

# PARIS - THE HUGUETTE BERÈS COLLECTION OF JAPANESE PRINTS, DRAWINGS AND ILLUSTRATED BOOKS - SECOND PART

TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2003



***Suzuki Harunobu (1725-1770) Lady Hangaku (estimate: 9,000-12,000 €)***

Sotheby's will sell the second part of the Huguette Berès Collection in Paris on Tuesday, 25 November 2003. Huguette Berès, a leading figure on the art market for more than fifty years, opened her art gallery on the Quai Voltaire in Paris in 1952, specialising in Japanese prints and 19th century paintings, especially those by the Nabis. Over the years, she built up a superb personal collection of Japanese prints, drawings and illustrated books that reflect her extraordinary personality, her quest for elegance and her subtle sensitivity.

Sotheby's sold the first part of the Huguette Berès Collection in Paris on 27 November 2002 for a total sum of €4,296,815. The highest price was €1,490,750 for the complete series of the Thirty- Six Views of Mount Fuji, the masterpiece of Hokusai. The event aroused great interest from collectors, museums and institutions all over the world, as well as a growing number of new art lovers.



This second sale, estimated at €1,700,000 to 2,200,000 - \$1,870,000 to 2,400,000, consists of 163 prints, 88 drawings and 43 illustrated books (252 lots), which will be divided between two sessions. Once again, it brings together the most typical artists of ukiyo-e art, « the image of the ephemeral world » (the literal meaning is « of the floating world »), who were active between the late 18th century and early 19th century, and included Hokusai, Hiroshige, Utamaro, Harunobu, Sharaku, Kunimasa and Toyokuni.

A vast choice of prints, in fresh colours and from distinguished provenances, depict scenes from the everyday life of women, courtesans in tea houses, merchants and craftsmen, rural life, landscapes, birds, fruit and flowers, not to mention erotic scenes.

## **MASTERS OF UKIYO-E**

Suzuki Harunobu (1725-1770), one of the masters of ukiyo-e, is associated with the first polychrome prints, published in the form of an illustrated New Year calendar for 1765. He liked to portray idealised women in scenes of everyday life, combining realism, charm and elegance. Thirty prints by this artist are part of the sale, including a superb print of Lady Hangaku. The daughter of an opponent to the government of the Kamakura shogun at the end of the 12th century, she is famous in Japan for her bravery (lot 22, estimate: €9,000 -12,000). Another print is of a young woman seated in the snow in front of some bonsai, holding a blade in her hand. The subject is inspired by Hachinoki, the No play, in which the main character, travelling incognito dressed as a monk, is lost in the snow. He is

saved by a warrior who offers him hospitality and who has his precious trees cut down in order to heat his house (lot 26, estimate: € 30,000 - 40,000). An extremely rare print by Harunobu depicts a delightful musical scene against a background of snow and a flowering cherry tree. Two young girls are playing the shamisen (a kind of guitar) and the koto (a horizontal harp) to accompany a young man holding a shakuhachi (bamboo flute) (lot 37, estimate: € 12,000-15,000).

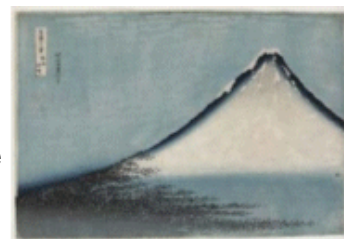
## GREAT LANDSCAPE ARTISTS



The son of an officer of the fire brigade at the Shogun court, Ando Hiroshige (1797-1858) also belonged to this brigade and in this capacity accompanied official journeys along the Tokaido road that linked Edo (Tokyo), the town of the Shogun, to Kyoto, the residence of the Emperor. From 1833 onwards, he concentrated on landscapes and travelled all over Japan, bringing back numerous sketches, which he used as studies for his most famous series of prints. These include Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido, The Sixty-nine Stages of the Kisokaido, Famous Views of Sixty Provinces, Eight Views of Omi, One Hundred Famous Views of Edo and Famous Places in the Capital of the East. His contemporaries

considered him to be the greatest Japanese landscape artist. The sale includes attractive landscapes of bridges and rivers, in the rain and snow, for example, the very fine print entitled Hakone and Snow-covered Mountains at Sunset, of a traveller on horseback accompanied by his groom, making their way along the snow-covered shores of a lake (lot 52, estimate: € 12,000 - 15,000 - illustrated above) and the exquisite Owl on a Branch of a Pine Tree, with the ky<sup>TM</sup>ka poem by Hajinteï, a friend of Hiroshige (lot 62, estimate: € 35,000 - 40,000).

A leading personality of ukiyo-e, Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) left a monumental oeuvre that was constantly being renewed. Mount Fuji, symbol of the beauty of the Japanese landscape, was his source of inspiration, just as it was for so many poets and artists. The series of prints entitled Thirty Six Views of Mount Fuji, which includes The Breaking Wave off Kanagawa, are famous all over the world. A very rare variation in blue of the 'Red Fuji', one of the most sought after views in the series, is a first print in aizuri-e (blue monochrome), and is part of the sale, the only other known example being in the Takahashi collection (lot 89, estimate: € 25,000-30,000 - illustrated above). Just as rare is a version of Fuji in Stormy Weather, with the base of the mountain streaked by lightning, revealing the tops of pine trees surrounded by a halo of mist (lot 90, estimate: €12,000-18,000). A particularly fine variation in blue of the Fuji, Seen from Kajikazawa in the Province of Kai depicts a fisherman standing on a rock and drawing in his fishing net above a turbulent sea. This print is one of the first ten drawings of the series, executed in a palette composed mainly of shades of blue (lot 93, estimate: € 50,000-70,000).



