famille nombreuse* (Spies, no. 1129; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) of the same year: improvising on the reliefs impressed onto his canvas, Ernst dredged up nightmarish memories of the First World War from his subconscious. His post-War anxieties manifested as primordial, mythic marauders resurrecting themselves from the Flanders mud. In retrospect, these craggy, sinuous presences are premonitory of the even greater disaster that would build in Europe over the next decade. Like the glorious poisoned paradises of Ernst's 'forests', the *grattage* paintings were forged through a unique meeting of the artist's internal emotional landscape and the 'found' material reality taken from the surfaces he used. Intricate, primal and menacingly beautiful, the present work is a darkly Romantic dream of the end of civilisation.

Responding to the suggestive forms on his relief-imprinted canvas, Ernst developed his *grattage* compositions through a blend of chance and design. *Jeune homme traversant une rivière prenant par la main une jeune fille et en bousculant une autre* was one of the first he made using this method, conceived during the winter of 1927 when he was staying in the French Alpine town of Megève. As he explained, 'these medium-format pictures ... were the first specimens of a new technique akin to *frottage*. It consisted of first preparing a canvas with light colours, placing it on an uneven surface (a piece of string, for instance) and then causing lines in transparency to appear on it with the aid of a bricklayer's trowel smeared with darker colours. Simplicity itself! But in this optical game one still has to know how to find signs leading to unforeseen interpretations' (M. Ernst, '1927: A piece of string found on my table', in E. Quinn, ed., *Max Ernst*, London, 1977, p. 138). Beyond the



Max Ernst, *La horde*, 1927. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

'A human being drifts through time like an iceberg, only partly floating above the level of the consciousness. It is the aim of the Surréaliste, whether a painter or as poet, to try and realise some of the dimensions and characteristics of his submerged being.'

– HERBERT READ

formal radicalism of this technique – just one of many non-traditional approaches he would adopt in his quest to go *au-delà de la peinture*, or 'beyond painting' – the 'unforeseen interpretations' Ernst found through *frottage* and *grattage* imbued his works with a rich ambivalence and psychological density. Neither working to represent nature nor presenting found objects as unadorned fact, he invented a hybrid mode that derived its essential forms from nature – wood-grain, twine, woven straw, rough bark – while also plumbing the hidden depths of his own interiority. True to the Surrealist principle of automatism, the images he lit upon were often multiple, ambiguous or contradictory, and alive with the hallucinatory, dream-like edge of divination. 'Wherever man hopes to take the mysteries of nature by surprise,' Ernst said, 'he finds only his own image reflected in the mirror. No diver knows, before he goes down, what he is going to bring up' (M. Ernst, quoted in 'Où va la peinture? Conversation avec Max Ernst', *Commune: Revue littéraire de la culture*, 2 : 21, May 1935, pp. 956-57).

Even as a child, Ernst had mixed feelings towards the forest that surrounded his home in Brühl. He recalled a dual sensation of 'delight and oppression, and what the Romantics called "emotion in the face of nature." The wonderful joy of breathing freely in an open space, yet at the same time distress at being hemmed in on all sides by hostile

trees. Inside and outside, free and captive, at one and the same time' (Ernst, quoted in E. Quinn, ed., *Max Ernst*, London, 1977, p. 142). This ambiguity is palpable in the present work, whose filigree of textures is both enticing and unnerving, and suggestive at once of forest, reef, rocky or swampy terrain, swirling liquid or even gaseous substances. The mutable, heraldic figures are uncanny, appearing like no beings on earth even as they are induced by structures inherent to natural matter. Monstrous faces, bodies and dangerous growths shift in and out of focus. Ernst himself is directly implicated in this fantastical twilight zone of imagination; the bird-like head of the pillaging *jeune homme* seems to anticipate the arrival of his avian alter-ego Loplop, who would first appear in his collage-novel of 1929, *La femme 100 têtes*. Such mercurial guises were important to Ernst, who summarised his experience of the First World War as one of death and rebirth. 'Max Ernst died on August 1, 1914. He came back to life on November 11, 1918, as a young man who wanted to be a magician and to find the myth of his era' (M. Ernst, 'Some Data on the Youth of M. E. as Told by Himself', *View*, 2nd Series, No. 1, April 1942, p. 30). The present painting sees him using that divinatory magic to bring to light the monsters that stalked his memories, while also creating a picture of the collective unconscious of his time: the 'myth of his era', found through an unprecedented approach to the interface between painting, the subconscious and the physical world.

MAX ERNST (1891-1976)

Jardin gobe-avions

signed 'max ernst' (lower right)
gouache on paper
10⁷/₈ x 19⁷/₈ in. (27.6 x 50.6 cm.)
Executed in 1935

£200,000-300,000

US\$260,000-390,000

€230,000-350,000

'Voracious gardens devoured in their turn by a vegetation which springs from the debris of trapped airplanes.'

– MAX ERNST

PROVENANCE:

Joseph-Berthold & Gaetane Urvater, Brussels, until at least 1959.

Galleria Galatea, Turin (no. 1682), by 1966.

Giulio Einaudi, Turin, by 1969.

Galleria Galatea, Turin.

Acquired from the above by the present owner in the mid-1970s.

EXHIBITED:

Knokke-Le Zoute, Albert Plage, Casino Municipal, *Max Ernst*, July - August 1953, no. 68, p. 26.

Bern, Kunsthalle, *Max Ernst*, August - September 1956, no. 58.

Otterloo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Les grandes collection belges, Sammlung Urvater*, June - September 1957, no. 37 (illustrated); this exhibition later travelled to Liège, Musée des Beaux-Arts, October - November 1957.

Leicester, Museum and Art Gallery, *Paintings from the Urvater collection*, September - October 1958, no. 28; this exhibition later travelled to York, City Art Gallery, October - November 1958; and London, Tate Gallery, November - December 1958.

Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Max Ernst*, November - December 1959, no. 53.

Turin, Galleria Galatea, *Max Ernst*, October - November 1966, no. 20 (illustrated; dated '1934').

Stockholm, Moderna Museet, *Max Ernst*, September - November 1969, no. 54, p. 75 (illustrated p. 55).

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *Max Ernst*, November 1969 - January 1970, no. 52.

Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, *Max Ernst*, January - March 1970, no. 63, p. 148 (illustrated p. 113).

LITERATURE:

P. Waldberg, *Max Ernst*, Paris, 1958, p. 291 (illustrated; dated '1934').

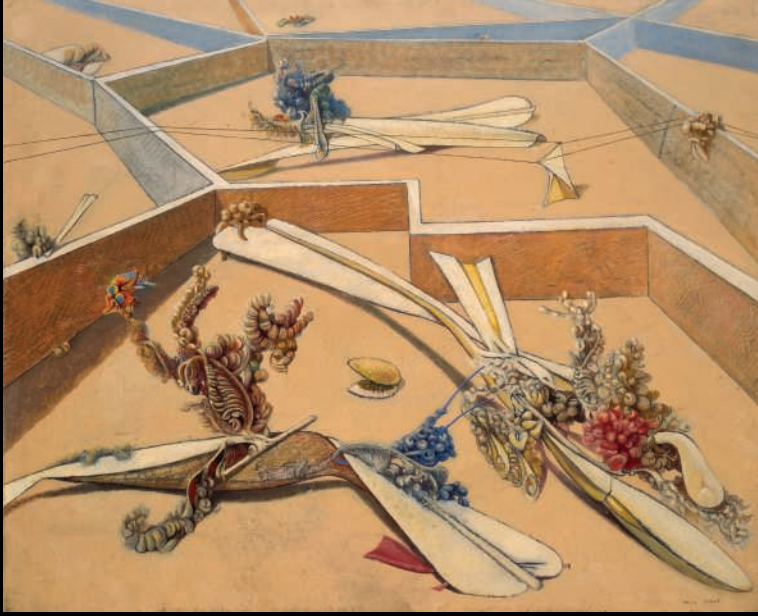
J. Russell, *Max Ernst, Life and Work*, London, 1967, no. 63, p. 346 (illustrated; with incorrect dimensions, medium and provenance).

M. Brion, 'Max l'oiseleur', in G. di San Lazzaro, ed., *XXe siècle, numéro spécial, Hommage à Max Ernst*, Paris, 1971, p. 89 (dated '1934').

U.M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*, London, 1972, no. 303, p. 153 (illustrated p. 152).

W. Spies, S. & G. Metken, *Max Ernst, Werke 1929-1938*, Cologne, 1979, no. 2182, p. 322 (illustrated).





Max Ernst, *Jardin gobe-avions*, 1935. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Max Ernst, *Jardin gobe-avions*, 1935. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

Created in 1935, Max Ernst's *Jardin gobe-avions* (Garden Airplane-Traps) hails from the artist's enigmatic series of paintings in which strange, colourful plant-like forms engulf the remains of a collection of flying machines that have fallen to the earth. In these dozen or so paintings, the titular 'airplane traps' spring from a desolate landscape reminiscent of Ernst's early 1920s collages, their luscious bundles of brightly coloured fronds, buds, vines and flowers sparkling like jewels within the desert-like environment, glimmering in the light of an unseen sun. Ernst and his fellow Surrealists shared a deep fascination for the bizarre and uncanny characteristics of the natural world, from the cannibalistic sexual practices of the praying mantis, to the seemingly innocuous appearance of predatory plants such as the Venus fly trap. At once highly attractive and eerily threatening, the flowers in *Jardin gobe-avions* appear to exhibit similar characteristics, their bold, richly variegated blooms wrapping themselves hungrily around the delicate armature of the fragmented planes, ensnaring them in such a manner as to completely disable their flying capabilities, rooting their forms once again to the earth in order to consume them.

The artist may have been drawn to the concept of trapping airborne creatures by an early nineteenth-century treatise by C. J. Kresz, *Avicéptologie Française, ou traité général de toutes les ruses dont on peut se servir pour prendre les oiseaux*, a copy of which Ernst held in his personal library. Dating from 1820, the book gave detailed instructions as to the best methods of capturing song birds, and included illustrations of the various mechanical man-made traps the hunter could construct, each one created with the sole purpose of luring and snaring their prey with the utmost efficiency. In *Jardin gobe-avions* Ernst appears to play with this concept, subverting the relationship between predator and prey by creating a scenario in which the organic plant forms lie in wait for the unsuspecting, mechanical aircraft to pass overhead, drawing them to their doom with the dazzling hues of their blooms. For the artist this inversion of power dynamics was particularly

striking, as the airplane had been so intertwined with destruction and death in his imagination, ever since his experiences of aerial warfare during the First World War. Here, the bodies of these flying machines are torn asunder by the force of a crash landing and the tendrils of the plants that ensnare them, fractured into thin strips of metal that fold and twist like paper under the weight of the encroaching carnivorous plants, their threatening nature neutralised in an instant.

Considered together, the paintings in the *Jardin gobe-avions* series explore the evolution of not only these strange, predatory plants, their forms growing, multiplying and diversifying from picture to picture, but also the gradual adaptation of the surrounding environment in response. Indeed, as the series developed, Ernst's 'gardens' also became increasingly complex in structure, divided into strange, geometric compartments that appear connected in an impossible maze, closing off any possible escape routes for the flying machines. In the present composition, however, these walls are merely suggested and hinted at, denoted by a ghostly structure that rises behind the debris of the airplane, almost like a mirage within the desert landscape. Showcasing similarities with the stepped structures of the artist's *La ville entière* paintings in texture and effect, most likely achieved through his favoured *grattage* technique, this form suggests containment rather than shelter, adding to the disquieting atmosphere of the scene. As such, the *Jardin gobe-avions* series may be seen to lead directly into the monstrous, untameable wild jungles that marked Ernst's compositions of the late 1930s and 1940s, where dense groves of foliage, flowers and vines interspersed by claw-like forms and unsettling hybrid creatures threaten the world of man.

One of only a dozen paintings created by Ernst of this enigmatic, menacing subject, the present *Jardin gobe-avions* appears at auction for the first time in its history, having remained in the same private collection for the last fifty years.



RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Le somnambule

signed 'Magritte' (upper right); inscribed and dated "'LE SOMNAMBULE" 1946' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
21 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (54.3 x 65.2 cm.)
Painted in 1946

£600,000-900,000

US\$780,000-1,200,000

€700,000-1,100,000

PROVENANCE:

Louis Scutenaire, Brussels, by whom acquired directly from the artist, until at least 1965.
Private collection, Brussels.
Galerie Patrick Derom, Brussels.
Acquired from the above by the present owner on 26 December 2001.

EXHIBITED:

Brussels, Galerie Dietrich, *Magritte*, November – December 1946, no. 15.
Verviers, Société Royales des Beaux-Arts de Verviers, *René Magritte*, 1947, no. 30.
Brussels, Galerie Isy Brachot, *Magritte. 150 œuvres. Première vue mondiale de ses sculptures*, January – February 1968, no. 71.
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, *René Magritte et le surréalisme*, September – December 1982, no. 165, p. 293 (illustrated p. 225).
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, *René Magritte*, March – June 1998, no. 141 (illustrated p. 149).

LITERATURE:

Postcard from Magritte to Marcel Mariën, 30 June 1944.
R. Magritte, *Titres*, Brussels, 1946.
P. Waldberg, *René Magritte*, Brussels, 1965, p. 348 (illustrated p. 200).
R. Magritte, *La Destination, Lettres à Marcel Mariën (1937-1962)*, Brussels, 1977, no. 108, p. 116.
R. Passeron, *René Magritte*, Paris, 1970 (illustrated p. 68).
D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. II, *Oil Paintings and Objects, 1931-1948*, Antwerp, 1993, no. 608, p. 372 (illustrated).



René Magritte, *Les compagnons de la peur*, 1942.
Sold, Christie's, London, 20 June 2018 (\$6,253,302).





René Magritte, *La trahison des images*, 1929. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



René Magritte, *Les ombres*, 1966. San Diego Museum of Art.



René Magritte, *La lampe du philosophe*, 1936. Private collection.

