

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | 19 MAY 2022

THE ART OF *Literature*

- A special curated exhibition exploring the relationship between art and literature
- Showcasing masterpieces from across three millennia of literary and artistic culture around the globe, including works by William Shakespeare; Pablo Picasso; Marlene Dumas; James Joyce; John William Waterhouse; Lucian Freud and J.K. Rowling
- Headlining London Now, a festival of arts and culture, open to all at Christie's London headquarters in June and July



The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
John William Waterhouse, R.A. (1849–1917)
Tristram and Isolde
Painted in 1916
Price on request

London - Christie's announces **The Art of Literature**, part of **London Now**, an exhibition showcasing a selection of artistic masterpieces inspired by literature through the ages. From

depictions of scenes from Virgil's *Aeneid* by the Old Masters, to the collaboration between artist Peter Doig and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, the connection between the visual and literary arts has given birth to extraordinary objects and texts. Artists and novelists, craftsmen and authors, painters and poets, have long referred to each other's work for inspiration, creating a rich and venerable tradition which continues to this day.

Curated by the next generation of Christie's specialists, co-curators of **The Art of Literature**, Victoria Gramm (Specialist, Post-War and Contemporary Art); Mark Wiltshire (Specialist, Books and Manuscripts) and Annabelle Scholar (Client Advisor, Client Advisory EMEA) comment, '*It has been a pleasure to explore the connections between art and literature over the centuries, from illuminated manuscripts and canvases depicting Classical myths, to more contemporary connections between painting and poetry. We have united a fascinating selection embodying some of these connections, and look forward to welcoming visitors to Christie's King Street to enjoy an exhibition which unites literary and artistic greats.*'

Presented in two separate chapters, the first, **The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition** will run from **6 June to 14 July**. Comprising 50 works, the exhibition is curated to present the finest examples of works from categories including 20th and 21st Century Art, Islamic Art, Books and Manuscripts, Old Masters, 19th Century Art and Decorative Arts.

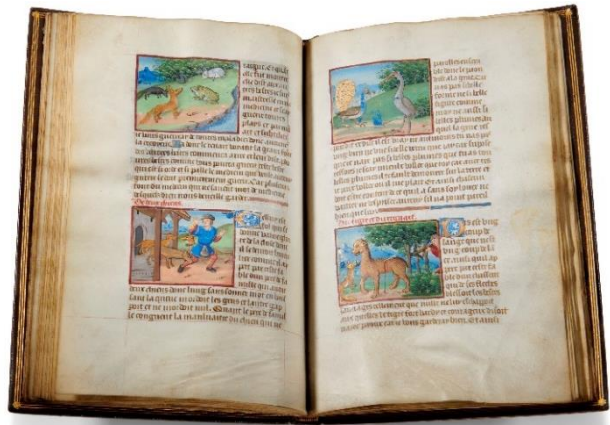
One highlight is **Marlene Dumas**, *Magdalena (Venus)*, on loan, (*illustrated on page 3 left*) dating from 1995. The artwork of South African-born Dumas is inherently literary; her poems, which are written as a complement to her paintings, often tie together literary and artistic threads. In the case of *Magdalena (Venus)*, the artist has written a poem with multi-layered allusions referencing Vladimir Nabokov, Sandro Botticelli and Simone de Beauvoir. These contrasting sources point to the complexity of the presentation of the female body in the history of art and literature.

A unique illuminated manuscript of **Aesop's Fables** in French dating from c.1495 is another exceptional highlight (*illustrated on page 3 right*). This literary masterpiece, combining text and painting in a single beautiful object, is the only known illuminated copy of Julien Macho's popular French translation, with additional works by other fabulists, richly illustrated with sixty-six miniatures by an artist associated with the Master of the Chronique Scandaleuse. All but one fable is illustrated with a miniature depicting a central episode, sometimes even two, of the tale. The scenes are animated and precise evocations of the famous fables.

Also of particular note is **John William Waterhouse's** *Tristram and Isolde* (*illustrated on page 1*). Often termed 'the last Pre-Raphaelite', Waterhouse painted this picture some 70 years after the formation of the Brotherhood. It shows the enduring appeal of Arthurian myth - in this episode of the chivalric romance, Irish princess Isolde offers the Cornish knight Tristram a chalice containing poison so they will not be forced to part – which has been substituted for a love potion. Painted at the height of the First World War, the picture carries undertones of romantic nationalism.



The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
 Marlene Dumas (b. 1953)
Magdalena (Venus)
 Painted in 1995
 ON LOAN

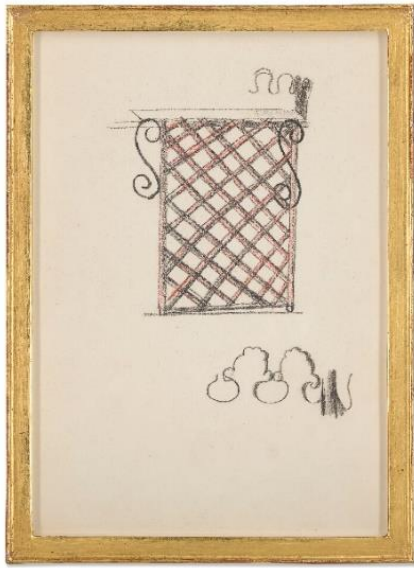


The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
 Aesop's *Fables*
Of the Frog and the Fox, Of the Two Dogs, Of the Peacock and the Crane and Of the Tiger and the Fox,
 an opening from Aesop's *Fables*, in the French translation of Julien Macho, illuminated manuscript on vellum
 France, c. 1495
 ON LOAN

Christie's is pleased to unite seven works by **Lucian Freud** from 1946, made during his association with French poet Olivier Larronde. Following the end of the Second World War, Freud spent the summer of 1946 in Paris where he embraced the French artistic and literary scene. This period was influential for Freud's artistic practice and during his visit he connected with ground-breaking figures including Pablo Picasso and Alberto Giacometti. The result of this encounter is a painting of Larronde's two parrots, *The Birds of Olivier Larronde*, and the accompanying five preparatory sketches. A further ink drawing of a caged bird was intended to be a bookplate for Larronde's *The Bird in the Gilded Cage*, which never reached publication. Larronde died at the early age of 38, being honoured posthumously with France's first *Prix de Littérature* in 1965 – awarded a few weeks after his death.



The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
 Lucian Freud (1922-2011)
Bird in a Cage
 Executed in 1946
 ON LOAN



The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
Lucian Freud (1922-2011)
Studies for The Birds of Olivier Larronde
Executed in 1946
ON LOAN



The Art of Literature: Loan and Selling Exhibition
Lucian Freud (1922-2011)
The Birds of Olivier Larronde
Painted in 1946
ON LOAN

The second chapter, **The Art of Literature: Auction Highlights Exhibition**, will run from **6 to 15 June**, encompassing a selection of outstanding lots from across Christie's summer season of auctions, including works from 20th/21st Century Post War and Contemporary Art in late June through to Classic Week in July. News regarding lots included in the upcoming auctions and in this week-long view will be announced in due course.

The Art of Literature will be accompanied by the return of a uniquely themed Christie's Lates taking place on 8 June - the perfect opportunity to mix with like-minded art lovers after hours. Guests are invited to experience experimental poetry performances, calligraphy workshops, curator led tours, literary-themed cocktails and much more. To book your place, please see the link [here](#)

The Art of Literature Exhibition (loan and selling and auction highlights) is part of **London Now**, a summer season of events, complementing the marquee week auctions taking place in June and July. The Art of Literature Exhibition is open to the public and free to attend at Christie's headquarters in the heart of London's St James's.

Please click [here](#) for drop box containing the images within the release.

*

denotes open by appointment only on 6th June.

PRESS CONTACT:

Charlotte Brown | + 44 (0) 7920 504674 | charlottebrown@christies.com

About Christie's

Founded in 1766, Christie's is a world-leading art and luxury business. Renowned and trusted for its expert live and online auctions, as well as its bespoke private sales, Christie's offers a full portfolio of [global services](#) to its clients, including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie's has a physical presence in 46 countries, throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, with flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. It also is the only international auction house authorized to hold sales in mainland China (Shanghai).

Christie's [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$200 to over \$100 million. In recent years, Christie's has achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction (Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvador Mundi*, 2017), for a single collection sale (the Collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller, 2018), and for a work by a living artist (Jeff Koons' *Rabbit*, 2019).

Christie's [Private Sales](#) offers a seamless service for buying and selling art, jewellery and watches outside of the auction calendar, working exclusively with Christie's specialists at a client's individual pace.

Recent innovations at Christie's include the ground breaking sale of the first NFT for a digital work of art ever offered at a major auction house (Beeple's *Everydays*, March 2021), with the unprecedented acceptance of cryptocurrency as a means of payment. As an industry leader in digital innovation, Christie's also continues to pioneer new technologies that are redefining the business of art, including the creation of viewing and bidding experiences that integrate augmented reality, global livestreaming, buy-now channels, and hybrid sales formats.

Christie's is dedicated to advancing [responsible culture](#) throughout its business and communities worldwide, including achieving sustainability through net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and actively using its platform in the art world to amplify under-represented voices and support positive change.

Browse, bid, [discover](#), and join us for the best of art and luxury at: www.christies.com or by downloading Christie's apps. The COVID-related re-opening status of our global locations is available [here](#)

##

Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

