

ARTCURIAL

Press release



Rediscovery of a rare painting by Toulouse-Lautrec depicting hospital life

Impressionist & Modern Art
Sale on 29 June 2021, Paris

On 29 June, the Modern Art department at Artcurial will auction a very rare work by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). Entitled *Une opération par le Docteur Péan à l'Hôpital International*, it was painted in 1891 and given the same year by the artist to his doctor Frédéric Baumgarten, who is represented in it. This recently rediscovered masterpiece has remained in the hands of the same family ever since. Estimated at 600 000 - 900 000€, it offers an exceptional insight into hospital life at that time, an environment familiar to the artist who suffered from serious health conditions.

PARIS – On 29 June 2021, as part of its major Impressionist & Modern Art sales, Artcurial will present a rare masterpiece by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) entitled *Une opération par le Docteur Péan à l'Hôpital International*. The painting, in essence (oil thinned with turpentine) on card, is estimated to fetch between 600 000 and 900 000 €.

This work is exceptional for several reasons. Painted in 1891, it was given the same year to Frédéric Baumgarten, the artist's doctor, who appears facing us at the back of the composition, and has been in the hands of the same family ever since. Exhibited just once in 1914, this is a major rediscovery.

The work is also unique for its subject matter, depicting a surgical operation in a Parisian hospital at the end of the 19th century. Toulouse-Lautrec is better known for his representations of cabarets, brothels, Parisian streets and horses. There are only two other known paintings of hospital scenes in the oeuvre of Toulouse-Lautrec: the

portrait of Docteur Péan in *Une opération de trachéotomie* of 1891, today in the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, US, and *Examen à la faculté de médecine de Paris*, 1901, in the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec in Albi. This painting is therefore the only one of this subject matter still in private hands today. Very few artists of that period drew or painted hospital scenes. Thanks to his doctor Frédéric Baumgarten, and Doctor Péan, a renowned surgeon known to him, Toulouse-Lautrec was given permission to attend an operation.

Painted in an accomplished style, it is very representative of the art of Toulouse-Lautrec, with animated brushstrokes, a colourful palette and his unique way of capturing a moment in time, depicting the scene as it unfolds in front of our eyes.

Works of this quality rarely appear on the market in France; not since the 1990s has there been such an accomplished painting by the artist for sale in Paris.

« The exceptional quality of this painting, its subject and its history qualifies this as one of Toulouse-Lautrec's most unique works of art. It is, without any doubt, one of the most important by the artist to appear on the Parisian market for many years. »

Bruno Jaubert
Director, Impressionist & Modern Art, Artcurial



Henri de TOULOUSE-LAUTREC
Une opération du Docteur Péan à l'Hôpital International, 1891
Essence on card
Estimate: 600 000 - 900 000 €

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec



The doctor Jules Emile Péan



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: painter of Parisian dances, acquainted with hospital life

When Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec painted this piece in 1891, he was 27 years old. The hospital environment was familiar to him as, from a very young age, he suffered from many different health conditions. From the age of ten, a genetic disease affected his bones and retarded his growth. Following an accident, he stopped growing at the height of 1.52 metres.

In 1891, he remained under the care of his doctor Frédéric Baumgarten and was also acquainted with Doctor Péan, a renowned surgeon at that time, whose operations he was allowed to attend, sketching the proceedings live.

This was rather surprising subject matter for the painter of Parisian high life and the Moulin Rouge.

On that day in 1891, he completed this piece in the midst of the operating room. He offered it to his doctor, in recognition of his work and as a tribute to the medical profession.

The depth of the painting is fascinating. In the foreground we see the back of a nurse who accompanies a patient lying on a stretcher.

Behind this, the operation is taking place with, in the centre, Doctor Péan, in black, seen from behind leaning over his patient, in the middle of operating. There is a nurse to his right, and an assistant to his left handing him what he needs. All around are doctors watching the operation.

In the background, the artist has painted the large windows that shed light on the surgeon and above all Frédéric Baumgarten, who is standing facing us, watching the proceedings. His is the only face painted so as to be recognisable.

An intern at the Hôpital Saint Louis under Doctor Péan, Frédéric Baumgarten went on to run the Hôpital Français in Mexico until his death in 1910.

Frédéric Baumgarten owned four works by Toulouse-Lautrec, including a painting from 1893, *La Macarona en costume de Jockey*, currently in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago; the two others, *La Goulue* and *Femme de Maison*, are in private collections today.

Une opération du docteur Péan à l'Hôpital International, to be offered for sale on 29 June, is the only one of the four to be kept by the doctor's family until today.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Public viewing :
From Thursday 24 to Sunday 27 June 2021

Sale :
Tuesday 29 June 2021

7 Rond-Point
des Champs-Élysées
75008 Paris

PRESS CONTACTS

Head of Press
Anne-Laure Guérin
+33 (0)1 42 99 20 86
alguerin@artcurial.com

Press assistant
Aurélia Adloff
+33 (0)1 42 99 20 76
aadloff@artcurial.com

PRESS MATERIAL

High resolution images
available on request

Discover the complete
catalogue on artcurial.com



About Artcurial

Founded in 2002, multidisciplinary Paris based auction house Artcurial confirmed its leading position on the international art market scene in 2020. With three sale venues in Paris, Monaco and Marrakech, the auction house achieved an overall sales total of 149,2 million euros in 2020.

Artcurial covers all the major specialist fields including Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, Collectors' Cars, Jewellery, Watches, Fine Wines and Spirits...

With a strong international bias, Artcurial maintains its presence abroad with offices in Brussels, Milan, Monte-Carlo, Munich and Vienna.

In October 2015, Artcurial held its first sale in Hong Kong and Morocco.

artcurial.com

ARTCURIAL