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Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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CHARACTER, CHARM AND CUTTING EDGE CHIC: 20th Century Decorative Art & Design at Christie's in April



20th Century Decorative Art & Design
Tuesday, 7 April at 2.00 pm
Christie's King Street

London – Showcasing a century of visionary creativity and experimentation full of character and charm, through to the cutting edge chic of contemporary works, Christie's auction of *20th Century Decorative Art & Design* will be held on Tuesday 7 April 2009. This carefully edited sale features over 100 lots, each exemplifying strong aesthetic appeal, historical significance, good provenance and excellent condition, with estimates ranging from £3,000 to £300,000. Tracing the decades and styles that captivated generations and continue to inspire to this day, this sale follows the international success of works in the category offered from the collection of *Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé*, in Paris, which realised £52.6 million and set 12 new artists records, led by the Eileen Gray *'Dragons' armchair*, circa 1917-1919 which sold for £19.4 million, setting a world record for most expensive work of 20th Century Decorative Art at auction. Highlights range from 40 stunning glass vases by Emile Gallé, Gabriel Argy-Rousseau and Daum Frères, from a private European collection, to furnishings designed by the Italian luminary Giò Ponti and an outstanding group of limited edition works by Marc Newson and Ron Arad, which characterise the progressive tendencies that inaugurated the new Century. These include many of the top lots of the sale and are led by Newson's *Orgone Chair*, 1999 (estimate: £200,000-300,000), illustrated above right.



Glassware - Bursting with vitality, the myriad of tantalizing colours, forms and designs presented by the 40 glass vases by Emile Gallé, Gabriel Argy-Rousseau and Daum Frères are individually and collectively enchanting. Spanning the turn of the Century through to the mid 1920s, they are laden with fruit, berries, flowers, animals and wildlife and clearly illustrate why their makers were so revered and remain important to the history of decorative art. **Emile Gallé** is one of the major forces at the forefront of the French Art Nouveau movement. Having studied botany in his youth, Gallé's name is synonymous with glassware celebrating naturalism and floral motifs. This is reflected in his rich, ochre red vase which is ensconced with lilies, circa 1925 (estimate: £25,000-35,000); his ethereal butterfly vase, circa 1900 (estimate: £25,000-35,000); his luminescent pink and green waterlily vases, circa 1900 (each with an estimate of £6,000-8,000 illustrated above left) and the striking elephants vase, circa 1900 (estimate: £25,000-35,000). Utilising the ancient technique of *pâte de verre* or "glass paste," which was revived in the late 19th century **Gabriel Argy-Rousseau** was held in the highest regard

for mastering the technique demonstrated in his wolf vase, 1926 (estimate: £15,000 - 20,000), *illustrated top centre of page one*, whilst only producing by hand on a small scale and never entering into mass production. The one vase in the collection by **Daum Frères**, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £25,000-35,000) masterfully creates the impression that it is glowing from within, *illustrated right*. Elsewhere in the sale there are three lamps by Daum Frères which range in estimate from £7,000 to £15,000 and a superb *Rose* lamp by Emile Gallé, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £15,000-20,000).



Art Nouveau (1890-1914) - In addition to the glassware from this period already detailed, examples are to be found elsewhere in a red Perrusson Décuisses earthenware fire surround, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £6,000-8,000), a Hector Guimard Jardinière, *circa* 1900, and two pieces of furniture by Emile Gallé: a wonderful *selette aux papillons*, inlaid with butterflies and lily-of-the-valley, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and *Les Blés* chair decorated with poppies, wheat and potato flowers, *circa* 1900 (estimate: £10,000-15,000). An example of this chair was exhibited at the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1900.



Wiener Werkstätte (1903-1932) - Works by Josef Hoffman, one of the three founders of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903, are offered in the sale led by a candelabra, 1924 (estimate: £20,000-30,000). A production community of visual artists, the Vienna Workshop's vision - which united architects, designers and artists - was to make art and design that was accessible to everyone. Their distinctive style of simple shapes, minimum decoration and geometric patterns naturally complimented the the exterior and interior design of Purkersdorf Sanatorium, for which two of Hoffman's works were created: the *Purkesdorf Sanatorium*



Billiard Room Chair, 1904 (estimate: £7,000-9,000) and *Bookcase*, 1904 (estimate: £3,000-4,000), *both illustrated left*. The Sanatorium was a place of healing waters and physical therapy, commissioned by Viktor Zuckekandl and built between 1904-5. The Wiener Werkstätte, unlike some of the Arts and Crafts movement workshops in Britain, did not embrace mass production, and closed in 1932.

Art Deco (1925-1939) - A glorious array of seven Art Deco sculptures, by Demetre Chiparus, Professor Otto Poertzel, Maurice Rivière and Claire-Jean Roberte Colinet, dazzle with detail and glamour. They are led by Chiparus's *Leotard Dancer*, *circa* 1928 (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and *Civa*, *circa* 1928 (estimate: £70,000-90,000). *Leotard Dancer*, *illustrated right*, is particularly rare, with only two others known to exist. The lot offered in this sale is numbered '1' and may have been the first to be executed.



