

Winston Churchill

1874-1965 | BRITISH



*Still Life of Aubergines and
Red Peppers on a Silver Tray*

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

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Oil on canvas | Circa 1934-35

Initialed "WSC" (lower right)

Canvas: 24³/₈" high x 29¹/₂" wide | 61.91 x 74.93 cm

Frame: 30³/₈" high x 35¹/₂" wide x 4" deep

77.15 x 90.17 x 10.16 cm

“

Happy are the painters for
they shall not be lonely.
Light and colour, peace
and hope, will keep them
company to the end, or
almost to the end, of the day.

– Sir Winston Churchill

”



Widely considered the greatest Briton of all time, Winston Churchill was not only a revered statesman but also a gifted painter. This exceptional painting, *Still Life with Aubergines and Red Peppers on a Silver Tray*, is a testament to his artistic skill and offers an intimate glimpse into his private creative life.

Painted between 1934 and 1935 during Churchill's time at his beloved country home, Chartwell, this oil painting demonstrates Churchill's mastery of bold color. Churchill's attentive brushwork captures the vivid reds and purples of the aubergines and peppers, which he expertly contrasts with the sharpness of the polished silver and the soft folds of the draped tablecloth. The painting is also far larger than an average painting by the master and unlike the majority of his works, is signed with the desirable "WSC" signature.

Churchill was deeply attuned to and embedded in important artistic circles of the time, and one of his mentors was the artist Sir William Nicholson. A close friend, Nicholson often stayed at Chartwell in the 1930s. Nicholson's impact is evident in the composition and brushwork and this rare painting by Churchill is similar to examples by Nicholson in the Tate collection. Additionally, the painting's subject matter closely mirrors a work by the celebrated N.C. Wyeth which is now housed in the Brandywine Museum of Art. Churchill was an admirer of Wyeth's work, and even arranged to have Wyeth's watercolors displayed in his hotel room during a visit to Boston.

As with most of Churchill's masterpieces, this painting was not created for public display but for Churchill's pleasure. It was later given as a token of gratitude to M. Alfred Kern, a prominent Swiss banker who owned Villa Choisy in Switzerland. In 1946, Kern hosted Churchill at the villa during the period of his iconic Zurich speech, a seminal call for European unity in the aftermath of World War

II. The villa's tranquil setting on the banks of Lac Léman provided Churchill with a sanctuary during a pivotal moment in history, as he worked to lay the foundations for post-war peace and stability in Europe. Created by one of the most influential figures of the 20th century, this extraordinary gift to a close confidant provides a rare and intimate glimpse into who the "real" Winston Churchill was.

Painting was a dominating passion for Churchill in the last half of his life. There is little evidence that he had any artistic training prior to his 40s. In fact, his wife Clementine mentioned at one point that before he began painting, Churchill had hardly visited an art museum, much less created art. Churchill first began painting following a personal and political disaster—the Dardanelles campaign in 1915. He is quoted as telling the painter Sir John Rothenstein: "If it weren't for painting, I couldn't live; I couldn't bear the strain of things."

In 1948, Churchill was bestowed the prestigious recognition of Honorary Academician Extraordinary by the Royal Academy of Arts. He painted roughly 500 works, approximately 350 of which are housed in Churchill's garden studio at Chartwell. Only a few others were given to friends and remain in private collections.



PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to Mr. Alfred Kern, 1946

Sale, Sotheby's, London March 1979

Sale, Christie's, London March 1991

Wells Collection

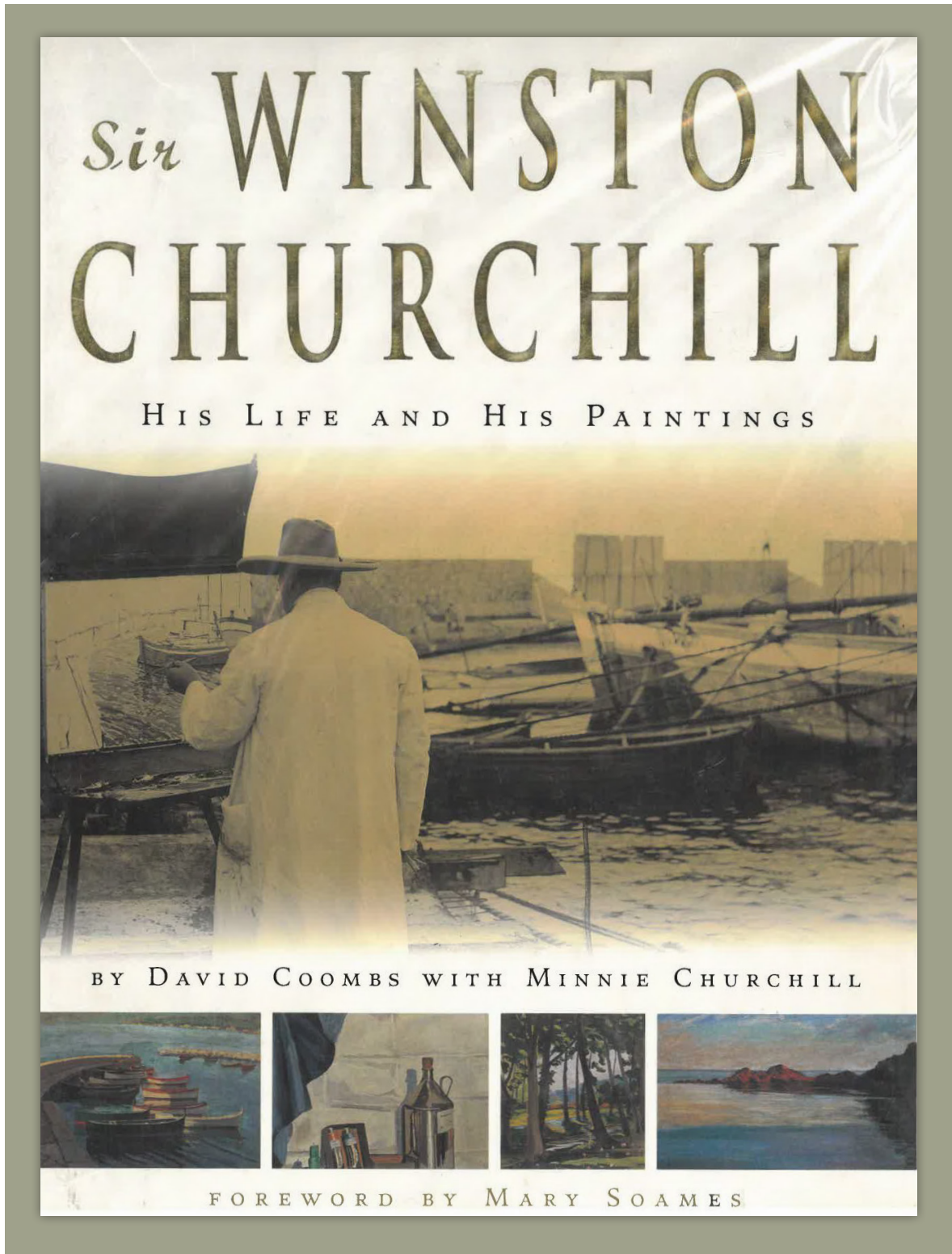
Churchill family member, United Kingdom

M.S. Rau, New Orleans

LITERATURE

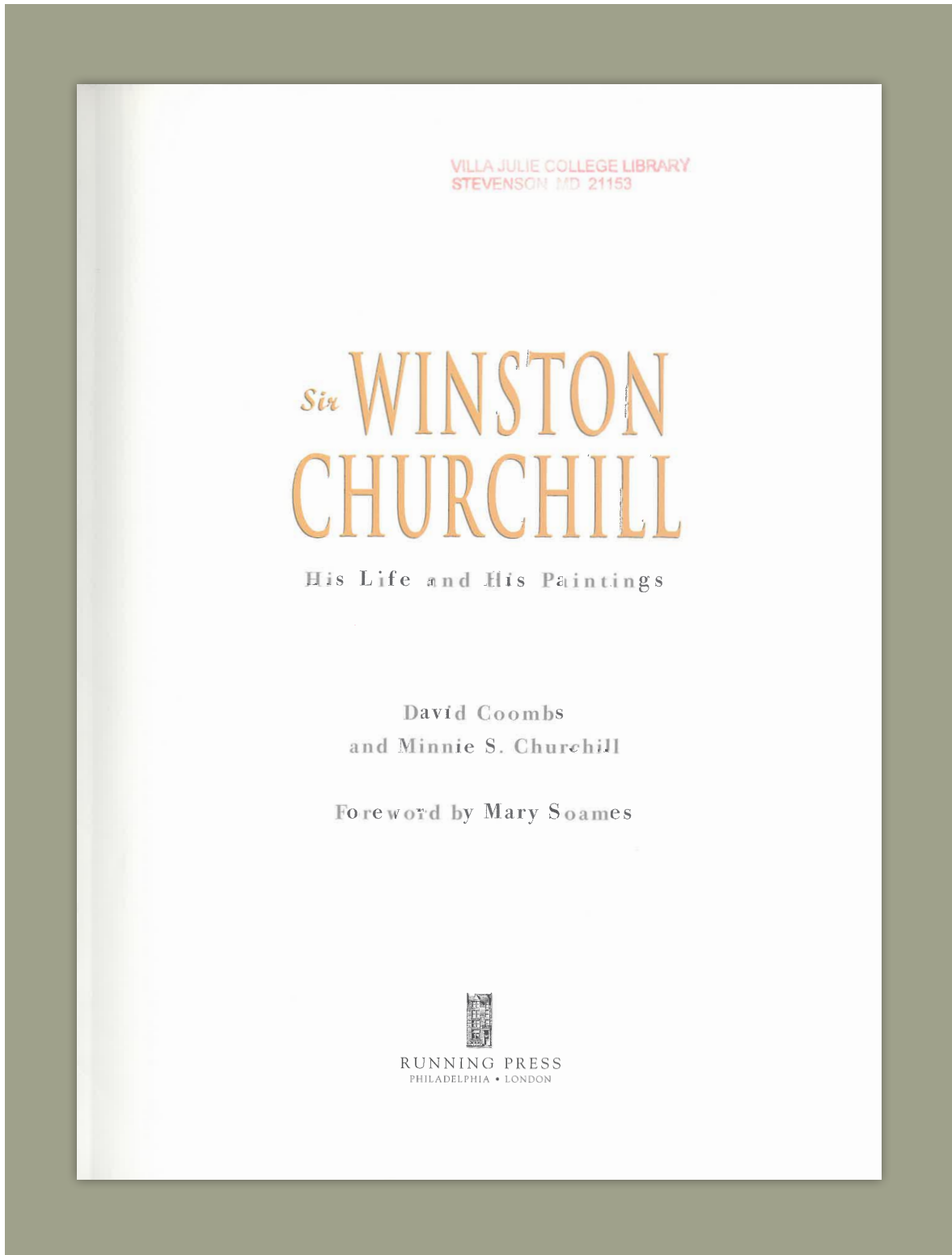
David Coombs and M. Churchill, *Sir Winston Churchill: His Life and His Paintings*, Dorset, 2011, C510, fig. 510, p. 240, illustrated





David Coombs and M. Churchill, *Sir Winston Churchill: His Life and His Paintings*, Dorset, 2011, C510, fig. 510, p. 240, illustrated





David Coombs and M. Churchill, *Sir Winston Churchill: His Life and His Paintings*, Dorset, 2011, C510, fig. 510, p. 240, illustrated





Fig 510 (C 510) above
Churchill gave this painting of Aubergines and Red Peppers on a Silver Tray to Alfred Kern in gratitude for the loan of his house at Choisy in Switzerland in 1946.

when or where Churchill might possibly have seen it, let alone copied it. That mystery has yet to be resolved.

Dating Churchill's paintings has always been a problem. While the dates of his visits are often known, he did not necessarily finish the picture at the time and/or might paint another version later using a photographic reference. In the case of one view of Marrakech, however (C 452), the picture can be dated to January 1959, because Mr John Whitmore, a volunteer at Chartwell, when on his honeymoon saw Churchill working on the picture, guarded by a Moroccan policeman.

In his essentially humble attitude to his painting, Churchill acknowledged three important teachers: Sir John Lavery, Walter Sickert and Sir William Nicholson. Two other artists painted with him often and were important companions of the brush: at first, Charles Montagu and latterly, Paul Maze. Both were quick with encouragement and technical help, nor was Churchill ever slow to seek advice from the many professional artists he met during his lifetime.



Fig 511 (C 514) above
The style of this painting of a beach on the Riviera is unusual for Churchill. He gave it to Victor Montagu on the occasion of his marriage in 1934.

Fig 512 (C 525) right
This is a view at Branksome Dean, the home near Bournemouth on England's south coast of the financier Sir Ernest Cassel. Uniquely it is signed and inscribed: 'Mrs Cassels from Winston 1916'.



C 508 (Fig. 507) The Second Duke of Westminster (Bendor) with his Lurcher Sam, late 1920s, 16 x 13 1/2 in. Initialled right, illustrated: *Winston Churchill: His Life as a Painter* by Mary Soames, 1990, Collection: Anne Duchess of Westminster, Gift of Lady Spencer-Churchill after Sir Winston's death in 1965.

