

**For Immediate Release**

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**JOHN W. KLUGE MORVEN COLLECTION ABORIGINAL PAINTINGS FOR  
CHRISTIE'S TRADITIONAL & MODERN ABORIGINAL ART AUCTION**

**Melbourne, Australia** – The John W. Kluge Morven Collection has consigned an important group of early paintings created during the origins of the Modern Aboriginal art movement in 1971 and 1972 to Christie's auction of Traditional & Modern Aboriginal Art scheduled in Melbourne on August 30.

Jon Dwyer, Director of Paintings, Christie's Australia, said. *"American industrialist and art collector John W. Kluge was one of the first international collectors to identify the significance of the Aboriginal art movement. We are delighted that he has recognised Christie's international expertise in the sale of genre with the consignment which includes important group of early paintings."*

The modern beginnings of the Aboriginal movement can be traced to the wall of the school at Papunya, a remote Aboriginal community on the western desert of central Australia. In 1971, schoolteacher Geoffrey Bardon encouraged senior members of the community to paint a mural that re-created some of the traditional designs he had seen drawn in the sand. Excited by the opportunity to communicate traditional culture through the use of Western art materials, a group of senior men were soon painting prolifically on any materials that were readily available – fruit boxes, pieces of masonite board, ceiling tiles and iron sheeting. Paintings from 1971 and 1972 are commonly referred to as 'boards'. The John W. Kluge Morven Collection has consigned six boards from this period to Christie's August 30 auction. They carry pre-sale estimates ranging from AUD\$8,000 to \$20,000.

Shaun Dennison, Christie's Specialist in Aboriginal Art said. *"The sale of John W. Kluge Morven Collection 'boards' represent a rare opportunity to acquire art from the seminal era of the last great art movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They are enormously significant both artistically and culturally."*

The consignment from The John W. Kluge Morven Collection also includes a significant painting by one of the greatest of Aboriginal artists, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. **'Kangaroo Dreaming'** was painted in 1986. It is a beautifully executed work depicting the 'Dreamtime' story of a kangaroo drinking at a watering hole and then hopping off to

rest at Mount Denison Station, North West of Alice Springs. The painting carries a pre-sale estimate of AUD\$60,000 to \$80,000.

Until 2004 Christie's had traditionally not separated streams of modern and contemporary Australian art ethnographically in auctions and incorporated works by Aboriginal artists within the context of the company's seasonal auctions of Australian, International & Contemporary Art. However, the outstanding success of the September 2004 auction in Sydney, following extensive international previews in New York and Paris quickly elevated Christie's to the highest level in international auctions of Australian Aboriginal art. This reputation has been cemented by the consignment to the 2005 auction of several major works from The John Kluge Morven Collection in the United States and of *Lundari (Barramundi Dreaming)* by The Holmes à Court Collection **(see separate release)**. This year's auction, in Melbourne will feature paintings, artifacts and sculptures of both traditional and modern origins.

Highlights of the collection will be on view at Christie's New York, 20 Rockefeller Plaza 14-18 July; Christie's London, 85 Old Brompton Road, South Kensington 21-25 July and Christie's Sydney, 287 New South Head Road, Edgecliff 18-22 August. The entire collection will be on view at Christie's Melbourne, 1 Darling Street, South Yarra from Friday 26 August prior to auction at 6.30pm on 30 August.

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*Images available on request*

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