

LOWRY MASTERPIECE SELLS FOR RECORD £3.8 MILLION AT CHRISTIE'S RECORD BREAKING SALE OF 20th CENTURY BRITISH ART

- Christie's establishes a record total for a sale of 20th Century British Art for the sixth successive time with an auction total of £14.6 million
- *British Art Week*, a series of 4 auctions dedicated to British Art and Furniture, realises £27.6 million

British Art Week, 5 – 8 June 2007
20th Century British Art
Friday, 8 June 2007

King Street – *Good Friday, Daisy Nook*, a masterpiece by L.S. Lowry (1887-1976) sold today at Christie's in London for £3,772,000, the highest ever price for the artist at auction. The picture was last seen at auction in 1970 when it sold for £16,800 and set a record price for the artist at the time. The auction of *20th Century British Art* realised a total of £14,567,480, setting a record total for a sale in this category for the sixth successive time.

Good Friday, Daisy Nook highlighted the finest and most comprehensive private collection of pictures by L.S. Lowry ever to appear at auction. *Factories, Lancashire*, another work from the same collection, sold for £1,128,800, the fourth highest price for the artist at auction. In total, five paintings from the Collection sold today for a total of £5,972,000, doubling pre-sale expectations.

Today's auction concludes *British Art Week*, a week of auction sales, events and lectures dedicated to the history of British art and furniture. A selection of paintings, watercolours, furniture and sculpture representing over 300 years of British art was sold over 4 sales held between 5 and 8 June. *British Art Week* included works by many renowned artists, including Bomberg, Lowry, Rossetti and Turner, as well as a selection of important English furniture, and realised a total of £27,580,220.

Good Friday, Daisy Nook eventually sold for £3,772,000 to *Richard Green, London* after a 10 minute bidding battle. This price represents the highest ever price for the artist at auction. Painted in 1946, the picture portrays the Lancashire town of Daisy Nook in festival mood. Traditionally, mill workers were confined to only two statutory days of holiday every year; Good Friday and Christmas Day. Every year on Good Friday, the town of Daisy Nook would stage a fair and provide entertainment to the local crowds. Managed by the Silcock family, whose name appears in the background of the painting, the fair regularly attracted huge numbers of people and still takes place to this day. The present painting depicts

this annual fair in 1946, the year after the end of the hostilities of the Second World War. The Ashton Reporter stated at the time that there were '*Record crowds at Daisy Nook*', as people celebrated a return to the fair and a return to normal life. The painting reflects post-war cheer and relief and depicts crowds of energetic, colourful characters, many holding whirligigs and flags. The work sold today at Christie's was last seen at auction in 1970 when it sold for £16,800, a record price for the artist at the time.

Factories, Lancashire, dated 1947, is a more recognizable work by the artist. This industrial townscape, complete with numerous mills and smoking chimneys, is portrayed from an elevated angle which looks down on the crowds in an objectifying manner and shows the diminutive figures going about their business. This exceptional example of a Northern industrial townscape sold today for £1,128,800, the fourth highest price for the artist at auction. It was bought by *Richard Green, London*.

Beach and Promenade, dated 1948, realised £546,400 at today's sale. Another example of Lowry capturing the spirit of recreation, this time at the seaside, the viewpoint for the picture is elevated once again. However, the figures of this work reach down to the foreground of the canvas, and it is possible to make out the faces of the characters at the front of the crowd. Lowry spent many of his childhood holidays by the sea, visiting Lytham St. Anne's at Easter and Rhyl, on the North-West coast, in the summer.

The Mansion, Pendlebury, dated 1944, is set in Lowry's home town and sold for £344,800 at today's auction. The Lowry family had moved to Pendlebury in 1909 when L.S. Lowry was 22 years old, and he was to continue living there for almost 40 years. The current depiction of a mansion house reflects the artist's fascination with solitude as the lone mass of a building dominates the canvas. A crowd can be seen to huddle around the front door of the residence, echoing Lowry's words that '*where there's a quarrel there's always a crowd.... It's a great draw.*'

Whitehaven, dated 1954, offers an alternative depiction of a seaside view. The artist would often depict human forms isolated in industrial landscapes. In the present painting, three people and a dog, standing on the shore, are confined by a wall on one side and the sea to the other, with the looming presence of a mill dominating the skyline. This picture sold at today's auction for £180,000.

L.S. Lowry, R.A. (1887-1976) was a curious character, dedicated to his art but always restrained by the Industrial movement that he portrayed. Lowry worked a '9 to 5' job with Pall Mall Property Company in Manchester until his retirement in 1952, and painted only in his spare time. Despite this restraint, he was hugely successful even within his lifetime; the Manchester City Art Gallery purchased *An Accident* in 1930, he was signed up to the Lefevre Gallery in London in 1939, he was elected an R.A. in 1962 and by 1967, the General Post Office issued a stamp reproducing one of his paintings. Lowry had been appointed official artist at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. He went on to turn down an O.B.E., a C.B.E., a C.H. (twice) and a knighthood on the grounds that he saw little point in receiving awards after the death of his mother.

Images available on request
Visit Christie's on the web at www.christies.com

Notes to editors:

- Christie's have held market share in the category of 20th Century British Art for over 10 years. This market dominance has been further strengthened by the auctions in June and November 2006 which realized the highest ever totals in this field, achieving a combined total of £24.9 million. These auctions also set 11 world auction records for key artists in the field, including David Bomberg, Patrick Caulfield, Dame Elisabeth Frink, John Piper, William Scott and William Turnbull.
- Christie's dominate the market for L.S. Lowry at auction. In the auctions in June and November 2006, 31 works by the artist were offered, all of which sold for a combined total of £6.9 million. Included in the June sale was *The Liver Building, Liverpool* which sold for £1.1 million (3rd highest price for Lowry at auction) and in the November sale *A River Bank* sold for £1.4 million (2nd highest price for Lowry at auction).
- Since 1766, Christie's has established a rich history of selling British and Irish art and James Christie, the company's founder, was the subject of a portrait painted by his good friend Thomas Gainsborough. In 2006, the *International British and Irish Art* department realised £93.1 million (\$173.2 million / €136 million), a 50% increase on the sales total for 2005, strengthening our market share for the category and setting records for the highest ever sale total for an auction of 20th century British art (£12.4 million in June and £12.5 in November), as well as the highest ever price for a British work on paper (J.M.W. Turner's *The Blue Rigi*, which sold for £5.8 million in June). The five sales of paintings during *British Art Week* at King Street in November realised a total of £29.1, the highest ever total for a week of British art sales at Christie's.