

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S *THE ART OF THE SURREAL* 28 FEBRUARY 2017

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE WORKS FROM
THE COLLECTIONS OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO,
THE EDWARD JAMES FOUNDATION,
THE FAMILY OF MAX ERNST AND
THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF BARBARA LAMBRECHT



Paul Delvaux, *Le village des sirènes* (1942, estimate: £1,700,000-2,500,000), René Magritte, *La corde sensible* (1960, estimate: £14,000,000-18,000,000), and René Magritte, *Le domaine d'Arnheim* (1938, estimate: £6,500,000-8,500,000)

London – The sixteenth edition of *The Art of the Surreal* sale will take place at Christie's on 28 February, following the *Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale* and will include 35 lots that chart the history of Dada and Surrealism. Together the two auctions launch *20th Century at Christie's*, a series of sales that take place from 28 February to 10 March 2017. Highlights include René Magritte's *La corde sensible* (1960, estimate: £14,000,000-18,000,000), one of the largest oils he created, alongside his painting *Le domaine d'Arnheim* (1938, estimate: £6,500,000-8,500,000). A group of seven works by Max Ernst include *Portrait érotique voilé* (1933 and *circa* 1950, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000), offered by the artist's family, and *Les deux oiseaux* (1925, estimate: £100,000-150,000) from the Personal Collection of Barbara Lambrecht, sold to benefit the Rubens Prize Collection in the Museum of Contemporary Art Siegen. The works will be exhibited in London from 23 to 28 February 2017.

René Magritte's *La corde sensible*, a composition unique in his oeuvre, exemplifies the artist's lifelong quest to reveal and revel in the mystery that he perceived to exist within the real world. Magritte originally presented it as a gift to his wife, Georgette. Later owned by Ronald Winston, the son of the world-renowned jeweller, Harry Winston, the painting has remained in the same private collection since 1990. Situated under a blue sky, amidst a verdant green landscape with a mountain range in the distance, an enormous crystal glass stands incongruously in the middle of the valley. Hovering just above it is a cloud, the weightless form meeting the solid glass creating a compelling contrast between lightness and weight, transparency and opacity, atmosphere and earth.

Le domaine d'Arnheim (illustrated, page one) is René Magritte's first realisation in oil of one of his most enduring pictorial motifs, the magisterial eagle-shaped mountain. The epic scale and romantic grandeur of this painting's mountain imagery is echoed on a window ledge in the foreground of the painting where a small, almost minimal, still-life rests in the form of a pair of bird eggs. The present work formed part of the collection assembled by the great English patron and collector of surrealist art, Edward James.

The group of seven works by Max Ernst, offered from a number of prestigious collections, includes *Les deux oiseaux*, one of a major series of object-paintings on the theme of imprisoned birds that Ernst made in 1925. The delicacy of the birds' forms is presented in sharp contrast to the heavy texture of the sandpaper ground, imprisoning bars and the strong cork boundary of the artist's picture-frame. *Savage Moon* (1926, estimate: £250,000-350,000) is one of a series of moonlit landscape paintings that Ernst made the following year, in 1926. Depicting a mystic moon casting its ethereal light over the surface of the sea, it is one of the very first paintings that he ever made using the new technique of *grattage*, a method of scraping random patterns in oil paint. Out of the apparent geometric simplicity of the forms a matrix of abstract pattern and colour has been created. *Portrait érotique voilé* (illustrated, right) is offered by the artist's family, it was first created in 1933 and later reworked by the artist into a new, more regal and grandiose version around 1950. Centred upon the depiction of an imperious bird-headed female figure sporting a revolutionary *bonnet de la Liberté* and seated on a crimson throne, this final version was unseen in public until the major retrospective of Ernst's work held at the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Dusseldorf in 1991. The group also includes a very rare Dada collage from 1920 titled *2 holoëder sulfates, silicates, picastrates and twins after my choice with chopsticks* (estimate: £250,000-350,000), *Produit de France* (1935, estimate: £80,000-120,000), *Das Rästel im Stil von Giorgio de Chirico* (1934, estimate: £30,000-50,000), and a striking 'décalcomanie' *Untitled* (1941, estimate: £200,000-300,000).



