

## **MONET'S MARRIAGE GIFT TO BE SOLD AT AUCTION**

### ***Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary Paintings from the Gabriel Sabet Collection at Sotheby's London in December***

A PAINTING by Claude Monet which the artist presented to the mayor of Montmartre in gratitude for officiating at his wedding is one of the highlights of an outstanding private collection of paintings to be sold during the week of Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary Art sales at Sotheby's in London on December 7, 8, 9 & 10, 1998.

The atmospheric seascape, entitled *La Jetee du Havre par mauvais temps*, was painted in 1867 and remained in the artist's possession until 1870 when Monet presented it to the mayor of Montmartre, his friend Antoine Lafont, for having conducted the ceremony in which Monet married his mistress Camille.

Camille had already presented Monet with a son but Monet's family disapproved of the liaison and although the artist was experiencing financial difficulties, they decided not to help him.

*La Jetee du Havre par mauvais temps* captures vividly the bleak, stormy weather and shows boats being tossed on the turbulent waves while people on the quayside brace themselves against the wind and rain.

Monet's seascape is one of 18 paintings from the Gabriel Sabet Collection which are expected to raise in excess of £5.5 million. The oil remained in the Lafont family until 1969 when it was bought by Mr Sabet. It is estimated at £700,000-900,000.

Gabriel Sabet (1908-1996) was a passionate collector with an excellent eye and a deep appreciation of works by the Impressionist and early 20th century painters and later those of the French artists of the 1950s.

Born in Egypt where he lived until 1956/57, Mr. Sabet moved to Geneva where he worked as a representative of chemical firms from different European countries until his death in 1996. He began collecting in the 1950s and bought purely for pleasure, selling none of his paintings during his lifetime.

The Gabriel Sabet Collection, now being sold by his estate, also includes Impressionist and Modern paintings by Renoir, Derain, Pissarro, Boudin and Chagall and later works by artists of the 1950s such as De Stael, Poliakoff, Lam, Klein and Miro and will be offered as follows:

#### **IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART (Monday and Tuesday, December, 7 & 8, 1998)**

An impressively colourful work by Renoir in the Sabet Collection, *Jeune fille a la couronne de fleurs*, painted circa 1908 sees the artist seemingly deliberately rejecting some of the most notorious aspects of Impressionism. Renoir painted the background with thin brushstrokes while enhancing the figure of the sitter with a supple, loaded palette and enriching the whole composition in the manner of old masters such as Rubens and Titian whose work he admired. The painting is estimated at £800,000-1,200,000.

A second work by Monet depicts the artist's garden gate at Vetheuil and reveals a new richness and freedom of brushwork particularly in the treatment of the foliage which became evident in many of his Vetheuil paintings executed during 1880-81. *La Porte du Jardin, Vetheuil* is estimated at £400,000-600,000.

In 1969, Mr Sabet acquired a stunning Fauvist work by Andre Derain, *Arbres a l'Estaque*, now estimated to fetch £600,000-800,000. The landscape around L'Estaque, a small port on the Mediterranean coast where Derain spent the summer of 1906, provided the ideal subject matter for many of his paintings during this period.

The resulting works mark a turning point in his oeuvre and see Derain beginning to explore a new purified form of painting in which strongly contrasting areas of vivid colour came to achieve new prominence.

Other Impressionist and Modern paintings from the Sabet Collection include a striking work by Joan Miro, *Le Vol d'un oiseau sur la plaine II* painted in 1939 (est: £400,000-600,000); a delightful landscape by Pissarro, *Paysage au Valhermeil* (est: £180,000-250,000); a 1911 work by Marc Chagall, *L'Acceuil*, which clearly reveals the artist's

enthusiasm for the strong colours of the Fauves combined with recollections of his Russian childhood (est: £150,000-200,000); a landscape by Renoir entitled La Poudrerie de la Rochelle (est: £150,000-200,000) and a beach scene by Boudin, Pecheuses a Berck, (est: £100,000-150,000).

CONTEMPORARY ART (Wednesday and Thursday, Decemehr 9 & 10, 1998)

Works by French artists active in the 1950s such as Vieira da Silva, De Stael and Poliakoff also attracted the attention of Gabriel Sabet and latterly it was their paintings that he added to his collection.

Most notable is an outstanding oil painting by Nicolas de Stael, entitled La Boite d'Aquarelle and executed in 1954, one of the most sought-after periods of the artist's work. A wonderful example of De Stael's ability to synthesise the abstract and figurative pictorial languages, La Boite d'Aquarelle results in a fluid and compelling composition, executed in free, playful brushstrokes. It is estimated at £250,000-350,000.

A magnificent work by Maria-Helena Vieira da Silva illustrates powerfully the artist's concerns with colour, line and architecture. Peinture, signed and dated 54, presents an almost musical quality which Vieira da Silva achieved by means of gently balanced waves of colour and line (estimate £120,000-150,000). A second work by the same artist, Le Vent, executed in 1953, has an estimate of £70,000-100,000.

The Sabet Collection also includes a good early work by Wilfredo Lam. Signed and dated 1944, Oiseau-Lumiere, I (Entre les Palmiers) was executed in a crucial period of Lam's artistic development when certain elements, notably the "bird of paradise" image, were crystallised and subsequently became central features of his work. It is estimated at £80,000-100,000.

Two works by Serge Poliakoff, each entitled Composition Abstraite, add further interest to the collection. One executed in 1969 is a particularly powerful late example of the artist's 20-year attachment to colour and is estimated at

£100,000-150,000, while the second dating from 1967 has an estimate of £80,000-120,000.

The remaining paintings in the Sabet Collection are two works by Yves Klein, F38, a work of charred cardboard mounted on board (estimate £50,000-70,000) and ANT 171 one of a series of body imprints executed in pigment and synthetic resin on paper mounted on canvas (estimate £40,000-60,000).