

CHRISTIE'S

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THE COLLECTION OF EARL AND CAMILLA MCGRATH *A COLLECTION PERSONALLY SHAPED BY THE 20TH CENTURY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES*



Top Left: Jasper Johns, Earl McGrath, 1971 | Top Right: Cy Twombly, Earl McGrath and Ahmet Ertegun, 1976

Bottom Left: Camilla photographing Earl, New York 1966 | Bottom Right: Earl McGrath and Mick Jagger, 1979 | All Photos ©Camilla McGrath.

New York – This March, Christie's will present the **Collection of Earl and Camilla McGrath**. Married for 44-years, Earl was the former head of Rolling Stone Records and a bicoastal gallerist, and Camilla was an Italian countess and an exceptional photographer. The McGraths were a social power couple who counted many of the leading artists and intellectuals amongst their friends, and their collection reflects a remarkable life spent alongside the greatest creative forces of the 20th century. Comprising over 135 examples of Post-War and Contemporary art, the collection will be offered in both a dedicated eponymous auction on March 3, and within the various owner Prints and Multiples sale on March 1. Highlights from the exhibition will be on view in Los Angeles February 9–11 at the De Re Gallery.

"Earl is the Gertrude Stein of our era," artist Ron Cooper once noted. "He had a salon like Stein. I met Andy Warhol through him and Jack Nicholson and Dennis Hopper and Michelle Phillips and Michael Crichton and Joan [Didion] and John [Dunne] and... just an amazing roster of people." The couple's residences in New

York and Los Angeles were gathering places for the world's most influential social figures, including artists such as Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Larry Rivers, Brice Marden, Bruce Nauman and Robert Graham. Naturally, the McGraths surrounded themselves with works by the same artists.

Earl and Camilla McGrath were beloved partners in art and culture. In the 1960s, Earl met Ahmet Ertegun, the co-founder and president of Atlantic Records. Ertegun became one of the McGraths' dearest friends, and invited Earl to join Atlantic Records in 1970. Seven years later, the collector was named president of the Rolling Stones' eponymous record label. The McGraths became immersed in the free-spirited heyday of rock and roll, jetting alongside Ertegun and Mick Jagger, touring with the Stones, and hosting late-night jam sessions in their New York apartment.

After leaving the music industry in the early 1980s, Earl chose to focus his energies on art, transforming his West Hollywood home into an Arata Isozaki-designed space to showcase both established and emerging artists. His emphasis was always on artists and their work, and how to best promote multiple generations of talent to collectors and patrons. Art proved to be Earl's ultimate passion and puzzle: a source of inspiration and delight to which he would devote decades.

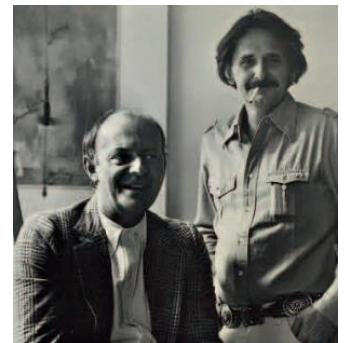
Both in Los Angeles or New York, Earl brought his signature vivacity to Post-War and Contemporary art, once remarking, "Collect art that you love to have on your walls that you want to be part of your life." The McGrath's filled their walls with art that reflected the couple's exuberance and discernment, as well as their unwavering dedication to the artists and their processes.

Auction Highlights from the standalone sale of *The Collection of Earl and Camilla McGrath, March 3*



Cy Twombly was one of Earl and Camilla's oldest and closest friends. The McGrath's bore witness to many of Twombly's most significant moments, and gave the dinner that followed Twombly's 1979 retrospective opening at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Among the top lots is Cy Twombly's *Untitled* from 1963 (\$250,000-350,000). In the early 1960s, the artist's creativity erupted in a torrent of vigorously worked drawings that brim with powerful, enigmatic motifs. Created at the height of his Roman period, *Untitled* illustrates the major pictorial themes of this era, particularly those inspired by the passions of love and war, as embodied by the myths of Venus and Mars. By the end of 1963, this theme reached its apotheosis in the epic, multi-panel *Nine Discourses on Commodus*, which now occupies the Collection of the Guggenheim Bilbao.



Cy Twombly and Earl McGrath, 1976
© Camilla McGrath.



