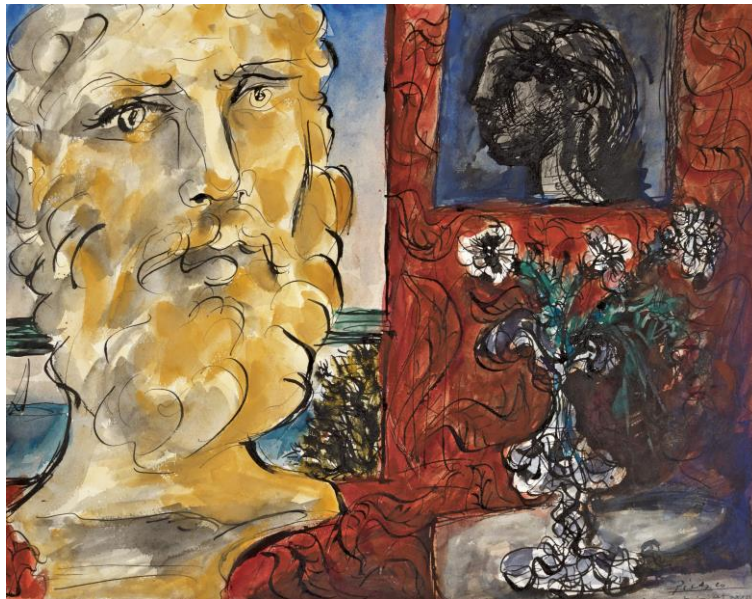


Sotheby's to Present AN ETHEREAL WORK ON PAPER BY PABLO PICASSO

Executed in Cannes in 1933,
NATURE MORTE À LA TÊTE CLASSIQUE
ET AU BOUQUET DE FLEURS

Has Remained in the Same Family Collection for More Than 35 Years

Estimate \$5/7 Million



Among the Finest Examples from the Most Accomplished Groups
Of Gouaches and Watercolors of Picasso's Entire Career,
The Work was Once in the Collection of
Renowned Surrealist Poet and Patron,
Edward James

A Highlight of Sotheby's Evening Sale of IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART This November in New York

On Public View for the First Time in the US,
Exhibition Opens 1 November on York Avenue

NEW YORK, 29 October 2019 – Sotheby's is pleased to announce that we will present Pablo Picasso's *Nature morte à la tête classique et au bouquet de fleurs* as a highlight of our [Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale](#) on 12 November 2019 in New York. Having remained in the same family collection for more than 35 years, this lyrical work on paper from 1933 is among the finest of a small group of highly-worked watercolors and gouaches on this subject that the artist created while on holiday in Cannes with his wife Olga and his young son Paolo.

Held for decades in the collection of the famed Surrealist poet and patron Edward James, the present work eloquently speaks to James' keen eye for the most ethereal and dreamlike compositions of the avant garde, and beautifully illustrates this tumultuous yet highly prolific period in Picasso's *oeuvre*. Sotheby's had the privilege of offering the present work in December 1982, when it sold for \$179,135 during our London sale of Impressionist and Modern Drawings and Watercolours, on offer from the Edward James Foundation.

Estimated to sell for \$5/7 million in the November Evening Sale, *Nature morte à la tête classique et au bouquet de fleurs* comes to auction on the heels of the celebrated 2018 Tate Modern exhibition, *Picasso 1932 – Love, Fame, Tragedy*.

Julian Dawes, *Head of Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale in New York*, commented: "We are thrilled to present one of the most exquisite watercolors by Pablo Picasso ever to come on the market. This magnificent work represents the pinnacle of Picasso's artistic powers: the color is remarkably vibrant and saturated; it exemplifies one of his most celebrated periods, in the 1930s during his entanglement with Marie-Thérèse Walter and the trajectory that she inspired in his art; and is a wondrous encapsulation of his Surrealist period. In addition, the work's exceptional quality is underscored by its provenance, having once resided in the collection of Edward James – a renowned patron of many Surrealist artists. With many outstanding paintings by Picasso appearing at auction

over the past few seasons, it is refreshing to offer an example of his mastery in this intimate medium. It not only speaks to his remarkable prowess and limitless versatility as an artist, but also his capacity to surprise and delight across myriad forms.”

