

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of ornate silverware. In the foreground, a large, highly detailed silver vase holds a bouquet of red and orange flowers. To its left, a silver arm of a chandelier or similar fixture holds a bottle of champagne with a gold foil top. In the lower right, a silver bowl is filled with green and red grapes. The background is dark, making the reflective silver pieces stand out. Below the image, the text 'FINE SILVER & OBJECTS OF VERTU SIGNATURE® AUCTION' is displayed in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by the date 'MAY 16'. At the bottom, an orange rectangular button contains the text 'VIEW AUCTION' in white. The Heritage Auctions logo is at the very bottom.



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The secret collection: Over 20 000 works discovered in a Paris flat

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Jean-Léon Gérôme, Une épave. Est. 80 000 - 120 000€.

PARIS.- At the [Hôtel Drouot](#) and throughout seven auctions, Daguerre will be offering at auction an exceptional collection discovered during a valuation in a Paris apartment. In keeping with the collector's wishes, all proceeds from the sales will be donated to the Institut Pasteur to support their scientific and medical research in preventing and treating infectious diseases.

This collection, assembled by an anonymous collector captivated by art and discoveries, is a truly unexpected treasure trove: 20,000 works on paper and 800 paintings divided into 1,500 lots. Though patiently assembled for decades, it has remained utterly unknown to leading specialists and its history is shrouded in mystery to this day.

The collection encompasses an exhaustive overview of fine art from the 16th century to contemporary art in paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs, as well as sculptures and works of art. Major works by renowned masters are juxtaposed with hidden gems, offering not only a remarkable artistic diversity but also a wide range of estimates.

The highlight of part I of the sale will be an unknown painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Une Épave*, estimated between €80,000 and €120,000 (lot 52). This painting is surprisingly radical and unusual in appearance, far from the classical and orientalist themes most often associated with this artist. With a background of emerald green and blue and a nearly abstract composition, it depicts a shipwreck scene in which the passengers, crowded on a lifeboat, appear to be abandoned and adrift.

In addition to this masterpiece, the sale presents an eclectic selection ranging from fine arts to decorative arts, sculptures to works of art. Among the works on paper are a refined work Alfons Mucha entitled *Lamalou-les-Bains* and characteristic of the Art Nouveau master's portraits of women (lot 96 – estimate: €8,000-€12,000); a charming drawing by Paul Sérusier, *L'île de la Douane sur le Trieux* (lot 100 – estimate: €5,000-€6,000); and a stunning study for a ceiling of the Louvre by Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse (lot 20 – estimate: €2,000-€3,000).

Art Nouveau lovers will also seize the opportunity to bid on the exquisite vase by Emile Gallé adorned with a woman in medieval garb (lot 107 – estimate: €2,000-€3,000), while sculpture connoisseurs will have the chance to purchase a bronze by Antoine-Louis Barye representing a Turkish horse (lot 26 – estimate: €2,000-€3,000).

The collection will be sold in six further auctions starting this September, featuring works from the Renaissance to contemporary era, including a striking study by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *Étude de guerrier assis* (estimate: €30,000-€40,000), which demonstrates his remarkable skill in capturing expression and movement; an intriguing painting by Alberto Savinio, *Machine pour féconder les arbres*, 1929 (estimate: €150,000-€200,000); and works by Roberto Matta, Frantisek Kupka, Alexandre Jacovleff and Giannis Gaïtis offering a captivating glimpse at art's history across the 20th century.

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