

For Immediate Release

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MASTERPIECES BY BACON & RICHTER LEAD CHRISTIE'S LONDON SALES OF POST WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART IN FEBRUARY 2008



Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Triptych 1974-77* (estimate on request)

**Post War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale
Christie's London ~ Wednesday 6 February 2008 at 7:00pm**

London – Christie's **Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale** on Wednesday, 6 February 2008 will offer an unrivalled selection of 55 works of art from both the European and American Post-War era, together with major stars of the Contemporary world. Featuring masterpieces from some of the most renowned names in 20th Century Art including Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gerhard Richter, Lucio Fontana, Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly and Richard Prince, the sale is estimated in the region of £70 million.

“We are incredibly excited to present an amazing selection of works, led by one of the greatest Bacon triptychs still in private hands. This tightly selected sale consists of works of the highest quality available by a range of artists from the Post-War years to recent times, including some of the shining lights of the Chinese contemporary scene. We hope that this sale will build upon our continued dominance of this market,” says **Pilar Ordovas, Head of Post War & Contemporary Art, Christie's London.**

Perhaps the most important triptych by **Francis Bacon** (1909-1992) ever to appear at auction leads the sale. 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). One of the finest and most mysterious of Bacon's paintings from the 1970s, *Triptych 1974-77* was 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. *Please see separate press release for further information.*

Painted in 1966, *Zwei Liebespaare*, is a masterpiece by German artist **Gerhard Richter** (b. 1932) painted at the height of his involvement with Pop (estimate in the region of £6 million / \$12 million) (*pictured right*). Acquired from the artist by the mother of the present owner, the work has been on long-term loan to the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich. At Christie's recent auction of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* in New York on 13 November 2007, Richter's *Düsenjäger (JetFighter)*, 1963,



sold for \$11,241,000 / £5,430,435, setting a world record price for the artist at auction. *Please see separate press release for further information.* Three further works from the artist include *Italienische Landschaft*, 1966 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000) and *Abstraktes Bild*, 1981 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000) both offered from the collection of publisher Bernd F. Lunkewitz and *Abstraktes Bild*, 1985 (estimate: £1,500,000-2,000,000).



Appearing at auction for the first time, *Palm Springs Jump*, 1982 by **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960-1988) is an exceptional and electrifying work made in a surge of drug- and music-fuelled creativity during the heady days when he had just broken through to star status (estimate on request) (*pictured left*). The master of Pop Art **Andy Warhol** (1928-1987) is represented by five works in the sale including *Judy Garland*, executed in 1979, a silkscreen on canvas in two parts presents a coiffed and bejewelled

image of the actress against pure white and regal blue backgrounds (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000).

Executed in 1965, the monumental *Concetto spaziale, Attesa* is thought to be the most important work by **Lucio Fontana** (1899-1968) to appear at auction (estimate: £3,500,000-5,500,000) (*illustrated right*). The smooth, red surface is interrupted by one single, long straight slash over a metre long. It is perhaps a tribute to the rarity of this superlative work that it bears a dedication from Fontana to Teresita, his wife, on the reverse. Indeed, throughout the years this work has often been referred to and known as the ‘Teresita’.



In **Richard Prince's** (b. 1949) *Settlement Nurse*, 2003 (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000) the title character joins the cast of unlikely art-world protagonists who populate Richard Prince's body of work, such as Marlboro men, biker chicks, celebrities and naughty nurses. A popular subject which Prince has regularly visited over recent years, the fetishistic connotations of the nurse in pulp fiction from earlier decades would be explored in Prince's famous photograph of supermodel Kate Moss in a nurse's outfit. This fetishisation is accentuated in *Settlement Nurse* by the removal of any background details. The nurse floats, deprived of context, in her own unsettling, lurid, painterly world.

With the market for Chinese contemporary art continuing to attract international interest, the sale features a number of works by prominent artists including *Le père de l'artiste*, 1995 (estimate: £300,000-400,000) and *Mao Rouge*, 2000 (estimate: £200,000-300,000) by **Yan Pei-Ming** (b. 1960) one of the most exciting expressionist painters of his generation. Also offered is *Le Cimetière du monde des signes*, 1994 by **Chen Zhen** (1955-2000) (estimate: £280,000-320,000), one of the leading members of China's international avant-garde who prior to his untimely death in 2000 was a rising international art star, and *Red, Yellow, Blue*, 1997 by **Liu Ye** (b. 1964) (estimate: £300,000-500,000).



On Thursday, 7 February 2008 Christie's will pay tribute to R.B. Kitaj (1932-2007), a celebrated artist and the originator of the 'School of London.' **The Collection of R.B. Kitaj** comprises over 50 works from the painter's personal collection, the majority of which were created by artists he associated with the 'School of London' such as Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach, David Hockney and of course Kitaj himself. The works pay a moving and

insightful testimony to the friendships between Kitaj and these fellow artists, many of whom are now major figures in the Post-War and Contemporary Art field. This highly personal collection includes rare works, some of them gifts from the artists, and many of them appear at auction for the first time including oil paintings, drawings and prints including *Francis Bacon*, 1951 (estimate: £100,000-150,000) by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) (*picture above*); the collection is estimated in the region of £3 million. *Please see separate press release for further information*

The **Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale** on Thursday, 7 February 2008 is divided into two sessions and presents an excellent opportunity for both established and new collectors with estimates ranging from £5,000 to in excess of £500,000. The sale of over 280 lots includes strong sections devoted to Post-War French, Spanish and Italian Art, American Post-War and Pop Art, German Contemporary and Chinese Contemporary Art. Amongst the highlights in the morning session are a number of works by **Andy Warhol** including *Portrait of Conrad Black*, 1982 (estimate: £80,000-120,000) (*illustrated right*); *Jackie* (1964) (estimate £600,000-800,000) and *Campbell's Soup Can (Tomato Soup)* (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Other highlights include **Joan Mitchell's**, *Untitled* (estimate: £350,000-450,000), **Lucio Fontana's** *Concetto spaziale* (1966-67) (estimate: £200,000-300,000) and **Zao Wou-Ki's**, *8.4.70* (1970) (estimate: £180,000-220,000) amongst others. The afternoon session is led by two works by **Damien Hirst** (b. 1965), *A Beautiful Thing To Do*, 2003 (estimate: £500,000-700,000) and *Locanda Locatelli*, 1997-1998 (estimate: £400,000-600,000). The sale also includes **Rudolf Stingel's** (b. 1956), *Untitled*, 1997 (estimate: £200,000-300,000) and **Anselm Reyle's** (b. 1970), *Untitled*, 2005 (estimate: £100,000-150,000).



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A selection of images is available on request

Notes to Editors

Exhibition Tour

- 14 & 15 January 2008: Christie's New York
- 22 & 23 January 2008: 140 Royal Palm Way, Suite 103, Palm Beach, Florida, USA
- 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.

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.

Record for Lucio Fontana

The current record for any work by Lucio Fontana is *Concetto Spaziale, Attese*, 1965 sold at Sotheby's New York in June 2007 for £2,484,000 / £4,909,090

Christie's Post-War & Contemporary Art

Christie's is the leading marketplace internationally for Post-War and Contemporary Art with global sales in the first half of 2007 totalling £459 million / \$914 million. Christie's New York *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale* in May 2006 became the most valuable auction ever in the category, and the second highest art auction in history totalling \$384,654,400. In June 2007, the highest ever European sale total for *Post-War and Contemporary Art* was achieved at Christie's London when the evening sale realised £74.1 million / \$147.3 million.

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.