Painted in 1946, *Le somnambule* represents the culmination of an idea René Magritte had been mulling over for almost two years. Writing to Marcel Mariën in June 1944, the artist recounted a vision he had experienced the night before, centred on a white owl standing on a plinth in a wooded landscape. The concept rapidly evolved, and just three days later he sent Mariën a postcard with a sketch closely resembling the present composition, explaining: 'The picture with the owl has been changed and become an owl-portrait' (Magritte, quoted in D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. II, *Oil Paintings and Objects 1931-1948*, Antwerp, 1993, p. 341). Such animal portraits, in which familiar, typically domesticated, creatures were anthropomorphised through the addition of clothing and accessories, were of particular interest to the artist during these years, resulting in compositions such as *La bonne fortune* (Sylvester, no. 579) and *Le civilisateur* (Sylvester, no. 561). However, it was not until after the end of the Second World War that the artist achieved his vision for the present work, placing the owl in a domestic setting, standing beside a window through which rolling green fields can be glimpsed, and smoking a pipe. Describing the work in his publication *Titres*, Magritte explained that the bird, usually associated with watchfulness and knowledge, remains oblivious to the situation it finds itself in: 'The owl, like the sleepwalker, is unaware of the actions it is carrying out. Unwittingly, it is smoking and its eyes are open' (Magritte, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 372).

It was this addition of the pipe, such an iconic motif within the artist's oeuvre, that appears to have sparked Magritte's imagination once again in 1946, bringing the idea for the portrait of the owl finally to fruition. The distinctive shape of the pipe, clutched within the owl's sharp beak, harks back to Magritte's celebrated 1929 composition *La trahison des images* (Sylvester, no. 303), which through its clever inclusion of the statement 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' below a painted image of the object in question revealed the impossibility of reconciling language, images and their subjects. Challenging the linguistic tradition of identifying an image as the object itself, the work was highly provocative. As the artist later explained: 'The famous pipe. How people reproached me for it! And yet, could you stuff my pipe? No, it's just a representation, is it not? So if I had written on my picture "This is a pipe," I'd have been lying!' (Magritte, quoted in C. Vial, 'Ceci n'est pas René Magritte', in *Femme d'Aujourd'hui*, July 6, 1966, pp. 22-24). Recurring again and again in various scenarios and contexts throughout Magritte's oeuvre, the simple image of the pipe became a symbol for the artist's explorations into perception. In *Le somnambule*, the addition of the pipe not only adds to the anthropomorphic character of the owl, enhancing its 'humanness' as it were, but also delivers a jolt of incomprehension to the viewer that leads them to question the impossibility of the scene before them.

Le somnambule was purchased directly from the artist by his close friend and fellow Belgian Surrealist, the poet Louis Scutenaire. Scutenaire had been inducted into the circle of Surrealist writers and artists active in Brussels in 1926 after sending samples of his automatic poetry to Camille Goemans and Paul Nougé, who introduced the poet to Magritte. Over the ensuing years, the friendship between the two blossomed, with Magritte contributing illustrations to a number of Scutenaire's publications, while the poet in return provided suggested titles for over 170 of the artist's compositions and wrote several important texts on his work. Through the 1930s and 40s, both Scutenaire and his wife, the writer Irène Hamoir, served as models in many of the artist's staged photographs, including the image which inspired the nightmarish scene in *La*



Le Rendez-vous de chasse, 1934. Photographer unknown. Standing (from left): E. L. T. Mesens, René Magritte, Louis Scutenaire, André Souris, Paul Nougé; Seated (from left): Irène Hamoir, Marthe Nougé and Georgette Magritte.

gravitation universelle (Sylvester, no. 518). Drawn to the artist's unique brand of mystery, Louis and Irène also became important patrons of Magritte's work, assembling a collection of over a hundred of the artist's compositions. Describing the aspect of Magritte's artistic musings which appealed so strongly to his imagination, Scutenaire wrote: 'Here are all our familiar objects though: that chair, which should be inviting us to rest, that fruit, which should be quenching our thirst, that overcoat, which should be protecting us from the chill of age and dusk; all the usual adjuncts of our daily life, but here presented in such a way that if we then turn back and look at the world again, something that was so banal that it no longer existed for us, suddenly acquires such formidable and fascinating density that we cannot even guess what new relationships we may form with it. The universe is changed; nothing is ordinary any more' (Scutenaire, quoted in S. Whitfield, *Magritte*, exh. cat., London, 1992, p. 37).

Le somnambule was included in Magritte's landmark solo exhibition at the Galerie Dietrich in Brussels in November 1946. Showcasing examples of the artist's most recent work, this exhibition was intended to launch and promote the artist's distinctive new approach to Surrealism, for which he coined the term *Le Surréalisme en plein soleil*. Featuring oils and gouaches on an unusually large scale, the show included reinterpretations of familiar themes alongside original motifs, all captured in this light-filled colourful manner. For the catalogue, Magritte's friend Paul Nougé wrote an endorsement of the new vision, celebrating the ecstatic freedom so in evidence in works such as the present composition: 'Magritte's purpose, our purpose, has not changed. The world around us seems to be becoming smaller, shrinking, shrivelling into a thin black and grey system, in which signs take predominance over things. Our constant ambition, then, is to restore to this world its brilliance, its colour, its provocative force, its charm and, in a word, its unpredictable combinatory possibilities. There are no longer any forbidden feelings, even if they respond to the names: serenity, joy and pleasure. And if, occasionally, we come upon "beauty", like Stendhal we promise it as a poignant promise of happiness' (Nougé, quoted in D. Sylvester, *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 137).

λ*43

RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898–1967)

Sans titre (La partition)

signed 'Magritte' (upper left)
pencil, watercolour and collage on paper
11¼ x 15⅞ in. (30 x 40.1 cm.)
Executed in 1961 or 1962

£350,000-550,000

US\$450,000-720,000

€410,000-650,000

'Everything we see hides something else; we always want to see what is hidden by the thing we see. It is interesting to know what is hidden and what the visible does not show us.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Belgium, by whom acquired directly from the artist in the 1960s; sale, Christie's, London, 3 December 1991, lot 168. Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

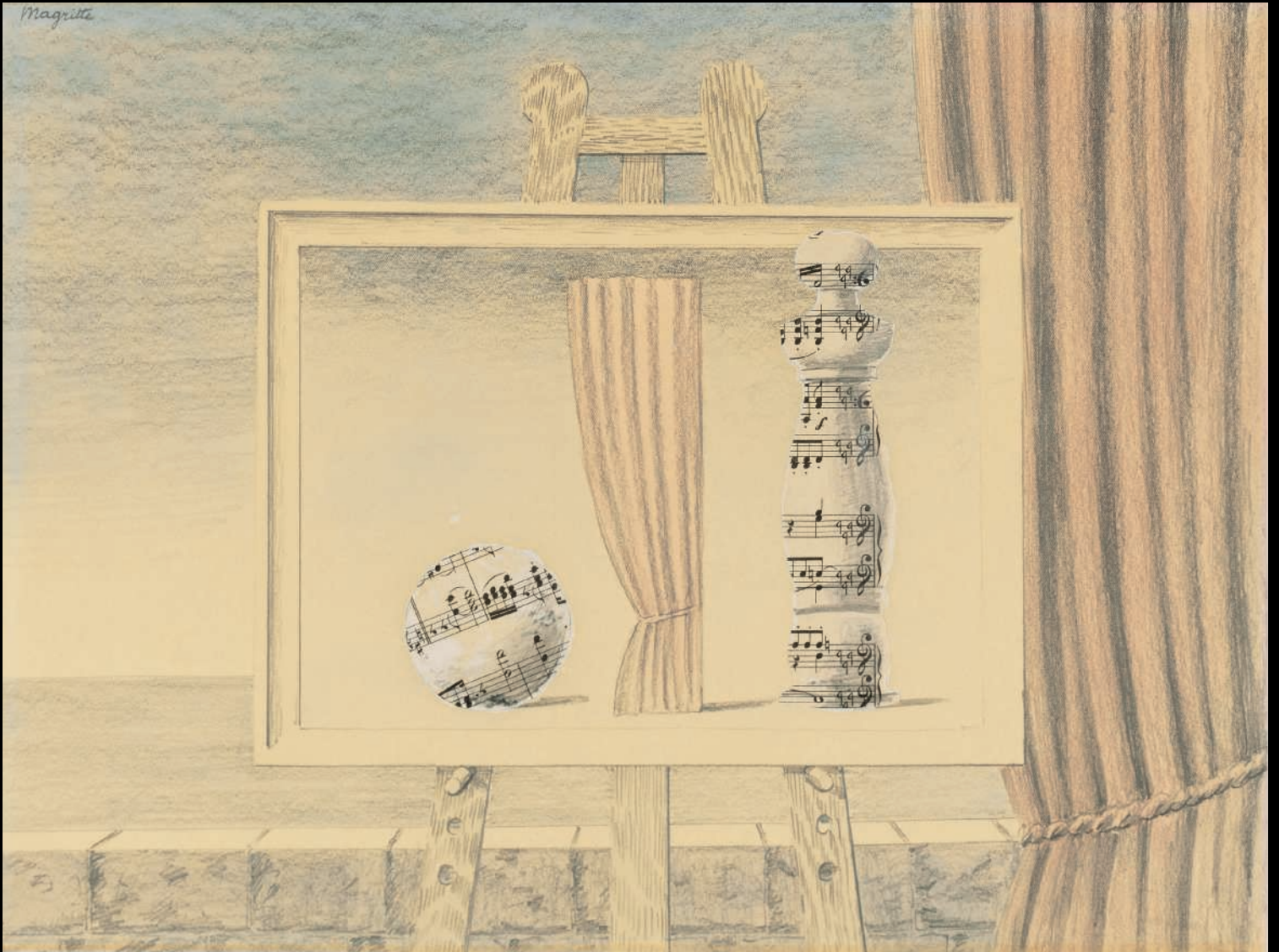
EXHIBITED:

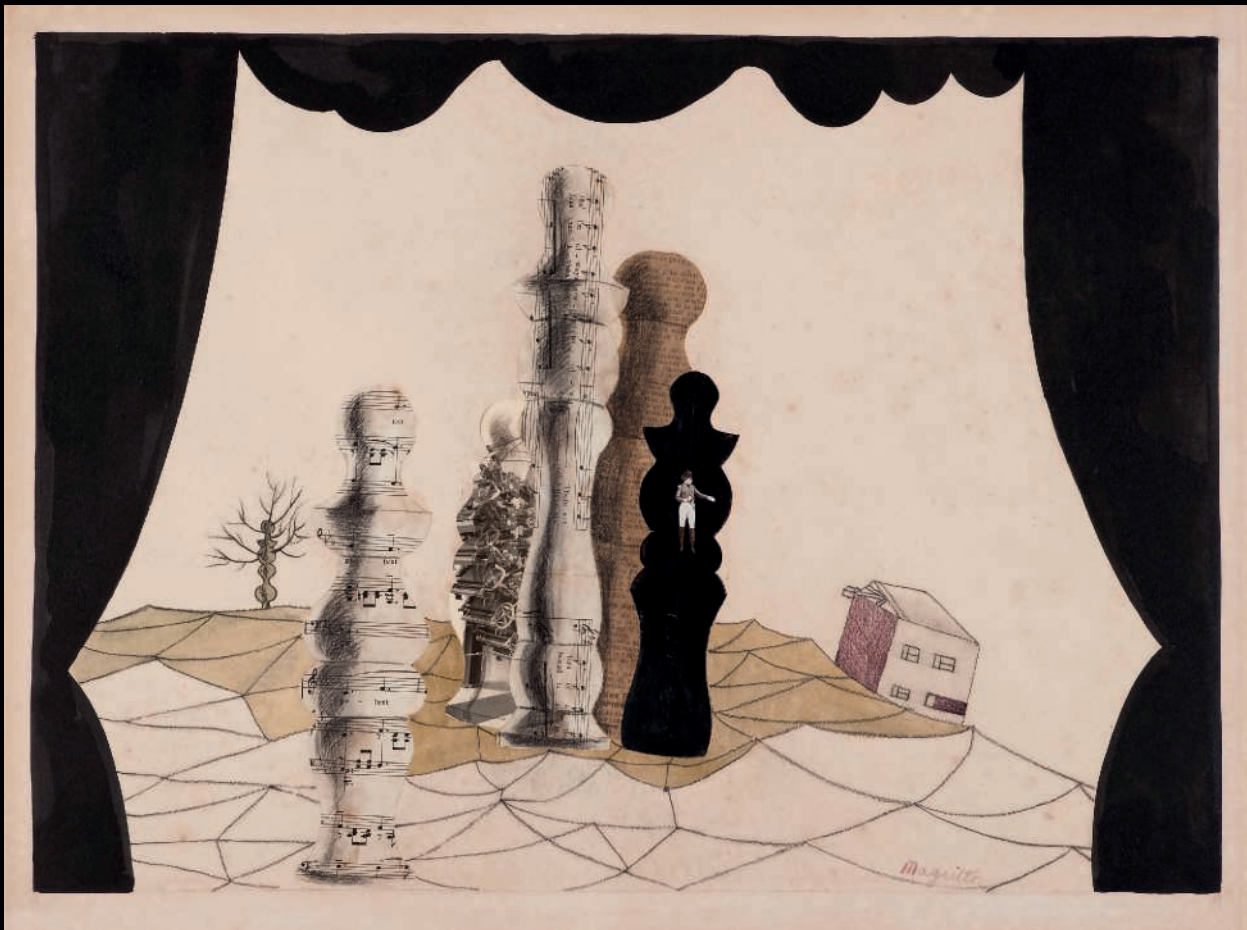
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, *Magritte*, March - June 1998, no. 317, p. 267 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. IV, *Gouaches, Temperas, Watercolours and Papiers Collés, 1918-1967*, Antwerp, 1994, no. 1649, p. 318 (illustrated).

Magritte





René Magritte, *Sans titre*, 1925-1926. Sprengel Museum, Hannover.

Playing with concepts of depth, illusion and perception, *Sans titre (La partition)* is among the most complex *papier collé* compositions created by René Magritte during the 1960s.

