

CHRISTIE'S

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LUCIO FONTANA LEADS CHRISTIE'S *THINKING ITALIAN* 6 OCTOBER 2017



LUCIO FONTANA
*Concetto spaziale, In piazza San Marco di notte
con Teresita* (1961) acrylic and stones on canvas
59 x 59 in. (150 x 150 cm.),
Estimate on request

London – This October, during London's Frieze Week, Christie's will present *Thinking Italian*, a showcase of the very best in Italian Art of the 20th Century. The auction will follow Christie's *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction* on 6 October 2017 and present a tightly curated selection of artists across the century; from Marino Marini, to Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Maurizio Cattelan. Defined by eclecticism, revolution and a deeply rooted yet ever-changing dialogue between the past and the present, Italian art of the 20th Century encompasses some of the most influential artistic creations of our times. A selection of works will tour to the MAXXI Museum in Rome from 14-15 September and then to Turin from 20-21 September, before the full sale exhibition in London from 30 September to 6 October 2017.

Leading the auction, Lucio Fontana's *Concetto spaziale, In piazza San Marco* (1961, estimate on request) is from the much-celebrated cycle of paintings titled *Venezie*. This sequence of 22 ornate, large-scale, baroque-inspired oil paintings are today recognised as the painterly culmination of Fontana's Spatialist vision. An ever-changing animated play of light, space and colour, the work is a spatial concept of St Mark's Square in Venice. It reflects the floating city's history as a place of love, mystery, romance and illusion. Fontana used light-reflecting black paint, sparkling Murano-glass stones and an architectural grid of punctured black holes to conjure a sensation of the piazza at night from multiple viewpoints. Unique in the *Venezie* cycle, this work's title

includes the name of Fontana's wife Teresita. The dedication suggests that not only is St Mark's Square a romantic location but that it holds personal significance for the artist and his wife. The work combines a highly specific sense of earthly time and place with a broader, Spatialist understanding of the universal play of light, space and time throughout the cosmos.

Mariolina Bassetti, Chairman Italy, Head of Southern Europe Post-War & Contemporary Art: "This year we are looking forward to introducing a new concept to the London sale with 'Thinking Italian', which will be dedicated to Italian masterpieces and works important to the specificity of the history of art in Italy. Fontana's *Concetto spaziale, In piazza San Marco di notte con Teresita* is without doubt a highpoint in the career one of the most sought-after artists today. The dialogue and understanding of Post-War and Italian Art grows year on year, and in 2017 we are looking forward to a Christie's Education conference dedicated to Italian art at The Italian Cultural Institute (ICI), alongside many other events dedicated to the importance and influence of Italian Art in the world."



Michelangelo Pistoletto's early Mirror Painting *Uomo che guarda un negativo* (1967, estimate: £2,500,000 – 3,500,000), brings together two iconic figures of post-war Italian art. Depicted with crisp realism in paint on tissue paper, Boetti stands with his back to us, holding a photo negative of a child's face up to the light. Reflected in the surrounding surface of polished stainless steel, the viewer steps into Boetti's space thus taking over part of the composition; we complete and animate the work. Pistoletto not only offers a playful interactive experience, but also makes a powerful investigation into the relationship between artist and viewer. His treatment of the negative that Boetti is inspecting adds a virtuoso detail, with the light areas left unpainted, creating a brilliant sense of true transparency. Boetti's own artistic preoccupation with the idea of doubling and reflection makes him a compelling subject. Image within image and artist within artwork conspire in a rare Mirror Painting that combines the twin outlooks of two of the greatest Italian pioneers of the last century.

Another major figure of Post-War Italian art is represented by Alberto Burri's *Sacco* (1953, Estimate on Request), which belongs to the artist's breakthrough series, the *Sacchi*: a rare and highly celebrated group of works that not only launched his career but have now come to characterise his oeuvre and define a radical break from traditional modes of art making. More highlights



MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO
Uomo che guarda un negativo
(1967)
Painted tissue paper on polished
stainless steel
90 x 47in. (230 x 120cm.)
Estimate: £2,500,000 – 3,500,000

include Marino Marini's *Cavaliere (Rider)* (1952/1976, Estimate: £2,000,000 – £3,000,000), which captures one of Marino Marini's most iconic themes – the precarious relationship of a rider and his horse, and Maurizio Cattelan's *Untitled* (2001, estimate £500,000 – £700,000) that focuses a critical eye on one of the most mundane of experiences – daily elevator rides. Created in 2001, this work presents the viewer with a meticulously constructed miniature elevator bank with sleek chrome doors and mirrored interiors, to their fluorescent lighting systems, 'authentic' sounds and functioning controls, the artist meticulously recreates each feature in the smallest detail.

ALBERTO BURRI
Sacco (1953)
burlap, canvas and oil on canvas
33 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (86 x 100cm.)
Estimate on request

To coincide with 'Thinking Italian' Christie's Education will host an afternoon conference ['Italian Art and its Markets: Developments and Challenges'](#). Convened in partnership with the Italian Cultural Institute, the

conference will be held in the prestigious rooms of the ICI on Belgrave Square on the afternoon of Monday 2 October, 2017.

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About Christie's

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Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

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