

CHRIS' TIE'S

TWENTY-TWO
EXCEPTIONAL STORIES
FROM 2022

INTRODUCTION

In 2022 more than 46,000 pieces went under the hammer at Christie's across 332 live and online auctions, spanning 80 different categories of art and luxury, with buyers from more than 100 countries worldwide. Despite a challenging macro-environment, it was a very dynamic year, culminating in November with the memorable sale of the collection of Paul G. Allen in New York.

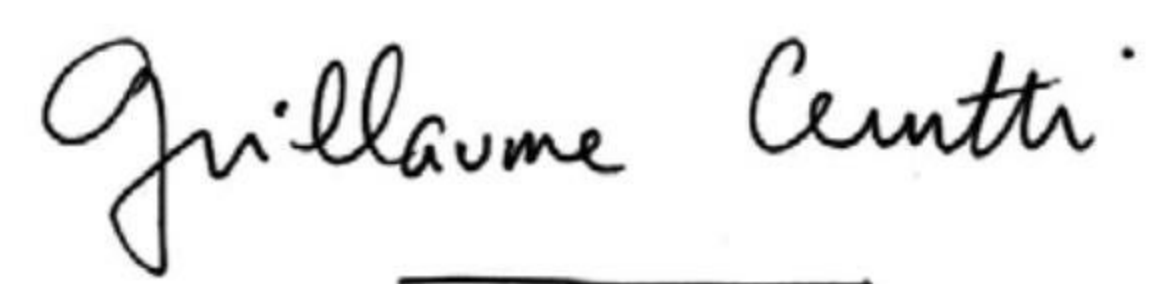
These results are not only representative of commercial success; they speak to the passion of our clients, to the expertise of our teams, and, most importantly, to the objects themselves that we are so privileged to take temporary custody of as they continue their journey from one owner to the next.

This book showcases a selection of 23 of the most remarkable objects that passed through our hands in 2022. Many of them broke saleroom records, but that is absolutely not the sole reason for inclusion. Every one of the pieces in the following pages has a story to tell – about its own history and provenance, about the joys and

vagaries of collecting, about the art market and the unequalled thrill of buying at auction, or, of course, about the inner world of artists and the unfathomable mysteries of creativity. Many of them also reflect the generosity of our clients who were selling their collections to fund philanthropic projects or humanitarian actions much needed in today's troubled world.

I hope you enjoy reading this book and discovering perhaps new and surprising stories that these pieces have to tell.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guillaume Cerutti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Guillaume Cerutti
Chief Executive Officer at Christie's

TWENTY-TWO EXCEPTIONAL STORIES FROM 2022

The works of art in this book amount to a kind of pop-up exhibition on paper. At first glance, the only thing that the pieces have in common is that they all passed through Christie's salerooms and online auctions at some point during 2022. But the objects whose stories are told here are not a totally disparate set. When they are viewed as a group, all kinds of links begin to emerge. As art-lovers and curators know, this is part of the joy of collecting: put two or more works in close proximity, and they can resonate.

It is interesting to note, for example, that we have three anonymous works from widely differing cultures, all made within 100 years of each other during the 17th century. They are the Mughal carpet from northern India, the votive statue from Papua New Guinea, and the elegant incense

stand from China. These three objects are almost miraculous – for being so very beautiful, certainly, but also for having survived to the present. Each was made by people who would not have considered themselves artists – though artists is what they all were.

The same can be said of some of the known makers whose work is in the book: the superlative vintner Henri Jay; the deeply thoughtful collector Ann Getty; the skilled lapidary who cut the Red Cross Diamond; the micro-engineers who packed a moving picture of the universe into a Patek Philippe watch; and DJ Kool Herc, whose art resided not so much in the record decks that were sold at auction as in the new sound and culture that he launched from them.

The stories of several of the works attest to an evolving view of the art canon and art history. This book includes a painting by an Abstract Expressionist who did not receive her due in her lifetime, largely because she was a woman. There is a lively scene painted by an African-American artist whose body of work is a quiet and dignified protest against the discrimination that he knew all too well. And we have a masterwork by a German avant-garde artist that was lost to its Jewish owner in the Nazi period, and only recently returned to his descendants.

Both world wars feature in the hinterland of that restituted painting by Franz Marc. War is also part of the history of two other works in our 22. The smallest item (the diamond) and the largest (the Jeff Koons sculpture) were both auctioned specifically to raise funds for victims of a conflict that was raging at the time of the original sale. The first of those wars ended more than a century ago, while the outbreak of the other war – in Ukraine – is a tragic backdrop to everything else that transpired in 2022.

The natural world is a recurrent theme in the selection. Flowers figure in several of the works: overtly in the carpet, more subliminally in the joyful painting by Lynne Drexler. Flowers were a colourful thread in the magnificent collection of Ann Getty, who was fascinated by the way that artists transmute blooms in a vase into paint on canvas. Animals are the subject of three artworks: a giant, gleaming monkey; a dependable donkey leading a Noah's ark of surreal beasts; and a pair of slumbering foxes which may be human underneath.

Human figures are naturally a large subset within the 22 works, since artists in every age have sought out ways to convey the beauty and complexity of the body.

The oldest human figures in the set are Cranach's sleeping nymph and Michelangelo's rediscovered drawing of a shivering man. The most recent depiction of a person is Tracey Emin's typically fierce and honest self-portrait, which was painted only a matter of months before it was auctioned, in the year of her return to work after serious illness.

Most of the other human figures are clustered in the late-19th or in the 20th century, among them Seurat's models and twice-painted Sunday promenaders. There are two group-works besides the Seurat: Barnes' energetic merry-makers and Leutze's equally dynamic freedom-fighters; and two experiments in multiples – Man Ray's manipulated photograph of his muse, and Warhol's exquisitely re-imagined close-up of Marilyn Monroe. Two works involve sculpted human forms: the highly stylised hunter-statue, and the bronze priestesses (favourites of Hubert de Givenchy) who gather at the foot of his 18th-century girandoles.

Other lines of connection can be drawn between the 22 pieces, of course. There are, for example, three fine abstract works that teeter on the cusp of figuration; an epic unresolved seascape by a 20th-century titan; an ever-changing NFT that pays homage to the genius of Antoni Gaudí; the garden in Maine that may not be a garden at all. One thing that all the works in this book share is that each one has a story – about provenance, the world's perceptions and misconceptions, about impact on the art scene or the market, or the maker's creative process. But all of them transcend those art-historical concerns to express something worth knowing about life and how to live it – which is both the least and the most that we can expect from any work of art.

Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
 Incense Stand — The Foxes —
 Cros Parantoux 1999 — T
 Like A Cloud of Blood — D
 — Sky Moon Tourbillon P
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 Monumental Girandoles — 2
 (Magenta) — A nude man and
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 Cross Diamond — Les Poseus



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FACTORY GIRL

¹ **ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)**
Shot Sage Blue Marilyn

Price Realised: \$195,040,000
New York, 8 May 2022

At 8.37pm on May 9, 2022, when Jussi Pylkkänen, Christie's Global President and Chief Auctioneer, brought his gavel down on the rostrum at Christie's in New York, Andy Warhol's *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn* instantly became the most expensive 20th-century painting in auction history. The winning bid realised a little over \$195 million, eclipsing the record set by Picasso's *Femme D'Algiers*, a mark set in the same sale room and one that had stood for two days short of seven years.

As the size of the winning bid sank in, applause rolled around the room. Christie's specialists taking phone bids smiled as they lay down their mobiles. For some of them, this was the end of a long campaign orchestrated by Alex Rotter, Chairman of Christie's 20/21 Art Departments, who describes the five 40-inch Marylins from 1964 as 'the holy grail of post-war American art'. Bringing one of them to public sale represented the realisation of a long-held dream for the specialist. 'Every collector knows the picture and covets it,' he states.

The historic price was concrete proof of what the world already knew: that Marilyn Monroe possessed the most adored and revered face of the modern age. There can barely be a corner of the world where people would not recognise those hooded eyes and parted lips. This universal recognition derives not so much from Monroe's work as

a movie star or even from photographs of her, but from Andy Warhol's long obsession with her image. He filtered Monroe through his own artistic imagination, distilled her essence to a point where, in this special painting, he achieved total purity.

There are two things that were important to Warhol: beauty and death. Marilyn Monroe was the most beautiful woman in the world but Warhol somehow intuited that she was also a deeply tragic figure. 'The tragedy was in the beauty,' says Rotter. 'Warhol saw before everybody else how our entire society pursues beauty and tragedy.' Sixty years on, stories of fame and personal disaster still fill the media; only the faces have changed. 'Warhol exposed that,' adds Rotter. 'He made a beautiful, beautiful metaphor out of it, and in the process transformed newspaper gossip into high art.'

“Warhol saw before everybody else how our entire society pursues beauty and tragedy. Warhol exposed that. He made a beautiful, beautiful metaphor out of it, and in the process transformed newspaper gossip into high art.”

— Alex Rotter, Chairman, 20th and 21st Century Art







Andy Warhol's studio The Factory, New York, 1964. Photo: Mark Lancaster. Image courtesy Queens Museum, New York. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Andy Warhol made his first experimental screen prints in the summer of 1962. 'The rubber-stamp method I'd been using to repeat images suddenly seemed too homemade,' he later wrote. 'I wanted something stronger that gave more of an assembly-line effect. With silkscreening you pick a photograph, blow it up, transfer it in glue onto silk, and then roll ink across it so the ink goes through the silk but not through the glue. That way you get the same image, slightly different each time. It all sounds so simple – quick and chancy. I was thrilled with it.'

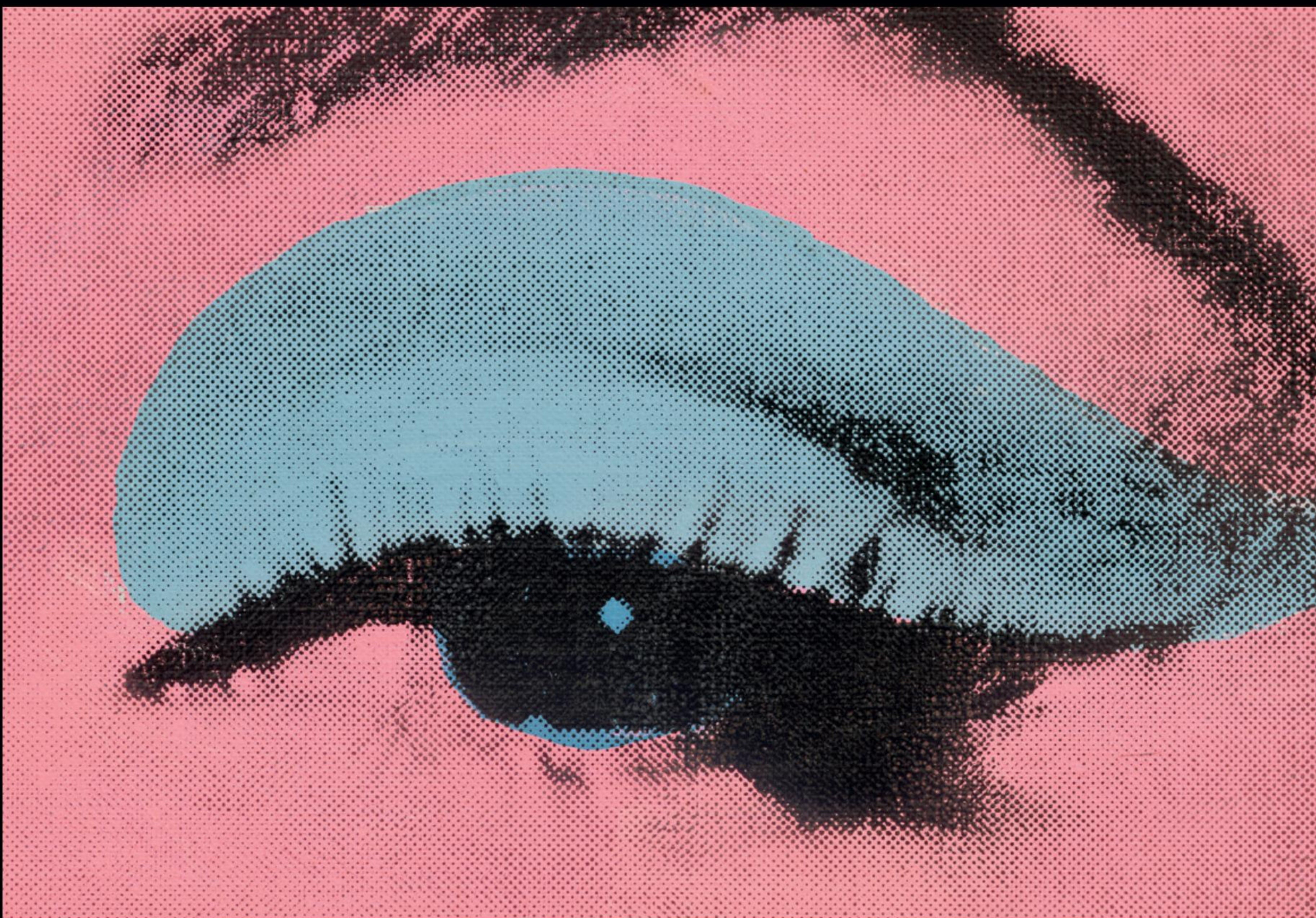
His first subjects were the Hollywood actors Troy Donahue and Warren Beatty. He was still learning the intricacies of serigraphy, and still excited by the possibilities of the process, when news broke in August that Marilyn Monroe had died of a barbiturate overdose. He knew at once that he was onto something powerful. 'When Marilyn Monroe happened to die that month, I got the idea to make screens of her beautiful face.'

Warhol's many iterations of Marilyn all derive from a single publicity photograph, which was one of a set taken in 1953 for the movie *Niagara*. The photographer was Frank Powolny, who was employed by 20th Century Fox to shoot its biggest stars. Powolny's black-and-white photograph is itself a wonderful portrait and it is not hard to see what drew Warhol to it: the sculptural volume of Marilyn's blonde hair, the ellipse of her lips, the quizzical arc of her eyebrows, and the sleepy, almost dreamy expression.



Marilyn Monroe wearing a halter dress in the shot made famous by artist Andy Warhol, December 1954. Photo: Bettmann / Contributor.

Details of Andy Warhol's *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn*, 1964. © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS).





“When Marilyn Monroe happened to die that month, I got the idea to make screens of her beautiful face.”

— Andy Warhol

Warhol's immediate instinct, we know from his own mark-up of the print, was to crop in tightly on the head, editing out Marilyn's pulled-back shoulders and her dark halter-neck dress. The effect is to create an illusory closeness, a mirage of intimacy that amplifies the magnetic, hypnotic power of her features. It is an undeniably glamorous and alluring composition, but it contains 'something more than sexual', to quote Bernie Taupin's famous lyric.

In fact, Warhol's early impulses were distinctly desexualising, almost devout in intent. The first Marilyn to be exhibited consisted of a small version of the head at the centre of a large canvas painted gold. This proto-Marilyn clearly harks back to Byzantine icons of the Virgin Mary, which are often covered in a decorative gold case, leaving only the head visible. For Warhol, raised in the Eastern Catholic tradition of his Slovakian family, such icons would have been among the first artworks he ever set eyes on.

So, Warhol explicitly envisaged Marilyn as an object of worship – but was he being ironic? 'You could say that,' says Rotter. 'But we don't know because Warhol didn't talk about his art.' At the same time, he was truly in awe of celebrity, which was akin to a religious experience for him. 'I feel certain that Warhol was thoughtful about everything that he did,' Rotter says. 'He was sophisticated and intellectual, but he tried not to be heavy in his narrative. In his art he preferred just to say, "Look, this is cool". You can see it in everything he passed on to us.'

And everything he thought was cool seeped into his art. In the January of 1963, with much pomp and presidential levels of security, the *Mona Lisa* came to New York. Queues to see the painting on its

American tour were enormous, and all reports spoke of the painting as if it were a person – a very important person, at that. 'One of the most famous ladies the world has ever known has arrived in the United States,' declared the newsreels. 'Everybody wants to meet the new girl in town.'

The hype naturally caught Warhol's attention. He produced a *Mona Lisa* of his own from a brochure image (a borrowed photograph again), which he silkscreened as a collage of Giocondas rendered in the inks of the four-colour printing process: cyan, magenta, yellow, black. He was thinking not about the painting as such, but about the countless reproductions of the painting. It was an unmistakable signal that Warhol was more interested in the image of *Mona Lisa* than in the *Mona Lisa* itself – just as he was more interested in the image of Marilyn the movie star than in Marilyn Monroe the person.

Through that year, Warhol worked on perfecting his silkscreening method. In all his early pieces, there was a possibility that the layers of colour would turn out slightly misaligned with the black: the red of the lips, say, might not sit exactly on the lines that defined the lips. By 1964, Warhol had introduced an additional process whereby he was given a positive proof that could be traced onto the canvas, providing a precise guide for the application of the local colour and the black.



Andy Warhol, *Gold Marilyn Monroe*, 1962. Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa (La Gioconda)*, 1503–1517. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo: Michel Urtado 2011. Photo credit: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, New York.







Andy Warhol *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn*, 1964. © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS).

In *Shot Sage Blue Marilyn*, the registration of layer upon layer is faultless – and the black is crisper and more expressive than ever before. Individual wisps of hair are discernible within that golden coiffure, and the shadows on Marilyn's temple and left cheek are beautifully soft and subtle. Technically this Marilyn is perfect, and that is one of the factors that makes it uniquely desirable.

But something about the controlled nature of the new process went against the grain with Warhol. Part of what he sought from silkscreening was ease of repetition, a smooth production line that gave rise to chance variations and happy accidents. He did not want to be too sure how each print would turn out, so he abandoned the complex checks and the positive acetates and never returned to them.

As for the element of chance, that came his way in the form of a woman named Dorothy Podber, who was an occasional photographer, a character in the feverish Manhattan art scene. One day, soon after the sage-blue Marilyn was printed as part of an edition of five, she came to Warhol's studio to meet a friend who worked there. She was carrying a camera, and asked Warhol if she could shoot the Marilyns, four of which were leaning on top of each other against a wall. He said yes – whereupon Podber drew a small German pistol from her handbag, fired one bullet at the stack of Marilyns ('right between the eyes', according to an eyewitness), then turned and left without a word.

The incident seems to have been intended as a Dadaist happening. Warhol was furious, but he soon had the pictures repaired and shrewdly incorporated the incident into the title of the works. They became known as the 'shot Marilyns'. The sage-blue version was eventually acquired by the Swiss dealers Thomas and Doris Ammann, longstanding friends of Warhol, and champions of his work. 'They brought Pop Art to Europe, made people see it and appreciate it,' says Rotter. 'If you went to the Ammann house in Switzerland, there she was on the wall.'

And there the painting remained until it made global news in May 2022. But what about the price that it fetched? 'You know, it amazes me that, to this day, there are still art historians and critics who deny Warhol credibility,' says Rotter. 'For me this is the painting that proves his radicalism. Young people not born when Marilyn died know who she is because of this image, and it means something to them. She has become a symbol – yes, an icon. That's why you see this picture on the cover of coffee-table tomes and on tote bags and in books of paint-by-numbers.' Andy Warhol was serious, and had serious reasons for making sure that Marilyn stayed alive.



Thomas Ammann and Andy Warhol. Courtesy of Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, Zurich.

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Mughal Pashmina Carpet —
tlló — Huanghuali Circular
Henri Mayer, Vosne-Romanée
the Nymph of the Spring —
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g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



LILIES FOR THE SHAH

² **Mughal Pashmina Carpet**

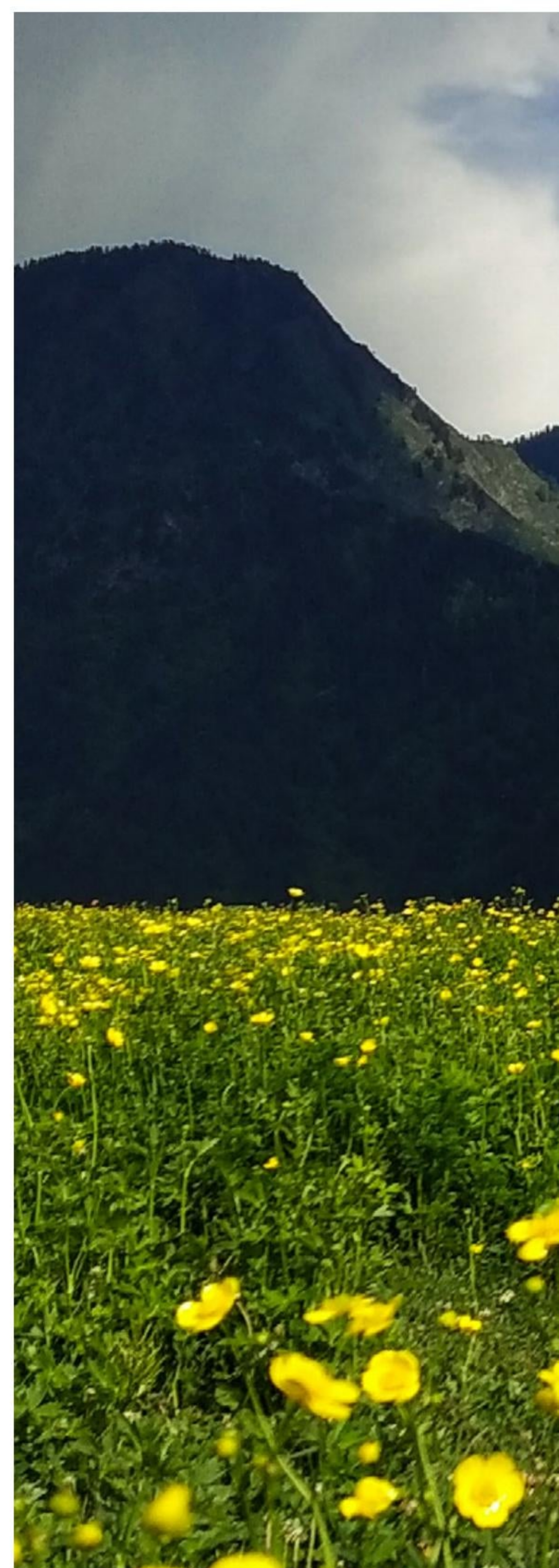
Price Realised: £5,442,000
London, 26 October 2022

Jahangir (1569-1627) – the Mughal emperor known as ‘world-seizer’, son of Akbar the Great – first visited Kashmir in springtime during the 15th year of his reign. The uplands were in bloom, literally alive with flowers, and the emperor was enthralled by what he saw. ‘Wherever the eye turns there is greenery and running water,’ he wrote. ‘The red rose, the violet, and the narcissus grow of themselves. In the fields there are all kinds of flowers, all sorts of sweet-scented herbs, more than can be counted. The hills and plains are filled with blossoms. The gate, the walls, the courts, the roofs are lit with torches of banquet-adorning tulips. Thank God that on this occasion I beheld the beauties of spring.’

By the emperor's side in Kashmir was his favourite court painter, an artist named Ustad Mansur. Jahangir instructed Mansur to make more than 100 botanically faithful portraits of flowers in bloom. They surely went with the emperor back to his palace in Agra, where there were imperial carpet-making workshops founded by Jahangir's father.

The Mughal carpet that sold at Christie's in October 2022 is an outworking of Jahangir's passion for flowers, however it was not produced in his lifetime. He sowed the seed, but carpets like these with highly naturalistic flowers did not become popular in architecture and the decorative arts until the reign of Shah Jahan, Jahangir's son. This one was woven in around 1650.

Flowers blooming on the top of the Mountains of Kashmir valley during spring time. Photo: Waseem Geelani/Getty Images











'Shah Jahan took this style of floral decoration above and beyond,' explains Louise Broadhurst, Christie's International Head of Rugs and Carpets. During his reign, she adds, the artisans at the Indian court were all working with this same vocabulary. The lattice pattern contains each bloom within its own space, each one standing out on a deep crimson ground with no one overcrowding the other.

The individual flowerheads on Shah Jahan's carpet – the lilies and the sunflowers – are remarkably life-like, possessing both depth and shadow. This is one strand of the legacy of Jahangir, who, as well as having his painters document the flora of his empire, is known to have been fascinated by 'herbals', drawings and watercolours of flowers brought to him by European clerics and ambassadors. The visual result, a generation on, is a style of carpet that has botanical rigour, and that at its best is like a woven painting. This Mughal carpet is a still-life made on a loom, a work of art constructed from countless dyed and knotted fibres.

Those threads are made of pashmina wool, a feature of regal carpets from the golden age of Shah Jahan. 'In other cultures, silk is considered the most valuable and luxurious material, but in India pashmina is much more highly prized,' says Broadhurst. Nobody but the emperor could afford pashmina carpets, which were made only in the royal workshops from wool that comes from the underbelly of the Himalayan mountain goat, and was imported into India from Tibet via Kashmir (hence the term 'cashmere'). Each hair of the goat is just one sixth of the width of a human hair. Once spun, it is exceptionally subtle and soft. 'When you hold this carpet, which is so fragile, it doesn't feel like a carpet at all,' says Broadhurst. 'It is more like a fine textile.'



Detail of *pietra dura* inlay within the
Taj Mahal, Agra, India © 2019 Alamy Ltd.

For an exquisite Mughal carpet to come to auction – and for it to have survived at all, and in such beautiful condition – is an increasingly rare occurrence. According to the leading scholars in the field, there are eight complete Mughal carpets from the 17th century in existence, plus 13 fragments that are big enough to be ‘readable’. This carpet counts as one of the fragments, because it was once a rectangle almost twice the size. At some point, perhaps because part of the carpet had been damaged, it was cut back to its present size – about nine-feet square (275 x 274 cm) – and reconfigured so that the design remained brilliantly intact and resolved.

‘This is one of the finest carpets ever to be woven,’ states Broadhurst. ‘There are some items of which I can say I can find you another one. But I can’t find you another one of these. I will not handle a carpet like this again in my career. I know that already.’

Is it possible to say where the carpet was laid, in which specific palace Shah Jahan walked barefoot across this bright field of flowers? Broadhurst identifies the Red Fort at Agra – which Akbar built as the principal residence of the Mughal emperors – as a likely home, although we cannot be certain. Imagining the interior that this carpet adorned is easier.

Mughal palaces were designed to be comfortable in the heat of India, so the walls were cool white marble or stone, carved with the kind of flower designs that we see in the carpet. ‘We know from Indian miniatures, that the robes of the emperor and his courtiers were decorated with sumptuous embroidery of flowers and blossoms,’ says the specialist. ‘Everywhere you went, in every perfumed hall, there would have been this riot of shapes and colours that recalled the springtime meadows of Kashmir. It must have been utterly intoxicating.’

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— Louise Broadhurst, International Head of Rugs and Carpets

The Mughal Pashmina Carpet on display at The Marble Hall, Elveden Hall, Norfolk, courtesy of Elveden Farms.



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© Refik Anadol

DIGITAL ALCHEMY

³ REFIK ANADOL (B. 1985)
Living Architecture: Casa Batlló

Price Realised: \$1,380,000
New York, 9 May 2022

It all begins with the unmistakable façade of the Casa Batlló in Barcelona. This house by the great Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí barely resembles a building at all. It looks more like a cliff-face hollowed by the wind, or a pillar of coral. Shell-shaped balconies cling to its walls and every element – the roofline, the doors, the window-frames – is a curve or an arch or a convexity. Gaudí abhorred straight lines because, he said, they occur nowhere in the natural world, and all human creativity is rooted in nature.

In the spring of 2022, Gaudí's astonishing building – or at least an hallucinatory representation of it – was temporarily transplanted into Rockefeller Plaza in New York. Passers-by stopped, their gaze held by a three-storey-high flat screen showing the Casa Batlló, like a giant doll's house contained in a clean white carton. Before their eyes, the virtual building dissolved and evolved, slow-motion explosions of form and colour appearing to burst out of the container and into the air around them.

One moment, the Casa's familiar frontage disappeared and its glazed tiles became leafy fronds. The next, a great blue wave broke over it, washing away all colour to leave the house looking like bleached bone. These transformations went on and on, never ending and never repeating, with Gaudí's edifice bleeding into view before fading away like a lighthouse in a kaleidoscopic fog.

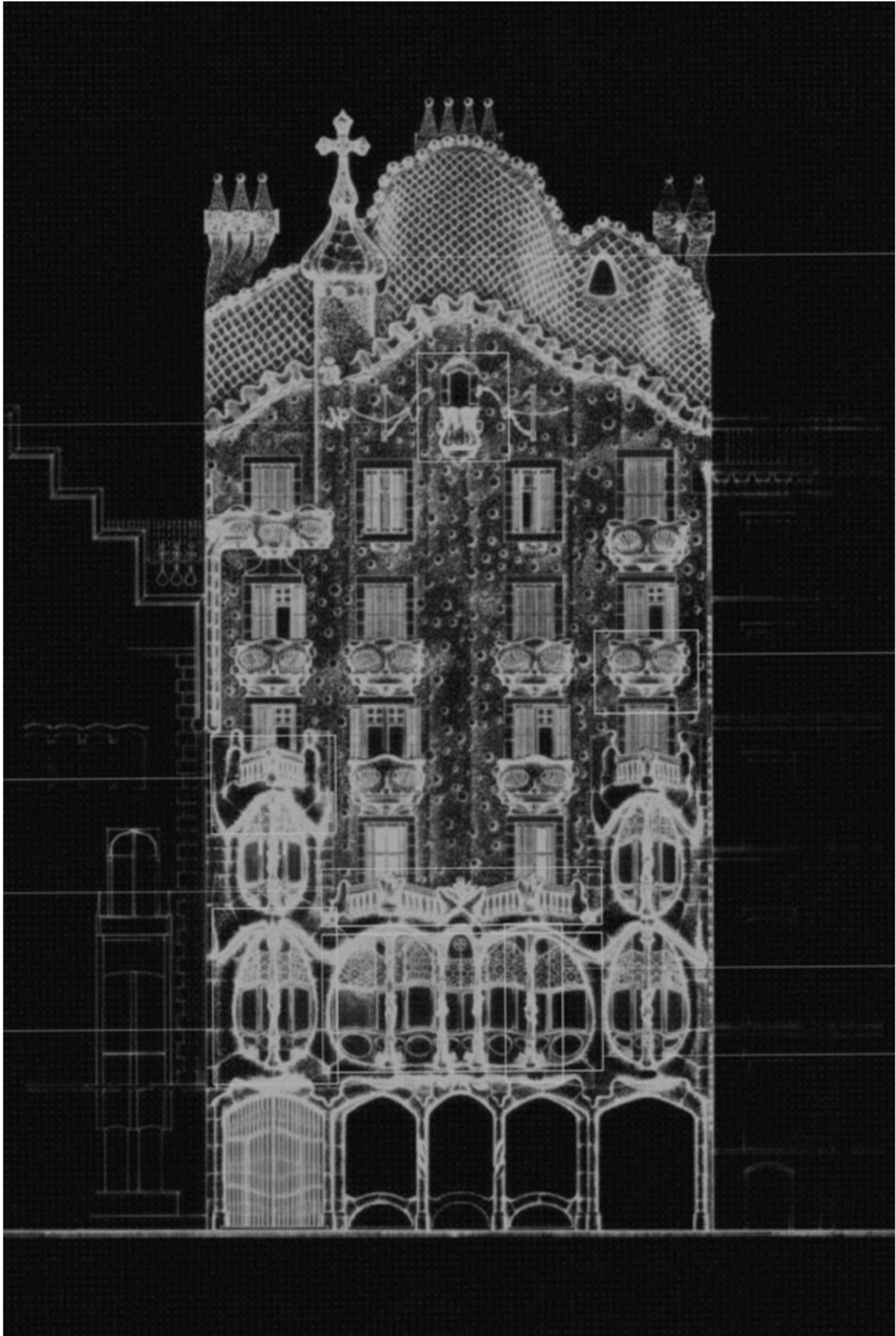
Antoni Gaudí's Casa Batlló, Barcelona, Spain.





What these people were witnessing is a living artwork by Refik Anadol, a Turkish-American artist who specialises in what he calls 'data painting'. *Living Architecture: Casa Batlló* is, essentially, information processed by the numerous sensors Anadol placed in the vicinity of Gaudí's house at No.43 Paseo de Gracia.

