

# CHRISTIE'S

## THE ART PEOPLE

PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK | 24 APRIL 2015

## CHRISTIE'S UNVEILS 'LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PAST'

FROM CLAUDE MONET TO URS FISCHER IN ONE EVENING:  
CHRISTIE'S TRACES THE EVOLUTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION THROUGH THE TITANS OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ART

SPECIAL CURATED SALE ON MAY 11 OFFERS 35 TOP-QUALITY IMPRESSIONIST, MODERN,  
POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY WORKS

ESTIMATED TO ACHIEVE MORE THAN \$500 MILLION TOTAL



Left to right: Pablo Picasso's *Buste de femme*, 1938, (estimate on request); Jean-Michel Basquiat's, *Untitled*, 1982, (estimate: \$9–12 million); Claude Monet's *Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, 1901, (estimate: \$35–45 million); Peter Doig's *Swamped*, 1990, (estimate in the region of \$20 million)

**New York** – Christie's is pleased to announce the full line-up of offerings in its special May 11 Evening Sale in New York, *Looking Forward to the Past*. With 35 lots total, this tightly-curated sale offers a mix of Impressionist, Modern, Post-War and Contemporary works selected for their connection to a central theme of artistic innovation inspired by the past. The full sale – which includes Picasso's *Les femmes d'Alger, Version O* from 1955 (estimated in the region of \$140 million) and Giacometti's *L'homme au doigt (Pointing Man)* conceived in 1947 (estimate in the region of \$130 million) – is expected to achieve in excess of US\$500 million total and promises to test the existing auction records for both paintings and sculpture.

Created through a collaborative team effort involving Christie's specialists from across expertise areas and global regions, this unique sale concept brings together two collecting categories that have traditionally been divided over the course of individual sale weeks and presents them in a new and innovative context. In his forward to the sale catalogue, curator Loic Gouzer, International Specialist in Post-War and Contemporary Art, notes, "*The majority of 20th Century artists were influenced by their predecessors, and through an exploration of the past they were able to venture into new and exciting territory of their own. The art of now is an endorsement of the art of the past.*"

The full sale catalogue may now be viewed online at [www.christies.com/lookingforward](http://www.christies.com/lookingforward). All of the works featured in the sale will be on view to the public from May 2–11 at Christie's Rockefeller Center galleries (see exhibition hours in appendix).

### STAR WORKS - PICASSO, GIACOMETTI AND MONET

As previously announced, the *Looking Forward to the Past* sale will be led by three masterpiece works by the leading artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet and Alberto Giacometti.



**PABLO PICASSO ([see dedicated release](#))**

*Les femmes d'Alger (Version 'O')*, oil on canvas, Painted on February 14, 1955

**Estimate in the region of \$140 million**

As the cover lot of the sale, Picasso's majestic, vibrantly-hued masterpiece perfectly embodies the underlying theme of the *Looking Forward to the Past* sale. Here, Picasso looks back to 19th century French master Eugene Delacroix for inspiration, and in the process creates a new and singular style of painting that combines elements of Cubism, Fauvism and Neo-Impressionism. Picasso painted a series of 15 variations on Delacroix's *Les femmes d'Alger* between December 1954 and February 1955, starting with Version A, and reaching his artistic crescendo in the stunning, fully-realized Version O. Previously sold at Christie's in

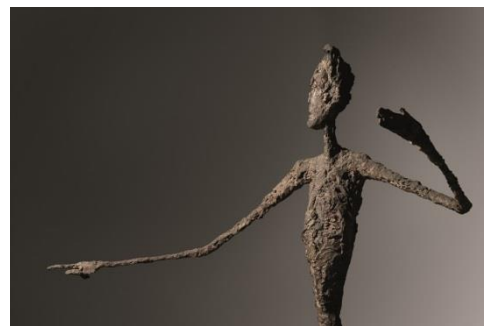
1997 as part of the legendary record-breaking sale of the Collection of Victor and Sally Ganz, this iconic work has caused a sensation at every stop on Christie's global tour this spring, and will take center stage at the New York pre-sale exhibition opening in May.

**ALBERTO GIACOMETTI ([see dedicated release](#))**

*L'homme au doigt*, bronze with patina and hand-painted by the artist, conceived in 1947

**Estimate: in region of \$130 million**

Cast in bronze and standing whippet-thin at five feet ten inches, *L'homme au doigt* (*Pointing Man*) is widely recognized as one of the most important sculptural achievements of the Modern era, created by the greatest master of the medium. It has never before been offered at auction. Instantly recognizable and awe-inspiring to view in person, *Pointing Man* is among the great masterpieces in the collections of New York's Museum of Modern Art and London's Tate Gallery. Giacometti conceived the work in 1947 and made just six casts of it plus one artist's proof. Today, four are in major museums; the remaining are in foundation collections and private hands. The extreme rarity of the work is underscored by the fact that the cast to be offered at Christie's is believed to be the only bronze version of *Pointing Man* that Giacometti painted by hand in order to heighten its expressive impact.



