

Press Release

**CHRISTIE'S**

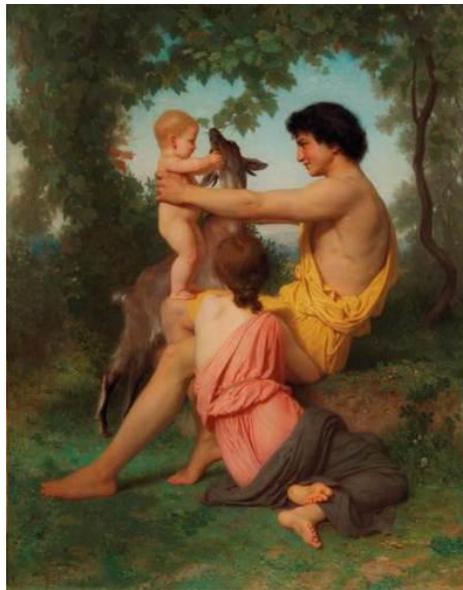
**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Sara Fox [sfox@christies.com](mailto:sfox@christies.com) tel +1 212 636 2680

**LONG-LOST BOUGUEREAU LEADS CHRISTIE'S  
19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EUROPEAN ART SALE ON APRIL 23**

**The Sale Offers a Diverse Selection Of Important 19<sup>th</sup> Century European Art**



William Bouguereau (French, 1825-1905)  
*Idylle: famille antique*  
Estimate: \$400,000-\$600,000

**New York** – From an idealized pastoral of William Bouguereau to Parisian street scenes by Jean Béraud and Louis Marie de Schryver, Christie's sale of *19<sup>th</sup> Century European Paintings* on April 23 in New York, offers strength through diversity with a tightly edited group of 83 paintings spanning the century's most popular styles and subjects. In addition to a rediscovered Bouguereau tableau of a young family in an idyllic pastoral setting, the sale includes several prime examples of the Barbizon school of landscape painters, including an early Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot seascape. The sale, set for 2 pm, is expected to exceed \$6 million.

During his lifetime, **William Adolphe Bouguereau** (French, 1825-1905) was one of the best known artists in the world and among the most commercially successful. Awarded the Grand Prix de Rome as a young man in 1850, he went to Italy to study the Renaissance masters, particularly Raphael. His early success in the

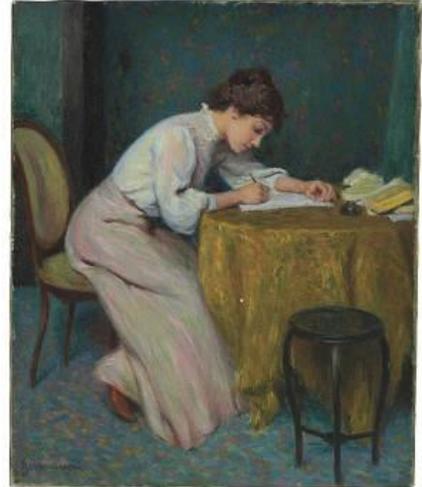
Paris Salon led to important commissions from the French state, as well as wealthy private clients. This gave the prolific painter the freedom to paint for his own pleasure, including this early work, *Idylle: famille antique*, which has been in a private collection since the 1950s (pictured on page 1; estimate: \$400,000-\$600,000). A reduction of the work belongs to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum in Hartford, CT. A later Bouguereau painting in the sale, *Pifferaro* (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), is an idealized portrait of a young country musician. Bouguereau was born in the countryside and his heart remained there, leading him to spend long stretches outside of Paris painting the *monde paysan*, the subject for which he is most remembered today.

