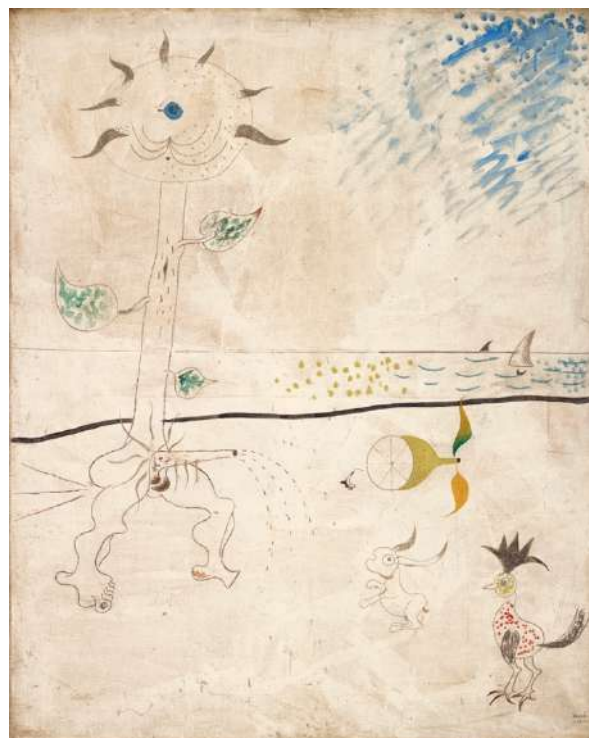


# CHRISTIE'S

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## 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MODERN MASTERS FROM A PRIVATE FRENCH COLLECTION TO SPAN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EVENING SALES 23 MARCH 2021

- *20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern Masters from a Private French Collection* demonstrates a rich dialogue across categories and time periods
- The collection will be offered across Christie's Spring Season of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Evening Sales in London: The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Evening Sale
- The collection has been carefully assembled over the last four decades
- The collection is led by Alexander Calder's *Submarine Christmas Tree* (1947, estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000)
- Seminal works by Jean Dubuffet, Max Ernst, Jean Fautrier, Fernand Léger and Joan Miró are also presented, with a combined pre-sale estimate of £16-24 million for *20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern Masters from a Private French Collection*



Alexander Calder, *Submarine Christmas Tree* (1947, estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000) and  
Joan Miró, *Le piège* (1924, estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000)

**London** – Christie's will present *20th Century Modern Masters from a Private French Collection* in the 20th Century Art Evening Sale and The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale, to be held on 23 March. The collection is comprised of eight works by Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Max Ernst, Jean Fautrier, Fernand Léger and Joan Miró. This exceptional group offers an insightful view into the crucial dialogues that connected avant-garde artists working in Europe and America throughout the 20th Century, highlighting the friendships, artistic innovations and the exchange of ideas that shaped the century, both before and after the Second World War.

Dating from 1913, Léger's *Deux femmes couchées* illustrates his bold, graphic style of cubism (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000, *illustrated page three, top left*), which resonates with the formal structures of Dubuffet's post-war Paris 'Circus' and 'Hourloupe' styles, both hybridised in *Paysage du Pas-de-Calais III* (1963, estimate:

£2,500,000-3,500,000, *illustrated page three, bottom right*). Radical mixed-media impasto is employed to very different ends in Dubuffet's *Le Vase de Barbe* (1959, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000, *illustrated page three, bottom left*), Max Ernst's *Aux 100,000 colombes* (1925, estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000, *illustrated below, right*) and Fautrier's *Pièges* (1946, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000, *illustrated page three, top right*). Finally, close links can be seen between Calder's *Submarine Christmas Tree* (1947, estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000, *illustrated page one, left*) and the intuitive, whimsical visual language of surrealists such as Miró.

**Anika Guntrum, International Director, 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Christie's:** "20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern Masters from a Private French Collection reflects the pioneering spirit of the collection with works that, seen together, create a carefully constructed dialogue between movements, artists and continents. This spirit is echoed in the eight paintings presented as a major highlight of Christie's 20<sup>th</sup> Century season in London. The scope of the collection provides insight into those artists – Calder, Dubuffet, Ernst, Fautrier, Léger and Miró – whose vision and innovation defined the 20<sup>th</sup> century and whose legacy and influence is seen in the artists practising today. We are thrilled to offer these works in the Spring season of 20<sup>th</sup> Century art."

