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MILLION POUND MASTERPIECE LEADS FINEST LOWRY COLLECTION EVER OFFERED AT AUCTION

British Art Week, 5–8 June 2007

20th Century British Art

Friday, 8 June 2007

King Street – Christie's announce that they will offer for sale the finest and most comprehensive private collection of pictures by L.S. Lowry ever to appear at auction. Consisting of six paintings and representing the work of the artist from 1944 to 1963, the collection is led by *Good Friday, Daisy Nook*, a masterpiece last seen at auction in 1970 when it sold for £16,800 and set a record price for the artist at the time. It will be offered at Christie's in June with an estimate of £1,000,000-1,500,000. The entire collection is being offered by a private collector and is expected to realise in the region of £3 million.



Good Friday, Daisy Nook (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000) was painted in 1946 and portrays the Lancashire town of Daisy Nook in festival mood *illustrated left*. Traditionally, mill workers were confined to only two statutory days of holiday every year; Good Friday and Christmas Day. Every year on Good Friday, the town of Daisy Nook would stage a fair and provide entertainment to the local crowds. Managed by the Silcock family, whose name appears in the background of the painting, the fair regularly attracted huge numbers of people and still takes place to this day. The present painting depicts this annual

fair in 1946, the year after the end of the hostilities of the Second World War. The Ashton Reporter stated at the time that there were 'Record crowds at Daisy Nook', as people celebrated a return to the fair and a return to normal life. The painting reflects post-war cheer and relief and depicts crowds of energetic, colourful characters, many holding whirligigs and flags. Lowry painted another depiction of the fair which was acquired by the Government Art Collection in 1947. The work to be offered at Christie's is the superlative example and was last seen at auction in 1970 when it sold for £16,800, a record price for the artist at the time.

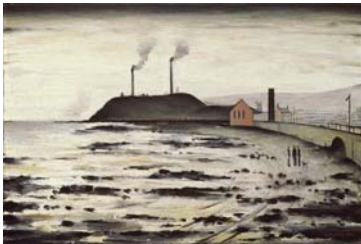
The Mansion, Pendlebury, dated 1944, is set in Lowry's home town and is expected to realise £250,000-350,000 *illustrated right*. The family had moved to Pendlebury in 1909 when L.S. Lowry was 22 years old, and he was to continue living there for almost 40 years. The current depiction of a mansion house reflects the artist's fascination with solitude as the lone mass of a building dominates the canvas. A crowd can be seen to huddle around the front door of the residence, echoing Lowry's words that 'where there's a quarrel there's always a crowd.... It's a great dram.'





Factories, Lancashire, dated 1947, is a more recognizable work by the artist. This industrial townscape, complete with numerous mills and smoking chimneys, is portrayed from an elevated angle which looks down on the crowds in an objectifying manner and shows the diminutive figures going about their business. This exceptional example of a Northern industrial townscape is expected to realise £500,000-800,000.

Beach and Promenade, dated 1948, is expected to realise £300,000-500,000 *illustrated right*. Another example of Lowry capturing the spirit of recreation, this time at the seaside, the viewpoint for the picture is elevated once again. However, the figures of this work reach down to the foreground of the canvas, and it is possible to make out the faces of the characters at the front of the crowd. Lowry spent many of his childhood holidays by the sea, visiting Lytham St. Anne's at Easter and Rhyl, on the North-West coast, in the summer.



Whitehaven, dated 1954, offers an alternative depiction of a seaside view *illustrated left*. The artist would often depict human forms isolated in industrial landscapes. In the present painting, three people and a dog, standing on the shore, are confined by a wall on one side and the sea to the other, with the looming presence of a mill dominating the skyline. This example is expected to realise £150,000-250,000.

Footbridge, South Shields, the latest of the works from the collection, is dated 1963. Lowry had a fascination with the sea, and often used the subject to reflect the insignificance of man and the isolation of human existence. Having retired in the 1950s, Lowry began to spend more time in the North East of England, often staying at the Seaburn Hotel in Sunderland, not far from South Shields. The present painting shows tiny figures crossing a bridge far away in the distance, with the foreground dominated by the sea. It is expected to realise £150,000-250,000.



L.S. Lowry, R.A. (1887-1976) was a curious character, dedicated to his art but always restrained by the Industrial movement that he portrayed. Lowry worked a '9 to 5' job with Pall Mall Property Company in Manchester until his retirement in 1952, and painted only in his spare time. Despite this restraint, he was hugely successful even within his lifetime; the Manchester City Art Gallery purchased *An Accident* in 1930, he was signed up to the Lefevre Gallery in London in 1939, he was elected an R.A. in 1962 and by 1967, the General Post Office issued a stamp reproducing one of his paintings. Lowry had been appointed official artist at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. He went on to turn down an O.B.E., a C.B.E., a C.H. (twice) and a knighthood on the grounds that he saw little point in receiving awards after the death of his mother.

In June 2007 Christie's will host *British Art Week* comprising auction sales, events and lectures dedicated to the history of British art and furniture. A selection of paintings, watercolours, furniture and sculpture representing

over 300 years of British art will be offered over 4 sales held between 5 and 8 June. *British Art Week* will include works by many renowned artists, including Bomberg, Lowry, Rossetti and Turner, as well as a selection of important English furniture.

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Images available on request
Visit Christie's on the web at www.christies.com

Notes to editors:

- Works of art to be sold during *British Art Week* will be on public view at Christie's, King Street, on 1 June and 3 to 7 June 2007. See www.christies.com for further details.

- *Good Friday, Daisy Nook* and selected highlights from the Collection will be on public view at the following locations:

King Street, London	19 to 22 March 2007
Christie's, Harrogate	22 to 23 March 2007
Christie's, New York	7 to 11 April 2007
Clandelboyne Courtyard, Belfast	24 April 2007
The Merrion Hotel, Dublin	25 to 27 April 2007
Christie's, Cheshire	30 May 2007
King Street, London	31 May to 7 June 2007

- Christie's have held market share in the category of 20th Century British Art for over 10 years. This market dominance has been further strengthened by the auctions in June and November 2006 which realized the highest ever totals in this field, achieving a combined total of £24.9 million. These auctions also set 11 world auction records for key artists in the field, including David Bomberg, Patrick Caulfield, Dame Elisabeth Frink, John Piper, William Scott and William Turnbull.

- Christie's dominate the market for L.S. Lowry at auction. In the auctions in June and November 2006, 31 works by the artist were offered, all of which sold for a combined total of £6.9 million. Included in the June sale was *The Liver Building, Liverpool* which sold for £1.1 million (3rd highest price for Lowry at auction) and in the November sale *A River Bank* sold for £1.4 million (2nd highest price for Lowry at auction).

- Since 1766, Christie's has established a rich history of selling British and Irish art and James Christie, the company's founder, was the subject of a portrait painted by his good friend Thomas Gainsborough. In 2006, the *International British and Irish Art* department realised £93.1 million (\$173.2 million / €136 million), a 50% increase on the sales total for 2005, strengthening our market share for the category and setting records for the highest ever sale total for an auction of 20th century British art (£12.4 million in June and £12.5 in November), as well as the highest ever price for a British work on paper (J.M.W. Turner's *The Blue Rigi*, which sold for £5.8 million in June). The five sales of paintings during *British Art Week* at King Street in November realised a total of £29.1, the highest ever total for a week of British art sales at Christie's.