C 509 (Fig. 529) Lake Carezza in the Dolomites, c. 1949, 15 x 21 1/2 in. 38.1 x 54.6 cm, Initialled left, Collections: Sold anonymously at Christie's 12th July 1973, Sold anonymously at Christie's 27th March 1997, Present owner unknown, The early provenance of this painting needs to be investigated before its authenticity can be confirmed. In 1973 it was sold at Christie's unframed and with the title 'A Bay in the South of France'.

C 510 (Fig. 510) Still Life with Aubergines and Red Peppers on a Silver Tray, 1934-35, 24 x 29 1/2 in. 61 x 75 cm, Initialled right, Collections: Mr Alfred Kern, Sold Sotheby's 14th March 1979, £3,900, Sold Christie's March 1991, £9,500, Wells Collection, Gift of the artist as a mark of gratitude for the loan of Mr Alfred Kern's house at Choisy, Switzerland, in 1946.

C 511 (Fig. 504) Landscape with Two Trees, 1922, 61 x 45.6 cm, Initialled and dated on the back, Collections: Miss Maud Elgie, Mr Michael Elgie Donaldson, Gift of the artist to Maud Elgie (later Mrs R. G. Donaldson and Mr Michael Donaldson's mother) who between 1919 and 1921 was 'employed by Mrs Churchill to help with Diana and Randolph'.

C 512 (Fig. 508) St Paul's Churchyard, c. 1927, 48.5 x 28 cm, Initialled left, Collections: Sold Balmoral Castle Charity Auction 1927, 115 guineas (£120.75), Mr Stanley Shaw Bond, Mr I. R. S. Bond,

C 513 (Fig. 513) Inlet in the South of France, 1920s, 20 x 30 in. Initialled right, Collections: Mr R. J. Marnham, Sold Christie's 1st March 1968, £1,320, (Other auctions at Christie's in 1981 and 1982), Mr F. Bartlett Watt (from Pickering and Chatto, London 1984), Mrs Lucienne Watt, Gift of the artist in 1945 to Mr R. J. Marnham, owner of Chartwell Farm.

C 514 (Fig. 511) Beach on the Riviera, c. 1930, 20 x 24 in. Unsigned, Collections: Victor Montagu, Sold Parke-Bernet, New York 21st October 1971, Sold Sotheby's, New York 7th June 1984, Sold Christie's, London 5th November 1999, £100,000, Tracey and Shanin Specter, Gift of the artist to Victor Montagu on the occasion of his marriage in 1934.

C 515 (Fig. 506) La Lieutenance, Honfleur, c. 1928, 23 x 27 1/2 in. 52.07 x 62.87 cm, Initialled left, Exhibited: Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1975, Collections: Mr P. M. Adam, Mrs Leigh Battson (from Wildenstein Gallery, New York 1967), Mr and Mrs Timothy M. Doheny, Gift of the artist to Mr P. M. Adam in 1928 in return for the latter's 'picture of my Mother's dining room which is a constant source of pleasure to me' and which still hangs over Churchill's bed in his bedroom at Chartwell.

C 516 (Fig. 531) View of La Pausa, Roquebrune, 1957, Size unknown, Initialled left, Illustrated in: *Winston Churchill Honorary Academician Extraordinary*, Royal Academy of Arts, London 1959, Exhibited: Royal Academy of Arts 1959, Collection: Present owner unknown, This painting is missing.

C 517 (Fig. 518) The Rocks of the Château de l'Horizon with Lady Castlerosse and the Artist, 1930s, 25 x 30 in. 53.5 x 76 cm, Initialled left, Illustrated: *My Aunt Maxine* by Diana Forbes-Robertson, 1964, Collection: Mrs Maxine Elliott, Lady Forbes-Robertson, J. J. Miles, Sold Sotheby's, New York 11th April 1984, \$21,000, Mrs Linda Noe Lane, Gift of the artist to Maxine Elliott and thence by descent. This painting is based on a photograph in the archives at Chartwell in which the figures are clearly seen to be Churchill himself and Lady Castlerosse. The painting was sold at Sotheby's, New York, in 1984 with the title 'Seascape near Cap Ferrat, a View from Château de l'Horizon' and the figures described as Churchill and Maxine Elliott.

C 518 (Fig. 515) Lady Castlerosse at the Château de l'Horizon, c. 1935, canvas board 14 x 19 3/4 in. Initialled Collections: Baron de Caters, Mons. Guy de Caters, Sold Parke-Bernet, New York 25th September 1968, Present owner unknown, Baron de Caters had a chateau near Maxine Elliott's Château de l'Horizon in the South of France. The young man on the other side of the table from Lady Castlerosse is identified in the auction catalogue as Randolph Churchill. The related photograph in the archives at Chartwell shows this to be wrong; instead either Peter Willes or Dudley Delevingne, Doris Castlerosse's younger brother, have been suggested.

