

# CHRISTIE'S

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## JEAN DUBUFFET, *PARIS POLKA*

The most important work by the artist still in private hands to come to auction

Among the Works to Lead Christie's

**LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PAST:**

A Curated Evening Sale

Monday, May 11, 2015 at Christie's Rockefeller Center



Jean Dubuffet  
*Paris Polka*  
Oil on Canvas  
190 x 220 cm  
24 octobre 1961  
Estimate in the region of \$25 Million

**New York** – On May 11, Christie's dedicated Evening Auction *Looking Forward to the Past* will present a major painting by Jean Dubuffet from the celebrated *Paris Circus* series. Executed in 1961 at the height of his creative development, this major work can be seen in both its scale and ambition as its epitome of his signature style from the 1960s. This highly chromatic and vibrant work has been featured prominently in every major museum exhibitions devoted to the artist. Estimated in the region of \$25 million, *Paris Polka* is the ultimate masterpiece still in private hand to be offered at auction and will likely break the previous auction record of \$7.4 million which was achieved last November in New York. *Paris Polka* is undoubtedly the best work by Dubuffet and amongst the four largest in scale from the series, the other ones are in museums, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Detroit Art institute.

In 1961, Dubuffet returned to the hustle-bustle of Paris after spending years in the south of France. He was immediately intoxicated by the raw and vibrant life of the city around him, a striking contrast to the post-war city that he had left. His renewed interest in depicting humanity exploded onto the canvas in a firework-like display of intense color. In a few months in 1961, he creates several paintings of street scenes and numerous gouaches and drawings that celebrate the city. Painted in late 1961, *Paris Polka* is filled with color, vigor and modernity, capturing the creative frenzy that marked Dubuffet's art during this period. The *Paris Circus* series have become the most sought after and more than half of the Paris Circus street scene paintings are housed prestigious public collections and museums.

The scale, palette and complexity of the composition which include people, cars, storefront, architecture, only finds its equal in *Le Commerce Prospere*, which is part of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. *Paris Polka* can be seen as a harbinger of the celebrated *Hourloupe* cycle, the iconic blue, red and white work that will dominate the rest of the artist's career in paintings, sculpture, architecture and performance. The word 'l'Entourloupe', at the center of the present work, has often been seen as one inspiration for the made-up work *l'Hourloupe*. It can also be read as a comment on the artist as a trickster.

#### **Note to the Editors:**

**Christie's is the leader for Post-War and Contemporary Art worldwide, and holds the highest prices for any works of art sold at auction and sale totals:**

**On November 12, 2013, at Christie's New York, Francis Bacon's *Three Studies of Lucian Freud*, was sold for \$142,405,000 setting the new world auction record for any work of art ever sold at auction.**

**The Evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art, on November 12, 2014, totaled \$852,887,000– the highest auction total in art market history.**

#### **Preview:**

**London: 11-16 April 2015**

#### **Viewing:**

**New York: 1-11 May 2015**

#### **Auction:**

**New York: 11 May 2015**

**Christie's 20 Rockefeller Plaza**

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#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2014 that totaled £5.1 billion / \$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewelry. Private sales totaled £916.1 million (\$1.5 billion) in 2014, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Shanghai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*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.

*Images available on request*

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