

# Pierre-Auguste Renoir



1841-1919 | FRENCH

*Femme au corsage blanc, Jeanne Samary*

*M.S. Rau*  
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's most famous works are his radiant depictions of women. By far the most important of these are ones that capture the ladies of his inner circle. This stunning 1879 pastel captures Jeanne Samary, Renoir's favorite subject and most important muse at the height of his career.

Samary was one of the most captivating figures of late 19th-century Paris. An iconic actress at the Comédie-Française, her fame rivaled that of the great Sarah Bernhardt. Beginning in 1876, Renoir created dozens of portraits of Samary, and she also appeared in all three of the artist's most important paintings from this pivotal period—*Bal du moulin de la Galette* (1876), *La balançoire* (1876) and *The Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1880–81). Renoir's close friend and biographer, Georges Rivière, noted that "no portrait ever gave Renoir greater satisfaction than the ones he made of Samary."

This magnificent pastel perfectly embodies this bond between Renoir and Samary. Vibrant and spontaneous, the work captures an intimate moment like only Renoir could, with Samary's blouse delicately falling over her shoulder. Renoir typically reserved pastel for his portraits of friends and family because it allowed him to capture them quickly "in all their vividness" (Daulte, 1959).

The year this pastel was created, 1879, was one of the most important years of Renoir's career. He entered the prestigious Salon of 1879, where four of his portraits were accepted, including a full-length masterpiece of Jeanne Samary. Camille Pissarro even remarked on his triumph: "Renoir is having a great

success at the Salon. I think he is hitting his stride." This pastel stands as an extraordinary testament to this pivotal chapter for Renoir, portraying the muse who shaped his groundbreaking vision.

Renoir's portraits of Jeanne Samary are exceptionally scarce, with most already held in prestigious museum collections, including the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Similar pastels of Samary have commanded millions—among some of the highest prices for Renoir's works on paper. Importantly, the artist's pastels are getting much recent museum attention, with the October 2025–February 2026 exhibition organized by the Musée d'Orsay and the Morgan Library, *Renoir Drawings*.





## Pierre-Auguste Renoir

1841-1919 | French

*Femme au corsage blanc, Jeanne Samary, 1879*

Initialed "AR" (lower right)  
Pastel on paper

Paper: 22 1/2" high x 14 1/4" wide | 57.15 x 36.20 cm  
Frame: 36" high x 27 1/2" wide x 2" deep | 91.44 x 69.85 x 5.08 cm

This work will be included in the Wildenstein Plattner Institute's forthcoming digital catalogue raisonné.

## PROVENANCE

Ambroise Vollard, Paris, acquired from the artist (as of 1907)

Étienne Bignou, Paris (as "Jeanne Samary")

Lafarge, Paris

Victor Hélin, Paris

Succession Victor Hélin, c. 1945

M. and Mme Schmit, acquired from the above, 2009

Private Collection, Paris

M.S. Rau, New Orleans



**Wildenstein  
Plattner  
Institute**

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wpl.art

Order No.  
5877

**Pierre-Auguste Renoir**  
**Digital Catalogue raisonné project**

Ref No.  
prkbyc

The WPI is pleased to inform you that the work referenced below will be included in the forthcoming Digital Catalogue Raisonné.

This determination of inclusion is provided subject to the terms and conditions of the Submission and Consultation Agreement, which was agreed to and executed by you upon submitting this work for consideration. As noted in the Agreement, this determination does not constitute a factual statement nor a representation or warranty of any kind, but shall be treated as public information, which the WPI reserves the right to make available at the request of any person who, in its opinion and sole discretion, has a reasonable interest therein. The WPI further reserves the right to change this determination if new information becomes available, including by withdrawing the Work from any catalogue raisonné in which it has been included.

Please be advised that this original notice should accompany the work upon transfer of ownership. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Gorayeb  
Executive Director  
The Wildenstein Plattner Institute, Inc.  
New York, November 13, 2025



**Femme au corsage blanc, Jeanne Samary**  
1879  
Pastel on paper  
66.3 x 42.2 cm  
Initialed lower right: AR.



Please find below a research summary on the work submitted for review. We provide this to you for informational purposes only, as it will be updated upon publication.