C 519 (Fig. 523) Thunderstorm: Nice, c. 1921, Size unknown, Illustrated: 'Painting as a Pastime' by Winston S. Churchill, Part 2, *The Strand Magazine*, January 1922, Collection: Present owner unknown, This painting is missing.

C 520 (Fig. 525) On the Rance, near St Malo, c. 1921, Size unknown, Illustrated: 'Painting as a Pastime' by Winston S. Churchill, Part 2, *The Strand Magazine*, January 1922, Collection: Present owner unknown This painting is missing.

C 521 (Fig. 524) The Vallery of the Brora, Sutherlandshire, c. 1921, Size unknown, Illustrated: 'Painting as a Pastime' by Winston S. Churchill, Part 2, *The Strand Magazine*, January 1922, Collection: Present owner unknown, This painting is missing.

C 522 (Fig. 526) Scene near the Head of Lake Como, 1945, Size unknown, Illustrated: 'Winston Churchill's Pictures', *The Strand Magazine*, August 1946, Collection: Present owner unknown, This painting is missing.

David Coombs and M. Churchill, *Sir Winston Churchill: His Life and His Paintings*, Dorset, 2011, C510, fig. 510, p. 240, illustrated



AUCTION COMPARABLES

	<p>1</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Year of Work</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Misc.</p> <p>Sale of</p> <p>Estimate</p> <p>Sold For</p>	<p>Winston Churchill</p> <p>Tower of the Koutoubia Mosque</p> <p>SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, O.M., R.A. (1874-1965)Tower of the Koutoubia Mosquesigned</p> <p>oil on canvas</p> <p>1943</p> <p>Height 18 in.; Width 24 in. / Height 45.7 cm.; Width 61 cm.</p> <p>Signed</p> <p>Christie's London: Monday, March 1, 2021 [Lot 00009] Modern British Art Evening Sale</p> <p>1,500,000 - 2,500,000 GBP (2,090,592 - 3,484,320 USD)</p> <p>8,285,000 GBP Premium (11,547,038 USD)</p>
	<p>2</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Year of Work</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Sale of</p> <p>Estimate</p> <p>Sold For</p>	<p>Winston Churchill</p> <p>The goldfish pool at Chartwell</p> <p>oil on canvas63.5 by 76.5cm.; 25 by 30in.Executed in 1932.Catalogue NoteWe</p> <p>oil on canvas</p> <p>1932</p> <p>Height 25 in.; Width 30.1 in. / Height 63.5 cm.; Width 76.5 cm.</p> <p>Sotheby's London: Wednesday, December 17, 2014 [Lot 00181] Daughter of History: Mary Soames and the Legacy of Churchill</p> <p>400,000 - 600,000 GBP (625,978 - 938,967 USD)</p> <p>1,762,500 GBP Premium (2,758,216 USD)</p>
	<p>3</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Year of Work</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Misc.</p> <p>Sale of</p> <p>Estimate</p> <p>Sold For</p>	<p>Winston Churchill</p> <p>Scene at Marrakech</p> <p>SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, O.M., R.A. (1874-1965)Scene at Marrakechsigned with initi</p> <p>oil on canvas</p> <p>Circa 1935</p> <p>Height 23.7 in.; Width 36.4 in. / Height 60.3 cm.; Width 92.4 cm.</p> <p>Signed</p> <p>Christie's London: Monday, March 1, 2021 [Lot 00003] Modern British Art Evening Sale</p> <p>300,000 - 500,000 GBP (418,118 - 696,864 USD)</p> <p>1,882,500 GBP Premium (2,623,693 USD)</p>
	<p>4</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Year of Work</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Misc.</p> <p>Sale of</p> <p>Estimate</p> <p>Sold For</p>	<p>Winston Churchill</p> <p>The Bridge at Aix-en-Provence</p> <p>SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, O.M., R.A. (1874-1965)The Bridge at Aix-en-Provencesigned</p> <p>oil on canvas</p> <p>1948</p> <p>Height 22 in.; Width 28 in. / Height 55.9 cm.; Width 71.2 cm.</p> <p>Signed</p> <p>Christie's London: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 [Lot 00011] Modern British and Irish Art Evening Sale</p> <p>1,500,000 - 2,500,000 GBP (2,073,255 - 3,455,425 USD)</p> <p>1,702,500 GBP Premium (2,353,144 USD)</p>



Winston Churchill | *Garden on Riviera*

Circa 1935

Medium: Oil on canvas



National Trust - Chartwell
Kent, England



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