

Sotheby's Presents

The Line of Beauty: Drawings from
The Collection of Howard and Saretta Barnet

Offering

Italian, French, Spanish, German & British Drawings
Spanning 500 Years of Western Art



Public Exhibition Opens 26 January
AUCTION IN NEW YORK 31 JANUARY 2018

NEW YORK, 7 December 2017 – Sotheby's is honored to present [The Line of Beauty: Drawings from the Collection of Howard and Saretta Barnet](#) in a dedicated auction on 31 January 2018 in New York, highlighting Sotheby's annual Masters Week sales.

The superb collection of 28 drawings, formed over a period of some 40 years by the New York couple Howard and Saretta Barnet, is unique for its combination of small overall size, great chronological span and exceptionally high quality. Making their selections with razor-sharp aesthetic judgement, the Barnets very carefully assembled a group of drawings that tells the story of five centuries of the art of drawing in Western Europe, each of the very highest quality and beauty. Spanning from an early Renaissance landscape, drawn around 1500 by Fra Bartolommeo, to the rare and penetrating portrait of fellow-artist Balthus, drawn by Lucian Freud in 1989, the collection also includes magnificent drawings by the great 17th-century landscape master, Claude Lorrain, by the five top draughtsmen of 18th-century France and Italy (Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard, Tiepolo, Guardi), by the most visionary of Spanish artists, Goya and Picasso, and by two of the giants of 19th-century French art, Ingres and Degas. Despite being very different from each other in date, geographical origin, technique, style and function, these drawings reflect a powerful, consistent taste.

The collection will be on view in our New York galleries from 26 – 31 January 2018, alongside our public exhibitions of Master Paintings.

Gregory Rubinstein, Head of Sotheby's Old Master Drawings Department, commented: "The sale of the Barnet Collection offers not only a unique and liberating insight into what makes a great drawing, but also gives another generation of collectors the opportunity to acquire works of the very highest quality, which have been off the market for several decades. Rarely, if ever, can a more perfectly chosen collection have been formed, in any collecting field."

He continued: "The greatest masters of Western European art, from Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo to Rembrandt, Goya and Picasso, all began every work of art that they made, in every medium, with drawings. Through drawings, they worked out how they would approach their projects, and developed their ideas. Drawings open a magical door, through which we can pass into the very heart of the creative process – we are transported in time, to the very moment when the artist was working out what he or she was going to do, and that moment, whenever it occurred,

thereby becomes part of the present, not the past. This timeless and universal quality is also fundamentally modern, and drawings from all periods can be equally revelatory to artists and collectors of today – to anyone fascinated by the process of making art.”

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION



Fra Bartolommeo holds a distinct and distinguished position amongst the classic painters of the Renaissance. The present drawing, an exquisite and highly rare landscape drawing, depicting a **View of Fiesole** (estimate \$600/800,000), has an absolutely impeccable provenance; given by Fra Bartolommeo to his fellow artist Fra Paolina da Pistoia, before subsequently entering the celebrated collection of the Florentine art historian Nicolo

Gabburi. Dating to circa 1508, this drawing can be considered among the earliest pure landscape studies in European art and like the other surviving landscape studies by the artist, the majority of which are in museum collections, this sheet appears to have been drawn directly from nature.

Parmigianino was a prodigiously talented painter, draughtsman and print maker, whose career spanned the Mannerist period. His drawings are continuously sought after by collectors and connoisseurs, and justifiably recognized for their outstanding quality. The present work, a double sided drawing, is no exception to this rule and depicts two separate studies of “**Shepherds for an Adoration**” on the recto and “**Two putti among foliage**”



on the verso (estimate \$300/500,000). The drawing also contains a charming musical score on the recto, perhaps explaining why it once belonged in the collection of Nicolas Lanière, who was appointed in 1618 as “Master of the Musick” to Prince Charles, who would later become King Charles I of England.

Claude Lorrain's **The Valley Of The Aniene, Near Tivoli, With The Ruins Of The Aqua Anio Novus Aqueduct** (estimate \$600/800,000) has not been seen in public since it was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, some 40 years ago, and the occasion of this sale therefore provides the first opportunity in a long generation to study and appreciate its exceptional qualities. Historically resonant, elegant in composition and understated in the handling of the media, it epitomises Claude's accomplishments in the field of drawing, at a moment when he was riding a wave of critical acclaim and professional success. It is through serene and imposing drawings such as that cemented the artist's position as the ultimate recorder of the landscape, ruins and atmosphere of the Roman Campagna. Though the monuments and antiquities of Rome itself and its immediate surroundings had been drawn and painted by other artists since the earlier 16th century, it was only when Claude took to the wider countryside surrounding the Eternal City in the 1620s that these pastoral locations began to be widely appreciated as subjects – a fashion that was subsequently to endure more or less unabated until the late 19th century. This characteristically atmospheric work is one of the finest and most significant drawings by the artist to remain in private hands, and is particularly fascinating in that it depicts an identifiable location, with the ruins of the Aqua Anio Novus Aqueduct still surviving to this day.



