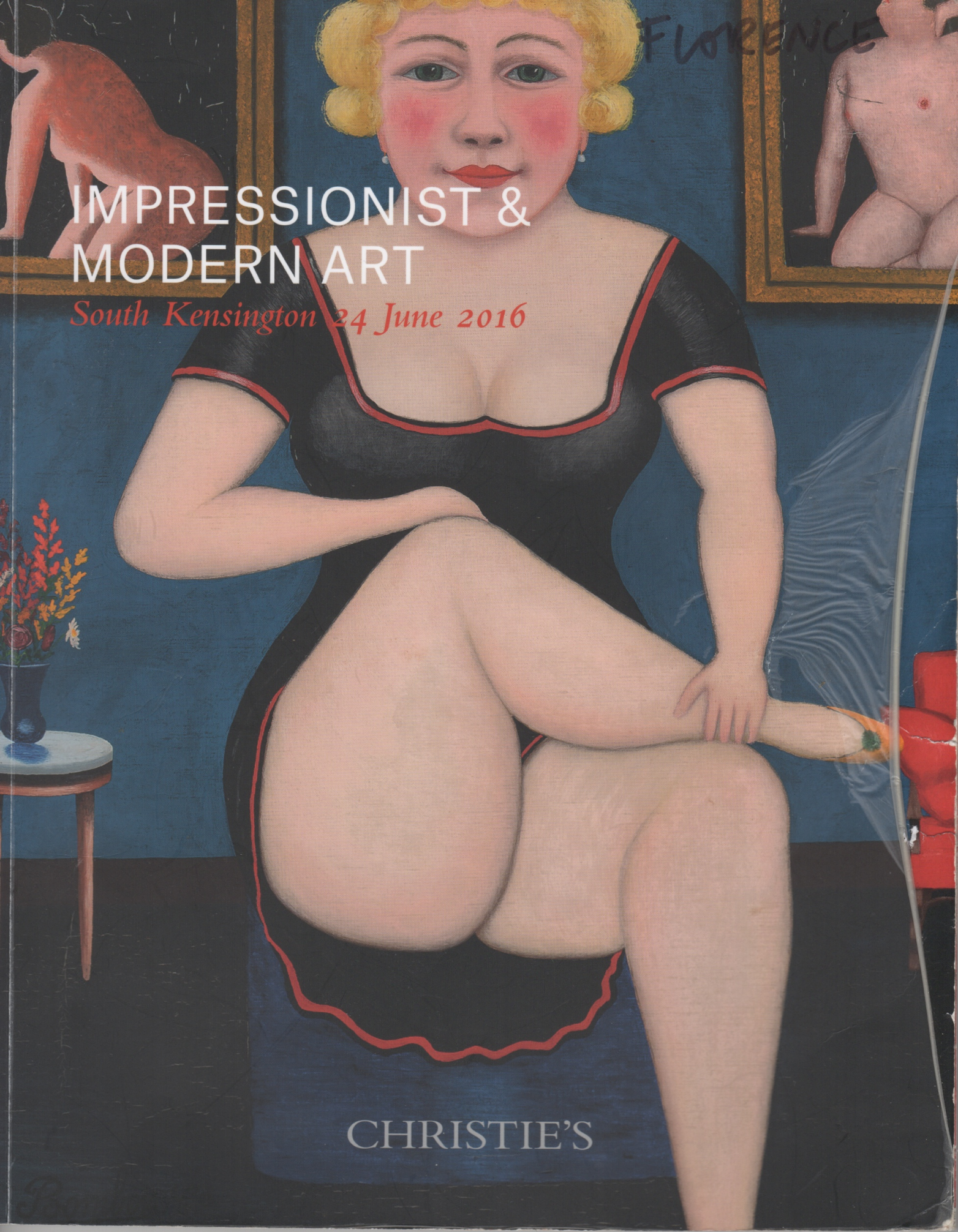


FLORENCE

IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART

South Kensington 24 June 2016



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Imogen Kerr
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IMPRESSIONIST & MODERN ART

FRIDAY 24 JUNE 2016

AUCTION

Friday 24 June 2016
at 10.30 am Lots 1-212
85 Old Brompton Road
London SW7 3LD

AUCTION CODE AND NUMBER

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Saturday	18 June	12.00 noon - 5.00 pm
Sunday	19 June	11.00 am - 5.00 pm
Monday	20 June	9.00 am - 7.30 pm
Tuesday	21 June	9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Wednesday	22 June	9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Thursday	23 June	9.00 am - 5.00 pm