At this time, the artist was re-examining works from his early career, searching for motifs and subjects that could be translated or reinterpreted in different media, as he sought to unleash his creativity in new directions. In this composition, Magritte returns to one of his most familiar motifs, the framed picture sitting atop an easel, which suggests a completely different reality to the scene which surrounds it. Featuring a free-standing curtain, a large sphere, and a towering *bilboquet* which crosses over the edge of the frame, this picture within a picture presents something of a visual conundrum, as we try to understand not only the connection between the objects it contains, but also the mysterious relationship between the framed image and the wider scene it inhabits. The heavy swathe of drapery along the right edge of the *papier collé*, for example, creates a doubling effect when paired with the curtain at the centre of the framed picture, though the two remain entirely separate from one another. For Magritte, the curtain held the capacity to both conceal and reveal different aspects of reality, a theme which would remain one of the artist's principal concerns throughout his career.

Magritte's first experiments with *papiers collés* had emerged in 1925, at the same time as he began to explore surrealist imagery in his paintings, and were largely inspired by the ground-breaking works of Max Ernst. For Magritte, Ernst's work with collage represented a radical shift in the act of art making, breaking through the traditional parameters by which an artist was judged. As he proclaimed: 'scissors, paste, images and genius in effect superseded brushes, paints, models, styles, sensibility and that famous sincerity demanded of artists' (Magritte, quoted in S. Whitfield, *Magritte*, exh. cat., London, 1992, p. 260). Almost three decades later, Magritte returned to the *papier collé* technique as part of a commission to produce the cover of a ballet programme for a 'Gala de la Section Bruxelloise de l'Association Générale de la Presse Belge,' which would count amongst its attendees the King of Belgium. Sparking the artist's imagination once again, the medium became an important creative outlet for Magritte through the 1960s, occupying him alongside his paintings in oil and gouache, and playful three-dimensional objects.



René Magritte, *Moments musicaux*, 1961.
Sold, Christie's, London, 27 February 2019 (\$3,211,146).



Giorgio de Chirico, *Interno metafisico con biscotti*, 1916.
The Menil Collection, Houston.

'I have nothing to express I simply search for images and invent and invent... only the image counts, the inexplicable and mysterious image, since all is mystery in our life.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

The most striking feature of these works lay in the whimsical use of music scores cut into the shape of some of the most recognisable motifs of the artist's oeuvre, from perfectly spherical apples, to floating pipes, bowler-hatted men and open doorways leading to mysterious realms. Whereas the collages from the 1920s had all used clippings from the same score, the popular Edwardian musical comedy *The Girls of Gottenberg*, the works from the early 1960s incorporate disparate fragments from a variety of musical sources, from Carl Maria von Weber's arias, to piano reductions of Beethoven's symphonies, along with popular numbers from the music halls. In *Sans titre (La partition)*, the sheet music has been identified as a piano medley of numbers from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute), though the fragments have been inverted so that the notes appear upside down and only vaguely legible, and are thus transformed into an abstract, monochrome pattern. Deftly articulating the shapes and volumes of these objects with accents of colour and subtle shading, Magritte grants these flat sections of paper a new presence within the composition, giving them a more sculptural character that allows them to stand out within the scene.

Having said this, the other objects in the composition are rendered with an almost comical flatness, creating a sense that each element is a piece of stage scenery, placed against a backdrop and awaiting a troupe of actors to take their places. This lends the composition an inherent theatricality, while also a sense that nothing is as it may seem, each element simply another layer in a carefully constructed tableau, which together create an impression of another time, another place, another world. In his studies of Magritte's *papiers collés* Siegfried Gohr has suggested a parallel between the composer of music and the composer of collages, namely in the importance of an audience in the reception of their work: 'In both cases, the actual work consists neither of the notes nor of the pieces of paper – but emerges only in a performance, which ultimately takes place in the mind of the listener or viewer' (S. Gohr, *Magritte: Attempting the Impossible*, New York, 2009, p. 72). Here, Magritte translates this concept of performance and theatricality in an unexpectedly direct manner, placing the viewer firmly in the role of audience member within a theatre, and in so doing, emphasises that their presence is integral to the realisation of the finished work of art.

λ44

SALVADOR DALÍ (1904-1989)

The Flight, The Temptation, The Love, The Broken Wings

signed and dated 'Gala Salvador Dalí 1945' (lower left)
oil on panel
8⁷/₈ x 20 in. (22.5 x 50.8 cm.)
Painted in 1945

£180,000-250,000

US\$230,000-330,000

€210,000-290,000

PROVENANCE:

George de Cuevas (Jorge Cuevas Bartholín),
New York, by whom probably acquired directly
from the artist.
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York,
11 November 1999, lot 391.
Anonymous sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris,
11 October 2000, lot 41.
Anonymous sale, Christie's, London,
7 February 2005, lot 87.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

New York, Bignou Gallery, *Recent Paintings by
Salvador Dalí*, November - December 1945,
no. 7 (with incorrect medium).

LITERATURE:

R. de Saint Jean, 'Salvador Dalí à New York', in
Formes Et Couleurs, December 1945, Paris, n.p.
R. Descharnes & G. Néret, *Salvador Dalí*, vol. I, 1904-
1946, Cologne, 1994, no. 866 (illustrated p. 383;
titled 'Sans titre - Scène avec allégorie marine').
Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, ed., *Salvador Dalí:
Catálogo Razonado de Pinturas*, (<https://www.salvador-dali.org/es/>), no. P 604 (illustrated).

Painted in 1945, Salvador Dalí's *The Flight, The Temptation, The Love, The Broken Wings* is one of a small group of dreamlike marine allegories that the artist created during the 1940s, which fuse barren landscapes, classical motifs and dancing nudes into wondrous fantasy scenes. Set against the same vast empty Ampurdan plains and Catalan coastline of his homeland which had characterised his Surreal landscapes of the 1930s, the composition centres on a frieze-like sequence of otherworldly characters engaged in frenetic interactions with one another. As with *The Broken Bridge and the Dream*, now in the Dalí Museum in St Petersburg, Florida, *The Flight, The Temptation, The Love, The Broken Wings* appears to paraphrase the whimsical follies and allegories that populated the elaborate interiors of Italian Renaissance palaces, while simultaneously prompting comparisons to the elaborate set design of contemporary ballets. This composition was first owned by the Marquis de Cuevas, one of the twelve forward-thinking members of the Zodiac group of benefactors formed in 1932, who each sponsored Dalí for one month of the year and received a work by the artist in return for their support, produced during the month of their sponsorship.



RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Le roman populaire

signed 'Magritte' (lower left); inscribed and dated "'Le Roman Populaire" 1944' (on the stretcher)

oil on canvas

19¾ x 25½ in. (50.2 x 65.4 cm.)

Painted in 1944

£700,000-1,000,000

US\$900,000-1,300,000

€820,000-1,200,000

'Charm and menace can reinforce each other by their fusion.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

PROVENANCE:

Van Santen, Brussels, probably acquired directly from the artist, by 1947.

Brook Street Gallery, London, by whom acquired in the 1950s.

Arturo Schwarz, Milan, by whom acquired from the above in 1962.

Anonymous sale, Finarte, Milan, 9 April 1970, lot 120.

Private collection, Italy, by 1977.

Galleria d'Arte Maggiore, Bologna.

Acquired by the present owner in 2004.

EXHIBITED:

Verviers, Société Royale des Beaux-Arts, *René Magritte*, January - February 1947, no. 21.

Milan, Palazzo Reale, *Magritte, il mistero della natura*, November 2008 - March 2009 (illustrated).

Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, *Teatro del Sogno da Chagall a Fellini*, September 2010 - January 2011 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

Postcard from Magritte to M. Mariën, 25 April 1944.

Letter from Magritte to M. Mariën, 17 June 1944.

Draft of letter from Magritte to P.-G. Van Hecke, 12 August 1944.

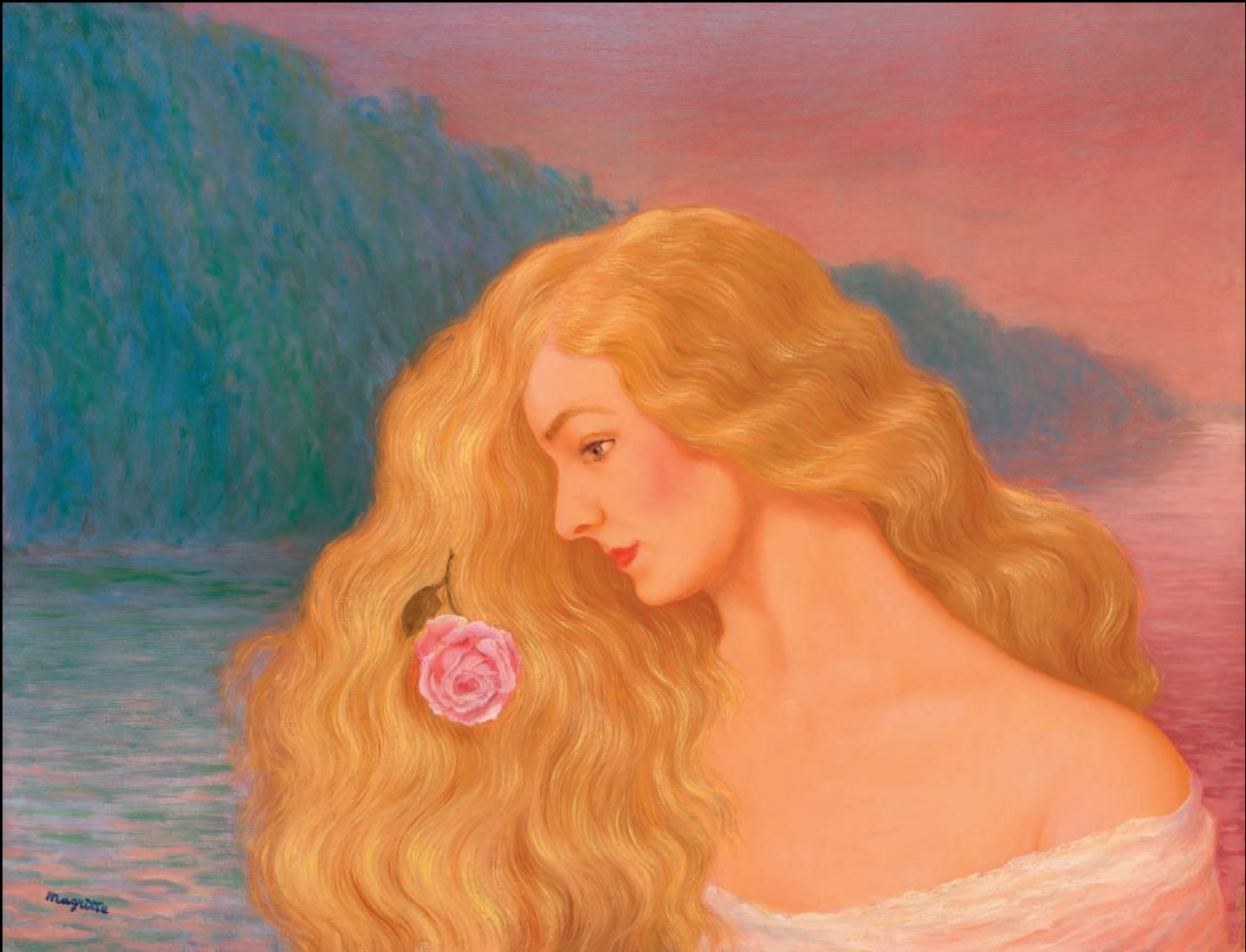
The artist's handlist, 1964.

H. Torczyner, *Magritte, Ideas and Images*, Paris & New York, 1977, no. 256, p. 137 (illustrated).

R. Magritte, *La destination, un livre de lettres*, Brussels, 1977, letters 89, 97 & 124, pp. 103 & 136.

P. Waldberg, *Magritte, Peintures*, Paris, 1983, p. 46 (illustrated).

D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. II, *Oil Paintings and Objects, 1931-1948*, Antwerp, 1993, no. 560, p. 337 (illustrated).





René Magritte, *Olympia*, 1948. Private collection.

'The German occupation marked the turning point in my art. Before the war, my paintings expressed anxiety, but the experiences of war have taught me that what matters in art is to express charm. I live in a very disagreeable world, and my work is meant as a counter-offensive.'

– RENÉ MAGRITTE

Created in 1944, René Magritte's dreamlike *Le roman populaire* centres on the graceful form of a young woman – a paragon of sensuous beauty and elegance, she appears lost in her own reverie, oblivious to the viewer's gaze. Set against the rippling reflections of a river bound by a bank of weeping willows, her delicate features and rippling hair are rendered with a precision that offers a sharp contrast to the soft, blurred edges of the landscape bathed in the gentle pink glow of the setting sun. Combining the precise, highly-polished style which had been a hallmark of the artist's *oeuvre* since the late 1920s, with a freer and more lively approach to brushwork and form, this composition highlights the divergent influences that were shaping Magritte's artistic vision during the turbulent 1940s.

Living in the shadow of the Second World War, Magritte felt that a new visual idiom was required to adequately respond to the horrors of the conflict, and began to experiment with a distinctly impressionistic technique, inspired by the late career of Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Creating works filled with light, colour and vivid, free brushwork, Magritte called this new style *Le Surréalisme en plein soleil* (Surrealism in full sunlight), and believed that in combining the aesthetic pleasure of beautiful, colour-filled scenes with subversive, mysterious images, he could best reveal the inherent chaos of the world. Writing to his friend Paul Éluard

in 1941, Magritte described this shift in his art: 'I have managed to bring a fresh wind to my painting. In my pictures an enormous magic has now replaced the uncanny poetry whose effect I used so much to strive for. On the whole, pleasure now supplants a whole series of essential interests that I wish increasingly to leave out of account... the power of these pictures is to make one acutely aware of the imperfections of everyday life' (Magritte, in a letter to P. Éluard, December 1941, quoted in S. Gohr, *Magritte: Attempting the Impossible*, New York, 2009, p. 191).

