

EXCEPTIONAL PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

AUCTION SALE ON 23 OCTOBER 2017 AT DROUOT

AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTION

An artwork in the rare technique of gemmail, signed by Pablo Picasso in 1956 and executed by Roger Malherbe-Navarre at the Malherbe Studio will be offered by Aguttes auction house at Drouot in Paris on 23 October 2017.

The work comes from a series of 50 gemmaux that were exhibited in the retrospective *Picasso en gemmail* in Paris in 1957.



AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTION



© Aguttes

THE ARTWORK

Guitare 1924-1957 is one of the fifty gemmaux exhibited in the retrospective *Picasso en Gemmaux* on Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré in Paris in 1957.

In the late 1950s, Picasso explored the technique of gemmail (from the French words for gem and enamel) alongside Braque and Cocteau. Enchanted, he declared, "A new art is born: Gemmaux."

Using glass and light, they together transposed about 60 iconic paintings that Picasso had made since 1900. After the retrospective in Paris, they were shown in an exhibition tour around the world:

at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Corning Glass Museum, Galerie Charpentier, Monaco, and more. Highly successful, elites rushed to the exhibitions, including the Queen of England, the royal families of Monaco and of Belgium, as well as Coco Chanel, Yves St Laurent, Jacques Cartier, Edith Piaf, Pierre Cardin, Elizabeth Arden, Marlene Dietrich, and Francine Weisweiler. Certain works were acquired by a select few, including the Emperor of Japan, Raymond Loewy, Stanley Marcus, Nelson Rockefeller, Prince Rainier of Monaco, the Rothschild and the Weisweiller families.



© 2017 Estate of Pablo Picasso

Related artwork: Pablo Picasso, *Guitare*, 1924. Painting in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

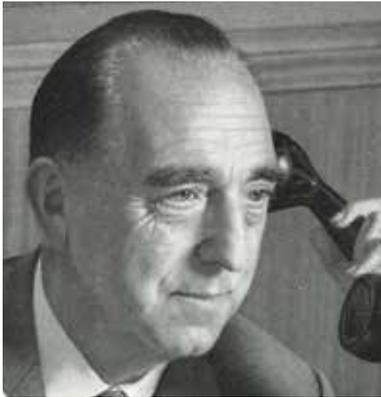


AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTION

“ **A** calling is that irresistible urge which enables us to overcome any obstacle, so great is the desire to fully achieve one’s raison d’être.”

Léon Josephson, 1963

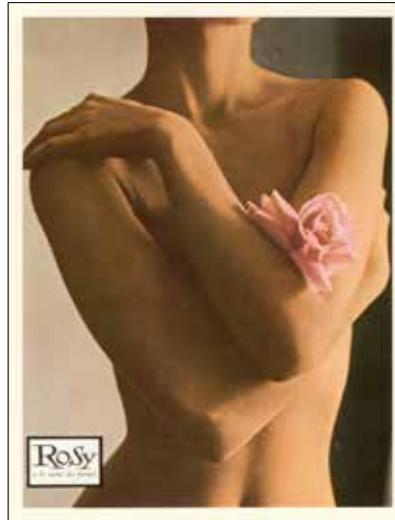
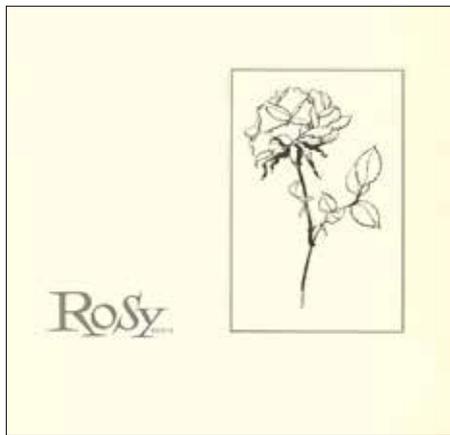


THE COLLECTOR

Léon Josephson, a Parisian industrialist, successfully launched the lingerie brand Rosy after the war, thereby contributing to the emancipation of women. He boldly broke advertising norms in 1963 with the landmark advertisement “Woman with a Rose”.

A lover of the arts, he already began collecting not only the masters of Impressionism but also modern art and the School of Paris in the 1950s. Eclectic and personal, his collection was a vibrant homage to twentieth century painting.

In 1960, he acquired the Guitar gemmail from Roger Malherbe-Navarre. It remained in the family since then.