**CLAUDE MONET ([see dedicated release](#))**

*Le Parlement, soleil couchant*, oil on canvas, 1901

**Estimate: \$35-45 million**

Between 1900 and 1905, Monet executed a series of paintings of the Palace of Westminster, home of the British Parliament (pictured, page one, center). Painted at different times of day and in different weather conditions, all the works are the same size and offer the same viewpoint overlooking the Thames from Monet's window. His decision to paint in London was inspired in large part by the extraordinary light effects that the city offered during the winter months, when the sun was diffused through a dense atmosphere of mist mingled with coal smoke from the city's furnaces. This painting is one of only four from the *Houses of Parliament* series that remains in private hands; 15 of the 19 Parliament canvases hang in major museum collections around the world.

**ADDITIONAL IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART HIGHLIGHTS:**

**CHAIM SOUTINE**

*Le Bœuf*, Oil on canvas, Painted circa 1923

**Estimate: \$20-30 million**

Between 1923 and 1925, Soutine painted an extraordinary sequence of nine canvases that take as their starting point the newly slaughtered carcass of a steer. Only three of these prized paintings remain today in private hands, of which *Le bœuf*, painted circa 1923 is the largest, most powerfully visceral, and most nearly abstract. Soutine found his inspiration for the series among the Old Masters, particularly Annibale Carracci, whose exceptional scenes of a butcher shop in the 1580s confirmed his status as one of the most revolutionary artists of the late Renaissance. Upon Soutine's arrival in Paris in 1913, the destitute young artist lingered in the warm galleries at the Louvre, studying Rembrandt's great *Slaughtered Ox* at length, and



extracting and distilling those aspects of the Old Masters work that would help him formulate his own unique vision. With its vigorous streaks and swirls of viscous, jewel-like pigment and powerful gestural expressiveness, Soutine's *Side of Beef* series became a touchstone for the next generation of painters to follow him, including Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Philip Guston, and Francis Bacon. Given the rarity, art historical significance, and tremendous cross-over appeal of this work to collectors of both modern and contemporary art, Christie's anticipates *Le bœuf* could challenge Soutine's current auction record of \$18 million, set at Christie's New York in 2013.

## **PABLO PICASSO**

### ***Buste de femme (Femme à la résille)***

**Oil on canvas**

#### **Estimate on Request**

Picasso painted *Buste de femme* (pictured page one, left) in Paris on 12 January 1938, at the height of his relationship with the photographer Dora Maar. This picture is one of the best known of his series of images of Dora, and crucially one of the most celebrated portraits remaining in private hands and has been featured in a number of publications over the years, including David Douglas Duncan's book *Picasso's Picassos*. It is one of the pictures Picasso appears to have been unable to part with during his lifetime; upon his death it passed into the collection of his granddaughter, Marina, from whom it was acquired by the legendary art dealer Jan Krugier. *Buste de femme* sings with electric color, and Picasso filled the composition with jagged lines, peaks and striations, bringing a sense of edginess and volatility that is balanced by the artist's placement of tender flesh-toned curves and swirls on her cheek. Executed in the period just after the completion of his masterpiece *Guernica*, this exceptional portrait marks a transitional period in Picasso's career and in his relationship with Dora, and serves as an intimate and insightful record of their relationship when it was at its height, which perhaps explains why it remained so long in Picasso's personal collection.



## **RENE MAGRITTE**

### ***L'empire des lumières*, Gouache on paper, Painted in 1955.**

**Estimate: \$3.5-4.5 million**

*L'empire des lumières* is Magritte's most important and well-known subject. This beautiful, poetic and sweetly disturbing work belongs to a series of oils and gouaches based on the contrast between daylight and darkness, depicting the paradoxical image of a nighttime street set against a pastel-blue sky. The Surrealist landscapes are wrought with contradictions that are intended to arouse wonder as they defy comprehension, and *L'empire des lumières* succeeds in reminding the viewer of the recurring, inescapable paradoxes of life itself. Magritte painted a first version in 1949 and produced numerous variations until the end of his career. Examples from this

series are housed within the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

