

'One of the Most Celebrated Venice Paintings'
Sotheby's To Offer Exceptionally Rare View of Venice
by Claude Monet Estimated at £20-30 Million

London 3rd February Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale



'When I looked at your Venice paintings I experienced a deep emotion . . . I admire them as the highest manifestations of your art' Paul Signac

SOTHEBY'S forthcoming London Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale on 3rd February 2015 will be led by an exceptionally rare and important view of Venice by Claude Monet, *Le Grand Canal* of 1908, estimated at £20-30 million / \$30.6 -45.9m / €25.6-38.3m.

Helena Newman, Sotheby's Co-Head, Impressionist & Modern Art Worldwide, said: "The market for works by Claude Monet has now reached an all-time point of strength, with bidders coming from four times as many countries as a decade ago. Reflecting the outstanding quality and beauty of the work, *Le Grand Canal* was prominently displayed for eight years at The National Gallery, London. Given the painting's rarity and exceptional quality, and the strong price of £19.7m achieved when we sold Monet's Venice view *Le Palais Contarini* in 2013, we anticipate enthusiastic global interest prior to the sale in February."

Painted during a three-month trip to Venice in 1908 – the year of one of the first Venice Biennales - such works depicting Venice are highly sought after by collectors as they represent the peak of Monet's career. *Le Grand Canal* has been exhibited around the world, most recently on loan to The National Gallery, London, for eight years (2006-2014) and previously exhibited at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, and the Royal Academy of Arts London. Prior to Sotheby's auction on 3rd February in London, the painting will be exhibited in Taipei (7th January 2015) Hong Kong (9th-12th January 2015), New York (21st-23rd January 2015) and then London (28th January – 3rd February 2015).

Monet's depiction of the domes of Santa Maria della Salute in *Le Grand Canal*, seen from the steps of the Palazzo Barbaro, highlights the development from the Old Masters' detailed depiction of Venice and the more lavish and picturesque depictions of the 18th century. Monet's series introduced a fresh approach that captured so finely the ever-changing splendour of light upon the city's ancient stone walls and the water that surrounds. Monet drew upon his artistic predecessors in Venice such as Turner and Whistler, as well as his personal achievements of his own London series of paintings. Unlike Monet's usual methods of charting the changes of time and light as the course of the day would progress, in Venice time was not to be one of the factors of variations for his motifs. It was what he called 'the envelope' - the surrounding atmospheric conditions, the famous Venetian haze - that became the principal factor of variation with these motifs.

On 19th December 1908, a few days after Monet's return to Paris, the influential Impressionist gallerist Bernheim-Jeune acquired twenty-eight of the thirty-seven views of Venice, though Monet kept the pictures in his studio to add finishing touches. It was only in 1911 after the death of his wife Alice – with whom he had travelled to Venice - that Monet finally agreed on a date for the exhibition *Claude Monet Venise* at Bernheim-Jeune, which opened on 28th May 1912 and was greeted with considerable critical acclaim.

A year after the exhibition at Bernheim-Jeune *Le Grand Canal* was acquired by Hunt Henderson, a New Orleans-based sugar magnate. Henderson was one of the most important collectors in the American South in the first half of the 20th Century whose collection included a significant number of works by the Impressionists, including paintings and drawings by Monet, Renoir and Degas.

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