In *Le roman populaire*, Magritte adopts a close-up view of the ethereal young woman, focusing our gaze on the way her luscious, thick golden hair falls in waves around her face, cascading across her right shoulder in a great stream of colour. Wearing a delicate chemise that leaves her shoulders bare, a garment that highlights her luminous, smooth skin and the elegant curve of her neck as she turns her head to the side, the figure exudes a calm serenity. In many ways, the pose recalls the model in Tony Robert-Fleury's lost work *Léda et le cygne*, a postcard of which was found amongst Magritte's belongings, particularly the manner in which the young woman gazes downwards towards the rose, with the brightly coloured flower taking the place of the swan's beak. Appearing to float in mid-air, this rose injects a note of mystery to the scene – unsecured to her hair or pinned behind an ear, where we would typically



René Magritte, *Le tombeau des lutteurs*, 1960. Sold, Christie's, New York, 19 November 1998 (\$5,722,000).

expect it to be, it appears to hover, weightless, held in place by the power of her gaze alone. As such, *Le roman populaire* is aligned with several other important compositions from Magritte's oeuvre, in which the rose is placed in incongruous settings and situations. From replacing the dagger carried by the fictional villain Fantômas in *Le retour de flamme* of 1943 (Sylvester, no. 535), to the anthropomorphic hybrid creature which melds the rose with the lower body of a young woman wearing heels in *Les troubles du coeur* (Sylvester, no. 529), or *Le tombeau des lutteurs* (Sylvester, no. 912), where an enlarged blossom fills the entire expanse of an otherwise banal room, the inherent romanticism of the flower transforms the atmosphere of each scene, turning the threatening into the passionate, the ordinary into the magical.

Upon the completion of *Le roman populaire* in June 1944, Magritte wrote to his close friend, the poet Marcel Mariën, requesting he conjure up a new, alternative title for the painting. Though the composition would retain its original name, this exchange highlights an important aspect of Magritte's creative practice during this period – allowing a separate individual to choose the titles for his finished works, often passing the responsibility to his compatriots in the Belgian Surrealist movement. For Magritte, such titles lent another intentionally enigmatic layer to his compositions, provoking a deeper engagement with the subject. As he later stated: 'The titles of pictures are not explanations, and pictures are not illustrations of titles. The relationship between the title and picture is poetic – that is, it only catches some of the object's characteristics of which we are usually unaware, but which we sometimes intuit, when extraordinary events take place which logic has not yet managed to elucidate' (Magritte, quoted in K. Rooney & E. Plattner, eds., *René Magritte: Selected Writings*, transl. J. Levy, London, 2016, p. 112).



René Magritte, *Le retour de flamme*, 1943. Private collection.

MAX ERNST (1891-1976)

Le tilleul et le châtaignier

signed 'max ernst' (lower right)
watercolour, *frottage* and pencil on paper
10¼ x 16⅞ in. (26.1 x 42.8 cm.)
Executed in 1925

£200,000-300,000

US\$260,000-390,000

€230,000-350,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris.
Galleria Galatea, Turin, by 1964.
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1976,
lot 68b.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

EXHIBITED:

Turin, Galleria Galatea, *Selezione 6: Bacon, Balthus, Carrà, De Pisis, Ensor, Ernst, Giacometti, Graves, Nicholson, Savinio, Schlemmer*, October - November 1964, no. 8 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

W. Spies, S. & G. Metken, *Max Ernst, Werke 1925-1929*, Cologne, 1976, no. 880, p. 46 (illustrated).



Max Ernst, *Ohne Titel*, 1925.
Fondation des Treilles, Tourtour.

A mixture of *trompe l'œil* watercolour, *frottage* and drawing, *Le tilleul et le châtaignier* (The Linden Tree and the Chestnut) dates from an important moment in Max Ernst's career, as he began to explore the full possibilities and implications of *frottage*. Ernst had happened upon this semi-automatic technique during the summer of 1925 while on holiday in the seaside town of Pornic where, stuck in his hotel room one rainy afternoon, he became captivated by the rich and varied textures of the grooves in the wooden floorboards. Laying sheets of paper at random across the floor, the artist made pencil tracings of the patterns, generating a series of unplanned images that fed his artistic imagination. At this time, Ernst's art was developing along new routes under the influence of the Surrealist group, moving away from the largely cubist-orientated aesthetic of his earlier Dada paintings and collages towards one that sought to uncover the hidden alchemy of his unconscious mind. For the artist, *frottage* was a catalyst that prompted him to paint directly from his unconscious, with Ernst describing the process as 'the technical means of augmenting the hallucinatory capacity of the mind, so that "visions" could occur automatically, a means of doffing one's blindness' (Ernst, quoted in W. Hopps, 'Ernst at Surrealism's Dawn: 1925-1927', in W. Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism*, exh. cat., Houston, 1993, p. 157).



JOAN MIRÓ (1893-1983)

Personnage et oiseau

signed and numbered 'Miró 4/4 (on the side) and stamped 'Susse Fondeur Paris' (on the side of the base)
bronze with black patina
Height: 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (109 cm.)

Conceived in 1974 and cast by Susse in a numbered edition of 4; this cast no. 4/4 and no. 1/4 with 'arms' as opposed to nos. 2/4 and 3/4 without 'arms'; this example cast in 1984

£150,000-250,000

US\$190,000-330,000

€180,000-290,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Maeght-Lelong, Paris.
Private collection, Japan.
Anonymous sale, Christie's, London,
30 November 1993, lot 217.
Waddington Galleries, London.
Acquired from the above by the present owners
in 1998.

EXHIBITED:

London, Annely Juda Fine Art, *Joan Miró, Sculptures and Works on Paper*, May - June 1995 (illustrated).

LITERATURE:

A. Jouffroy & J. Teixidor, *Miró Sculptures*, Paris, 1980, no. 276, p. 204 (another cast illustrated).
F. Basile, *Joan Miró*, Bologna, 1997, p. 247 (another cast illustrated).
E. Fernández Miró & P. Ortega Chapel, *Joan Miró, Sculptures, Catalogue raisonné, 1928-1982*, Paris, 2006, no. 317, p. 300 (another cast illustrated).

ADOM (Association pour la défense de l'oeuvre de Joan Miró) has confirmed the authenticity of this work.



Joan Miró, *Tête*, 1974. Sold, Christie's, London, 23 June 2015 (\$551,968).

At once abstract and yet playfully figurative, *Personnage et oiseau* is one of Joan Miró's monumental and fantastical 'Assemblage-Sculptures', a group of works that he began to create in the late 1960s. Created from disparate, found objects that were then cast in bronze, these pieces saw the artist take seemingly incongruous, often quotidian objects and transform them into a magical and surreal form of sculpture. Here, Miró has used a rope buoy – likely one that he had found on the beaches near Montroig – as the central part of this figure. Balanced precariously atop the handle is another object, likely representing the bird of the title. Miró clearly enjoyed the aesthetic possibilities of the undulating, spherical form of the buoy, including it in another sculpture, *Tête*, which was also conceived in 1974 (Miró & Ortega Chapel, no. 318).

It was during the 1940s, when Miró returned to Montroig during the Second World War, that he began to collect objects that he found on walks in the countryside and along the seashore. Over the following years, the artist

continued this process, collecting everything from tree-trunks, stones and bones, to tins, ironing boards and wheels. Storing them in his studio until inspiration struck, he then combined various pieces to create large, free-standing sculptures. In starting from elements from real life, Miró was using a very different process from his painterly methods; as Jacques Dupin explained, 'In an inversion of the process whereby he had extracted the elements of a new language from natural forms, Miró now proceeded to project the ideograms of his imaginary world onto his real surroundings; in an attempt to discover, lay bare and extract pure "Mirós" from pebbles, roots, a gourd, a stone, a cactus, a piece of driftwood, a cast-off plow-share or a dented canister' (J. Dupin, *Miró*, New York & Paris, 1993, p. 366). With an acute sensitivity to the textures, scale, volume and material of the objects, in *Personnage et oiseau* Miró has, without consciously disguising or transfiguring the pieces, invented a new form of sculpture, infused with the magical poeticism that is so unique to both the painting and sculpture of the prolific artist.



ANDRÉ MASSON (1896-1987)

Torse d'homme

signed 'andré Masson.' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (81 x 54.3 cm.)

Painted in 1926

£150,000-250,000

US\$190,000-330,000

€180,000-290,000

'If our eye were only more acute we would see everything in movement, the gaze of Heraclitus, of Nietzsche.'

– ANDRÉ MASSON

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Simon (Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler), Paris (no. PH 10668).

Paul Rosenberg Gallery, New York.

Galerie Patrice Trigano, Paris, by 1983.

Private collection, Paris.

Anonymous sale, Tajan, Paris, 27 March 2002, lot 95.

François Odermatt, Montreal, by whom acquired at the above sale; sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 February 2007, lot 96.

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

LITERATURE:

C. Lanchner, 'André Masson: Origins and Development', in exh. cat., *André Masson*, New York, 1976, p. 112.

F. Fielding Lewis Beatty, *André Masson and the Imagery of Surrealism*, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia, 1981, p. 659 (illustrated).

P. Cabanne, 'André Masson', in *Cimaise*, no. 164, Paris, 1983 (illustrated).

G. Masson, M. Masson & C. Loewer, *André Masson, Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, vol. I, 1919-1929, Paris, 2010, no. 1926*24, p. 328 (illustrated p. 329).

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Galerie Patrice Trigano, *André Masson, Rétrospective Exposition*, March - April 1983.

Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *André Masson*, January - April 2004,

p. 95 (illustrated).



André Masson, *L'armure*, 1925. Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

Appearing as if in a state of continuous metamorphosis, André Masson's *Torse d'homme* was painted in 1926, at the peak of the artist's Surrealist period. The monumental torso of a man simultaneously emerges and submerges into a complex array of planes, colours and lines, overlaid by different motifs, many of which relate to Masson's distinctive personal iconography. Painted whilst Masson was immersed in the headily creative crucible that was the rue Blomet in Paris, where he lived and worked alongside Joan Miró, Max Jacob, Georges Limbour and others, *Torse d'homme* encapsulates the pioneering spirit of discovery that defined this era.

A number of recognisable forms emerge from the myriad layers of the composition. In place of the torso's navel is an eye, 'isolated and stylised like an Egyptian Horus', as Dawn Ades has written (D. Ades, 'André Masson: Introduction', in G. Masson, M. Masson & C. Loewer, *André Masson: Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint, 1919-1941*, vol. I, Paris, 2010, pp. 39-40). The navel held numerous associations for the artist, and it was said that Masson once suggested viewers regard paintings through their navel, so to interpret an image without prior thought or knowledge (W. Rubin & C. Lanchner, *André Masson*, exh. cat., New York, 1976, p. 112). Within this growing, dissolving and metamorphosing composition, one side of the figure's chest seems to have morphed into the shape of a bird. Another frequently used motif in Masson's art of this time, this anthropomorphic detail can also be found in *L'armure* (1925, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice), in which a winged, bird-like form similarly hovers in the upper right of the composition next to a monumental female torso, this work therefore standing in perfect contrast to the present *Torse d'homme*.



JOAN MIRÓ (1893-1983)

Composition

signed and dated 'Miró .27.7.24' (lower right)
pencil on painted panel
10% x 16¼ in. (26.9 x 41.3 cm.)
Executed on 27 July 1924

£40,000-60,000

US\$52,000-78,000

€47,000-70,000

PROVENANCE:

Galerie Marumo, Paris.
Private collection, France, by whom acquired from the above in the 1980s; sold, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 11 March 2019, lot 18.
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner.

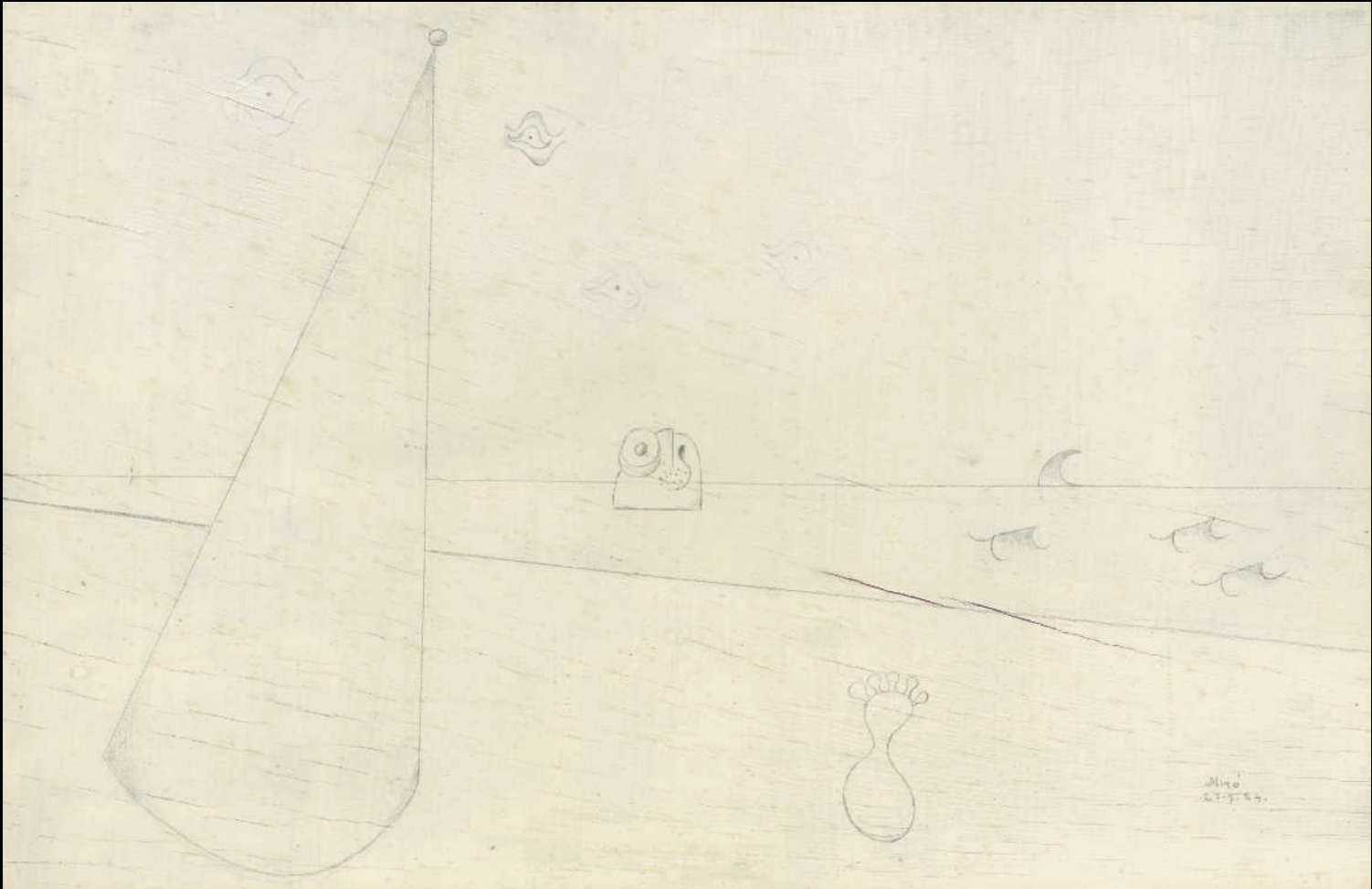
ADOM (Association pour la défense de l'oeuvre de Joan Miró) has confirmed the authenticity of this work.