Max Ernst, *Portrait érotique voilé*
(1933, estimate: £1,500,000-2,500,000)

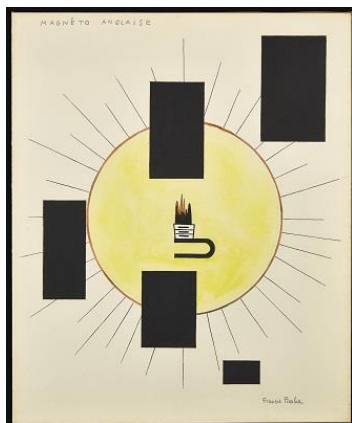


Yves Tanguy, *La lumière, la solitude*
(1940, estimate: £500,000-700,000)

One of the first works he created upon arriving in the USA, Yves Tanguy's *La lumière, la solitude* (1940, estimate: £500,000-700,000, illustrated, left) is a comparatively large, highly worked, jewel-like painting, distinctive for the rich rainbowcolours of its background. With its constellation of automatic, intuitively-arrived-at, forms in the foreground, it hovers on the borderline between realist landscape and abstract fantasy. One of the best compositions the market has seen for years this painting was hidden in a private European collection for decades until now.

Magnéto anglaise (1921-22, estimate: £400,000-600,000, illustrated, below left) is one of a much celebrated series of ironic, 'abstract' works that Francis Picabia made for his solo show at the Galerie Dalmau in Barcelona, in November 1922. It was first bought from the artist by the celebrated collector and Parisian fashion designer Jaques Doucet and later formed part of the English collection of E.J. Power for 20 years. Picabia's 'mechanomorphic' abstractions appeared to challenge and lampoon the whole idea of modernist aesthetics, the contemporary art market and the mechanical workings of human sexual attraction and interaction. Rich in imagery and enigmatic in its meaning, *Statice* (1929, estimate: £1,300,000-1,800,000) is a captivating example of Picabia's celebrated *Transparency* paintings, a series of works named for their depiction of multiple images,

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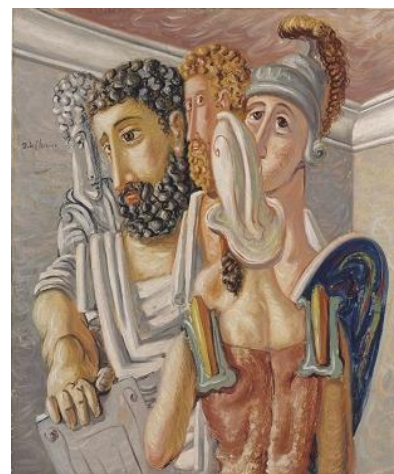


Francis Picabia, *Magnéto anglaise*
(1921-22, estimate: £400,000-600,000)

layered atop one another in an effect similar to multiple-exposure photography. Completing this group is *Phimparey* (circa 1941-42, estimate: £200,000-300,000), a painting that demonstrates a move towards pop art in its reproduction of a popular magazine image.

Two works are being offered by The Art Institute of Chicago. Paul Delvaux's *Le village des sirènes* (illustrated, page one), created in 1942, one of the best years in Delvaux's oeuvre, at the very height of the German occupation of Belgium, portrays an otherworldly scene, in which a group of elegantly dressed women sit along a gently curving street with mermaids swimming beyond. The silence conveyed offers

a startling contrast to the chaos of the war that was raging in Europe at this time while the disconcerting and anachronistic architectural juxtapositions and disquieting atmosphere reveal a strong affinity with the art of Giorgio de Chirico. Part of the collection since 1954, Giorgio de Chirico's *Guerrieri e filosofi* (circa 1928, estimate: £300,000-500,000, illustrated, right) is one of a series of gladiatorial paintings that appeared regularly in de Chirico's oeuvre during the late 1920s and early 1930s. De Chirico stated that many of his *Gladiatori* from this period were intended as a satire on the art world who had turned against him.



Giorgio de Chirico, *Guerrieri e filosofi*
(circa 1928, estimate: £300,000-500,000)

Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist & Modern Art, Christie's: "The sale presents 16 of the leading Dada and Surreal artists in a carefully curated group of paintings and Surrealist objects from some of the most celebrated collections in the world. René Magritte's magnificent oil *La corde sensible*, painted in 1960, is an exquisite composition that eludes meaning or logical explanation and is poised to achieve a significant record for the artist. It is arguably the most striking and important Magritte work we have offered at auction since 2002. It is also a privilege to be offering on behalf of the Art Institute of Chicago two great paintings by Paul Delvaux and Giorgio de Chirico. Together with the Max Ernsts from the collections of the artist's family and the great German philanthropist and collector Barbara Lambrecht, the provenance of the works of art in this edition of *The Art of the Surreal* is unrivalled."

Further artists representing the range of the movement include Jean (Hans) Arp, Alexander Calder, whose sculpture *The bat* (1966, estimate: £400,000-600,000) shows how Surrealism continued to influence artists throughout the second part of the 20th century, Salvador Dalí, who collaborated with Edward James on the striking bright red *Mae West Lips Sofa* (1938, estimate: £400,000-600,000), sold by the Edward James Foundation, Óscar Domínguez, André Masson, Joan Miró, Man Ray and Antoni Tàpies.

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Shanghai, and Mumbai. Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

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