

Paris – Press Release

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***Modernités* and Impressionist & Modern Art**



Masterpiece by Francis Picabia

Medea

for the first time at auction for the last four decades

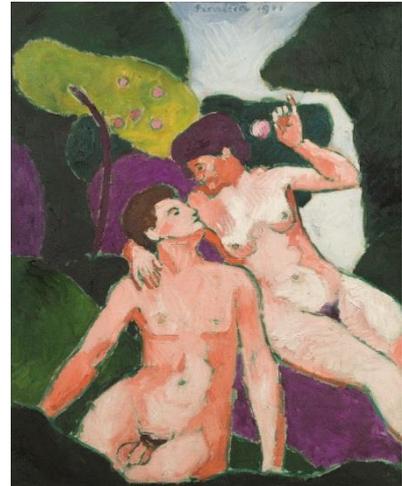
On **16 October 2019**, the same week as the International Contemporary Art Fair (FIAC), the third ***Modernités*** sale is the promise of a first-class evening event: a select number of outstanding works of modern and contemporary art reflecting the greatest moments in 20th-century art. Auction highlights include a superb *Transparence* by Picabia, a major *Cirque* from Chagall, two Fontana paintings and a large Dubuffet shaped canvas works. Also being sold are works by Magritte, Fernand Léger, Pierre Soulages and Hans Hartung, along with bronzes from Julio Gonzalez, Hans Arp, Germaine Richier and Bernar Venet.

It will be followed on **17 October 2019** by the sale of **Impressionist and Modern Art** that will pay tribute to Belgian artists and collectors, including a selection of works by the iconic painter Anto Carte.

Modernités

The work featured on the cover of the auction's catalogue is **Medea (estimate: €1,500,000-€2,000,000)** by **Francis Picabia**. Now being sold for the first time in more than forty years, it is one of the most advanced and sophisticated examples of the legendary *Transparences* series. The year *Médée* was painted, 1929, marked the start of the second, increasingly refined phase of *Transparences*. It depicts a celebrated, ancient myth, that of Jason and Medea, and is rife with nods to Sandro Botticelli. This composition of exceptional complexity is a superb representation of the surrealist, dream-like world of Picabia.

Another Francis Picabia work from an especially historic collection is **Adam et Eve, 1911 (estimate: €600,000-€800,000)**, the artist's first work depicting nude figures, as well as the first to address sexuality and a biblical theme. Eve, represented here with the face of Gabrielle, whom he married in 1909, is positioned above her companion, Adam. The scene's poetic ambiance is shaped by the progressive simplification of the forms, the landscape and the human figure, an early indicator of a shift towards the abstract.



The quintessence of the finest period in **Marc Chagall's** work, **Le Cirque mauve (estimate: €3,000,000-€5,000,000)** is a large painting executed in **1966**, the year Chagall definitively established his studio in Vence. In this newfound serenity and the glowing sun of the South of France, the emblematic themes of his repertoire and the colours of his palette exuded fresh, searing intensity. *Le Cirque Mauve* is a brightly coloured, animated résumé of his artistic expression of ceremony and celebration. Every character is

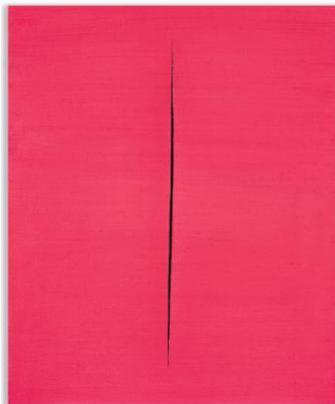
present: the artist in the foreground in a sensitive self-portrait (Chagall always saw himself as an actor, magician and acrobat), the musicians of religious scenes and wedding processions, even the animals from his enchanted bestiary, sharing space with horsewomen, trapeze artists, clowns and acrobats.

Les deux sœurs, painted in **1932 (estimate: €1,200,000-€1,800,000)** is from a pivotal period in the life of **Fernand Léger**: several years earlier, the painter had abandoned the abstract, mechanical vocabulary displayed in the first few decades of his work to focus on the human figure. Signalling a more serene, peaceful painting style, the archetypal female figures of *Les deux sœurs* are the perfect embodiment of modern classicism.

René Magritte's 1940 *L'Incorruptible* (estimate: €1,000,000-€1,500,000) already foreshadows the "petrified" paintings that Magritte would execute in the 1950s, which would form one of the most important bodies of work in the post-war period. Painted in grisaille at the start of the war, it depicts the sculpted head of Georgette, the painter's wife and muse, in a desolate, almost lunar landscape.



Nu allongé et tête d'homme 1967 (estimate: €1,200,000-€1,800,000) attests to the expressive power of **Pablo Picasso's** later works. In this painting, the two figures incorporate iconographical and compositional elements of the "painter and his model". Nearing the end of his life and living in Mougins, France, with Jacqueline Roque, Picasso made this his central theme, one representing the sum of his aesthetic research. It is, in some ways, the last will and testament of his work.