Joan Miró, *Composition*, 27 July 1924.
Sold, Christie's, London, 2 February 2004 (\$152,124).

Infused with the whimsy and fantasy that defines Joan Miró's art, *Composition* is one of a compelling series of three works that the artist created on 27 July 1924 during his summer sojourn in Montrouge (Dupin & Lelong-Mainaud, nos. 198, 199). Using white painted panel as his ground, Miró created abstract compositions made up of signs and ciphers, lyrical lines, both biomorphic and geometric, and strange forms seemingly inspired by the natural world in these radically simplified and purified works. It was this small and rare series that sparked an outpouring of similar works that flowed from the artist's hand over the following months.

Composition encapsulates a pivotal moment as Miró's art was making its first dramatic leaps into a new poetic realm of pictorial expression, as the artist experimented with automatic techniques and began to embrace a looser, more open idiom. As he wrote to his friend, the Surrealist poet Michel Leiris, just a few days after he completed the present work, 'I am working furiously; you and all my other writer friends have given me much help and improved my understanding of many things. I think about our conversation, when you told me how you started with a word and watched to see where it would take you. I have done a series of small things on wood, in which I take off from some form in the wood. Using an artificial thing as a point of departure like this, I feel, is parallel to what writers can obtain by starting with an arbitrary sound'. He continued, 'I am moving away from all pictorial conventions (that poison)...In spreading out my canvases, I have noticed that the ones that are simply drawn (or that use a minimum of colour); the intromission of exciting materials (colours), however stripped of pictorial meaning, *shakes up* your blood and the exalted sensation that *claws at* the soul is ruined' (Miró to M. Leiris, 10 August 1924, in M. Rowell, ed., *Joan Miró: Selected Writings and Interviews*, London, 1987, p. 86).



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Lot 49

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ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES



Salvador Dalí (1904-1989)

'At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing ever since'. (Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, St. Petersburg, FL, 1986, p. 1).

Born in Figueras in 1904, the Catalan artist Salvador Dalí was given his first name, Salvador, after the name of his dead brother who had been born in 1901 and died twenty-two months later. According to Dalí the premature death of his brother cast an enduring shadow over his life. His father was a public notary with republican atheist views and his mother a devout Catholic. Dalí's first recorded painting was a landscape in oils supposedly painted in 1910, when he was six years old. While studying at the San Fernando Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, Dalí became close friends with the older poet Federico García Lorca and Luis Buñuel, with whom he would later collaborate on the films *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'or*. Dalí's early paintings followed the styles of Impressionism, Pointillism and for the most part, Cubism. In 1926 he made his first trip to Paris, and on his second visit, his fellow Catalan Miró introduced him to the Surrealist group, whose activities Dalí had read about in a variety of periodicals. Welcomed by the Surrealists as a powerful new imagination, Dalí became fully associated with the movement in 1929. Fusing the profound influence of Freud on his own deeply disturbed psyche with the painterly style of Tanguy's mysterious landscapes and images from his home town of Cadaques, between 1924 and 1936 Dalí created a powerfully Surreal visual language that culminated in his 'Paranoiac-Critical Method'. In the summer of 1929 Dalí met his future wife, muse and personal manager, Gala, when she visited him in Cadaques with her husband, the poet, Paul Eluard. Throughout this period Dalí's relationship with André Breton and the Surrealists grew increasingly strained until in 1934 he was expelled from the group (partially for his right-wing sympathies). Between 1940 and 1948 Dalí lived in the United States, where he sought and gained great commercial success. His eager commercialism displeased Breton and led to him being anagrammatically being dubbed 'Avida Dollars' by the Frenchman. After 1945 and the explosion of the Atomic bombs Dalí seized upon the innovations of the post-war generations of painters, becoming deeply interested in Nuclear physics, biology and mathematics. At the same time he began to be increasingly interested in Christian devotional subjects, merging his atomic theory and devout Catholicism into powerful modern religious paintings such as his *Madonna of Port Lligat* and *St John of the Cross*. In the 1960s Dalí became concerned with *recherches visuelles*, exploring the optical mechanisms of illusion and the perceptions of images. The Theatre-Museu Dalí officially opened in 1974, and on his death in 1989 he bequeathed his estate to the Kingdom of Spain and the Independent Region of Catalonia.



James Ensor (1860-1949)

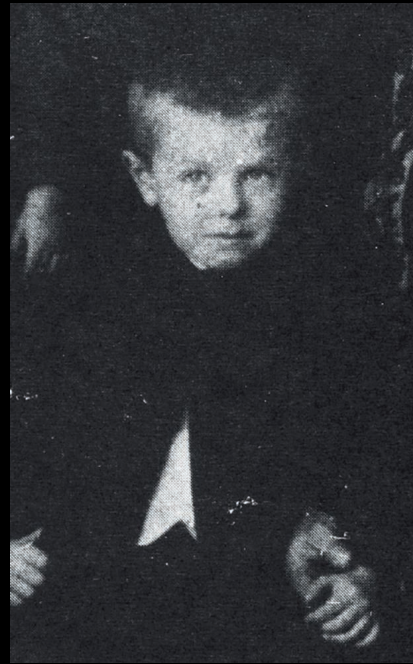
James Sydney Ensor was a painter of the fantastic, the poetic and the grotesque, who foreshadowed the important 20th Century movements of Expressionism and Surrealism. He was born in Ostend in 1860, the son of an expatriate Englishman and a Belgian mother. The young artist was encouraged by his mother, who kept a curio and souvenir shop in the ground floor of the family home, which was filled with shells, porcelain vases, figurines, and most strikingly, carnival masks in which the shop specialised. His early success in being accepted as an exhibitor in the Salons of Brussels and Paris came to a sudden end when Ensor was 22 years old and his use of bright colours as well as his avant-garde style became too advanced for the juries. For years to come doors were closed to him, and he worked in isolation.

In 1898, there was a large and successful exhibition in Paris, and after the turn of the century Ensor's most difficult time had passed. Early in the 1900s, rich collections of his prints were formed in Germany where they influenced the course of German Expressionism. Unlike most artists of his generation, Ensor lived to witness his own success. As his fame grew, Ensor was increasingly honoured in his own country, and in 1929, at the time of a large retrospective in Brussels, he was made a Baron by the King. Ensor's contributions to modern art are plenty, including his innovative and allegorical use of light, his prominent use of satire, his deep interest in carnival and performance, and his own self-fashioning and use of masking, travesty, and role-playing. His rich improvised imagery foreshadowed the Surrealist and Dadaist art of the 20th century, and his exuberant, freely applied colour anticipated the abstraction of Kandinsky by decades.



Max Ernst (1891-1976)

In 1896 the young Max Ernst ran away from his authoritarian father; later, when he was found by some pilgrims, they mistook him for the Christ Child, a guise in which his father painted him, but Ernst was never the son his father wished for. A student of philosophy and psychology, Ernst was mobilised during the First World War, spending four years in the German artillery and fighting on the Western front. He later wrote of this traumatic period: 'Max Ernst died on 1 August 1914. He returned to life on 11 November 1918, a young man who wanted to become a magician and find the myths of his time' (Ernst, quoted in U.M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*, London, 1972, p.16). Ernst soon became involved with Dada, a non-rational protest against the 'civilisation' that had caused the futile, orgiastic massacres of the War. His collages, often incorporating mechanical designs as core components, evoked his anger against the logic and mechanisation that could lead to such a crisis. After meeting Paul Eluard in 1922, he moved to Paris. Under the sway of the metaphysical works of Giorgio de Chirico, Ernst became a core member of the Surrealist movement, exhibiting in its pioneering 1925 exhibition at the Galerie Pierre. He left the movement in 1938 because of Breton's maltreatment of Eluard. Arrested as a dissident in the early 1940s, Ernst escaped to Spain, then the United States with the help of Peggy Guggenheim, his third wife. There, he met his last wife, the painter Dorothea Tanning. They moved to Sedona, Arizona, and then returned to France after the Second World War where Ernst continued creating his own brand of mature Surrealist works. As well as collage and painting, Ernst developed various techniques facilitating his semi-automatic approach, for instance in 'frottage', he reinterpreted the shapes formed in rubbings of wood or brick, creating imagined images. The reinterpretation of ready-made designs remained crucial to Ernst's artistic output, especially in his grattage, decalomania and drip-painting works. His recurring forest scenes and more general preoccupation with nature are evidence of German Romanticism's influence on him. These works embody the individualised brand of Surrealism peculiar to Ernst: he did not produce figurative illustrations of the Surreal nature of reality, nor automatic drawings tapping the subconscious, but instead, semi-consciously, produced expressive illustrations of the traumatised interior of 20th Century man.



René Magritte (1898-1967)

'During my childhood I used to play with a little girl in the old abandoned cemetery of a country town where I spent my holidays. We used to lift up the iron gates and go down into the underground vaults. Regaining the light again one day I found, in the middle of some broken stone columns and heaped-up leaves, a painter who had come from the capital, and who seemed to me to be performing magic' (Magritte, quoted in Suzi Gablik, *Magritte*, London, 1992, p. 183). The other decisive event of Magritte's childhood was the discovery of his mother's body after she drowned (herself) in a river, which resulted in a legacy of haunting memories. Although espoused and endorsed by the French Surrealists and André Breton, René Magritte and the Belgian Surrealist movement that formed around him kept themselves at a wary distance. This distance encompassed every aspect of Surrealism, from lifestyle to ideology. At several points in his career he worked in advertising, and even set up his own agency, seeing no conflict between capitalism and art. Magritte was originally influenced by several movements and artists, particularly Cubism and Futurism, but it was Giorgio de Chirico's work, which he first saw in 1922, the same year he married his muse Georgette Berger, that caused him to break with his earlier style and led him to attempt to represent 'the naked mystery of things' in his art. In 1926 his career as artist was facilitated through a contract with the Belgian dealer Paul-Gustave Van Hecke. Magritte went to Paris in 1927, but his distance from French Surrealism was soon formalised after an altercation between Breton and Magritte when the former criticised Georgette for wearing a crucifix. Nonetheless, exposure to the Parisian Surrealists had solidified his artistic vision. During the Second World War, Magritte outraged his friends and fans by painting his *vache* works, parodies of Impressionism, which were considered a betrayal of his true style but managed to shock and upset even the unshockable Surrealists. Magritte soon returned to his former style and continued painting until very near the end of his life, often revisiting themes he had explored in his earlier work with a more mature eye. Despite a remarkably low-key life, all the more remarkable when compared to many of the other Surrealists, the iconoclasm of Magritte's art and message was rivalled by few of his contemporaries.



André Masson (1896-1987)

Even by the age of 10, André Masson was a frequent visitor to art galleries, especially the Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, where at a young age he became influenced by many of the Old Masters. His prodigious talents were recognised in his acceptance, although under age, at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in the same city. Masson's exceptional draftsmanship led to his being befriended, mentored and encouraged by Paul Signac and Paul Baudouin despite even though he was only in his early teens. Masson's meteoric rise in the artistic community was however interrupted in 1916, when he was sent to fight at the Somme. Wounded severely the next year, he spent the rest of the war in and out of both medical and mental hospitals. When Masson re-emerged onto the art scene, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler encouraged his Cubism, but the individualised feel and iconography of his works prompted André Breton, on seeing his work in Kahnweiler's gallery, to ask him to join the Surrealists. The movement was still taking shape, and Masson became one of its founders. Masson experimented repeatedly with automatic drawing, and created many automatic portraits of his colleagues. His automatic works and poetry-inspired paintings were a major influence on Joan Miró, whose studio neighboured his own. In the 1930s, during his estrangement from the Surrealist group, Masson produced more illustrative, illusionistic works that explored Surreal themes in an expressionistic manner more removed from automatism. His experiences in the War, in hospital and later as a witness to the Spanish Civil War resulted in Masson's subject matter being significantly darker than most other Surrealists. Even in his automatic works and sand-paintings, where pen, paint or glue with sand sticking to the adhesive were moved unconsciously around the canvas and then interpreted and moulded into the interpreted forms, the content often retained a preoccupation with death and distress. This, along with his intense need for independence led to several ruptures with the group, especially Breton. Masson fled to the United States during the Second World War but returned to his native soil as soon as it was finished. Influenced by Impressionism in the 1940s and 50s, Masson also became interested in Zen art, attempting to portray the essence of the object depicted in a spontaneous, abstract manner. Gradually, from the 1970s onwards, disability impeded his artistic output. Masson's influence was most keenly felt in the United States in the work of avant-garde artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Tobey.



