

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | PARIS | 6 MAY 2024 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COLLECTION CRÉMIEUX *passion privée*

Sale in Paris on Wednesday 5 June, 4pm

Viewing from 30 May to 5 June 2024

Press presentation upon reservation, Thursday 30 May at 11am



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- Celebrating Rosine and Claude Crémieux's legacy
- A collection offering the quintessential portrait of an era
- A collection both characteristically French and world conscious

Paris – Christie’s is proud to announce the *Collection Crémieux, passion privée* sale taking place in Paris on 5 June. In 1995, the already iconic Suzanne Pagé, curates *Passions privées*, a Landmark exhibition at the **Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris**. Bringing together major private collections, the exhibition celebrates the boldness and commitment of post war collectors in France, a spirit perfectly heralded and epitomized by **Rosine Bernheim-Crémieux** and **Claude Crémieux**, both members of the French Resistance and committed intellectuals of their time. The collection curated over the years by Rosine and Claude Crémieux brings together leading French post war figures such as **Jean Dubuffet**, **Serge Poliakoff**, **Nicolas de Staël**, and **Jean Degottex**, as well as major international artists of the era, such as **Robert Rauschenberg**, **Wifredo Lam**, **Fujita** or **Takis**. With nearly 100 works by 70 artists, the sale’s global estimate ranges from **€3.9 to 5.5 million**.

Rosine and Claude Crémieux – an inspirational legacy

Claude Crémieux is twenty years old when he rallies de Gaulle in London in 1940. Rosine is eighteen when she decides to join the Resistance in the Vercors, a famous maquis in the French Alps. As all other nurses of the local hospital, she is sent to Ravensbrück, a concentration camp she manages to escape. Born to the Alsatian Bernheim family, Rosine becomes a pioneer in children’s psychoanalysis in post war era. The son of one of the first female barrister in France, who also serves as the Minister of Justice head of private office, Claude becomes a lawyer himself. Committed to the rights of women, he opposes the death penalty and excessive pretrial detention. An advocate of self-determination, he actively engages against the wars in Algeria and the former French colonies in Mainland Southeast Asia. Following a vivid tradition of the Bernheim family, the young couple shares a passion for the arts, befriending, hosting, and supporting numerous artists. Together with their close friends, gallerists Nicole and Lucien Durand, they share a deep love for Belle Isle, a French island off the coast of Brittany. Hope, freedom and respect, are essential values to the couple at the core of *La traîne-sauvage* a book published in 1999 by Rosine and largely acclaimed by critics as a new literary genre (1999, Editions Flammarion).

Zeitgeist and modernity

Though mainly focused on the post-war period, the Collection Crémieux is deeply rooted in the Bernheim family tradition, featuring most of the early 20th century’s avant-garde with two bronze *Petits léopards* by **Rembrandt Bugatti**, dating 1912 (**€250,000 - 350,000**) or *Paysage* by **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** (**€35,000 - 55,000**). Building a rather comprehensive panorama of the century’s avant-garde, the selection offered for sale is rounded out by a 1929 *Composition* by **Auguste Herbin** (**€150,000 - 250,000**) and *Châte à fleurs de givre*, a 1925 surrealist frottage by **Max Ernst** (**€30,000 - 40,000**).

The traumas of war and deportation long remained unspeakable. They are barely visible in the collection. However, a notice, documenting the looting of a work by the Nazi regime, or a work on paper by **Zoran Mušić** are discreet but very present witnesses of the darkest period in modern history.

The core of the Crémieux collection is firmly embedded in a decidedly optimistic post war period, turned toward the future and shaped by an often radically new artistic output. As such, the Collection Crémieux becomes very quickly the subject of a great deal of interest and is frequently loaned out as shown by a

Quai de Grenelle by **Nicolas de Staël** (1954, €600,000 - 800,000) and a *Rouge et gris* by **Serge Poliakoff** (1957, €180,000 - 250,000), already on display in 1958 in major museums of Düsseldorf or Copenhagen.