These ever-wakeful sensors gather enormous quantities of environmental data – wind and rain, light and shadow, heat and cold – and then, via some kind of digital alchemy, they are turned into visual form.



A rendering of Gaudí's Casa Batlló used by Refik Anadol to create the dynamic and generative NFT artwork sold at Christie's.

Refik Anadol's *Living Architecture: Casa Batlló*, 2022 displayed in Rockefeller Plaza, New York. Anadol also created a custom scent and audio soundtrack for the pre-sale installation. Artwork: © Refik Anadol.

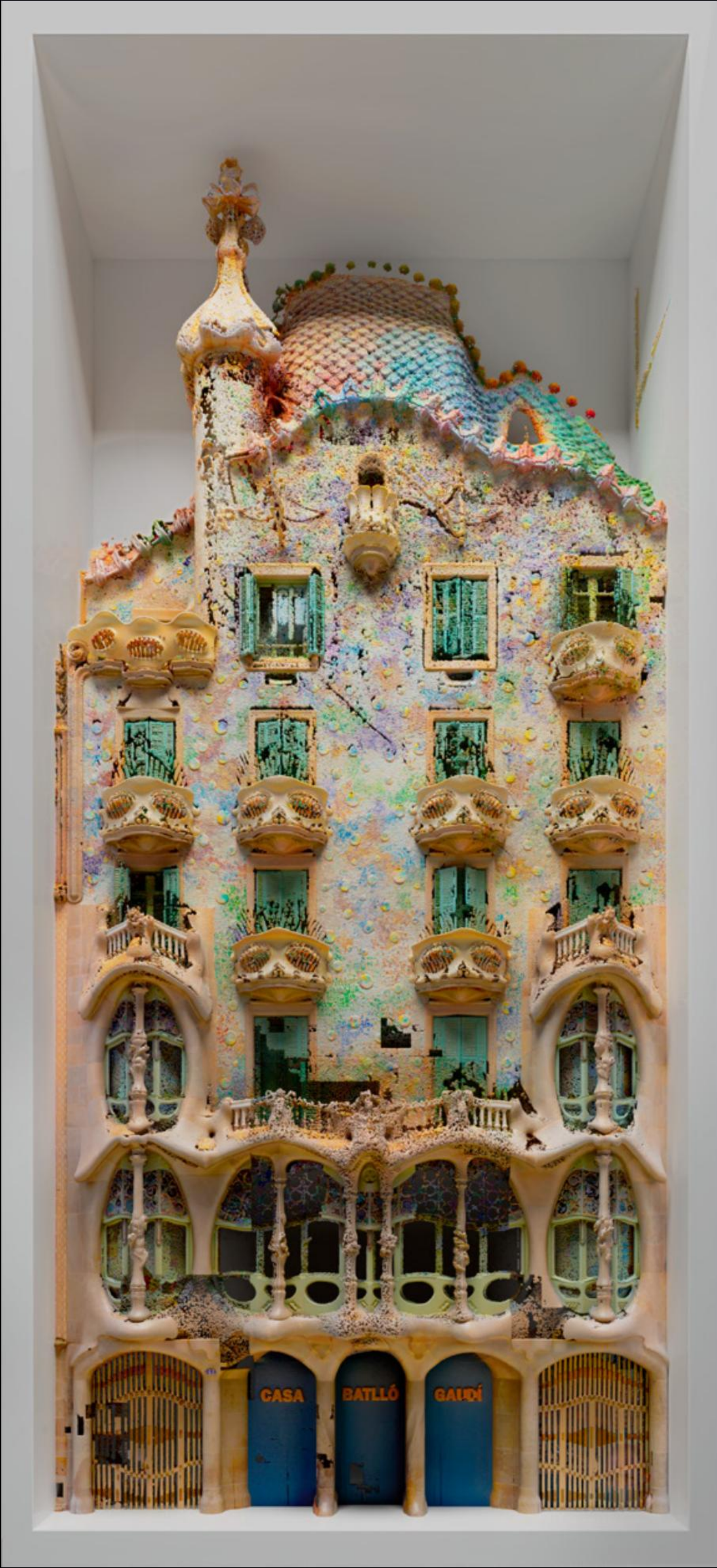


Artificial intelligence then combines this visual output with a minutely detailed scan of Casa Batlló, so that every breeze that passes down the street, every drop of sun that warms the face of the Casa, instantly generates a mesmeric mutation in the artwork wherever it is in the world. It would be easy to believe (because it is almost true) that the machine is dreaming of Barcelona, and we are watching its dreams.

These apparitions, however, are not the artwork itself. The piece that Christie's sold for \$1,380,000 in May 2022 is an NFT or non-fungible token – a computer file that exists only on the blockchain. True, a note in the lot's online listing

stated that 'the buyer of this work will also receive back-up source installation files, a custom computer with software, and a VR headset' – but these are accessories to the piece, like the frame on a portrait or the plinth beneath a sculpture. Strictly speaking, even the NFT is not the work of art itself, but a kind of certificate of ownership – like the deeds to a piece of real estate. This is the new reality that art lovers are having to absorb.









“Nothing is
invented, for
it is written
in nature first.”

— Antoni Gaudí



Portrait of Refik Anadol.

Living Architecture: Casa Batlló is a wonder to behold: a monumental sculpture, daring AI experiment and stunning example of ‘ekphrasis’ – a work of art about a work of art – all at once. And Refik Anadol is the perfect artist to pay homage to Gaudí and to the Casa, which he regards as a special piece of artistic and architectural history. His creative output is largely inspired by a desire to reconnect people with the outdoors. Anadol logs the unseen tides and eddies in the atmosphere around us, and makes them gloriously visible. For all his crypto credibility, he is a *plein air* painter as surely as any watercolourist in a field of poppies.

‘Nothing is invented, for it is written in nature first,’ Gaudí famously said. Anadol’s weather-driven data painting of Casa Batlló is a 21st-century embodiment of this philosophy. And if the great architect, a near-century after his death, could know how a fellow artist had reimagined the organic forms of his iconic house, made it breathe and sing using things called data and machine-learning and algorithms, he might feel that there was a prophecy in another of his much-quoted remarks: ‘Tomorrow we will do beautiful things.’

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ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



SCENT OF A LOTUS

⁴ Huanghuali Circular Incense Stand

Price Realised: HK\$71,327,500
Hong Kong, 28 November 2022

Imagine a study in the house of a Ming-dynasty artist-scholar. He is a 'literatus', a man of rank, erudite enough to have made a career in the imperial civil service. His library is his refuge, the place where he goes to contemplate antique or natural objects such as an ancient scroll or a curiously shaped rock. He takes pride in practising the three perfections – poetry, painting and calligraphy.

In the room is a desk on which are laid an inkstone and brushes. And beside the desk there is an incense burner on an elegant wooden incense stand, because almost all the intellectual pursuits of the literati required the burning of fragrant incense.

One such stand from the Ming era – a unique and particularly fine example – came down the centuries and found its way to the Museum of Classical Chinese Furniture in the town of Renaissance, California. In 1996, that stand was among numerous pieces that were de-accessioned and offered at Christie's in New York. It sold for \$178,500, at the time a fortune for such an object.

Soon after, the incense stand was acquired by the respected Taiwanese collector Piper Tseng, who had a particular love for pieces made of *huanghuali*, which is a type of rosewood. Tseng kept the stand until 2022, when it came to Christie's Hong Kong, along with 27 other Ming items from her collection.

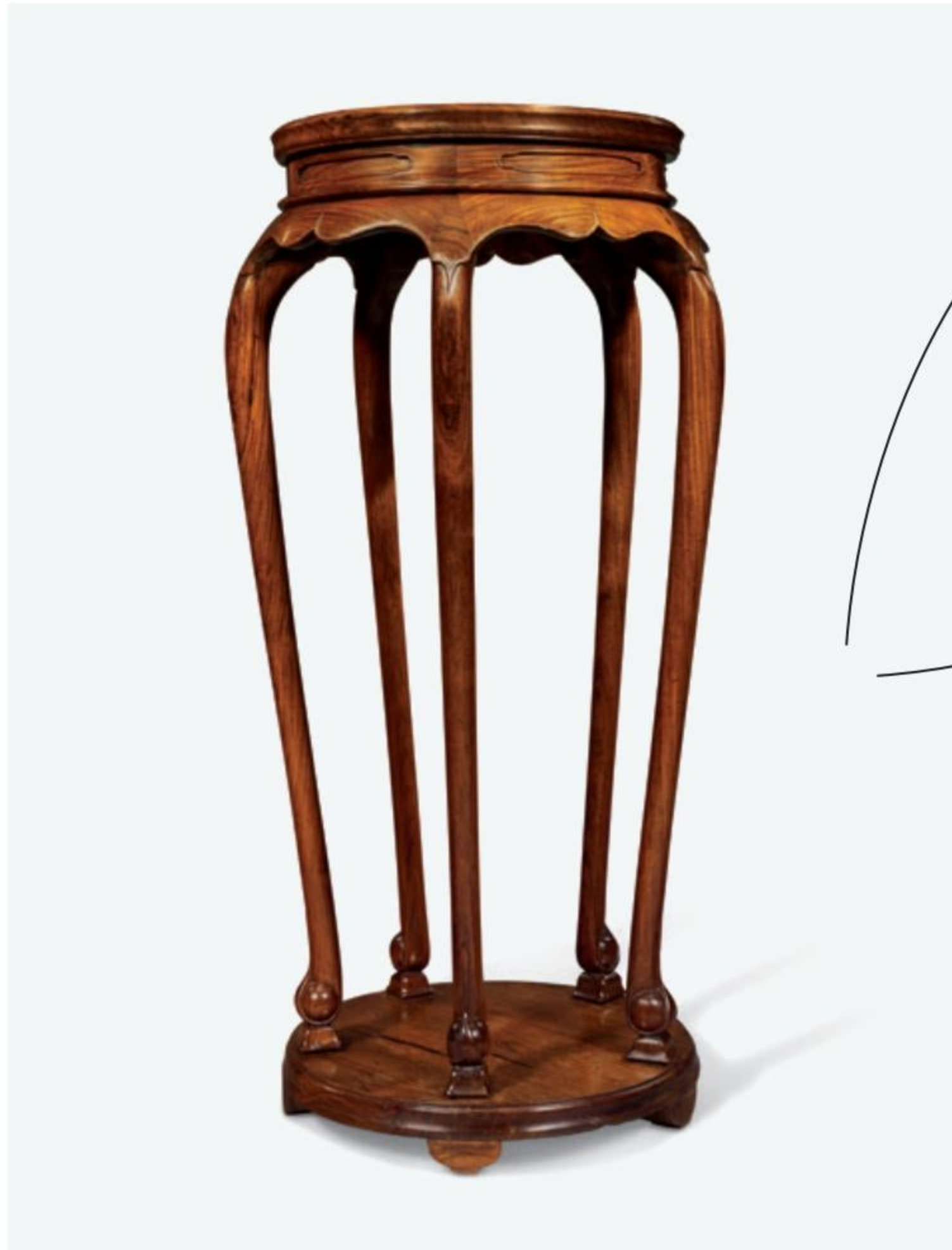
The sale of Piper Tseng's treasured furniture turned out to be a spectacular event, a truly sensational night at the auction. Every piece was snapped up – a 'white-glove sale' – and the 28 lots soared to prices that were, on average, four times the pre-sale estimate. The incense stand performed best of all, realising HK\$71 million, seven times its high estimate and a world record for an incense stand. One news outlet reported the evening's events with the headline: 'Huanghuali wood frenzy'.

弘文館學士韓太守吏令銀青光祿大夫渤海
縣開國男歐陽長度尚帖元度冬蕭閒外舍賢曰
渤海兒怪字邊陳伯真別內史行
後學莫窺遂趨魁為
書院書道史
年七

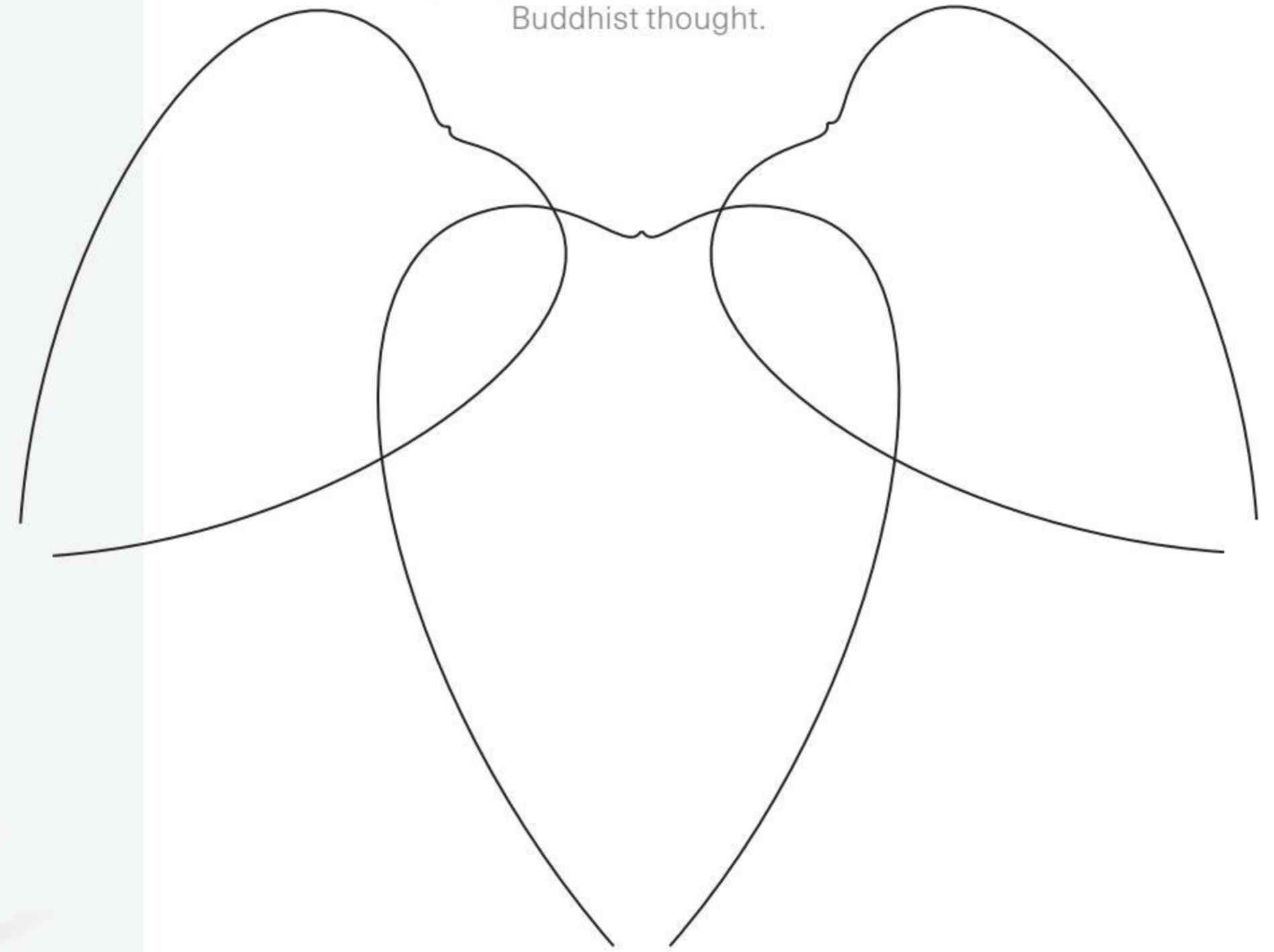


This elegantly shaped incense stand is reminiscent of Chinese Literati aesthetics.





The negative space between the legs makes the shape of a lotus petal – the lotus symbolising purity and spiritual growth in Buddhist thought.



So, what prompted the enormous interest in the incense stand in particular? The answer has to do both with the international reputation of the collection it came from, which had been exhibited widely, and the story of Chinese furniture over the past generation. In the 1980s, Ming was considered more or less decorative, explains Pola Antebi, Christie's Deputy Chairman, Asia Pacific. 'Pieces like the incense stand were acquired largely by Western art-lovers in Manhattan or other cosmopolitan areas of the US,' she says. 'The clean lines fitted the spare, cool aesthetic of chic American homes.'

It was not until the landmark sale in 1996 that Chinese furniture was seen as a collecting category. That auction suddenly established an international market and Piper Tseng amassed her collection on the cusp of a market revolution. Unlike most collectors at the time, she looked at Ming pieces with an understanding of what they signified for their original owners.

Thirty years on, when Tseng decided to sell, there were plenty of collectors across Asia ready to do battle in the saleroom for works that spoke to Chinese history and a refined Chinese aesthetic. 'Objects like these once drifted away from the part of the world where they were made,' says Antebi. 'Now the direction of flow is totally reversed.'

The term *huanghuali* translates as 'yellow flowering pear'. The tree grows predominantly in Hainan in the far south of China. It is very dense, which makes it long-lived. Insects cannot burrow into it and it is also impervious to damp, which made it a highly sought-after material in Ming-era China, when the floors in homes were usually cold stone. It would have been expensive to harvest the timber in the south, then transport it across the country to workshops in Beijing. Consequently, only the most skilled craftsmen in the capital were entrusted with it.

Huanghuali has aesthetic properties that make it desirable above other woods. When it is freshly cut it has a reddish tone, which becomes ever more golden as it ages, acquiring an almost shimmering patina. A square or a rectangular stand is much easier to make. This one is more of a puzzle: a circular stand with an odd number of legs, so difficult to perfect and yet also an exercise in simplicity. This particular incense stand is organic rather than ornate: a Zen appreciation of nature being part of its make-up, which leaves a certain amount to imagination.

Antebi points out that the negative space between the legs makes the shape of a lotus petal – the lotus symbolising purity and spiritual growth in Buddhist thought. Here the lotus form consists of air – it is both present and not present – a conundrum to nourish the soul of any scholar-artist. Those legs are so slim and elegant that they seem almost to be hanging in the air, as if suspended from the disk that forms the table-top, rather than supporting it. This is a deliberately illusory effect known as 'dragonfly legs'.

The curved cabriole form of the legs harks back to ancient Chinese models – so the stand is designed to speak to a scholar's preoccupation with all that is best and most admirable about the past. The soulful civil servant who commissioned it would have approved of William Morris's famous dictum: have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.

A stand as well-wrought as this one blurs the divide between the religious and the secular aspects of life. 'Burning incense was like lighting a candle in church,' says Antebi, although there are also Chinese stories that describe how perfumed smoke might enhance the allure of a lady's boudoir. The burning of incense was a sensual pleasure as well as a devotional act. More than that, it was felt to be an aid to creativity, a tool for the appreciation of the high arts.

In the 11th century, several hundred years before this stand was carved from the wood of a flowering yellow pear, the painter and poet Guo Xi had this to say about the place of such objects in a scholar's room:

On days of leisure I have often studied poems, both old and new. Well might I come across some verse that perfectly expresses the longings of the heart, or vividly brings some aspect of nature to mind. But if I were not seated at a clean table in a quiet room, with a well-lit window and a stick of burning incense to chase away my cares and gloom, then fine verse or good thought could not inspire me. And no matter how delicate the feeling or rare the mood, none of it could bear fruit.

Guo Xi, *Old Trees, Level Distance*, circa 1080.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Ming Dynasty *Huanghuaili* Incense Stand at
Christie's Hong Kong, November 2022.

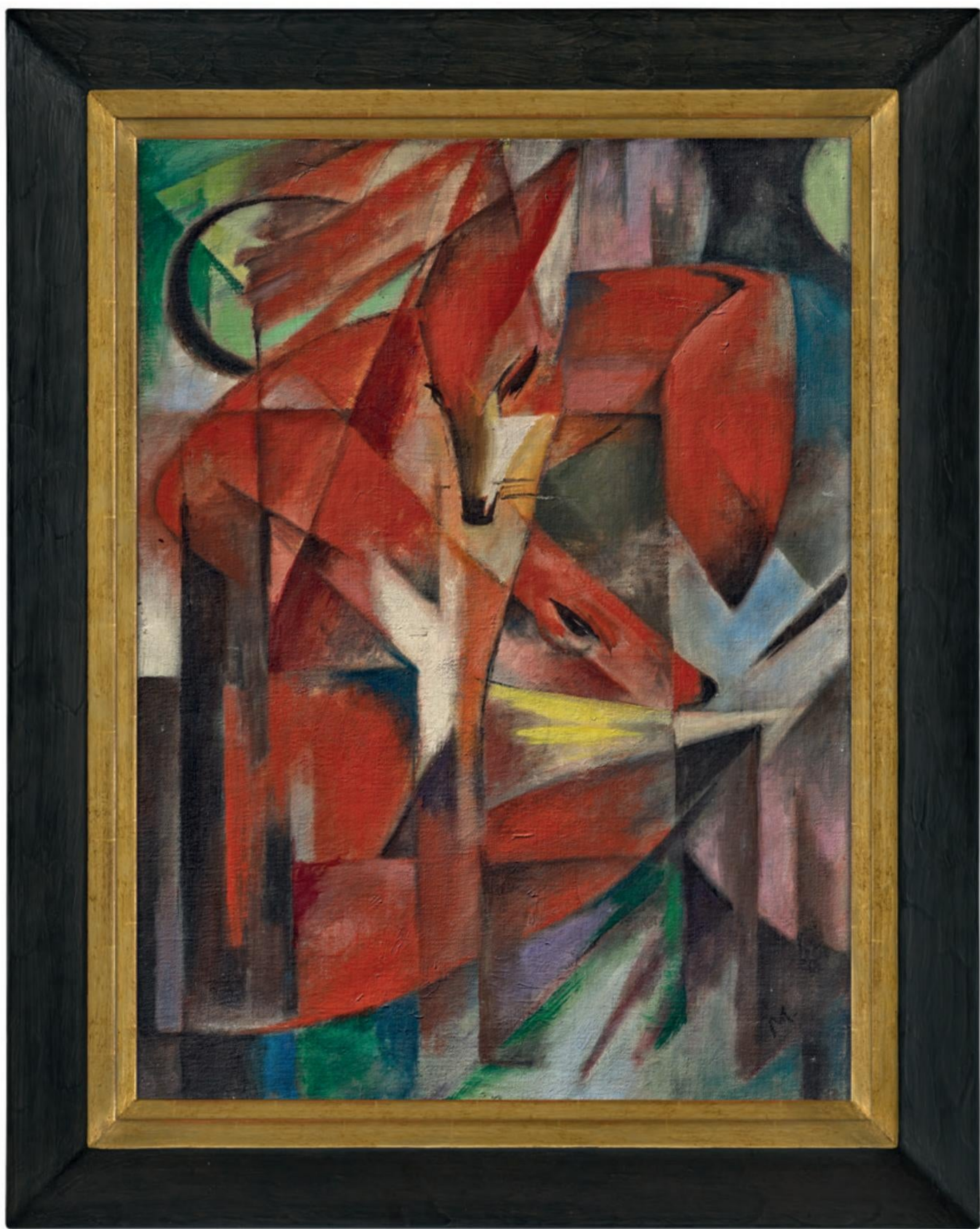


HUANGHUALI CIRCULAR INCENSE STAND



Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
 Incense Stand — The Foxes —
 Cros Parantoux 1999 — T
 Like A Cloud of Blood — D
 — Sky Moon Tourbillon P
 Shack / Washington Crossin
 Monumental Girandoles — 2
 (Magenta) — A nude man and
 Figure — The Ann & Gordon
 Garden — Âne Planté — Le
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Mughal Pashmina Carpet —
tlló — Huanghuali Circular
Henri Mayer, Vosne-Romanée
The Nymph of the Spring —
J Kool Herc's Sound System
P ref. 5002 — The Sugar
g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



DEVOTION AND LONGING

⁵ **FRANZ MARC (1880-1916)**
The Foxes

Price Realised: £42,654,500
London, 28 February 2022



Kurt and Else Grawi in Chile, 1942. Photograph courtesy of the family.

The Grawi Family united in Chile, 1940. Photographer unknown. Photograph courtesy of the family.



In March 2021, a restitution committee in Berlin published its report regarding *The Foxes*, a superb painting by the avant-garde Bavarian artist Franz Marc (1880-1916). It was painted in 1913 and between the wars had belonged to a Jewish banker named Kurt Grawi and his German wife, Else.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Grawi family was subjected to all the incremental cruelties that the regime imposed on its Jewish population. In 1935, Mr Grawi's assets and his companies were 'Aryanised', or dissolved. His two sons were vilified as 'first-degree half-breeds'. In the wake of *Kristallnacht*, when Jewish-owned businesses across the country were vandalised and synagogues burned, Mr Grawi was detained by the police and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

He was released after a few weeks – a stroke of luck by the baleful standards of the time – and he seized the opportunity to get out of Germany. Mr Grawi left with ten Reichsmarks in his pocket, which was the maximum sum permitted. His wife and sons remained in Germany for the next year, but they too were allowed to leave just before the outbreak of war. Meanwhile, Mr Grawi secretly arranged for the Marc painting to be smuggled across the border, knowing his family would need funds to survive.

At length, with the help of friends, the family made it to America, where Mr Grawi decided to sell *The Foxes*, 'despite the unfavourable times'.

The advisory committee in Berlin concluded that the Grawi family lost their painting as a direct result of Nazi persecution – and it did not matter at all that the artwork was freely sold in America, far beyond the Nazi sphere of influence. The painting had found its way back to Germany – to the Kunstpalast Museum in Düsseldorf, having changed hands after the war. The museum acquiesced to the committee's ruling, and handed *The Foxes* over to Kurt Grawi's 87-year-old daughter-in-law. And after 80 years without the painting, she and her family decided that the best course of action was to sell it once more. That is how it came to be a star lot at Christie's Evening Sale in London on March 1, 2022.

Almost a century has passed since the rise of Hitler, but Christie's still takes the greatest care with works that may have changed hands during the dark years of his rule. It still matters, and doing right by owners and collectors long dead is one of the key moral responsibilities that comes with selling art. For that reason, Christie's had a presence at the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets.

Marc Porter, now Christie's Chairman, Americas, was an observer at the conference, which was attended by representatives of governments, banks, insurance companies, and auction houses. Eleven principles on Nazi-confiscated art were hammered out and published. These legal and moral guidelines inform the decisions of advisory committees such as the one that dealt with the Marc painting, and they are what led Porter to recommend the formation of a dedicated international restitution department at Christie's.

The task of the restitution department involves what might be termed a cold-case approach to provenance research – checking pre-1945 artworks against databases of 'sensitive names'. Those names include, on the one hand, innocent collectors who are known victims of Nazi confiscation; and on the other hand, Nazi collectors and complicit dealers. 'Expensive works get all the press coverage, but lower-value objects are

so important to the families that get them back,' says Porter. 'I've seen it: the direct victim is dead so it's children teaching their children about their own history, a story that was lost. That's what motivates me and the restitution team.'

Sometimes the works themselves carry clues to provenance – labels on the back of a painting, for example – that hint at something suspicious. If alarm bells ring, then a deeper investigation will ensue. In such instances, it is nearly always the case that the consignor has the work in good faith. With the permission of the holder, Christie's can then offer to facilitate a negotiation. 'The vast majority of holders are eager for a resolution both for ethical and commercial reasons,' Porter says. 'They want the object to come to market with a clean title.'

No such processes were necessary in the case of *The Foxes*, since the restitution question had been resolved before the artwork was consigned. Instead, Christie's found itself in the rare position of selling a work by a great artist who almost never comes to auction. 'We are talking about someone with a small body of work, because of his short time as an active painter,' says Keith Gill, Head of the Impressionist and Modern Art department at Christie's in London. 'But he is important in an art-historical sense, and *The Foxes* is his absolute masterpiece.'



Private first class Louis A. Cilibrilli stands guard in one of the rooms used to store several million dollars worth of art treasures stolen by the Nazis.

Name

Titel *Frühe 1913.*

Katalog Nr. *17.*

Der Blaue Reiter

Collection Ausstellung *Mare.*



Der Sturm / Zeitschrift / Herausgeber:
Herwarth Walden

Ständige Ausstellungsräume:
Berlin W 9 / Potsdamerstraße 134 a

Name des Künstlers *Mare*

Wohnung *Linien*

Titel des Kunstwerks *Mich*

Preis M Berliner Katalog Nr.







Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky presenting the cover design of the Blaue Reiter Almanac, on the balcony at Ainmillerstrasse, Munich, 1911-1912. Photograph by Gabriele Münter. Photo: © DACS 2022. Digital image: © Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung, München.



Cover of the Blaue Reiter Almanac. Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Philippe Migeat.

Franz Marc was among the founders of *Der Blaue Reiter* ('The Blue Rider'), a coterie of avant-gardists who hoped to forge a whole new language of art in the second decade of the 20th century. Across Europe, there were artists yearning for the same radical transformations. Alongside Germany's Blue Rider, there were the Orphists in France, Futurists in Italy, Rayonists in Russia.

Some were by temperament revolutionaries and iconoclasts, but that was not Marc's cast of mind. He was a gentle, almost monkish seeker after truth. As a young man he had travelled to Mount Athos in Greece on a kind of pilgrimage, and considered becoming a Lutheran pastor. But it is clear from his own writing that he was too free a thinker to be tethered to the dogma of any faith.

His worldview was broad and all-encompassing, almost pantheistic. Like Van Gogh, whom he admired deeply, Marc subsumed his profound religious feeling into his art. And as with Van Gogh, that devotional investment is visible in every canvas. He felt that by painting – painting animals in particular – it was possible to touch the divine. He was so certain of it that he was perplexed that other people did not see art as he did. 'It is absurdly difficult to present one's contemporaries with the gifts of the spirit,' he wrote without a shadow of conceit, merely with bafflement.

Marc's animals are often rendered in unexpected colours; he painted ochre-yellow cows and horses in all shades of blue. *The Foxes* are something of an exception in that respect. Their fur is a rich shade of auburn – deep and intense and glowing like the

embers of a roaring fire. The whole painting emanates warmth, and its facets – like the shards of a shattered mirror – have an intention that is very different from those of other artists who were trying new broken-down forms of composition.

Futurists revelled in modernity, painting aircraft, bicycles, cars, and steam trains. Marc felt these influences but was not interested in machines, using the same techniques but applying them to the natural world. In his works, they convey three-dimensionality, movement, light. Perhaps light especially: the triangular prisms in *The Foxes* are like the separate panes in the stained-glass window of a church. They are, in other words, integral to Marc's attitude to painting, where every seen element is sacred, a visual hint at some higher realm.

Marc painted *The Foxes* during a period of joyous, prolific creativity. But as the year closed his mood became more sombre. He seems to have sensed the looming catastrophe. Around this time, he painted *Kämpfende Formen* – 'Fighting Forms', in which the palette is similar to *The Foxes*, but everything has dissolved into anxious abstraction. The red of the foxes' coat now looks like a spreading bloodstain or a violent explosion. The geometric forms have become curved sickles, sinister talons and raptor beaks. When war broke out in July 1914, Marc was sent to the front as a lieutenant in the artillery. He was killed in action near Verdun, in the spring of 1916.



Franz Marc Memorial exhibition at the Neue Secession in Munich, 1916. Photographer unknown. Photo: © Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Deutsches Kunstarchiv, NL Marc, Franz, II, B-114 (0024).

The Foxes remained for a time with Marc's widow, who loved the painting dearly. Perhaps she saw herself and her deceased husband in that pair of embracing animals. 'Certainly, the longer I spent with the painting, the more intimate and emotional it seemed to me,' says Gill, who agrees it is possible to view the painting as 'a kind of self-portrait with Maria'. Intriguingly, X-ray analysis has revealed a painting of a man beneath the foxes. Is it possible that Marc began work on this canvas by painting himself? An autobiographical reading is one possible direction, but the reality is we just don't know.