## GREAT PORTRAITISTS

The sale also comprises fine portraits by talented artists such as Utamaro, Sharaku, one of the favourite artists of Huguette Berès, and Kunimasa.



Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806) started his career by illustrating small popular books and plays for the Kabuki theatre. From 1788 onwards, he produced erotic prints for the Song of the Pillow and illustrated books. His masterpieces were created in the years 1788 to 1800. The subject of his inspiration were women, portrayed in everyday life, in pleasure districts or at festivities, wearing rich kimonos. The sale includes 20 prints by Utamaro, two of which are fine examples of young women after bathing. One of them, on a white mica-tinted background, is entitled Uwaki no s<sup>TM</sup>, A Young Frivolous Woman (lot 138, estimate: €40,000-50,000 ) and comes from the famous Hayashi collection. The other is entitled N<sup>TM</sup>fu no y<sup>TM</sup>suro Koi, A Young Peasant Woman and Love, in very fresh colours (lot 143, estimate € 24,000-28,000- illustrated opposite), from the former Henri Vever collection.

The Portrait of the Courtesan Kisegawa, is part of the series Seven Komachi from the Green Houses. According to the customs of certain areas in Edo, processions to celebrate the recognition ceremony of a courtesan were held in the pleasure districts. This very fine print on a grey background shows Kisegawa with her hair tousled, wearing a garment in an undefined colour, proof that her ceremony has not yet been celebrated. She was the leading courtesan in the Matsubaya house in the 1790s (lot 154, estimate: € 30,000-40,000 - illustrated opposite). Utamaro also displays an extraordinary mastery of his art in a superb print on a grey background, Chawan to Kanzashi, Tea Bowl

and Hairpin, in which an elegant woman is adjusting her hairpin while a servant serves her a bowl of tea on a red tray (lot 157, estimate: € 45,000-55,000).

Actors are a recurring theme for Toshusai Sharaku, whose life is still shrouded in mystery. The 145 prints forming his oeuvre were completed in nine months (between 1794 and 1795) and are considered to be masterpieces of Japanese art. Highly appreciated in the West, they were an important source of inspiration for Impressionist and early 20th century painters. A noteworthy example is the outstanding print on a yellow background of Nakamura Nakazo II in the role of a prince. He has a fierce expression on his face and is disguised as a peasant wearing a red hat and striped kimono (lot 121, estimate: € 80,000-100,000).

The sale also includes two fine portraits by Utagawa Kunimasa (circa 1773-1810), notably a bust portrait of the actor Nakamura Noshio II in the role of a woman, dated 1795. The actor, whose hair is partly hidden by a piece of material, seems to be portrayed as a figure in the drama *Kaeribana yuki no Yoshitsune*, which was performed at the Miyakoza theatre in Edo that year. However, there are several theories as to the role he actually played (lot 110, estimate: € 30,000-40,000).

## **DRAWINGS AND BOOKS**

The afternoon auction will be devoted to drawings and books, and is expected to attract numerous bidders, as was the case in the first sale.

The preparatory drawings for prints are of great interest for they reveal the creative process of artists, their hesitations and corrections. Several will be sold with their corresponding prints, in particular, the studies of the landscape along the Tokaido road by Hiroshige (lot 164, estimate: € 1,700-2,000). Among the drawings by Hokusai are a number of very lively scenes of everyday life, charming studies of animals, and fighting warriors. One example worth mentioning is a very rare preparatory drawing in sumi ink and red ink, sketched around 1835, for a print in the series *One Hundred Poems Explained by a Nurse* (*Hyakunin isshu uba ga etok*). The scene is of a couple with a child crossing a bridge on a donkey, and merry samurai and two fishermen depicted below (lot 195, estimate: €10,000-13,000).

About forty books illustrated with wood engravings by 17th century artists such as Moronobu, and by famous 18th and 19th century artists such as Utamaro, Hokusai and Shunsho, and others who are anonymous, close the sale of the Huguette Berès collection. Most of the albums contain calligraphed texts and poems, illustrated with flowers or birds, fans, advice on the breeding of silk worms or cultivation of mustard seeds, as well as figures from the theatre and warriors.

Finally, the sea was a source of inspiration for a number of very attractive illustrated works. The one by Katsuma Ryusui (1711-1796) *Wealth of the Sea* (*Umi no sachi*) is decorated with fish, turtles, sea shells and shellfish (lot 240, estimate: € 5,200-6,300). The last lot of the sale, *Memories of Low Tide* (*Shioh no Tsuto*) by Utamaro, is a magnificent work combining poetry and natural history, figures by the seaside and sea shells. Its fine quality, rarity and exquisite delicacy make it a masterpiece of Japanese wood engraving of the kind that Huguette Berès appreciated so much (lot 252, estimate: € 28,000-32,000 - illustration).

### **EXHIBITIONS**

in Tokyo: from 14 to 17 October  
in New York : from 1st to 4 November

in Paris: from Thursday 20 to Monday 24 November (including the week-end)

### **SALE IN PARIS**

Tuesday, 25 November 2003 at 10h 30 and 15h

**SOTHEBY'S FRANCE - GALERIE CHARPENTIER**  
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