Giò Ponti is recognised to be one of the most influential Italian architects, industrial designers and furniture designers of the twentieth century. Christie's are pleased to present five superb lots, which epitomise the powerful linearity of his work and were designed as the furnishings for the legal office of Luigi Licitra. An office suite, *circa* 1950 (estimate: £20,000-30,000) comprises a stunning desk, two wall mounted cabinets, a wall panel with brass hook and three side chairs; a suite of striking white reception furnishings (estimate: £5,000-8,000); a shelving suite, *circa* 1950 (estimate: £4,000-6,000); two ceiling lights, *circa* 1950 (estimate: £3,000-5,000); a writing desk and chair, *circa* 1950 (estimate: £5,000-8,000) and ten pairs of brass door handles which were designed in 1955 and manufactured by Olivari, all provide a rare opportunity for private collectors and institutions.

Elsewhere other key pieces of notable **mid-century design** include a *Danish* chair by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, 1946-50 (estimate: £12,000-15,000), *illustrated page one top left*, which is one of only five known to exist and one of only three upholstered plywood chairs designed for the Royal Festival Hall, Festival of Britain in 1951, by leading British designer Sir Robin Day, *circa* 1950 (estimate: £3,000-5,000). The Festival of Britain was an opportunity for Britain to define national identity and assert Post-War optimism. The exhibition buildings constructed on the South Bank of the River Thames were fitted with custom designed furniture by Day. With the redevelopment of the site in the 1960s, all of the original furnishings were discarded. This design was awarded a Gold Medal at the Milan Triennale in 1951.



Decorative beauty and whimsical intrigue are important qualities for any collection to possess, as they bring pleasure and inspiration which are central to the spirit of collecting. A Jaguar display model, 1938 (estimate: £4,000-6,000) by Frederick Gordon Crosby, an artist and sculptor who designed numerous car mascots and emblems, highlights the lasting impact that design can have. This leaping jaguar mascot, originally designed for SS Cars Ltd a company who were renamed *Jaguar Cars* in 1945, has endured



as one of the most iconic symbols of the post-war British Automobile industry. Elsewhere the colourful balance of Serge Poliakoff's 1960's abstract carpet and the dynamic bronze hunt scene by Franze Hagenhauer, *Die Jagd*, *circa* 1930 captivate and delight, as does the lithographed 1940s dining suite by Aldo Tura (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and, in a rather more provocative manner, the handwritten and signed Carlo Mollino New Years greetings card, 1959-60 (estimate: £3,000-5,000).

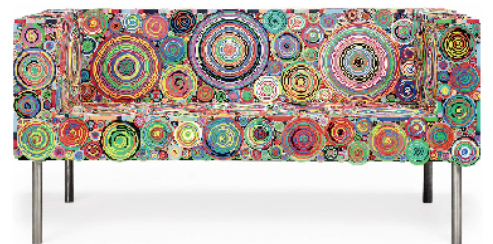


The **Contemporary Design** section concludes the sale and the century with a bang. Marc Newson and Ron Arad have redefined the boundaries of modern design and Christie's are pleased to present important works including a *Pod of Drawers* (estimate: £150,000-250,000) and *Orgone Chair* (estimate: £200,000-300,000) by Newson and a *Europa Settee* (estimate: £100,000-150,000) by Arad, alongside unique prototype works by Tom Dixon such as *Pylon table*, 2007 (estimate: £10,000-15,000).



Marc Newson's *Pod of Drawers*, *illustrated left*, was designed in 1987 and subsequently produced in a limited edition of 12. Unusually, for a young designer at time, Newson chose to interpret the cabinetry and surface treatments of the French early Art Deco creators, in particular the work of André Groult. It is this synthesis of the Antique with the Modern that infuses Newson's early experimental creations with their magnetism. The Pod of Drawers, together with the Lockheed Lounge of 1986 (sold at Christie's London on October 2007 for £748,500), inaugurated an aesthetic of visual weightlessness and metallic futurism that asserted Newson's prominence at the vanguard of contemporary design. Both designs were conceived as visions that would be sheathed

entirely in a seamless surface of aluminium, an impression that Newson would be able to fully realise with the Orgone series of 1993. The futuristic Orgone Chair offered in this sale is number five from an edition of six. Both Arad's *Europa Settee* (estimate: £100,000-150,000) and the *Two Legs and a Table* (estimate: £50,000 – 80,000) are futuristic in their forms. Another highlight, *Sushi Sofa* (estimate: £80,000-100,000) *illustrated right*, by Humberto & Fernando Campana, 2003, adds an infectious injection of multi-colours, which draws inspiration from Brazillian Street Life. It is number one from an edition of seven.



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Sale date:

20th Century Art & Design

Tuesday, 7 April at 2.00pm at Christie's London, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT

Public Viewing dates

Christie's London, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT on: 3 April to 6 April 1 2009.

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