

# Sotheby's

Press Release Paris

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## PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF ELEANOR POST CLOSE & ANTAL POST DE BEKESSY

To Be Offered in a Series of Auctions this Fall  
at Sotheby's London and Paris



### AN AMERICAN DYNASTY IN EUROPE

**Paris, October 2017** – Sotheby's is honoured to announce that the collections of Eleanor Post Close and of her son, Antal Post de Bekessy, will be sold in a series of dedicated auctions this fall in London and Paris. Passionate about Fine Art and the Decorative Arts, Eleanor Post Close and Antal Post de Bekessy loved 18th-century painting, as well as Modern and

Contemporary art. The collection to be offered therefore encompasses works by a broad range of artists from across the centuries, including works of Odilon Redon, Auguste Rodin, Clodion and Nicolas de Largillière, Gustav Klimt and Zao Wou-Ki.

650 lots of furniture, 18th and 19th-century sculpture and works of art, as well as paintings and drawings, watches, and wine, will be offered in a series of five auctions this autumn between Paris and London.

Pierre Mothes, Vice-President of Sotheby's France, said: "We are delighted to have been chosen for the auction of this prestigious collection, which we hope will be a fitting tribute to Eleanor Post Close and her son Antal."

Eleanor Post Close (1909-2006) and Antal Post de Bekessy (1943-2015) belonged to an exceptional American aristocratic dynasty. Over the generations, the Post family assembled extraordinary collections, and built or restored outstanding houses in the United States, (such as Mar-A-Lago in Florida), Switzerland and France. Renowned for its generous donations (to museums and foundations such as the Smithsonian Institution, Château de Versailles and Hillwood museum), the family's cultural legacy, particularly in the United States and in France, is significant.

Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887-1973), the richest woman in the United States of her day, was at the helm of the family business General Foods. An astute businesswoman, philanthropist, and collector, she left a significant portion of her collection of 18th-century French and Russian art and several jewels of exceptional quality to be shown in her Hillwood home in Washington D.C., today a museum open to the public. A portrait of this exceptional lady in its Cartier frame reminds us that she was also one of Cartier's most important customers (estimate: €20,000-30,000).



It was in Europe that Marjorie's daughter, Eleanor Post Close, chose to settle down just after the Second World War. She first purchased a lovely private mansion opening onto the Monceau Park, and subsequently bought an elegant 18th century house on the banks of the river Seine, the former residence of the Count of Artois, the future King Charles X. Later in life, Eleanor strengthened her ties to Europe, by acquiring a private mansion in Freiburg, Switzerland, where she would often stay with her then husband, the famous orchestra conductor Léon Barzin., music director of the New York City Ballet and head of the National Orchestra

Association. Awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, this elegant woman regularly received art enthusiasts, music lovers and aristocrats in her homes. She was also a philanthropist, who generously donated several works to French museums, most notably the Martin Carlin jewel case, which she gave to the Château de Versailles in 1961.

Her son, Antal Post de Bekessy, who owned properties in New York and then in Pennsylvania and often travelled to Europe, received the cross of the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres for his work in conservation and in the promotion of French Art and Architecture. Antal was also a fervent collector, with a penchant for Romanticism and Modernism; he was particularly fond of works by Viennese artists, such as Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele.

Eleanor Post Close and her son established themselves as great collectors of assured taste. Over the years, they built up an astounding art collection, which Sotheby's is now privileged to be offering.

## DECORATIVE ARTS

Each work, selected for its great artistic quality, testifies to the skill of the artist, regardless of when it was made. The Close collection is distinguished by a superb suite of four gilt-wood fauteuils à chassiss stamped by Louis Delanois, a prestigious testimony to the talent of one of the most renowned seat-makers of the 18th century. His distinguished clientele included the Count of Artois, the Dukes of Bourbon, of Enghien, and of Praslin, the Prince of Beauvau and the Countess of Choiseul (estimate: €120,000-180,000).



Louis Delanois was one of the rare Parisian menuisiers of the last decades of the 18th century – a highly skilled craftsman with an acute understanding of current fashion and taste. The moulded curve of the armrest of these four armchairs was repeatedly used by Delanois on his Louis XV seat furniture. The rather flat moulded borders around the seat begin to appear on his work circa 1765, as on an armchair formerly with the Seligmann collection and the Niarchos collection. The rose ornament at the center of the seat-rail is similar to that of a suite of six armchairs and a sofa that now forms part of the collection of the Louvre museum.

