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PRESS RELEASE

Matisse Masterpiece to be Offered at Phillips

Nu allongé I (Aurore) to be Included in the 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Auction in London in March 2018



Henri Matisse 1869-1954

Nu allongé I (Aurore)

Patinated bronze, 34.3 x 50.2 x 28.6 cm (13 1/2 x 19 3/4 x 11 1/4 in.)

Conceived in Collioure in 1907 and cast circa 1908 by Bingen-Costenoble, Paris, this work is number 3 from an edition of 10.

Estimate: £5,000,000-7,000,000

LONDON - 23 JANUARY 2018 - On 8 March, Phillips will offer Henri Matisse's *Nu allongé I (Aurore)*, 1907-08 as a highlight of the 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale. The sculpture, an early lifetime cast, is emblematic of one of the hallmark motifs that Matisse returned to throughout his career – that of the female form. Having been in a French private collection for almost seven decades, *Nu allongé I (Aurore)* has not been seen in public since it was last exhibited at the Montross Gallery, New York in 1915. The sculpture will be on view at Phillips' Paris from 1-3 February, and Antwerp from 8-9 February 2018, before being offered for sale in London on 8 March 2018.

Hugues Joffre, Senior Advisor to the CEO, said: "This season, Phillips is fortunate to be able to again create a meaningful dialogue between two titans of Modern art – Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse – with Picasso's *La Dormeuse* of 1932, and Matisse's *Nu allongé I (Aurore)* that predicated it. *Nu allongé I (Aurore)* is a landmark work in Matisse's oeuvre, and exemplifies the same sinuous pose that goes on to feature in a string of masterpieces that are now housed in museum collections throughout the world. Following Phillips' extraordinary results achieved for Modern works in November 2017, this season's 20th Century & Contemporary Art auctions will be anchored by an impressive group of Modern artists."

Nu allongé I (Aurore), finished in 1907, and first cast in bronze shortly afterwards, was singled out as “one of Matisse’s masterpieces” by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art. It stands at the threshold of 20th century art, marking a departure from the purely figurative and leading the way for abstract art. Posed with her muscular limbs twisting across her torso, this work helped Matisse to find a new solution in his paintings, with *The Blue Nude*, 1907, *The Pink Nude*, 1935, his great charcoal drawings of 1938, and even his 1952 paper cut-out *Blue Nudes* all being reprises of the pose first perfected in *Nu allongé I (Aurore)*. The exaggerated size of some body parts that are disproportionate to one another possibly also indicate the artist’s enthusiasm for African figure sculptures with articulated limbs. Engaged by the sculpture’s complexity, Picasso immediately began to develop his own versions of this abstract pose and continued to do so throughout his long career.

“By the most fortunate coincidence this sale also includes Picasso’s masterpiece, ‘La Dormeuse’, a monumental horizontal format image made on March 13, 1932.” Charles Stuckey

Picasso’s immediate response to *Nu allongé I (Aurore)* has often been noted in the series of abstract nudes with raised elbows and twisted poses that he made in 1907. Later, during the summer of 1930 when Matisse’s sculptures were exhibited at the Galerie Pierre, Picasso embarked on a group of abstract figurative sculptures that led directly in 1932 to a series of paintings depicting one of his greatest muses: Marie-Thérèse Walter. These works from 1932 show poses similar to those used by Matisse, exemplified by the sinuous, sensual depiction of Marie-Thérèse in *La Dormeuse* (illustrated right).



Pablo Picasso 1881-1973
La Dormeuse, 13 March 1932
Oil and charcoal on canvas, 51 1/4 x 63 3/4 in., 130.2 x 161.9 cm.
Estimate: £12,000,000-16,000,000

Nu allongé I (Aurore) is number 3 of 10 casts. Of the ten, only the first three were cast immediately, with the last being cast in 1951. It is a tribute to the importance of this work that five of the casts are housed at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, and finally the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, and the others in some of the most prestigious private collections.

Auction: 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale, 8 March 2018

Location: 30 Berkeley Square, London

Preview Tour:

Paris

46 Rue du Bac, Paris 75007

1 - 3 February 2018

Antwerp

Graaf van Egmontstraat 37, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

8 - 9 February 2018

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