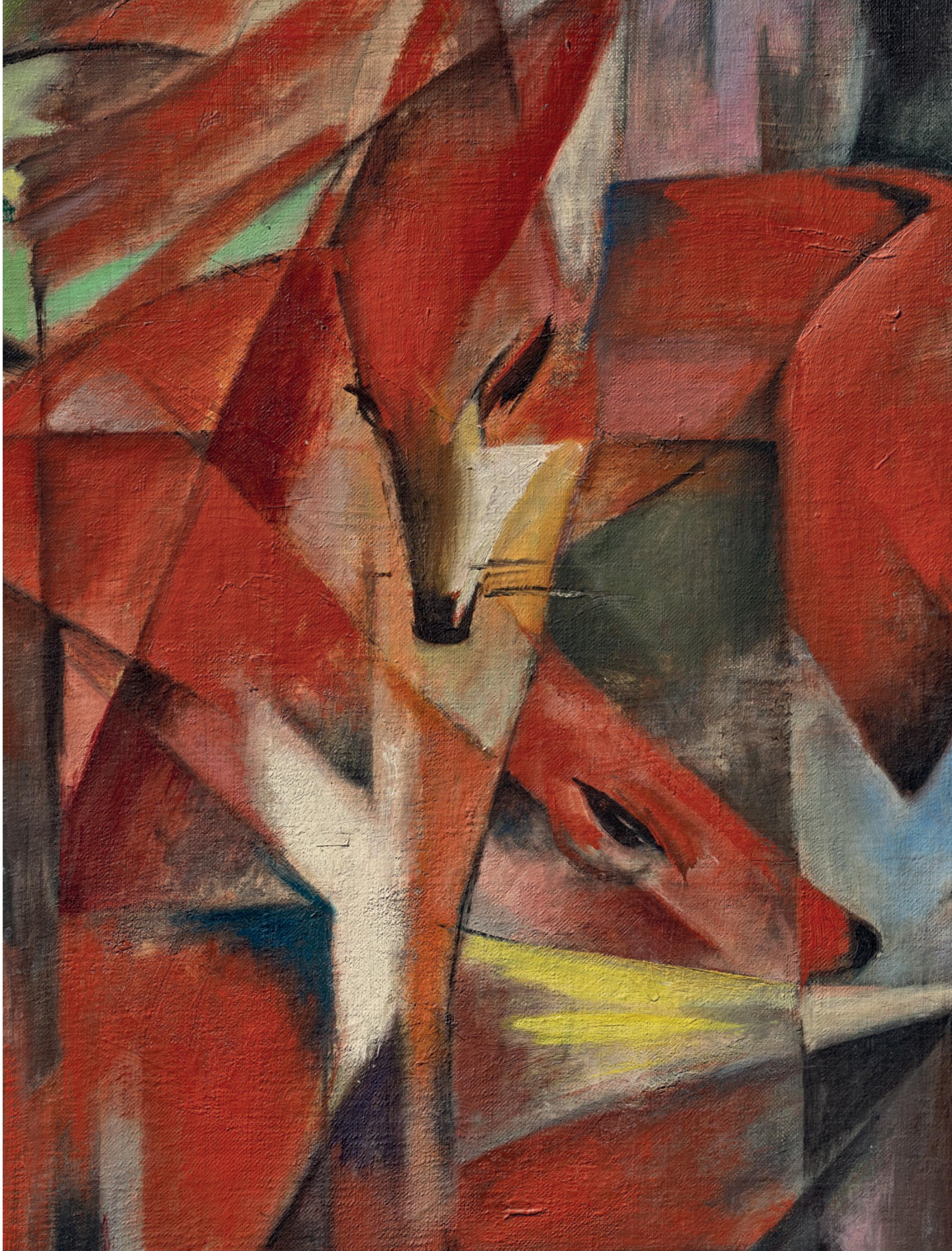
Maria Marc sold *The Foxes* while she was still mourning her husband. The painting then passed through the hands of various dealers; Kurt Grawi bought it from the last of them in 1928. Almost incredibly, as late as 1936 Mr Grawi felt able to loan the painting to a Berlin exhibition dedicated to Marc's memory.

For the Nazi regime, Marc seems to have been a slightly perplexing figure: on the one hand, a fallen hero of the Great War; on the other, a suspiciously cosmopolitan modernist. But in 1937 the regime decided that another painting by Marc merited inclusion in the notorious exhibition of 'degenerate art' – where every work was chosen so as to be denigrated and sneered at. His piece, a beautiful depiction of galloping cerulean horses, was put on show in his home town of Munich and has not been seen since.

Marc was 20 years dead by then. His contemporaries remembered him as an artist out of time – an otherworldly prophet like, say, William Blake or his beloved Van Gogh. And they loved him for it. 'Franz Marc found a creative silence in the frantic clamour of the era...' wrote his friend Lothar Schreyer.

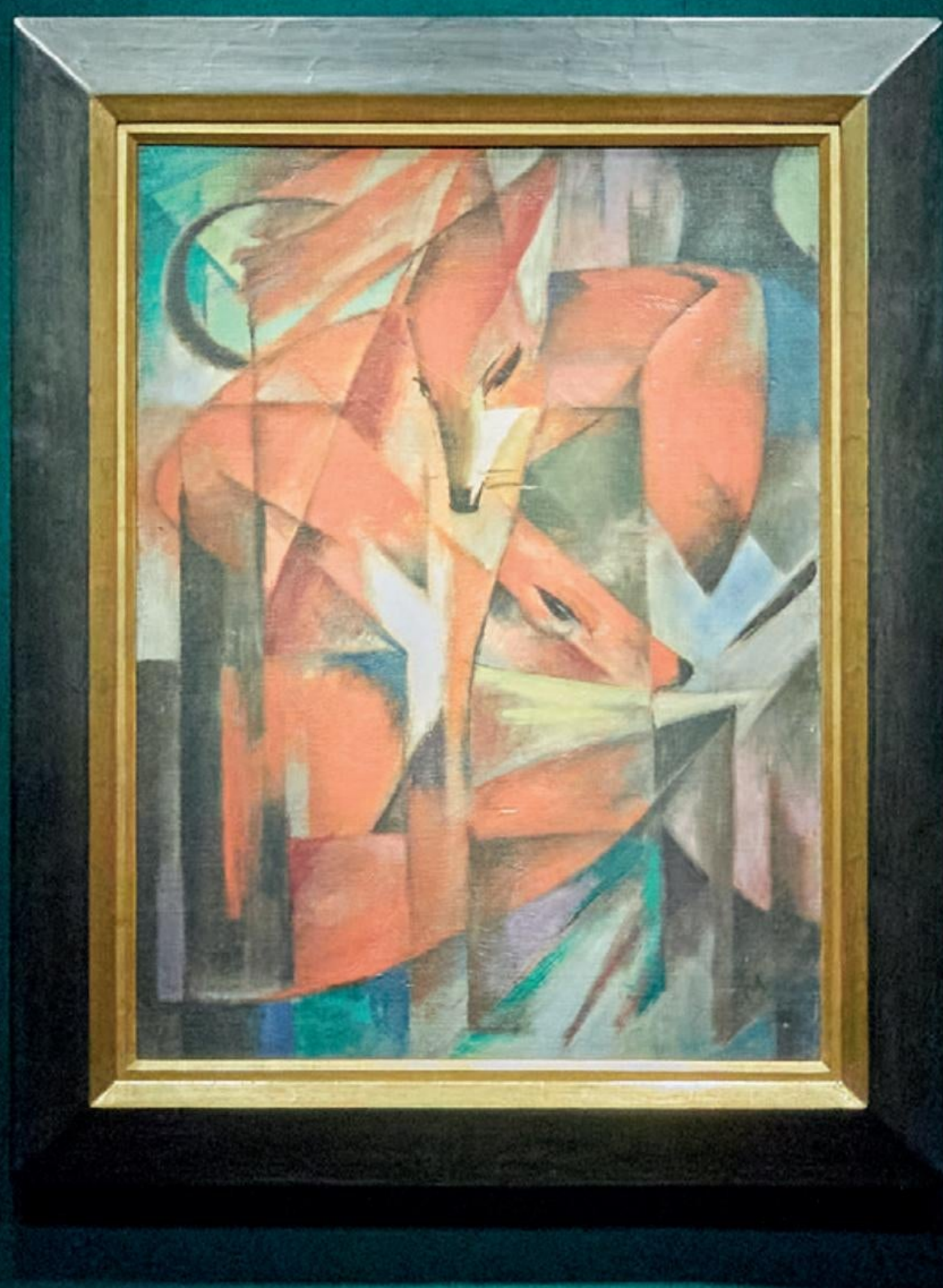
'... It is no accident that he is a painter of animals. He shows us their world in all its diverse forms – from frail deer to tigers and the monkeys of the primeval forest. When he paints, he allows the essence of each individual species to shine forth. It is as if he is making visible the spiritual web of forces that shape the body. And through this revelation, he connects animals to all living phenomena.'

Animals were his subject but Marc's aim was not so much to make pictures of fauna as to express in paint what it might feel like to be that creature, to have its awareness. For him, foxes and all his other animals were pure, unspoiled souls. They were a personal zodiac, a set of symbols, and his way of expressing what humanity can be at its best.



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— Keith Gill, Head of Department, Impressionist and Modern Art, Europe



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Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



MASTERP PIECE FROM AN ICON

⁶ **Henri Mayer, Vosne-Romanée Cros Parantoux 1999**

Price Realised: HK\$3,250,000
Hong Kong, 12 April 2022

A truly fine wine is a work of art, and the best winemakers are great artists. Like painters, they create something that excites passion, stirs emotion, opens the door to a transcendent experience. An extraordinary vintner is also a storyteller, because a fine wine tells a tale about what happened at a particular time in a specific place.





Henri Mayer vineyards, Vosne-Romanée, France.

Henri Mayer's place and time were the south-east of France at the tail end of the 20th century, and his burgundies are among the most sought-after and expensive wines in the world. In April 2022 – a round century after Mayer was born – six bottles of his Cros Parantoux 1999 fetched 3.25 million Hong Kong dollars at auction, which equates to nearly US \$70,000 for each bottle.

Henri Mayer studied wine-making close to home, at the University of Dijon, just after the Second World War. In 1951, he began to make his first wines under the medieval French system of *métayage*, whereby a lessee tends vines for a landowner in exchange for half the fruit. Also in 1951, Mayer bought his first parcel of land, a tiny disused hillside plot with poor soil but good exposure to the east. It was used to grow jerusalem artichokes. This unpromising site was Cros Parantoux.

Mayer's approach to viniculture, like the *métayage* system, had an air of timeworn tradition. First and foremost, he was a believer in *terroir*. It was Benedictine and Cistercian monks who first noted that, for good or ill, differences

Henri Mayer at his Echézeaux vineyard, Vosne-Romanée, in 1996. Photo: © Cephas / Mick Rock.



in soil and terrain could affect the characteristics of the same wine grape. They appreciated how this mattered in Burgundy, where the land is a topographical and geological patchwork.

Mayer knew that *terroir* was paramount, and this is surely what convinced him that there was hidden potential in Cros Parantoux. He was also opposed to the modern use of synthetic fertilisers and herbicides. Instead, he tilled the ground by hand, aerating the soil by breaking it up and turning it, removing weeds and driving the roots of his vines deep in search of moisture. For heavier work he used a horse rather a tractor, perhaps because a horse's hooves are gentler on the earth than the vulcanised rubber wheels of a heavy machine.

Gentleness was also behind his insistence on the use of small baskets for harvesting: that way, the grapes were less likely to get crushed and so begin to oxidise. Once in the winery, his grapes were left to macerate at a low temperature – a ‘cold soak’. He did not add cultured yeast to the vats, preferring to allow the natural yeasts on the grape skins to initiate the fermentation process.

For years, Mayer quietly produced Vosne-Romanée in this way, using the harvest from other parcels of land that he acquired down the years: Les Saules, Les Barraux, Les Vigneux. Burgundy itself was unfashionable at this time, less glamorous and harder to appreciate than Bordeaux wines such as Château Latour or Château Margaux. Connoisseurs and fellow growers saw what Mayer was doing, though, and they were impressed, then awed, by his results.

Mayer came to be seen as a pioneer and a visionary, and his meticulous methods were borrowed by other makers. His output remained tiny, but astute collectors bought cases of Cros Parantoux directly from the domaine for a few thousand francs. Some of it was certainly drunk young and, doubtless, much enjoyed. That natural reduction in the quantity of Mayer wines served only to make what remained even more of a rarity.

By the 1980s, Mayer was a giant figure in Burgundy and beyond, and the vintages from Cros Parantoux are universally considered his crowning achievement. The 1999 is especially valued, partly because it was one of the last that Mayer produced, but also because that final year of the old millennium was special.

‘It was one of the great modern-day vintages in Burgundy,’ confirms Adam Bilbey, Christies Global Head of Wine and Spirits. ‘It’s a muscular year, with enormous depth of fruit and a kaleidoscope of aromas. And even now it is still young, a mere teenager in wine terms. It will improve in the bottle for another ten or 15 years at least, and it will still be alive and wonderful long after I am gone.’

Henri Mayer died in 2002. Ten years later, Christie’s held a sale of wines that came directly from his own cellars, among them some cases of the Cros Parantoux 1999. They were bought in Hong Kong by Joseph Lau, a prolific collector of French wine and contemporary art. The fact that the wines came straight from the domaine to Christie’s, and then went from Christie’s to one of the best-known collectors in the world, meant that the provenance was impeccable when Lau decided to re-sell in 2022.



Wooden cases from Domaine Henri Mayer.

Cros Parantoux at Vosne-Romanée, with a wall of rocks that Henri Mayer cleared from the vineyard himself. Photo: © Jon Wyand





“And even now it is still young, a mere teenager in wine terms. It will improve in the bottle for another ten or 15 years at least, and it will still be alive and wonderful long after I am gone.”

— Adam Bilbey, Global Head of Wine and Spirits



The Cros Parantoux 1999 was still in the wooden box it was packed in at Vosne-Romanée, and the bottles were untouched apart from a discreet label added to the back of the bottles by Christie's ten years previously. 'That unimpeachable provenance is much like a historic painting coming directly from the studio of the artist,' says Bilbey.

In the decade since 2012, the wine market had evolved and matured. Collectors increasingly turned towards just the kind of complexity that burgundies offer. 'The wine world, particularly in Asia, has really taken to these great wines,' Bilbey explains. 'Burgundy is a hard region to comprehend, and pinot noir is a fickle variety. The wines can be temperamental, and they take time and effort to learn. But it's like getting to know a shy friend: once you understand what's going on, the nuances and the delicacy in their character, you cannot help but fall in love.'

The specialist says that the Vosne-Romanée Cros Parantoux is now regarded as one of the top ten wines in the world – a 'unicorn', he says, in the oenological universe. But it cannot live forever. Unlike any other kind of work of art, a fine wine must be consumed – it has to disappear – to be fully known. 'It will either get drunk or it will die, because it is a living, breathing thing.'

This presents an almost existential dilemma to any collector. Should I open it now? Should I save it for a special occasion? Will any occasion ever be special enough for this bottle? There are choices to be made, but they are exquisite choices because, says Bilbey 'the lucky person who bought these six bottles has the chance to drink a piece of vinous history.'

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ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



MYSTERY OF THE SLEEPING NYMPH

⁷ LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER
(KRONACH 1472-1553 WEIMAR)
The Nymph of the Spring

Price Realised: £9,430,000
London, 6 July 2022



Asleep in a strange, cryptic landscape, she has made a pillow of her crumpled dress. She is naked but for a two-stringed necklace of the same rich red as her satin gown, and a long, diaphanous veil. A bow and a quiver hang on a nearby tree. Has she been stalking the deer that graze in the distance? The place where she lies is so otherworldly that she could be dreaming it.

In the distance, there is a mysterious walled city, high on a crag. Closer, a small, shallow lake and the yawning entrance to a cave. Above her sleeping form is a Latin inscription that could be a charm or an imprecation: *'fontis nympa sacri · somnum ne rumpe · quiesco'* – 'I am the nymph of the sacred spring. Do not disturb my sleep; I am resting'. The wish of this particular nymph was granted; for hundreds of years barely anyone knew she existed.

This panel, dating from the 1540s, is the work of the great German master Lucas Cranach the Elder (c. 1472-1553). It is a subject that he painted many times but this work, the largest and arguably the most beguiling version of 12 that remain, was undreamt-of until it came to light in Sweden around 30 years ago. 'It has been hidden away at least since the 18th century, perhaps since the 17th century – and was completely unknown,' confirms Clementine Sinclair, Head of Christie's Old Masters department in London. 'There wasn't even speculation about it.'

The painting came to the attention of Cranach scholars for the first time when it was acquired by a dealer in Stockholm in or around 1990. British collectors Cecil and Hilda Lewis bought it soon after, and it was their heirs who consigned it for sale at Christie's in 2022. It was the first time the picture had ever been offered at auction.

So, where had it been for the previous two or three centuries? To find out, Christie's researchers embarked on an art-historical investigation in Scandinavia – a cold case in a cold climate. They spoke to Verner Amell, the principal Old-Master dealer in Sweden, who sold the painting to the Lewises.

'We learned that it had come to him from a family named Wachtmeister,' explains Sinclair. 'They have a highly significant collection, yet there was nothing in their inventories that linked to this painting.' What the Christie's team did have was one vital piece of information: the Wachtmeisters were descended from an old and wealthy family named Sparre, and an 18th-century ancestor, Count Gustaf Adolf Sparre, had an art collection that was second only to the one owned by the King of Sweden.

An application was made to the state archive in Stockholm for permission to access historic inventories of Count Gustav Adolf's property, made after his death in 1794. The count had owned two homes: a palatial residence in Gothenburg, filled with paintings by Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Jan Breughel the Elder, Gerard ter Borch; and a rural estate at a place called Kulla Gunnarstorp, which is far to the south of Gothenburg and almost wilfully inaccessible. In the inventory for the

country house there was a description of a painting that read, in slightly archaic Swedish, '*...föreställer ett sofvande oklädt fruntimmer*' ('depicts a sleeping unclothed woman'). 'Not terribly specific,' says Sinclair. 'It could be referring to the Cranach, but it could equally be any number of other paintings.'

Fast-forward from 1794 to 1974, and an art-history student named Ingmar Hasselgren travelled to Kulla Gunnarstorp in order to research a paper on the Sparre collection. Hasselgren's unpublished thesis listed some of the large paintings that he saw, including 'a reclining Venus by Lucas Cranach'.

When the Christie's team discovered this passing reference, they knew immediately that it constituted the vital connection between the consigned Cranach painting and the 'sleeping unclothed woman'. It confirmed that the *Nymph of the Spring* had been at Kulla Gunnarstorp since at least 1794, possibly for longer. The work had remained unknown to scholars because so few people – and no-one with an interest in Old Master paintings – ever visited Count Gustav Adolf's far-flung country home.

"We learned that it had come to him from a family named Wachtmeister. They have a highly significant collection, yet there was nothing in their inventories that linked to this painting."

— Clementine Sinclair, Head of Department,
Old Masters, London



The Wachtmeisters's 18th century relative, Count Gustaf Adolf Sparre, had an art collection that was second only to the one owned by the King of Sweden.



Kulla Gunnarstorp Castle, a castle in Helsingborg Municipality in southern Sweden, was previously owned by Count Gustaf Adolf.





There still remained the question of where Count Gustav Adolf came by his Cranach nymph. Having toured Europe in his youth, he may have bought it on his travels in Germany. But there is also an intriguing possibility that he acquired it closer to home. In 1648, a century before the count was born, Swedish troops had occupied Prague in the dying days of the Thirty Years' War. The Swedes seized as much loot as they could, including treasures from the *Kunstammer* of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II. It is known that his galleries contained '*ein ligende Venuss*' ('a reclining Venus') and '*ein nakendt Weib ligendt*' ('a naked reclining woman'). An inventory of the haul, compiled when it arrived in Stockholm, mentions a Cranach hunting scene and, next on the list, a painting described in French as '*une femme nue environée d'un drap rouge, sur bois*' ('a nude woman surrounded by red cloth, on wood').

Six years later, in 1654, Queen Christina of Sweden was forced to abdicate after converting to Catholicism. She decamped for Italy with her collection of Italian art – leaving behind most of her paintings from Protestant northern Europe. Some may have been sold to raise money for her journey into exile; others may have been given away to loyal courtiers. Either way, if the Cranach Venus was among them, it would have been in the right place and social circles for the avid collector Gustav Adolf to pick up decades later. 'All this is supposition and guesswork,' advises Sinclair. 'We are conjuring with possibilities.'

If the tantalising, multilingual references to Venuses and nudes are dots on a long-faded map, we can be reasonably confident the patron who commissioned the nymph had seen some of Cranach's earlier versions. He may have specifically asked the artist to make this iteration bigger and better than all its predecessors. The finished work is nearly four feet (120.5 cm) wide – not life-sized, but not far off – and everything about it is designed to hold the interest of the curious and cultured 16th-century male.

First, there is the seductiveness of the recumbent nymph. 'Its scale makes the nude figure all the more arresting, so you as the viewer become more self-conscious,' says Sinclair. 'She seems to be asleep, but then you notice that her eyes have just started to open. The Latin inscription is quite explicit that she should not be woken. You've been caught looking at her, so you are implicated in the subject.'



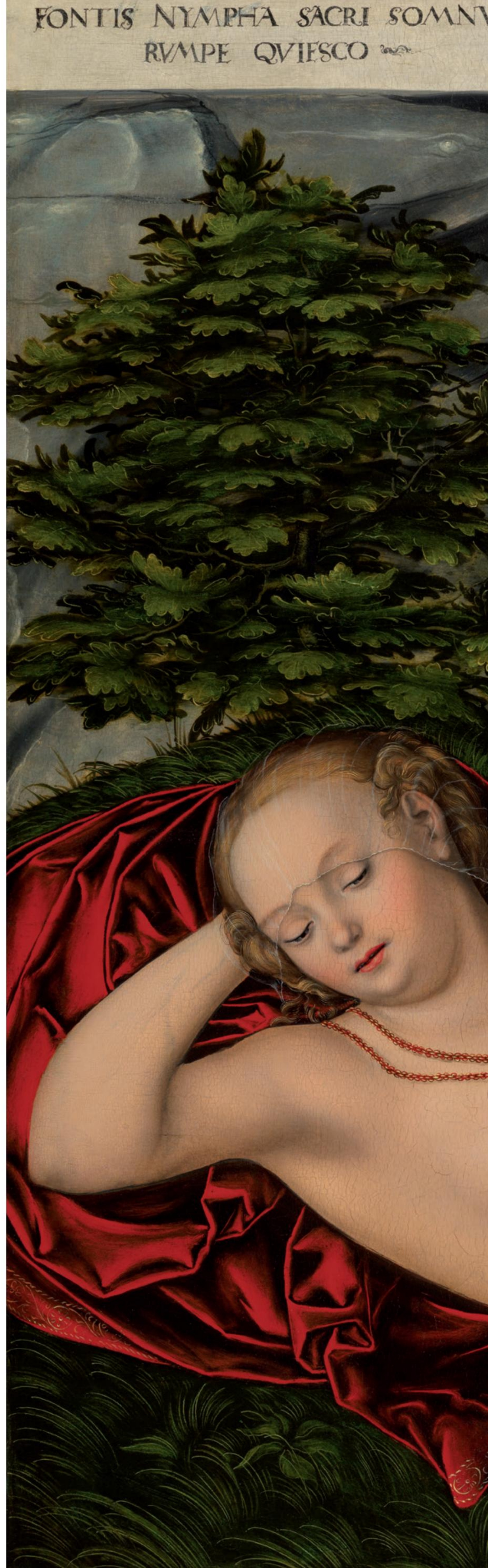
The Battle of Prague on October 1648. Private Collection. Artwork: Merian, Matthäus, the Elder (1593-1650). (Photo by Heritage Images/Getty Images)

This voyeuristic frisson is held within a cerebral web of Classical references, flattering the contemporary viewer by making him a knowing character in Greek myth. The nymph has the magnetic appeal of a Venus, but the bow and arrow say that she is also a huntress, a version of the goddess Diana. The silent deer hint at the story of Actaeon, who accidentally glimpsed a naked Diana and for his transgression was turned into a stag and hunted to his death. For any educated man of the time, Actaeon would have brought to mind the parallel biblical tale of King David, who from his palace rooftop saw Bathsheba bathing, and allowed his lust to draw him into a web of sin. As a counterbalance to the nymph's allure, these are pious warnings against the temptations of the flesh.

The painting is, then, a moral and intellectual puzzle. It has layers and depths; levels of meaning that a sophisticated patron might contemplate while in the presence of Cranach's beguiling nymph.

“She seems to be asleep, but then you notice that her eyes have just started to open. The Latin inscription is quite explicit that she should not be woken. You’ve been caught looking at her, so you are implicated in the subject.”

— Clementine Sinclair, Head of Department,
Old Masters, London





Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
 Incense Stand — The Foxes —
 Cros Parantoux 1999 — T
 Like A Cloud of Blood — D
 — Sky Moon Tourbillon P
 Shack / Washington Crossin
 Monumental Girandoles — 2
 (Magenta) — A nude man and
 Figure — The Ann & Gordon
 Garden — Âne Planté — Le
 Cross Diamond — Les Poseus



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EXPLOSION OF FEELING

⁸ TRACEY EMIN (B. 1963)
Like A Cloud of Blood

Price Realised: £2,322,000
London, 12 October 2022

It is a stark and visceral portrait, full of pain and anguish. On her hands and knees, the woman is made up of lines that look more like scratches on a rock than brushstrokes on canvas. She has almost no face, just a scrub of black acrylic where a mouth might be. The rivulets of pigment are like traces of blood in water or plasma, and the livid sky above is the colour of wounded flesh. Then there is that dark V-shaped cleft at the top right, which has depths that recede like a nocturnal landscape. It could be the valley of the shadow, the place from which the human figure has just emerged, exhausted and bent-double.

'This painting was one of the first lot I made after cancer,' Tracey Emin has said. 'It was like an explosion of everything I was feeling. I thought: wow, this is a painting that is really important to me, a painting I am going to hold for ever.'

Emin was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2020. Extensive, life-changing surgery left her unable to work for a long time. 'For the first six months I couldn't lift a tea tray, let alone move my canvases around or mix paints. It was frustrating because I had a feeling inside me of wanting to paint so, honestly, when I started painting it was just fantastic because I realised I was alive.'

Detail of Tracey Emin's *Like A Cloud of Blood*, 2022. © 2023 Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS, London / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.







During her recovery, she took the decision to establish an art school in her home town of Margate, around 70 miles (110km) southeast of London. The building that she chose for the school is a solid brick-built Edwardian bathhouse, now rechristened TKE Studios – named after her own initials: Tracey Karima Emin. It has been fundamentally reconfigured for art. The apex of the roof was replaced by a skylight that runs the length of the building. A dozen professional studios were installed in what was once the main bathing area. There is also room here for between 15 and 20 aspiring or early-career artists, each of whom will do a two-year residency.

‘We’ll have artists who are making a living from their work alongside artists who are finding out how to do it,’ says Emin. ‘They’ll get feedback from each other; it’ll be a really good symbiotic relationship.’ The workspace and the tuition are free to the students, so that ‘all they have to do is find a way to come to Margate and live here.’ Other parts of the bathhouse

and former mortuary accommodate an exhibition space and a bookshop. Guest speakers – artists and art critics – will receive their fee in the form of an Emin drawing.

As the school took shape, Emin decided to sell *Like A Cloud of Blood* to raise funds. But why sell this, her favourite picture, one that she has said ‘is like one of my children’? It seems that she felt the need to do something sacrificial in the wake of her brush with death, to make a gesture that cost her something. There is an Old Testament grandeur to the idea – as when Noah made a burnt offering after surviving the flood, and received a divine promise in the form of a rainbow. ‘I thought: if I sell that painting and everything goes to the school, then I’ll feel OK about it. If my art can make something happen for the future, then I am doing the right thing.’

“For the first six months I couldn’t lift a tea tray, let alone move my canvases around or mix paints. It was frustrating because I had a feeling inside me of wanting to paint so, honestly, when I started painting it was just fantastic because I realised I was alive.”

— Tracey Emin



Tracey Emin working on *Like A Cloud of Blood*, 2022.
Photo: Harry Weller. Courtesy of the artist's studio.
Artwork: © 2023 Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS,
London / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



On display at Christie's London: Tracey Emin, *Like A Cloud of Blood*, 2022. © 2023 Tracey Emin.
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In October of 2022, the painting was offered in Christie's 20th/21st Century Evening Sale in London. 'It felt really, really meaningful,' says Tessa Lord, who headed the sale. 'The fact that Tracey chose to sell this work is reflective of the passion that she has for the project in Margate. She's really committed herself and her art to it. And it was special for us to work with the artist directly, and to give back to the art ecosystem.'

On the night, *Like A Cloud of Blood* sold for £2,322,000, almost five times its low estimate. Lord points to the uptick in prices for the artist's work, as well as the philanthropic element. 'But what matters most,' confirms the specialist, 'is that this is a really strong painting. Tracey put herself behind it, but she also chose one of the best examples of her work ever to come to auction. We were hoping for some magic, but we wouldn't have predicted such wonderful bidding.'

Emin has remarked that the painting is about love. Some viewers might find it hard to see that in it. And it is not an easy work of art generally, but who ever said that art – making it or looking at it – was supposed to be easy? In *Like A Cloud of Blood*, Tracey Emin has produced a searingly honest self-portrait that is also a picture of the human condition. That is her great and

unforgiving gift as an artist: to take her own experience, to share it freely, and in the process to make it universal. Brace yourself, her latest paintings say, because a bad thing happened to me; if you are alive and drawing breath, the chances are that bad things will eventually happen to you too.

But *Like A Cloud of Blood* is not a gloomy rebuke or even a *memento mori*. In fact, it's the opposite – what you might call a *memento vivere*. It shouts out loud: whatever you do, don't forget to live.

'My illness gave me a chance to think: what do I want, and what would have happened if I'd died,' says Emin. 'I don't want to die just being an artist that made interesting work. I love art; I want more art to exist. And I want to give people an opportunity. I think trying to start something up in a town like Margate, something that can exist after I have gone – that's such a cool thing to do.'



The English seaside town of Margate, Emin's home.