Matta (1911-2002)

Roberto Matta recorded his own history in a sketchbook, calling it his 'Auto-elasto-infra-biography': '11.11.11 Roberto Sebastian Antonio Matta Echaurren, born in Santiago, Chile. 1912-1914 Memory of the lights of Valparaíso at night, a giant tortoise I ride upon, my black dog Siki and Dr. Comentz's gold watch. 1914-1918 Memory of travels in Europe with my parents and grandmother, of being dressed like an angel, of wearing glass slippers at a children's party, and of learning to swim at Viña del Mar in the Pacific Ocean with the temperature of 12°C. 1918-1926 Memory of the Dempsey / Carpentier match. Memory of the botany, history and biology lessons at the College of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary and my stomach-ache during exercise... 1933 Cut the Gordian knot of the Jesuits, the family and Chile' (Matta, quoted in G. Ferrari, *Entretiens morphologiques: Notebook No. 1 1936-1944*, London, 1987, p. 199). This medley of life experiences was merely the beginning – Matta's time as an architect alone brought him into contact with swathes of the vanguard of art and design at the time. By the late 1930s, he had worked with Le Corbusier, Gropius, Moholy-Nagy, had met Duchamp, Aalto, Lorca, Magritte and Moore. And yet his great revelation was Picasso's *Guernica*, which he saw while working on the Spanish Republican pavilion at the Exposition Universelle de Paris in 1937. To compound the effect, he met Breton the same year and was soon brought to the heart of Surrealism: '1938 At *Les Deux Magots*, with the Surrealists. I was like Jesus in the temple, a child with the doctors of the law. They gave me faith, affection and an education in the verb to be' (Matta, *ibid.*, p.199).

Soon after this induction, Matta left for the United States, along with so many other Surrealists (and on the same boat as Tanguy). He revelled in life back in the New World and was repeatedly exhibited during the war, the first time alongside Walt Disney. His art made dramatic advances, and he found himself Surrealism's natural ambassador to the young American artists. However, the emancipation he had felt on his arrival in the United States gradually resulted in his work veering from the strict constraints of Breton's Surrealism and, in 1948, he was expelled from the group, resulting in the resignations of several other members. Although later re-embraced by the group, from this moment of rupture his work advanced freely, adopting its language from popular media as well as his Surreal training. His affiliations became increasingly political, as did his art. Although he continued to travel extensively, he set up homes in Paris and in a monastery in Italy where he lived and worked until his death in 2002.



Joan Miró (1893-1983)

'The more I advance in life and the more I go back to my first impressions: I think that by the end of my life I will have rediscovered all the values of my childhood' (quoted in *Miro on Mallorca*, by Barbara Catoir, Munich and New York 1995, p. 7).

Joan Miró, the Catalan painter, sculptor, ceramicist, poet and mythmaker, was born in Barcelona to a family of skilled craftsmen. In 1912 he devoted himself to painting, studying at the Galí art school in Barcelona. Following this he attended classes at the Sant Lluch circle, where the architect of the Art Nouveau style Antoni Gaudí had been a former student. In 1920 Miró settled in Paris and became interested in the activities of the Paris Dadaists, attending many of their performances and provocations. His work, however, maintained a strong nationalistic focus and was rooted in Catalan traditions and folk art. Between 1921 and 1922 Miró painted his first masterpiece *The Farm*. This truthful description of a Catalan farmyard, painted from memory, was a 'breakthrough' painting for the artist that led to a raw new style. In the following years Miró developed close friendships with André Breton, Paul Eluard and Louis Aragon, and shared a studio space with André Masson, whose development of automatic writing was an important influence on his art. Under the influence of his Surrealist friends, the intimacy between painting and poetry became fundamental to Miró, and his work in the 1920s grew increasingly literary. Moving from gritty Catalan realism towards the imaginary, Miró developed a radically new style that culminated in his *Dream Paintings* of 1925-27. Miró's natural independence prevented him from conforming completely to strict Surrealist doctrine under the shadow of Breton, but his work continually appeared in Surrealist publications, such as *La Révolution Surrealiste* and *Minotaure*, and was displayed in many Surrealist exhibitions. In 1929 Miró underwent a crisis of painting, which was followed by a period of collage making that led to a new departure in the 1930s and ultimately the creation of his remarkable series of *Constellations* in 1939. Spending his time between France and Spain, in 1941 Miró built a large studio in Palma de Mallorca that enabled him to work on the increased scale he had always dreamed of. In 1944 he established another new method of expression when he made his first terracotta sculptures and ceramics. These were followed in 1946 by his first bronzes. Between 1945 and 1959 Miró executed what he called his 'slow paintings' and 'spontaneous paintings', and in 1970 was given the scope and the public place he had long needed to create a monumental ceramic, fifty metres long, for the façade of Barcelona airport. The Fundació Joan Miró was established by Miró in 1971 and officially inaugurated in 1976.



Francis Picabia (1879-1953)

As a child Francis Picabia had a toy scale in which he weighed the light and shadow falling on his windowsill. From this important childhood experiment Picabia learnt that darkness was heavier than light and this experience played an important part in shaping his profoundly pessimistic and often tragic view of life. Born in 1879 in his grandfather's house in Paris to a French mother and a Cuban-born Spanish father, Picabia became an artist who was linked closely to most key issues and movements of the modern era. In 1898, Picabia entered the École des Arts Décoratifs and became close friends with Rodo (Manzana) Pissarro, who introduced him to his father, the painter Camille Pissarro. At the beginning of his career Picabia became well-known as an Impressionist painter and began to exhibit his paintings at the *Salon d'Automne* and *Salon des Indépendants*. Between 1908 and 1912 he sought a more personal manner of expansion and explored Neo-Impressionist, Fauvist, and Cubist styles. Significantly in 1908 Picabia met his future wife, Gabrielle Buffet, a music student who shared his interest in 19th century concepts of *correspondance*. By 1912, Picabia had developed a unique blend of Cubism and Fauvism which developed into an important form of abstract art motivated by the desire to express internal states of the mind or emotions. In this same year Picabia became close friends with Apollinaire, who placed the artist's painting at the heart of the new Orphist movement. His wife's money enabled Picabia to travel and in 1913 he and his wife travelled to New York for the Armory Show, where the artist exhibited at Alfred Stieglitz's '291' gallery. Recklessly abandoning his army supply mission to the Caribbean, Picabia became involved in the activities around '291' and with Marcel Duchamp formed a New York branch of the Dada movement. This period marked the beginning of Picabia's machinist or mechanomorphic paintings in which machinery and technology were subverted and given sexual *personae*. In the summer of 1916 Picabia left New York to settle in Barcelona, where in 1917 he began the publication of the Dadaist magazine entitled '391'. During the 1920s Picabia produced provocative paintings that incorporated matchsticks, curlers and buttons, and in 1923 he began to make 'Dada collages', which were followed by a series of paintings of *Monstres*, and in the late 1920s, the *Transparences*. During the early years of Surrealism Picabia took part in a number of important Surrealist exhibitions and also designed covers for and contributed many texts for *Littérature*, but he was always reluctant to become totally adherent to the movement. His extreme originality, extravagant nature and propagandist buffoonery exerted an important influence on the Surrealist movement during these years. In the 1930s his work grew more varied and became naturalistic, more frequently depicting nudes. It remained so until 1945 when Picabia resumed his distinctive abstract painting and poetry. In 1936 he took part in the highly important international exhibition of Dada and Surrealist works at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, organised by Alfred Barr, and in 1949 he held an exhibition of works he described as 'sur-irrealist' at the Galerie Denise René Drouin. Picabia died in the same house he was born in, on the 30th of November 1953.



Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012)

The Catalan nationalist painter Antoni Tàpies was born in Barcelona, where he lived and worked until his death in 2012. He was twelve years old when the Spanish Civil War broke out, and vividly recalls the invasion of his school by anarchists dressed up in the vestments of the holy fathers dancing around triumphantly before burning all of the liturgical objects they could find. After abandoning his law studies at the University of Barcelona he devoted himself to his artistic career in 1946. In the same year he met the poet and playwright Joan Brossa, and the collector Joan Prats, who in 1948 introduced him to Miró, whose visual poetry deeply influenced him. His early works were mostly figurative, and were inspired by Eastern art, religion and philosophy, but his entire *oeuvre* is informed mostly by the philosophy and mystical teachings of Ramon Llull, venerated by the Catalans as a patron Saint. Tàpies took the reality of Catalonia as the basis for his pictorial world, and created a universe that appears abstract and surreal, yet at the same time unveils a reality which is reduced to a set of schematic signs and archetypal symbols, such as the cross. Between 1945 and 1947 Tàpies produced paintings that were in the 'anti-aesthetic' spirit of Dada, using collages, hautes-pâtes, untreated materials and graffiti. After 1949 he developed a new aesthetic that was shaped and dominated by Surrealist art, particularly the work of Miró and Klee. Although greatly concerned with materials, often making his own, mixing and adding elements from the environment, Tàpies has declared that he is anti-materialist and that the aim of his art is to bring us back to our elemental roots and instincts. In 1953 there was a turning point in his art when he created his first thick impasto paintings on the themes of walls and with art brut graffiti-like elements. Throughout these years Tàpies continued to explore his own self and his relationship as an individual to the collective and universal world surrounding him. Always looking for the spiritual and magical realm in both art and life this is a quest that continues in his work today. Towards this end many of his paintings contain autobiographic elements or motifs, and frequently depict the artist, whether it be a full portrait, eyes, a footprint, or a palm-print. In the 1980s Tàpies made his first sculptures, often examining everyday objects, such as a door, a chair or a shirt, giving a concrete shape to their essence. In 1981 he was asked to design a tribute to Picasso by the city of Barcelona, which was inaugurated in 1983. Tàpies' received due recognition in 1990 when a foundation of his work was opened in Barcelona, making him only the third artist, after Picasso and Miró, to have a museum dedicated to his work there.

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NOTES



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If we have provided a translation of this agreement, we will use this original version in deciding any issues or disputes which arise under this agreement.

7 PERSONAL INFORMATION

We will hold and process your personal information and may pass it to another Christie's Group company for use as described in, and in line with, our privacy notice at www.christies.com/about-us/contact/privacy.

8 WAIVER

No failure or delay to exercise any right or remedy provided under these Conditions of Sale shall constitute a waiver of that or any other right or remedy, nor shall it prevent or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy. No single or partial exercise of such right or remedy shall prevent or restrict the further exercise of that or any other right or remedy.

9 LAW AND DISPUTES

This agreement, and any non-contractual obligations arising out of or in connection with this agreement, or any other rights you may have relating to the purchase of a lot will be governed by the laws of England and Wales. Before we or you start any court proceedings (except in the limited circumstances where the dispute, controversy or claim is related to proceedings brought by someone else and this dispute could be joined to those proceedings), we agree we will each try to settle the dispute by mediation following the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Model Mediation Procedure. We will use a mediator affiliated with CEDR who we and you agree to. If the dispute is not settled by mediation, you agree for our benefit that the dispute will be referred to and dealt with exclusively in the courts of England and Wales. However, we will have the right to bring proceedings against you in any other court.

10 REPORTING ON WWW.CHRISTIES.COM

Details of all lots sold by us, including catalogue descriptions and prices, may be reported on www.christies.com. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees, or application of buyer's or seller's credits. We regret that we cannot agree to requests to remove these details from www.christies.com.

K GLOSSARY

auctioneer: the individual auctioneer and/or Christie's.

authentic: a genuine example, rather than a copy or forgery of:

(i) the work of a particular artist, author or manufacturer, if the lot is described in the Heading as the work of that artist, author or manufacturer;

(ii) a work created within a particular period or culture, if the lot is described in the Heading as a work created during that period or culture;

(iii) a work for a particular origin source if the lot is described in the Heading as being of that origin or source; or

(iv) in the case of gems, a work which is made of a particular material, if the lot is described in the Heading as being made of that material.

authenticity warranty: the guarantee we give in this agreement that a lot is authentic as set out in section E2 of this agreement.

buyer's premium: the charge the buyer pays us along with the hammer price.

catalogue description: the description of a lot in the catalogue for the auction, as amended by any saleroom notice.

Christie's Group: Christie's International Plc, its subsidiaries and other companies within its corporate group.

condition: the physical condition of a lot.

due date: has the meaning given to it in paragraph F1(a).

estimate: the price range included in the catalogue or any saleroom notice within which we believe a lot may sell. **Low estimate** means the lower figure in the range and **high estimate** means the higher figure. The **mid estimate** is the midpoint between the two.

hammer price: the amount of the highest bid the auctioneer accepts for the sale of a lot.

Heading: has the meaning given to it in paragraph E2.

lot: an item to be offered at auction (or two or more items to be offered at auction as a group).

other damages: any special, consequential, incidental or indirect damages of any kind or any damages which fall within the meaning of 'special', 'incidental' or 'consequential' under local law.

purchase price: has the meaning given to it in paragraph F1(a).

provenance: the ownership history of a lot.

qualified: has the meaning given to it in paragraph E2 and **Qualified Headings** means the section headed **Qualified Headings** on the page of the catalogue headed 'Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice'.

reserve: the confidential amount below which we will not sell a lot.

saleroom notice: a written notice posted next to the lot in the saleroom and on www.christies.com, which is also read to prospective telephone bidders and notified to clients who have left commission bids, or an announcement made by the auctioneer either at the beginning of the sale, or before a particular lot is auctioned.

UPPER CASE type: means having all capital letters.

warranty: a statement or representation in which the person making it guarantees that the facts set out in it are correct.

VAT SYMBOLS AND EXPLANATION

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The VAT liability in force on the date of the sale will be the rules under which we invoice you.

BREXIT: If the UK withdraws from the EU without an agreed transition deal relating to the import and export of property, your invoiced VAT position may retrospectively change and additional import tariffs may be due if you import your purchase into the EU. Christie's is unable to provide tax or financial advice to you and recommends you obtain your own independent tax advice.