In his relatively short-life, Jean Antoine Watteau managed to have a hugely significant impact on the development of Rococo art in France and beyond. **A Scene From The Commedia dell'arte: A Girl Resisting The Advances Of A Comedian And An Actress Executing A Step** (estimate \$500/700,000) is an exquisite and extremely elegant drawing by the artist, depicting a scene from the "Commedia dell'Arte", an early form of theatre, that originated in Italy in the 15th century. Spreading in popularity throughout Europe, it was of the utmost fashion in Rococo France by the 18th century. The two figures on the left, drawn predominantly in a vibrant red chalk, with touches of black lead, appear to depict the timeless scene of a beautiful woman, spurning



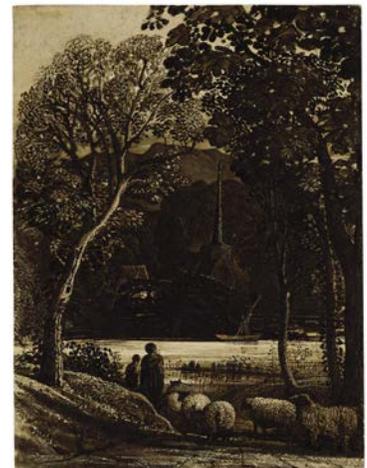
the advances of an enthusiastic suitor. The equally beautiful woman on the right side of the sheet, does not seem to directly relate to the aforementioned narrative, but rather, appears to be an actress or dancer performing a step. The two groups of figures combined form a delightfully balanced “mis en page”, in which Watteau, captures both the elegance of the figures he portrays, coupled with an expressiveness and sense of movement that only a draughtsman of his immense virtuosity could achieve.



Goya's penetrating vision of humanity and intense visual imagination mark him out as one of the first truly modern artists. Throughout his life, he expressed his most private thoughts and feelings in his drawings, and gathered them at various stages of his career into eight remarkable "Private Albums". **No llenas tanto la cesta (Don't Fill The Basket So Full)** (estimate \$1/1.5 million) originates from the *Black Border Album*, named for its most visible characteristic: the distinctive lines that frame each drawing within this group. Here the artist has portrayed an elderly woman, hunched over a basket of food, some of which has fallen on the ground to the right of her. Goya has added his own proverbial inscription to

the lower centre of the drawing: *No llenas tanto la cesta (Don't fill the basket so full)*, to suggest that the viewer can learn from the mistakes made by the elderly woman depicted. The combination of media that Goya uses in this drawing remain in particularly exceptional condition, making this museum quality drawing one of the most important works by the artist to appear on the open market in recent years.

Samuel Palmer was undoubtedly one of the most important and influential artists of the Romantic era, working in Britain. A particular emphasis is placed on his celebrated early career, a period in which he was living in the Kent village of Shoreham. His work from this “Shoreham period”, of which **Landscape With A Church, A Boat And Sheep** (estimate \$250/350,000) is a wonderful example, is executed in his visionary style. Drawn in Palmer's characteristic combination of brown ink and wash with scratching out, the present work depicts a scene of rural bliss, with two shepherds and their flock bathed in dappled light, whilst behind them a boatman drifts past an idyllic village



Church.



Degas' two engrossing passions, horseracing and ballet, provided him with a rich and exciting social life and the artistic inspiration for the greatest part of his *œuvre*. As a member of the prestigious Jockey Club, Degas was a habitué of the racecourses at Deauville and Longchamps, where he could study the beauty of thoroughbred horses at close quarters. Images of racing were a central part of his career, and his pastels of the subject are among his most celebrated

works, of which **Deux jockeys** (estimate \$80/120,000) is a perfect example.

A virtuoso rendering of bold line and delicate chiaroscuro, Lucian Freud's arresting **Portrait of Balthus** (estimate \$70/90,000) magnificently illustrates the legendary British portraitist's extraordinary powers of analysis in both form and character. Executed in 1989, the present work portrays Freud's fellow artist Balthus, a French modern painter whose early investigation of figurative expressionism served as a significant influence upon Freud's own iconic output. This drawing confidently captures the essence of the sitter, the brooding gaze and distinctive, shadowy features readily evoking Balthus' reputation as a reclusive and impenetrable artistic



figure. In each deft charcoal accent, Freud imbues his sitter's refined visage with an arresting psychic intensity that serves as an enduring testament, both to Freud's inimitable analysis of the human subject, and to his remarkable abilities as a master draughtsman.

ADDITIONAL SALES OF THE COLLECTION

Contemporary paintings from the collection of Howard and Saretta Barnet were offered in our Contemporary Evening Auction on 16 November, with additional works in the Contemporary Art Day Auction the following day. Following the sale of Old Master, Impressionist and Contemporary drawings in January, the collection will also be represented in our March Important Design auction and our April Prints & Multiples auction, and there will be a dedicated sale of an exceptional group of

sculpture in May 2018, featuring important African and Oceanic Art, Pre-Columbian Art, American Indian Art and Antiquities.

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