



Jacques Grange, *The Curiosity Cabinet*, display cases emulating the Schatzkammer of the German Prince-Electors with Statue of Buddha in red and gold lacquered wood, China, Ming Dynasty 16th century, est. €30,000-€40,000; Opposite page: A. Van Hermansreyt, Ivory sculpture box (1657), est. €180,000-€220,000

Sale of the Century

This February's auction of the Yves Saint Laurent personal collection is expected to raise as much as €300 million for AIDS research. **BY TERENCE DONNELLAN**

If the fashion industry

built a Mount Rushmore for its heroes and most influential designers, Yves Saint Laurent's would be one of the faces carved in stone. For that reason, among many others, the Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé Collection sale at Christie's Auction House at the Grand Palais in Paris (February 23, 24, 25) is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own a piece of history, or simply to view the many splendors from Saint Laurent's extraordinary life.

There are so many stunning pieces, so many types of art, it's almost as if Christie's is auctioning off a small museum of more than 700 objects. The categories are expansive: Modern Art, Art Deco, European Sculptures and Works of Art from the Renaissance, European Furniture, Silver, Antiquities, Old Master and 19th-Century Paintings and Drawings, and Asian Art. The sale is expected to raise between €200 million and €300 million, and has been dubbed "the sale of the century" by the French newspaper *Le Figaro*.





The sale isn't, however, only about a collection of beautiful art objects. It is a manifestation of the life, love, and business partnership that Yves Saint Laurent shared with Pierre Bergé for more than 40 years. Bergé, to whom Saint Laurent bequeathed his half of the collection, is showing an incredible generosity of spirit and altruism in his plan to use the money raised from the sale to create a foundation dedicated to scientific research and the fight against AIDS.

Between the bookends of Oran and Marrakech, Saint Laurent dressed everyone from couture-wearing society figures to everyday office workers with his ready-to-wear lines. As a reward, he was able to populate his apartment on the Rue de Babylone on Paris' Left Bank with art by Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, Edouard Manet, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, George Braque, Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Giorgio De Chirico, Marcel Duchamp, Toulouse-Lautrec, Constantin Brancusi, Edouard Vuillard, James Ensor, Juan Gris, Thomas Gainsborough, Jacques-Louis David, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Théodore Géricault, Frans Hals, and Rembrandt.

The Hope Diamond among all these visual jewels may be Picasso's Cubist masterpiece *Instruments de musique sur un guéridon*, with an estimated value of €30 million to €40 million. Christie's calls it "the last Cubist painting of this quality on the market." Other top lots include the Fernand Léger *La tasse de thé*, estimated at €10 million to €15 million; the Henri Matisse *Les coucous, tapis bleu et rose*, estimated at €15 million to €20 million; and the Piet Mondrian *Composition avec bleu*,



Gustave Miklos, pair of stools with palm veneering circa 1920-1922, est. €2,000,000-€3,000,000; Opposite page: Rome, 1st-2nd century AD, male turso, est. €200,000-€300,000





1936

Yves Saint Laurent is born on August 1 in Oran, Algeria.

1953

Wins third prize for three design sketches in *Paris-Match* magazine's Wool Secretariat's annual competition.

1954

Moves to the City of Lights as a student.

1957

Christian Dior declares: "Yves will be my successor."

1958

Meets Pierre Bergé.



Sir Edward Coley Burke-Jones,
The Adoration of the Magi,
est. €400,000-€600,000

1962

First collection is unveiled. Later, the House of Yves Saint Laurent is born.

2004

The Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent Foundation opens to preserve the history of the YSL House.