This stunning work will be on view in Sotheby’s York Avenue galleries beginning this Friday, 1 November, alongside our marquee auctions of Impressionist & Modern and Contemporary Art. The exhibition marks the first public viewing of the work in the US.



In the spring of 1932, Picasso had retired to the Château de Boisgeloup, his studio-retreat in Normandy, in the company of his new mistress and principal muse, Marie-Thérèse Walter. It was his time spent at Boisgeloup that provided the inspiration for the present work.

During his sojourn in Cannes in the summer of 1933, Picasso did not create a single painting. Instead, his energy focused almost entirely on one of the most accomplished groups of gouaches and watercolors of his entire artistic production. The artist’s personal life was in disarray — his wife Olga was distraught about both his blossoming relationship with Marie-Thérèse and the publication of his former lover, Fernande Olivier’s memoirs which cast Picasso in an unfavorable light— while his professional life, after his first large-scale museum exhibition in 1932, was reaching new heights. Such an unending amount of change, both personal and professional, found its escape with this series of works that live in a dreamlike plane, evoking influences of ethereal classicism and Greek legends such as that of Pygmalion and Persephone.

In the present work, Picasso has subverted the traditional embodied interaction of artist and model— a theme that came to symbolize his own life and work most evocatively — and replaced these lead roles with sculpted avatars. In place of the artist is a large, bearded neoclassical head, while the model is substituted by a bas-relief sculpture affixed to the wall above a bouquet of flowers, echoing the

graceful profile of Marie-Thérèse. Haunted by the absence of his mistress who had remained in Paris, Picasso re-created her image from memory.

Picasso's work of the spring and summer of 1933 is dominated by two male characters, who appear to represent the artist's alter-ego: the sculptor and the minotaur. Both are central images in the *Vollard Suite* etchings, commissioned by art dealer Ambroise Vollard in 1927, and published in 1937. The bearded man, as sculptor, appears in a number of these etchings and closely resembles the sculpted male head in the present watercolor. To the right hangs a relief of Marie-Thérèse in profile, which directly related to a relief Picasso had executed in plaster in 1931.

Edward James, a poet and a lifelong collector of art, is particularly remembered for his patronage of Surrealist painters including Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Pavel Tchelitchew, Leonor Fini and Leonora Carrington. James provided studio space for his artist friends to develop their craft during their extended stays at his homes at West Dean and in London. Most importantly, he supported them further through commissions and collaborations, building one of the finest collections of Surrealist art in the world. James owned several notable works by Picasso including other languidly beautiful portrayals of Marie-Thérèse, such as *Femme endormie*.

About Sotheby's

Sotheby's has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby's became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby's has a global network of 80 offices in 40 countries and presents auctions in 10 different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris. Sotheby's offers collectors the resources of *Sotheby's Financial Services*, the world's only full-service art financing company, as well as the collection, artist, estate & foundation advisory services of its subsidiary, *Art Agency, Partners*. Sotheby's also presents private sale opportunities in more than 70 categories, including S|2, the gallery arm of Sotheby's Global Fine Art Division, and three retail businesses: Sotheby's Wine, Sotheby's Diamonds, and Sotheby's Home, the online marketplace for interior design.

[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Pinterest](#) | [Snapchat](#) | [Weibo](#) | [WeChat](#) | [Youku](#)

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.*

Images are available upon request

Stream live auctions and place bids in real time, discover the value of a work of art, browse sale catalogues, view original content and more at sothebys.com, and by downloading Sotheby's apps for iOS and Android

#