

# CHRISTIE'S

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## CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER A 32-FOOT TOUR DE FORCE BY ANDY WARHOL WITH *SIXTY LAST SUPPERS*

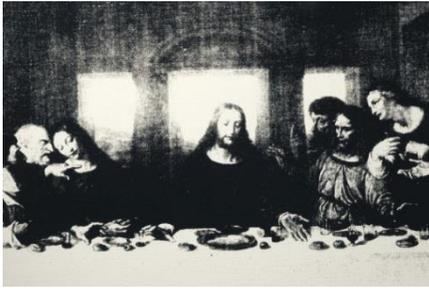


**New York** – On November 15, Christie's will offer Andy Warhol's *Sixty Last Suppers*, 1986 (estimate in the region of \$50 million) as a highlight of its Evening Sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art. *Sixty Last Suppers* is an outstanding example from the artist's great final painting series. Executed just a year before Warhol's death in February 1987, this monumental canvas poignantly illustrates the themes of religion and loss that were so instrumental to his work. This canvas is being offered for its first time at auction.

**Alex Rotter, Chairman of Post-War and Contemporary Art, New York, remarked:** "*Christie's Sixty Last Suppers is the unequivocal masterpiece from Warhol's late period. Standing in front of this momentous canvas, the viewer is fully immersed by Leonardo's vision, but seen through the eyes of Andy Warhol. Many paintings are described as a tour-de-force, this is Warhol's.*"

The idea for a group of works based on Leonardo's Renaissance masterpiece was proposed to Warhol in 1984 by Milan-based gallerist Alexander Iolas. Warhol leapt at the idea of putting his own stamp on one of the best-known images in the world, and produced an exhaustive series of variations — some freehand, some showing outlines, some, as in this example, using a photostat of the oil painting as the source image for a silkscreen. In all, Warhol would make over 100 different renditions of the Last Supper, 22 of which were displayed in 1986 in a space opposite the Santa Maria delle Grazie church, home of Leonardo's original. Viewed by an estimated 30,000 people, the works took Milan by storm.

At the same time, and underscoring the Pop process of manufacture, the doubled image was a reminder that Warhol's works were not originals in the traditional sense. This interrogation of originality versus reproduction had come up again and again in his art. The 'Dollar Bills' were not dollar bills. The 'Brillo Boxes' were not Brillo boxes, exactly. By



1986, of course, Leonardo's *Last Supper* had become not only part of the art historical canon, but part of popular culture.

As a deeply religious man, the image of *The Last Supper* had featured prominently in the background of Warhol's life: his mother's Bible featured a reproduction of the image; another copy apparently hung in the family's kitchen. It is perhaps no coincidence that in creating this particular *Last Supper* variation, Warhol worked from a print

of an old oil copy of the Renaissance painting — a source already removed from the original, and already a proto-Pop artefact.

In the early 1980s, religious iconography would feature more prominently in Warhol's art as he began to confront his mortality. *Sixty Last Suppers* marked the culmination of a process of acceptance: the final image of communion and forgiveness. To some critics, Warhol's artistic appropriation of the iconography of advertising and pop culture represented the substitution, in the modern age, of capitalism for religion. But in *Sixty Last Suppers*, Warhol both celebrated Christianity and injected new life into religious art, charging it with contemporary currency.



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**Public Exhibition:**

*New York*

4-15 November 2017

**Auction:**

*Post-War and Contemporary Evening Sale*

15 November 2017

7pm

**About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in first half of 2017 that totalled £2.35 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.

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.

*\*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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