

Press Release

**CHRISTIE'S**

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## **CHRISTIE'S TO SELL PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF HOLLYWOOD LEGENDS LEW AND EDIE WASSERMAN**

**IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES BY MATISSE,  
DEGAS, RODIN, MOORE AND VUILLARD TO HIGHLIGHT IMPRESSIONIST AND  
MODERN ART EVENING SALE THIS FALL**

**TOTAL COLLECTION ESTIMATED TO EXCEED US\$18 MILLION**



**Interior of the Wasserman Residence, Beverly Hills, CA**

**New York** – Christie's is honored to announce it has been selected to offer *Property from The Collection of Lew and Edie Wasserman* as part of its major fall sales in New York City. Assembled largely in the 1950s and 60s by the "king and queen of Hollywood," the collection includes several seldom-seen works by important artists such as Degas, Matisse, Vuillard and Soutine that have adorned the couple's Beverly Hills home for decades. Over 30 items from this exceptional private collection will be offered in the Impressionist and Modern Art Sales, beginning with seven pieces in Christie's major *Evening Sale* of Impressionist and Modern Art in New York on Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7 p.m.

Further works will be sold in Christie's *Works on Paper and Day Sales* on Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 10 am and 2 pm, respectively. The total value of the collection is expected to exceed \$18 million.

*"We are delighted to have been entrusted with the sale of this jewel of a collection,"* said Conor Jordan, Head of Christie's Impressionist and Modern Art Department in New York. *"The Wassermans' collection includes important works by major artists, including a luminous Degas pastel of a woman bathing, a brilliant interior view from Matisse's mature period, and a captivating Vuillard self-portrait."*

*"As we saw last year with the success of the Collection of Mrs. Sidney F. Brody – another prominent Los Angeles connoisseur of Impressionist and Modern Art – whenever high-quality works by blue-chip artists come back into the market after nearly half a century, the global collecting community turns out in force,"* Jordan added. *"We anticipate the Wasserman Collection will spark similar interest worldwide."*

## ABOUT LEW AND EDIE WASSERMAN

Known for their considerable business and social influence, Lew and Edie Wasserman loved entertaining close friends in their Beverly Hills home. Over the course of their 66-year marriage, the couple had formed so many lasting friendships, their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary party in 1986 drew more than 700 of Hollywood's leading social and business figures. A mandatory stop on any political fundraising trip to California, the Wasserman home also welcomed presidential candidates, senators and congressional representatives.



The couple met and married in Cleveland, Ohio, in the mid-1930s. At the time, Mr. Wasserman, who had begun his career as a cinema usher, was booking bands for a Cleveland nightclub. His sensitive handling of the performers so impressed Jules Stein, founder of the talent agency MCA, he was hired to open an office in Los Angeles, where the couple moved in 1938.

Within a decade, Mr. Wasserman was president of MCA, managing the careers of Hollywood's hottest talent. Over the next four decades, he reshaped the studio system and expanded MCA, eventually acquiring control of Universal Studios. In the 1970s and 80s, he pioneered the summer blockbuster movie, starting with *Jaws*, and licensed a catalogue of classic films for television, earning the studio three times its investment in the first year.

While Mr. Wasserman was becoming one of the last true moguls of Hollywood, Mrs. Wasserman was steadily expanding her own sphere of influence as a social power broker and a tireless champion

of charitable causes. An intensely private couple, they tended to avoid publicity, except on behalf of fundraising for their favorite causes, which included the Los Angeles Music Center, California Institute for the Arts, the Jules Stein Eye Institute at UCLA, and the Motion Picture and Television Fund, which cares for retired actors in a building named after the couple. Mrs. Wasserman created a Wasserman Scholars program at six major universities nationwide.

The film industry rewarded Mr. Wasserman with a special Oscar® in 1973 for his charitable contributions and civil rights advocacy. He also received a Presidential Medal of Freedom from Bill Clinton, who called him “one of the smartest men I ever met, and in more than intellectual ways. He just came across as someone who understood what life was all about and was pulling for people to have good lives.”

