

For Immediate Release

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PLACE YOUR BETS – A WINNING PORTRAIT BY FREUD

Lucian Freud's Outstanding Portrait of Victor Chandler

To be Offered at Christie's in February 2006

Post-War and Contemporary Art, Evening Sale

Christie's King Street

8 February 2006

London – The outstanding portrait *Man in a String Chair* (estimate: £3,000,000-4,000,000), by the artist Lucian Freud leads Christie's Evening Sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on 8 February 2006. This magnificent and seminal work was painted by the artist between 1988-89 and is a portrait of the artist's friend, gambling magnate, Victor Chandler.

Like most of Freud's work, *Man in a String Chair* was not a commissioned portrait but was painted at Freud's own instigation. In this full length portrait of his friend, Victor Chandler, Freud presents him dressed in ordinary attire, reclining comfortably, at ease with both himself and his surroundings. The accuracy of the understatement inherent in the painting is outstanding, representing the world of today with a deeply objective and unaffected precision. Just as the portraits by Gainsborough, Ingres and Manet captured the characters and atmosphere of their respective eras, so *Man in a String Chair* succeeds both as a frank and perceptive portrait and as a timeless representation of our modern age.

"I am only interested in painting the actual person; in doing a painting of them, not in using them for an ulterior end of art. For me, to use someone doing something not native to them would be wrong" (Lucian Freud quoted in R. Hughes, *Lucian Freud Paintings*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London 1988, p. 20).

As Chairman of one of the biggest bookmaking operations in the world, Victor Chandler's success and popularity have led him to his being nicknamed the "Gentleman bookmaker". First introduced to the artist in 1979 by a mutual friend, Freud became Chandler's client as well as a friend. In turn Chandler bought two of his paintings during this early period. They also shared mutual interests. Since his youth, Freud has always been fascinated by horses, horse-racing and gambling. These interests have resulted in the artist meeting a wide cross-section of people in the racing world at various stages of his life, some becoming his most important collectors.

In 1988, Freud asked Chandler if he would sit for him for a small half-length portrait. Chandler jumped at the chance. He was asked to bring a selection of his clothes to the studio, from which Freud chosen the ordinary and straightforward attire that he felt was in keeping with his sitter. The pose was arrived at through a process of trial and error. Between 1988 and 1989, Chandler sat for Freud in his studio as often as three times a week in sessions that began in the evening and would often last for up to six hours at a time. What had begun life as a head and shoulder depiction took almost two years to complete and resulted in this powerful full-length portrait *Man in a String Chair*. As Chandler recalls, “after about two months work on the picture Lucian decided that it was developing into a bigger picture than originally intended and changed it to its current size extending the canvas”. These long sittings resulted in a great friendship between Freud and Chandler who began to meet on a regular basis for over a decade. Two out of the three evenings after the sittings they would go out together for dinner, sometimes joined by other sitters, friends or family. During these sittings they talked “of everything from racing, gossip, painters, paintings, books”, Freud would, Chandler remembers, “on occasions recite poetry and quote from books” or “go silent if the picture was going badly and would even frighten me on occasions by suddenly jumping backwards and shouting if he felt he had made a mistake”.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the Web at www.christies.com

Notes to Editors:

Christie's leads the international Post-War and Contemporary Art market and also has a long tradition of selling and achieving the best works of art by Lucian Freud at auction. In February 2004, two contrasting portraits by Freud established new levels for the artist at auction with *Red Haired Man on a Chair* realizing £4.1 million and *Naked Portrait* selling for £3.9 million.