### Provenance

*Ambroise Vollard*, Paris, acquired from the artist (as of 1907)<sup>1</sup>

*Étienne Bignou*, Paris (as "Jeanne Samary")<sup>2</sup>

*Lafarge*, Paris

*Victor Hélin*, Paris

Succession *Victor Hélin* (c. 1945)

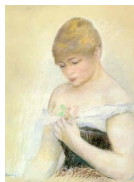
*M. and Mme Schmit*, acquired from above (2009)

- <sup>1</sup> Previously unpublished photograph, *Pierre-Auguste Renoir* [Restricted], *Ambroise Vollard Records* [jo924zs1]. The Wildenstein Plattner Institute, Inc.  
Photograph signed by the artist and dated 2 septembre 1907. *Archive Essoyes* [Restricted], *Pierre-Auguste Renoir Research Archive* [7o1p1cyz]. The Wildenstein Plattner Institute, Inc.
- <sup>2</sup> Collection *Etienne Bignou*, ODO 1896-29. *Renoir Album: Dessins*. Documentation du Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo Number: 3468

Wildenstein Plattner Institute, Inc. 19 West 21st Street, Suite 702, New York, NY 10010



# — AUCTION COMPARABLES —



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir**  
*PORTRAIT DE JEANNE SAMARY*

pastel on paper  
Height 58 x Width 43 cm.  
Height 22.835 x Width 16.929 in.  
1879–1880

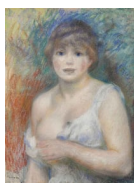
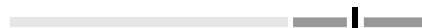
**25 June 1990** over 35 years ago

Christie's London

*Impressionist and Modern Paintings and Sculpture – [Lot 00012]*

est. 1,000,000 - 1,500,000 GBP **1,210,000** GBP Ⓟ

est. 1,730,403 - 2,595,604 USD **2,093,787** USD Ⓟ



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir**  
*Portrait de Jeanne Samary*

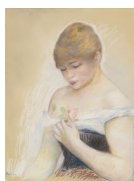
pastel on paper  
Height 60.3 x Width 46.4 cm.  
Height 23.74 x Width 18.268 in.  
1879–1880

**04 May 2011** over 14 years ago

Christie's New York

*Impressionist and Modern Evening Sale – [Lot 00015]*

est. 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 USD **1,106,500** USD Ⓟ



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir**  
*Jeune femme tenant une Fleur*  
*(Portrait de Jeanne Samary)*

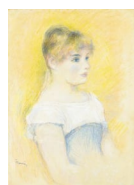
pastel on paper  
Height 61.6 x Width 46.3 cm.  
Height 24.252 x Width 18.228 in.  
1879–1880

**07 November 2013** about 12 years ago

Sotheby's New York

*Impressionist & Modern Art Day Sale – [Lot 00117]*

est. 250,000 - 350,000 USD **425,000** USD Ⓟ



**Pierre-Auguste Renoir**  
*Jeune fille au corset bleu*  
*(Portrait de Jeanne Samary)*

pastel on paper  
Height 61.4 x Width 44 cm.  
Height 24.173 x Width 17.323 in.