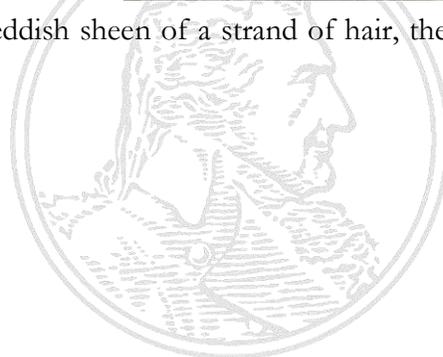
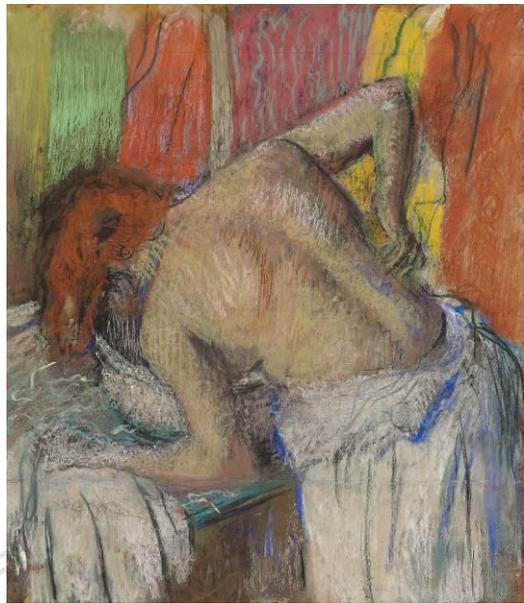
## COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS – IMPRESSIONIST PAINTINGS

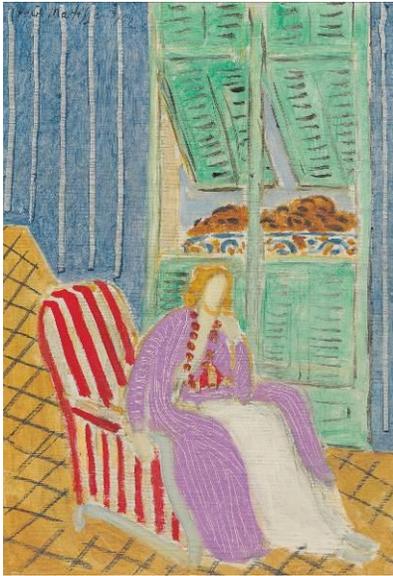
### *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale*

Christie’s New York, November 1, 2011

The Wassermans were highly selective in assembling their collection; seven works in particular stand out as exceptional opportunities for collectors of Impressionist and Modern Art and will be included in the *Evening Sale*.

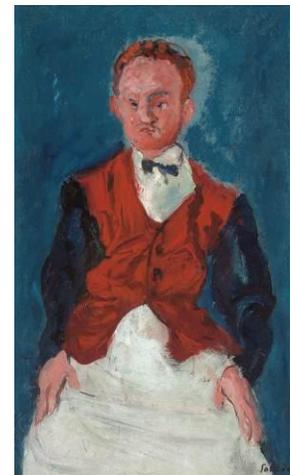
One is a pastel by **Edgar Degas** (1834-1917), *Femme s'épongeant le dos*, circa 1895 (pictured at right; estimate: \$3,500,000-5,500,000), from his celebrated series of intimate studies of women bathing. Degas’ constant experimentation and ongoing search for perfection found ideal expression through his mastery of pastel. He undertook the subject of bathers caught during their most intimate *toilettes*, seeking a naturally observed manner of depicting his models as they engaged in their private ablutions. At the last Impressionist Exhibition in 1886, Degas exhibited ten similar pastels, of which the critic Felix Fénéon wrote at the time, “The skin acquired a strong, individual life of its own in M. Degas’s works. His art is thoroughly realistic and...his colour is masterly in a highly personal way...His tonality now derives muted, one might say latent, effects from the reddish sheen of a strand of hair, the bluish folds of damp linen.”