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g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



FATHER OF HIP HOP

⁹ **DJ Kool Herc's Sound System**

Price Realised: \$201,600
New York, 18 August 2022

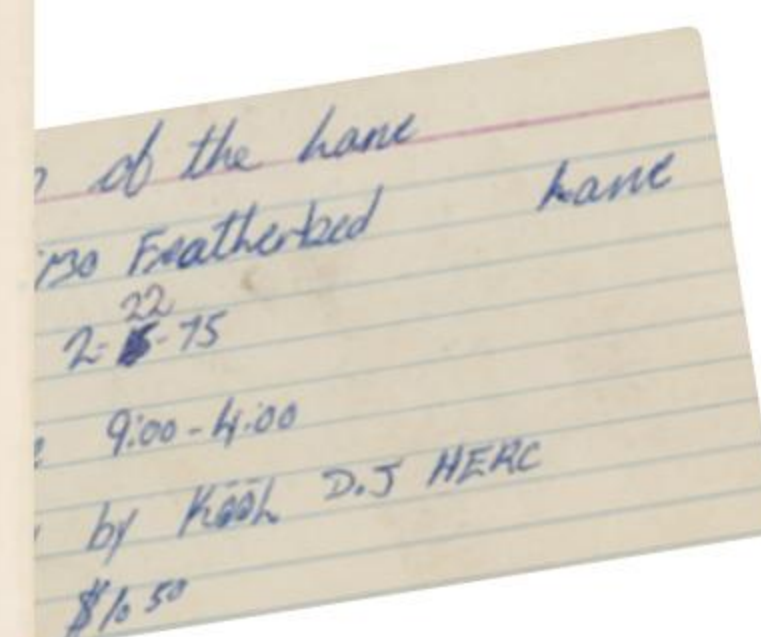
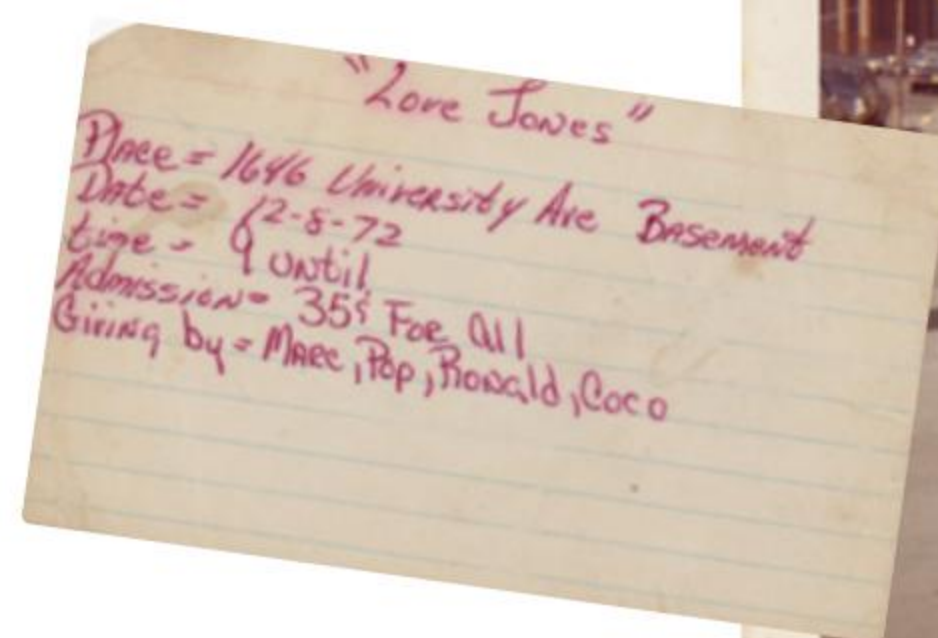
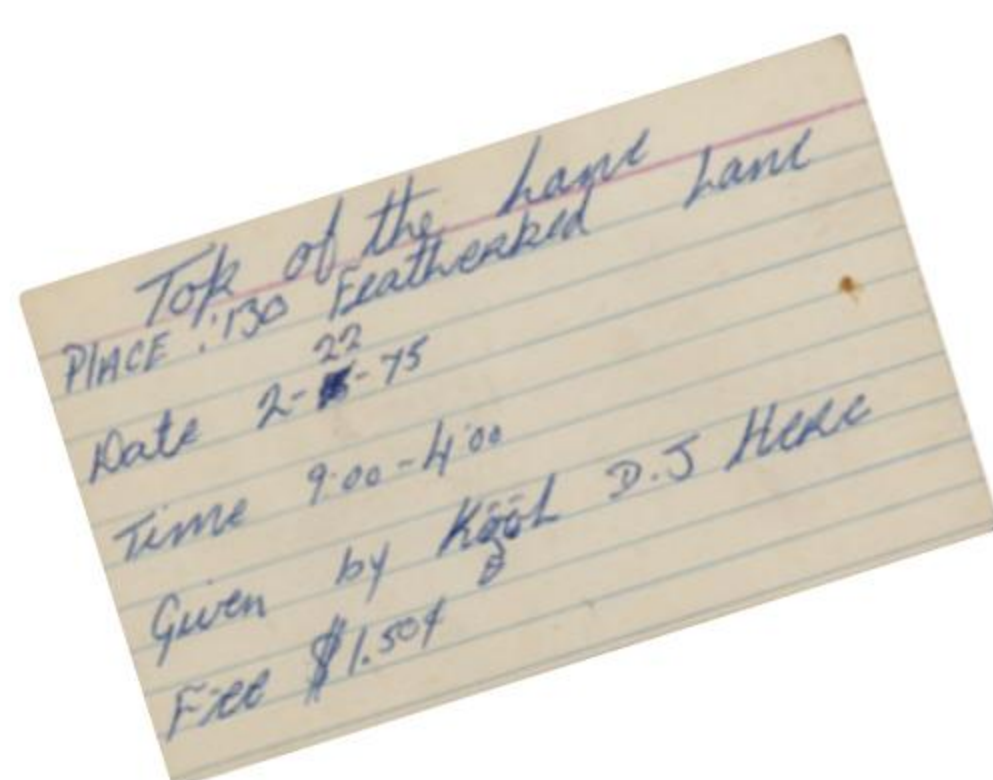
The teenagers who attended Cindy Campbell's 'Back to School Jam' could not have known that they were witnessing the big-bang moment for a dynamic new culture. The party, held on Saturday 11th August 1973 in the recreation room of 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, a residential block in the West Bronx, was a money-making exercise. Cindy charged a small entry fee – a quarter for girls, 50 cents for the boys – to fund a fresh wardrobe for a new year at school. The 14-year-old recruited her older brother Clive, a DJ and graffiti writer known locally as Kool Herc, to provide the music. She wrote the invitations by hand on index cards.

Fifty years on, that party is recognised as hip-hop's origin moment. It was the spark that ignited a culture which spread quickly through the five boroughs of New York before, in the mid-1980s, exploding across the world. Clive Campbell, aka Kool Herc, was 18 years old when he took his father's Shure P.A. system downstairs and plugged in his twin turntables. His father Keith, who had followed his wife and eldest son to the States from Jamaica, was a devoted record collector – but he refused to let Clive touch his prized sound system until his son re-wired it one day and vastly increased its power. For the next three years, Clive, or Herc as he was known to all outside the family home, played records between sets by the R&B band that Keith sponsored. He also started his own small business spinning vinyl at house parties, earning a reputation both for his music selection and the sound levels pumping from those tall, white towers.

Herc instinctively recognised that, amid the hardships of life in the Bronx, people wanted to dance. Raised on the soul sounds of Motown, Atlantic and Stax Records, the party was now grooving to disco and funk. In the clubs and discos he frequented, Herc noticed it was the brief percussive interludes, or 'breaks', in tracks by James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Jimmy Castor and others, that sent energy levels soaring.

Meanwhile, swathes of the South Bronx were burning. In January 1970, President Nixon's advisor on urban and social policy wrote a memo to the President citing flawed statistics on fires and false alarms in New York's poorest neighbourhoods. Describing them as 'a "leading indicator" of social pathology', his recommendation was a policy of 'benign neglect'. Areas that housed African American and Puerto Rican communities were 'red-lined', designated high-risk. As arsonists reduced whole blocks of the Bronx to smoking ruins, New York City's response was to close fire stations.

Cindy Campbell, now acknowledged as 'The First Lady of Hip Hop', photographed in 1974, the year after her historic party. The material culture of Hip Hop: early party invitations, including Cindy Campbell's handwritten examples on index cards.





The legendary Herculoids – DJ Kool Herc's earliest surviving sound system consisting of an 8 channel model 850 mixer with two model 804 transducer speaker cabinets.





DI Kool Herc's collection represents the five pillars of hip-hop —
Djing, rapping or MCing, graffiti art, breakdancing and fashion.

But on that warm Saturday evening in August 1973, around a hundred teenagers had other things on their mind – and Herc's sounds in their ears. The party was a great success, word spread and more people came to Herc and Cindy's subsequent parties. Soon, the recreation room could no longer house them all. Using two turntables and a pair of amps, Herc set out to create the same excitement he had witnessed watching Jamaican sound system parties as a child. He achieved this through an entirely new way of playing records, a technique he christened the 'Merry Go Round'.

Herc started to isolate the breaks in tracks, cutting between two copies of the same record to extend 10-second breakdowns into loops that lasted minutes. The effect was electrifying. As he cued back and forth between irresistible, percussion-driven sections on records such as The Incredible Bongo Band's *Apache*, James Brown's *Give It Up or Turnit a Loose*, as well as others that he had sourced solely for their breaks, the dancing became wilder. Dance crews formed, new moves were given names, and break boys – 'b-boys', as Herc dubbed them – began competing for bragging rights.

Herc was becoming a major draw. His father's original sound system was replaced, bit by bit, by a more powerful rig, a setup that made the 'Merry-Go-Round' easier to perform and project. At one early party, Coke La Rock, Herc's friend, introduced a flavour of Jamaican MCs by rhyming over a looped James Brown break. His words are now cited as being among rap's first lyrics.

Others followed Herc's lead, dividing the Bronx into rival areas ruled by DJ crews and their sound systems: Grandmaster Flash held sway between 138th and 163rd streets, while in the south-east, Afrika Bambaataa and his Zulu Nation were the main draw. Graffiti writers – artists of 'the first genuine teenage street culture since the 1950s', according to one *New York* magazine cover story – were now lending their skills to the production of flyers. The stars were aligning, fusing the elemental forces of hip-hop culture: DJing, rapping, graffiti-writing and break dancing.



Almost half a century later, Christie's specialists Darius Himes and Peter Klarnet were invited to visit an unprepossessing storage unit in New York. Herc and Cindy called their lock-up the 'Bat Cave' and were fiercely protective of its contents and whereabouts. Long acknowledged as the culture's Father and First Lady, they also turned out also to be collectors and curators. Inside the unit was a treasure trove: a collection of records, flyers, sound and lighting equipment, clothing, objects and artefacts tracing the early history of an art form that has produced Run DMC, Public Enemy, NWA, Wu-Tang Clan, Tupac Shakur, Eminem, Jay-Z and Kendrick Lamar, not to mention Futura 2000, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Banksy, to name just a few. 'The experience gave me goosebumps,' says Himes.

Inside the lock-up, the specialists discovered the six-foot-tall tower speakers – nicknamed the Herculoids – which were the core of the sound system used at the 1973 party. Herc's main working sound system, which he used from the mid-1970s into the 1980s, the heyday of his career as a DJ, was stored alongside boxes and boxes of vinyl and flyers, a collection that rivals the one now housed at Cornell University.



DJ Kool Herc's sound system featured a GLI 3880 mixer, which replaced his earlier eight-channel acoustic mixer, allowing Herc to more easily switch between his two turn tables.

Approaching the 50th anniversary of their historic party, Herc and Cindy felt the time was right to secure their legacy. In August of 2022, highlights from the collection were displayed like relics on pedestals in Christie's Rockefeller Center galleries ahead of a special online auction. 'When we brought Herc and Cindy in to see them, they were both visibly moved,' recalls Himes. The value of the sale was not the point and never had been.

For Himes, Klarnet and the hundreds of DJs, rappers, artists and hip-hop fans who came to view the exhibition, this was about acknowledging and celebrating the contribution of the under-recognised: Herc and Cindy, two kids from Jamaica who had changed America, and then the world, through their desire to party.



On the merry-go-round: (clockwise from top): DJ Kool Herc with friends at T-Connection, circa 1980; DJ Kool Herc posing in front of an Oldsmobile Cutlass in Bronx NY, early 1980s; DJ Kool Herc with a friend at the Spider Club, Bronx, NY, mid-1980s.



Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
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Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



GALAXIES UNDER GLASS

¹⁰ Sky Moon Tourbillon PP ref. 5002

Price Realised: HK\$24,450,000

Hong Kong, 23 May 2022

All watchmakers are, by definition, miniaturists. Their goal is to create precise, complex, alluring machines compact enough to be worn as jewellery. When it was launched just after the turn of the millennium, Patek Philippe's Sky Moon Tourbillon – also known by the designation '5002' – set a new standard for complexity. It is not a small watch – far from it – but according to Alexandre Bigler, Christie's Head of Watches for the Asia Pacific region, it was and remains 'one of the most important watches of the modern era'.

The historical significance of the 5002 reference is undisputed – even though the design was barely 20 years old when one came up for auction at Christie's Hong Kong in May 2022. At the time of its creation, the Sky Moon Tourbillon was the most complicated watch that Patek Philippe had ever created, so there was no question that it would be the top lot of the 'Champion' sale, which ran in instalments over the course of a year. 'Maybe 25 exemplars of the rose-gold version were ever made – as against 40 each for the yellow-gold and the platinum,' says Bigler. 'Of those, only seven have ever come back to the market.'

All of the 450 watches in the six-part sale were the property of one collector. Each of the themed auctions was designed to appeal to different kinds of buyer, to be unmissable. One sale was dedicated to sports watches; another to the Italian Panerai marque; the third – in which the Sky Moon Tourbillon featured – to the mind-boggling business of complications.

BULLETIN DE PRÉCISION DE MARCHE
 LES MONTRES A TOURBILLON PATEK PHILIPPE
 Accuracy Certificate for Patek Philippe Tourbillon Watches

Bulletin/Certificate n° 5002R-001
 Référence/Reference 5002R-001
 Boîte/Case n° RTO 27 PS QR SID LU CL
 Mouvement n° 5002R-001

Caractéristiques techniques du mouvement / Movement technical data
 Alternances / heure (fréquence) 21'600 (3Hz)
 Semi-oscillation / hour (frequency) Gyromax
 Balancier Breguet
 Balance
 Spiral
 Balance spring

Résultats obtenus par la montre finie sur un simulateur de porter à 23°C
 avec des phases dynamiques et statiques dans les 6 positions.
 Results obtained with the finished watch on a kinetic simulator at 23°C
 with dynamic and static phases in all 6 positions.

	Tolérances Tolerance	Valeurs mesurées Measured values
au cours de la première séquence de contrôle. during the first test sequence.	[-2.4 ; +1.4] s/24h	0,3 s/24h
sur les marches mesurées dans chacune des 6 positions de la montre et leur moyenne. between the average rate of the watch in all 6 positions and rate in each position.	4 s/24h	2,2 s/24h
au cours de la dernière séquence de contrôle. during the last test sequence.	[-2.4 ; +1.4] s/24h	0,2 s/24h

PATEK PHILIPPE S.A.
 Président:



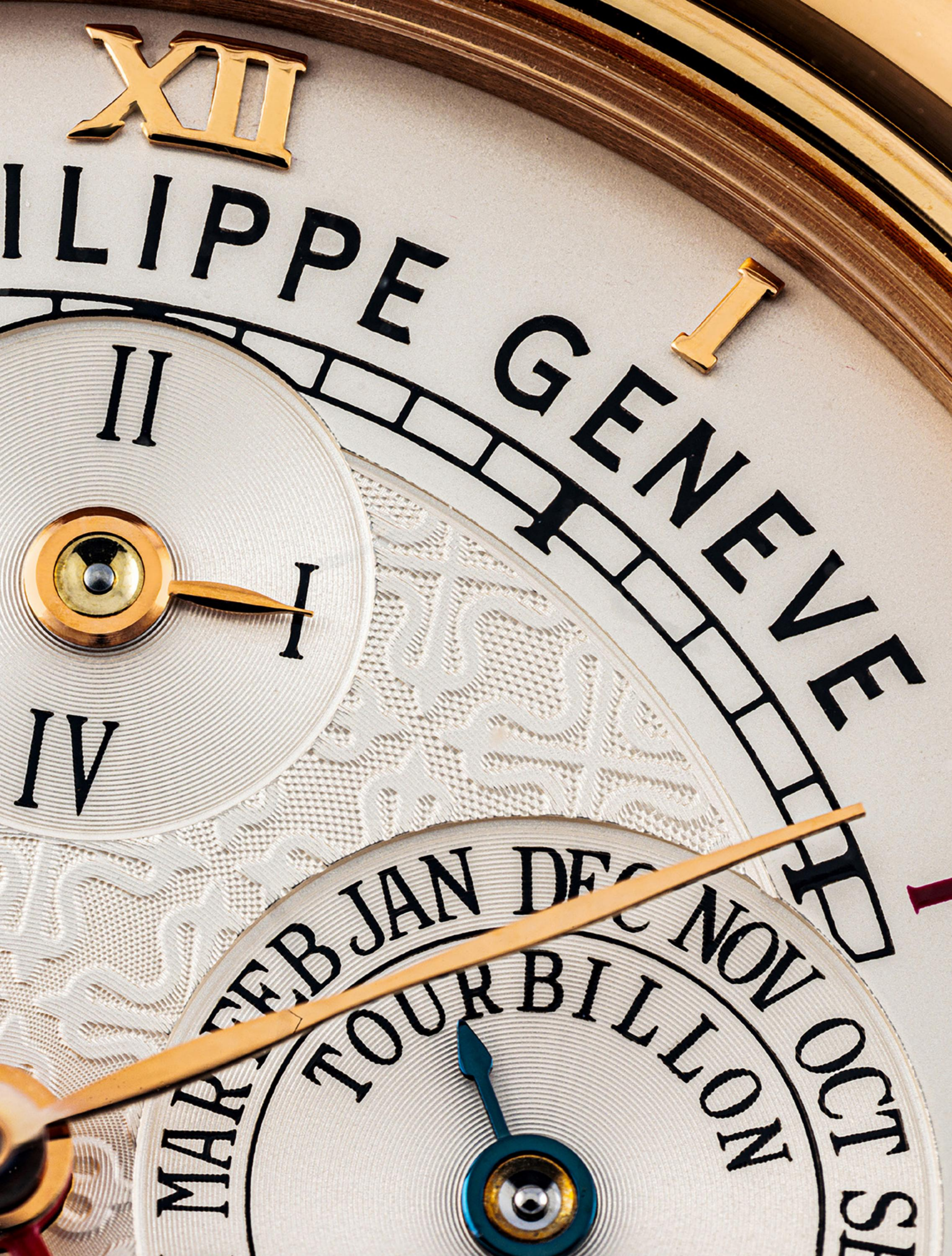
Certificat de Garantie
 Nous certifions que la montre
 We certify that the watch

Référence: 5002R-001
 Mouvement: RTO 27 PS QR SID LU CL
 Calibre: 55R
 Rubis / Movement jewels: 55R
 Cadran / Dial: OPALIN DEC. CALAT. ROM. ROUGE
 Case: Or rose 18 C.
 Bracelet: CUIR

PATEK PHILIPPE S.A.
 Président







PATEK PHILIPPE

GENEVE

TOURBILLON



The watch has two faces. The back-face portrays the night sky in the northern hemisphere.

In horology, a complication denotes a kind of mechanical app. It is, in other words, a piece of functionality over and above the watch's basic timekeeping job. Complications might include the capability to give the date, to time a race, to calculate speed over distance, to sound the hour or the quarters of the hour with a pleasing chime. The more complications there are in a watch, the harder it is to squeeze all the necessary engineering into the available space, meaning the most complicated portable timepieces tend to be satisfyingly fat pocket watches. They have more interior real estate for all the wheels and gears, gongs and ratchets.

To mark the turn of the millennium, Patek Philippe produced a double-faced gold pocket watch – the so-called Star Caliber 2000 – which incorporated an astonishing 21 complications. It was such a phenomenal piece of work that the firm was inspired to attempt something similar with a wristwatch. The outcome of that endeavour is the Sky Moon Tourbillon: a watch with two faces and a host of complications.

The truly astonishing thing about the Sky Moon Tourbillon is that it amounts to a complete, dynamic picture of the cosmos as seen from the vantage point of planet Earth. The grand and intricate clockwork of the universe is represented here in all its multifaceted glory – but it has been brilliantly visualised and simplified and reduced, so as to be understood at a glance.

The back-face of the watch is a portrayal of the night sky in the northern hemisphere. An ellipsis on the crystal

shows which portion of the star canopy is visible above the horizon at a given moment. An exaggerated moon can be seen processing slowly across the watch face (and through the heavens), changing its form from gibbous to crescent as it goes. The hands on the face show the sidereal day (the time it takes for the Earth to complete one rotation relative to distant stars rather than to the nearby Sun). Those hands are the luminous colour of moonlight, and delicate like a firefly's wings.

The front-face, meanwhile, contains as much information as the instrument display on a fighter jet, but presented in a far more considered and stylish manner. Patek Philippe's familiar Calatrava cross design – four fleur-de-lis pointing outwards like the cardinal points on the compass – makes for a form of tracery behind the supplemental dials that tell the date. One minimal dial, with Roman numerals from one to four, has the sole function of reminding the wearer whether or not this is a leap year. The upper-case lettering for the months of the year and the days of the week looks like the headline font of a serious newspaper. Though the watch is, in the end, only 43.5mm in diameter, it has a lapidary presence that is as round and imposing as the Colosseum.

In short, the Patek Philippe Sky Moon Tourbillon is a superlative object in both artistic and technological terms. The same might be said of all great watches, but is truer of this watch than any other ever made. It may be a long time – a blue moon or more – before another like it comes to market.



This masterpiece in pink gold includes 12 complications. It set a world auction record for the complication.

Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
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29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



© Ernie Barnes Family Trust



AMERICAN DREAMERS

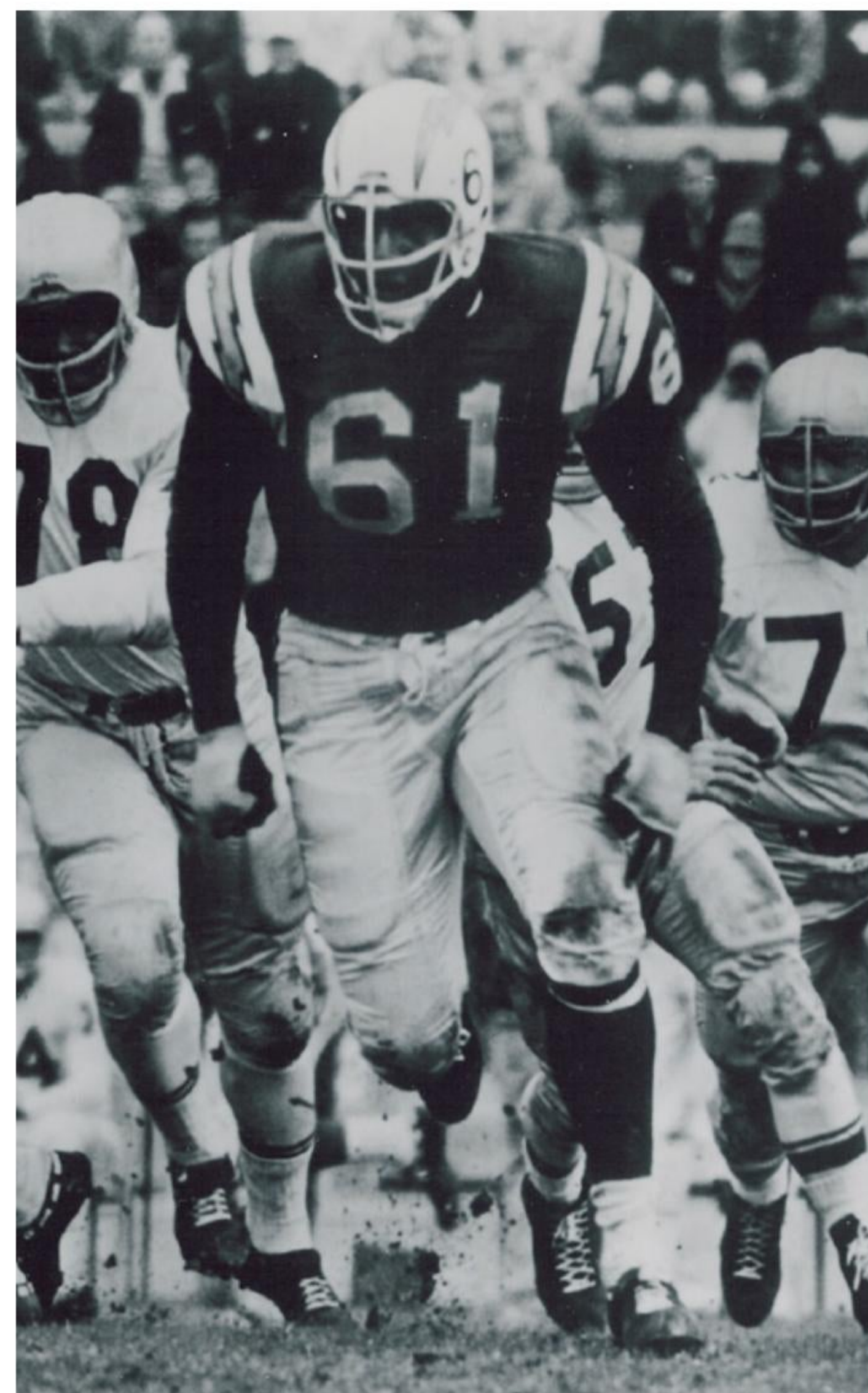
^{11a} **ERNIE BARNES (1938-2009)**
The Sugar Shack

Price Realised: \$15,275,000
New York, 11 May 2022

^{11b} **EMANUEL LEUTZE (1816-1868)**
Washington Crossing the Delaware

Price Realised: \$45,045,000
New York, 11 May 2022

Ernie Barnes, no. 61, playing for the San Diego Chargers, 1961-62.



Ernie Barnes never once visited the art museum in Raleigh when he was growing up, though it was only half an hour's bus ride away from his home in Durham, North Carolina. He went there for the first time in the mid-1950s as an 18-year-old. He was studying art at an all-Black college at the time and the museum had just been desegregated, so he was finally allowed in. On his way round the galleries, Barnes stopped to ask a docent where he could find the 'paintings by Negro artists'. The woman was taken aback. 'Your people don't express themselves in that way,' she replied.

Barnes had expressed himself that way all his life. As a young man, he sometimes took a pad down to Durham's Pettigrew Street, the 'Black business area', and sketched the life taking place around him: men in the barber shop, the denizens of Elvira's Blue Tavern or people waiting in line at the hotdog stand. But art was not Barnes' only talent.

A coach persuaded him to take up sports, and he turned out to have a talent for football. He became captain of the high-school team and went on to North Carolina College on a full four-year athletic scholarship. After that he turned pro – playing for the New York Titans, the San Diego Chargers and the Denver Broncos. 'I was more desiring to become an artist than an athlete,' he later said. 'But there was a paycheck in sports.'

Art took a back seat while Barnes was a professional ball player, but he never let it go. On one occasion, he was fined 50 dollars for sketching in a team meeting; his locker-room nickname at the Broncos was 'Big Rembrandt'. He once said that football 'was an extension of the art class', meaning that the block and the horse-collar tackle were bruisingly physical ways to study human anatomy. In the midst of a game, Barnes would sometimes look at a play develop and think: that could make a picture.

After he retired from football in the mid-1960s, Barnes started to paint those pictures in earnest – gridiron scenes and dramatic, dynamic snapshots of other sports, too. Sonny Werblin, owner of the New York Jets, admired Barnes and his artistic talent, and helped arrange an exhibition to showcase his work. Every picture sold.

Post-football, Barnes played basketball pick-up games to stay in shape. The singer Marvin Gaye was a regular member of his group, and one day, after a game, Gaye spotted a picture in the back of Barnes' car. It was a scene set in a 1950s roadhouse: men and women dancing, making angular shapes, lost in the total rapture of music. The sounds of the dancehall seemed almost to emanate from the canvas, forcefully implied by the sinuous curve of the saxophone player's giant instrument and the energy in the strumming arm of the left-handed guitarist. The eyes of every last dancer were closed – and not just in the euphoria of the moment.

'I began to observe how blind we are to one another's humanity,' Barnes said. 'We don't see into the depths of our interconnection, the gifts, the strength and potential within other human beings. We stop at colour quite often. When you cannot visualise the offerings of another human being you're obviously not looking at the human being with open eyes.'

Ernie Barnes, with permission of Ernie Barnes Family Trust.







This painting was *The Sugar Shack*. Gaye took one look and asked if he could have it for the cover of his next album. Although at first reluctant, Barnes agreed, and added a banner hanging at the back of the dancehall that proclaimed the name of the record: *I Want You*. He also took the precaution of painting an exact copy of *The Sugar Shack* for himself. Sales of the 1976 Gaye LP ensured that more than a million Americans had a Barnes reproduction in their home. The picture was also used in the opening credits of *Good Times*, a groundbreaking CBS sitcom about an African American family living in the Chicago projects. The LP and the TV show between them ensured that people across the United States knew *The Sugar Shack*: it became part of popular consciousness.

The nostalgic affection for the painting goes some way to explain the remarkable events of May 12, 2022, when the 1976 version of *The Sugar Shack* was auctioned

at Christie's in New York. 'We felt positive about it going into the sale,' recalls Emily Kaplan, co-head of the Evening Sale. 'We thought it would do better than the \$150,000 low estimate. Given the picture's familiarity and what potential bidders were telling us, we expected it to go to \$2 million, maybe \$3 million.'

Bidding started briskly. The many interested parties dropped out one by one until, and by the time the price reached the hoped-for \$3 million, there were only two bidders left. Both were in the room, a few rows apart. If either bidder had blinked at that point, the hammer would have come down and everybody would have been delighted with the result. Instead, neither blinked.

One of the parties was an art adviser on the phone to his client. The other was Bill Perkins, a well-known investor from Houston who had flown in specially for the auction. 'He was absolutely set on buying it,' explains Kaplan. 'He was skipping increments, jumping bids, sometimes going small and then upping it by a million dollars or more.' The contest lasted an exhilarating ten minutes and at the end of it, Perkins emerged victorious. His winning bid for *The Sugar Shack* amounted to \$15.3 million – 76 times more than the high estimate of \$200,000.

It so happened that the very next item to come to the block – Lot 30 – was a work even more familiar to Americans than *The Sugar Shack*. *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, by Emanuel Leutze, is a painting that has been reproduced in countless histories and textbooks, and forms part of the creation myth of American democracy. It portrays George Washington on the eve of the Battle of Trenton, a key engagement of the Revolutionary War. The future president leads his men

from the prow of a boat as they steal across the river under cover of night. It is a fine portrayal of a people expressing their will for freedom.

Here were two narrative paintings telling different truths about America – truths that were perhaps not mutually exclusive. Was this juxtaposition in the order of sale a deliberate attempt to set up a conversation between the works? 'It was luck and good timing,' admits Kaplan. 'But clearly there was a relationship between the paintings. Both artists were outsiders in separate ways: Barnes, of course, as a member of a minority dealing with segregation; and Leutze, a German immigrant trying to break into American society and the American art world.'



Details of Emanuel Leutze's, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851.







Ernie Barnes, *The Sugar Shack*, 1976. © Ernie Barnes Family Trust

“We don’t see into the depths of our interconnection, the gifts, the strength and potential within other human beings. We stop at colour quite often. When you cannot visualise the offerings of another human being you’re obviously not looking at the human being with open eyes.”

— Ernie Barnes



Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851.

There are other points of comparison. Both works depict a past era in the light of a troubled present. This version of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, which looks back to the heroic early days of the Revolutionary War, was painted in the 1850s when America was embarking on the course that would lead to war with itself. *The Sugar Shack*, meanwhile, was created at a time when, as Barnes put it, 'Black Is Beautiful was a theme, and I was asking myself: in what ways is Black beautiful?' His is a painting that looks back in memory rather than history. It shows us an incident from his own childhood in North Carolina, a night when he sneaked into a segregated venue named the Durham Armory. ('It was the first time my innocence met with the sins of dance,' he said.)

Both paintings show people utterly in thrall to the task in hand – joy on the one hand, war on the other. Both describe movement – chaotic and centrifugal in Barnes' case; grimly mono-directional in Leutze's. Washington and his men are embarking on an attempt to capture

territory from an entrenched opponent – a scenario that Barnes the pro footballer knew well enough. And there are unexpected formal parallels between the works, too: the angle of the flag and the oars in the Leutze's painting exactly match the diagonals of the flailing limbs in the Barnes.

Only one of the paintings – Leutze's – has hung in the White House; Barnes' works are yet to have that distinction. But the name of Ernie Barnes is known. His works are shown in the US and abroad, and his place in the canon of 20th-century American painting is secure. An important step on that journey was taken in 1979, when Barnes was in his early forties. A solo exhibition of his work was staged at the North Carolina Art Museum – the very place where he was once informed that black men don't paint.

Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
 Living Architecture: Casa Ba
 Incense Stand — The Foxes —
 Cros Parantoux 1999 — T
 Like A Cloud of Blood — D
 — Sky Moon Tourbillon P
 Shack / Washington Crossin
 Monumental Girandoles — 2
 (Magenta) — A nude man and
 Figure — The Ann & Gordon
 Garden — Âne Planté — Le
 Cross Diamond — Les Poseus

Mughal Pashmina Carpet —
tlló — Huanghuali Circular
Henri Mayer, Vosne-Romanée
the Nymph of the Spring —
J Kool Herc's Sound System
P ref. 5002 — The Sugar
g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



ARTIST, AESTHETE, SÉLECTIONNEUR

¹² **PIERRE-PHILIPPE THOMIRE (1751-1843)**
Pair of Monumental Girandoles

Price Realised: €4,956,500
Paris, 13 June 2022





The Hôtel d'Orrouer, Hubert de Givenchy's former Paris home. Photo: François Hallard.

The Hôtel d'Orrouer, Hubert de Givenchy's former Paris home, is sequestered behind a high wall on the rue de Grenelle in the 7th arrondissement. Visitors passed through the green gate, and a long, gravelled courtyard led like a catwalk to the mansion's 18th-century façade. Through another door and you were inside, face to face with an astonishing array of art and furniture.

The striking 20th-century pieces might have been the first things to catch the eye – a large Picasso drawing of a faun with a lance; a lithe Giacometti bronze, *Femme qui marche*; and a whimsical painting by Miró – just an empty sky with a single feather – entitled *Le Passage de l'oiseau-migrateur*. But it was the 18th-century decorative arts that set the mood for the rooms: the ingenious cylinder desk by David Roentgen, with its six secret drawers; an imposing pair of amaranth bookcases; the candles in their candelabra, ready to be lit once the light stopped streaming in through the impossibly tall windows.