The spectacular Blue-John vases were particularly rare in France during the Restoration and attest to the strong current of Anglomania that swept through France at the beginning of the 19th-century. Blue-John, originally coming only from quarries in Derbyshire, England, was a

British specialty, which did not arrive in France until the early 19th-century (estimate: €50,000 – 70,000). This semi-precious stone was appreciated for its translucency and its amethyst color. The famous British bronze-artist Matthew Boulton specialized in Blue-John objects mounted in gilt-bronze, such as pendulum clocks and candelabra. That the pair of vases in the collection here is a French model is indicated by the design of its bronze mounting: the musician putti on the handles are directly inspired by the putti that ornament the model of a wall light attributed to Pierre Gouthière.



Two delightful neoclassical reliefs in terracotta by Clodion entitled *La Marchande d'Amours*, signed by the artist (estimate: €100,000-150,000), and *Le Sacrifice à l'Amour* (estimate: €80,000-120,000), illustrate one of the sculptor's preferred subjects. Presented at the 1773 Salon, these two high quality reliefs belonged to the prestigious collection of Louis-François de Bourgon, Prince of Conti, before he sold them in 1779. A marble version of *Sacrifice à l'Amour*,

signed by Clodion, exists, which belonged to the former collection of La Live de La Briche, and today forms part of the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Three other reliefs in terracotta of the same model are known today: the version in the Brinsley Ford collection from the former collection of Emile Strauss; the version belonging Georges Wildenstein; and a third version that was sold by Sotheby's London in 1977. For *La Marchande d'Amours*, only one other terracotta version exists, which is kept in a private American collection, and a signed marble version, which currently is included in the collection of the Musée de Nancy.

## OLD MASTER AND 19TH CENTURY PAINTINGS

The portrait of Monsieur de Puységur by Nicolas de Largillierre (1656-1746) was hung by Eleanor Post Close in the drawing room of her private Parisian mansion. This painting is a perfect example of the artist's talent in the reign of Louis XIV: the face reflects the personality of the model, the slightly crumpled lace sleeves and frill, the shoulders white with powder, shiny highlights



in the luxurious velvet and gold and silver embroidery. If this gentleman's attitude exemplifies a classical pose in the artist's work, the fabrics twist and twirl to suggest the model's movement (estimate: €60,000-80,000).



*Lion couché dans un paysage* by Eugène Delacroix recalls a theme dear to the artist since his younger days; lions held a special place in the work of the painter. The palette is reduced here to subtle tones of green and brown and the paintwork is vibrant. The lion's expressiveness and the painter's romantic use of brushwork endow the painting with a sense of natural liveliness. (estimate: €60,000 – 80,000).

The important collection of furniture and of 18th and 19th century paintings brought together by Eleanor Post Close and Antal Post de Bekessy come together in harmony with major works from the modern period. In the drawing rooms of their homes, a dialogue is created between works of different styles and from different periods.

## MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Antal Post de Bekessy, was passionate about the Viennese Secession, and collected works by Josef Hoffmann, Herbert Boeckl and Koloman Moser. Several drawings within the section dedicated to the collection of Eleanor Post-Close and Antal Post de Bekessy in October in Paris, evoke the family's vision of the Sezessionstil

The collection included a beautiful pencil drawing on paper by Egon Schiele, depicting a standing woman (€283,500), three works on paper representing feminine faces and nudes made by Gustav Klimt, and a pastel drawing by Edouard Vuillard, which, with particularly poetic effect, evokes the effect of an evening on the sea, *Effet du soir sur la mer* (estimate: €20,000).



Finally, this collection also reflects the discerning eye of Eleanor Post Close and Antal Post de Bekessy with regard to Contemporary works of art, such as the beautiful painting by Zao Wou-Ki, dated October 1969, 6.10.69 (estimate: €300,000-500,000), which was created during the artist's lyrical period, and which will be offered at auction by Sotheby's in Paris on December 6, 2017.

An American Dynasty in Europe  
Eleanor Post Close & Antal Post de Bekessy Collections  
London — Paris  
October 2017 — April 2018

Wine - London, 15 November 2017

Contemporary Art - Paris, 6 December 2017

Collection Eleanor Post Close & Antal Post de Bekessy Collections - Paris,  
19 and 20 December 2017

Watches - London, April 2018

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\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.

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