

CHRISTIE'S

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MONUMENTAL IMPERIAL VASE AND MASTERPIECES BY AIVAZOVSKY, REPIN AND KUSTODIEV TO BE OFFERED IN THE AUCTION OF IMPORTANT RUSSIAN ART **NOVEMBER 26, 2018**

Previews in Moscow (November 8–10) and in London (November 22–25)



London – Kicking off London's Russian Art Week, on 26 November Christie's Important Russian Art auction will present 268 lots featuring important paintings that are fresh to the market and valuable works of art. Highlights of the painting section include Ivan Aivazovsky's *Venice at sunset*, 1873 (£400,000 – 600,000, *illustrated above left*); Vasili Shukhaev's *Self-portrait in a grey smock* and *Portrait of Vera Shukhaeva, the artist's wife* which are offered together as a single lot with an estimate of £300,000 – 500,000; and an astonishing group of works by Léon Bakst from the Constantinowitz Collection, never before seen at auction. The works of art section is highlighted by a monumental and extremely rare Imperial porcelain vase decorated with an equestrian portrait of Emperor Franz I after Johann Peter Kraft by Nesterov (£800,000 – 1,200,000, *illustrated above right*).

RUSSIAN PAINTINGS

The top lot of the sale is **Ivan Aivazovsky's** (1817–1900) *Venice at sunset* from 1873 (lot 30, £400,000 – 600,000). With its history and refined architectural landscapes, Venice captivated Aivazovsky, who first visited the city in the summer of 1840 as a recent alumnus of the Imperial Academy of Arts in St Petersburg. Renowned for his ability to paint from memory within the comfort of his own studio, which was especially equipped for large-scale canvases, Aivazovsky rarely sought to achieve topographical accuracy of a given place; rather, he aimed to convey its very essence and atmosphere. In *Venice at sunset* the artist uses familiar Venetian landmarks to serve his compositional needs, as the golden light of the setting sun casts reflections on the still waters of the Adriatic lagoon. Appearing at auction for the first time in 20 years, this painting from the collection of John W. Kluge will be sold to benefit Columbia University.

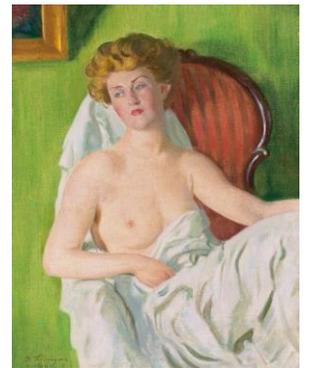


From a private French collection, **Vasilli Shukhaev's** (1887–1973) *Self-portrait in a grey smock* and *Portrait of Vera Shukhaeva*, the artist's wife will be offered for sale as a single lot (estimate: £300,000 – 500,000 *illustrated left and right*). The rich history of the portraits is closely interlinked with the Shukhaevs' immediate circle during the first years of their sojourn in France in 1921–1922. In February 1922, one year after the



couple arrived in Paris, *Self-portrait in a grey smock* was gifted to Ashkhen Melikova, and its counterpart *Portrait of Vera Shukhaeva* to the famed beauty Salome Andronikova, the couple's close friends. Despite their importance and frequent reproduction of *Self-portrait in a grey smock* in literature, these portraits were considered lost until their recent rediscovery.

Painted in 1919, **Boris Kustodiev's** (1878–1927) *Model* is a rare and important work which appears at auction for the very first time (lot 7, £250,000 – 350,000, *illustrated right*). It has remained in the same private collection since the late 1930s and relates to an earlier pastel executed in 1908 in the Kovalenko Art Museum in Krasnodar. A counterpoint to the formal, salon portraits of Valentin Serov whose models are often concealed behind an armour of silks and crinoline, Kustodiev's subject is liberated, but no less idealised. Eschewing realism, Kustodiev's model has the unblemished skin of a Danko porcelain figure, perfection further highlighted by her flushed cheeks and highly charged rosebud mouth.



Also fresh to the market is **Aleksandr Gerasimov's** (1881–1963) *Peonies*, painted in 1931 (lot 62, £200,000 – 250,000, *illustrated left*), which is a crowning example of the artist's sumptuous still lifes. Considered to be a quintessential example of Russian painting, Soviet authorities selected Gerasimov's *Peonies* among works by nine other artists to represent the country at the Carnegie Institute's 1935

International Exhibition of Paintings in Pittsburgh. As this important exhibition was nearing the end of its tour in 1936, *Peonies* was sold to Alice C. Terhune, heiress to a successful lumber business in Ohio. The painting has since remained in private hands, and is being offered at auction for the first time.

