

# CHRISTIE'S

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## Roy Lichtenstein's *Woman with Flowered Hat*

A POP ART MASTERPIECE

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Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997)  
*Woman with Flowered Hat*  
Magna on canvas  
50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm)  
Executed in 1963.  
Estimate in the region of \$30,000,000

### Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale - 15 May 2013

**New York** – The Evening Sale of Post-War & Contemporary Art on May 15 will offer Roy Lichtenstein's Pop masterpiece, *Woman with Flowered Hat*, which is expected to realize in excess of \$30 million. Lichtenstein draws on Picasso's portraits of Dora Maar from 1949-50, but invents her anew in his revolutionary pop language. Coinciding with Lichtenstein's major retrospective at the Tate Modern in London, the Evening Sale will offer four

major works that span the artist's career, with classic pictures from the early 1960s and mature renderings from the 1980s and 1990s.

Roy Lichtenstein's *Woman with Flowered Hat* is a classic example of Pop Art from the movement's earliest beginnings. It was painted in 1963, when Lichtenstein was engaged in his most profound investigation of popular imagery. At the age of thirty-eight, the Pop exponent made a drastic and permanent break with a style heavily indebted to Abstract Expressionism. His audacious decision to appropriate commercial illustrations, comic imagery and, in this case, reproductions of modern masterpieces, electrified the artworld and brought him almost instantaneous fame. With works like *Woman with Flowered Hat*, Lichtenstein went into combat with his heroes and overturned the soul-searching painterliness of the generation before. But this act of transgression was not without deference and respect. As Lichtenstein admitted, "*the things that I have apparently parodied I actually admire.*"

Lichtenstein painted *Woman with Flowered Hat* at a time when he was attacking various aspects of the so-called "canon" of art, or rather, what people liked to think of as "High Art." Alongside the "low-art" subject matter of comic strip images, he began pillaging masterworks by the likes of Cézanne, Mondrian and Picasso as they too had become part of readily available, mass-produced culture. Picasso was a natural target for the artist as his work was so recognizable it essentially was already Pop. Between 1962-63, Lichtenstein produced four paintings based on Picasso portraits. The present painting is based on a postcard sent to Lichtenstein by the owner of the original of painting. Its subject is Dora Maar, Picasso's lover during the Second World War, whose image was used to reflect the era's troubled events, as well as the artist's own capricious emotions. The Dora Maar portraits are famed for their wild colors, distorted forms and the palpable anxiety expressed in her visage. Like the weeping damsels in Lichtenstein's comic-inspired paintings, Dora is often represented as the archetypal damsel in distress.

*In Woman with Flowered Hat* Lichtenstein submits these emotive qualities to the dramatic simplification of his comic stylization. The composition retains all the essential features of the original but its nuances of color, texture, form and line have been streamlined by the mock-mechanization of Lichtenstein's newfound technique. A complex palette has been exchanged for primary colors; subtle tonal modulation replaced by flat planes and Ben Day dots; and a brooding brunette swapped for a sunny, blue-eyed blonde.

## The evening sale will offer three other works by Lichtenstein...



... Including a monumental *Nude with Yellow Flower* (estimate: 12,000,000-16,000,000) which represents the triumphal return of the comic heroine in the Pop master's late career. This provocative domestic goddess, rendered in the artist's bold signature style, is a modern variation on an ancient artistic genre. Like Picasso, Renoir, and Matisse before him, Lichtenstein seized on the classic theme of the female nude late in life, using the motif to invent new creative possibilities. The Nudes became one of Lichtenstein's last major series, which was instigated in 1993 and curtailed by the artist's death in 1997. The sale of *Nude with Yellow Flower* coincides with the artist's major retrospective at the Tate Modern which highlights contemporaneous works based on comic strips and advertising imagery.

*Woman II*, (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000), is one of the four *Woman* paintings Lichtenstein executed in 1982 based on Willem de Kooning's *Woman* series from the 1950s. Lichtenstein's *Woman II* parodies gestural abstraction and yet, at the same time, pays homage to the movement of Abstract Expressionism.

Roy Lichtenstein's painted bronze *Coup de Chapeau II* of 1996 (estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000) is one of the artist's most engaging sculptures, wittily illustrating his Pop style translated into three dimensions. It exudes the signature visual style that Lichtenstein developed in his seminal Pop oeuvre of the 1960s, including such hallmarks as cartoon-derived imagery, a pared-down color scheme and boldly distilled graphic form--as well as a distinct sense of humor. As is characteristic of Lichtenstein's three-dimensional work, this sculpture is frontal and flat recalling his famous Pop painting style, so that as the viewer walks around the sculpture it virtually disappears when seen from the side, then snaps into full view.



#### **Sale Preview**

**New York – 20 Rockefeller Plaza**

**11 – 15 May 2013**

#### **Auction**

**Post-War and Contemporary Art, Evening Sale**

**15 May 2013**

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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*Images available on request*

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