**07 November 2001** about 24 years ago

Christie's New York

*Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper – [Lot 00409]*

est. 350,000 - 450,000 USD **358,000** USD Ⓟ





## Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Mlle. Jeanne Samary*

c. 1878

**Medium:** Pastel

**Dimensions:** 27<sup>7/16</sup> x 18<sup>3/4</sup> inches | 69.7 x 47.7 cm

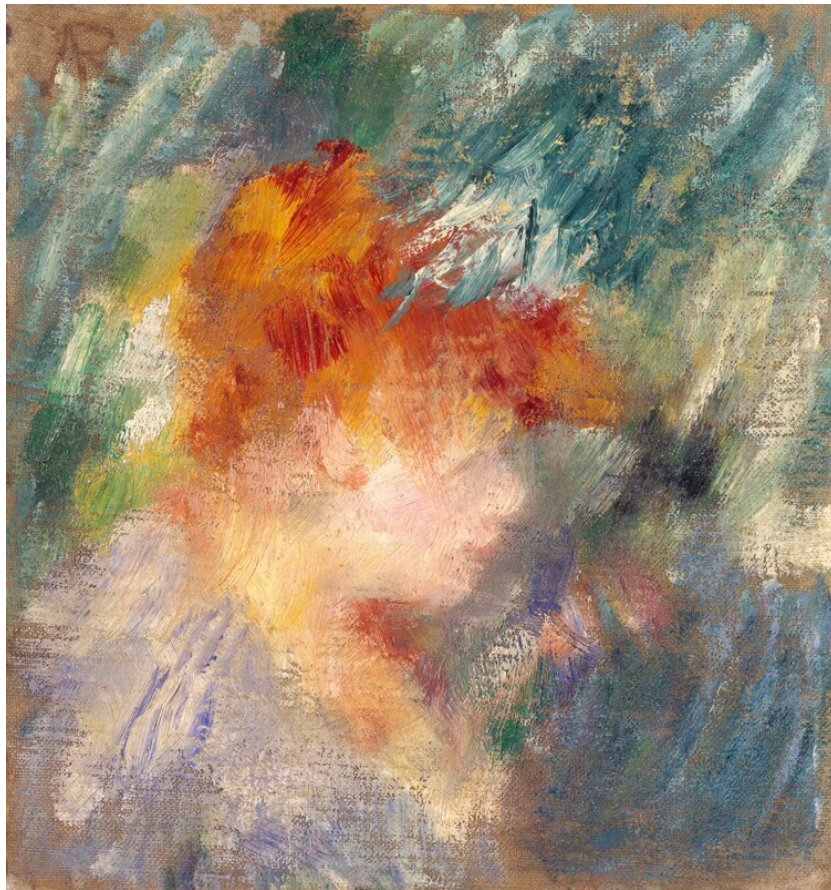


## Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Jeanne Samary*

1878

**Medium:** Oil on canvas

**Dimensions:** 7<sup>1/2</sup> x 7 inches | 19 x 17.8 cm



**National**  
Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art  
Washington, D.C., United States





## Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Jeanne Samary*

1877

**Medium:** Oil on canvas

**Dimensions:** 18 x 17<sup>1/4</sup> inches | 46 x 44 cm

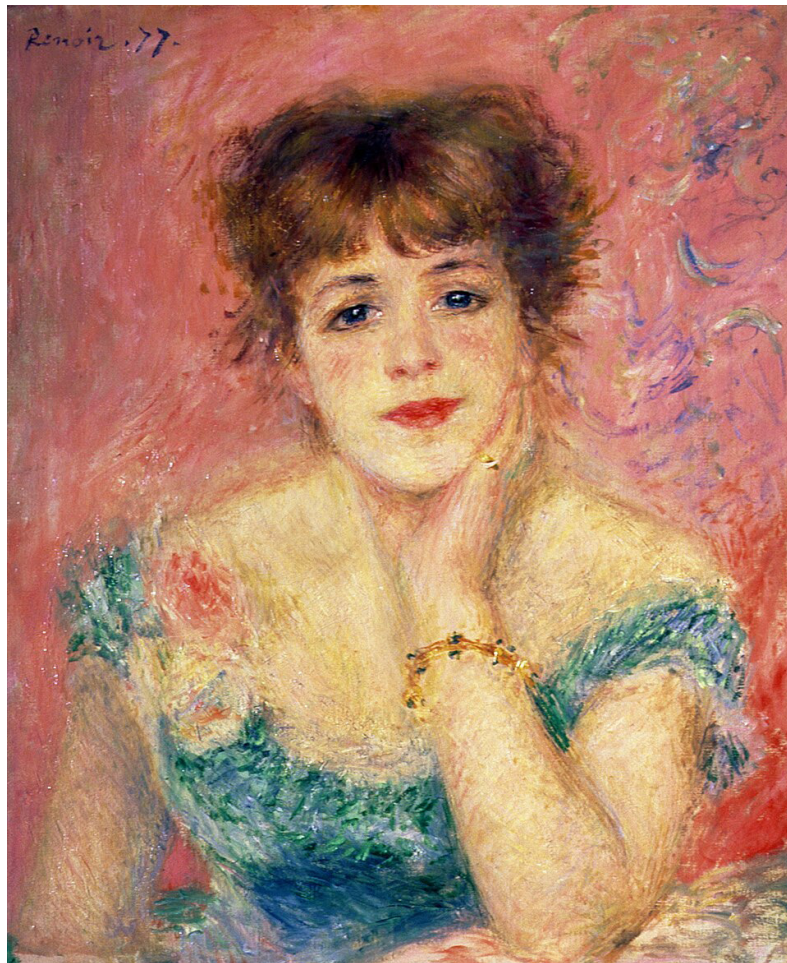


## Pierre-Auguste Renoir | *Jeanne Samary*

1877

**Medium:** Oil on canvas

**Dimensions:** 22 x 18 inches | 56 x 46 cm



Pushkin Museum  
*Moscow, Russia*





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