## **ADDITIONAL POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY HIGHLIGHTS:**

## **ANDY WARHOL**

### ***Silver Liz*, silver spray paint, synthetic polymer and silkscreen inks on canvas, painted in 1963**

**Estimate: \$25-35 million**

Painted during the summer of 1963, *Silver Liz* is an early Pop Art masterpiece that illustrates Warhol's newly-developed silkscreen technique. More than any other artist from the early 1960s, Andy Warhol exploited the power of the image as commodity, and, toward this end, he found no more appropriate subject than the phenomenon of fame. Warhol's celebrity portraits of the mid-1960s – whether of Jacqueline Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, or Elizabeth Taylor – present subjects with larger-than-life personal myths and anticipate the artist's own fascination with appearances and production of personae. The peculiar blend of glamour, scandal and illness that plagued Elizabeth Taylor throughout her life made her the ultimate muse for Warhol, whose *Silver Liz* epitomizes the star at the





height of her glamorous career. With its space-age silver sheen – a nod to her status as the greatest star of the silver screen - *Silver Liz* is one of the most celebrated and acclaimed paintings of Andy Warhol's career.

#### PETER DOIG

***Swamped*, oil on canvas, Painted in 1990**

**Estimate: in the region of \$20 million**

*Swamped* (pictured page one, right) is an exquisitely rendered masterpiece by Peter Doig, dating from a pivotal moment in the artist's career. Painted in 1990, the year that Doig graduated from Chelsea School of Arts at the age of 31 and was awarded the prestigious Whitechapel Artist Prize, it captures the mesmerizing atmosphere of a moonlit lagoon with a mysterious white canoe situated at its heart. Doig's pictures of canoes have become icons of contemporary painting. As one of his earliest works to explore this motif, *Swamped* has been an important touchstone for the artist in scores of major exhibitions, including most recently Fondation Beyeler, Basel 2015. Isolating a single frame from the 1980 cult horror classic *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*, Doig builds a shuddering tension in his painting with his intricate tapestry of process-based and abstract techniques that create a friction between figurative atmosphere and dense abstract and painterly meaning. *Swamped* is poised to break the world auction record of \$18 million for the artist set in 2014 with *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)*.

#### JEAN DUBUFFET ([see dedicated release](#))

***Paris Polka*, Oil on Canvas, 1961**

**Estimate: in the region of \$25 million**

An iconic *chef-d'oeuvre* of Jean Dubuffet's most celebrated series, the *Paris Circus*, *Paris Polka* radiates with the artist's unfettered application of vibrant hues and boisterous brushwork resulting in a dynamic interpretation of the raw vitality and joie de vivre that pulsed through the French capital in the 1960s. Teeming with life and movement, *Paris Polka* offers a dynamic composition, executed in a particularly vibrant palette filled with people, cars, storefronts and architecture. One of only four large-scaled canvases, *Paris Polka* is perhaps the most definitive masterpiece of the artist's most influential series left in private hands. Many canvases belonging to the *Paris Circus* are housed by important museum collections, including the Tate London, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the Guggenheim and Museum of Modern Art in New York.



#### LUCIO FONTANA

***Concetto spaziale, Attese*, Red waterpaint on canvas, 1965**

**Estimate: \$10-15 million**

Lucio Fontana's *Concetto spaziale, Attese* projects an irrepressible sense of energy. The painting's monochrome surface pops with vibrant color and is riven through with fourteen gestural cuts that signal agency and charge. This is a monumental example of the 'cut' or *taglio* paintings for which Fontana is best known. Executed in 1965, it dates from the pinnacle of his extraordinary career, produced one year before he was awarded the Grand Prize for Painting at the XXXIII Venice Biennale. It is also extraordinarily rare as it is one of only seven mature *tagli* monochromes in which Fontana's signature cuts are arranged in two stacked rows, and of these it is among the largest. Here, Fontana literally opens the canvas to new possibilities and interpretations. He points to the three-dimensional nature of the canvas and brings his earlier

incarnation as a sculptor to the practice of painting, combining its different processes to forge a hybrid object that is no longer constrained by traditional classifications.

#### Jean-Michel Basquiat

***Untitled*, Executed in 1982**

**Oil stick and ink on paper**

**Estimate: \$9–12 million**

Jean-Michel Basquiat's frenzied and electric *Untitled* (pictured page one, center) depicts one of the artist's most celebrated themes, rendered with rapid-fire execution in dynamic slashes of red, blue and black oilstick. The human head is among Basquiat's most autobiographical subjects, which he obsessively explored during the pivotal year of 1982. His depiction here is violently slashed and scribbled in a seemingly feverish attempt to produce on paper the inner workings of his own mind, which is especially felt in the jutting red slashes that seem to burst forth from the totemic figure's head and neck. The work

belongs to a series of heads he created in 1982, many of which can be regarded as self-portraits executed at a crucial moment in his own meteoric rise to fame. *Untitled* bears witness to Basquiat's humble origins as the street artist SAMO, yet it also displays the sophistication that, by this stage in his short but brilliant career, had already made him the undisputed star of the New York art world.