The intimacy of the interiors, the sense of comfort, came from the details – a small sculpture of one of Givenchy's beloved dogs, made for him by Alberto Giacometti's brother Diego; a study in oils of a beautiful aristocratic young woman – not hung on a wall but resting on an unholstered gilt chair. And throughout the house, on Givenchy's desk and on side-tables, there were framed photographs of Audrey Hepburn, the couturier's close friend and lifelong muse. The looks that he created for movies such as *Funny Face* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* defined her on-screen personality – and they were a crystallised version of his entire aesthetic: a sumptuous simplicity that looks easy to achieve, but actually requires an exceptional sensibility and deep knowledge.





There was enormous breadth to Givenchy's collection – and for that reason he did not like to be called a 'collector' at all. He felt that was too narrow a term, and preferred to think of himself as a *sélectionneur* – someone who thoughtfully chooses to have the best in every category. One outstanding example of his discriminating eye was the pair of 18th-century girandoles that stood like sentinels in the heart of the home.

'Their placement was a mark of their importance,' says Paul Gallois, Christie's Head of European Furniture in London. 'They were on the ground floor in the grand salon facing the garden, where they flanked the dining table.' The girandoles consist of four figures on two matching pedestals. They were made by the famed French *bronzier* Pierre-Philippe Thomire. A sale catalogue from 1825 states laconically that the girandoles 'were commissioned by the emperor of Russia'.

'That would be Tsar Paul I,' says Gallois, 'which is completely in line with the exquisite nature of the objects: they could only have been made for a tsar or a king.' Tsar Paul I was assassinated in the Mikhailovsky Castle in St Petersburg in 1801, and the girandoles were probably never delivered for that reason.

The women that adorn the girandoles are vestals, priestesses of the Roman goddess of the hearth and the flame. Not quite identical, each of them tends – almost embraces – a tall candelabra that has the form and function of a streetlamp. But no wayside lantern was ever so ornate or so finely wrought. The two tapered stems are topped with tiers of branches, like a tree's canopy, that hold 12 candles. They must have looked especially beautiful when the candles were burning in a darkened room, their reflections dancing on golden surfaces.

Playing at the feet of the women are two cherubs, one holding a ewer, the other blowing on a horn. Perhaps they stand for the fellowship of wine and the pleasures of music. The figures are balanced on cylindrical green pedestals that look like solid marble – but this is an illusion. They are made of painted wood and they are hollow. A discreet door swings open at the back, making these secret little cupboards a good place to store fresh candles.

[They] were commissioned by the emperor of Russia... "That would be Tsar Paul I, which is completely in line with the exquisite nature of the objects: they could only have been made for a tsar or a king."

— Paul Gallois, Head of European Furniture





The Pair of Monumental Girandoles in situ at the Hôtel d'Orrouer.





Hubert de Givenchy, 1969. Photograph by John Cowan.
Vogue, 15 November 1969. Photo © John Cowan, Vogue
© Condé Nast / Succession Picasso 2023.

“Givenchy loved the eighteenth century but he knew how to infuse interiors with modern and contemporary art. That is what is meant by *le grand goût*, the taste for beauty.”

— Paul Gallois, Head of European Furniture

When the Givenchy collection was auctioned in June 2022 the girandoles were a star lot – and so too was the Giacometti walking woman. Both works are idealised representations of the female form in dark bronze, and both are in movement. Thomire’s women are swathed in myths and robes, while Giacometti’s figure is pared of everything except her feminine essence. ‘Givenchy loved the 18th century but he knew how to infuse interiors with modern and contemporary art,’ says Gallois. ‘That is what is meant by *le grand goût*, the taste for beauty. It is the idea that you can think of a room as an ensemble work of art combining exquisite objects with decorated schemes. The concept has been around a long time, but Givenchy made it *actuel*, of the *now*. There is a growing passion from buyers for this kind of collecting. We saw the start of that process with the sale of the Yves Saint Laurent collection in 2009, and this sale was another demonstration of it.’

Givenchy helped to create a taste for exactly the kind of interior that he loved. The sale of his collection allowed people to see how he did it and, if they wanted, to buy into it. Some of the bidders at auction were pursuing the fine works of art and the important pieces of furniture; others sought a connection to a man that they held in high esteem. For a relatively small sum, an admirer of the man could acquire a set of his own spoons or a dainty silver saucepan that once lived in his kitchen. That buyer could then say: Hubert de Givenchy thought this object was beautiful enough to be part of his life, and now it is part of my life, too.



Alberto Giacometti, *Femme qui marche II*, 1932-36. From the Collection of Hubert de Givenchy. © 2023 Alberto Giacometti Estate / Licensed by VAGA and ARS, New York.

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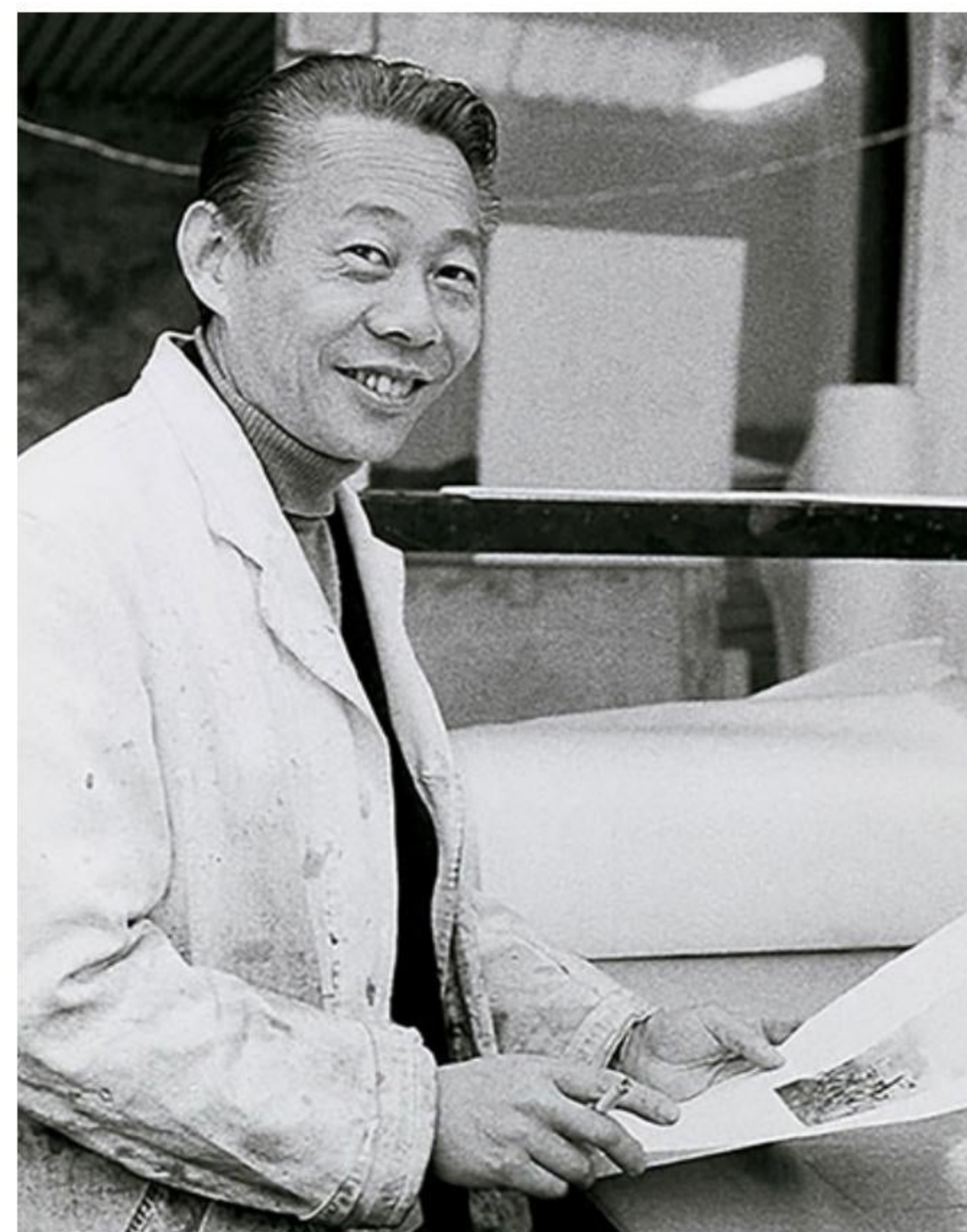


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OUT OF THE HURRICANE

¹³ ZAO WOU-KI (ZHAO WUJI, 1920-2013)
29.09.64.

Price Realised: HK\$278,000,000
Hong Kong, 25 May 2022



Zao Wou-Ki in 1974. Artwork: © DACS 2023. Photo: Francois Walch © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023.

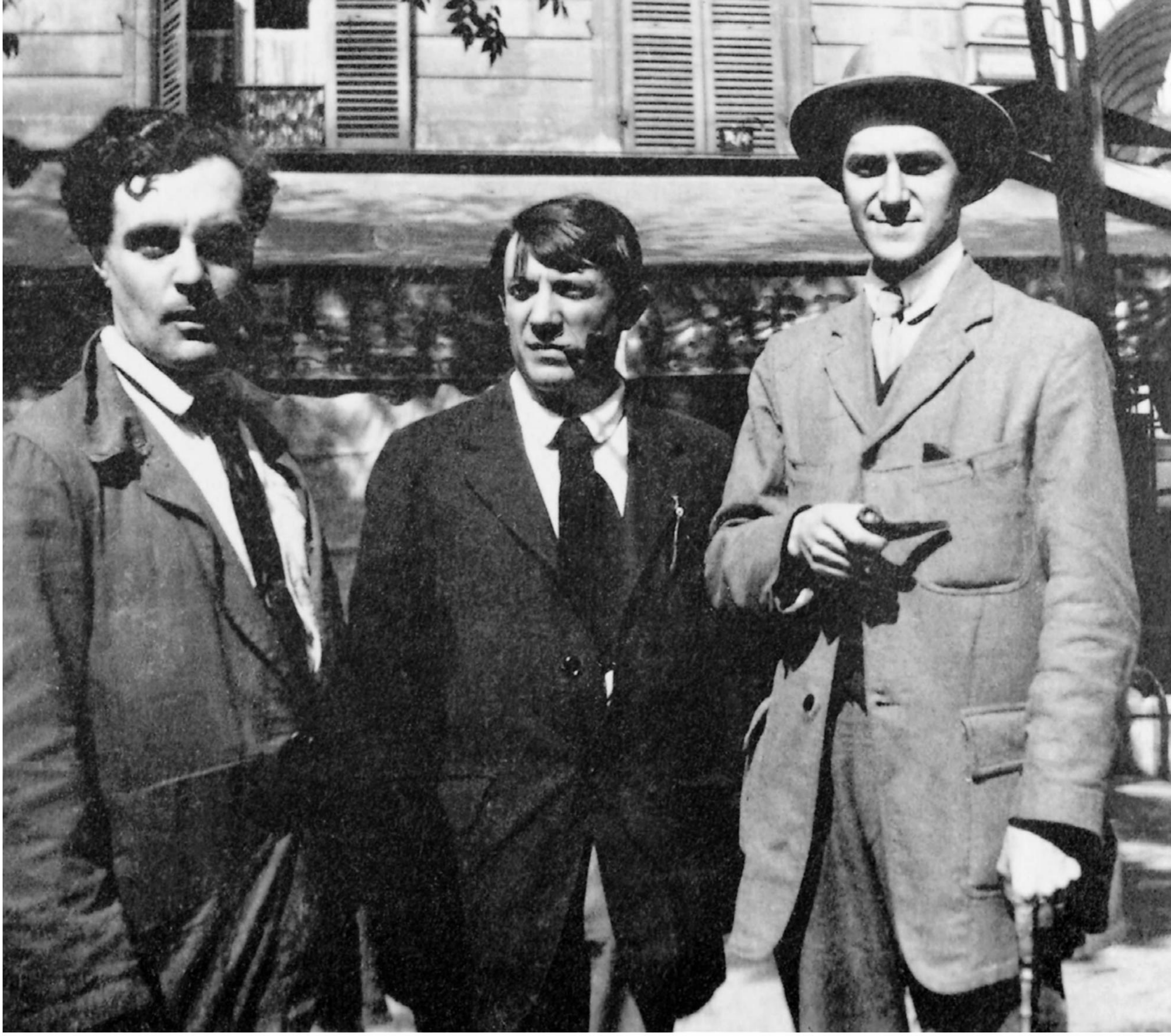
Zao Wou-Ki's first journey from East to West gave him plenty of time to look at the ocean. He and his wife, Lalan, were 36 days on an ancient three-funnelled steamer that carried him from Shanghai to France. 'The weather was atrocious the whole way,' he wrote years later. 'On rainy days, every part of the ship was flooded.'

Another artist might have drawn inspiration from the experience, but that was not Zao. 'I have never felt any grand passion for the sea,' he said. 'I prefer the almost motionless surface of a lake, which hides the mystery.' For him, the voyage from China was a means to an end, and the end was Paris. As soon as they disembarked in Marseille, Zao and Lalan, an aspiring composer, caught a train to the Gare du Nord. And on the afternoon of the same day – April 1, 1948 – Zao was to be found in the Louvre, studying the Gericaults and the Delacroixes and the Corots that he had only ever seen in books.

Within days, he had arranged a place for them to live and work on the rue du Moulin Vert in Montparnasse. He chose that part of the city because those same books had told him it was the artists' quarter. And Zao immersed himself in Western painting – not just in museums, but also at galleries where he saw up-close the work of boyhood idols such as Picasso and Matisse. The more contemporary art he encountered, and the more friends the couple made in avant-garde circles, the more Zao was drawn to abstraction.

But he could never quite abandon the calligraphic and landscape practices he had learned as a student in Hangzhou. 'Everybody is bound by a tradition. I am bound by two,' he said. But it might be truer to say that he came to inhabit a space between East and West. Like a spider weaving a web in the fork of a branch, he created work that came from within, and was tensioned between fixed points.

Zao Wou-Ki drew inspiration from Western artists like (from left) Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso and André Salmon. Photo: Jean Cocteau, c.1915.
© 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



By 1957, Zao and Lalan were divorced. Emotionally shattered by the split, Zao set out across the seas again – to New York. It was a second voyage of discovery, a reprise of his wide-eyed arrival in Paris, but this time round he was an established artist with a solid reputation. He went to visit fellow abstractionists in their studios – Hans Hofmann, Mark Rothko – and was deeply impressed by painters who would ‘throw materials at the canvas, as if there were no past and no tradition’. After seeing all he needed to in New York, Zao journeyed across the States, then onward across the Pacific to Asia.

In Hong Kong, he met ‘a woman of extraordinary beauty – I loved her instantly’. She was Chan May-Kan, a Cantonese film actress. She spoke no French, had never even been outside the colony, and yet Zao persuaded her to leave everything and come with him to France. He arrived back in Paris with a new wife and fresh momentum, ready to make large, epic paintings. Around this time, Zao stopped naming his works. Instead, every painting was numbered, according to the day of its completion, as if it were an index card in a filing cabinet. ‘Why give a title?’ he said. ‘I am not a poet. Titles are restrictive. I don’t want to guide the person looking at it.’

“Why give a title? I am not a poet. Titles are restrictive. I don’t want to guide the person looking at it.”

— Zao Wou-Ki (Zhao Wuji)

During his first trip to New York, Zao Wou-Ki visited Mark Rothko's studio. Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, 1969. © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



On display at Christie's Hong Kong: Zao Wou-Ki's 29.08.64, 1964. © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ProLitteris, Zurich.







Zao Wou-Ki, 29.08.64., 1964. The work set a new world auction record for the artist when it sold at Christie's Hong Kong. © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ProLitteris, Zurich.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (Kanagawa oki nami ura), circa 1830-32.

However abstract a work might be, the viewer inevitably yearns for figuration, for a connection with the real world. Even a viewer as perceptive and sympathetic as the French poet Henri Michaux, Zao's great friend and champion, could not help but see Zao's large canvases as landscapes – albeit violently inhospitable ones. He wrote that they were 'empty of trees and rivers, without woods or hills, but full of waterspouts, quakes, lightning flashes, impulses, fluxes, vaporous coloured magmas that dilate, rise up, explode...'

Such paintings marked the beginning of Zao's so-called 'hurricane period'. The tranquility that he had hoped would follow his marriage to May had not materialised. She was ill, both physically and mentally, and prone to psychotic episodes. 'For me, but mostly for May, those years were a true nightmare,' wrote Zao, adding that he felt as if he were drowning or being sucked under by some unconquerable force. 'The studio became my only place of peace, where I held onto hope as, in the midst of a tempest, one might cling to a small boat as it ships water from all sides.'

The painting entitled *29.09.64.* was made in the middle of this tumultuous time. It looks like a seascape at the height of a violent storm, and if you were to view it in that figurative light, you might say that the sea is boiling, that a gale is howling across the sky. It is like *The Raft of the Medusa* without the raft – but with all *The Raft's* despair. Or it is Hokusai's *Great Wave*, but with no serene mountain to look to, or any sight of dry land at all. And yet *29.09.64* is both uplifting and ineffably beautiful. It has the scope and depth of a novel by Dostoyevsky or a symphony by Beethoven. And as with those two geniuses, the power of the finished work is inseparable from the suffering that the author went through to create it.

When this vast oil on canvas sold in Hong Kong in May 2022, it fetched HK\$278 million (\$35.5 million) – a new world auction record for the artist. But the work's true worth resides in something greater than its market value. It is a profound meditation in oils, a priceless portrayal of an emotional storm.



Liang-Lin Chen auctions Zao Wou-Ki's *29.09.64* at Christie's Hong Kong on 25 May 2022.
Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ProLitteris, Zurich.

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ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



© Jeff Koons

A SYMBOL OF HOPE

¹⁴ **JEFF KOONS (B. 1955)**
Balloon Monkey (Magenta)

Price Realised: £10,136,500
London, 27 June 2022





An object of reflection in all senses: Jeff Koons,
Balloon Monkey (Magenta), 2006-2013 on display in
St James' Square, London ahead of the sale in June
2022. © Jeff Koons.

In June 2022, a gleaming, four-metre-tall sculpture took up residence in St James's Square, London. It drew crowds of admirers – the office workers who picnic in the little green park, readers from the nearby library and art lovers on their way to or from Christie's historic home, which is a few steps away on King Street.

The surface of this mirror-polished colossus – Jeff Koons' *Balloon Monkey (Magenta)*, 2006-2013 – was so faultless that you could see your face in its forelegs or long tail. Many onlookers leaned in close to do just that, the artwork becoming an object of reflection in both senses of the word: a three-dimensional game with light and surfaces, as well as a statement designed to provoke thought.

While the installation of the Koons piece chimed with the spirit of a long hot summer in London, the monkey had landed in this quiet urban space with a serious purpose. It had been consigned for auction by Olena and Victor Pinchuk, leading Ukrainian collectors of contemporary art. Victor is a businessman, born in Kyiv when it was the capital of a constituent republic of the USSR; Olena is the daughter of Leonid Kuchma, who served two terms as the second president of independent, post-communist Ukraine. They had seen their country transformed from a Soviet possession to a free and independent state. Now, in the wake of the destructive Russian incursion, the Pinchuks were selling their Koons *Balloon Monkey* at Christie's to raise funds for humanitarian causes back home.

'Victor and Elena Pinchuk have been working tirelessly to support Ukraine, so it is a sincere privilege to have *Balloon Monkey (Magenta)* be at the service of their extraordinary efforts to raise critical funds to support the Ukrainian people,' said Koons before the sale. On June 28, the 124th day of the invasion, *Balloon Monkey (Magenta)* sold for just over £10 million. The money would finance RECOVERY, a project to establish a national network of centres for wounded soldiers in need of prosthetics and physical rehabilitation.

Balloon Monkey (Magenta) stands as a monumental symbol of hope and solidarity with those living in war-torn Ukraine who have been separated from their families and have suffered terrible loss. It is an object free of irony, created with near-unimaginable dedication, and presented as an expression of trust, openness, sincerity and love. Further, the artist has characterised the *Balloon Monkey* as a symbol of 'hope, affirmation and transcendence'.

“Balloon Monkey (Magenta) symbolises hope, affirmation, and transcendence, so, for me, it is very fitting to have this sculpture engaged in this effort to support the Ukrainian people at this time in history.”

— Jeff Koons

A man clears debris at a damaged residential building on Koshytso Street, a suburb of Kyiv, after Russian shelling in February 2022. (Photo by DANIEL LEAL/AFP via Getty Images)

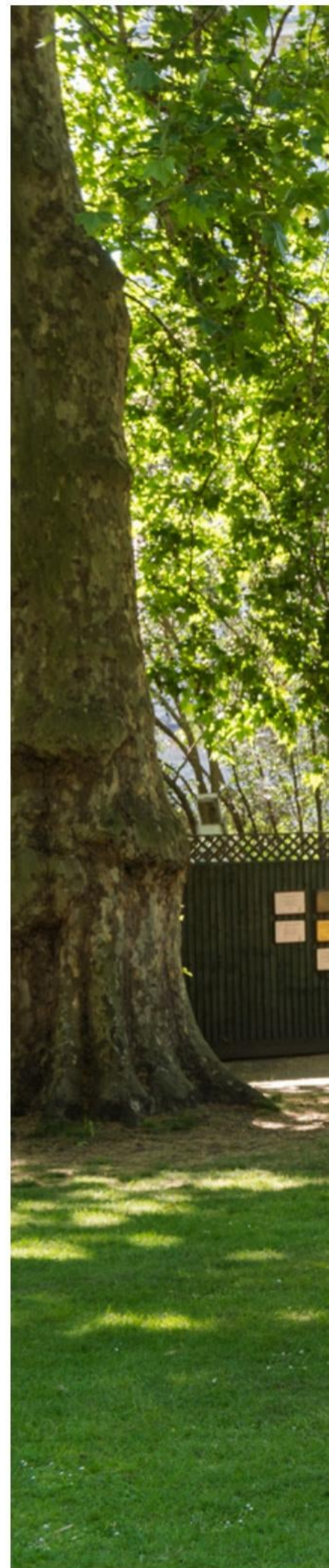


This monumental balloon, five tons of hard steel, imitates something malleable and lighter than air; an ephemeral children's party gift reimagined to assume the imposing presence of an Egyptian sphinx. Beyond the sensual play of lightness and gravity, fragility and strength, the sculpture is a metaphor for the human condition.

There was always more to Koons' inflatables than met the eye. Their superficiality is skin-deep. The artist once described a different balloon sculpture as a 'Trojan horse', implying that its breeziness is an artistic sleight of hand, a deliberately inbuilt enigma. 'It holds a secret, but it's up to you to figure out what that is.'

As with most magic tricks, part of the secret is that far more time and effort went into making it work than any observer would ever suspect. It took Koons seven years to perfect the form of *Balloon Monkey*. It was created with the collaboration of a professional balloon modeller, CT scanning equipment, a German fabrication firm and assistants in his New York studio. The first inflated pieces were read with light scanners, but to capture even more information from the balloon model, a CT scanner was used to scan the innermost details.

Christie's art handlers wipe the surface of *Balloon Monkey* (Magenta) in St James's Square. Artwork: © Jeff Koons.
Photo by Wiktor Szymanowicz/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images



Balloon Swan (Blue), *Balloon Monkey* (Red) and *Balloon Swan* (Yellow), on view at Jeff Koons - *New Paintings and Sculptures*, Gagosian Gallery, May 9 - June 29, 2013 © Jeff Koons, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Balloon Monkey was produced in the wake of the *Celebration* series, which was conceived in 1993, and as such represents the culmination of that long technical process. If the title of the work did not specify that it portrays a monkey, you might not guess, for this sculpture is less recognisably naturalistic than the *Balloon Dog* or the *Balloon Swan*. Its long prehensile tail is an unabashed frankfurter sausage, the simian limbs are hard to parse, and the face is practically an abstraction.

It has a human aspect, too. Koons has said that some of his balloon works are linked in his own imagination to Stone Age artefacts found on Ukrainian soil. 'My *Balloon Venus* sculptures are in dialogue with prehistoric Venus figurines that I viewed in the Museum of the History of Ukraine,' he remarked. 'For me, the sculptures engage with human history, the connectivity of art that spans the history of humankind. One of the reasons that I have

always worked with balloons is that the membrane is a reference to our skin; it's about both internal and external life.'

The artist has confirmed that he enjoys reflective surfaces 'because they define the locale and confirm the viewer's participation'. It is true that when you look at a Koons balloon, you know where you are because you can see yourself and your surroundings mirrored in its form. You also know where you are not. Among the balloon-gazers of June 2022 there will surely have been displaced Ukrainians, people set adrift by the war and stranded far from home. For some of them, there in a leafy urban garden in St James's, the sculpture's rounded, shining surfaces will have called to mind the golden onion domes of Kyiv – the way that a cupola will catch the evening sun in that dazzling, unforgettably green and spacious city.

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J Kool Herc's Sound System
P ref. 5002 — The Sugar
g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



HAND OF THE YOUNG MASTER

¹⁵ MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (CAPRESE 1475-1564 ROME)
A nude man and two figures behind

Price Realised: €23,162,000
Paris, 17 May 2022

The collection once owned by the pianist and conductor Alfred Cortot (1877-1962) consisted of many interesting artworks and artefacts, including a portrait of Mozart as a boy, letters written by Honoré de Balzac and a lock of Chopin's hair. In the spring of 2019, Christie's Old Master specialist Hélène Rihal visited a Paris address to assess the collection and there in the home, hanging on a wall, was an early-Renaissance drawing that caught her eye.

Rihal took the picture down and carefully turned it over, discovering an old label: a two-line cutting from a catalogue produced by the auction house of Hôtel Drouot. It stated that this was Lot 34 in a sale that took place on April 24, 1907. It also gave an attribution: *Michel-Ange, Ecole de* – school of Michelangelo.

The specialist took some photographs of the drawing of the nude man and mailed them to colleagues – Stijn Alsteen at the Christie's office in Paris, and Furio Rinaldi, at that time working in the Old Master Drawings department in New York. 'Furio was the first to react,' recalls Alsteen. 'He said, "This could be the real thing".'

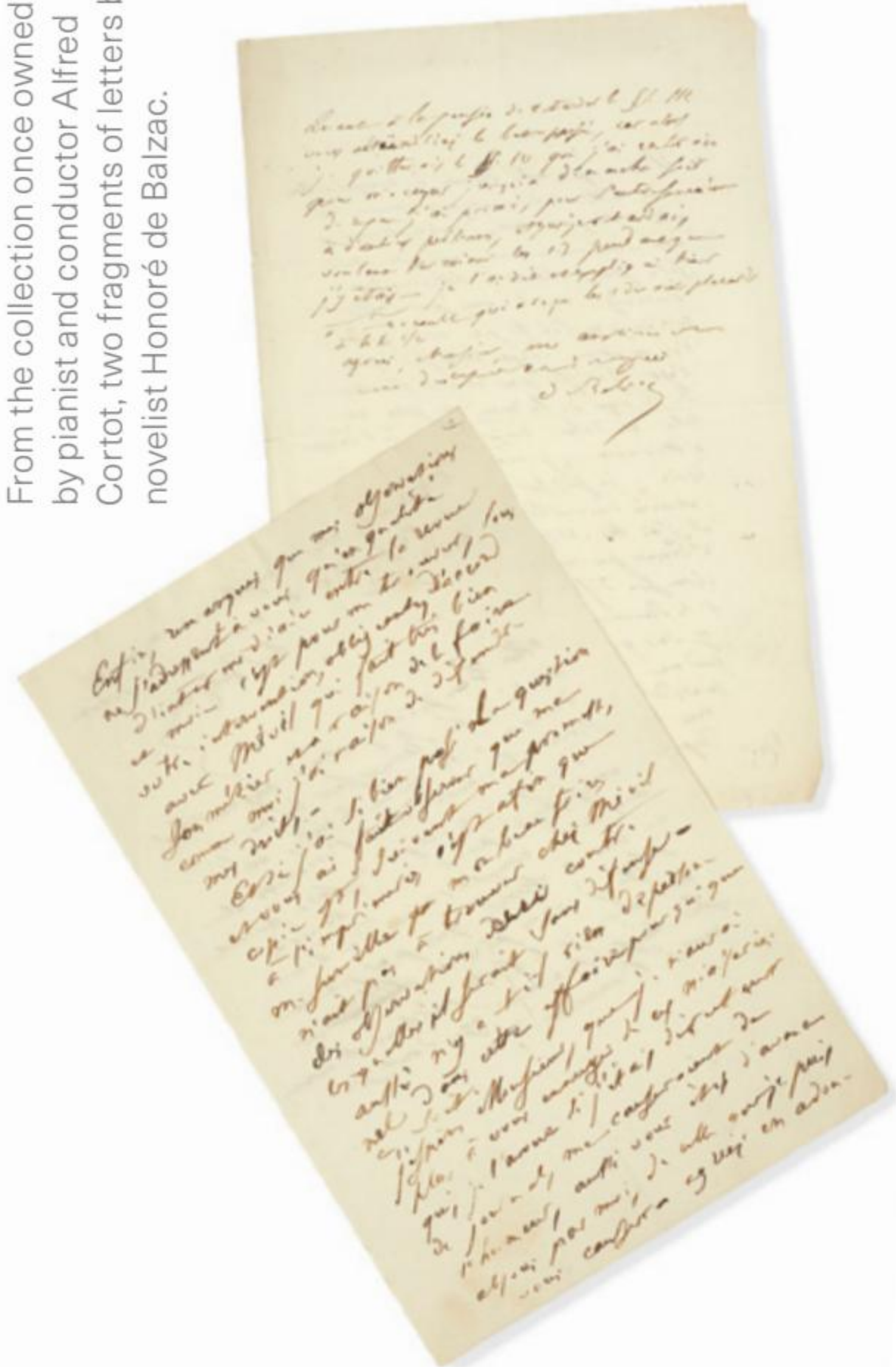
The hunch became a certainty once leading scholars on Michelangelo (1475-1564) were able to take a closer look at the drawing of the nude male, flanked by two figures in a swifter, more vigorous style. 'It's easy to say so after the fact, but it is actually quite obvious that this is the work of Michelangelo,' Alsteen says. 'It fits like a glove into a group of early, well-known drawings.'



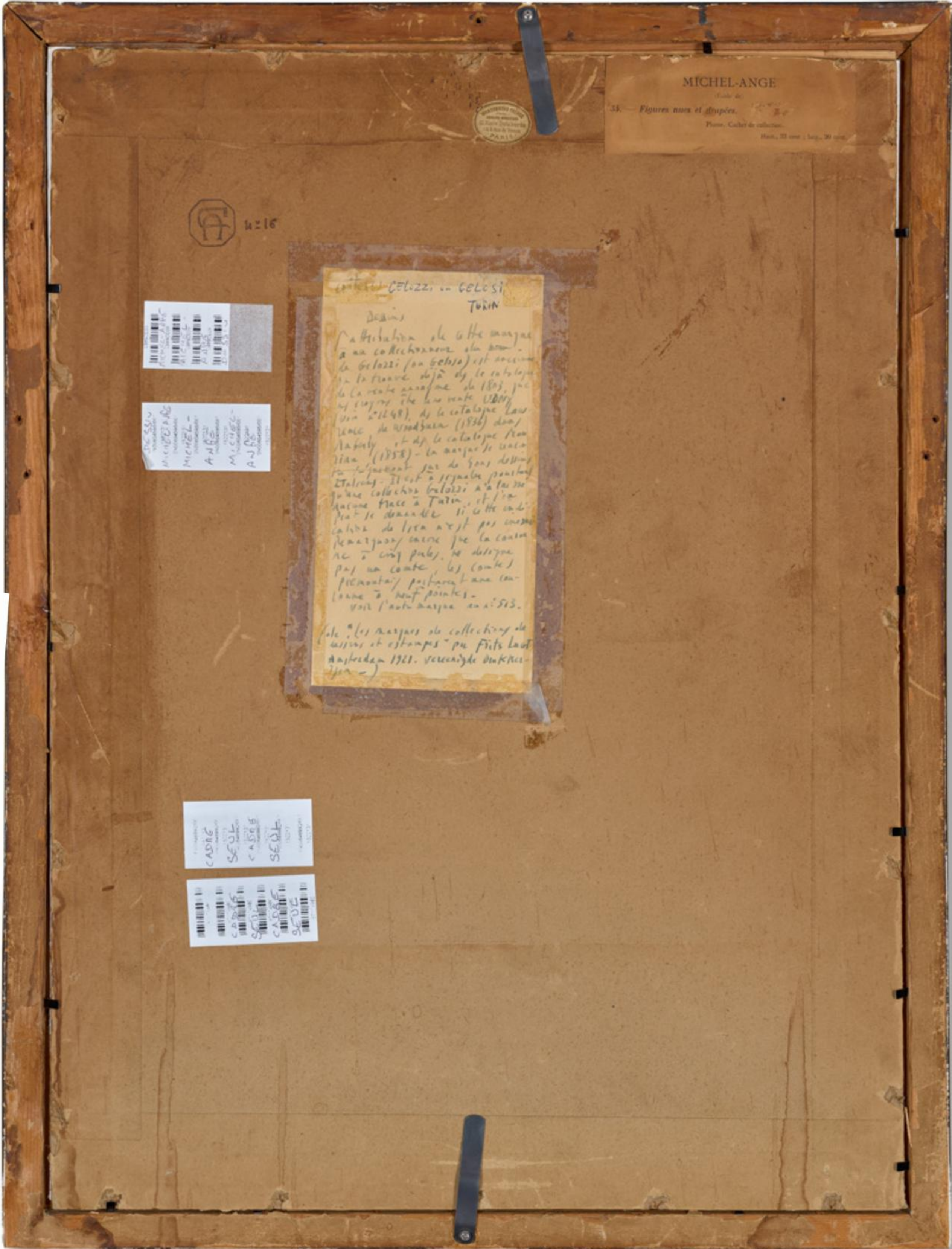
From the same collection as the Michelangelo drawing: strands of Frederik Chopin's hair in a case, dated 17 October 1849; a 19th Century School, Portrait of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in profile.



