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CHRISTIE'S

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LUCIAN FREUD'S RARELY-SEEN PORTRAIT OF FRANCIS BACON TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON AUCTION OF *POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART* IN OCTOBER 2008



'I would wish my portraits to be of the people, not like them. Not having a look of the sitter, being them. I didn't want to get just a likeness like a mimic, but to portray them, like an actor. As far as I am concerned the paint is the person. I want it to work for me just as flesh does.'

Lucian Freud, quoted in L. Gowing, *Lucian Freud*, London, 1982, pp. 190-91

Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Exhibition: 15 to 19 October 2008 at Christie's South Kensington

Auction: 19 October 2008 at 4pm, Christie's, 8 King Street, London

London – Christie's announce that they will offer one of only two oil portraits of Francis Bacon (1909-1992) ever painted by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) at the *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale* on 19 October 2008 in London. The last known remaining oil portrait (the other was stolen from an exhibition in Berlin in 1988), the rarely-seen painting offers a tangible and intimate glimpse into the inspirational friendship of two of the greatest British artists of the 20th century. It will be exhibited to the public for the first time in London from 15 to 19 October at Christie's South Kensington, and is expected to realise £5 million to £7 million. At Christie's New York in May 2008, Lucian Freud's *Benefit Supervisor Sleeping* sold for \$33 million / £17.3 million, a world record price for a work by a living artist sold at auction.

Pilar Ordovas, Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's London: "*Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon are widely considered to be the most important British artists of the 20th century, and the international appreciation for their work has grown significantly over the last few years. We are thrilled to present to the international art market a rarely seen, intimate portrait which pays tribute to an inspirational friendship, and a key moment in the development of Freud's career. This incredibly rare painting is one of the highlights of a week in which the international art world will turn their attention to London, and in which we will offer an exciting selection of Post-War and Contemporary art at Christie's.*"

Lucian Freud first met Francis Bacon in 1945 having been introduced by Graham Sutherland, a mutual friend and contemporary artist, who invited the pair to his house for the weekend. The pair formed a close friendship and saw much of each other during the following years. Although their friendship was built on a mutual respect, Bacon had a great influence on the younger Freud and is often credited with liberating his style and fuelling his desire to depict human life. In the early 1950s, the artists compounded their friendship by sitting for each other; Bacon's first portrait of Freud was painted in 1951, and many other examples were to follow.

In contrast to his quite frequent appearances in Bacon's portraits, Freud painted Bacon only twice; first in 1952 and again in 1956-57, which is the portrait to be offered at Christie's in October. The earlier portrait was lent from the collection of the Tate to a Retrospective on the artist at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin in 1988 where it was stolen. In 2001, in preparation for the artist's great Retrospective at Tate Britain, and echoing the great respect he held for Bacon, Freud designed a wanted poster which was placed around Berlin in the hope that the painting would be recovered in time for the exhibition. Its whereabouts remain unknown, and Freud has never allowed the image to be reproduced in colour.

The present work was painted in 1956-57 and, as with the earlier portrait of 1952, shows Bacon with a downward gaze. Bacon sat knee-to-knee with Freud while he worked on the portraits, and during the three months of sittings for the first work, he is said to have '*grumbled but sat consistently*'. The present work is unfinished, offering a fascinating snapshot into the working methods of the artist at a critical point of his artistic development; Freud had begun to work in a more expansive way using thicker brushstrokes, liberating the paint and creating a more worked complexion, more seasoned and full of life. It is thought that Bacon left suddenly, most likely in order to pursue his lover Peter Lacy in Tangiers.

The portrait was acquired by the present owner from a London gallery in 1972 and has remained in their possession ever since. It has rarely been seen in public, having made rare appearances at Wolfsburg and Toulouse in 2002-03, and in Venice in 2005.

Christie's will present a series of exhibitions and auctions dedicated to Post-War and Contemporary art and 20th century Italian art from 15 to 21 October 2008, during a week when the international art world will gather in London for a showcase of contemporary art exhibitions and events including *The Frieze Art Fair*.

The auctions will take place at the newly refurbished salerooms at Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, and are scheduled as follows:

Sunday 19 October at 4pm	<i>Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale</i>
Monday 20 October at 7pm	<i>The Italian Sale</i>
Tuesday 21 October at 10.00am and 2pm	<i>Post-War and Contemporary Art</i>

The public exhibitions for the sales will take place as follows:

<i>Post-War and Contemporary Art:</i>	15 to 19 October 2008 at Christie's South Kensington
<i>The Italian Sale:</i>	15 to 20 October 2008 at Christie's King Street

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About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totalled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totalled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.