You can find a glossary explaining the meanings of words coloured in bold on this page at the end of the section of the catalogue headed 'Conditions of Sale' VAT payable

Symbol	
No Symbol	We will use the VAT Margin Scheme. No VAT will be charged on the hammer price . VAT at 20% will be added to the buyer's premium but will not be shown separately on our invoice.
†	We will invoice under standard VAT rules and VAT will be charged at 20% on both the hammer price and buyer's premium and shown separately on our invoice.
θ	For qualifying books only, no VAT is payable on the hammer price or the buyer's premium .
*	These lots have been imported from outside the EU or, if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal, from outside of the UK for sale and placed under the Temporary Admission regime. Import VAT is payable at 5% on the hammer price . VAT at 20% will be added to the buyer's premium but will not be shown separately on our invoice.
Ω	These lots have been imported from outside the EU or, if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal, from outside of the UK for sale and placed under the Temporary Admission regime. Customs Duty as applicable will be added to the hammer price and Import VAT at 20% will be charged on the Duty Inclusive hammer price . VAT at 20% will be added to the buyer's premium but will not be shown separately on our invoice.
α	The VAT treatment will depend on whether you have registered to bid with an EU address or, if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal, a UK address or non-EU address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you register to bid with an address within the EU or UK (as applicable above) you will be invoiced under the VAT Margin Scheme (see No Symbol above). • If you register to bid with an address outside of the EU or UK (as applicable above) you will be invoiced under standard VAT rules (see † symbol above)
‡	For wine offered 'in bond' only. If you choose to buy the wine in bond no Excise Duty or Clearance VAT will be charged on the hammer . If you choose to buy the wine out of bond Excise Duty as applicable will be added to the hammer price and Clearance VAT at 20% will be charged on the Duty inclusive hammer price . Whether you buy the wine in bond or out of bond, 20% VAT will be added to the buyer's premium and shown on the invoice.

VAT refunds: what can I reclaim? If you are:

Non-VAT registered UK buyer or Non-VAT registered EU buyer (please refer to the below category if you are a Non-VAT registered EU buyer and the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal)		No VAT refund is possible
UK VAT registered buyer	No symbol and α	The VAT amount in the buyer's premium cannot be refunded. However, on request we can re-invoice you outside of the VAT Margin Scheme under normal UK VAT rules (as if the lot had been sold with a † symbol). Subject to HMRC's rules, you can then reclaim the VAT charged through your own VAT return.
	* and Ω	Subject to HMRC's rules, you can reclaim the Import VAT charged on the hammer price through your own VAT return when you are in receipt of a C79 form issued by HMRC. The VAT amount in the buyer's premium is invoiced under Margin Scheme rules so cannot normally be claimed back. However, if you request to be re-invoiced outside of the Margin Scheme under standard VAT rules (as if the lot had been sold with a † symbol) then, subject to HMRC's rules, you can reclaim the VAT charged through your own VAT return.
EU VAT registered buyer (please refer to the below category if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal)	No Symbol and α	The VAT amount in the buyer's premium cannot be refunded. However, on request we can re-invoice you outside of the VAT Margin Scheme under normal UK VAT rules (as if the lot had been sold with a † symbol). See below for the rules that would then apply.
	†	If you provide us with your EU VAT number we will not charge VAT on the buyer's premium . We will also refund the VAT on the hammer price if you ship the lot from the UK and provide us with proof of shipping, within three months of collection.
	* and Ω	The VAT amount on the hammer price and in the buyer's premium cannot be refunded. However, on request we can re-invoice you outside of the VAT Margin Scheme under normal UK VAT rules (as if the lot had been sold with a † symbol). See above for the rules that would then apply.
Non-EU buyer or Non-VAT registered EU buyer (if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal) or EU VAT registered buyer (if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal)		If you meet ALL of the conditions in notes 1 to 3 below we will refund the following tax charges:
	No Symbol	We will refund the VAT amount in the buyer's premium .
	† and α	We will refund the VAT charged on the hammer price . VAT on the buyer's premium can only be refunded if you are an overseas business. The VAT amount in the buyer's premium cannot be refunded to non-trade clients.
	‡ (wine only)	No Excise Duty or Clearance VAT will be charged on the hammer price providing you export the wine while 'in bond' directly outside the EU or, if the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal, outside of the UK using an Excise authorised shipper. The VAT amount in the buyer's premium cannot be refunded to non-trade clients.
	* and Ω	We will refund the Import VAT charged on the hammer price and the VAT amount in the buyer's premium .

1. We **CANNOT** offer refunds of VAT amounts or Import VAT to buyers who do not meet all applicable conditions in full. If you are unsure whether you will be entitled to a refund, please contact Client Services at the address below **before you bid**.
2. No VAT amounts or Import VAT will be refunded where the total refund is under £100.
3. To receive a refund of VAT amounts/Import VAT (as applicable) a non-EU or EU

buyer (as applicable) must:
(a) have registered to bid with an address outside of the EU (prior to the UK withdrawing from the EU without an agreed transition deal) or UK (after the UK has withdrawn from the EU without an agreed transition deal); **and**
(b) provide immediate proof of correct export out of the EU or UK (as applicable pursuant to (a) above within the required time frames of: 30 days via

a 'controlled export' for * and Ω lots. All other lots must be exported within three months of collection.
4. Details of the documents which you must provide to us to show satisfactory proof of export/shipping are available from our VAT team at the address below. We charge a processing fee of £35.00 per invoice to check shipping/export documents. We will waive this processing fee if

you appoint Christie's Shipping Department to arrange your export/shipping.
5. If you appoint Christie's Art Transport or one of our authorised shippers to arrange your export/shipping we will issue you with an export invoice with the applicable VAT or duties cancelled as outlined above. If you later cancel or change the shipment in a manner that infringes the rules outlined above we will issue a

revised invoice charging you all applicable taxes/charges.
6. If you ask us to re-invoice you under normal UK VAT rules (as if the lot had been sold with a † symbol) instead of under the Margin Scheme the lot may become ineligible to be resold using the Margin Schemes. Prior to the UK withdrawing from the EU without an agreed transition deal, **movement within the EU must be within 3 months**

from the date of sale. You should take professional advice if you are unsure how this may affect you.
7. All re-invoicing requests must be received within four years from the date of sale. If you have any questions about VAT refunds please contact Christie's Client Services on info@christies.com
Tel: +44 (0)20 7389 2886.
Fax: +44 (0)20 7389 1611.

SYMBOLS USED IN THIS CATALOGUE

The meaning of words coloured in **bold** in this section can be found at the end of the section of the catalogue headed 'Conditions of Sale'.

- Christie's has a direct financial interest in the lot. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.
- △ Owned by Christie's or another **Christie's Group** company in whole or part. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.
- ◆ Christie's has a direct financial interest in the **lot** and has funded all or part of our interest with the help of someone else. See Important Notices and Explanation of Cataloguing Practice.

- Bidding by interested parties.
- λ Artist's Resale Right. See Section D3 of the Conditions of Sale.
- **Lot** offered without **reserve** which will be sold to the highest bidder regardless of the pre-sale estimate in the catalogue.
- ~ **Lot** incorporates material from endangered species which could result in export restrictions. See Section H2(b) of the Conditions of Sale.

- ψ **Lot** incorporates material from endangered species which is shown for display purposes only and is not for sale. See Section H2(g) of the Conditions of Sale.
- †, *, Ω, α, ‡ See VAT Symbols and Explanation.
- See Storage and Collection Page.

Please note that **lots** are marked as a convenience to you and we shall not be liable for any errors in, or failure to, mark a **lot**.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

CHRISTIE'S INTEREST IN PROPERTY CONSIGNED FOR AUCTION

△ **Property Owned in part or in full by Christie's**
From time to time, Christie's may offer a **lot** which it owns in whole or in part. Such property is identified in the catalogue with the symbol △ next to its **lot** number. Where Christie's has an ownership or financial interest in every **lot** in the catalogue, Christie's will not designate each **lot** with a symbol, but will state its interest in the front of the catalogue.

○ **Minimum Price Guarantees**
On occasion, Christie's has a direct financial interest in the outcome of the sale of certain lots consigned for sale. This will usually be where it has guaranteed to the Seller that whatever the outcome of the auction, the Seller will receive a minimum sale price for the work. This is known as a minimum price guarantee. Where Christie's holds such financial interest we identify such **lots** with the symbol ○ next to the **lot** number.

○◆ **Third Party Guarantees/Irrevocable bids**
Where Christie's has provided a Minimum Price Guarantee it is at risk of making a loss, which can be significant, if the **lot** fails to sell. Christie's therefore sometimes chooses to share that risk with a third party who agrees prior to the auction to place an irrevocable written bid on the lot. If there are no other higher bids, the third party commits to buy the lot at the level of their irrevocable written bid. In doing so, the third party takes on all or part of the risk of the **lot** not being sold. **Lots** which are subject to a third party guarantee arrangement are identified in the catalogue with the symbol ○◆.

In most cases, Christie's compensates the third party in exchange for accepting this risk. Where the third party is the successful bidder, the third party's remuneration is based on a fixed financing fee. If the third party is not the successful bidder, the remuneration may either be based on a fixed fee or an amount calculated against the final **hammer price**. The third party may also bid for the **lot** above the irrevocable written bid. Where the third party is the successful bidder, Christie's will report the **purchase price** net of the fixed financing fee.

Third party guarantors are required by us to disclose to anyone they are advising their financial interest in any **lots** they are guaranteeing. However, for the avoidance of any doubt, if you are advised by or bidding through an agent on a **lot** identified as being subject to a third party guarantee you should always ask your agent to confirm whether or not he or she has a financial interest in relation to the **lot**.

□ **Bidding by parties with an interest**
When a party with a direct or indirect interest in the **lot** who may have knowledge of the **lot's reserve** or other material information may be bidding on the **lot**, we will mark the **lot** with this symbol □. This interest can include beneficiaries of an estate that consigned the **lot** or a joint owner of a **lot**. Any interested party that successfully bids on a **lot** must comply with Christie's Conditions of Sale, including paying the **lot's** full Buyer's Premium plus applicable taxes.

Post-catalogue notifications
In certain instances, after the catalogue has been published, Christie's may enter into an arrangement or become aware of bidding that would have required a catalogue symbol. In those instances, a pre-sale or pre-**lot** announcement will be made.

Other Arrangements
Christie's may enter into other arrangements not involving bids. These include arrangements where Christie's has given the Seller an Advance on the proceeds of sale of the **lot** or where Christie's has shared the risk of a guarantee with a partner without the partner being required to place an irrevocable written bid or otherwise participating in the bidding on the **lot**. Because such arrangements are unrelated to the bidding process they are not marked with a symbol in the catalogue.

Please see <http://www.christies.com/financial-interest/> for a more detailed explanation of minimum price guarantees and third party financing arrangements.

EXPLANATION OF CATALOGUING PRACTICE

FOR PICTURES, DRAWINGS, PRINTS AND MINIATURES

Terms used in this catalogue have the meanings ascribed to them below. Please note that all statements in this catalogue as to authorship are made subject to the provisions of the Conditions of Sale and Limited Warranty. Buyers are advised to inspect the property themselves. Written condition reports are usually available on request.

Name(s) or Recognised Designation of an Artist without any Qualification

- In Christie's opinion a work by the artist.
- **Attributed to ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion probably a work by the artist in whole or in part.
- **Studio of ..."/"Workshop of ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the studio or workshop of the artist, possibly under his supervision.
- **Circle of ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion a work of the period of the artist and showing his influence.
- **Follower of ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the artist's style but not necessarily by a pupil.
- **Manner of ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion a work executed in the artist's style but of a later date.
- **After ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion a copy (of any date) of a work of the artist.
- "Signed ..."/"Dated ..."/
- "Inscribed ..."
- In Christie's qualified opinion the work has been signed/ dated/inscribed by the artist.
- "With signature ..."/"With date ..."/
- "With inscription ..."

In Christie's qualified opinion the signature/ date/inscription appears to be by a hand other than that of the artist.

The date given for Old Master, Modern and Contemporary Prints is the date (or approximate date when prefixed with 'circa') on which the matrix was worked and not necessarily the date when the impression was printed or published.

*This term and its definition in this Explanation of Cataloguing Practice are a qualified statement as to authorship. While the use of this term is based upon careful study and represents the opinion of specialists, Christie's and the consignor assume no risk, liability and responsibility for the authenticity of authorship of any lot in this catalogue described by this term, and the Limited Warranty shall not be available with respect to lots described using this term.

STORAGE AND COLLECTION

COLLECTION LOCATION AND TERMS

Please note that at our discretion some **lots** may be moved immediately after the sale to our storage facility at Momart Logistics Warehouse: Units 9-12, E10 Enterprise Park, Argall Way, Leyton, London E10 7DQ. At King Street **lots** are available for collection on any weekday, 9.00am to 4.30pm.

Collection from Momart is strictly by appointment only. We advise that you inform the sale administrator at least 48 hours in advance of collection so that they can arrange with Momart. However, if you need to contact Momart directly:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7426 3000

Email: pcandauctionteam@momart.co.uk.

PAYMENT OF ANY CHARGES DUE

Lots may only be released from Momart on production of the 'Collection Order' from Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1Y 6QT. The removal and/or storage by Momart of any **lots** will be subject to their standard Conditions of Business, copies of which are available from Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1Y 6QT. **Lots** will not be released until all outstanding charges due to Christie's are settled.

SHIPPING AND DELIVERY

Christie's Post-Sale Service can organise local deliveries or international freight. Please contact them on +44 (0)20 7752 3200 or PostSaleUK@christies.com. To ensure that arrangements for the transport of your **lot** can be finalised before the expiry of any free storage period, please contact Christie's Post-Sale Service for a quote as soon as possible after the sale.

PHYSICAL LOSS & DAMAGE LIABILITY

Christie's will accept liability for physical loss and damage to sold **lots** whilst in storage. Christie's liability will be limited to the invoice purchase price including **buyers' premium**. Christie's liability will continue until the **lots** are collected by you or an agent acting for you following payment in full. Christie's liability is subject to Christie's Terms and Conditions of Liability posted on www.christies.com.