The auction's contemporary section features **Lucio Fontana**, the father of spatialism, with two *Concetto Spaziale*. The first, the scarlet *Concetto Spaziale, Attesa, 1967* (estimate: €800,000 – €1,200,000) was completed one year before the artist's death, when he was at the height of his career and had unforgettably taken part the previous year in the Venice Biennale. The second, the pristine *Concetto Spaziale, Attesa, 1968* (estimate: €500,000 - €700,000) dates from the following year, when he took part in the fourth Documenta in Kassel, Germany. Here, Fontana gives substance to what he had said a decade earlier: "Sculpture and painting are both things of the past; we need a new form. Art that is movement. Art within space."

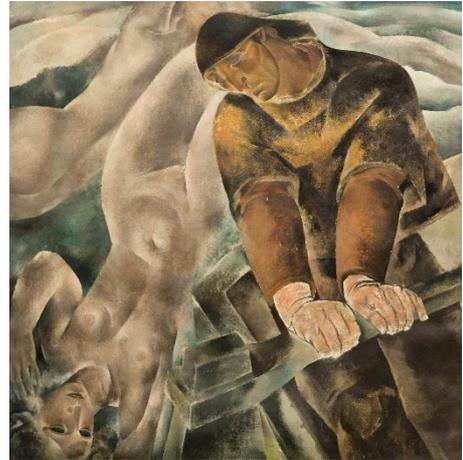
Massif aux échancres, 1971 (estimate: €700,000-€1,000,000,000) marks the start of **Jean Dubuffet's** renowned *Coucou Bazar*. As he said himself, *Massif aux Echancres* is the fortuitous result of "the combination of relief and painting, to give it more life". A free-form cluster of familiar shapes that somehow represent all things, *Massif aux Echancres* markedly expresses the incredible creative force Dubuffet exhibited at the peak of his career.



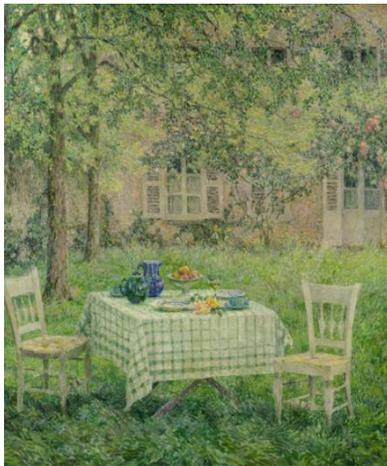
The year 1950 was a decisive one in the life of **Hans Hartung**, when he was visited by Mark Rothko in Paris and exhibited in the United States with the support of celebrated gallery owner Louis Carré. *T1950-3* (estimate: €600,000-€800,000) is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces by the artist, one who is the focus of an excellent retrospective at this very moment at Paris' Musée d'Art Moderne. On sale for the first time since 1982, *T1950-3* is emblematic of the best paintings put out by Hartung at the turn of the century, a time of abundant enthusiasm for painting that itself was never curtailed by a strict mastery of the practice.

Impressionist and Modern Art

The Impressionist and Modern Art sale will feature an ensemble of paintings that includes nine works by **Anto Carte**, a leading-edge painter who struck a balance between modernity and decorative art. *Le Batelier et la Sirène* (or *Les Sirènes*) presents an unusual perspective and stylised volumes, especially characteristic of the refinement of Anto Carte's art and reminiscent of the geometric figures and aesthetics of Art Deco (estimate: €200,000-€300,000).



Five paintings come from the collection of *Tony Herbert* (1902-1959), one of the leading Belgian collectors of his time. A key work is **Gustave de Smet's** elegant *Femme au Manteau* (estimate: €80,000-€120,000).



Another superb demonstration of composition is found in **Henri Le Sidaner's** *La Table dans la verdure, Gerberoy* (estimate: €400,000-€600,000), on the theme of a table set in a garden. Painted on his Gerberoy estate in 1926, this large and luminous pointillist work showcases the artist's taste for hushed and muted atmospheres.

Painted in 1965-70, while the artist was living in the town of Vence in the South of France, *Bouquet rose sur fond bleu* by **Marc Chagall** (estimate: €320,000-€450,000), featuring a mix of impasto and swaths of transparency, reflects the painter's command of colour. With the floral bouquet as a central theme, the composition also depicts two entwined, levitating lovers and the familiar rooftops of

the artist's native village of Vitebsk.

Another remarkable work is the unseen bronze by **Auguste Rodin**, *Masque de l'Homme au nez cassé* (estimate: €150,000-€200,000). It is a portrait of "Bibi", an elderly man who made a living doing odd jobs in artists' studios and who was a popular model in Carrier-Belleuse's studio, where Rodin worked. This bronze, which was hugely successful, was adapted by Rodin more than a dozen times. The cast-iron work by Gruet corresponds to the first version, begun in late 1862 or 1863, when Rodin was only 23 years old, and is the closest to the original design.

Modernités

Sale on 16 October

Exhibition from 11 to 15 October

Art Impressionniste et Moderne

Sale on 17 October

Exhibition from 11 to 16 October

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