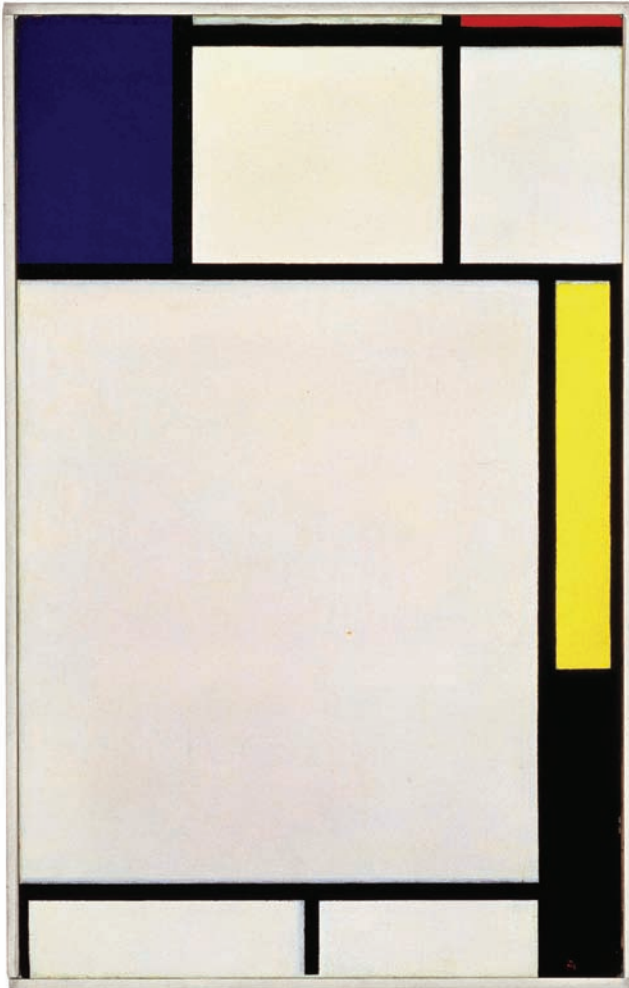
2008

Yves Saint Laurent breathes his last breath in his Paris home. After the funeral services in the French capital, his ashes are scattered in the Majorelle Garden in Marrakech, Morocco.

Key dates in the life of Yves Saint Laurent



It's **the last Cubist painting** on the market.
The other nine that were painted on
this scale are in museums today.



rouge, jaune et noir, estimated at €8 million to €12 million. (Prices were set prior to the recent global economic crisis.)

Saint Laurent's love of Art Deco is illustrated through the work of some of its most illustrious practitioners: an Eileen Gray brilliant and beautiful fauteuil, decorated with dragons; Gustave Miklos' stools with palm veneer; Jean Dunand's copperware and lacquer vases; Claude Lalanne's bronze and galvanized copper mirrors; and an African-style wood stool by Pierre Legrain.

Other lots of great interest include lamps by Alberto Giacometti and Jean-Michel Frank; a portrait of Jean Cocteau by Modigliani; more than 1,200 pieces of silver cutlery by Christofle; Venetian and Limoges renaissance enamels; a Chinese statue of Buddha in lacquered wood from the 16th century; bronzed heads of a rabbit and a rat from the Qing Dynasty; a suite of 18th-century Italian armchairs; and an Edward Burne-Jones tapestry, *Adoration des Mages*, commissioned in 1904.

Beyond all this splendor, what is being auctioned represents a window into the creative soul of one of the 20th century's most gifted clothing designers. Saint Laurent, like all those who collect art objects, wasn't just collecting for himself. He desired to share what he found beautiful in the world with the people he loved.

Now is your chance to do the same. ■

Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, +33.1.44.31.64.00, www.fondation-pb-ysl.net; *Christie's*, www.christies.com; *Pierre Bergé & Associés*, www.pba-auctions.com

Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow, and Black*, est. €8,000,000-€12,000,000; *Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*, *La Tauromachie*, est. €300,000-€500,000; *Frans Hals*, *Portrait of a man*, est. €800,000-€1,200,000; *Opposite page: Pablo Picasso*, *Instruments de musique sur un guéridon (Musical Instruments on a Pedestal)*, est. €30,000,000-€40,000,000