

CHRISTIE'S

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**PABLO PICASSO'S
MOUSQUETAIRE ET NU ASSIS
WILL BE A LEADING HIGHLIGHT OF
CHRISTIE'S *IMPRESSIONIST AND
MODERN ART EVENING SALE***

27 FEBRUARY 2018



Pablo Picasso, *Mousquetaire et nu assis*, oil and Ripolin on canvas
(1967, estimate: £12,000,000-18,000,000)

London – Pablo Picasso's masterpiece *Mousquetaire et nu assis* (1967, estimate: £12,000,000-18,000,000) will be a leading highlight of Christie's *Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale*, in London on 27 February 2018, part of '20th Century at Christie's', a series of sales that take place from 20 February to 7 March 2018. Painted with gestural, lavishly and passionately applied brushstrokes, it is among the first of the triumphant musketeers that appeared in Pablo Picasso's art in 1967. This iconic figure is accompanied by a sensuous, seated nude. With her shock of dark

hair, hieratic posture, and her large, all-seeing almond-shaped eyes, there is no question as to the identity of this woman: she is Jacqueline, the artist's final, great love, muse and wife, whose presence permeated every female figure in this final chapter of Picasso's life. With one eye towards the Old Masters and another towards contemporary art, Picasso shows himself still challenging the history of art, carrying out iconoclastic attacks, plundering the past and doing so in a strikingly fresh, gestural way. Steeped in eroticism, a sense of painterly bravado, and pulsating with a vital sense of energy, this painting paved the way for the themes, style and execution that would come to define this late phase of Picasso's oeuvre. *Mousquetaire et nu assis* will be on view in Hong Kong from 5 to 8 February and New York from 12 to 14 February 2018 before being exhibited in London from 20 to 27 February 2018.

Keith Gill, Head of Sale, Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale, Christie's, London: "*Picasso's late career was defined by sensuous paintings in which he cast himself as the virile artist alongside his voluptuous lover. The allegorical figures were used by Picasso not only to reference fictitious characters but were a means by which he could situate himself firmly within the art historical canon alongside the likes of Rembrandt, El Greco, Velázquez and Goya. He seemed to have a sense of urgency to his work in this period, as if trying to beat the passage of time, a feeling that is evidenced by the dense brushwork and bold gestures of 'Mousquetaire et nu assis'. It is a privilege to present the painting as a leading highlight in the Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale.*"

Throughout his life, Picasso had frequently been drawn to historical, classical, or mythological 'types': he was the melancholic harlequin, monstrous minotaur and the courageous *torero*. Now, in the final decade of his life, Picasso transformed himself for a final time into the brave, adventurous and virile musketeer, clad in ornate costumes, ready for daring escapades, romantic exploits and heroic deeds. In this final act of self-rejuvenation and artistic resurgence, this character became the façade that Picasso presented to the world during the remaining years of his life.

For Picasso, the figure of the musketeer had a wealth of varied art historical origins: from Hals and Rembrandt, to Meissonier, El Greco, Velázquez and Goya. This striking, dark-featured character, half-Spanish, half-French, half-Dutch, with his elegant seventeenth-century garb, could as easily have stepped out of *Las Meninas* as *The Night Watch*. Picasso was fuelled by a desire to beat the inexorable passage of time, something that led him to paint with a new speed. In many ways, reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionists, his brushstrokes are thick and visceral, irrevocable gestures that boldly declare the hand of the artist himself, memorialising his presence in paint upon the canvas.

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