

Auction Record Report

Shows up to 100 filtered/checked results.

Copyright © 1999-2024 askART.com and underlying auction houses. All Rights Reserved. Digital copying of these images and content strictly prohibited; violators will be subject to the law including the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

1 auction record(s).



Copyright: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Copyright: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Copyright: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Copyright: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Copyright: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Artist: Rene Magritte
Title: L'autre son de cloche

Sales Price: \$10,122,500 **(Fees to buyer included)
Price/Square Inch: \$39,618.40
Low Estimate: \$4,000,000
High Estimate: \$7,000,000
% Difference: 44.61% over estimate

Signature: Signed and Titled
Medium/Ground: Oil / Canvas
Size Inches: 14" x 18.25"
Size CM: 35.56 cm x 46.36 cm
Year Created: 1951

Auction Date(s): 05/14/2022

Auction: The Surrealist World of Rosalind Gersten Jacobs and Melvin Jacobs

By: Christie's New York, Rockefeller Center

Lot: 628

Provenance: Iolas Gallery, New York (acquired from the artist, April 1952). William and Noma Copley, Longpont (acquired from the above, 1957). Gift from the above to the late owners as a wedding present, 1957.

Exhibitions: New York, Iolas Gallery, *René Magritte*, March-April 1953. Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts and Museum of Fine Arts of Houston, *René Magritte in America*, December 1960-February 1961, no. 35. Little Rock, Arkansas Art Center, *Magritte*, May-June 1964. Miami, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Sweet Dreams and Nightmares: Dada and Surrealism from the Rosalind and Melvin Jacobs Collection*, March-May 2000, no. 8 (illustrated in color). New York, Pace/MacGill Gallery, *The Long Arm of Coincidence: Selections from the Rosalind and Melvin Jacobs Collection*, April-May 2009 (illustrated in color).

Lot Notes: “Mystery is not one of the possibilities of reality. Mystery is what is absolutely necessary for reality to exist.”

René Magritte

Painted in 1951, *L'autre son de cloche* is a sophisticated example of the growing refinement of René Magritte's style during the years following the Second World War, as he boldly explored new themes and concepts in his work through an increasingly simplified and focused language of forms. Conjuring an intriguing image in which an ordinary green apple floats mysteriously alongside the Earth, an unexpected pairing that is at once familiar and yet distinctly strange, Magritte creates a puzzling, enigmatic scene that draws the viewer into his poetic world. The title, which translates literally as "The Other Sound of the Bell," but idiomatically as "The Other Story" or "A Different Version of Events," was reportedly suggested by the Surrealist poet Paul Nougé and appears almost as a direct challenge to the viewer, encouraging one to question and rethink one's understanding of the world around oneself. *L'autre son de cloche* was purchased by William and Noma Copley from Magritte's long-time dealer, Alexandre Iolas, in 1957 and presented the same year as a wedding gift to Rosalind and Melvin Jacobs. *L'autre son de cloche* is one of around a dozen works that Magritte had been enthusiastically working on since the autumn of 1951. In a letter from April of that year, Iolas had written to Magritte of the success of his latest exhibition in New York and advised that "For the next exhibition, it will be necessary to create very, very large and spectacular pictures, all of them especially new in inspiration and very, VERY, VERY WELL PAINTED" (quoted in D. Sylvester, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 17). Magritte seems to have taken Iolas's request to heart, and concentrated on working on roughly a dozen paintings concurrently through the final months of 1951 and into the new year. In April 1952, *L'autre son de cloche* was among a group of ten paintings that Magritte offered directly to Iolas, alongside *La boîte de Pandore* (Sylvester, no. 772; Yale University Art Gallery), *Les valeurs personnelles* (Sylvester, no. 773; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) and *La chambre d'écoute* (Sylvester, no. 779; The Menil Collection, Houston), as well as a series of compositions inspired by roses in various states of transformation. By this stage of his career, Magritte had become increasingly adept at converting his vision of the mysteries of the world into pictures that, through their iconic simplicity, conveyed their messages all the more strikingly. Paring back the number of elements and themes in his compositions, imbuing each with far greater significance, he succeeded in enhancing the poetic, uncanny impact of his subjects. To this end, the artist accumulated a personal inventory of everyday objects that he deployed in a variety of different combinations or arrangements to create strange and mysterious visions that nevertheless remained rooted in the familiar. "Our secret desire is for a change in the order of things, and it is appeared by the vision of a new order... the fate of an object in which we had no interest suddenly begins to disturb us."