#### YVES KLEIN

***SE 181*, dry pigment in synthetic resin on natural sponge, metal stem, resin and plaster base, 1960-1961**

**Estimate: \$4-6 million**

*SE 181* marries the humming intensity of Yves Klein's signature International Klein Blue with the uniquely textured form of an oceanic sponge. This dynamic sculpture is one of only three extremely rare iterations of the artist's celebrated *Sculptures éponges*. Klein's pigment-soaked sponge sculptures were an essential component in the 'blue revolution' that defined the spectacular trajectory of his tragically brief career. Klein had identified in the remains of these porous aquatic creatures a ready-made emblem of totemic significance.



#### MARTIN KIPPENBERGER

***Untitled (Jacqueline)*, oil on canvas, Painted in 1996.**

**Estimate: \$8-12 million**

With its spectral protagonist looming large before the viewer, her hand outstretched as if to repel our gaze, *Untitled* (from the series *Jacqueline: The Paintings Pablo Couldn't Paint Anymore*) is the largest and most significant work from Martin Kippenberger's landmark series of ten paintings depicting Pablo Picasso's widow Jacqueline (pictured, page one center). Painted in 1996, the year before Kippenberger's own life was tragically cut short, it stands among the artist's most poignant series and represents a grand denouement of many of the themes that were so deeply embedded in his practice: artistic identity, creative suffering and unfinished legacies. Inspired by David Douglas

Duncan's haunting photographs of Jacqueline Roque mourning Picasso's death, Kippenberger embarked upon a visionary sequence of paintings: "*Picasso died, she was sad. So I'm taking over his job,*" he claimed. Blurring the boundaries between portrait and self-portrait, Kippenberger performed a complex act of homage to an artist whose approach to image-making had guided the development of his own practice and persona. *Untitled* is the first example from the series to come to auction: one is housed in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and another is currently on loan to the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva.

#### ELIZABETH PEYTON

***Gavin on the Phone*, Oil on board, Executed in 1998**

**Estimate: \$300,000-500,000**

Elizabeth Peyton's *Gavin on the Phone* (pictured page one, right) is a luminous and sumptuously rendered portrait of the art dealer Gavin Brown, a key figure in New York's downtown art scene and a dear friend of the artist's. With a stylized approach that is instantly recognizable, Peyton is widely celebrated for her portraits of cultural icons, from Kurt Cobain to Napoleon to Marc Jacobs — all of whom are portrayed in her characteristic otherworldly and androgynous fashion. Peyton's refreshingly un-ironic paintings of the alluring public figures whom she admires — notably, the artist only paints those that inspire her and does not accept commissions — achieve a level of empathy, a casual intimacy that humanizes her subjects.



#### URS FISCHER

***Untitled*, paraffin wax mixture, pigment, steel, wicks and lead weights, 2011**

**Estimate: \$1.5-2.5 million**

This haunting waxwork depicts the artist's friend and fellow eminent artist Rudolf Stingel. It was produced in 2011 — the same year that Fischer's trio of candle sculptures wowed at the Venice Biennale. Created from unconventional and frequently ephemeral materials, Fischer employs an intricate suite of techniques to create his life-size wax figures, including 3D scanning and casting. Impressively, these sculptures combine a faultless artistic technique that brings out the specific physical qualities inherent to wax with a rigorous philosophical approach. The integration of strategically located wicks into the likenesses renders them into

candles that may be lit and burned over time – a testament to time's relentless melt.

*View further sale highlights at [www.christies.com/lookingforward](http://www.christies.com/lookingforward)*

---

**Notes to the Editors:**

- Looking Forward to the Past creates a new context to present a mix of Impressionist, Modern, Post-War and Contemporary Art. In 2014, Christie's achieved global sales of US\$1.2 billion for Impressionist and Modern Art, an increase of 19% over the previous year. Christie's is the global leader in sales of Post-War and Contemporary Art, with total sales in 2014 of \$2.8 billion, up 39% over the previous year. Christie's previously announced its new sale concept for Looking Forward to the Past, along with early highlights of the sale (see [dedicated release](#) for further detail).

**Public Exhibition:**

2 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
3 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
4 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
5 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
6 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
7 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
8 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
9 May 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
10 May 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
11 May 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**Auction:**

New York: 11 May 2015 at 7pm EDT  
Christie's 20 Rockefeller Plaza

**PRESS CONTACTS:**

Erin McAndrew | +1 212 636 2680 | [emcandrew@christies.com](mailto:emcandrew@christies.com)  
Capucine Milliot | +1 212 641 5078 | [cmilliot@christies.com](mailto:cmilliot@christies.com)

**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.

**FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:**