A highlight of the dedicated sale on March 3, is Larry Rivers' depiction of the couple. Completed just two years after their wedding, *Formal Marriage Portrait of Earl and Camilla McGrath, 1965* (\$15,000-20,000) only teeters on the traditional. The narrative does not unravel in a single coherent picture, but rather in emotional vignettes. Camilla and Earl are placed among a lush, painterly landscape with Italy floating just above their heads, memorializing Camilla's birthplace, and the country



Larry Rivers and Earl McGrath with studio view of the present lot, 1965. Photo: © Camilla McGrath.

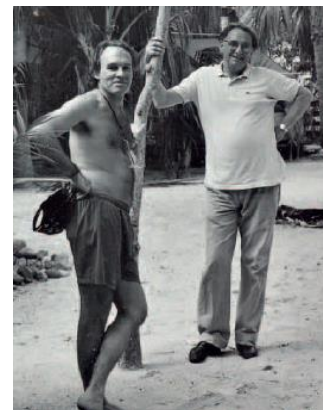
where the couple met. Earl's head appears twice, once in profile looking towards Italy and again facing the viewer. In the painting's center, "McGrath" is shown in a deep red stenciled lettering, and Camilla's maiden name, "Pecci-Blunt" is included in the lower left.



Created during a profound turning-point in Marden's career, *Talisman for Earl* 1981-1982 (\$300,000-500,000), holds particular personal significance for the artist. Marden titled the work

after Earl, who was a dear friend. Created between 1981 and 1982, *Talisman for Earl* demonstrates new developments in Marden's work, including a deeper emotional range and a heightened sense of feeling, both of which

came to define his work during this era. *Talisman for Earl* demonstrates the intense, dynamic grids that Marden created at this time, and though each drawing displays a similar formal construction, Marden's variation on the theme is remarkable.



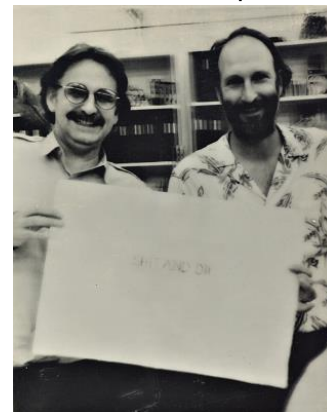
Bruce Marden and Earl McGrath, *St. Bart's*, 1987. © Camilla McGrath.

Auction Highlights from *The Collection of Earl and Camilla McGrath within the Contemporary Editions Sale, March 1*



Highlighting the 76 lots included in the March 1 Contemporary Editions sale in New York, is a sweeping representation of Bruce Nauman's most successful endeavors in printmaking. The McGraths cultivated a particularly close relationship with Nauman, and avidly collected (and sold) prints from nearly every phase of the artist's extensive career. Earl, being such an enthusiastic supporter of Nauman's work, often purchased multiple impressions from publishers

to place in the collections of friends and collectors. For their own collection, the McGraths favored Nauman's witty text-based works with deep philosophical ironies lurking just below the surface. Such works were hung throughout the McGrath residences, notably *Shit and Die*, 1985 (\$10,000-15,000), which bears a personal inscription reading "*Earlie Proof.*" The earliest example of Nauman's engagement with printmaking included within this grouping is *Studies of Holograms* (\$2,000-3,000), which was the result of his choreographed performance pieces of the late 1960s.



Earl McGrath and Bruce Nauman with a proof of *Shit and Die*, 1983. Photo: © Camilla McGrath. Artwork: © 2017 Bruce Nauman/Artists Rights Society, NY.

The prints selection is also underlined by a range of dynamic examples by Jasper Johns, led by *Flags II*, 1973 (\$25,000-35,000).

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Public Exhibition:

New York, Rockefeller Center
 Feb 23 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 Feb 24 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 Feb 25 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Auction:

Contemporary Editions, 76 Lots, 1 March, 10am,
The Collection of Earl and Camilla McGrath, 59 Lots

Feb 26 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Feb 27 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Feb 28 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Mar 1 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Mar 2 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Mar 3 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2016 that totalled £2.1 billion / \$3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Christie's offers around 350 auctions 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 \$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 Jewellery.

2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. 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. Click [HERE](#) to view a short film about Christie's and the 250th anniversary.

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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