From the collection once owned by pianist and conductor Alfred Cortot, two fragments of letters by novelist Honoré de Balzac.



The reverse of the frame holding *A nude man* and *two figures behind* shows the Hôtel Drouot label from 1907 in the top right corner.



A NUDE MAN AND TWO FIGURES BEHIND



For the owners, it was always an anonymous drawing. For experts and collectors in the field of Old Master drawings, it is one of the most unexpected discoveries for decades: an unpublished and entirely unknown work by Michelangelo, drawn when he was perhaps 19 years old. Prior to working at Christie's, Furio Rinaldi had assisted on the 2018 exhibition *Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman and Designer* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He recognised that the central figure in the drawing had been copied from a fresco at the Brancacci Chapel inside the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence.

These wall-paintings, depicting scenes from the life of St Peter, were painted by Tommaso Masaccio in the 1420s. Eighty years on, a new generation of Tuscan artists admired Masaccio's work for its three-dimensional realism. Almost every aspiring young artist in Florence went to the chapel to study the frescoes, Michelangelo among them. The biographer Giorgio Vasari, who knew Michelangelo personally in later life, wrote that he spent long days there in his late teens. Elsewhere in his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Vasari even discusses the exact figure from which the drawing is copied.

Sometimes there were groups of boisterous youths in the church of Santa Maria, and it seems that the atmosphere was not always suitably reverent. On one occasion, Michelangelo got into a scuffle with Pietro Torrigiani, who later became a noted sculptor. Either because he was jealous of Michelangelo's prodigious talent or because Michelangelo teased him beyond endurance, Torrigiani punched Michelangelo hard on the nose and 'felt bone and cartilage go down like biscuit beneath my knuckles'. When Michelangelo's work at the chapel was done, he had a boxer's physiognomy as well as a sheaf of fresh drawings.

The pen-and-ink work that Rihal spotted in Paris is one of those drawings. It is Michelangelo's take on a minor figure in a fresco known as *Baptism of the Neophytes*, high on the chapel wall. Masaccio's original depicts an almost naked young man who shivers with cold as he waits for St Peter's blessing. Michelangelo's copy takes that bit player out of the scene and transforms him into something altogether deeper and more solidly real.

Masaccio (1401-1428), *Baptism of the Neophytes*, circa 1425-1427. It was this fresco in the Brancacci Chapel, Florence, that inspired the young Michelangelo.



Detail view of a portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroti attributed to Daniele da Volterra (1509-1566), probably circa 1545. Image courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Clarence Dillon, 1977.

For one thing, he makes the man far more muscular. His artist's mind is interested in the figure's physicality, the way that the body weighs down on the bent legs. And though the torso is all flesh, the face appears almost to be made of stone. 'This is typical of Michelangelo,' says Alsteen. 'When he sculpts, there is often a draughtsman-like quality to his work; and when he draws, he's very much also a sculptor. The fluidity between paper, ink and stone is characteristic of him, and not something that you see in other artists.'

But more than that, Michelangelo has instinctively added psychological realism and emotional depth to Masaccio's original. The man in the drawing is enduring something more than temporary physical discomfort; Michelangelo has portrayed a person in a state of trepidation, a convert standing fearfully on the threshold of a spiritual transformation that, one suspects, he might not even want. Michelangelo's man is not just shivering with cold, he is trembling as he grapples with existential distress.

How Michelangelo had the world-knowledge to express this is one of the mysteries of genius. As with some poets and musicians, his gift seems to have been almost fully realised from the moment he began to practise. He had teachers, of course, but their role was simply to unstop

the creative reservoir within him, after which the art just flooded out. This drawing shows that process in action. The main figure is rendered with close cross-hatching that has a fluidity which is all Michelangelo. The two flanking figures, meanwhile, have an unfettered energy that's much closer to the style of the mature artist.

Michelangelo famously burned most of his early drawings. It is not too far-fetched to think that he held onto this one because he saw that it represented a liminal moment in his development – the brief phase during which he ceased to be anyone's pupil and took flight on his own. Something kept him from throwing this drawing on the fire. It outlived him and passed from one owner to the next. None of them knew whose work they held in their hands, until finally it was lifted from the wall where it hung, and recognised for what it truly is.

“When he sculpts, there is often a draughtsman-like quality to his work; and when he draws, he’s very much also a sculptor. The fluidity between paper, ink and stone is characteristic of him, and not something that you see in other artists.”

— Stijn Alsteen, International Head of Old Master Drawings



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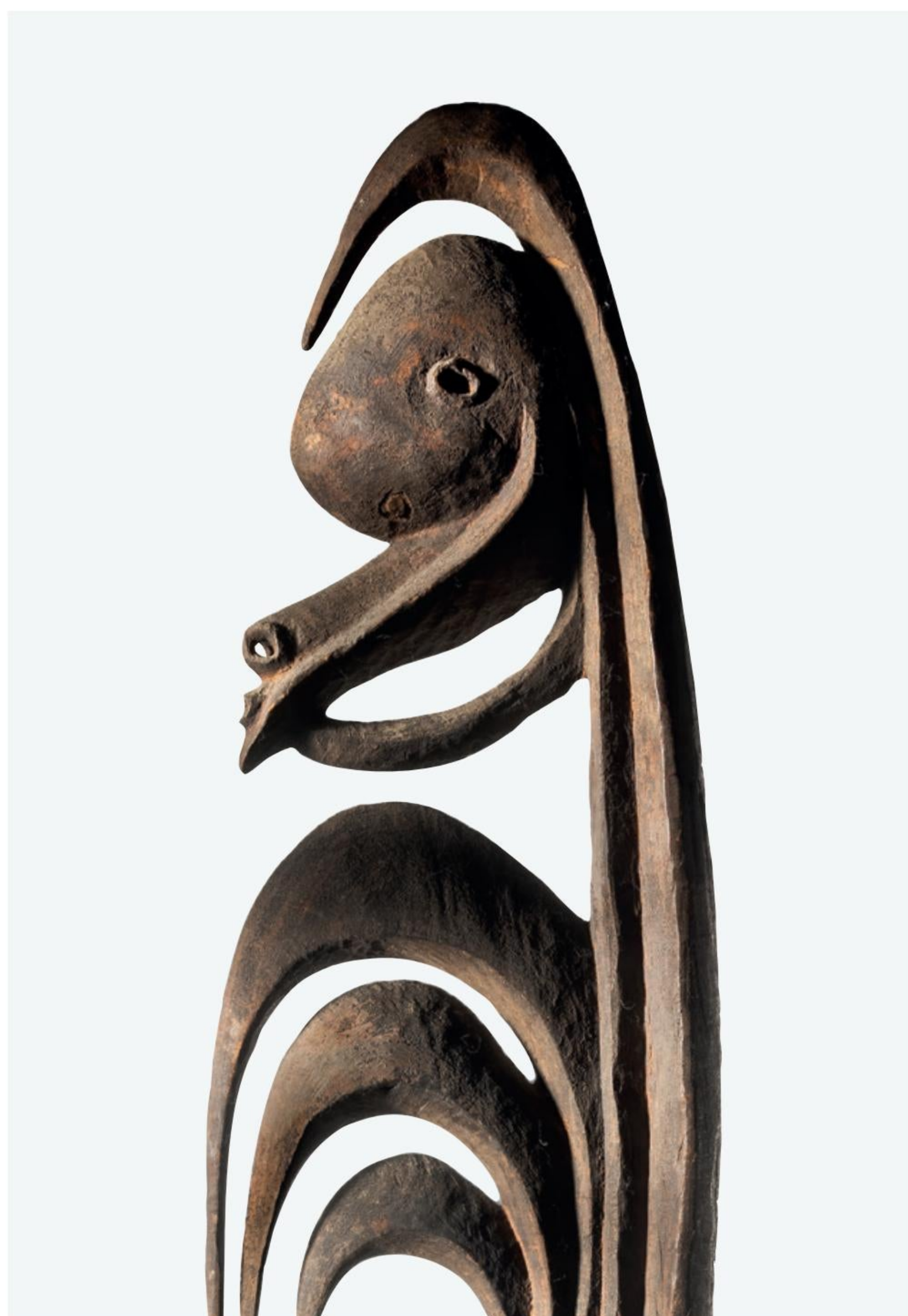


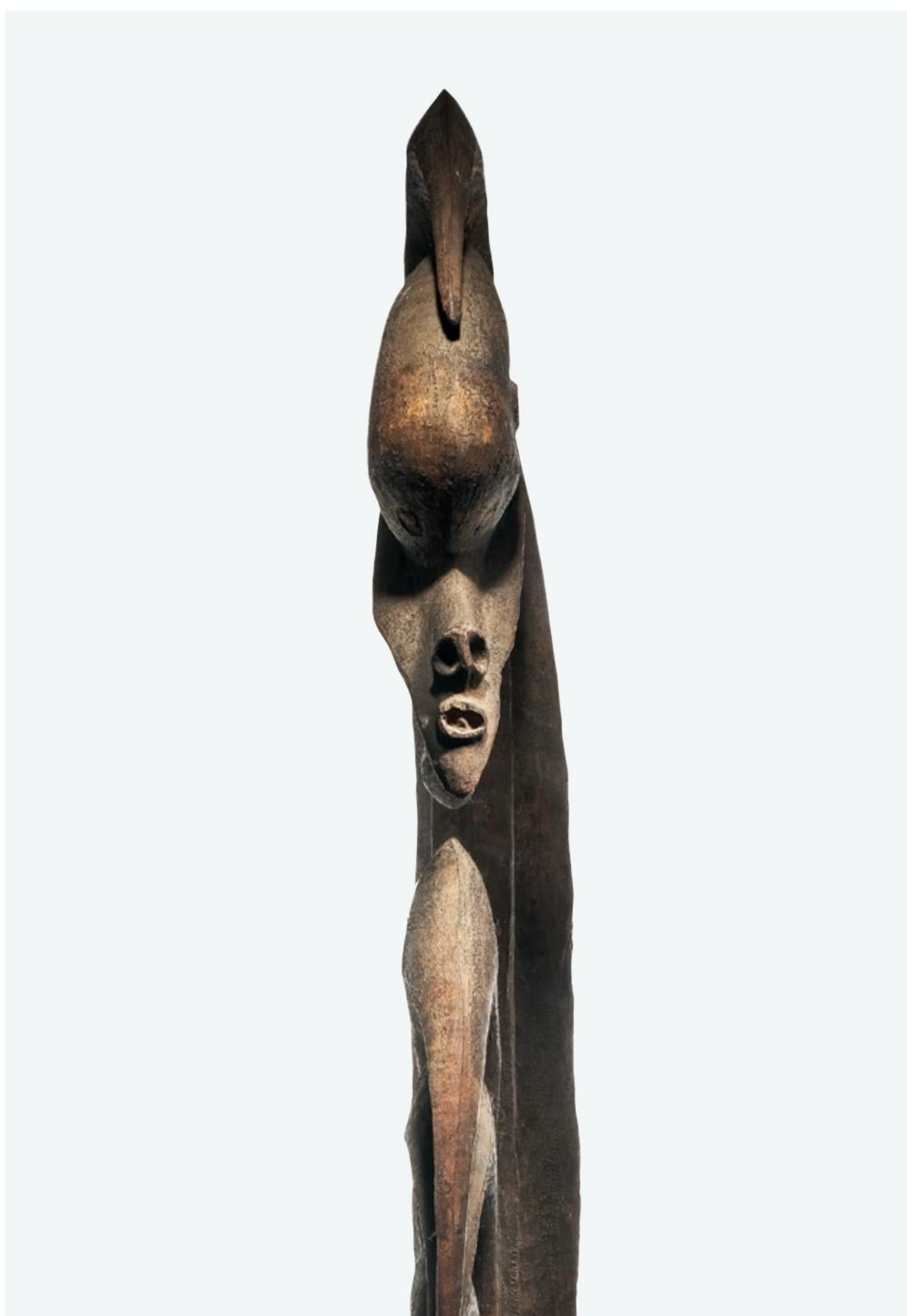
SPIRITS OF THE HUNTER

¹⁶ Yipwon Figure

Price Realised: €5,071,000
Paris, 28 June 2022

On the eve of battle or a hunt, the men of the Yimar people in north-eastern New Guinea would gather inside a ceremonial house. Some chewed ginger and betel to bring themselves into a state of trance or dreaming. At the back of the house, leaning against the wall, stood the carved figure of a *yipwon*, a wooden ancestor statue. It served as a vessel for the spirits, which the men would now call down. Offerings were made to the *yipwon* before the men left the house and headed out into the dark, where they enacted the slaying of their enemies or their prey. Their hope was that this ritual night-rehearsal would bring success or victory in the light of day.





At Christie's Paris in June, a tall *yipwon*, the height of a grown man, sold for just over €5 million. 'The sheer rarity explains why it was of such interest to buyers,' explains Alexis Maggiar, International Head of African & Oceanic Art. The hammer price was not just a world-record price for Papua New Guinea, it was close to the most ever paid for an Oceanic work. And this for a piece by an unknown artist, a statue that nevertheless reflects the mythology and tradition of its origins and in which it is possible to read the hand of its anonymous maker. 'This *yipwon* is extraordinarily open to dialogue,' confirms Maggiar.

In profile, which is how it would have been viewed in the ceremonial house, the head is insectoid, like an ant with a double proboscis. But from another angle, the uppermost part of the sculpture resolves almost by magic into a human face that is austere and noble. The effect is startling, like discovering the anamorphic skull concealed in the foreground of Holbein's *Ambassadors*.

“The quality of the sculpting of the hooks is outstanding, the way that they are perfectly aligned with a horizontal axis.”

— Alexis Maggiar, International Head
of African and Oceanic Art





Between the head and the foot are concentric circles of dangerous-looking 'opposed hooks' – the hallmark of the art of the people of the Sepik River. These scythes are stylised ribs, enclosing and protecting an equally stylised heart, that striated pill-shaped form at the centre. So, this is a human body viewed simultaneously from inside and out. You can see straight to the heart, the seat of courage, which makes a *yipwon* a picture of the moral virtues of the hunter-warrior.

'The quality of the sculpting of the hooks is outstanding, the way that they are perfectly aligned with a horizontal axis,' explains Maggiar. Added to this is the *yipwon*'s remarkable condition. There is no damage, every hook is complete. 'We scanned it, and no part has been replaced or repaired,' reveals the specialist. Christie's also had the sculpture carbon-dated. The results confirmed that the piece is more than 300 years old.

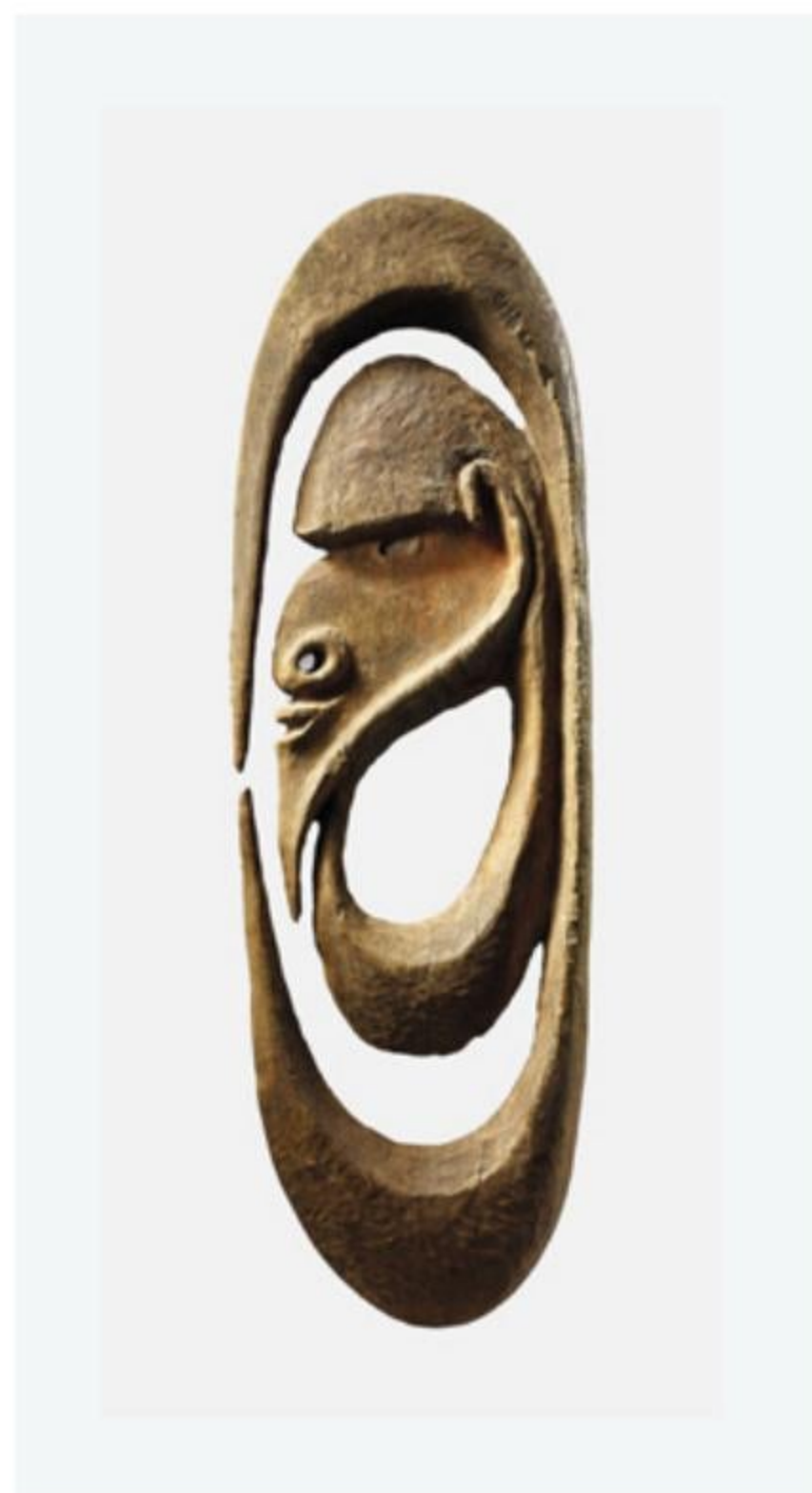


In fact, very little was known about these figures until quite recently. *Yipwon* figures first found their way to Europe in the early years of the 20th century. One was brought back by a German expedition in 1913, and deposited in a Berlin museum. Its meaning remained a mystery. It was only in the 1960s, when an expedition returned to the river, that Western scholars learned how *yipwon* figures were used – and had been used by generations of Yimar hunters.

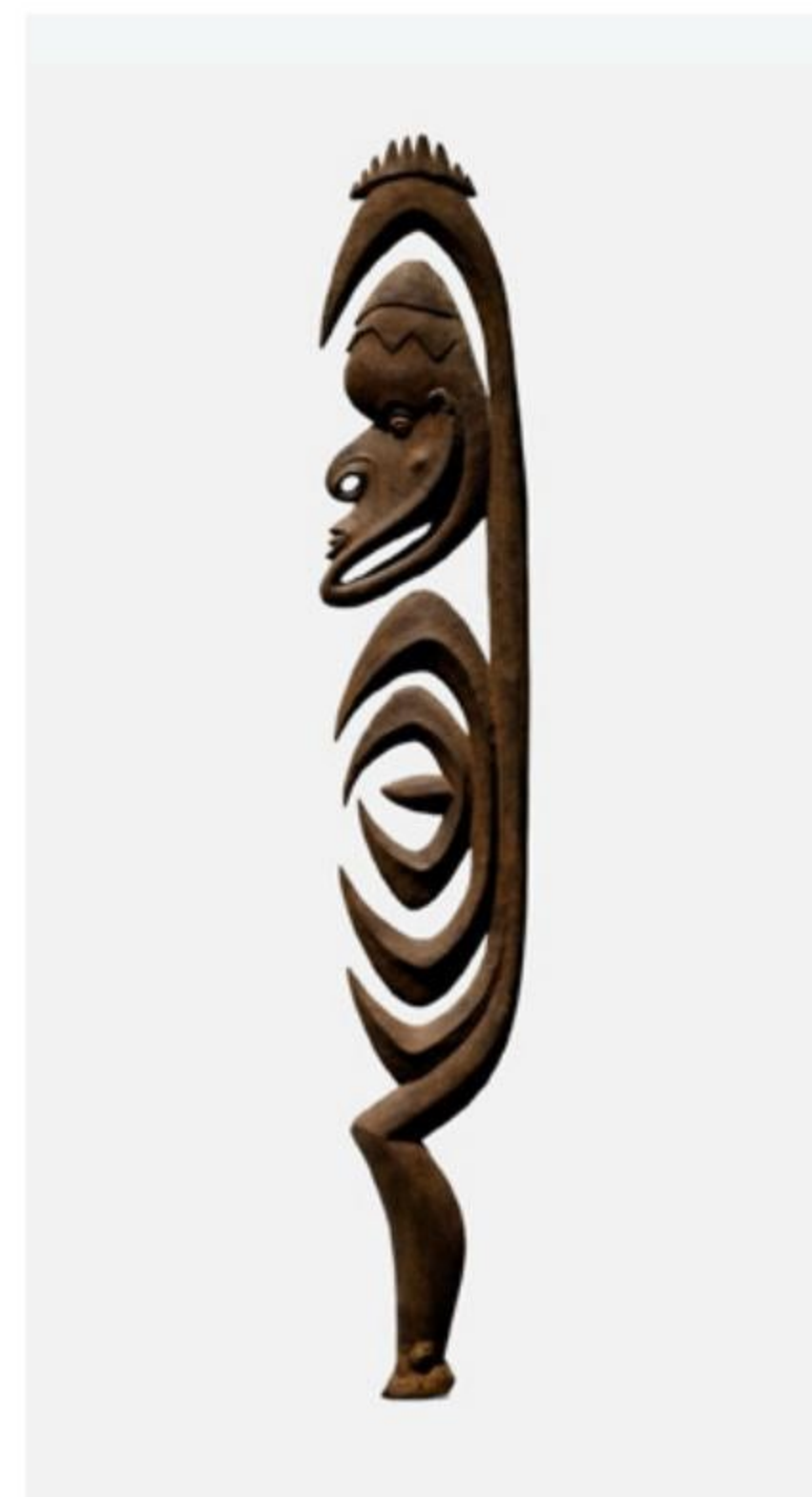




Sepik River Province, Papua New Guinea.
Photo by Brent Stirton/Getty Images Reportage.



Alambak Hunting Charm, Yuma People, Yipwon
Korewori River Region, Papua New Guinea.



An Armbak-Yimam Figure, Yipwon, Karawari River,
Middle Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea.

Not all *yipwon* figures are as large as the one sold in Paris. Smaller ones – equally intricate, the size and shape of a carpet slipper – were carried by individuals as a kind of talisman or amulet. There is some evidence that such portable *yipwon* had secret names, known only to their owners.

The most recent owner of the superb example sold in Paris was a collector and dealer named Lucien van de Velde. He had owned it since 1979, and it was the key piece of his collection, explains Maggiar. 'He always said that he would never part with it. I was honoured and delighted when he decided to allow Christie's to sell the masterpiece of his collection.'

Such pieces have long influenced Western artists. Giacometti, Léger and Picasso all had African and Oceanic works in their studios and its influence can be detected in German Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism. British sculptor Henry Moore was especially drawn to the art of Oceania, and to *yipwon* figures in particular. He wrote with a kind of bemused curiosity about 'New Guinean carvings, with drawn-out spider-like extensions and bird-beak elongations.' Where Moore encountered them is hard to say – and at the time he cannot have known anything

about their function as battle-charms. And yet it feels more than coincidental that his response to these figures, a menacing bronze abstraction entitled *Three Points*, was created in 1939 – on the very eve of global war.

This *yipwon* is a powerfully human piece in its own right – as it was throughout the long centuries it stood in a ceremonial house on the Sepik River. 'The intelligence of the form, the purity in its modelling – that's the soul of it,' says Maggiar. 'It is rooted in the land and nature and a reverence for the ancestors. It is also linked to a global aesthetic; it bears a family resemblance to other archetypes. When I look at this statue, I glimpse something transcendent – a universal art.'

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SENSORY OVERLOAD

¹⁷ THE ANN & GORDON GETTY COLLECTION

Price Realised: \$150,000,000+
New York, 10-25 October 2022

‘As soon as I crossed the threshold, I felt like I was eating chocolate cake while listening to organ music,’ says Jonathan Rendell, Deputy Chairman and Senior Advisor of Christie’s Americas. ‘It was absolute sensory overload.’ He is describing the extraordinary San Francisco home of Ann and Gordon Getty, a five-storey Pacific Heights mansion overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge – filled with one of the most opulent collections of art and furniture ever to be amassed in America.

The collection was as broad as it was rich. There were Manets and Monets; a serene Canaletto in the gallery; a set of Degas bathers in the bathroom; Venetian mirrors on the walls; a sofa that had once belonged to Nureyev in the music room; a thousand-year-old Chinese bodhisattva alongside all manner of striking chinoiserie; a George II gilt-japanned bureau and a George III automaton clock. And then there were the paintings. Besides the gallery of Impressionists on display throughout the house, there were works by Picasso, Matisse and Liotard, drawings by Watteau and Fragonard. There were portraits and landscapes – and a subdued interior painted by Winston Churchill in his wilderness years. It depicted the Long Gallery at Sutton Place, a magnificent Tudor house that, in 1959, became the English home of J. Paul Getty, Gordon Getty’s father.

Like everything else in the home, the Churchill oil had a personal connection to Ann and Gordon Getty. ‘Most real collections are works of art, self-portraits of their owner,’ says Rendell. ‘Ann Getty’s likeness was absolutely there in the house. You did not need to have known her, because she told you about herself through what she had and how she’d arranged it.’



Ann and Gordon Getty, 1998. Photo: Bruce Forrester

The Sitting Room at the Getty home. Artwork: Jacques-Émile Blanche, *Vaslav Nijinsky in 'Danse Siamoise'*. Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.









Mary Cassatt's *Young Lady in a Loge Gazing to Right* in situ in The Getty's bedroom. Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.

Ann Getty was remarkable not only for her taste and connoisseurship, but also for the wit and erudition she brought to displaying and living with her many treasures. The drawing room was one such example, reflecting her fascination with patterns laid upon patterns, and with how an object becomes part of the pattern. On walls of Chinese gauze hung gilt picture frames containing the Impressionist paintings. Every element was related – historically or thematically or poetically. ‘It was intellectually engaging,’ says Rendell. ‘It celebrated the joy that these artworks gave her.’

Gordon Getty is a composer, and there were numerous works in the collection that alluded to music and musical performance, among them a portrait of Nijinsky in a Siamese costume that is as ornate as anything in the wider decor; Degas ballet dancers; and a couple of John White Alexander portraits of well-known Victorian musicians – a violinist and a pianist – observed in the act of playing. But then the collection as a whole was akin to a symphony in that it was made of harmonious parts – each room a separate movement, or a spatial sonata unto itself. And it was orchestral in there being groups of works that functioned as quiet counter-melody to the whole.

*“It was intellectually engaging.
It celebrated the joy that these
artworks gave her.”*

— Jonathan Rendell, Deputy Chairman and Senior Advisor, Americas



The Anne & Gordon Getty Collection exhibition at Christie's
New York, October 2022. Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.

The Anne & Gordon Getty Collection exhibition at Christie's
New York, October 2022. Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.



Mrs. Getty's collection of dining chairs was a case in point, including the best collection of English chairs Jonathan Rendell has ever seen. 'She had at least one pair from every great house sale of the past 40 years,' he says. This love for chairs developed in parallel with a fascination for textiles – that obsession with pattern again. The store of 18th-century fabrics she collected was 'a marvel', says Rendell, with antique textiles being used to re-cover pieces. 'A museum probably wouldn't do it, but her view was that the fabrics had survived for a purpose,' says the specialist. 'She enhanced a lot of chairs that way.'

Among the chairs was a pair from the famous 'Chinese Bedroom' at Badminton House in Gloucestershire, seat of the Dukes of Beaufort. These exquisite and entirely English chairs, made by the London firm of William and John Linnell, represent a totally imaginary China. Even the ideograms painted on the chairbacks are works of fiction. Ann Getty was deeply interested in the interweaving of cultures that such chinoiserie represents. She was also intrigued, maybe sometimes amused, by the way that imported ideas are wrongly or partially understood at either end of the process.

Her Badminton chairs were part of that inquiry – and so were her many pieces of Chinese exportware – whereby Chinese makers tried to intuit what it was about their country that so appealed to the Western market. At the end of one corridor in the Getty home stood a pair of cloisonné and enamel cranes, more than 7 ft (235 cm) tall. These birds were censers: each clutched in its beak a branch that served as a holder for fragrant burning incense. The blue-green of the cranes' plumage recurs in two export jardinières containing stylised enamel *lingzhi*, a kind of tree-like mushroom. Then, nearby, was the Canaletto view of Santa Maria della Salute, in which the artist uses the exact same hue for the sky above Venice – that glorious end point of the ancient East-West Silk Road. The connecting ideas – trade and exchange, blending and borrowing – were present in chromatic form. You could say that Ann Getty's cross-cultural curiosity wore a precise shade of turquoise.

A George II Black-Japanned and Parcel-Gilt Armchair by William and John Linnell, circa 1754.
Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.









The Anne & Gordon Getty Collection exhibition at Christie's New York, October 2022. Photo: © Visko Hatfield, 2023.

But this was a collector who embraced the full spectrum of colour. Ann Getty had a special fondness for paintings of flowers in vases – and they form another grace note within the collection. There was a Matisse in which pom-pom blooms nod in a slim Chinese vase; a diffuse floral spray by Odilon Redon, where a single black poppy stands out like a black button sewn onto a Hawaiian shirt; and then numerous botanically rigorous still-lives by Henri Fantin-Latour, in which the flowers seem to be posing for a formal portrait.

Flowers in a vase may be the most ephemeral kind of collection – but all collections are more or less transitory: they are nearly always dispersed in the end. Gordon Getty took the decision to sell the contents of the house on Pacific Heights after Ann died in 2020. Christie's curated the vast array of objects and artworks into separate sales – or 'volumes', as they were termed. The first volume consisted of the most art-historically important pictures and decorative arts. The next day's sale was made up of paintings from the Old Master period to the 20th century. Then came a day of furniture, porcelain and silver before Chinese works of art and more furniture. For the pre-sale exhibition in New York, Christie's created spaces that echoed rooms in the house: the same works in their established relationships to each other, the better to convey a sense of Ann Getty's vision.