AUCTIONEERS

Nick Martineau and Will Porter

SPECIALISTS

Imogen Kerr
Head of Sale
Tel: +44 (0)20 7752 3177
ikerr@christies.com

Astrid Carbonez
Junior Specialist
Tel: +44 (0)20 7389 2198
acarbonez@christies.com

ADMINISTRATOR

Florence Woodfield Morais
Tel: +44 (0)20 7752 3102
fwoodfieldmorais@christies.com
Fax: +44 (0)20 7752 3283

EMAIL

First initial followed by last name @ christies.com (eg. Imogen Kerr = ikerr@christies.com).
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FEMMES MODERNES

FRANÇOISE GILOT : LA FEMME FLEUR

A true pioneer of Modernism, Françoise Gilot had early ambitions to be a painter, contrary to pressure from her agronomist father. Having met Picasso in Paris in 1943, Gilot became his long-term partner and muse, and mother to couple's two children, Claude and Paloma. During this time Gilot continued to independently develop her own unique painterly style, and after 10 years with Picasso, she left him to pursue, in her own words, a life of 'rigor and integrity' (François Gilot, 2012). Some of her most exciting work, including her famous *Labyrinth* series, were painted in the years following their separation.

Vase au pois et bourgeon de pavot (lot 50) is one of a series of still lifes executed by the artist in 1958 in the fruitful period that followed the separation. Gilot's rigorous interest in the nature of objects and, as she writes, 'the unending debate between nature and culture', ensured that the still life was to become one of her most enduring themes. Her interest in the symbolism of flowers (inspired in part by her admiration of the 17th Dutch school) as well potent memories evoked by the flowers grown in her childhood home of Neuilly, contribute to the still-life composition being a most fertile ground for her continuing experimentation in to abstraction, colour and the nature of form. It was also the motif that Picasso used to portray the young Gilot as *La Femme Fleur* in the late 1940s during their relationship, at which time he commented:

"You're like a growing plant and I've been wondering how I could get across the idea that you belong to the vegetable kingdom rather than the animal. I've never felt impelled to portray anyone else this way. It's strange, isn't it? I think it's just right, though. It represents you"

Françoise Gilot, *Life with Picasso*, New York, 1964, p. 119

With its origins in the Middle Ages and in Ancient Greco-Roman art, the still life has maintained chief importance throughout the history of Western art. From the 16th to the 19th century, the still life was regarded as a minor pictorial genre, but during the second part of the 19th century, the revolutions in style of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists ensured that the still life form experienced a revival. Still life played a central role in the subsequent development of abstraction, in particular, in the initial development of Cubism, in which artists such as Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris and Georges Braque used the interplay of geometric shapes and planes to forward their pioneering work into the deconstruction of the two dimensional surface, bringing a new interpretation of volume and three dimensionality to the field of painting. Still life became a place of great enquiry and experimentation, and as Françoise Gilot has noted, 'all possible variations and permutations were welcome'. Still life compositions were widely used during the second-world war, when freedom of movement was restricted. Constraint, occupation and the threat of extreme violence were often reflected in the distilled, contemplative space of the still life composition.

The following still life compositions by Françoise Gilot (lots 50-53; and also one by Susanne Valadon lot 54) explore elements of form, colour and tension evoked by objects and situations of varying context, suggestion and juxtaposition. These works evoke not only aesthetic and emotional responses from the viewer, but engender an enlivening of the senses in their olfactory potentialities, their insinuated textures and historic reference points. This is not to mention the sensually charged nature of their symbolism, a concept mined further by artists towards the latter part of the 20th century including Georgia O'Keefe, Robert Mapplethorpe and Imogen Cunningham and continued today into 21st century practices by artists such as Jeff Koons, Fischli/Weiss and Pipilotti Rist.

The four still life compositions by Françoise Gilot offered in this sale (Lots 50-53) span her career from the 1950s to 1980s and exemplify the artist's continuing exploration into the genre, which developed continually, as she writes, 'I do not start a new oil to verify what I already know; quite the opposite. I try to put myself in an equation with the unknown.' (Françoise Gilot, 2012).



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