

## For Immediate Release

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### TWO FREUD PORTRAITS LEAD CHRISTIE'S FEBRUARY SALES OF POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART



*Red Haired man on a chair*, 1962/63  
(estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000)



*Naked Portrait 2002*, 2002  
(est (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000))

### Post-War and Contemporary Art, Evening Sale

Christie's King Street

9 February 2005

**London** – Two portraits by the artist Lucian Freud will lead Christie's February Evening Sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on 9 February 2005. As important paintings by the artist are so rarely seen on the auction market, Christie's double offering of *Red Haired Man on a Chair* (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000), executed 1962/63 and *Naked Portrait 2002* (estimate: 2,500,000-3,500,000), 2002, is exceptional.

*Red-Haired Man on a Chair* was painted between 1962 and 1963, an important turning point in Freud's career. This striking portrait of a man crouching both languidly and uneasily on a chair amidst the alienating space of an empty room is among the first of Freud's paintings to reflect the new, bolder and more overtly painterly style that the artist developed in the early 1960s. Freer and more adventurous, this technique was brought about by, and relied upon, Freud's use of a wider hog's hair brush which in turn encouraged the use of thicker more energetic strokes of paint. A change of studio

also affected his style, as well as the setting of his work, as in 1962 Freud moved to a room at 124 Clarendon Crescent, Paddington. This new studio was so poky it provoked a more expansive manner in his paintings.

The sitter for this portrait was Tim Behrens, a painter and student at the Slade school of art who was a great admirer of Freud's and a fellow frequenter of the infamous Colony Room in Soho, where Freud and Bacon and many of their circle spent much of their time in the late 1950s and '60s. Set against this sparse dilapidated background and the pile of rags, here used for the first time, that would feature so prominently in many of his most famous paintings, the diminutive figure of Behrens in a crouched position, perching on top of a bamboo chair, presents a powerfully individual portrait of fragile humanity. Everything that happens in a Freud painting happens as a direct result of the sitter. It is Freud's response to his sitter that characterises the resultant form

*Red Haired Man on a Chair* is offered from the collection of Erich Sommer, who passed away in 2004. Mr Sommer passionately sought out some of the best examples of Twentieth Century British Art, the result of which is a highly personal group of pictures and sculpture, which embraces the diversity and richness of this field. Mr Sommer acquired *Red Haired Man on a Chair* in 1972 and in the subsequent years loaned the painting to many important exhibitions of the artist's work, including the Hayward Gallery, London in 1974, Tate Britain, London in 2002, and the Washington Smithsonian Institution in 1987.

*Naked Portrait 2002* by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) will also be offered at Christie's in London in the evening sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000). An almost life-size, full-length reclining portrait of a naked and pregnant young woman, *Naked Portrait 2002* is very rare in Freud's oeuvre for being one of only a few portraits the artist has painted of well-known or famous people. In this case, Freud's sitter is, with the exception of Queen Elizabeth II, probably the most famous figure to be painted by the artist. His model is the British 'supermodel' Kate Moss. The painting has never been exhibited to the public.

Freud's art, almost fanatically devoted to the visual appearance of reality, makes a stark and intrusive contrast to the glamour of fame. Exposing everything to a cold and all-pervasive light, Freud's fierce, curious and analytical gaze scrutinises the smallest of details. Slow to produce, painstakingly crafted and difficult to fabricate, Freud's painting carries with it integrity and a visual truth that acts almost as an antidote to the fast-paced, quickly-packaged world of glitz and sound-bite that characterises so much of the cult of celebrity in the modern world, a world that in some ways the iconic face and body of Kate Moss has both adorned and been used to advertise and promote for nearly fifteen years.

Freud's decision to paint Kate Moss, not only one of the most 'looked' at but also one of the most famous people in the world, was arguably a challenge for an artist who prefers to paint people he knows well and who are not professional models. In painting someone like Kate Moss, Freud investigates the physical form of a person who has been probed and projected in almost every way by the camera lens. Applying his own strict discipline of scrutinizing the figure under new light, like a scientist inspecting a new life form, Freud creates a wholly different image of Moss. It is one that shows another person entirely from someone who is normally so recognisable.

It was Kate Moss herself who originally suggested the painting by revealing in an article in *Dazed and Confused* magazine that one of her remaining ambitions was to pose for Freud. It takes between six months and a year of regular sittings for the artist to complete a painting but Moss had explained in the same article that she was unconcerned by the length of time it would take. The artist seems to have heard about her wishes.

Freud began painting this work in 2001 and started with Moss' slightly pregnant stomach so as to fix it in paint. The fact that the sitter is pregnant forms a key feature of the painting and enhances the already uncharacteristic image of such a famous model. The normally waif-like Moss is here presented as an imposing physical presence, looking both more corporeal and physically substantial than any fashion photograph would, or could, ever show. Staring directly at the viewer with a look of resolution her body seems disproportionately large, even growing in magnitude, as through perspective it approaches the viewer. The effect is that Moss's face, normally the dominant force in any photograph of her, is overshadowed. *Naked Portrait 2002* is an extraordinary and highly important painting and is a fascinating and ultimately successful collaboration of two very different worlds.

*Naked Portrait 2002* was acquired, shortly after it was painted, by a private collector who has now decided to offer the work on the international market.

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*Images available on Request*

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### **Notes to Editors**

Portraits by Lucian Freud are particularly rare at auction and are highly sought-after. The current market for all works by Lucian Freud is very strong with Christie's leading the market in achieving successful sales. *Factory in North London* sold in February 2004 for £2,077,050. Market interest has been further heightened by a major exhibition of recent works by Freud at the Wallace Collection in London followed by the Acquavella Galleries in New York, which received unprecedented interest and confirmed Freud as arguably the UK's most celebrated living artist.