**Keith Gill and Tessa Lord, Co-Heads of Sale, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Evening Sale, Christie's:** "Together with three major works from an important Swiss Surrealist collection, we are thrilled to present another exquisite collection, from France on this occasion, to the London market in 2021. We are confident that this opening season will see international collectors centre around this significant moment in the art world calendar. We look forward to engaging established and new audiences alike in our livestreamed auctions and events, providing opportunities to explore artworks that defined the trajectory of artistic practise throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century."



Joan Miró, *Peinture* (1927, estimate: £1,400,000-1,800,000) and  
Max Ernst, *Aux 100,000 colombes* (1925, estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000)

### The Art of the Surreal, 23 March 2021

Joan Miró's 1924 composition *Le piège* (estimate: £3,000,000-5,000,000, *illustrated page one, right*) showcases the artist's earliest forays into a new poetic realm of pictorial expression, inspired by his exposure to Surrealist poetry and writing. Formerly in the collection of André Breton, *Le piège* was last exhibited in the retrospective 'Miró, La couleur de mes rêves', held at the Grand Palais in Paris in 2018. Created the following year in 1925, Max Ernst's *Aux 100,000 colombes* (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000, *illustrated above, right*) emerged during an important time of transition for Ernst when, under the influence of the Surrealist group, he began to explore semi-automatic techniques of art making. The painting is a rich study on the expressive potential of the *grattage* technique. Painted in 1927, Miró's *Peinture* (estimate: £1,400,000-1,800,000, *illustrated above, left*) belongs to the artist's radical and much celebrated series of 'oneiric' or 'dream' paintings, which he had begun in 1925 while living in Paris. Unseen in public for almost 50 years, this work illustrates Miró's pioneering, intuitive approach to content and form, which would have an enormous impact on the generations of artists that followed, particularly in America during the post-Second World War era.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Evening Sale, 23 March 2021

Executed in 1913, Fernand Léger's *Deux femmes couchées* (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000, *illustrated below, left*) belongs to a groundbreaking series of paintings and works on paper, the 'Contrastes de formes', that the artist created between 1912 and 1914, in which he dramatically broke with artistic convention. In this rare composition, which was last publicly exhibited in 1971, Léger radically reconfigures the tradition of the female nude in art, reimagining his subject as a near abstract amalgamation of line and monochrome colour. *Deux femmes couchées* was formerly in the collection of the legendary British cubist collector and scholar, Douglas Cooper, who, over the course of his life, amassed one of the greatest collections of Cubism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



Fernand Léger, *Deux femmes couchées* (1913, estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000) and Jean Fautrier, *Pièges* (1946, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000)

*Submarine Christmas Tree* (1947, estimate: £4,000,000-6,000,000, *illustrated page one, left*) is an elegant, expansive mobile that brings together two of Alexander Calder's great passions: the ocean and the cosmos. The work was owned for over two decades by the French-Lebanese actress Delphine Seyrig, who lent it for a major Calder retrospective at the Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul, in 1969. Held in this private French collection for almost four decades, *Paysage du Pas-de-Calais III* (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000, *illustrated below, right*) is one of three monumental paintings of the same title that Jean Dubuffet painted in August 1963. Depicting near-abstract rural scenery in vibrant compositions over 2.5 metres wide, these majestic canvases represent a vital turning point in Dubuffet's practice, linking his 'Paris Circus' and 'Hourloupe' cycles. The whimsical *Le vase de barbe* (1959, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000, *illustrated below, left*) is an outstanding work, rare for its impressive scale, from Dubuffet's celebrated earlier series of *Barbes*. The painting was included in Dubuffet's first American retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1962, and more recently in his major 2016 survey at the Fondation Beyeler. In *Pièges* (1946, estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000, *illustrated above, right*), an exceptional large-scale work by Jean Fautrier, the artist has compounded the surface with layers of luminous oil paint and paper pasted onto canvas. While similar in technique to the 'matter paintings' of his contemporary Dubuffet, who was interested in primal forms of expression, Fautrier's work was more political in spirit.



Jean Dubuffet, *Le vase de barbe* (1959, estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) and Jean Dubuffet *Paysage du Pas-de-Calais III* (1963, estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000)

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**About Christie's**

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