

## For Immediate Release

4 January 2005

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### SEMINAL POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY LINE-UP AT CHRISTIE'S



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled* (estimate: £650,000-850,000)

#### Post-War and Contemporary Art, Evening Sale Christie's King Street 9 February 2005

**London** - Seminal works from key European and American Post-War art movements star in Christie's *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale* on 9 February 2005. Superb examples from the London School, French, German, Spanish and Italian Post-War masters, celebrated American artists and work from the younger generation of artists whose energy, vision and passion define today's Contemporary Art market, will all feature in the evening sale. This sale follows the record breaking sale totals set in New York in 2004, and is expected to fetch in the region of £ 20 million.

Two portraits by the artist Lucian Freud are major highlights of Christie's Evening Sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on 9 February 2005. As paintings by the artist are so rarely seen on the auction market, Christie's double offering of *Red Haired Man on a Chair* (estimate: £1,200,000-1,800,000), executed 1962/63 and *Naked Portrait 2002* (estimate: 2,500,000-3,500,000), 2002, depicting the pregnant British 'supermodel' Kate Moss, is exceptional. (*See separate press release*)

A centre-piece of the auction is a large three-panel work, *Untitled*, by Jean-Michel Basquiat (estimate: £650,000-850,000) and one of four major works from a European Collection to feature in the sale.. Merging abstract splashes of paint with schematically rendered figures, the work features a jungle of

mythic heroes, villains and predatory creatures, reflecting the artist's uncertainty and fear in navigating the lonely road of success and fame in the frenetic 1980s. Executed at the pinnacle of the artist's short and troubled career, the picture appeared as the backdrop for Basquiat's 1985 front cover appearance on *The New York Times* magazine - marking the apex of his rise to fame and crystallizing his iconic status as the first black artist to break into the Western art scene.

*Nine Multi-coloured Marylins (Reversal Series)* by Basquiat's friend and mentor, Andy Warhol (estimate: £450,000-650,000) is also offered from the same European Collection. In the *Reversal Series*, created in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the master of pop-art revisited his established themes, treating them to a disco-aesthetic. The collection also features textural works by two leading Spanish artists, Miquel Barceló and Antoni Tàpies. Miquel Barceló's oil and paper collage *Autorretrato* of 1983 (estimate: £180,000-220,000), is an intimate self-portrait of the artist, executed at a turning point in his career, when a disused church studio allowed him to work on a scale previously unimaginable. Antoni Tàpies's oil and sand work, *Pintura Rosa con Franja Negra*, (estimate: £180,000-220,000) is one of only a few bold, non-figurative, works which he executed around 1963 after discovering, like Barceló, the freedom of space in a large studio.

Mark Rothko's *Untitled*, painted in 1952 is a major highlight of the evening sale (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000). Dating from the period in which Rothko achieved fame and fortune, *Untitled* features his mature and distinctive style of a large rectangular expanse of colour with softly uneven edges, giving a hazy, pulsating and almost floating quality. Cy Twombly is represented in the sale by *Untitled (Rome)*, an oil wax crayon and lead pencil on canvas (estimate: £700,000-1,000,000). This impressive canvas was painted in 1959, two years after the artist settled in Rome.

Gerhard Richter's canvas, *Volker Bradke* (estimate: £900,000-1,300,000), is also offered in the sale. Produced in 1966, in an era of increasingly revolutionary politics, this work is a humorous critique on the dangers of ideology. The black and white blurred painting of the youthful optimistic-looking figure of Volker Bradke amongst people with banners, appears to mimic the supposed realism of photography. The work formed the central part of an exhibition devoted to Volker Bradke, featuring photography and blurred film footage of the subject. The image of Bradke appearing to lead a political demonstration is, however, entirely misleading, as he was a complete unknown.

Mario Merz's museum-quality work *Igloo: Objet cache-toi* (estimate: £350,000-450,000) was also produced in response to the politics of the era, following the student riots in Paris in 1968. Symbolising self-sufficiency, shelter, refuge, and an alternate way of life, the igloo, for Merz, was a powerful image of protest against the blinkered values of modern society, as well being a sacred space for contemplation and meditation. The neon lettering affixed to the transparent structure, *Objet Cache-toi*, was taken from the graffiti that appeared on the walls of the Sorbonne during the

Paris riots. Meaning both “object hide yourself” and “an object for hiding yourself in” the igloo becomes a metaphor for the mind and a monument to the ideals of the revolution which swept the world in 1968.

Prefiguring such conceptual art, Piero Manzoni’s *Achrome* of 1958-9 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) reflects the artist’s desire to create spaces devoid of any image or colour. Questioning his aims and methods, Manzoni argued that an artist could realize universal values through extreme self-awareness. The scored white kaolin surface is an area of freedom in which the artist can go in search of images. In fellow Italian Lucio Fontana’s work, *Concetto spaziale* 1960 (estimate: £200,000-300,000), the canvas surface is punctuated with holes, exuding subversive energy.

Amongst the contemporary works in the sale, a haunting blend of nostalgia and anonymity characterises Marlene Dumas’s painting *The Teacher* (estimate: £350,000-450,000). Painted in 1987, the work was exhibited with a group of paintings under the title *The Private versus the Public*. Depicting a class of children from a primary school attended by the South African artist, the painterly treatment of a school photograph, in which the facial features are blurred, creates a sense of ambiguity. Dumas’ self-portrait lurks almost undetected amongst the seemingly anonymous, tense and artificial grouping. Further contemporary works in the sale include *1-123-123-12-12 (two size seven Dr. Martens boots with razor blades)* (estimate: £22,000-28,000) by Sarah Lucas, Richard Prince’s *Untitled (three Men looking in the same direction)* (estimate: £65,000-85,000), and Ghada Amer’s *Pink* (estimate: 35,000-45,000), acrylic, embroidery and gel on canvas. Beatriz Milhères appears for the first time at auction since representing Brazil in the Sao Paulo Biennial with *Untitled* (estimate: £30,000-50,000).

*Christie’s Post-War & Contemporary Art Day Sale* in which a further *Achrome* by Piero Manzoni (estimate:£100,000-150,000) is the centre-piece, will take place on 10 February. The sale also features Maurizio Cattelan’s *Zorro* (estimate:£20,000-30,000) and several works by Niki de Saint Phalle, including *L’oiseau* (estimate:£70,000-90,000). A strong Spanish section includes Antoni Clavé’s *Femme des Balears* (estimate:£100,000-150,000), Barceló’s canvas *Le Collier* (estimate: £25,000-35,000), and Chillida’s sculpture, *Lurra* (estimate: £30,000-50,000). Minimalism is strongly represented by, amongst others, two exceptional works, Carl Andre’s *Southeast Deck* (estimate:£30,000-40,000) and Robert Mangold’s *Plane Figure III* (estimate: £25,000-35,000). *Blau*, by the much sought-after German painter Eberhard Havekost (estimate:£20,000-30,000) and Andy Warhol’s *Panda Bear Clock* (estimate: 25,000-35,000), one of a number of works by the artist in the sale, are further highlights.

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*Images available on Request*

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**Impressionist and 20<sup>th</sup> century art at Christie's London in February 2005**

Impressionist and Modern Art Evening sale, 7 February

The Art of the Surreal Evening Sale, 7 February

Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sale, 8 February

Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale, 9 February

Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper, 10 February

Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale, 10 February