

**For Immediate Release**

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## **RARE PRINTS AT CHRISTIE'S IN MARCH**



**Old Master, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Modern and Contemporary Prints**

**Christie's London**

**Wednesday, 28 March 2007 at 10:30 am & 2:00 pm**

**London** – A roll call of works by “superstars who are responsible for iconic, instantly recognizable images” will be offered in Christie's *Old Master, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Modern and Contemporary Prints* sale, on Wednesday 28 March 2007, says Richard Lloyd, Head of Prints London. Highlights include 16 exceptional works from the Private Collection of Franz Koenigs, featuring ten extremely rare working proofs by Goya from his *Disasters of War* series, which record how the artist himself truly intended the series to look. Other important works include a very rare set of three portraits by Pablo Picasso, *Portrait de Françoise à la Résille* 1953 (*illustrated above*) which are estimated to fetch between £100,000 and £150,000. Over 500 lots will be offered, with estimates starting at £500 through to £200,000. The sale is expected to realise in excess of £2.5million.

*“Prints have been made for over 500 years. Nearly every major artist has been a printmaker or worked in the field, so collectors have an enormous range to choose from”* says Richard Lloyd. *“Even though prices have risen strongly in recent years, with our London Prints sales realizing over £12 million in 2006, it is still possible to own signed works by big names without spending millions.”*

Franz Koenigs (1881-1941), international businessman, founder of Rhodius Koenigs bank and passionate art collector, started his collection with prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, at the age of just 17. Koenigs' essentially instinctive and self-taught eye amassed a collection of exceptional works which he allowed enthusiasts, scholars, other collectors and even royalty to view. Christie's is proud to be offering 16 works from this collection in the *Old Master, Modern and Contemporary Prints* sale, following the huge success of works from the Koenig Collection sold in the *Old Master Drawings* sale in New York, January 2007.

Ten exceedingly rare working proofs from Goya's famous *Disasters of War* series lead the Koenigs Collection. It is unprecedented in modern times to be offering ten of these proofs in one sale. Their rarity and importance is due to Goya's decision, despite working on the series for over ten years (1810-1820), that the publication of such damning evidence of mankind's self destructive ability would run too great a risk of reprisal from the authorities. As a result, the plates were hidden away.

Eventually discovered by Goya's son Javier, the plates were finally printed, 35 years after the artist's death, by the Spanish Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1863. Printed in the style of the day, with a heavy layer of surface ink, the resulting prints completely misunderstood Goya's aesthetic intentions. Fortunately, as Goya worked on the plates he printed several proofs, which are the only records of how the artist himself truly intended the series to look.



These prints are unique historical and artistic documents. Examining them provides an insight into Goya, the master, at work in his atelier. In *Tambien estos* ('*These too*') the slightly pale oval patch to the right of the standing figure in the centre (*illustrated left*) is thought to be caused by the grease of Goya's thumb print, which he inadvertently placed on the copper plate, reducing the biting effect of the acid (estimate: £20,000-30,000). Goya joined

prints within the *Disasters of War* series together by their titles, as demonstrated in *Será lo mismo* (estimate: £20,000-30,000) and *Tanto y más* (estimate: £20,000-30,000), which run together to state Goya's prediction of the brutality of future conflicts: '*It will be the same*' or '*Even worse*'. *Duro es el paso!* ('*It's a hard step!*') reflects Goya's decision to evade details that divulge who is who in the scenes that he portrayed; those about to be hung could be Spaniards or equally French, whilst the title exemplifies Goya's dark humour (estimate: £30,000-50,000).

Rembrandt Harmensz. Van Rijn's rare and early work *Woman bathing her Feet at a Brook*, 1658 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) will also be offered from the Koenig's collection (*illustrated right*). Rembrandt's use of chiaroscuro lighting adds stark drama to this female nude, which possesses the power and fluidity of his drawings executed at this time. Rembrandt softened the final image by printing onto a warm-toned yellowish Japanese paper, which was a scarce and expensive commodity in 17<sup>th</sup> century Holland.



The Modern works from the Koenigs Collection consist of seven prints by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Highlights include *La Danse au Moulin Rouge*, 1897 (estimate: £150,000-250,000), a very rare print with particularly fresh colours (*illustrated on page three*), this is from an edition of only 20 prints, 12 of which are in public collections, the existence and whereabouts of the other eight remains uncertain. *Idylle Princièrre*, 1897 (estimate: £120,000-180,000) is also a rare,

particularly vibrant work capturing the private off stage dramas of the theatre, a more reserved depiction of which is shown in *Au Concert*, 1896 (estimate: £30,000-50,000). Other classic Lautrecs portraying Parisian life are offered with estimates starting at just £6,000 for *Brandès et le Bary*, *dans Cabotins*, 1894 (estimate: £6,000-8,000), *Au Moulin Rouge: L'Union Franco-Russe*, 1893 (estimate: £7,000-10,000), *May Belfort (grande planche)*, 1895 (estimate: 15,000-25,000) and *Le Suisse, Menu*, 1896 (estimate: £10,000-15,000).



Elsewhere in the sale, a star lot is Picasso's *Portrait de Françoise à la Résille, I, II, III*, 1953 (estimate: £100,000 - 150,000). This is the first time that all three states have been offered together at auction (*illustrated on page 1*). Further highlights include Theodore Gericault's *Boxeurs*, 1818 (estimate: £20,000-30,000) and Claude Pissarro's monotype *Baigneuse debout et Baigneuse agenouillé, circa 1895-96* (estimate: £40,000-60,000), whilst a collection of thirty works by Paul Cesar Helleu offer an affordable glimpse into Belle Époque society in 19<sup>th</sup> century France, with estimates from £1,000 to £5,000.



Contemporary prints are led by Roy Lichtenstein's *Reverie*, 1965 (*illustrated left*) which is estimated to realise between £50,000 and £70,000. Other highlights include a very rare set of Cy Twombly *Sketches*, 1967 (estimate: £40,000-60,000), Andy Warhol's diamond dust *Superman*, from *Myths*, 1981 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and a set of Warhol's *Cowboys and Indians* (estimate: £25,000-35,000).

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*A selection of images is available on request*

#### Public Viewing:

Friday 23 March 9.00 am - 4.30 pm

Sunday 25 March 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Monday 26 March 9.00 am - 4.30 pm

Tuesday 27 March 9.00 am - 8.00 pm

#### Notes to Editors

Christie's London established the world auction record for a print at auction when Pablo Picasso's *Le Repas Frugal (Bloch 1; Baer 2 II a2)*, 1904, sold for £657,250/\$1,173,341 on 30 November 2004; Christie's also holds the world auction record for a Rembrandt print at

auction with his drypoint *Christ presented to the People; oblong Plate*, 1655 which realized £528,000/\$935,341 on 10 December 1991. Sales of Prints are held ten times a year, four in New York and six in London. Christie's is proud to have pioneered themed sales and print collections, the success of which is reflected in the superb results for the Albrecht Dürer collection of the late Count Antoine Seilern in 1998, which realised £1,211,613/1,984,622, the Rembrandt collection of Walter J. Johnson in 1997, which realised £1,624,086/\$2,619,495 and the Rembrandt collection of G.A.H Buisman in 2006, which was 100% sold and realised £854,160/\$1,488,800/€1,237,677. The current market for prints is very strong, with the sales at Christie's London in 2006 realising in excess of £12 million.

### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 marks the highest total in company and in art auction 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, 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 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