LOT 64
CAMILLE CLAUDEL
1864 - 1943
LA VALSE
Inscribed C. Claudel, stamped with the foundry mark Eug. Blot Paris and numbered 3
Bronze
Height: 18 1/4 in.
46.4 cm
Conceived in 1895 and cast in 1905.

ESTIMATE 1,100,000-1,500,000 USD

The authenticity of this work has kindly been confirmed by Danielle Ghanassia.

PROVENANCE
Sale: Andersantix, Netherlands, 6 May 2001, lot 215
Private Collection, France (acquired in 2011)

LITERATURE
Emile Verhaeren, "Le Salon de la Libre Esthétique. Les Sculpteurs" L'Art Moderne, 1st April 1894

Mathias Morhardt, "Mlle Camille Claudel" Mercure de France, March 1898, p. 733

Paul Claudel, "Camille Claudel" L'Art Décoratif, July 1913, illustration of another cast p. 20
Paul Claudel, "Ma soeur Camille, son œuvre est l'histoire de sa vie" Figaro littéraire, November 17, 1951, p. 9
Cécile Goldscheider, Camille Claudel (exhibition catalogue), Musée Rodin, Paris, 1951, no. 16, illustration of another cast pl. VIII
Paul Sentenac, "Les sculptures de Camille Claudel et les galeries" Cette semaine, 12th-18th December 1951
Michelle Seurière, "Gazette des arts: Camille Claudel (Musée Rodin)" L'Opéra, 1951
Cécile Goldscheider, Rodin, ses collaborateurs et ses amis (exhibition catalogue), Musée Rodin, Paris, 1957, no. 54, p. 24
Anne Pingeot, "Biographie de Camille Claudel" La femme artiste d’Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun à Rosa Bonheur, Mont-de-Marsan, Lacataye, 1981, p. 104
Anne Rivière, L’Interdite, Camille Claudel, Paris, 1983, no. 16, p. 75
Bruno Gaudichon, "Catalogue raisonné de l’œuvre sculpté, peint et gravé" Camille Claudel (exhibition catalogue), Musée Rodin & Musée Sainte-Croix, Poitiers, 1984, no. 74b, illustration of another cast p. 108
Brigitte Fabre-Pellerin, Le Jour et la Nuit de Camille Claudel, Paris, 1988, illustration of another cast
Renate Flagmeier, "Deux autoportraits précédant L’Âge mûr" Les Dossiers du Musée d'Orsay, no. 25, Paris, 1988, illustration of another cast p. 39
Anne Rivière, Bruno Gaudichon & Danielle Ghanassia, Camille Claudel, catalogue raisonné, Paris, 2000, no. 7, pp. 112
Anne Riviere & Bruno Gaudichon, Camille Claudel. Correspondence. 2003, mentioned pp. 86-88, 329, illustration of another cast pl. 27
Camille Claudel, 1864-1943 (exhibition catalogue), Fundacion Mapfre, Madrid & Musée Rodin, Paris, 2007-08, illustration of another cast p. 83
Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, Camille Claudel & Rodin: Time will Heal Everything, Paris, 2013, illustration of another cast p. 35

CATALOGUE NOTE
Created at the height of her artistic career, Camille Claudel's La Valse is a stunning example of the sophistication and
skill of the young sculptress. This dynamic rendering of a couple in movement, with its detailed and complex treatment surface and form, is considered among her best sculptures. Claudel created La Valse near the end of her 10 year love affair with Auguste Rodin, a passionate relationship filled with conflict, hard work, disputes and ultimately disappointment. One of her most erotic sculptures, Claudel presented her dancers naked in the first version, which has sadly since disappeared. The Administration des Beaux-Arts were so shocked by this audacity that they demanded she dress her figures, which she partially accomplished with the sweeping fabric that appears to flow out of the female figure's back.

The French journalist and art critic Octave Mirbeau wrote of the strong emotions that permeated the work "The flesh is young, it pulses with life, but the drapery that surrounds them, which follows them, which swirls with them, fights like a shroud. I do not know where they go, if it's love, if it is death, but what I do know is that there is a poigniant sadness to these two, so poignant it can come from death, or perhaps from love, sadder than death" (O. Mirbeau, Camille Claudel de la mort à l'oeuvre, Paris, p. 43).

Claudel was not even twenty years old when the sculptor Paul Dubois introduced her to Auguste Rodin and within a year she became an apprentice in his studio. Claudel and Rodin worked together for over a decade, during which time she flourished both as an indispensable figure in the Rodin studio and a virtuosic sculptor in her own right. Claudel not only produced unbelievably elegant and sensual masterpieces such as La Valse, she also contributed hands and feet (widely acknowledged to be the most demanding forms) to Rodin's most famous work The Gates of Hell, and there is even speculation that she was the true creator of Rodin's celebrated Galatea (Mathias Morhardt, "Mlle. Camille Claudel," Mercure de France, 1898, p. 17).

The rhythm of the waltz in which these figures are engaged can be felt in the tension of the bodies and the whirl of the drapery. In another version, today known as the first, the figures are enveloped by drapery which climbs up and around their heads. In a second version the drapery is modified, so that the figures are now nude from the waist up. Variations also ensued within this second series, where the base on which the figures dance was modified and the placement of the man and woman's heads vary. The present work incorporates several of Claudel's modifications, as here the man's lips rest tenderly against the woman's cheek, rather than against her neck as in other versions. The drapery is also more worked than in other versions, and serves as a support for the two figures enveloped in their delicate and passionate dance. It has been noted that the La Valse series represents Claudel's "most daring and personal works" and that in "these works, Camille Claudel displayed a completely autonomous genius and takes a place among the greatest artists of the turn of the century" (Anne Rivièrè, Bruno Gaudichon & Danielle Ghanassia, op.cit., pp. 116-17).

Claudel completed the plaster cast of the present composition, known as the first version of La Valse, in 1892. The present bronze was cast in 1905 by the Eugène Blot foundry in Paris in an edition of 25 out of the 50 originally planned.

---

Fig. 1

Camille and Louise Claudel in Jessie Lipscomb's studio, circa 1885, Paris