The post war period is definitely ready for groundbreaking experiences, productions and ideas. This specific state of mind is probably best evidenced by some of **Jean Dubuffet's** works and researches. As the famous art dealer and Resistance fighter **Daniel Cordier** put it Jean Dubuffet's "*Texturologies* and *Matériologies* series sparked the most controversy and criticism, probably because they represent the final (and likely most accomplished) stage of his experiments." Two of the Dubuffet pieces included in the sale date from this period : *Langage des caves IX* from 1958 (€200,000 - 300,000) and *Regard Limpide* from 1959 (€250,000 - 350,000).

Rosine Crémieux was greatly passionate about abstraction in all its forms, whether geometric, expressionist or lyrical as shown by a 1967 *Horsphère bois (II)* by **Jean Degottex** (€8,000 - 12,000), several paintings by **Jean Dewasne**, and numerous pieces by **Albert Bitran**, **Geneviève Asse** and **François Rouan**, all close friends of the Crémieux couple.

Never limited to a specific genre or medium, the collection also shows a deep interest for artists with a great ability in pushing boundaries – especially boundaries between artistic disciplines. The artist is most and foremost a poet, as shown by **Henri Michaux** and **Gérard Titus-Carmel**.

Wide open to the world

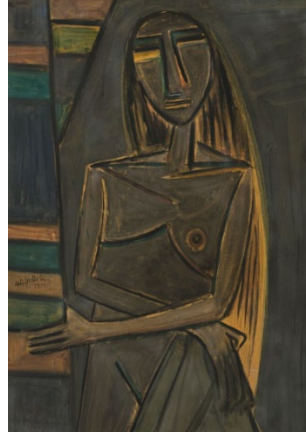
At the time, the new and flourishing American art scene had a significant influence on the building of many collections. The Crémieux ensemble is no exception and Rosine's post-war studies at Harvard University-Massachusetts-USA played a key role in shaping her taste. Works by **Robert Rauschenberg** (€70,000 - 100,000 for an *untitled work* from 1972), **Peter Klasen** (€15,000 - €20,000 for *Bouche + deux interrupteurs*), and **Tom Wesselman** (*Study for bedroom painting No. 3*, €80,000 - 120,000) show the importance of Pop Art in the collection. Those by **Franz Kline** and **Sol LeWitt** respectively speak for abstract expressionism and minimalism.

Looking far beyond the US, the Collection Crémieux shows a deep interest in most region of the world. Latin and romance cultural areas are strongly represented through futurist paintings by **Giacomo Balla** and further works by **Maria Helena Vieira da Silva**, **Joaquín Torres García**, **Sergio de Castro**, or **Julio González**.

Three paintings by **Wifredo Lam** (including *Oiseau Papaye*, €250,000 - 350,000 and *Esquisse pour la Chilienne*, €150,000 - 200,000) are characteristic of the artist's unique and distinctive style. In Lam's hybrid shapes, African and Caribbean influences are no longer relegated to an inspirational role, taking their rightful place as driving forces for the future.



NICOLAS DE STAËL (1914-1955)
Quai de Grenelle, 1954
oil on canvas
60 x 81 cm
Estimate: €600,000 – 800,000
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WIFREDO LAM (1902-1982)
Esquisse pour la Chilienne, 1939
watercolour and graphite on paper
laid down on canvas
101 x 68.5 cm
Estimate: €150,000 – 200,000
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JEAN DUBUFFET (1901-1985)
Regard limpide, 1959
collage of botanical elements
62 x 48 cm
Estimate: €250,000 – 350,000
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SERGE POLIAKOFF (1900-1969)
Rouge et gris, 1957
oil on panel
116 x 88.5 cm
Estimate: €180,000 – 250,000
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AUGUSTE HERBIN (1882-1960)
Untitled, 1928
oil on canvas
195.3 x 114.3 cm
Estimate: €150,000 – 250,000
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REMBRANDT BUGATTI (1884-1916)
Petits léopards l'un derrière l'autre
bronze with brown patina
H: 39.2 cm. L: 62 cm
Drawn up in circa 1912; this proof was poured between 1925 and 1931 as part of a ten-copy edition
Estimate: €250,000 – 350,000
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PRACTICAL INFO

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Viewing from 30 May to 5 June 2024, **Christie's France, 9, Avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris**

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