“Woman with a Rose”, Photograph by Jean-Loup Sieff used for the celebrated ad of the Rosy brand in 1963
© Wolf Lingerie SAS
© Jean-Loup Sieff

© Wolf Lingerie SAS



AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTION

“Who has never felt the desire to enter a diamond? To swim in its crystallized water to, for a magical instant, be the inhabitant of perfect geometry? Gemmail makes this dream of a child or of a poet come true by hollowing out a new space in its radiant depths which is a space as serene as snow and as warm as a lamp, a sea of ice, a labyrinth that leads to abysses of color.” (Marc Alyn) Described as “the eighth art» by Jean Cocteau, gemmail (a neologism that stems from the contraction of “gem”, a precious stone, and “enamel”, the clear substance that fuses the pieces of glass) is an interesting technique that came to be when the painter Jean Crotti, enthralled by color, met Roger Malherbe-Navarre, who was involved in his physicist father’s research on crystalline resonance and fluorescence. It was through Cocteau that Pablo Picasso discovered the Malherbe studio in 1954 and the endless possibilities offered by this superimposition of thin stained glass lamellas illuminated by their translucence. Taken by this new medium and the unprecedented opportunity of being able to shine light on his talent, Picasso led the creation of the gemmail *Woman in a Wicker Chair* in 1954, followed by some sixty works that reinterpreted his most famous paintings. Seeing the culmination of his Cubist research on volume and the perception of forms in this new means of expression, Picasso exhibited his gemmaux (“enamel gems”) at

© Succession Picasso 2017



Pablo Picasso writing, “A new art is born: Gemmaux.”

the Grande Galerie du Faubourg Saint Honoré in 1957, which met great success among the world’s elite. The Emperor of Japan, Prince Rainier of Monaco, and the Rothschild family competed for his works, which were also exhibited in major American museums from 1958 to 1998.

Still today, most of Picasso’s gemmaux are safely preserved by the Malherbe family, a few museums, and a handful of private collectors.

Based on the *Guitare* of 1924, the composition we are presenting exemplifies the unique capacity of gemmail to let light become an active player of the artwork. In passing through it, light brings life



Pablo Picasso signing one of his gemmaux in the presence of Roger Malherbe Navarre.

© Succession Picasso 2017

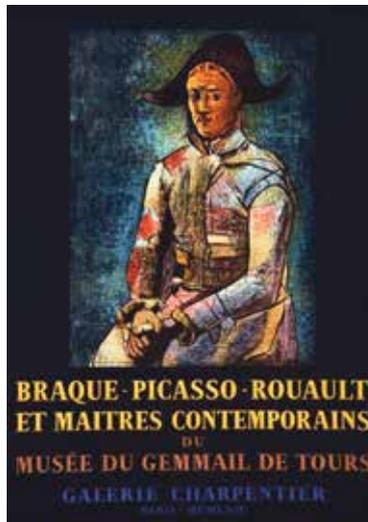


AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTION



Poster of the retrospective exhibition Picasso en Gemmaux, 1900-1957 with 50 gemmaux by Picasso, held by Atelier Malherbe on Rue du Faubourg St Honoré in Paris, March-April-May 1957. Our work was presented as No. 39 in the exhibition.



© Succession Picasso 2017 // © Galerie Charpentier

Poster of the exhibition "Braque, Picasso, Rouault and Contemporary Masters of the Gemmail Museum in Tours", Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 1964.



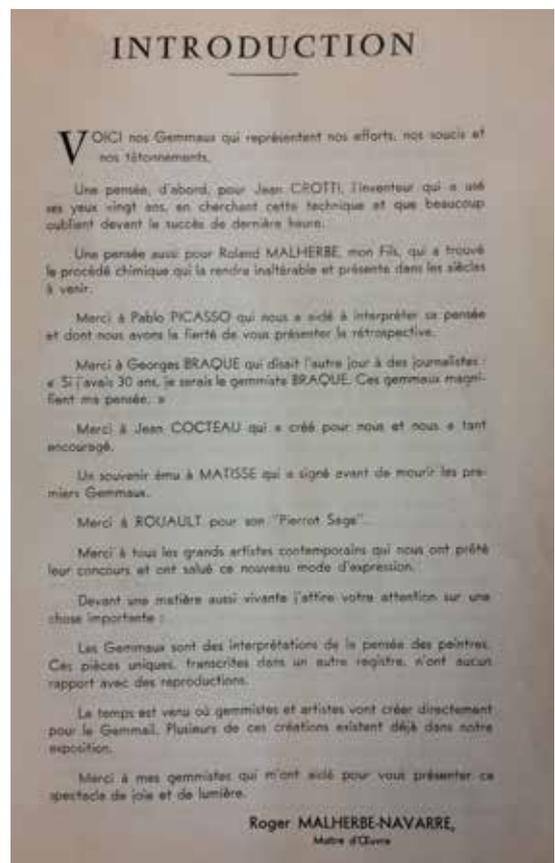
© Succession Picasso 2017

Gemmail entitled Self-portrait presented as No. 1 in the exhibition

to the painter's palette by adding warmth to the vivid colors and making blue, Picasso's cherished color, regain its primary splendor. With its pigments set aflame, the work becomes more than a reinterpretation of the original oil painting. It is its material completion.

The angular outlines of the artist's work echo the coarse projections of the glass, with their juxtaposed fragments heightening the impression of a crystal camaïeu. Contrary to Braque's gemmaux, which consisted of pieces of glass that were identical in size and shape, Picasso employed an infinite number of varied shards which he superimposed in layers of varying thickness in order to create an appealing artwork that abounds with nuances.