**Louis Marie de Schryver** (French, 1862-1942) ventured out on the grand boulevards to capture in exquisite detail the elegant life of the privileged class in *fin-de-siècle* Paris. His painting, *Rue Royale, Paris* (1898) depicts one of the city's most famous streets, known for its luxury shops and restaurants (pictured right; estimate: \$250,000-450,000). De Schryver playfully calls attention to the street's fashionable character by placing a shop sign with the word 'Modes' in the upper left of the painting above several elaborately attired women. Amidst these stylish, hurried Parisians, a single dog pauses at the lower edge of the canvas peering out at the viewer as if to invite us into the lively scene. We are led further into the composition by the rows of buildings whose plunging lines terminate in the hazy grayish-blue outline of the Luxor Obelisk and the dome of *L'Hôtel National des Invalides*. With these recognizable monuments in the distance, de Schryver reminds us of Paris' rich cultural past in the midst of his image of buzzing contemporary life.



Like de Schryver, **Jean Béraud** (French, 1849-1936) clearly loved city life, and his pictures chronicle the customs and fashions of the Belle Époque era with precise detail. His *Boulevard Poissonnière en automne* portrays the unique effects of Paris in the rain (pictured left; estimate: \$300,000-500,000). The city is bathed in the cool, silvery light of an overcast sky while the hustle and bustle of urban life goes on despite the weather. A version of the painting is now in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

After moving from Italy to Paris in 1874, the young **Federico Zandomenighi** (Italian, 1841-1917) experienced an artistic awakening, inspired by the group of avant-garde artists just beginning to gain notoriety for their impressionistic style of painting. Much like his friend Edgar Degas, Zandomenighi was fascinated by the personal rituals of women, and in his innovative painting, *Jeune fille écrivant*, a young woman sits on the edge of a chair absorbed in the task of writing a letter (pictured right; estimate: \$250,000-350,000). Zandomenighi enlivens the otherwise quiet scene with his sinuous lines and coordinated patchwork of rich colors.



**Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot** (French, 1796-1875) inspired his fellow artists to paint from nature. His *Grosse mer à Sainte-Adresse*, painted circa 1829-1830, was painted during his visits to the Normandy coast upon his return from his first visit to Italy (pictured left; estimate: \$100,000-150,000). These early seacoast paintings are exercises in pure technique, with a fluidity of palette achieved through subtle nuances of color.

The depth of space created by the placement of the sea and sky are perfectly mastered, the cool diffused light is captured in harmonies of white, grey, blue and lavender and the buildings that mark the middle ground are almost abstract in their simplicity. These qualities contributed to Corot's influence upon ensuing generations of artists, including the Impressionists. Pierre-Auguste Renoir wrote of him, "There you have the greatest genius of the century, the greatest landscape artist who ever lived...I have studied ceaselessly without ever being able to approach his art."

In addition to three paintings by Corot, the sale includes five paintings by fellow Barbizon school artists, **Hippolyte Camille Delpy**, **Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de La Peña**, and **Constant Troyon**. These artists gathered around the village of Barbizon at the edge of the Fontainebleau forest and painted scenes of the countryside en plein air." Corot's *Environs de Mantes, le Gué sur la Seine* represents the group's dedication to painting nature for its own sake, not simply as a backdrop for allegorical or historical scenes (pictured right; estimate: \$180,000-220,000).





Another grand master of the landscape was **Gustave Courbet** (French, 1819-1877), who spent the last years of his life in exile in Switzerland. The somber mood of the painting *Lac Léman avant la tempête*, (circa 1874), evokes the melancholy that pervaded the later years of the artist's life (pictured at left; estimate: \$120,000-180,000). Courbet's final years were spent removed from his family and friends, cut off from the vitality of Paris and in declining health. With its masterful brushwork, carefully chosen palette and unique invocation of atmosphere, the present work represents the culmination of a long career of experimentation and innovation in landscape painting.

**Auction:** *19th Century European Paintings*

April 23, 2012 at 2pm

**Viewing:** Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

April 19 – April 22

[Click here](#) to view the e-catalogue.

#### **About Christie's**

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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*Images available on request*

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