

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**HOCKNEY'S BEVERLY HILLS HOUSEWIFE HIGHLIGHTS
CHRISTIE'S POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART SALE
ON MAY 13, 2009 IN NEW YORK**

**Hockney Picture Is Part of the Collection of Betty Freeman
To Be Sold This Spring At Christie's**

**Other Sale Highlights To Include Works By Lichtenstein, Flavin, Calder,
Francis, Warhol and Oldenburg**



"I'm always interested in the new, and don't understand why everybody isn't. I like contemporary painting, furniture, architecture. So of course I like contemporary music...I like complexity, challenge, ambiguity, abstraction." Betty Freeman, Interview with The New York Times, 1998.

New York - Christie's is pleased to offer a selection of works from the Collection of Betty Freeman in the May 13 Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale. Leading the selection is one of the most important works to come to the auction market by David Hockney, *Beverly Hills Housewife*, (estimate: \$6-10 million), 1966-1967, which could break the auction record for any work by the artist. The Evening Sale selection of works from the collection comprises 20 lots and is estimated at \$26-40 million.

Laura Paulson, Deputy Chairman and International Director of Post-War and Contemporary Art stated: *“Betty Freeman’s deep commitment to the arts was demonstrated by a lifetime of indefatigable dedication and passionate support. David Hockney’s epic Beverly Hills Housewife is one of the artist’s most fascinating and iconic works and remains a perfect, timeless tribute to Freeman, a modern-day Medici, who will be remembered as an influential patron of our contemporary culture.”*

Marc Porter, President of Christie’s Americas said: *“This was a highly competitive consignment won by Christie’s through creative marketing commitments, the expertise of its specialists and our long-term relationships with the consignor rather than through guarantees or revenue sharing arrangements.”*

A diptych measuring twelve feet long and six feet high, David Hockney’s *Beverly Hills Housewife* depicts a 1960’s California housewife standing on the patio of her well-appointed home. The painting’s modernist setting is testament to the refined and minimalist sensibilities of the subject, who is none other than Freeman herself. Having recently arrived in Los Angeles, the British artist asked Freeman if he could come to her house and paint the swimming pool in her backyard for a series that would become famously representative of his *oeuvre*, the ‘California Dreaming’ series. Upon arriving, Hockney decided to focus the work on Freeman, immediately finding that she, like many Los Angeles residents he had met, was very much a function of the space that she existed in, and the space that she existed in was very much a function of her.

Infused with pervasive and powerful silence, *Beverly Hills Housewife* not only captures the artist’s detached fascination with the California landscape, it also demonstrates his predilection for scenes bathed in crisp light and hyper-real colors, a distinct departure from the work being created by Hockney’s Post-War British counterparts at the time. Painted between 1966-1967, the work depicts a tanned, sculptural Freeman in bright pink dress standing on her covered patio.

Beverly Hills Housewife would become the centerpiece of Betty Freeman’s collection. She was to remain in the same house, memorialized on canvas, for the remainder of her life. The painting not only conveys the essence of the California good life, it also stands as a testament to the remarkable life-long friendship between the subject and the artist.

A much-admired, generous supporter of avant-garde contemporary music, Betty Freeman was also drawn to the work of the contemporary artists of her day who challenged the boundaries of painting and sculpture. She began collecting art in the 1950’s and gathered works by Abstract Expressionist artists. As with the composers she supported such as John Adams, Philip Glass, Steve



Reich, Freeman forged friendships with artists David Hockney, Roy Lichtenstein, Dan Flavin, Clyfford Still, and Sam Francis, and followed the development of their careers throughout her lifetime. Freeman was also an accomplished photographer, who published and exhibited portraits of musicians and composers.

In addition to *Beverly Hills Housewife*, the New York Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale will also feature works from the Collection of Betty Freeman by Roy Lichtenstein, Dan Flavin, Alexander Calder, Sam Francis, Andy Warhol, and Claes Oldenburg.

Roy Lichtenstein's *Frolic*, 1977, (estimate: \$4-6 million) – pictured page 2, was inspired by his own 1962 painting, *Girl with Ball*, by ads and comic books, and by one of the greatest painters in art history – Pablo Picasso. In *Frolic*, Picasso is seen through the filter of Pop, as his celebrated 1932 painting *Baigneuse au ballon de plage* in the collection of New York's MoMA is interpreted with an unusual and irreverent twist.



Andy Warhol's *Portrait of Man Ray*, 1976 (estimate: \$2-4 million) – pictured left, will also be featured as part of the collection. One of Warhol's most definitive portraits, his execution of Man Ray is a testament of his adoration of the celebrated artist. Man Ray's work had a very significant impact on Warhol's career, but with this portrait it becomes evident that Man Ray's being had just as much of an influence. This portrait reinforces the larger theme within Warhol's *oeuvre* regarding the concept of the artist as celebrity, putting Man Ray among the ranks of the glittering cultural icons by which Warhol defined his life and work, including Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, Mick Jagger and Mohammed Ali.

Typewriter Eraser (estimate: \$1.4-1.8 million) – pictured right, epitomizes Claes Oldenburg's revolutionary approach to sculpture as an objectification of mundane objects. Produced in 1976, this work marks a period of technical expansion for the sculptor, in which he experimented with new materials and an ever-increasing scale.

A rare, early painting by Sam Francis from 1954 entitled *Grey* (estimate: \$2-3 million) will also be offered. First exhibited in Dorothy Miller's seminal *Twelve Americans* show at the MoMa, the work was acquired directly from Francis' private collection by Betty Freeman, who enjoyed a long and close relationship with the artist.



A selection of works from the Collection of Betty Freeman will also be included in the Post-War & Contemporary Art Day Sale on May 14. *Separate releases will be available.*

Auction: May 13, 2009 at 7pm

Viewing: Christie's Los Angeles: March 5-6, 10am-5pm

London, King Street: March 19-25

New York, Rockefeller Center: April 3-May 12

About Christie's

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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