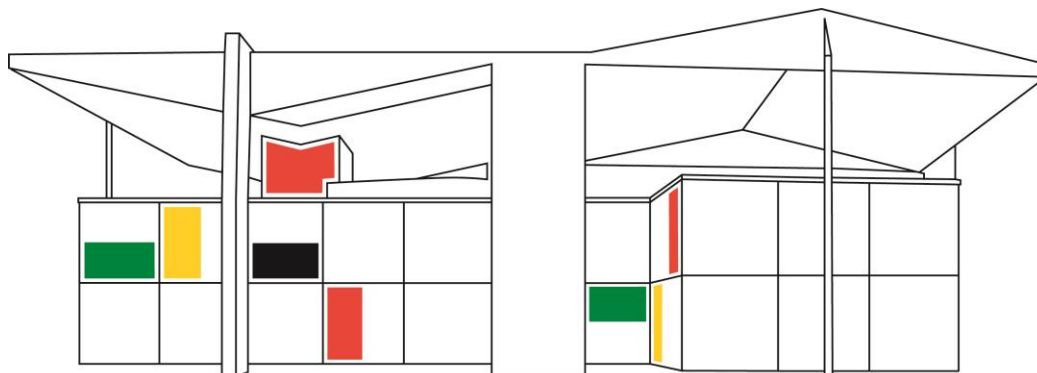


# CHRISTIE'S

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## LE CORBUSIER

IMPORTANT WORKS FROM THE  
HEIDI WEBER MUSEUM COLLECTION

FORM CENTREPIECE OF CHRISTIE'S  
IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART  
EVENING SALE · 28 FEBRUARY 2017

*'I had only one wish: to help Le Corbusier get the recognition for his paintings and sculptures, which he deserved. His paintings and sculptures should become world renowned'*

Heidi Weber

**London** – *Le Corbusier: Important Works from the Heidi Weber Museum Collection* will form a centrepiece of the *Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale*, the first auction in *20<sup>th</sup>-Century at Christie's*, a series of sales that take place in London between 28 February and 10 March 2017.

Heidi Weber first met Le Corbusier in the summer of 1958 at Cap Martin in Southern France. This auspicious meeting marked the beginning of a close, collaborative and enormously productive partnership between the pair. With endless passion, determination and an unceasing enthusiasm, Weber embarked on a number of collaborative projects; from the incredibly successful industrial and commercial adaptation of his furniture designs, to publishing his graphic works, to nurturing and developing the market for Le Corbusier's art, and finally to personally funding and constructing his last building – the Heidi Weber Museum Centre Le Corbusier in Zurich, Switzerland. Described variously as the 'leading ambassador', 'spiritual heiress' or 'mentor' of Le Corbusier, Heidi Weber was, in Le Corbusier's own words, a 'monster of perseverance, devotion and enthusiasm'.

Three oil paintings tracing Le Corbusier's career from the 1920s to the 1940s will be offered alongside four works on paper from this significant Museum Collection. Weber developed an unparalleled collection of Le Corbusier's work, amassing a comprehensive overview of his career. From the elegant, rigidly structured Purist compositions of the late 1910s and early 1920s, to the exuberant multi-hued compositions of his later years, the astonishing diversity that characterises Le Corbusier's *oeuvre* can be seen in the selection of works that feature in the *Impressionist & Modern Art Evening* and *Works on Paper Sales*. Although Le Corbusier regarded himself first and foremost as a plastic artist, he rarely exhibited this side of his practice, choosing instead to keep it hidden from critics and a wider public. One of the first to recognise the importance of his painting, drawing and sculpture, over the course of her life Weber dedicated herself to the promotion and dissemination of this aspect of his work. The selection presented in *Le Corbusier: Important Works from the Heidi Weber Museum Collection* demonstrates the range of Le Corbusier's plastic *oeuvre*, and reveals an artist who constantly defied stylistic definition. Highlights will be on view in Hong Kong from 17 to 20 January, Shanghai on 8 February 2017, Beijing from 11 to 13 February 2017 and then in London from 23 to 28 February 2017.