This season Christie's is honoured to offer a unique collection of works by **Léon Bakst** (1966–1924) from the Constantinowitz Collection, directly from the artist's descendants. Lots 31–61 present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for collectors to acquire Bakst's work in different media and dedicated to different subjects, including: stage designs, book graphics, portraits, nudes, textile designs, nature studies and even an album of designs for ladies' hats. The collection is highlighted by the remarkable stage design for *Daphnis et Chloé* by Maurice Ravel from 1912 (lot 35, £180,000 – 220,000, *illustrated right*). Commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev in 1909, the scenario was adapted by Michel Fokine from the pastoral novel by the second-century Greek writer Longus, which had been published in Florence in 1598. Bakst's stage designs for this production were praised as a work of art enriched with Greco influence and mythological spirit.



Ilya Repin's (1844–1930) *Portrait of Vera Repina, the artist's wife, reading* from a private Finnish collection is estimated at £150,000 – 200,000 (lot 15, *illustrated left*). Ilya Repin was introduced to the family of the architect Aleksey Shevtsov in the early 1860s. In 1872 Repin proposed to Shevtsov's youngest daughter Vera Alekseevna, and the couple were married. Vera became Repin's most well-known muse and touching portraits of her feature in many of Repin's most famous works, such as *Raising of Jairus' Daughter* (1872, State Russian Museum, St Petersburg) and the tour de force *A Parisian Café* (1875, Private collection, sold at Christie's, London, 6 June 2011, lot 22). Another striking portrait of Vera, entitled *Repose*, 1882 is in the collection of the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

WORKS OF ART

The section is highlighted by a magnificent, monumental and **extremely rare Imperial porcelain vase** decorated with an equestrian portrait of Emperor Franz I after Johann Peter Kraft by Nesterov (lot 238, £800,000 – 1 200,000, *illustrated right*). The vase is probably one of the largest two-handed campana shaped vases ever produced by the Imperial Porcelain factory during the reign of Nicholas I. Emperor Nicholas I (1796-1855) was a great patron of the Russian Arts and commissioned a large number of porcelain vases during his reign. The other vase of almost identical design and size is painted after Franz Krüger's 1831 portrait of Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia is currently part of the State Hermitage Museum collection.





Also for sale is a **pair of rare and large porcelain vases** by the Imperial Porcelain Factory, St Petersburg, in 1828, which depicts *A Battle between Turkish and Austrian Troops* after Philips Wouwerman and *The Troops at Rest* after Pieter Wouwerman, both signed by Semyon Golov (lot 246, £400,000 – 600,000, *illustrated left*). The remarkably detailed and colourful paintings on the present vases were copied by the Imperial Porcelain Factory artist Semyon Golov (c.1783–1849) from canvases by the seventeenth-century Dutch painters, Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668) and his brother Pieter Wouwerman (1623–1682). The form and decoration are closely related to two pairs of vases from the Peterhof Museum.



Lot 213
Property From A Private French Collection
A GEM-SET SILVER EWER
IN THE FORM OF A RABBIT
MARKED K. FABERGÉ WITH THE IMPERIAL
WARRANT, MOSCOW, 1894,
10¾ in. (26.4 cm.) high
Estimate: £30,000 – 40,000



Lot 360
A SOVIET PORCELAIN PLATE 'THE
ACCORDION PLAYER'
BY THE IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY, ST
PETERSBURG, 1896, AND THE STATE
PORCELAIN FACTORY, PETROGRAD, 1923
11½ in. (28.3 cm.) diameter
Estimate: £20,000 – 30,000



Lot 210
A JEWELLED GOLD CIGARETTE CASE
MARKED FABERGÉ, WITH THE
WORKMASTER'S MARK OF MICHAEL
PERCHIN, ST PETERSBURG, CIRCA 1890,
4¾ in. (11 cm.) high
Estimate: £18,000 – 22,000

Pre-sale exhibitions:

Christie's Moscow: Romanov Lane, 2/6 (bld. 13), November 8–10 2018 (**Press Preview on November 7 at 1 pm**).

Christie's London, King Street: November 22–25 2018.

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About Christie's

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Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

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