

CHRISTIE'S

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**RENÉ MAGRITTE'S *L'AMI INTIME (THE INTIMATE FRIEND)*
OFFERED BY CHRISTIE'S AT AUCTION FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1980**

ESTIMATE OF £30-50 MILLION

**THE MASTERPIECE IS PROPERTY FROM THE
GILBERT AND LENA KAPLAN COLLECTION**

COINCIDING WITH THE CENTENARY OF THE SURREALIST MANIFESTO

**THE LEADING HIGHLIGHT IN OUR UNIQUE
STANDALONE SURREAL SALE IN LONDON**



René Magritte, *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)* (1958, estimate: £30,000,000-50,000,000)

London – Christie's will offer René Magritte's *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)* as the leading highlight of The Art of The Surreal Evening Sale, the annual auction dedicated to Surreal and Dada art, taking place in London on 7 March. Presented to coincide with the centenary of the Surrealist Manifesto, penned by André Breton in October 1924, the painting comes to auction for the first time since 1980. Depicting the enigmatic bowler-hatted man, Magritte's 'everyman', *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)* is property from the Gilbert and Lena Kaplan Collection and was last exhibited in

Brussels at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in 1998. The work will be displayed at Christie's LA from 5 to 6 February, Rockefeller Center in New York from 9 to 14 February and in Hong Kong from 21 to 23 February. The pre-sale exhibition in London will take place from 1 to 7 March.

Gilbert Kaplan was a pioneering entrepreneur who founded *Institutional Investor* in 1967 at the age of 25. He was also a renowned cultural connoisseur. Having established and built a commercially successful company, he celebrated its 15th anniversary, together with his own 40th birthday, by conducting Gustav Mahler's Second Symphony, the Resurrection Symphony, at the Lincoln Center in New York. The debut was well received and following the sale of *Institutional Investor*, he went on to conduct the symphony around the world, lecturing and teaching at Juilliard. Reflecting his lifelong passion, he had a radio show on WQXR called 'Mad About Music'. Two of the men close to Gilbert Kaplan's heart were Gustav Mahler and René Magritte. Kaplan served on the Board of Carnegie Hall for more than 30 years and set up a fellowship programme at Harvard's Music Department, which continues to support students today.

Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art, Christie's, London: *"It is an honour to have been entrusted by the Gilbert Kaplan family with this masterpiece, which they have enjoyed for over 40 years. René Magritte, of all Surrealist artists, is the most sought after internationally. L'ami Intime (The Intimate Friend) belongs to one of Magritte's two most iconic subject-series of paintings - the other being his 'Empire des lumières'. L'ami Intime (The Intimate Friend) is one of the most powerful and impressive of only a few of these iconic images left in private hands, a tour de force of the artist's hyper-realistic technique. Extremely poetic, silent and mysterious, especially given the unknown identity of the sitter together with its evocative title. We are looking forward to the market's reaction to this exquisite painting, the like of which has not been seen at auction since the Torczyner sale of Magritte paintings in 1998."*

The figure of a man in a bowler-hat made his first appearance in Magritte's work in the 1926 painting *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire (The Musings of a Solitary Wanderer)*. The figure came to function within Magritte's oeuvre as a symbol of the bourgeois, of the anonymous, faceless masses, the everyday working man and that of the lone wanderer. In *L'ami intime (The Intimate Friend)* the distinctly ordinary, yet also mysteriously anonymous bowler-hatted man is seen, almost like a silhouette, from behind. Gazing out the window onto a serene, mountainous landscape and a cloud-filled sky, he appears oblivious to the strange sight of a baguette and wine glass floating in mid-air behind him.

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