

Ray Waterhouse's report on the auction of the Rockefeller Collection  
Christies May 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The most important single owner sale ever to hit the auction block comes up next week at Christies New York. The world-renowned collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller has a number of major masterpieces worthy of the best museums, and many other very high-quality works for which top collectors will compete. There are also a number of paintings below \$1 million and even \$100,000 that are wonderful. And there are, naturally, some works which are more mundane and not desirable.

I was told by a senior expert at Christies that all estimates were made simply on the quality of the works themselves. They did not build in any 'Rockefeller factor', but expect that is worth an extra two bids per lot, with more for the exceptional pieces.

All proceeds will benefit charity. For further information and advice, please call us at 1-212 717 9100 or email me at [ray@fineartbrokers.com](mailto:ray@fineartbrokers.com).

I will allow readers to gain insight into the Rockefeller's collecting aims and history elsewhere, as I want to touch on some personal highlights.

**1. European Paintings, May 8<sup>th</sup>.**



Lot 1 is a rare and delightful depiction of a single apple by Picasso. Dated 1914, at the tail end of his Cubist endeavors, this is a simple and surprisingly naturalistic image. Auctioneers often place works which they expect to exceed estimate at lot 1 of evening sales, so expect this to rise above the \$1-1.5m estimate.



Lot 3 is another rarity, a medium sized Delacroix of a tiger. Having just seen the incredible Delacroix show at the Louvre, this doesn't compare but its still a joy to see. \$5m - \$7m.



Lot 6 Paul Gauguin 'La Vague'. An absolutely brilliant painting of a wave and red beach in Brittany. Excellent painting of 1888. Expect this to do really well, above \$10 m.



Lot 10 Claude Monet 'Nymphéas en fleur' is a bit of a disappointment to me, with some cracking and a stamped signature, and later than the best Waterlilies, as executed 1914-17.



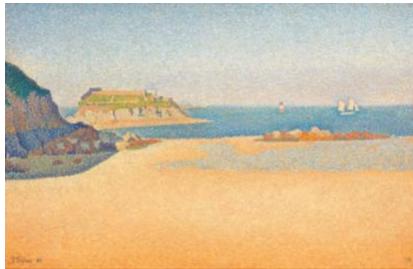
Lot 15, the early Picasso of the young girl is the star of the sale and is likely to make more than \$100m. A genuine masterpiece of mega proportions, from 1905.



Lot 16, an early pre-Cubist Picasso drawing. Having studied this period in particular as a student many many years ago, I am naturally drawn to these studies painted around the time of the groundbreaking 'Demoiselles d'Avignon' (MOMA). This isn't the very best of its type but at \$1m-\$1.5m it should do very well due to rarity and its relationship to the famous painting.



Lot 18, Georges Seurat, an absolutely stunning pointillist painting from 1885.



Lot 21, Paul Signac, one of the best works I've ever seen by the artist, a true pointillist beach scene from 1888. Magical.



Lot 26, Gare St Lazare by Claude Monet. One of the stars of the show. Incredible Impressionist painting, showing Parisian modern life and with beautiful colours. My pick of the collection, comparable if not better than the painting in the Musee d'Orsay.



Lot 29, Alfred Sisley, a classic sunny Impressionist scene from 1888. I have rarely seen an Impressionist work with more inbuilt sun. Should exceed the #2m-\$3m estimate.



Lot 30. Claude Monet of his wife Camille on the beach at Trouville. A small gem. Classic early Impressionist painting, small in size but grand in quality and importance.

## 2. American Paintings, May 9<sup>th</sup>.

There are many fewer major masterpieces in the American collection, but here are some noteworthy lots:



Lots 404 and 406 are rare early Georgia O'Keefe New Mexico landscapes



Lot 423, a late but great De Kooning, large and colorful, should do well at \$6m – \$8m.



Lot 424, a major Diego Rivera, \$5m - \$7m. 1931. David Rockefeller said that in the early years of collecting he was drawn to South American art as he could afford it. Interesting comment, but perhaps not 100% true.



Lot 425. A wonderful Jamie Wyeth of birds in an Ice Storm, Maine. Fantastic light and colour. \$300 - \$500,000.



Lot 438. Winslow Homer of three women waiting for their fisherman to return 'Where are the boats?', 1883. Painted after his stay in the north east of England, a classic Homer with great colors. \$1.5m - \$2m.



Lot 440. A very good Gilbert Stuart of George Washington. One of a number of examples by the artist, but this is a good one. \$800,000 - \$1.2m