

For Immediate Release

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**A FRANCIS BACON MASTERPIECE LEADS CHRISTIE'S LONDON
POST WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING SALE IN FEBRUARY
2008**



**Post War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale
Christie's London ~ Wednesday, 6 February 2008**

London – Perhaps the most important triptych by Francis Bacon (1909-1992) to ever appear at auction leads Christie's **Post War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale** on Wednesday, 6 February 2008. Appearing at auction for the first time and offered from a private collection, *Triptych 1974-77* is the last in the great series that Bacon painted in response to the tragic death of his lover George Dyer in 1971 (estimate on request).

"Painted just in time for his 1974 show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York as a tribute to George Dyer, Triptych 1974-1977 is the most important triptych by Francis Bacon to appear ever at auction," said **Pilar Ordoñas, Head of Post War & Contemporary Art, Christie's London**. *"It is a privilege and an honour to be able to work with such a monumental work and present it for sale in London"*

Triptych 1974-77 is one of the finest and most mysterious of Bacon's paintings from the 1970s. Painted between May and June of 1974 and revisited in 1977, this great, strangely open, Baconian landscape was the last work the artist made before a major retrospective of

his work held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1974. As the most recent and also one of the most elaborate and ambitious of the artist's paintings to be included in this exhibition, it formed the culmination of this important survey of Bacon's career from the late 1960s onwards and was immediately recognised as both a major landmark and also perhaps a turning point in Bacon's career.

With its sequential images of dark ominous umbrellas and his lover George Dyer writhing and struggling on a near deserted beach overlooked by the spectre of two terrifying monochrome Orwellian witnesses, the subject-matter and the open-air landscape setting of this work, appeared to mark this work as both a conclusion and, a new departure in Bacon's art.

The exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was the first major survey of the Bacon's work to take place since his major retrospective at the Grand Palais in Paris in 1971. It was on the eve of the opening of this exhibition that George Dyer had committed suicide alone in the Paris hotel room that he and Bacon shared. Many of Bacon's works since then - marking what David Sylvester maintained was the absolute 'peak period' of Bacon's entire career - had been preoccupied with Dyer and the tragic and ugly manner of his death.

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A selection of images is available on request

Notes to Editors

Record for Francis Bacon

The current record for any work by Francis Bacon is *Study from Innocent X*, 1962 sold at Sotheby's New York in May 2007 for \$52,680,000 / £26,581,895.

Exhibition Tour

- Christie's New York: 14 & 15 January 2008
- The Post War and Contemporary Art Sales including The Collection of R.B. Kitaj will be on public view from 1 February 2008 at Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road SW7.

Christie's London Auctions in February 2008 of Impressionist & Modern Art and Post War & Contemporary Art:

- Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale including Art of the Surreal: 4 February 2008
- Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sale: 5 February 2008
- Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper: 5 February 2008
- Post War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale: 6 February 2008
- Post War & Contemporary Art Day Sale: 7 February 2008
- The Collection of R.B. Kitaj: 7 February 2008

All auctions will take place at Christie's, 8 King Street, SW1Y 6QT.

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totalled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. Worldwide sales for the first half of 2007 totalled £1.63 billion / \$3.25 billion, an increase of 32% by £ and 45% by \$ from the same period last year and highest half year sales ever in art market history. Christie's 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, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$600 to over \$80 million*. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including 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 China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales through Christie's LIVE™, its unique, real-time online bidding service. *Estimates do not include buyer's premium.