René Magritte

The apple was among the most frequent and recognizable of Magritte's leitmotifs, appearing in various guises such as an enormous stone statue amidst an empty landscape, anthropomorphized as a mysterious masked entity and, perhaps most famously, suspended in mid-air in a position that perfectly hides the face of a man wearing a bowler hat. For Magritte, it was the simple familiarity of the apple which allowed it to achieve such a powerful effect when placed in such unexpected situations. "My paintings portray such familiar things: an apple, for instance, makes us ask questions," he explained. "We don't understand any more when we see an apple: all that is mysterious about it has been evoked" (interview with Jean Neyens, quoted in A. Blavier, ed., *Ecrits complets*, Paris, 2001, p. 603). In the present painting, Magritte transports the piece of fruit to an extraordinary, unexpected setting—the apple hangs, apparently weightless, against a deep blue star-studded sky, its rounded curves mirroring the perfectly spherical form of the Earth it sits behind, enhancing the apple's own allusion to planets, moons and other celestial bodies. While in its open defiance of gravity the apple calls to mind Newtonian physics, a concept inextricably linked in the public conscious with the image of the apple falling to the ground, the true mystery of the painting lies in the juxtaposition between this mundane fruit and the planet as a whole. The incongruity of this pairing is heightened further by the disparities in scale: either the apple is colossal in its dimensions, echoing the concept of paintings such as *La chambre d'écoute* and dwarfing the planet, or conversely Earth has shrunk to a Lilliputian scale, easily held in the palm of our hand. The surreal quality of the image is further accentuated by the knowledge that at the time of its creation, such a view of Earth from space would have seemed impossible—photographs of the planet from this perspective would not appear for at least another decade. Unimpeded by the swirling white cloud cover that usually fills the atmosphere in such images, here the planet appears to have been modelled using a traditional cartographic globe, or perhaps illustrations from the novels of Jules Verne, such as *Hector Servadac* or *De la Terre à la Lune*, of which Magritte was an avid reader. A similar vision of the Earth lies at the heart of another painting from 1951, *Le grand style* (Sylvester, no. 763; The Menil Collection, Houston), in which the planet appears to sit atop the slender stem of a plant, as if it were a flower bursting to life. However, whether or not this was a clever trick of the eye, an optical illusion or somehow a magical dislocation, remains a mystery. In both compositions Magritte positions the globe so that it reveals the full expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, framed on one side by Western Europe and North Africa, while on the other the elongated profile of the East Coast of North America stretches southwards in a sinuous line to South America, suggesting he used the same source for his imagery. Playing with concepts of illusion, perception and association in this way, Magritte confounds and compels the viewer in equal measure in *L'autre son de cloche*. Through these strange juxtapositions and combinations, Magritte intended to jolt his viewers out of a complacent understanding of the world around them, forcing them to question the perceived, inherited or conventional visual rules that govern their everyday understanding of reality. Indeed, while different elements in *L'autre son de cloche* may allude to multiple layers of potential meaning, it is the enigmatic effect conjured by the imagery that Magritte prized above all else. "To equate my painting with symbolism, conscious or unconscious," he insisted, "is to ignore its true nature. By asking, 'what does this mean?' they express a wish that everything be understandable. But if one does not reject the mystery, one has quite a different response. One asks other things" (in "Les Mots et les images," *La Révolution Surréaliste*, 15 December 1929; quoted in S. Gablik, *Magritte*, New York, 1985, p. 11).

Literature: Letter from R. Magritte to A. Iolas, 25 April 1952. Letter from A. Iolas to R. Magritte, 23 June 1952. Letter from R. Magritte to A. Iolas, 9 July 1952. Letter from R. Magritte to A. Iolas, 17 July 1952. Letter from A. Iolas to R. Magritte, 15 October 1952. H. Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, New York, 1977, p. 149, no. 286 (illustrated, p. 148). M. Marien, *Le radeau au radoub*, Brussels, 1983, p. 55. D. Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte: Catalogue Raisonné, Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes, 1949-1967*, New York, 1993, vol. III, p. 190, no. 771 (illustrated).

Source: www.askART.com

