Season's Greetings
A true artist can help us see what is universally and eternally true and beautiful.

Kees Van Dongen was an artist born with a deep and mysterious force which could be satisfied only by expression in line, color or form.

He presented his world as a vivid ideal, electrifying his view of life with great feelings, using color and striking images that become etched in the viewer’s mind.

Van Dongen presented truth and gave it form. He created art full of excitement and beauty.

At this joyous time of the year we wish you and your loved ones the blessings of health, peace, happiness and prosperity.

Ethel and Samuel J. LeFrak and Family

Tête De Femme Tournee De Trois Quarts
(Woman’s Head Turned to Three Quarters—circa 1920)
by Kees van Dongen

From the Collection of
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel J. LeFrak
KEES VAN DONGEN (Cornelius Theodorus Marie Van Dongen) was born in Delshaven, Holland in 1877. As a young man he was interested in painting and drawing; and in 1897 he moved to Paris where he remained until moving to Monaco a few years before his death in 1968.

During Van Dongen's early years of art study, he worked for subsistence as a porter in the markets. He also drew satiric sketches for magazines, which he sold for five or ten francs according to size. During this time he lived in the famous "Bateau-Lavoir" with Picasso, Braque, and Juan Gris, all as penniless as he. His work in these years was inspired by the Impressionists, particularly Vincent Van Gogh.

At the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris a group of painters under the leadership of Henri Matisse shocked the art world with their paintings characterized by brilliant color, expressive brushwork, and flat composition. The critic Louis Vauxcelles, on visiting the original show, called the painters the "Wild Beasts," or "Les Fauves." After 1906 Van Dongen developed the Fauve style in which vivid colors, bold outlines, simplified forms, and emotional distortions expressed his passionate involvement with the Bohemian life of Paris.

Van Dongen's work, and that of the Fauves, represented a radical break with artistic traditions of the past. Their emphasis on formal values and expressive use of color, line, and brushwork helped liberate painting from the representational expectations that—since the Renaissance—had mandated the transformation of the picture plane into the illusion of three-dimensional space.

Van Dongen's paintings, often of women with brilliantly painted red lips and huge eyes, were unabashedly sensual. After 1918 Van Dongen became a fashionable society painter.

Nevertheless, he made few concessions to his subjects, neither flattering them nor concealing their physical or moral flaws. His subjects, mostly women, from high and low life, were portrayed with an acid brush reminiscent of his early Fauvist days.

As he matured, Van Dongen's style grew more realistic, and he continued to use vivid colors to portray his subjects with fervent animation and honesty. He remained an active and enthusiastic artist throughout his life.