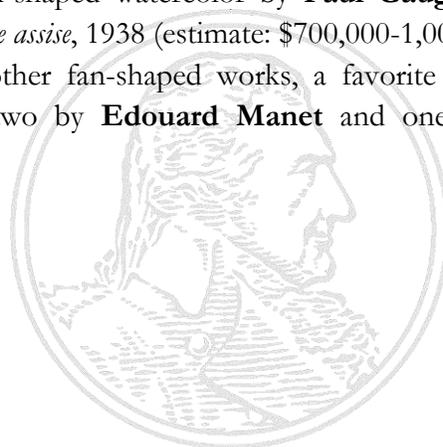
Another signature work in the collection is *La robe violette*, 1942 (pictured at left; estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000), by **Henri Matisse** (1869-1954), which belongs to a series of paintings begun in Nice over the latter months of 1942 and continued into 1943 at Vence, where Matisse moved to escape wartime bombardment. The works at the beginning of the series, such as the present painting, point toward the increasing purity of Matisse's late style, with a limited palette of primary hues and reduced extraneous design. His return to painting after a serious illness and hospitalization in 1941 prompted a dramatic simplification in his draftsmanship. Commenting to a friend, Matisse observed, "What I did before this illness, before this operation, always has the feeling of too much effort; before this, I always lived with my belt tightened. What I created afterwards represents me myself: free and detached."

Additional Impressionist and Modern masterworks from the Wasserman Collection include **Chaim Soutine's** (1893-1943) *Le valet de chambre*, circa 1927 (pictured at right; estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000), one of a series of portraits he painted of various workers shown in the traditional dress code of the French hotel trade in the 1920s. The individuality of the figure is expressed in direct contrast to the anonymity of the uniform.



A self-portrait by **Edouard Vuillard** (1868-1940), *Autoportrait au miroir de bambou*, circa 1890 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), is notable for the way in which the artist clearly includes the frame of the mirror he's using to capture his reflection, and yet his own face is deliberately indistinct, with the eyes closed. Vuillard seems to be playing with the idea of his own identity, searching inwards, eyes closed, almost imagining his own reflection in his mind. Works of this type remain extremely rare on the art market, and are highly prized by collectors and museums alike. At last year's spring sale of Impressionist and Modern art, a Vuillard self-portrait from the Brody Collection fetched nearly 50 percent more than its estimate.

The *Evening Sale* also includes an exquisite fan-shaped watercolor by **Paul Gauguin**, and other works by Matisse, including two drawings, *Femme assise*, 1938 (estimate: \$700,000-1,000,000), and *Tête de femme* (estimate: \$100,000-150,000). Three other fan-shaped works, a favorite format for the Wassermans, are included in the *Day Sales*, two by **Edouard Manet** and one by **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**.



## SCULPTURE HIGHLIGHTS

The Wassermans also collected sculptures by Impressionist and Modern masters. Their collection includes two Degas sculptures of one of his favorite subjects, dancers: *Arabesque sur la jambe droite, la main droite près de terre, le bras gauche en dehors* (pictured page one, center, background; estimate: \$250,000-350,000) and *Danse espagnole* (pictured page one, left, background; estimate: \$180,000-250,000).

**Auguste Rodin** (1840-1917) is represented in the collection by a bronze of three dancing female figures with interlocking arms, *Trois Faunesses* (pictured page one, center foreground; estimate: \$100,000-150,000), as well as a study of a hand, *Main droite*, from 1958 (estimate: \$20,000-30,000). There are also two sculptures by **Henry Moore** (1831-1895), *Maquette for Seated Torso*, 1954 (estimate: \$30,000-50,000) and *Mother and Child: Petal Skirt*, conceived in 1955 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), and one by **Marino Marini** (1901-1980), *Gertrude, il Piccolo Cavallo*, conceived in 1952 (estimate: \$300,000-500,000).

*Complete e-catalogues of these sales are available online at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)  
and via Christie's free app for the iPad and iPhone in the coming weeks.*

### Auctions:

*Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale*  
*Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sales*

Tuesday, November 1 at 7 pm  
Wednesday, November 2 at 10 am & 2 pm

**Public viewing:** October 28 – 31

### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2011 that totaled £2.0 billion/\$3.2 billion. In 2010 it achieved global auction and private sales of £3.3 billion/\$5.0 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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*Images available upon request*