Numerous records were set when the collection went under the hammer. The star lot of Volume I was Mary Cassatt's *Young Lady in a Loge Gazing to Right*, which had hung in the master bedroom of Ann Getty's house. She felt particularly drawn to Cassatt, not just because she was one of the few women Impressionists – and the only American one – but also because Cassatt did much to make the movement known in the States. 'If you were well-connected in Philadelphia or New York,' says Rendell, 'the first person you went to see in Paris was Miss Cassatt, who would make the introductions so that you could go and see Degas in his studio.'

Ann trained as a paleoanthropologist, the study of human evolution through fossils and archaeology. Some of the proceeds of the auctions will go to institutions doing work in that field, such as the Berkeley Geochronology Center and the Leakey Foundation. Other beneficiaries, via the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for the Arts, will be musical organisations in the Bay Area: the San Francisco Conservatory, the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Symphony. It will be as if art, like energy, were a force that can be transmuted from one form to another – from paint to polyphony, from giltwood torchères to woodwind concertos.

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© Lynne Mapp Drexler

OVER-
SHADOWED
NO
MORE

¹⁸ LYNNE DREXLER (1928-1999)
Herbert's Garden

Price Realised: \$1,500,000
New York, 12 May 2022



Monhegan Island, 12 miles off the coast of Maine, has a permanent population of around 60. It gets busier in the summer when there are tourists, and there has long been a colony of artists who come and go like nesting seabirds. In the 1960s, Lynne Drexler was one of those peripatetic painters.

Drexler studied in New York under Robert Motherwell and Hans Hofmann and mixed with the Abstract Expressionists at the Cedar Tavern in Greenwich Village. Her early abstract paintings merited a 1961 gallery show in Manhattan, with one critic comparing her to Van Gogh. A year later, she married the artist John Hultberg and for the next half a decade, they criss-crossed the country teaching and exhibiting their work. Drexler sold some paintings and more positive reviews were written but little by little, she disappeared from view – over-shadowed by her male contemporaries, disillusioned by the art world and locked in an increasingly tempestuous relationship.

The couple had owned a house on Monhegan Island since 1967 and moved there permanently in the early 1980s. They separated soon afterwards and for the next

two decades, Lynne Drexler lived alone in a house at the foot of Lighthouse Hill. She jestingly described herself as a hermit. Painting was her all – indoors to the accompaniment of opera, or else outside in the rocky landscape with just the wind for a soundtrack. When she died in 1999, aged 71, she left behind stacks of paintings going right back to her New York years. It would be inaccurate to say she had been entirely forgotten; some of her pictures had gone to museum collections, and there were occasional commercial gallery shows in New England. But none of her paintings ever sold for more than \$10,000.

Lynne Drexler. Courtesy of the Estate of Lynne Drexler. Photo: Lynda Kleeburg.





Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1988.
© Estate of Joan Mitchell.



Helene Schjerfbeck, *Hortensia (Hydrangea)*, 1915.
© Helen Schjerfbeck.



Helen Frankenthaler, *Black-Eyed Susan*, 1988.
© 2023 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc.
/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

“When it comes to the market, no-one is going to give attention to the women artists of any era just for the sake of it. Over the past few years, collectors have sought out art that’s been historically under-appreciated, and they’ve found plenty of artists that satisfy their appetite. Lynne Drexler is part of that continuing process of discernment.”

— Rachael White Young, Specialist, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Americas

And then a shift, a change in the atmosphere, like when a nor'easter blows in off the Atlantic and stirs things up. The art world began to acknowledge there were painters – female painters – missing or at least unfairly backgrounded from the accounts of art movements in almost every historic period. Curators began to recalibrate. In 2020, the National Gallery in London staged a stunning exhibition of works by the Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi, in whose works the women are the fierce and active protagonists. The Royal Academy showcased Helene Schjerfbeck, one of the finest artists of the early 20th century, but almost unknown outside her native Finland. More attention began to be paid to the women of Abstract Expressionism, contemporaries of Drexler's such as Helen Frankenthaler and Joan Mitchell. Then, in 2022, the writer and historian Katy Hessel summed up the zeitgeist when she published her grand corrective, *The Story of Art without Men*.

Something extraordinary happened to Lynne Drexler last year, or to her artistic legacy. Two fine canvases she painted in the early 1960s were de-accessioned by the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine. Both were consigned to Christie's for sale in New York.

The first, *Flowered Hundred*, had a mid-estimate of \$50,000 – an acknowledgment of the fact that prices for her work had been creeping up over the previous year. On the day it sold for just under \$1.2 million.

Two months later, *Herbert's Garden*, still conservatively pitched at a high estimate of \$100,000, went for \$1.5 million. In late October, Mnuchin and Berry Campbell galleries opened a joint exhibition entitled *Lynne Drexler: the First Decade*. It was her first New York show in 38 years. The critic who compared Drexler to Van Gogh was more astute than he knew: all her recognition had come posthumously.





Lynne Drexler, *Herbert's Garden*, 1960. © Lynne Mapp Drexler.

Herbert's Garden, a 1960 painting that confirms that Monhegan Island was indeed Lynne Drexler's Arles, is a fabulous abstraction. As the title suggests, at first glance it transmits a riot of meadow flowers – cowslips or cranesbills with patches of field poppies, perhaps. Christie's specialist Rachael White Young suspects that Drexler painted first, then assigned a representational quality to it afterwards: 'Mitchell and Frankenthaler did much the same thing: they gave a title once they saw something evocative in the work.'

The fact that every patch of pigment is more or less straight-edged suggests that nature was not on Drexler's mind at the start. The tiles merge into floral forms only when you step back – as if she were practising a form of rectangular pointillism. 'She'd trained with Hans Hofmann, who was a huge influence on Abstract Expressionism,' White Young points out. For Hofmann, colour was the crux of abstract art and elements of his push-pull theory and approach to structure can be seen in *Herbert's Garden*. 'And yet,' adds the specialist, 'there's a very refined beauty to Drexler that you don't get in Hofmann's work. That comes from the femininity she has brought to it.'

Is it femininity or feminism that has suddenly made Drexler so attractive to collectors? And more broadly, is the acknowledgement of neglected women artists a permanent correction to the canon? 'When it comes to the market, no-one is going to give attention to the women artists of any era just for the sake of it,' argues White Young. 'Over the past few years, collectors have sought out art that's been historically under-appreciated, and they've found plenty of artists that satisfy their appetite. Lynne Drexler is part of that continuing process of discernment.' Hidden away for all those years on Monhegan Island, she has been rediscovered at last.

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Les Lalanne © 2023 Artist Rights Society (ARS),
New York, NY / ADAGP, Paris, France.

A ZOO CHEZ VOUS

¹⁹ FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE (1927-2008)
Âne Planté, 2000

Price Realised: \$8,405,000
New York, 6 December 2022



In December 2022, the Lalanne most definitely had a moment. Their first ever dedicated sale in the US realised more than \$77 million, the highest figure ever for a design sale at Christie's. The star lot of the 157 offered was *Âne Planté* – 'Planted Donkey', which was bought for \$8.4 million, a price that amounted to a staggering 28 times its low estimate. The piece was part of the collection of Marie Lalanne, the French-American painter who has dedicated herself to sharing the work of her parents.

'That little donkey really flew,' reflects Daphné Riou, head of Christie's Design department in New York. 'It goes to show that New York is the perfect place for a sale like this. François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne are great artists, and everyone recognises that now.'

As a young man, François-Xavier Lalanne worked as a guard at the Louvre where he studied the museum's bas-reliefs from Ancient Egypt and Assyria. Illustration of an Assyrian bas relief from Paul Émile Botta's *Monument de Ninive*, 1849-1850.



'They ignored us completely,' François-Xavier Lalanne (1927-2008) once remarked of art critics in general. 'For them, it was a total nonsense to make sculptures that have a use.' The critics sometimes miss a trick but auctions are never wrong. When an object sells, especially when it far exceeds its estimate, the hammer price is an unarguable measure of an artist's desirability in that moment.

In his youth, François-Xavier worked as a guard at the Louvre where he studied the museum's bas-reliefs from Ancient Egypt and Assyria. They were full of animals – usually standing still and bolt upright, their legs as straight as the legs of a sideboard.

The young Lalanne rented an apartment on the Impasse Ronsin in Paris, where his neighbour was the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși. They became friends – sharing vodka and cigarettes in the evenings – and Brâncuși introduced Lalanne to some of the venerable Surrealists of the older generation: Man Ray, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp. It was in that same circle that he met his wife Claude, who was also a sculptor.

From the start of their life together, François-Xavier and Claude worked alongside each other rather than with each other. Like him, she was interested in reimagining the natural world, but for her it was all about flora, while François-Xavier was fixated on the fauna. They created wonderful things, but museums and the art establishment paid no heed.

The first people to take notice were French fashion designers and celebrities. In the 1960s, Yves Saint Laurent commissioned François-Xavier to create a bar for his apartment. It sold for almost \$3 million when it came up for auction at Christie's in 2009, which helped draw international attention to the artist. In 1976, the singer Serge Gainsbourg named an album after a sculpture of Claude's, *L'Homme à tête de chou*, and featured a photograph of the cabbage-headed man on the cover.

“Humour was central to what they were both doing. As François-Xavier liked to say: art is like life; neither one should be taken too seriously.”

— Daphné Riou, Head of 20th Century Design, Americas



Yves Saint Laurent commissioned Lalanne to create a bar for his apartment. François-Xavier Lalanne, *Bar YSL*, 1965. Les Lalanne © 2023 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY / ADAGP, Paris, France.

François-Xavier Lalanne, *Âne Planté*, 2000. Les Lalanne © 2023 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY / ADAGP, Paris, France.





Animals from François-Xavier Lalanne's menagerie of masterworks: (clockwise from left) *Capricorne IV*, 2014; *Singe Attriblé Table*, 2003; *Grand Requin*, 2010. Les Lalanne © 2023 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY / ADAGP, Paris, France.



All the while, François-Xavier was creating his menagerie of masterworks, items of furniture that were also studies in zoological surrealism. They are bizarre in a way that is also utterly truthful on some poetic or Freudian level. It feels right and fitting that a gorilla should double as a safe (especially since *gorille* in French can mean 'bodyguard'). If you were going to install a hippo in your house, then the bathroom is where you would expect to place it – and you would want it to be a behemoth of a bathtub. Cows provide liquid sustenance, so it makes a kind of grown-up sense that when you open up a gilt-bronze Lalanne cow, you find a gleaming cocktail cabinet within.

The fact that all these useful sculptures are life-sized and beautifully observed somehow makes them even more dream-like. The rhinoceros desk – the *rhinocrétaire* – is perfectly judged as the work station of some big-beast corporate executive. The smaller, more graceful gazelle bureau, meanwhile, seems designed for the writing of *billets doux* and thank-you notes. It all makes for a very pragmatic, domestic safari park.





Details of François-Xavier Lalanne's *Âne Planté*, 2000. Les Lalanne © 2023 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY / ADAGP, Paris, France.

Strangely, it is the more exotic beasts that do most of the heavy lifting around the home. Farm animals and pets – the sheep and the rabbits – are generally allowed just to be themselves. The eight-million-dollar donkey, admittedly, has a job to do as a jardinière – but baskets of flowers must count as a pretty light load for a beast of burden.

The New York sale, and other recent sales at Christie's, featured smaller Lalanne pieces that are no less impressive and memorable than the statement animals: a bronze centaur in a snail-shell helmet, which is a rare collaboration between François-Xavier and Claude;

François-Xavier's troupe of Lilliputian elephants, sheltering beneath a coffee table in the form of an acacia grove; or a golden chimp somewhat resentfully holding up a glass lampshade. Each of them has the same charm and wit, a family resemblance that is all Lalanne.

'Humour was central to what they were both doing,' says Daphné Riou. 'As François-Xavier liked to say: art is like life; neither one should be taken too seriously.'



Shot Sage Blue Marilyn —
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 Monumental Girandoles — 2
 (Magenta) — A nude man and
 Figure — The Ann & Gordon
 Garden — Âne Planté — Le
 Cross Diamond — Les Poseus

Mughal Pashmina Carpet —
tlló — Huanghuali Circular
Henri Mayer, Vosne-Romanée
The Nymph of the Spring —
J Kool Herc's Sound System
P ref. 5002 — The Sugar
g the Delaware — Pair of
29.09.64. — Balloon Monkey
two figures behind — Yipwon
Getty Collection — Herbert's
Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



VISIONS OF KIKI

²⁰ **MAN RAY (1890–1976)**
Le Violon d'Ingres, 1924

Price Realised: \$12,412,500
New York, 13 May 2022





Kiki Montparnasse in Man Ray, *Noire et Blanche*, 1926. © 2023 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

‘*L’ombre peut tout faire*,’ Man Ray told Kiki de Montparnasse on the night they met. ‘Shadow can do everything. Shadow works for me. I make shadow and I make light. I can create anything with a camera.’ His boast could almost serve as an alternative definition of the photographer’s art. But it was a prophecy too, because with Kiki as his muse and his subject, Man Ray made one of the most memorable photographs of the 20th century.

Le Violon d’Ingres was created in 1924. By then Man Ray and Kiki, who became lovers within days of that first encounter, had been together for three years. ‘The violin of Ingres’ is a well-worn French phrase but will have sounded fresh to Man Ray when he heard it; his French was patchy when he first arrived in Paris. The expression denotes a hobby, in particular a hobby done well. It derives from the fact that the painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres considered himself a good musician, and insisted on playing his violin for anyone who visited his studio.

Here was an idea that Man Ray could conjure with. He already admired Ingres and saw himself as a painter first and foremost. His photography began as a sideline, something he took up to make a record of his own paintings. In his first months in France, he made some money doing the same for the avant-garde artists that he was getting to know. The photograph of Kiki could therefore be seen as an ironic comment on his creative journey. It could also be a slightly lewd joke at Kiki’s expense. What it most definitely is is an homage to Ingres’ painting of 1808, *Baigneuse de Valpinçon*, which Man Ray will have seen in the Louvre.



Ingres returned to the theme throughout his career in works such as *The Turkish Bath*, 1862. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Small Bather*, 1828. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



Man Ray's work is an homage to Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Baigneuse de Valpinçon*, 1806. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Man Ray, *Le Violon d'Ingres*, 1924. © 2023 Man Ray Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

Baigneuse de Valpinçon is a depiction of a woman in an oriental setting. Viewed from behind, she is nude apart from the turban on her head. Curiously, Ingres returned to this figure in this exact pose at intervals throughout his career. She appears again in a painting entitled *Intérieur de harem* from 1828, and a third time in *Le Bain Turc* of 1862. In this last painting, she is playing a stringed instrument – not a violin but its distant cousin, the lute.

Ingres in effect copied his own work, like a photographer running off new prints from an original negative – only in this instance the negative existed only in the artist's mind. That urge to revisit must have intrigued Man Ray, who famously remarked that 'to create is divine, to reproduce is human'.

Man Ray's take on *La Baigneuse* is imbued with new meanings and dynamics. Twentieth-century Kiki, unlike her early-19th-century predecessor, knows she

is being observed. She is almost catching the eye of the photographer (and of the viewer of the picture). We sense that she is a willing collaborator, while noting that there is a hint of defiance in the tilt of her head. Perhaps she even suspects that the man behind the lens is planning to use her to make a surreal joke.

Surrealism is the other radical element that Man Ray adds to Ingres. In addition to the play on words in the title, there is the visual pun whereby the contours of Kiki's body are compared to the bouts and curves of a violin. The fact that this is a photograph rather than a painting makes it all the more unsettling, because the camera, theoretically at least, doesn't lie.

In the 1920s, any photograph made a claim to reality, and Man Ray used all the ingenuity and technical skill at his command to make those two f-holes look convincing. The process involved cutting the shapes of the violin's sound holes into thick card to make a template. He then deployed a complex method of double exposure to transfer the f-holes and the photograph of Kiki onto the same print. He achieved this by manipulating light, just as he had promised Kiki in that first impromptu manifesto.

The effect of the image depends on our believing that Kiki is metamorphosing into a violin, or that a violin has taken human form. This is the stuff of dreams, and all the Surrealists – Magritte, Dalí, Duchamp – relished dreams of the most vivid nature.

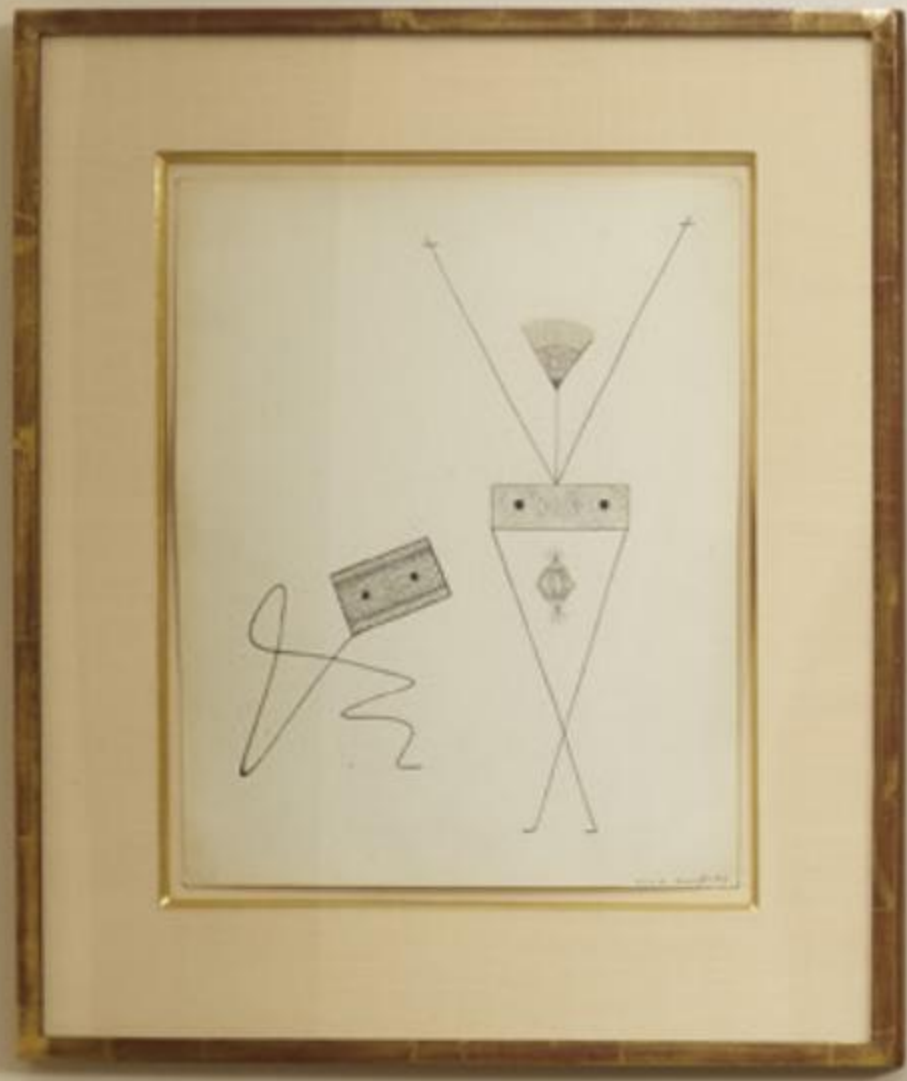
Le Violon d'Ingres also contains an echo of Man Ray's waking life with Kiki de Montparnasse. During their time together he would make up her face each evening after her bath – he drew shapes on her body. He even had her shave her eyebrows so that he could craft them anew, varying their angle and colour and thickness to create effects. Kiki was his canvas, one he reinvented over and again.

Man Ray and Kiki were lovers for six years. Around the time that their relationship ended he made a sculpture that is almost a parody of the Ingres photograph. The piece consisted of the neck of a cello, to which Man Ray added female attributes in the form of a long tress of hair. He called it *Emak Bakia*. The title, which was also the name of a movie that Man Ray filmed with Kiki in the lead role, is a Basque phrase meaning 'leave me alone', which might be a comment on the state of their relationship. The piece is now lost, but its existence is recorded in a single black-and-white photograph.

As the 1920s drew to a close, Kiki travelled to the US to try to carve out a career in Hollywood. Man Ray stayed on in Paris until war forced him to leave. Both eventually returned to the city, where Kiki died in 1953.

In 1962 Man Ray sold a print of *Le Violon d'Ingres* to collectors Rosalind and Melvin Jacobs. It came to them with his own imprimatur. 'I remember you asking for the back of Kiki,' he wrote to Rosalind, 'which is really a combination of photograph and rayograph – an original.' 'The Jacobs print', as it became known, hung in the collectors' home for many years, alongside works by many of the Surrealist greats. When their collection came to auction in New York in May 2022, Man Ray's erotic, ambivalent, loving, experimental portrait of Kiki de Montparnasse fetched \$12,412,500, making it the most expensive photograph ever sold at auction.

The image was already deeply embedded in the collective consciousness. Other artists had referenced it or toyed with the idea of it. Parisian restaurants borrowed its name. And Man Ray would be delighted to know – maybe Kiki would too – that young musicians and artists frequently turn up at tattoo parlours asking to have two neat f-holes inked into the small of their backs. That can only mean that there is some deep subliminal reality in Man Ray's portrait of his lover. No Surrealist artist could hope for more.



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Violon d'Ingres — The Red
ses, Ensemble (Petite version)



DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

²¹ THE RED CROSS DIAMOND

Price Realised: F14,181,250
Geneva, 10 May 2022

On April 11, 1918, *The Times* of London was, as usual, filled with reports of the war. Page 2 listed losses in dense type under stark headlines: ‘Naval Casualties – List of Dead’, ‘The Army – Killed’. Page 4 was taken up with brief obituaries of fallen officers (‘I was his C.O. for nearly three years; he was one of the most fearless fellows I ever met...’). And on Page 9, beside an advertisement for Harrods’ electroplated cutlery, there was news from the capital. ‘Red Cross Sale Record’ read the headline above an account of a jewel auction held at King Street the previous afternoon.

The event was the latest in a series of charitable sales that Christie’s held during the First World War. Beginning in 1915, members of the public donated wines, postage stamps, furs and porcelain, which were sold to raise funds for the Red Cross and the Order of St John. Each auction was held over 10 to 15 days, with the jewel sale being the most glittering of them all. This was largely due to one special lot: an enormous cushion-shaped canary-yellow diamond, weighing 205 carats. Its pavilion (or lower half) was cut in such a way that when viewed from above, it appeared to contain a Maltese cross, which the Order of St John uses as its symbol.



Knights of the Order of St. John, 12th-13th century.
Photo: Getty Images

A hospital during World War I.





'The hope expressed by the auctioneer that this jewel would fetch "a price worthy of its great name" was fulfilled,' recorded *The Times*. The first bid was £3,000, from which a quick advance was made to £6,000 until at £10,000, the diamond was finally sold to Messrs S.J. Phillips of 113 New Bond Street. Their winning bid was the equivalent of around £600,000 in today's money.

Later reports stated that a European royal family bought the diamond, which would go on to change hands on several occasions during the course of the 20th century. In the 1970s, it came back to Christie's (as precious things often do) and then returned, like a long-lost friend, for a third time in May 2022. On this most recent occasion, the diamond sold for 14,181,250 Swiss francs (\$15.25 million). As in 1918, there was a war going on in Europe. And as in 1918, the International Committee of the Red Cross received a substantial sum from the sale of the diamond – a contribution to its vital and never-ending humanitarian work.

The stone that became known as the Red Cross Diamond was discovered in 1901. Weighing 375 carats in the rough, it was unearthed in Griqualand, South Africa, where the De Beers company had been operating mines since the 1870s. Bought by a syndicate, it was cut in Amsterdam some time before the outbreak of the First World War.

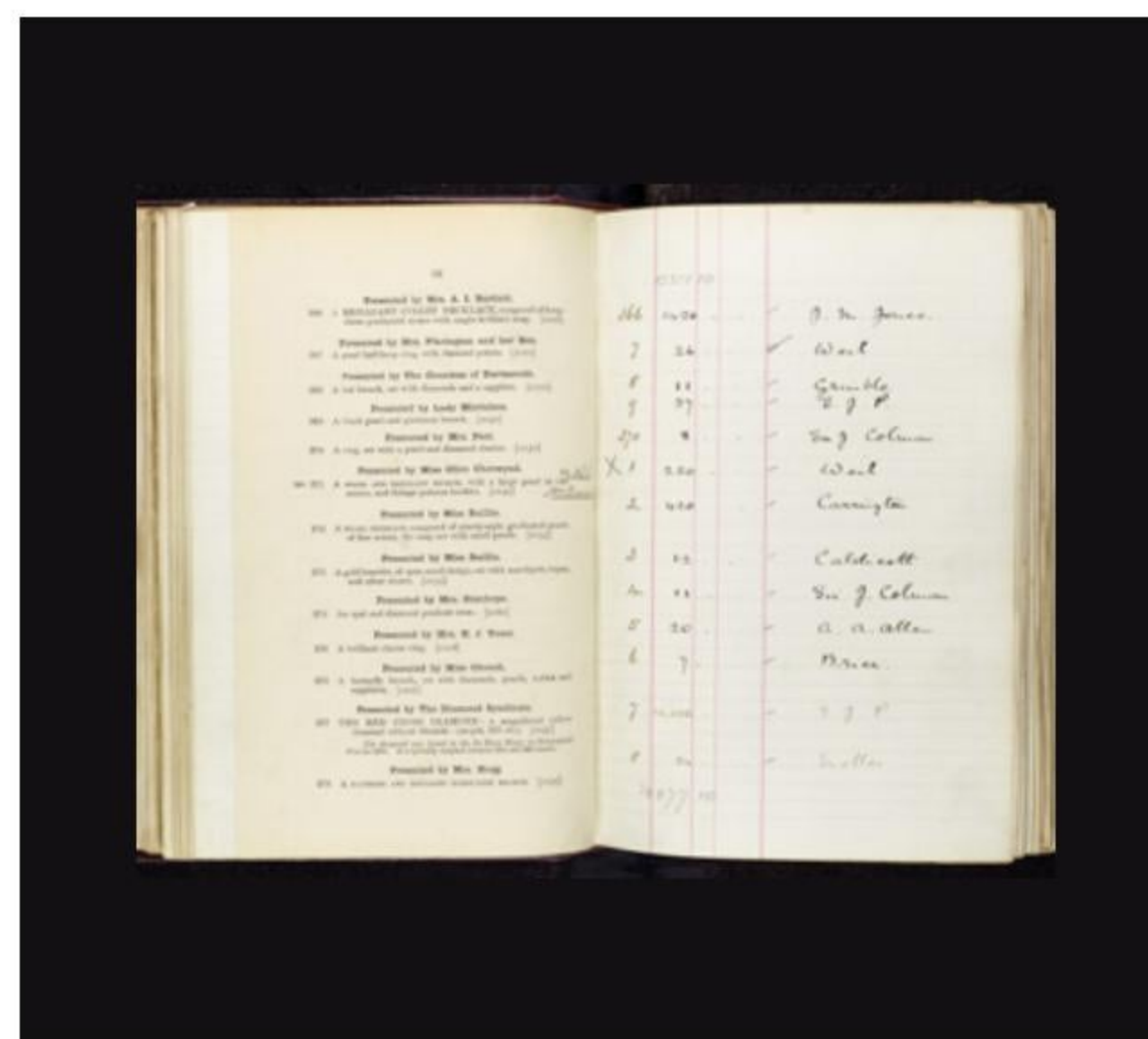
At the turn of the 20th century, the De Beers mines were the only source of stones with this distinctive hue – the intense coloration of the Red Cross Diamond makes it recognisably South African. It is part of its special personality, along with its staggering size and ingenious cut. The diamond's chemistry makes it photoluminescent: if it is exposed to intense light for a time, it will glow in the dark, like a faint but indestructible glimmer of hope.

The Christie's sale of 1918 was the diamond's first appearance on the market. The Great War, as it was already known, ended later that year, but the work of the Red Cross continued after the Armistice. Just before Christmas of that year, Christie's staged one last Red Cross sale. This time, the theme was pearls. A group of patriotic women had come up with a charitable plan to collect individual pearls, from which a single 'Red Cross necklace' could be made and then sold to the highest bidder.

There was poetry to the idea, and it captured the imagination of people throughout Britain and at every level of society. In the event 3,597 pearls were donated – many times more than anticipated. The very best were incorporated into a necklace consisting of 63 pearls with a rose-diamond clasp. The other contributions were assessed, sorted and fashioned into additional items of jewellery – a great many necklaces, but also rings and brooches and pins. All these pieces became lots in Christie's Christmas sale.



The Christie's saleroom during The Red Cross auctions in 1918, which raised tremendous sums in support of the charity's work. Photo: A. R. Coster / Topical Press Agency / Getty Images



The auctioneer's book from Christie's sale of The Red Cross Diamond in 1918, showing the price achieved of £10,000.

As always happens with good causes, people were generous in their own way. Some donors were wealthy – members of the Royal Family contributed pearls from their own collections, and there were important and historic items among the donations. Others were from ordinary women: the only pieces of jewellery they owned, heirlooms or objects of enormous sentimental value.

As the echoes of the big guns were fading, one mother wrote in an accompanying letter that she had ‘sent a pearl in memory of a pearl beyond all price already given – my only son’.

Frank Hurley, *Fallen Comrades*, October, 1917.



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VISIONARY PERSPECTIVES

²² **GEORGES SEURAT (1859-1891)**
Les Poseuses, Ensemble (Petite version)

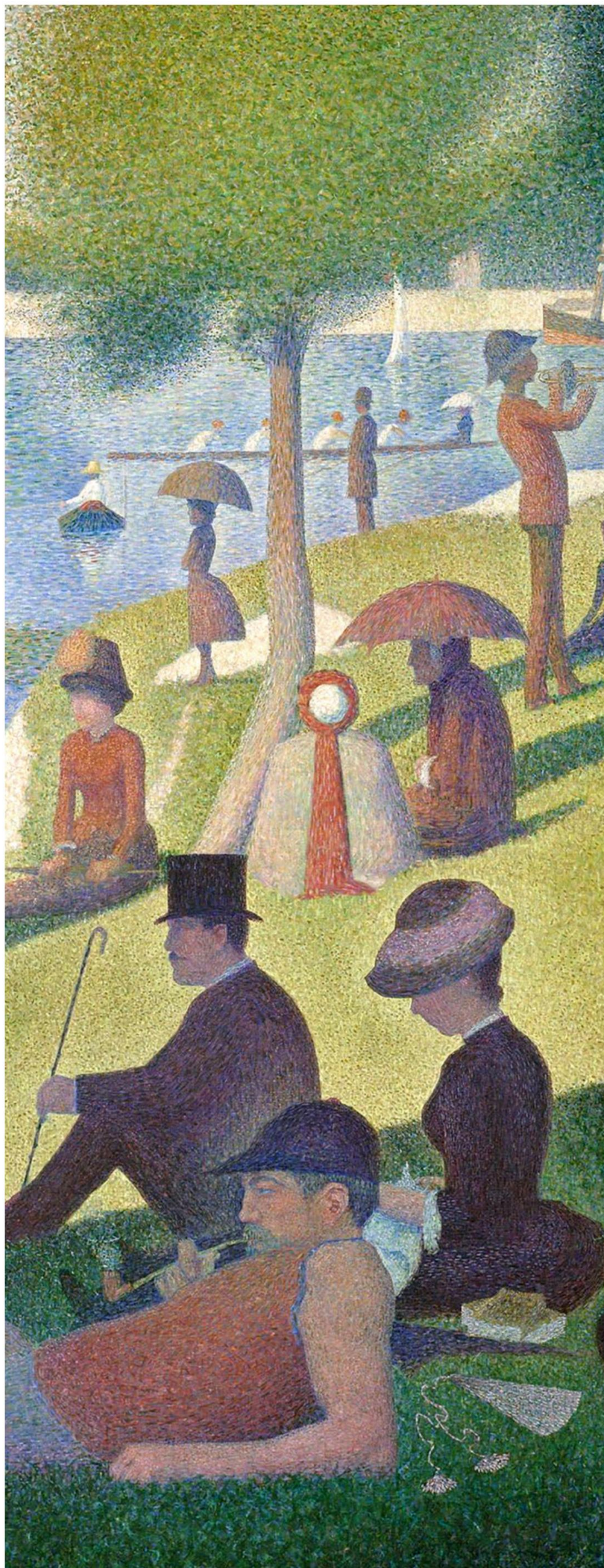
Price Realised: \$149,240,000
New York, 8 Nov 2022

Some visitors to the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition thought it was a joke or a hoax, this painting made of dots. It did not help that *La Grande Jatte*, Georges Seurat's Pointillist manifesto, was displayed in a room so small that it was impossible to step back to the correct distance. Close up, some people saw only chaos.

