

CHRISTIE'S

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KERRY JAMES MARSHALL'S *KNOWLEDGE AND WONDER* TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S NOVEMBER EVENING SALE IN NEW YORK PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE WILL BENEFIT THE CITY OF CHICAGO'S PUBLIC ART AND LIBRARIES PROGRAMS



New York – Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of Chicago, announced that Kerry James Marshall's tour de force, *Knowledge and Wonder*, 1995 (estimate: \$10,000,000-15,000,000) will be sold to benefit the City of Chicago's public art fund and libraries program. One of the largest and most expansive paintings in the artist's oeuvre, this work will be a centerpiece of the Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale at Christie's in November in New York.

Commissioned by the City of Chicago in 1995, *Knowledge and Wonder* has been exhibited at Chicago's Legler Branch Library ever since and, with its sale, this extraordinary work will enrich the future of its original home for generations to come. The auction proceeds will be used to expand the Legler Library from a branch location to a West Side regional library with major upgrades in capabilities akin to current regional libraries. Additionally, proceeds will be used to augment the public art fund for the acquisition and development of new work.

"Kerry James Marshall's iconic works are part and parcel of Chicago's public art portfolio, and we will always honor the home *Knowledge & Wonder* had on the West Side," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I want to thank Christie's Auction House for handling the sale of this remarkable piece of contemporary art, which will in turn help transform the lives of residents across Chicago for generations to come."

Knowledge and Wonder is from a key period of Marshall's widely celebrated body of work including the *Garden Project* series of 1994-1995. This exemplary painting speaks to the artist's cultural and art historical narrative, which has made him one of the leading American artists working today. His figurative paintings have become some of the most powerful images in a generation. Measuring nearly 10 feet in height by over 23 feet in length, *Knowledge and*

Wonder is a monumental achievement from a prime moment in the artist's career. Marshall depicts a community of people not normally represented in art history as more than a dozen African American children and adults are shown looking up in awe at the universe, its elements and the world beyond.

Alexis Klein, Senior Specialist, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's: *"It is an honor for us to share in this uniquely Chicago story and to have the opportunity to offer Knowledge and Wonder, a stunning painting by Kerry James Marshall, to benefit the people of the City of Chicago. In Knowledge and Wonder, Kerry James Marshall realizes an iconic modern-day history painting rife with layered meaning and symbols of inspiration. In this seminal masterpiece, the artist opens up the art historical canon to a new generation, promoting knowledge and learning as the tools necessary for social change. It is truly a painting for our time."*

Working on such a significant scale, Marshall places *Knowledge and Wonder* in a tradition of history painting and in the process, gives a voice to those who have often gone unheard. *"I think it's important for a black artist to create black figure paintings in the grand tradition,"* the artist has said. *"Artworks you encounter in museums by black people are often modest in scale. They don't immediately call attention to themselves. I started out using history painting as a model because I wanted to claim the right to operate at that level."* Marshall's skillful execution of *Knowledge and Wonder* in ambitious proportions immediately brings to mind the large scale figurative work of French Post-Impressionist masters such as Paul Gauguin and Henri Matisse or the revered oversized murals of Diego Rivera.

The City of Chicago has a long-standing history of deep engagement in education and the arts. Christie's sale of *Knowledge and Wonder* represents the City's commitment to future generations of Chicago citizens by ensuring their access to lifelong learning and the art of their time. This sentiment is paralleled by Kerry James Marshall's longtime dedication to Chicago, his chosen city of over three decades. Marshall's influence can be seen throughout Chicago. This is perhaps most notable at the Chicago Cultural Center, where in 2017 Marshall unveiled his 132 by 100-foot mural, *Rushmore*, which honors 20 women who have shaped the city's cultural landscape.

Works by Kerry James Marshall are in the collections of major institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

For further details, please visit the City of Chicago's October 1 announcement for the Legler Library and Public Art Fund project by clicking [here](#).

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Auction:
Post-War and Contemporary Art
New York
7pm – 15 November 2018

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2018 that totalled £2.97 billion / \$4.04 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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