A veritable joy of shapes, materials and colors, this piece is one that, like Picasso, will make you exclaim «A new art is born: gemmaux».



Introduction to the catalogue of the retrospective *Picasso en Gemmaux* by Roger Malherbe Navarre, 1957.



AGUTTES

A LUMINOUS REDISCOVERY OF A RARE ARTWORK BY PICASSO & MALHERBE
FROM THE L. JOSEPHSON COLLECTIONFROM THE COLLECTION
OF LÉON JOSEPHSON

50

PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)
AND ROGER MALHERBE-NAVARRÉ
(1908-2006)*Guitare, 1924 -1956*

Gemmail made in 1956 as a transfiguration of the 1924 painting *Guitare*. A unique work, signed Picasso in the lower right and executed at Atelier Malherbe by Roger Malherbe-Navarre.

101.5 x 131 cm – 40 x 51.5 in.

The work's certificate written by Roger Malherbe-Navarre (founder of the Malherbe Studio for gemmail) which entitles it *Nature morte à la mandoline* (Still life with a mandolin) will be given to the buyer.

PROVENANCE

Atelier Roger Malherbe (Paris)
Léon Josephson collection
(Neuilly-sur-Seine)
Acquired c.1960 and in the family since then.

EXHIBITIONS

Picasso en Gemmaux, 1900-1957 exhibition by Atelier Malherbe featuring 50 gemmaux signed by Picasso from 1956 to 1957 on Rue du Faubourg St Honoré in Paris, March-April-May 1957. Number 39 in the exhibition.

**Contrary to custom,
there is no estimate for this lot.**

When it is provided, a valuation is based on and supported by prices fetched for comparable items in previous auctions. In this case, the rarity of this kind of artwork and its scarcity are such that a reliable estimate cannot be determined.

We had first wished to put forward an estimate of between €100,000 and €150,000. But it could of course attain much more.



© Aguttes

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rétrospective : Picasso en Gemmaux, 1900-1957, Atelier Malherbe (1957). Catalogue de l'exposition de l'Atelier Malherbe qui présenta 50 des gemmaux signés par Picasso entre 1956 et 1957, rue du Faubourg St Honoré, Paris, mars-avril-mai 1957. N°39 du catalogue, non repr.

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso, vol 5, œuvres de 1923 à 1925*, Edition Cahiers d'Art Paris (1952). Toile en rapport reproduite sous le titre « Guitare » (peinte en 1924 et mesurant 97 x 130 cm) repr. n° 224 p109.
Josep Palau i Fabre, *Picasso des ballets au drame (1917-1926)*, Könemann (1999). Toile en rapport reproduite sous le titre « Mandoline sur une table, Juan-les-pins, été 1924 », repr. n°1480 p416.
Catalogue du Salon d'automne 1991 [...] Picasso et le Gemmail, Grand Palais, Paris, exposition du 19 octobre au 3 novembre 1991, Association du Salon d'automne (1991): textes pages 30 et 33 et deux gemmaux signés Picasso en rapport reproduits p.31 et 32.

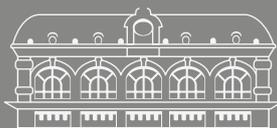
Le gemmail : miracle de lumière et d'amour, un art nouveau est né, Musée du gemmail de Tours (circa 1971). Un gemmail signé Picasso en rapport intitulé « Enfant malade » reproduit.

Maurice Tournade, *Le gemmail, chemin de lumière*. Edition de la Nouvelle République (1990). Deux gemmaux signés Picasso en rapport reproduits.

Les gemmaux de France : nouveau mode d'expression créée par Jean Crotti [...] Galerie d'art de la lumière, Paris (1956) : textes et l'« Autoportrait » en gemmail signé Picasso reproduit.

Galerie Charpentier, *Documents autour de l'exposition «Braque, Picasso, Rouault et Maîtres contemporains du Musée du Gemmail de Tours»* (1964) : textes et plusieurs gemmaux en rapport signés Picasso reproduits dont l'« Arlequin », « Nature morte à la tête de mort », « Nature morte au pot jaune » ou encore « Nature morte au bucrâne ».

Le gemmail : art de lumière, expression du XX^e siècle, Musée du gemmail (2002) : plusieurs gemmaux en rapport signés Picasso reproduits dont « Nature morte à la tête antique », « Femme assise dans un fauteuil » ou encore « Les adolescents ».



HEAD OF MODERN // CONTEMPORARY ART DEPARTMENT

Charlotte REYNIER-AGUTTES • reynier@aguttes.com • +33 1 41 92 06 49

PRESS CONTACTS

At DROUOT : Mathilde FENNEBRESQUE • mfennebresque@drouot.com • +33 1 48 00 20 42

At AGUTTES : Sébastien FERNANDES • fernandes@aguttes.com • +33 1 47 45 93 05

