

Sotheby's

Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale

New York | 07 Nov 2007, 07:00 PM | N08359



LOT 6

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE AMERICAN COLLECTION

CAMILLE PISSARRO

1830-1903

PAYSANNE BÊCHANT

Signed C. Pissarro. and dated 82 (lower left)

Oil on canvas

26 by 21 5/8 in.

66 by 55 cm

Painted in 1882.

ESTIMATE 1,800,000-2,500,000 USD

Lot Sold: 2,057,000 USD

PROVENANCE

Julie Pissarro (the artist's wife)

Jeanne Pissarro-Bonin (the artist's daughter, inherited from the above in 1921)

Maurice Payen, Paris

Durand-Ruel, Paris (acquired from the above on December 10, 1923)

Terves (acquired from the above on February 18, 1924)

Graphisches Kabinett, Bremen (circa 1924)

Galerie Fritz Gurlitt, Berlin

Richard Semmel (circa 1930 and sold: Frederick Muller, Amsterdam, Collection d'un amateur, June 13, 1933, lot 27)

Galerie Moos, Geneva (acquired before 1939 and until at least 1945)

Jacques Lindon, New York

Private Collection, Monaco

Private Collection (sold: Sotheby's, London, June 27, 1977, lot 19)

Waddington Galleries, London (acquired at the above sale)

Private Collection

Daniel B. Grossman, New York

Joan B. Kroc (acquired from the above in 1991)

The Estate of Joan B. Kroc (sold: Christie's, New York, May 2, 2006, lot 8)

Richard Green Fine Art, London

Acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Paris, Galerie Nunès & Fiquet, Exposition de la collection de Madame Veuve C. Pissarro, 1921, no. 27

Paris, Musée de l'Orangerie, Centenaire de la naissance de Camille Pissarro, 1930, no. 136

Geneva, Galerie Moos, Art français, 1939, no. 48

New York, Wildenstein Gallery, Camille Pissarro: His Place in Art, 1939, no. 21

Bremen, Graphisches Kabinett Wolfgang Werner, 50 Jahre Graphisches Kabinett, 1970

LITERATURE

Ludovic-Rodo Pissarro and Lionello Venturi, *Camille Pissarro: son art--son oeuvre*, vol. I, Paris, 1939, no. 577, catalogued p. 163; vol. II, no. 577, illustrated pl. 120 (titled *Étude de paysanne en plein air; Paysanne bêchant*)

Richard Brettell, *Pissarro and Pontoise: the Painter in a Landscape*, New Haven, 1990, fig. 165, illustrated p. 191

Joachim Pissarro, *Camille Pissarro*, New York, 1993, illustrated pl. 192 and p. 175

Joachim Pissarro and Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts, *Pissarro. Catalogue critique des peintures*, vol. II, Paris, 2005, no. 678, illustrated p. 454

CATALOGUE NOTE

Executed in 1882, *Paysanne bêchant* depicts an everyday scene of a local peasant from the town of Pontoise, where Pissarro lived from 1866 until 1883. In deciding to move to Pontoise, the artist was partly guided by a desire to separate himself from the influence of his predecessors, the established French landscape painters, and to depict an environment previously scarcely recorded by other masters. Located some twenty-five miles northwest of Paris, Pontoise was built on a hilltop, with the river Oise passing through it, elements which made it a highly picturesque environment in which to paint en plein-air. The town's economy included agriculture as well as industry, and offered Pissarro a wide range of subjects, from crowded semi-urban genre scenes, views of roads and factories, to farmers working in the fields and particularly the melding of the urban, suburban and rural worlds.

The present work may be seen as a prime example of this study, as it depicts a humbly dressed peasant woman at work in the fields of a farm. The subject matter is reminiscent of Millet who presented peasants working the land. However, unlike Millet who presented faceless laborers, Pissarro presents us with intimate, casual portraits of the individuals he observed throughout Pontoise. In *Paysanne bêchant*, the young woman is harmoniously integrated into her natural setting. A sense of spontaneity and movement pervades the composition, evidenced by the fleeting brushstrokes in the lower right quadrant.

"In the figure paintings of 1879-83, Pissarro enlarged the figures so that they are no longer staffage figures. He allows them instead to dominate their surroundings. He contorts their limbs in active, even distracting poses; he averts their gazes so as to deny psychological interaction with the viewer; he distorts the conventional relationship between the ground plane and the figure as Degas was doing at the same time, tilting the ground plane forward and pushing it around the figure so that the viewer seems most often to be looking down on the peasant" (Richard Brettell, *op. cit.*, p. 134).