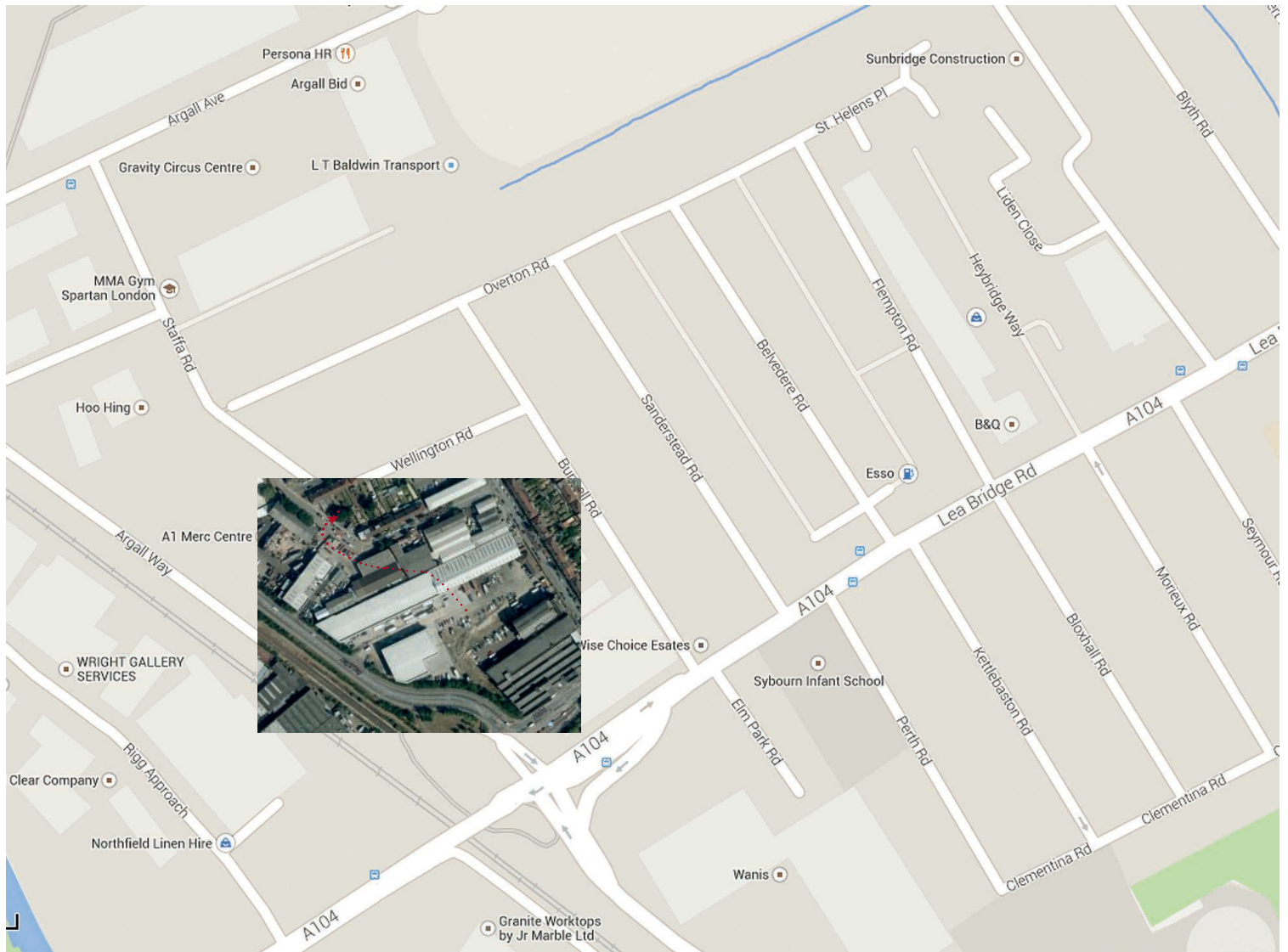
MOMART

Moved by Art

Units 9-12, E10 Enterprise Park,
Argall Way, Leyton,
London E10 7DQ

Tel: +44 (0)20 7426 3000

Email: pcandauctionteam@momart.co.uk



Bespoke Service. Buy and Sell Privately. Now.

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PRIVATE SALES
CHRISTIE'S



© Leonor Fini, DACS 2020.

LEONOR FINI (1908-1996)

Rasch, rasch, rasch, mein puppen werten

signed 'Leonor Fini' (lower right); signed again and titled 'Leonor Fini "Rasch, rasch, rasch"'
(on the stretcher)

oil on canvas

45 x 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (114 x 145.7 cm.)

Painted in 1975

PRICE UPON REQUEST



Property formerly in The Collection of Eleanor Lambert
SALVADOR DALÍ (1904-1989)
Femmes aux papillons
signed and dated 'Dalí 1953' (lower center)
gouache, watercolor, printed paper collage and pen and ink on board
30 x 40 in. (76 x 101.7 cm.)
Executed in 1953
Price Realized: \$939,000

**INVITATION TO CONSIGN
IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART WORKS
ON PAPER SALE**

New York, May 2020

VIEWING

May 2020
20 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020

CONTACT

Allegra Bettini
abettini@christies.com
+1 212 636 2050

Other fees apply in addition to the hammer price. See Section D
of our Conditions of Sale at the back of the Auction Catalogue

CHRISTIE'S



The James and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection
RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)

Le seize septembre

signed 'Magritte' (lower right); signed again, dated and titled 'MAGRITTE "LE SEIZE SEPTEMBRE" 1957' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

63 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (162 x 130.2 cm.)

Painted in 1957

Estimate: \$7,000,000 - 10,000,000 · Price Realized: \$19,570,000

**INVITATION TO CONSIGN
IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART
EVENING SALE**

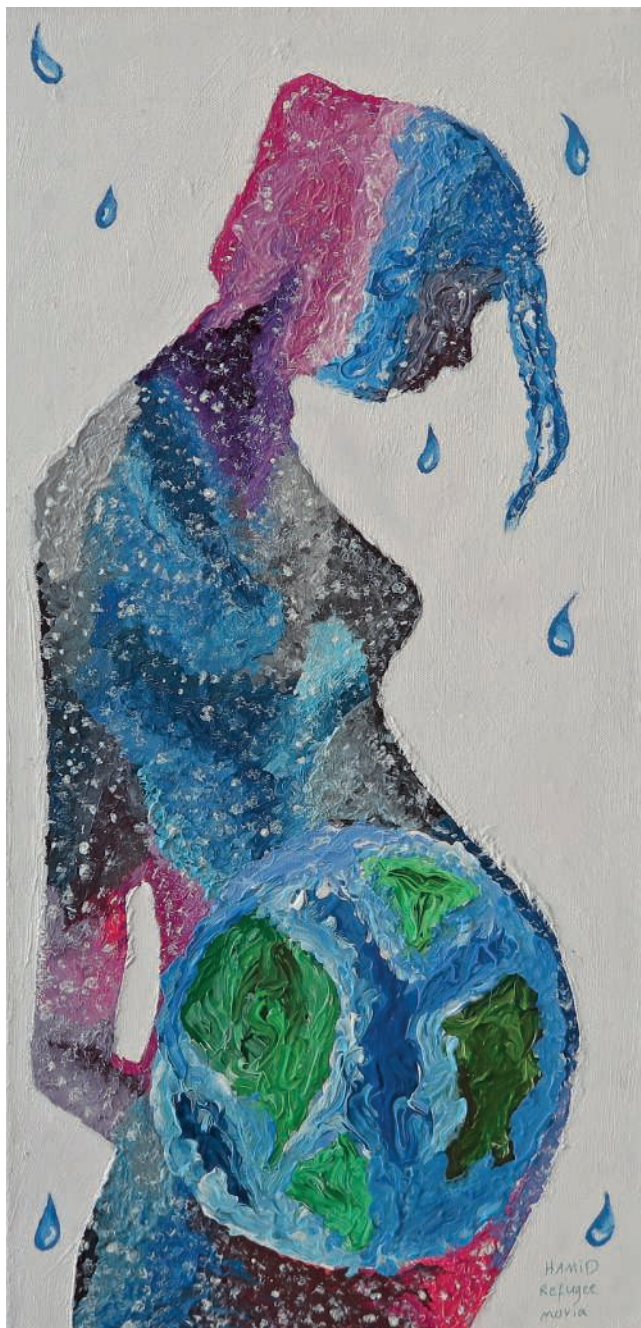
New York, May 2020

CONTACTS

Max Carter
mcarter@christies.com
Jessica Fertig
jfertig@christies.com
+1 212 636 2050

Other fees apply in addition to the hammer price. See Section D of our Conditions of Sale at the back of the Auction Catalogue

CHRISTIE'S



HAMID HEIDARI
Mother earth
signed 'Hamid Refugee Moria' (lower right)
acrylic on canvas
30 x 60 cm.
Painted in 2019

THE HOPE PROJECT

London, 13 January 2020

AUCTIONEER

Ian Hislop

VIEWING & SALE

9, 10 & 13 January 2020
8 King Street
London SW1Y 6QT

CONTACT

Eliza Heneage
eheneage@christies.com
+44 (0)20 7389 2735
+44 (0)7824 605 059

VIEWING

6-17 January 2020
St James's Church
Piccadilly

CONTACT

Annabel Matterson
amatterson@christies.com
+44 (0)20 7389 5735
+44 (0)7826 918 652

**THE HOPE
PROJECT**



From an Important Private Collection
GIORGIO DE CHIRICO (1888-1978)

Oreste e Pilade

signed 'G. de Chirico' (lower left); signed again and titled 'Giorgio de Chirico Oreste e Pilade' (on the reverse)

oil on canvas

36¼ x 25 in. (91.8 x 63.4 cm.)

Painted in 1960

£250,000–350,000

**IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN
WORKS ON PAPER AND DAY SALES**

London, 6 February 2020

VIEWING

30 January - 5 February 2020

8 King Street

London SW1Y 6QT

CONTACT

Annie Wallington

awallington@christies.com

+44 (0)20 7389 2638

Other fees apply in addition to the hammer price. See Section D of our Conditions of Sale at the back of the Auction Catalogue

CHRISTIE'S

YOUR CAREER IN THE ART WORLD STARTS HERE

LEARN MORE AT [CHRISTIES.EDU](https://christies.edu)

CHRISTIE'S
EDUCATION

LONDON | NEW YORK | HONG KONG

CONTINUING EDUCATION · ONLINE COURSES



Art for Future | Selected Works from
the UniCredit Group

ANDY WARHOL (1928–1987)

Flowers

acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

24 × 24 in. (61 × 61 cm.)

Executed in 1964

**POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART
EVENING SALE**

London, 12 February 2020

VIEWING

8–12 February 2020
8 King Street
London SW1Y 6QT

CONTACT

Tessa Lord
tlord@christies.com
+44 (0)20 7389 2683

Other fees apply in addition to the hammer price. See Section D
of our Conditions of Sale at the back of the Auction Catalogue

CHRISTIE'S



IDENTITY VERIFICATION

From January 2020, new anti-money laundering regulations require Christie's and other art businesses to verify the identity of all clients. To register as a new client, you will need to provide the following documents, or if you are an existing client, you will be prompted to provide any outstanding documents the next time you transact.

Private individuals:

- A copy of your passport or other government-issued photo ID
- Proof of your residential address (such as a bank statement or utility bill) dated within the last three months

Please upload your documents through your christies.com account: click 'My Account' followed by 'Complete Profile'. You can also email your documents to info@christies.com or provide them in person.

Organisations:

- Formal documents showing the company's incorporation, its registered office and business address, and its officers, members and ultimate beneficial owners
- A passport or other government-issued photo ID for each authorised user

Please email your documents to info@christies.com or provide them in person.

CHRISTIE'S

WRITTEN BIDS FORM

CHRISTIE'S LONDON

THE ART OF THE SURREAL EVENING SALE

WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.00 PM

8 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QT

CODE NAME: MICHELLE
SALE NUMBER: 18340

(Dealers billing name and address must agree with tax exemption certificate. Once issued, we cannot change the buyer's name on an invoice or re-issue the invoice in a different name.)

[BID ONLINE FOR THIS SALE AT CHRISTIES.COM](http://www.christies.com)

BIDDING INCREMENTS

Bidding generally starts below the **low estimate** and increases in steps (bid increments) of up to 10 per cent. The auctioneer will decide where the bidding should start and the bid increments. Written bids that do not conform to the increments set below may be lowered to the next bidding interval.

UK£100 to UK£2,000	by UK£100s
UK£2,000 to UK£3,000	by UK£200s
UK£3,000 to UK£5,000	by UK£200, 500, 800 (eg UK£4,200, 4,500, 4,800)
UK£5,000 to UK£10,000	by UK£500s
UK£10,000 to UK£20,000	by UK£1,000s
UK£20,000 to UK£30,000	by UK£2,000s
UK£30,000 to UK£50,000	by UK£2,000, 5,000, 8,000 (eg UK£32,000, 35,000, 38,000)
UK£50,000 to UK£100,000	by UK£5,000s
UK£100,000 to UK£120,000	by UK£10,000s
Above UK£200,000	at auctioneer's discretion

The **auctioneer** may vary the increments during the course of the auction at his or her own discretion.

- I request Christie's to bid on the stated **lots** up to the maximum bid I have indicated for each **lot**.
- I understand that if my bid is successful, the amount payable will be the sum of the **hammer price** and the **buyer's premium** (together with any taxes chargeable on the **hammer price** and **buyer's premium** and any applicable Artist's Resale Royalty in accordance with the Conditions of Sale - Buyer's Agreement). The **buyer's premium** rate shall be an amount equal to 25% of the **hammer price** of each **lot** up to and including £225,000, 20% on any amount over £225,000 up to and including £3,000,000 and 13.5% of the amount above £3,000,000. For wine and cigars there is a flat rate of 22.5% of the **hammer price** of each **lot** sold.
- I agree to be bound by the Conditions of Sale printed in the catalogue.
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