

# CHRISTIE'S

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## JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT SELF-PORTRAIT FROM THE COLLECTION OF U2'S ADAM CLAYTON



Jean-Michel Basquiat *Untitled* (1982)  
Oil stick on paper  
42 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 30in. (108.3 x 76.2cm.)  
Estimate: £1,000,000 - 1,500,000

**London** – Christie's will present Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Untitled* (1982, estimate: £1,000,000 - 1,500,000) from the collection of U2's bassist Adam Clayton as a major highlight of the upcoming Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction on 7 March. Held for over twenty-five years in Clayton's collection, *Untitled* featured on the front cover of the catalogue for the exhibition *Basquiat Drawings* held in 1990 at The Robert Miller Gallery in New York. A deeply poignant self-portrait, the work offers a rare insight into Basquiat's psyche at a pivotal moment in his career. A tear drops from his eye; his arms seem to pierce his body like an arrow, Basquiat depicts himself as a martyr: a Saint Sebastian-like figure for the contemporary age. Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Untitled* will be on view as part of a global tour to Shanghai (8 February), Beijing (11-13 February), New York (24-26 February) and London (from 3 March) ahead of the auction at Christie's King Street, London.

Adam Clayton: "There was a group of them – there was Basquiat, there was Keith Haring, and obviously Warhol was the granddaddy of the whole movement. The idea that these young painters without

any gallery experience could make their mark on the streets of New York – could go to the hippest night clubs, could mix with musical culture – was very exciting to me. It was where I came from – I always thought music and art went hand in hand together... At the time people were talking about Jean-Michel as being the Jimi Hendrix of painting and I think that's true."

Francis Outred, Chairman and Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art EMERI: "On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U2's Joshua Tree, it is a rare privilege to showcase this work which Adam Clayton acquired during his first months of moving to New York. Unlike other self-portraits by Basquiat it shows him as a figure who is coming to terms with his new position in the world and injects a new emotion into the narrative of his dramatic trajectory from anonymous graffiti artist to international art superstar."

The work was acquired soon after Clayton's arrival in New York and less than two years after Basquiat's death. U2, by this point, were enjoying great success globally, and were exploring a new electronic sound world that would come to fruition in their celebrated album *Achtung Baby* (1991). At the same time the band acquired a large painting by Basquiat which was installed in the studio where they were working at the time.

Rendered on an exceptional scale, the work bears all the hallmarks of the raw graphic language that, during this period, propelled Basquiat from anonymous graffiti artist to international superstar. Channelling influences ranging from Pablo Picasso and Leonardo da Vinci to comic books and cave paintings, the artist performs a rigorous anatomical dissection. In contrast to the heroism of his self-portrait paintings from this period, here Basquiat casts himself as a victim of his new status: an itinerant street artist raised to meteoric heights in an unfamiliar world.

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#### Notes to Editors:

For Christie's features, including an interview with Adam Clayton of U2 and Francis Outred, Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, EMERI visit: <http://www.christies.com/features/U2-Adam-Clayton-on-Basquiat-8034-1.aspx>

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