

CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT | LONDON | WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023

THE FIRST 'HITCHCOCK BLONDE'

Madeleine Carroll

~ Who starred in *The 39 Steps* ~

Depicted by Portrait Painter Philip De László

Will be offered in
Christie's *British & European Art* sale
14 December 2023 during
CLASSIC WEEK



PHILIP ALEXIUS DE LÁSZLÓ (BRITISH, 1869-1937)
Mrs Philip Astley, née Madeleine Carroll
1935
Estimate: £50,000-£70,000

London – A captivating portrait full of elegance, grace and glamour, *Mrs Philip Astley, née Madeleine Carroll* by Philip Alexius de László, 1935, depicts the first Alfred Hitchcock blonde in the same year that she starred in *The 39 Steps*. A highlight in Christie's *British & European Art* sale on 14 December during *Classic Week* in London, it was originally in the collection of the sitter herself, before passing to her assistant and by descent until 2022, when it was acquired by the present owner in Spain. This painting exemplifies de László's sumptuous and painterly signature style, which made him one of the most famous

portraitists of the time, favoured by royalty, politicians, artists, writers and famous beauties. It is currently on public view at Christie's headquarters in London until 28 November, alongside a selection of early *Classic Week* highlights, ahead of the full pre-sale view from 1 to 13 December.

Peter Brown, Senior Director, International Specialist, European & British Art commented: *"Christie's is delighted to offer this stunning portrait of Madeline Carroll by the pre-eminent portraitist Philip de László. This is a portrait of great panache, fitting for the actress who is recognised as Alfred Hitchcock's first blonde leading lady."*

The actress's early parts included *I Was a Spy*, and *School for Scandal* before she was cast by Alfred Hitchcock as the original 'Blonde' in *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *Secret Agent* (1936). Subsequently Madeleine Carroll was, as **Katherine Field, Senior Editor of de László Catalogue Raisonné** noted: *"one of the first British actresses to be offered a major contract in Hollywood, becoming the highest paid actress in the world and starred with Gary Cooper in The General Died at Dawn, and with Ronald Colman in The Prisoner of Zenda. Her acting career was relatively short, but her significance is illustrated by the fact she has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her outstanding contribution to the cinema industry."*

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