Le Corbusier, *Accordéon, carafe et cafetière* (1926, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000)

Created in 1926, *Accordéon, carafe et cafetière* (estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000) shows the growing complexity of Le Corbusier's pictorial vocabulary as he reached the heights of his mature Purist style. Having co-founded Purism alongside Amédée Ozenfant in 1918, Le Corbusier spent much of the early half of the 1920s intensely focused on refining his still-life compositions to best reflect the theories of order and purity which underpinned the movement, reducing his forms to pure geometric shapes and minimizing his use of colour to an austere palette of restrained hues. However, following his break with Ozenfant in 1925, Le Corbusier's paintings became decidedly less rigorous in their formulation, with the artist moving away from the strict geometry of forms which had characterised his earlier work, and instead introducing increasingly dynamic shapes and bright colours to his compositions. Key amongst the developments that occurred during this period was the artist's expansion of the types of objects he included in his still-lives, as he began to push his paintings to new levels of expression and invention. In the present work, the inclusion of the accordion, with its distinctively concertinaed mid-section, lends the scene a new visual richness, while the overlapping contours and intersecting sections of the glasses, carafe and coffee pot heighten the internal dynamism of this striking still-life.

Produced during a period of intensive experimentation in his painting, *Femme grise, homme rouge et os devant une porte* (1931, estimate: £1,200,000-2,000,000) highlights the emergence of several integral motifs within the artist's *oeuvre*. From the voluptuous curves of the nude female body, to the symbolic open hand at its centre, the composition features a series of themes that would prove essential to Le Corbusier's painterly activities throughout the rest of his career. At its heart stand two monumental figures, the man and woman of the title, their forms appearing to almost melt into one another as their bodies intertwine in an intimate embrace. Positioned before an open doorway, they stand in almost visual opposition to one another, the sharp juxtaposition between the cold grey and russet red used on their bodies emphasising their individuality and inherent differences. To their left, a fragmented bone, one of the artist's so-called *objets à réaction poétique* (*objects with poetic effect*) appears in a series of segments, its form almost completely abstracted as the artist explores its shape through a variety of cross-sections and different profiles. The bright colouring and amorphous forms of this portion of the painting lend the scene an almost Surrealist air, particularly when contrasted against the neighbouring figurative elements, and point towards Le Corbusier's familiarity with the art of his Parisian contemporaries. The inclusion of both this natural, found



Le Corbusier, *Femme grise, homme rouge et os devant une porte* (1931, estimate: £1,200,000-2,000,000)

object and the human figure in *Femme grise, homme rouge et os devant une porte* reflects the increased importance of nature in Le Corbusier's art at this time, as he broke away from the constraints of his earlier Purist style and began to forge a new, distinctive path for his creativity.



Le Corbusier, *Nature morte et figure*  
(1944, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000)

Painted over a number of years, 1927, 1938, and completed in 1944, *Nature morte et figure* (estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000) is a monumental work that incorporates many of the themes and motifs that had dominated Le Corbusier's art. A kaleidoscopic array of bold colours and forms, this painting can be seen as a summation of Le Corbusier's work as a painter and architect. At the centre of the composition, a single dark outline denotes the form of a large bottle, next to which, on the left-hand side, the statuesque figure of a woman similarly fills the entire height of the canvas. Amidst a plethora of other forms, shapes and facets of colour, these two objects illustrate the two primary components of Le Corbusier's prolific pictorial *oeuvre*: the still-life and the human figure. Elsewhere in the large, multi-partite composition, a pipe, and a wooden triangle – an architect's instrument – serve as visual symbols of the artist himself. Filled with the archetypal images of the artist's practice, *Nature morte et figure*

is a panoramic and immersive depiction of Le Corbusier's life as an artist, a dynamic and celebratory work that encapsulates the many different facets of his pluralistic career.

Friend, confidante, collaborator and patron, Heidi Weber's relationship with Le Corbusier was truly unique. As Le Corbusier's fame flourished in the final decade of his life, it is undeniable that Weber's vision, temerity and dedication to the artist played a large part in perpetuating his international renown and establishing the unparalleled reputation that he enjoys today.

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#### About Christie's

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