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Sotheby's to Present
*A VISION: PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF
MICHELLE SMITH*

Two Dedicated Auctions This April Presenting 400 Lots Spanning
Design, Fine Art, Jewelry and More
From the
Lauded Washington D.C.-Based Philanthropist & Art Patron

Auctions to Feature:
Quintessential Examples of 20th and 21st Century Design by
Les Lalanne, Alberto and Diego Giacometti,
Jean-Michel Frank & More

The Largest Single-Owner Collection of Jewelry by Hemmerle
Ever to Appear at Auction

An Encyclopedic Selection of Iconic Handbags by Hermès

Dedicated Live Auction in New York on 22 April
With Concurrent Online Sale Open for Bidding from 16 – 27 April

NEW YORK, 9 March 2021 – Sotheby's is honored to announce that we will present *A Vision: Property from the Collection of Michelle Smith* across two dedicated auctions this April in New York. Spanning 20th and 21st century design, fine art, jewelry, and handbags, the Michelle Smith collection is a testament to a passionate collector whose commitment to excellence resounded through every area of her life, and whose utmost standards and impeccable taste is reflected in the superior quality across categories in the collection.



An outstanding selection of works from the Smith collection will be presented in a live auction on 22 April at Sotheby's in New York, led by exquisite design by some of the most renowned artists of the 20th century, with quintessential works by François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne, Alberto and Diego Giacometti, Jean-Michel Frank, Pierre Chareau, Eugène Printz, Jean Besnard, Lucie Rie and Tiffany Studios among others. Additional highlights from the live sale include the largest private collection of Hemmerle jewelry to appear at auction, and a strong ensemble of fine art anchored by contemporary works by Antony Gormley, Edmund de Waal and Alexander Calder. Alongside the live auction, an online sale of jewelry, design and an impressive ensemble of Hermès handbags will be open for bidding from 16-27 April.

The daughter of the late renowned businessman, real estate developer and philanthropist Robert H. Smith – who developed large swaths of the Crystal City neighborhood just outside of Washington, D.C. – and artist Clarice Smith, Michelle Smith was a trailblazing businesswoman, arts patron and philanthropist in her own right. Among the institutions and organizations that she supported are the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institute, the Aspen Institute, the New York Historical Society, the University of Maryland, and many others. While continuing to build upon her father's legacy, she ultimately served as vice president of product design and development for Charles E. Smith Residential Realty and its publicly traded successor, Archstone-Smith, and became one of the D.C. area's most respected figures, known for her generous spirit, exacting eye and fierce dedication to championing myriad artistic, cultural and health organizations, as well as educational institutions. In addition to her business career and philanthropic endeavors,

Michelle brought to life her passion for art, architecture and design in her stunning penthouse apartment at the Ritz-Carlton Georgetown, where true to her background in real estate and visionary spirit, she undertook a multi-year development in transforming two separate and raw living spaces into the impeccably appointed home that showcased the breadth of her collection.

Lisa Dennison, Sotheby's Chairman, Americas, commented: "Michelle Smith was an exceptionally kind and generous person, whose reputation in Washington D.C. and beyond preceded her. She defined what it means to be a collector. Her discerning vision, flawless taste, and quest for perfection led her to fashion a true *gesamtkunstwerk* in her Georgetown home, where art, architecture and design was integrated into a harmonious ensemble. Her appreciation of form, texture, and material carries throughout the collection from jewelry and handbags to fine arts and design objects. Her passion as a collector was only further reinforced by her legacy and longtime commitment as an arts patron and philanthropist, supporting numerous causes in the D.C. area and elsewhere to ensure their preservation."

The collection will be presented in a live auction on 22 April in New York, with a concurrent online sale open for bidding from 16 - 27 April on sothebys.com. Works from the collection will travel to Sotheby's Paris from 11 - 15 March, before returning to New York for exhibition in our York Avenue galleries beginning 16 April.

A VISION: PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF MICHELLE SMITH
HIGHLIGHTS



The exceptional taste and refined eye of Michelle Smith is encapsulated in the superlative examples of 20th and 21st Century Design featured throughout the collection. Anchoring this illustrious group is an extraordinary selection of works by Alberto and Diego Giacometti, highlighted by a sublime "Égyptienne" Table Lamp executed in pink plaster in 1933 (estimate \$300/500,000). The present work is an extremely rare, if not entirely unique, example of the form in pink and is regarded as one of Alberto Giacometti's most sculptural designs produced for Jean-Michel Frank in the 1930s. The only pink version of the model to be

documented in the Fondation Giacometti database, the present lamp bridges the boundaries between sculpture and functional object. The lamp's complex design is a stylistic homage to the alabaster oil lamps discovered in 1922 in the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh, Tutankhamun, while its unexpected and sophisticated pink pigmentation and stylized lines instill in the piece a decidedly modern and timeless character. The collection is further highlighted by a wide range of masterpieces by Alberto and Diego Giacometti, showcasing many of their rarest and most iconic lighting and furniture designs.

