

For Immediate Release

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A CALIFORNIAN DREAM

Fantastic examples of 20th century modern design will be offered at Christie's South Kensington this November

Modernism from a California Collection

Christie's South Kensington

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London – Superb examples of European and American 20th century design from the leading international artistic and intellectual movements will feature in this fabulous single-owner sale *Modernism from a California Collection* at Christie's South Kensington on 18 November 2007. Californian collectors, Michael and Gabrielle Boyd, have consistently sought out the most important and interesting works dating from 1900 to the present, concentrating on examples preserved in excellent original condition. Over 300 diverse and unusual lots from their collection, ranging from furniture through to photography, jewellery and garden furnishings will be offered, with estimates from £100 to £10,000. This sale provides a unique opportunity for collectors, decorators and museums to acquire good examples by some of the most influential Modernist designers of the 20th century.

Collectors for the past twenty-five years, Michael and Gabrielle Boyd have exhibited a portion of their collection in a special exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1998. In addition the Boyd's have donated furniture and objects to the permanent collections of both the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the New York Museum of Modern Art. In April 2007, *Modernist Paradise: Niemeyer House/Boyd Collection* was published featuring their core collection and documenting their meticulous renovation of the Strick House in Santa Monica, California. This is the only North American house by noted Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, built in 1964, and which the Boyd's have meticulously renovated since 2002. Now settled in their new home, the Boyd's have had the opportunity to reappraise their collection and have decided to let go of many cherished artefacts.

The selection to be offered for sale span periods, schools and countries, a fact that is immediately evident in the diversity of items offered. Themes of the sale include the California lifestyle of the 1940s and 1950s with its emphasis upon the outdoors, illustrating the influence of architects such as Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra, Frank Lloyd Wright and Charles Eames. California was also the

birthplace of many of the technological developments that define mid-century style and identity, and this will be illustrated by a section within the sale that concentrates on the use of new materials such as fibreglass, plywood and aluminium.

A fabulous selection of around 200 lots of furniture, lighting and carpets will be offered. All preserved in good and original condition, many are in uncommon colours or variations that are unlikely to be found again. The major design themes of the 20th century are well illustrated from its beginning in turn of the century Vienna through the Constructivism of Holland and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, and on to Post-War American industrial production and European Pop Design from the 1960s. Highlights include Josef Hoffmann's Wiener Werkstatte metal basket, Austrian 1900 (estimate: £1,000-1,500), Marcel Breuer's Bauhaus lattenstoel armchair, German 1924 (estimate: £8,000-12,000), Marcel Breuer's set of four 1930s plywood dining chairs for Isokon Ltd (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret's zebra-skin lounge chair, Swiss 1930 (estimate: £8,000-12,000).

Of unique and special interest is an excellent selection of furniture by the leading American, and specifically Californian, designer-architects. Among the highlights is a rare 1950s aluminium chair by Frank Lloyd Wright for the Price Tower, 1953 (estimate: £10,000-15,000), a scarce Frank Gehry cardboard chair and stool, 1970s (estimate: £5,000-7,000) and an Oscar Niemeyer lounge chair and stool, 1970s (£5,000-8,000). Californian design is extensively documented with over forty iconic and important works by Charles Eames and George Nelson. Garden furnishings are well represented including Hendrik van Keppel and Taylor Green's tubular steel chaise, 1950 (estimate: £1,000-1,500), a group of fifteen Architectural Pottery planters, 1960s (estimate: £1,500-2,000) and an unusual garden sculpture attributed to Douglas Davis for Architectural Pottery, 1960s (estimate: £3,000-5,000). Lots illustrating the imaginative use of aluminium in mid-century America range from the small to the large including a group of aluminium table lighters (estimate: £400-500) and a pair of console tables designed by Warren McArthur for the Arizona Baltimore Hotel, *circa* 1930 (estimate: £2,000-3,000).

Michael and Gabrielle Boyd have assembled an intriguing collection of 'found photography', primarily vintage prints from 1900 to the 1960s, created by unknown but talented amateur photographers alongside works by established names such as Carlo Mollino and Walker Evans. They are grouped together in lots of several related images documenting a changing America, with estimates ranging from £500-800 per lot. Specific images include a series of photographs of a baseball game, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £800-1,000), a 1937 portrait of a Navajo Indian Woman included within a group lot (estimate: £500-700) and a NASA official photograph of the moon landing, 1969, again part of a group lot (estimate: £800-1,200). The photography section of this collection also includes a series of large format images by the celebrated advertising photographer Wingate Paine executed in the 1960s.

The sale offers over fifteen lots relating to poster design, graphic art and literature. Posters designed by Gerrit Rietveld, Achille Castiglione and Max Bill are put together in carefully edited groups of up to eight posters with estimates from £400 upwards. While a group of Andy Warhol memorabilia including a copy of his Index box also features (estimate: £800-1,200). In addition, there are fifteen lots of books on design, art and architecture including a scarce run of 100 *Arts and Architecture* magazines from the 1940-50s (estimate: £800-1,200).

As truly democratic collectors, Michael and Gabrielle Boyd are able to interpret all objects of the 20th century with equal analytical criteria. The collection therefore includes some fascinating and diverse collection groupings of folk art and industrial design. Leading this section of industrial design is a striking collection of twenty-five microphones, dating from 1930s-60s (estimate: £1,000-1,500), and a rare set of 1950s fibreglass luggage manufactured by Koch (estimate: £250-350). Other unusual groupings include ray guns from 1940-60s (estimates from: £300-400), several lots of silver jewellery (1940-1960s) (estimates from: £300) and a number of large group lots of Western memorabilia (estimates from £500).

This sale leads Christie's 20th Century Week at South Kensington providing a unique access to one of the leading collections of 20th century design.

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Images available on request

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