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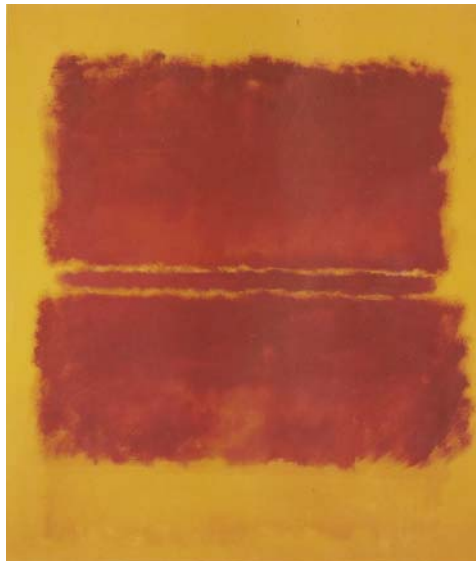
Contact: Toby Usnik

+1.212.636.2680

tusnik@christies.com

**CHRISTIE'S TO SELL ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST
COLLECTION THAT INCLUDES ROTHKO'S *NO. 15*, 1952
IN MAY EVENING SALE IN NEW YORK**

Collection also includes Francis's *Black*, 1955 and Gottlieb's *Untitled*, 1960



Mark Rothko (1903-1970)
No. 15, 1952
(Estimate on request)

Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale
Christie's New York -- Tuesday, May 13, 2008

New York, NY – Christie's today announced that it would offer a world-class collection of Abstract Expressionist works from a private American collector at its May 13 Evening Sale in New York. The collection of three museum quality works includes Mark Rothko's *No. 15*, 1952 (estimate on request), Sam Francis's *Black*, 1955 (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000) and Adolph Gottlieb's *Untitled*, 1960 (estimate: \$1,500,000-2,000,000).

"We are thrilled to present this jewel of a collection at our May Evening sale," said Brett Gorvy, international specialist and co-head, Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Sales. "This is an extraordinary grouping of Abstract Expressionist work, in which each painting is of the highest museum quality and has the potential to achieve record prices at auction."

Rothko's *No. 15* with its impressive scale and glorious red and yellow colors demonstrates extraordinary power and monumentality. 1952 was a groundbreaking year for the Abstract Expressionists and it was Rothko's most creative year. With this painting his mesmerizing use of intense color is evidenced in an unprecedented manner. The painting's large scale (90" x 77") was Rothko's optimum format and nearly consumes the viewer. With *No. 15*, one can see how Rothko set out to shape the viewer's experience. The painting's scale forces it into the viewer's environment. There are few better examples of Rothko's signature style. For this reason, *No. 15* has the potential to set a new world record, as it did when previously sold at auction in 1999.

"I start by painting the entire canvas white. As other colors are added, it becomes less intense. I add black to bring back the intensity, [for black is the color which] burns with the possibility of all colors."

– Sam Francis

Black, with its cell-like forms suggesting both microcosmic and/or macrocosmic entities, reflects Francis's detached world view and his deeply spiritual and meditative approach to art. Having begun to paint while bed-ridden after an airplane crash in 1943, he became obsessed with patterns of light and the "play of light on the ceiling" as manifested in this work. What interested him most, however, was what he described as the "quality of light itself, not just the play of light. But the substance of which light is made." *Black* celebrates this fascination, displaying an amorphous swarm of black cells at the center of the canvas that generates attention at the heart of the work and gives a vague sense of non-symmetrical structure. Radiating with the vibrant energy of this color, the black swarm of cells seems to burn like coals, bound into a unique, almost life-like entity.

Black was originally acquired by Franz Meyer of the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1955 when Meyer visited Francis's Paris studio. While acquiring works for the museum, Meyer was able to choose top works for himself, including *Black*.

"There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless."

- Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko in a 1943 letter to The New York Times, articulating the tenets of the new abstract art.

Adolph Gottlieb, like Rothko was a member of the New York School and one of "The Ten" Abstract Expressionists. His seminal *Burst* paintings presented two individual images, an irregular spherical shape with a soft halo around it and an expressionist, jagged edged cluster, both acting as intriguing metaphors. In *Untitled*, the richly colored sphere hovers, glows, vibrates, and continually shifts. It is mesmerizing in its isolation and rich, dark tone, perhaps suggesting a setting sun. The artist's late minimalist works, including this one, are a conversation in which the individual parts interact with one another, creating something ambiguous, as the artist intended. Painted during his breakthrough years, *Untitled* is a very rare, early work that contrasts strong reds against a black burst. With an estimate of \$2,000,000-3,000,000, this work's starting estimate is already a record price for the artist.

Auction: Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale
May 13, 2008

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 \$200 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.

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about this Christie's sale can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

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