

For Immediate Release

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A LIFETIME OF COLLECTING
Christie's to Offer Most Important Single-Owner Modern & Contemporary Art Collection from Italy to Ever Appear at Auction



Alberto Burri (1915-1995), *Sacco e rosso*, 1959
(estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000)



Mark Rothko (1903-1970) *Untitled (Black, Red, Black on Brown)*, 1968 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000)

"Contemplating the works that cover the walls of my home and which I consider to be friends that have taken part in my life, I feel as though I have remained loyal to a pact I made with myself. I dedicated a long period of time to collecting based on my personal artistic preferences. This collection of contemporary art was borne out of my innate curiosity, a characteristic I have had since childhood and which in time grow into a passion."

Riccardo Tettamanti (1924-2005)

London – Christie's is pleased to announce the sale of **The Tettamanti Collection**, the most important single owner Modern and Contemporary Art collection from Italy to appear at auction will be offered in Christie's **Post War and Contemporary** sales on 8 and 9 February 2007 in London and in the **Modern and Contemporary Art** sale in Milan on 22 May 2007. The collection of over 100 works, which stretch from the giants of the Post-War period through to the contemporary era, is estimated in the region of £10 million. The collection includes a number of outstanding works from pivotal 20th century American artists, and European artists such as Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, Roy Lichtenstein, Alberto

Burri, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni and Micheangelo Pistoletto, which are appearing in public for the first time since they were acquired.

“This is the most important Post-War and Contemporary art collection to come out of Italy and appear on the international art market. Put together over a lifetime by renowned collector Riccardo Tettamanti and his wife Carla, many of these works have not been seen in public since they were acquired— some over 5 decades ago,” says **Pilar Ordovás, Head of Post War & Contemporary Art at Christie’s London.** *“We are extremely privileged to have been entrusted with such a significant and important collection which will lead what is set to be an exciting series of sales in London and Milan throughout early 2007,”* adds **Mariolina Bassetti, Director and Head of the Modern and Contemporary Art, Christie’s Italy.**

Riccardo Tettamanti set out to collect spectacular the finest works by the most renowned modern masters of the time, beginning with Post-War Italian artists, who feature prominently throughout his collection. Tettamanti’s passion for his collection is demonstrated by the fact that all of the works that he and his wife collected were displayed within the confines of their home and were never once put into storage, nor were they ever sent out on loan to a museum or exhibition. Thus, the works being offered are truly rare and exceptionally fresh to the market.

Leading the **Post War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale** on 8 February 2007 is the seminal *Sacco e rosso* by Italian painter and sculptor Alberto Burri from 1959, one of the most important works by the artist to appear at auction (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000). Burri expanded the frontiers of painting by cutting, layering, and burning diverse materials, and this work is a poetic and sensuous combination of colours, textiles and textures. From the same year is the superb *Achrome* by Piero Manzoni (estimate: £500,000-700,000). Manzoni is known for having described his white canvases as being composed of, *“a white that is not a polar landscape, not a material in evolution or a beautiful material, not a sensation or a symbol or anything else.”* Although the two artist’s works differ stylistically, they share the sentiment of a damaged, war tattered Italy and exude the existential, almost haunting expression of that period.

Not only did the Tettamantis share a love of contemporary art, they also benefited from personal, close relationships with artists they admired, and the couple even inspired works of art. Among these is a poignant installation by Mario Merz *Untitled (Al Ponte delle Gabelle)* (estimate: £180,000-220,000) that prominently features the couple.

Among the works by great American masters is Cy Twombly’s *Capitoli* from 1962 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000). Enchanted by Europe, the American artist has remained primarily based in Rome since the 1950s and his works are steeped in a deep awareness of his ancient surroundings. The scrawled lines on *Capitoli* recall the ancient messages scratched on the walls in the grottos of Rome and the street of Pompeii, combining the ancient and the

modern in a uniquely trans-Atlantic blend. Whilst Twombly was fascinated by the ancient and historical and the living history that he saw around him, Mark Rothko was similarly inspired by literature and history, using them to explore themes which he considered timeless and eternal. These saturated his mood-drenched works such as *Untitled (Black, Red, Black on Brown)*, executed in 1968 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000). As he explained, “*I’m interested only in expressing basic human emotions – tragedy, ecstasy, doom...and if you...are moved only by their colour relationship then you miss the point.*”

Partly inspired by Abstract Expressionists such as Rothko and Pollock, Andy Warhol created his *Flowers* in the summer of 1964 for his first show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York (estimate: £350,000-550,000). Taking a simple textbook photo of flowers as his source, Warhol made an image that is deliberately and subversively synthetic with the flowers appearing lifeless despite their vibrant colours.

Among the other artists in The Tettamanti collection included in the Post War and Contemporary Art Day Sale on 9 February 2007 in London are Tom Wesselmann, Gerhard Richter, Enrico Castellani, Francesco Clemente and Richard Prince amongst others. The Milan Modern and Contemporary Art sale to be held on 22 May 2007 will feature by works by Emilio Vedova, Giulio Paolini, Arnaldo Pomodoro and Mimmo Rotella.

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A selection of images is available on request*

Notes to Editors

International Exhibition Tour

- 17 January 2007: Palazzo Clerici, Milan
- 20 January 2007: Christie’s Rome
- 23 & 24 January 2007: The Brazilian Court, Café Boulud, 301 Australian Avenue in Palm Beach, Florida, USA
- 26-28 January 2007: Christie’s Rockefeller Centre, New York

Christie’s London Auctions in February 2007 of Impressionist & Modern Art and Post War & Contemporary Art:

- Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale followed by The Art of the Surreal: Tuesday, 6 February 2007 at 6:00 pm
- Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sale: Wednesday, 7 February 2007 at 2.00pm
- Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper: Thursday, 8 February 2007 at 10:30 am
- Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale: Thursday, 8 February 2007 at 7:00 pm
- Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale: Friday, 9 February 2007 at 10:30 am

Christie's Milan Sales

- Modern and Contemporary Art, 22 May 2007
- Old Master Pictures, 23 May 2007
- Jewellery and Watches, 23 and 24 May 2007

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global sales in 2005 that totaled \$3.2 billion. It is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.