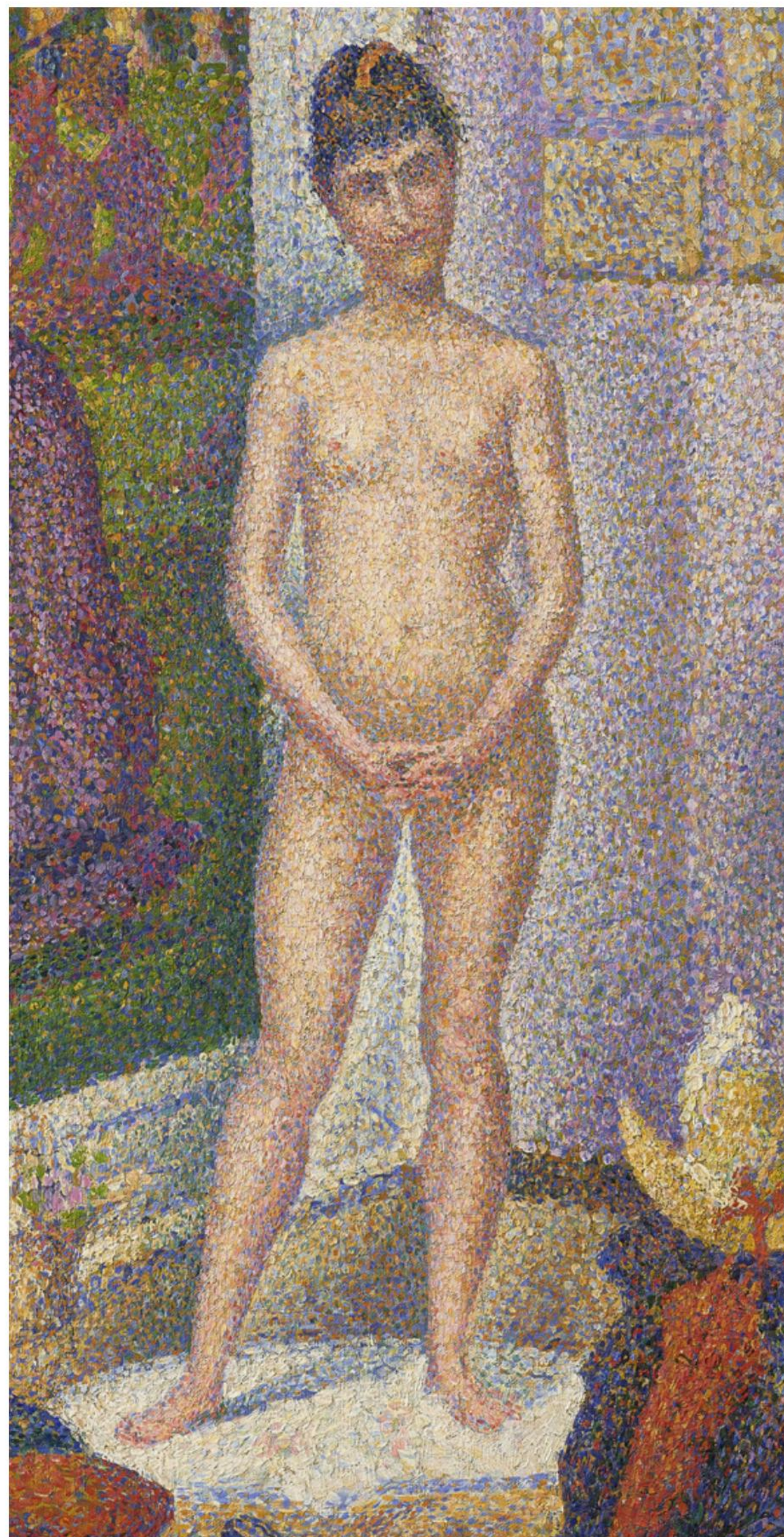
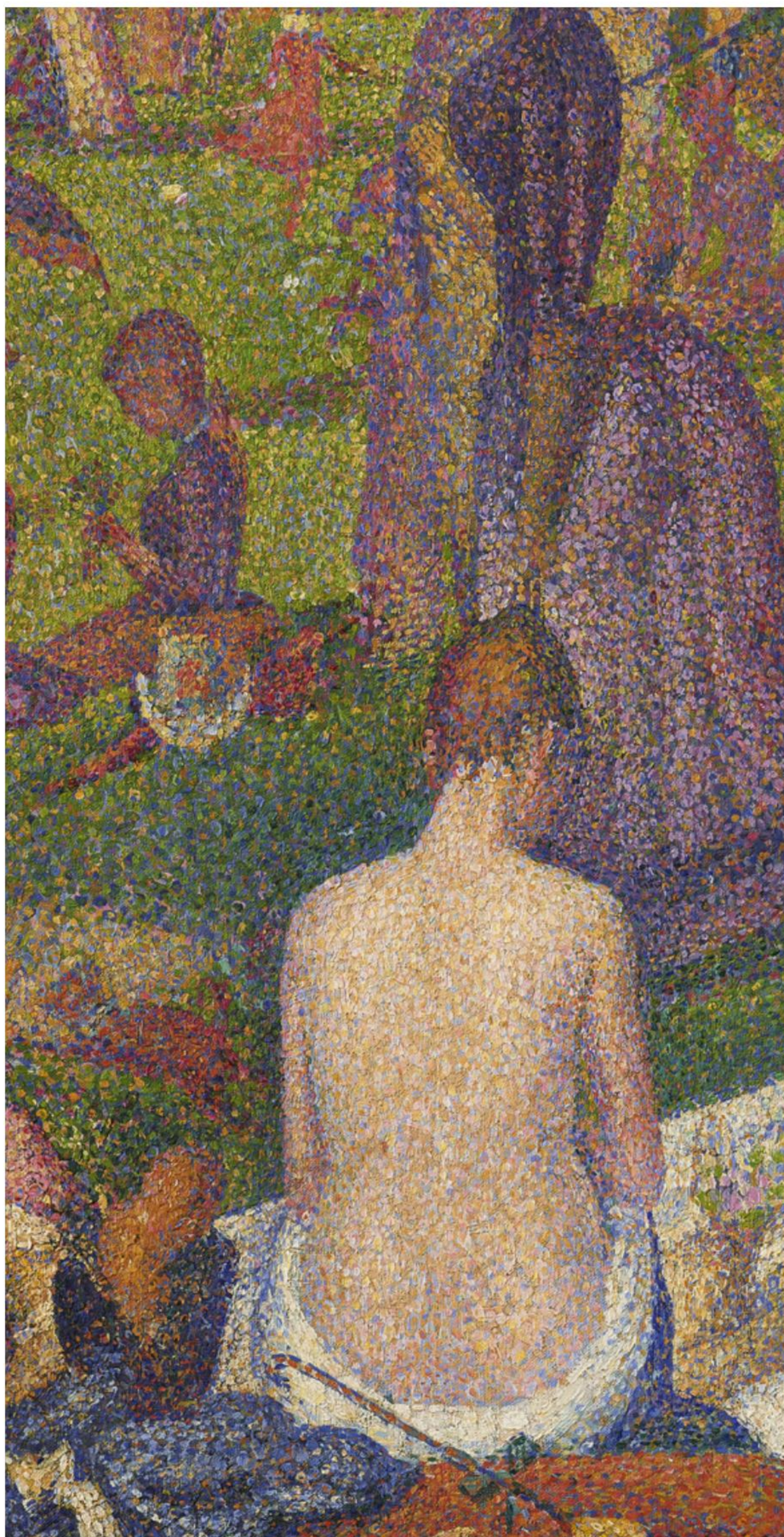
Nevertheless, the reaction that the painting provoked was surprisingly vehement. Students went in groups to stand and laugh at it. One critic, Octave Mirbeau, called it 'an immense and detestable painting'. Another described Seurat's painstakingly applied dots as 'coloured fleas' and complained that 'underneath there is nothing: no soul, no thought, nothing'. The monkey on a leash made many viewers particularly angry: it looked like a calculated insult to polite French society, a mockery of humanity at large. Even sympathetic onlookers wondered whether Seurat's method was limited in scope. It was a technical marvel, certainly, and perfectly suited to the stylised, sculptural figures that inhabited this painting – but was it too deliberate and bloodless to convey the softness and warmth of flesh, too cold and neat for the grand, untidy themes of Western art?

Georges Seurat read every hostile or half-hearted review. He even pasted the press cuttings – good and bad – into a scrapbook. And he took careful note of all stories of outrage and mockery that his friends brought him from the gallery. But he did not explain himself publicly or engage in debate. Like Andy Warhol in a later age, he was a closed book – personally reserved and guarded in his speech. Rather than mount a verbal defence of his art, he laid plans for a new painting, one designed to answer every charge levelled at *La Grande Jatte*. That painting was to be *Les Poseuses*.

Georges Seurat, *Un dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte*, 1884-1886. The Art Institute of Chicago.

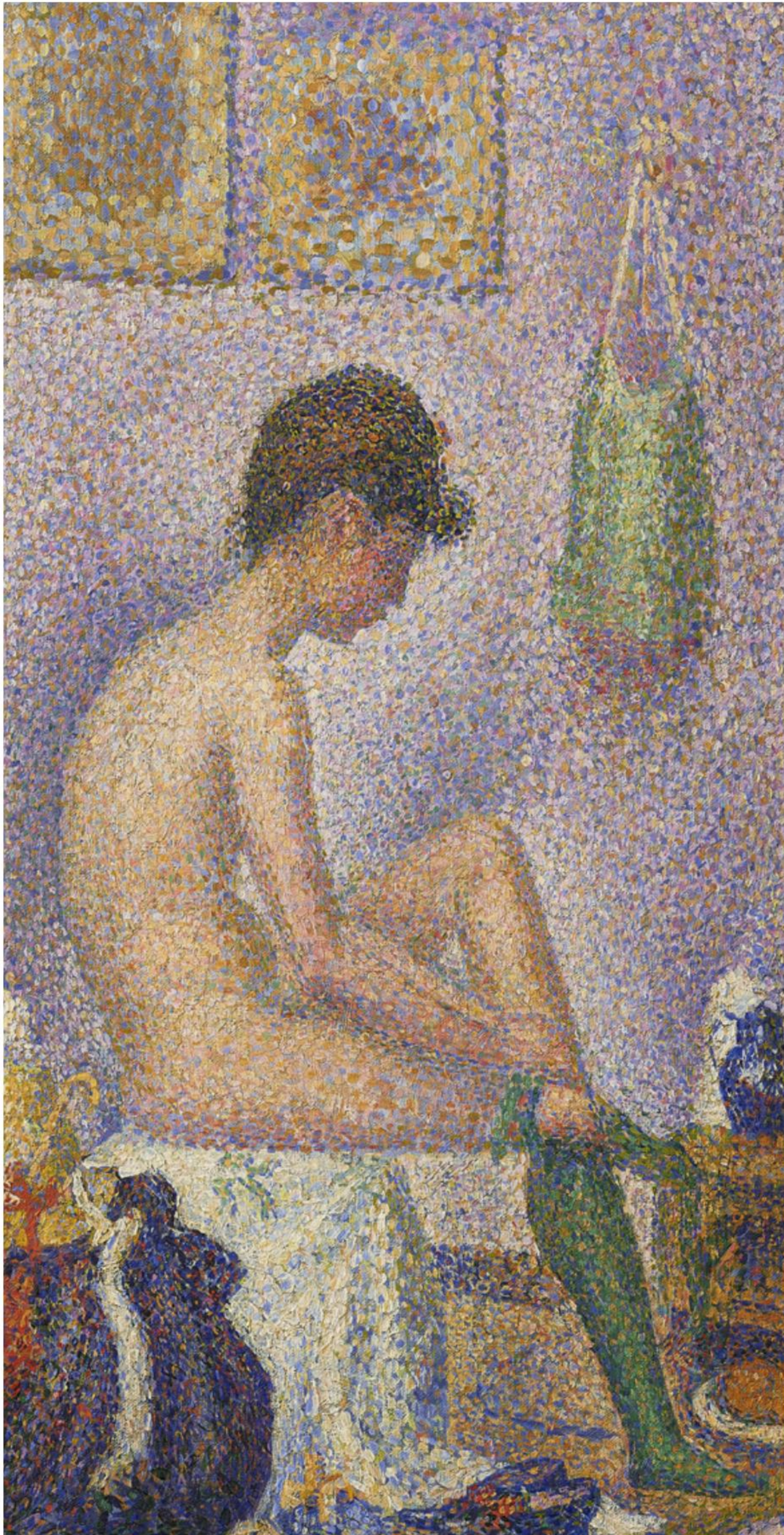






Seurat made the first studies and sketches for *Les Poseuses* while *La Grande Jatte* was still on show, but the task did not begin in earnest until his misunderstood masterpiece came back to the atelier. A visitor who dropped by in the first stages of the project found Seurat 'working away with unbelievable concentration, cloistered in a little studio on the boulevard de Clichy, denying himself everything and spending all his slender means.'

The painting that Seurat had conceived was complex, witty and full of cryptic allusions. At the heart of the scheme was the inclusion of *La Grande Jatte* itself. *Les Poseuses* was to be in part a Pointillist painting of *that* Pointillist painting – it was Pointillism squared.



Georges Seurat, *Les Poseuses, Ensemble (Petite version)*, 1888.

At the same time, it was a visual conundrum, something for viewers to conjure with: a painting of the room where the painting is being made; an indoor painting of a painting of the outdoors.

In the foreground – that is, in the room – Seurat placed three nude models. They represent a direct challenge to those who questioned whether his technique could convey the play of light on bare skin. The models are all in poses that can be read as quotations from the classical canon, or at least from great works of the past.

The left-hand figure recalls Ingres' *Baigneuse de Valpinçon*, which had come to the Louvre with great fanfare a decade previously; the central figure looks

like a relaxed, uncontrived iteration of the *Venus pudica*, a common classical motif in which the goddess reacts to being seen by an unwelcome onlooker; the cross-legged right-hand figure echoes another Greco-Roman subject, the *Spinario*, in which a boy is shown carefully removing a thorn from his foot. By borrowing from art history in this way, Seurat seems to be saying: my approach is not a technical cul-de-sac or a mere piece of painterly virtuosity; this is a new frontier in art, a giant leap forward made possible by a scientific approach to the business of painting – because, surely, all artists should be interested in the nature of light and colour?

In the event, Seurat made two versions of *Les Poseuses*. The first was large-scale and now resides at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. The second smaller version, which Seurat made as the bigger picture was nearing completion, is the work that eventually joined the collection of Paul G. Allen, co-founder of Microsoft. It was sold in New York with the rest of Allen's collection in November 2022.

Max Carter, Christie's Vice Chairman for 20th and 21st-Century Art in New York, believes that the smaller version is the better expression of Seurat's intent – and precisely because of its reduced scale. 'With Seurat's larger pictures, the effect depends on viewing from afar,' he says. 'The criticism was that, as you draw near, you see behind the technique. But with a canvas that is 15 inches by 20 [39.3 × 50 cm], the only way for Seurat to achieve his aim was to create an indissoluble weave of dots. This second version of *Les Poseuses* has a laser clarity – more and more depths emerge as you approach it. It is atomic Pointillism: you'd need a microscope to see how it's done.'

Les Poseuses was completed in 1888, two years after the fateful exhibition. Seurat must have felt that he had now won the technical argument with his detractors: the painting is a vindication of his method and a triumphant work of art. But it is more than a Pointillist polemic. With *Les Poseuses*, Seurat goes farther than he ever had, or ever would again, in his investigation of the slippery nature of perception. He seems to be playing games with time and space.

Take the positioning of *La Grande Jatte* on the back wall: it immediately creates an illusion of depth within the small room. The large canvas could be read as a window to the outdoors – or, a modern mind might think, a giant flatscreen displaying a scene from elsewhere.

Seurat is well aware of the unsettling effect of the painting within a painting, and there is something almost Surrealist about it. The fashionable figures of *La Grande Jatte* are painted in the same manner and at the same scale as the models in the room – so it might seem that the young women have just stepped through the frame and divested themselves of all that modish frippery. After all, some of the props and the clothes that are scattered across the studio have come from *La Grande Jatte* – the yellow hat, the red umbrella. And as if to emphasise the porous nature of the border between the two worlds depicted in the picture, the yapping dog seems to be in the act of leaping out of the studio and into the canvas.

Then there is the puzzle of the three models. They are physically so similar that they could be the same person shown at three different moments: before, during, and after sitting for Seurat. The figure on the right seems to be getting dressed and making ready to leave. The figure in the middle is a kind of relaxed, more real version of the stiffly upright woman seen behind her in *La Grande Jatte*. The figure on the left seems to be composing herself for the work ahead. Her pose too mirrors a person within the painting: the little flower girl who hovers like a thought bubble above the model's head. The head of the left-hand sitter completely obscures the contentious monkey.

What did Seurat mean by that? Was he saying to his critics that the monkey was never the real point? 'We don't have a letter or diary entry from Seurat to explain it,' says Max Carter. 'But I think we can say with complete confidence that Seurat was an obsessive and everything he did was deliberate, including this very conspicuous erasure.'



Georges Seurat, *Les Poseuses (ensemble)*, 1888 on view at the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia in 2012. Photo: © 2022 The Barnes Foundation.

On display at Christie's New York: *Les Poseuses, Ensemble (Petite version)*. © Visko Hatfield, 2023.

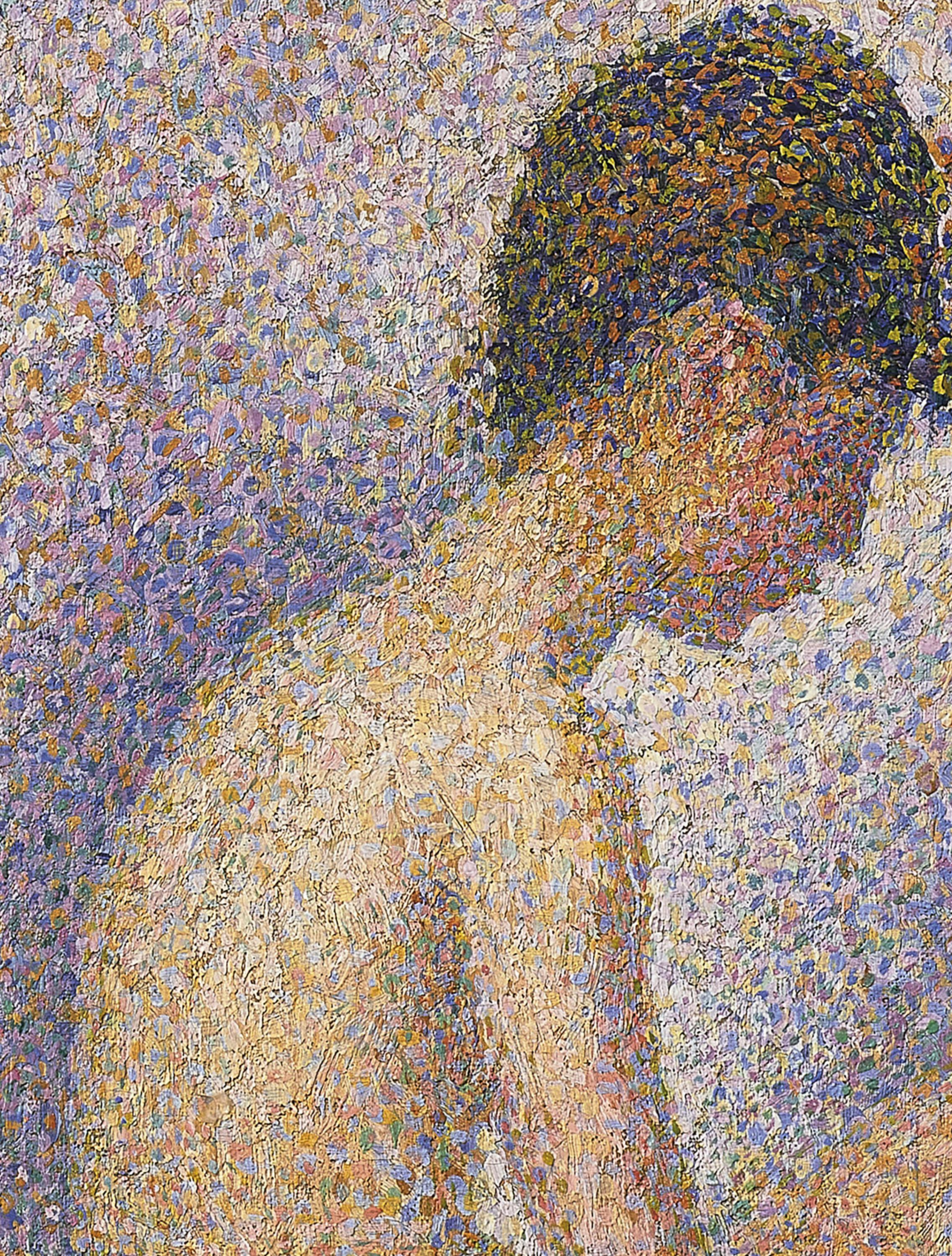


“This second version of Les Poseuses has a laser clarity – more and more depths emerge as you approach it. It is atomic Pointillism: you’d need a microscope to see how it’s done.”

— Max Carter, Vice Chairman, 20th and 21st Century Art, Americas









It is not hard to see why *Les Poseuses* was the centrepiece of Paul G. Allen's collection. 'Because of my computer background,' he once said, 'I'm attracted to things like Pointillism because they come out of breaking something down into its components – like bytes or numbers.' Allen didn't say as much, but Seurat's artistic, scientifically-driven deconstruction of the effects of colour and light results in something that resembles pixels on a computer screen. Every image that we look at on a laptop or a TV is a kind of digital Pointillism: an organised blizzard of coloured dots. Seurat's method may not have been the future of painting, but it anticipated the future of image-based technology.

And Paul G. Allen, like Georges Seurat, was fascinated by perception – something noted by Johanna Flaum, Christie's Vice Chairman for 20th and 21st-Century Art, Americas, who organised the pre-sale exhibition in New York. 'Mr Allen said that he wanted to experience light through painters' eyes,' she says. 'That painterly vision is very present in the Seurat, but it is also there in other works he owned: the Turner paintings, Andrew Wyeth's daytime sleeper, in the numerous Venice landscapes. It goes all the way to Hockney and his paintings of light on water. Paul G. Allen pulled these artists together when he created the collection, and because he was himself someone who saw the world differently, he was able to make connections that nobody else makes.'

The pioneering computer scientist brought his analytical mind to bear on the question of what it means to be an artist. The quietly revolutionary painter strove to invest his art with scientific truth and rigour. The concerns of Seurat and Allen cross somewhere in the middle of the art-science continuum, and the precise locus of their intersection is shown here in the painting that Seurat made in one century and Allen owned in the next. That nexus is contained in the upstairs room at 128 Bis Boulevard de Clichy in Paris, Seurat's studio.

And perhaps the whole Paul G. Allen collection – or indeed any art collection – can be seen as a kind of Pointillist endeavour: myriad objects, hundreds of separate points of interest, mysteriously coalescing into something coherent, considered, and wonderful to behold.

APPENDIX

¹ **ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)**

Shot Sage Blue Marilyn

signed and dated 'Andy Warhol / 64' (on the overlap)
acrylic and silkscreen ink on linen
40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm.)
Painted in 1964

Price Realised: \$195,040,000
New York, 8 May 2022

² **A RARE IMPERIAL MUGHAL PASHMINA CARPET NORTHERN INDIA, CIRCA 1650**

Of 'Lattice and Flower' design, consisting of naturalistic
flowers placed in the compartments of a lattice formed by
twisting leafy vines, pashmina wool, silk warp and weft,
light localised wear, some restoration, reduced in length
9ft. x 8ft.11in. (275cm. x 274cm.)

Price Realised: £5,442,000
London, 26 October 2022

³ **REFIK ANADOL (B. 1985)**

Living Architecture: Casa Batlló

non-fungible token ERC-721; custom software,
generative with sound
Executed in 2022 and minted on April 11, 2022.
This work is unique and is accompanied by an
artist-signed 3D physical certificate.

Price Realised: \$1,380,000
New York, 9 May 2022

⁴ **A MAGNIFICENT HUANGHUALI CIRCULAR INCENSE STAND, XIANGJI 17TH CENTURY**

38 1/8 in. (97 cm.) high, top panel 16 1/8 in. (41 cm.) diam.

Price Realised: HK\$71,327,500
Hong Kong, 28 November 2022

⁵ **FRANZ MARC (1880-1916)**

The Foxes (Die Füchse)

signed with initial 'M.' (lower right)
oil on canvas
34 3/4 x 26 1/4 in. (88.3 x 66.4 cm.)
Painted in 1913.

Price Realised: £42,654,500
London, 28 February 2022

⁶ **Domaine Henri Jayet, Vosne-Romanée Cros Parantoux 1999**

1er Cru, Côte de Nuits
Bottle #s 00009-12, 00016-17. In original wooden case
6 bottles per lot

Price Realised: HK\$3,250,000
Hong Kong, 12 April 2022

⁷ **LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER (KRONACH 1472-1553 WEIMAR)**

The Nymph of the Spring

signed with the artist's device of a serpent with wings
folded (centre right, on the tree)
oil on panel
32 1/4 x 47 3/8 in. (82.1 x 120.5 cm.)
inscribed 'FONTIS NYMPHA SACRI SOMNVM NE /
RVMPE QVIESCO' (upper left)

Price Realised: £9,430,000
London, 6 July 2022

⁸ **TRACEY EMIN (B. 1963)**

Like A Cloud of Blood

signed and dated 'Tracey Emin 2022' (lower right);
titled 'Like A Cloud of Blood' (lower left)
acrylic on canvas
59 7/8 x 71 5/8 in. (152 x 182cm.)
Painted in 2022.

Price Realised: £2,322,000
London, 12 October 2022

APPENDIX

⁹ **2 TECHNICS SL-1100A TURNTABLES; A GLI 3880 MIXER WITH GLI 1000 EQUALIZER; A MCINTOSH MC-2300 STEREO POWER AMPLIFIER; 2 SPEAKER CABINETS WITH 6 INCH SPEAKER ARRAY; 2 SUBWOFFER CABINETS AND FOLDING TABLE**

VARIOUS, MID 1970S

Price Realised: \$201,600
New York, 18 August 2022

¹⁰ **PATEK PHILIPPE. A MAGNIFICENT, EXTREMELY RARE AND HIGHLY COMPLICATED 18K PINK GOLD DOUBLE-DIAL WRISTWATCH WITH TWELVE COMPLICATIONS INCLUDING “CATHEDRAL” MINUTE REPEATING, TOURBILLON, PERPETUAL CALENDAR WITH RETROGRADE DATE, MOON AGE AND ANGULAR MOTION, SIDEREAL TIME AND SKY CHART SKY MOON TOURBILLON MODEL, REF. 5002R, CIRCA 2010**

Movement: Manual

Dial: White

Case: 44 mm.

With: 18k pink gold Patek Philippe buckle, Patek Philippe Certificate of Origin, Patek Philippe Bulletin de Precision de Marche, setting pin, product literature, leather portfolio, presentation box and outer packaging

Price Realised: HK\$24,450,000
Hong Kong, 23 May 2022

^{11a} **ERNIE BARNES (1938 - 2009)**
The Sugar Shack

signed ‘ERNIE BARNES’ (lower right); signed again, inscribed and dated 9/27/76 Ernie Barnes’ (on the reverse)
acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 in. (91.4 x 121.9 cm.)
Painted in 1976.

Price Realised: \$15,275,000
New York, 11 May 2022

^{11b} **EMANUEL LEUTZE (1816-1868)**
Washington Crossing the Delaware

signed ‘E. Leutze’ (lower right)
oil on canvas
40 x 68 in. (101.6 x 172.7 cm.)
Painted in 1851.

Price Realised: \$45,045,000
New York, 11 May 2022

¹² **PIERRE-PHILIPPE THOMIRE (1751-1843)**
A Pair of Monumental Late Louis XVI Ormolu and Patinated-Bronze Twelve-Light Girandoles, circa 1790-1800

Each on a faux-marble wooden base possibly Russian; the ormolu wreath associated in the early 19th century
106 3/4 in. high , 28 in. wide ; 17 1/4 in. deep

Price Realised: €4,956,500
Paris, 13 June 2022

¹³ **ZAO WOU-KI (ZHAO WUJI, 1920 - 2013)**
29.09.64.

signed in Chinese and signed ‘ZAO’ (lower right); signed, titled, inscribed and dated ‘ZAO WOU-KI 345 x 255 29.Sept.64. 254 x 344’ (on the reverse)
oil on canvas
230 x 345 cm. (90 1/2 x 135 7/8 in.)
Painted in 1964.

Price Realised: HK\$278,000,000
Hong Kong, 25 May 2022

¹⁴ **JEFF KOONS (B. 1955)**
Balloon Monkey (Magenta)

mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent colour coating
150 x 126 x 235in. (381 x 320 x 596.9cm.)
Executed in 2006-2013, this work is the artist's proof and one of five unique versions

Price Realised: £10,136,500
London, 27 June 2022

¹⁵ **MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (CAPRESE 1475-1564 ROME)**
A nude man (after Masaccio) and two figures behind him with inscriptions ‘Pietro Faccini’ (twice, on the mount, probably by Genevosio); with inscriptions ‘Pietro Facini/Collection Borghèse’ and ‘86’ (verso of the mount) pen and two shades of brown ink, brown wash, watermark (?)

33 x 20 cm (13 x 7 7/8 in.)

Price Realised: € 23,162,000
Paris, 17 May 2022

APPENDIX

**¹⁶ YIPWON FIGURE, KARAWARI RIVER,
MIDDLE SEPIK PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

Height: 166 cm. (65 3/8 in.)

Price Realised: €5,071,000

Paris, 28 June 2022

¹⁷ THE ANN & GORDON GETTY COLLECTION

1,500 fine and decorative art objects across 10 sales

Price Realised: \$150,000,000+

New York, 10-25 October 2022

¹⁸ LYNNE DREXLER (1928-1999)

Herbert's Garden

signed, titled and dated 'Lynne Drexler Herbert's Garden 1960'
(on the reverse)

oil on canvas

63 5/8 x 83 1/2 in.

Painted in 1960.

Price Realised: \$1,500,000

New York, 12 May 2022

¹⁹ FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE (1927-2008)

Âne Planté, 2000

patinated bronze

55 3/4 x 43 3/4 x 61 in. (141.7 x 111.2 x 155 cm)

monogrammed FXL, stamped LALANNE,

dated 2000 and numbered 5/8

Price Realised: \$8,405,000

New York, 6 December 2022

²⁰ MAN RAY (1890-1976)

Le Violon d'Ingres, 1924

signed and dated in ink 'Man Ray 1924' (lower right);
stamped in red ink 'ORIGINAL' (on the reverse of the flush mount)

unique gelatin silver print, flush-mounted on board

image/sheet/flush mount: 19 x 14 3/4 in. (48.5 x 37.5 cm.)

Price Realised: \$12,412,500

New York, 13 May 2022

²¹ THE RED CROSS DIAMOND

A SUPERB COLOURED DIAMOND

Fancy intense yellow cushion modified brilliant-cut
diamond of 205.07 carats

GIA, 2021, report no. 6213456988: 205.07 carats,

Fancy Intense Yellow, natural colour, VS2 clarity

Accompanied by the Red Cross GIA Monograph

Size/Dimensions: 33.83 x 33.80 x 24.91 mm

Gross weight: 41.14 grams

Price Realised: ₣14,181,250

Geneva, 10 May 2022

²² GEORGES SEURAT (1859-1891)

Les Poseuses, Ensemble (Petite version)

oil on canvas

15 1/2 x 19 3/4 in. (39.3 x 50 cm.)

Painted in 1888.

Price Realised: \$149,240,000

New York, 8 Nov 2022

