

Property from an Important Private Collection

## CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)

Route près de Giverny

◆ Third party guarantee

Price realised	Estimate
USD 9,035,000	USD 7,000,000 – USD 10,000,000

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### DETAILS

CLAUDE MONET (1840-1926)

*Route près de Giverny*

signed and dated 'Claude Monet 85' (lower right)

oil on canvas

25 3/4 x 32 in. (65.5 x 81.2 cm.)

Painted in 1885

### PROVENANCE

Dr. Georges Viau, Paris; sale, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, 4 March 1907, lot 39.

Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris (acquired at the above sale).

Durand-Ruel Galleries, New York (transferred from the above, 1915).

Gustavia A. Senff, New York (acquired from the above, 5 February 1916).

Alice and Charles Senff McVeigh, New York (by descent from the above, circa 1927, until at least 1974).

Private collection, Switzerland (by 1975).

Galerie Schmit, Paris.

Private collection, Japan (by 1978).

Acquavella Galleries, Inc., New York (acquired from the above, 2008).

Acquired from the above by the present owner, 20 October 2009.

### LITERATURE

T. Duret, *Histoire des peintres impressionistes*, Paris, 1906, p. 96

(illustrated).

D. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Bibliographie et catalogue raisonné, peintures*, Lausanne, 1979, vol. II, p. 164, no. 1001 (illustrated, p. 165).

D. Wildenstein, *Monet: Catalogue raisonné*, Cologne, 1996, vol. III, p. 377, no. 1001 (illustrated).

B. Echte and W. Feilchenfeldt, "Kollektionen Claude Monet, Heinrich Hübner, Phillip Franck, Werke von [...]: 22. Januar bis 22. Februar 1909" in

*Kunstsalon Cassirer: Die Ausstellungen 1908-1910*, Eine neue Klassik, Wädenswil, 2013, vol. 4, p. 147 (illustrated in color).

C. Theuveny and C. Petit-Castelli, *George Viau: Un amateur éclairé*,

Louviers, 2018, p. 90, no. 475 (illustrated).

### EXHIBITED

Brussels, Palais du Cinquanteaire, *Expositions générales des beaux-arts*,

August-November 1907, p. 34, no. 340.

Berlin, Paul Cassirer, *XI. Jahrgang. VI. Ausstellung*, March-April 1909, no. 2

(titled *Dorfstraße*).

Martigny, Fondation Pierre Gianadda, *Monet au Musée Marmottan et*

*dans les collections suisses: Estampes japonaises*, June-November 2011,

pp. 107 and 188, no. 33 (illustrated in color, p. 107).

## Lot Essay

In 1883, Claude Monet and his family relocated to Giverny, outside of Paris, a move that would profoundly impact his artistic career. They took up residence at Le Pressoir, the pink farmhouse with green shutters that Monet would go on to purchase in 1890. Although the artist had previously lived in Paris, Argenteuil, and Vétheuil, among several other locales, it was in Giverny, the small village located at the confluence of the Seine and Epte rivers, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. Shortly after his arrival, Monet wrote to his dealer Paul Durand-Ruel: "Once settled, I hope to produce masterpieces, because I like the countryside very much" (quoted in D. Wildenstein, "Monet's Giverny" in *Monet's Years at Giverny: Beyond Impressionism*, exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978, pp. 15-16). During his time in Giverny, the artist did just that, spending the first years diligently and enthusiastically roving the hills and fields with his paints and brushes to discover what the land had to offer.

With only a few hundred inhabitants, the village of Giverny was a bucolic idyll of dappled sunlight and greenery, a sense evoked in *Route près de Giverny*. Executed in 1885, the painting shows a countryside road curving through a verdant landscape. Touches of pale blue and lavender evoke the early morning shadows while above, soft clouds capture the first rays of sunshine. Light glints off the trees and shrubbery, while broader, more gestural marks define the hillside on the right side of the composition. *Route près de Giverny* likely depicts a road that runs along the left bank of the Seine towards the town of Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer. The houses hidden among the trees lie on the outskirts of Port-Villez, a village that Monet painted several times during this period, including in *Bords de la Seine à Port-Villez* (Wildenstein, no. 1005; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne).

During this period, Monet's working methods were exacting: he rose at dawn each day, ate a large breakfast, and set off into the world. The journalist Georges Jeannot accompanied the artist on one of his excursions, observing how Monet would "stop before the most dissimilar scenes, admiring each and making me aware of how splendid and unexpected nature is" (quoted in *ibid.*, 1978, p. 21). Jeannot went on to describe Monet's approach once he had selected a site: "...he draws in a few lines with the charcoal and then attacks the painting directly, handling his long brushes with an astounding agility and an unerring sense of design ... His landscape is swiftly set down and could, if necessary, be considered complete after only one session, a session which lasts ... as long as the effect he is seeking lasts, an hour and often much less" (*ibid.*). In addition to Jeannot's account, John Singer Sargent captured Monet hard at work in 1885. In *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood* (Tate, London), the artist has set up his easel in a field so as to paint *en plein air*. Robert Herbert has suggested that the canvas shown in the painting was *Pré à Giverny* (Wildenstein, no. 995), created at the same time as *Route près de Giverny* and now in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Monet was so discerning when it came to choosing what to paint because he was deeply invested in a location's *enveloppe*, or its unique atmospheric qualities. As he explained, "I am pursuing the impossible. Other painters paint a bridge, a house, a boat... I want to paint the air in which the bridge, the house, and the boat are to be found—the beauty of the air around them, and that is nothing less than the impossible" (quoted in J. House, "Monet: The Last Impressionist?" in P. Tucker, *Monet in the 20th Century*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Art, London, 1998, p. 8). Working directly from observation became essential to how the artist conceived of representation. Monet became less concerned with directly reproducing specific scenery or foliage than recording his experience of the landscape at a precise moment in time.

Beyond recording atmosphere and the transient effects of light, Monet's scenes of Giverny present a particular vision of France that had gained currency during the last decades of the nineteenth century. *La belle France* as a subject was taken up by many artists of the era, including the Impressionists. Their paintings of a rural arcadia depict a "serene beauty," suggesting that "paradise—or something very close to it—has been made actual in these pictures" (R. Brettell, "The French Landscape Sensibility" in *A Day in the Country: Impressionism and the French National Landscape*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1984, p. 33). Monet, too, endeavored to portray the landscape that he witnessed, and *Route près de Giverny* revels in the beauty of the countryside and all its pastoral splendor.

*Route près de Giverny* was first owned by Dr. George Viau, the Parisian dental surgeon who built an exceptional collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. Viau assembled more than a thousand works, including Paul Cézanne's *Baigneurs et baigneuses* (The Art Institute of Chicago), Edgar Degas's *La femme en gris* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *La Danse au Moulin Rouge* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). *Route près de Giverny* was later acquired by Gustavia Senff, whose husband Charles had been related to the Havemeyer family, and remained within the Senff family collection for close to sixty years. In addition to several paintings by Monet, the Senffs owned pictures by Degas, Gustave Courbet, Peter Paul Rubens, Franz Hals, and Diego Velázquez, among others. Works from the Senff collection are held in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia.