

# CHRISTIE'S

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## PRIVATE SALE

# FOUJITA MASTERPIECE TO MUSÉE ANDO À KARUIZAWA

CHRISTIE'S PRIVATE SALES DEPARTMENT  
FACILITATES ACQUISITION OF LÉONARD TSUGUHARU FOUJITA'S  
*CLASSE DE CHATS*  
TO MUSEUM DEDICATED TO HIS WORKS



**LÉONARD TSUGUHARU FOUJITA (1886–1968)**

*Classe de chats* signed, dated and inscribed 'Foujita 1949 n.y.c' (lower left)

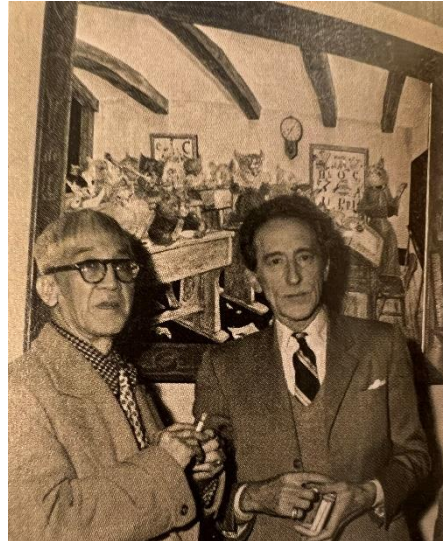
oil on canvas

29 ½ x 39 ½ in. (77 x 102 cm.)

Painted in New York in 1949

**NEW YORK** – Christie's is proud to announce that its Private Sales Department has helped the first private museum in Japan dedicated to the works of Léonard Tsuguharu Foujita to acquire a major picture by the artist. *Classe de chats* is on display in the museum's exhibition, *Tsuguharu Foujita: Room for Cats and Girls*, at the Musée Ando à Karuizawa (Ando Museum of Art in Karuizawa), Japan through Tuesday, 12 September 2023. *Classe de chats* is exhibited to the public for the first time since 1989.

Cats played an important role for Foujita on a personal level and in his art. He depicted them with tenderness on their own, as companions in portraiture, and later in life as anthropomorphic animals in lively scenes. Animals with humanlike qualities had populated the myths of his childhood, and are famously depicted in ukiyo-e prints by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, but also from Western sources, such as La Fontaine's *Fables*. *Classe de chats* ranks among the masterpieces Foujita painted during his one-year stay in New York in 1949, and was included in the celebrated solo-exhibition at Mathias Komor Gallery the same year, which became the talk of the town. A New York paper declared "No living artist can depict cats in action whilst capturing such variety of expression."



Foujita and Jean Cocteau in front of *Classe de chats*, New York, 1949.

Image from the artist's photo album at Tokyo University of the Arts

**MUSÉE ANDO À KARUIZAWA** opened October, 2022 in Karuizawa, a mountain resort area not far from Tokyo. The museum's collection consists of approximately 200 works by Léonard Tsuguharu Foujita, a leading painter of the École de Paris, belonging to Yasushi and Megumi Ando. Collected over the past 20 years, these works had been displayed in the Ando residences in Tokyo. The museum is conceived with the philosophy of, "inviting you into the collector's home," so you can relax and enjoy these incredible works in a comfortable, contemporary setting.

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