Exemplary works by the design duo Les Lalannes represent a defining focus of the Smith Collection, highlighted by a **Unique Choupatte** by Claude Lalanne and two **Moutons de Laine** by François-Xavier Lalanne (estimates \$500/700,000 each). A unique iteration of Claude Lalanne's iconic *Choupatte*, the present work is one of few non-editioned examples of the form, which contributes to its rarity and desirability among collectors. Lalanne's



Choupatte embodies the artist's playful interpretation of organic forms and her notorious play on words, exemplified by the title which merges the words "Chou" (cabbage) and "Patte" (paw). The piece displays strong figurative elements treated with tremendous detailing and sculptural presence, which are heightened by a variegated teal blue patina. François-Xavier Lalanne's *Mouton de Laine* is arguably the most popular iteration of the artist's career-defining sheep series. The collection of Michelle Smith comprises two relatively early iterations of the form, each respectively executed in 1977 and 1987, providing a rare opportunity for collectors. Additional highlights by the artists include an early "**Crocodile**" **Armchair** executed in 1993 by Claude Lalanne (estimate \$600/900,000) and two rare patinated bronze **Béliers** by François-Xavier Lalanne (estimate \$400/600,000 each), among other iconic series.



A **Cabinet** exquisitely embellished in parchment by Jean-Michel Frank (estimate \$400/600,000) displays the pinnacle of the artist's modernist furniture designs in the 1930s. Frank's magnificent cabinets clad in the most luxurious materials of the period are remarkably rare on the market, with the present work further distinguished by its superior craftsmanship, chic simplicity and proportions, and remarkably well-preserved condition.

The Smith Collection also features great depth and variety in pottery, with defining collections by French ceramicist Jean Besnard and British ceramicist Lucie Rie (estimates range from \$1,500 to \$60,000). Iconic and masterful lamps and objects by Tiffany Studios are also a quintessential focus in the collection, seamlessly presented in often unexpected vignettes alongside modernist European Design and Contemporary Art. A **"Poppy" Table Lamp** is one of the collection's many stunning leaded glass lamps (estimate \$180/240,000). Exhibiting a highly sculptural "Cattail Pond Lily" base, the present example features a dazzling range of richly saturated jewel-tone colors in its glass, distinguishing it among the most superb examples of this iconic floral model.

In addition to design, Smith's collection is distinguished by a refined and highly curated selection of fine art, spanning the late 19th century to contemporary works. Among the highlights include two works by Edmund de Waal, personally commissioned from the artist by Smith. The works, **A Guide for the Perplexed** (estimate \$80/120,000) and **Lebensstürme** (estimate \$150/200,000), are quintessential examples of the artist's beguiling assemblages, consisting of multiple porcelain vessels bearing de Waal's hallmark style of unadorned elegance. The collection is further noted by standout sculptures: Antony Gormley's **Stand I**, one of the artist's quintessential figures (above left, estimate \$350/450,000), as well as two table-size sculptures by Alexander Calder, **Red Pennant** from 1966 (above right, estimate \$120/180,000)



and **Broken Wings** from 1967 (estimate \$180/220,000). Two mixed media preparatory studies by the famed artist Christo, as well as works by Félix Vallotton, Christian Marclay, Lynn Chadwick, Pierre Bonnard, and more showcase the depth of the collection.



Smith's keen and astute eye for timeless design is epitomized in her jewelry collection, telling the story of a woman who, when she decided she liked a certain style or maker, explored and collected them in depth. The

centerpiece of the offering is a stunning group of jewels by Hemmerle, representing the largest single-owner collection by the Munich jewelry house to appear at auction. Assembled over the course of decades by Mrs. Smith, the 19 handcrafted pieces are exemplary of Hemmerle's distinctive contemporary style, utilizing innovative combinations of colors, textures and precious stones, from a pair of **Diamond and Copper Stud Earrings** (estimate \$100/150,000) and a **Bronze and Sea Urchin Necklace** (estimate \$15/25,000) to a **Peridot, Tourmaline, Brass and Wood Cuff-Bracelet** (estimate \$40/60,000).

Speaking to her elegance, sophistication and position at the top of Washington society, with pieces appropriate for every occasion both day and night, the collection boasts a selection of bold, mid-century pieces in iconic designs by Van Cleef & Arpels and Cartier including a "**Ludo Hexagon**" **Bracelet** (estimate \$60/80,000), a "**Chevalerie**" **Demi-Parure** (estimate \$40/60,000), a **Pair of Gold Boule Bracelets** (estimate \$35/55,000), as well an impressive contemporary selection of diamonds and pearls by Graff. All in remarkably pristine condition, the jewels are a clear extension of the highly curated and refined aesthetic she applied to her collections of Fine Art and Design.

The online sale further features an encyclopedic collection of handbags and accessories by Hermès, including the label's iconic



Kelly and Birkin designs in a wide variety of colors and finishes, with estimates ranging from \$500 to \$28,000.

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