

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S

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**FREUD MASTERPIECE TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK
POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING SALE IN MAY 2008**

- Freud's *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping* leads New York Art sales
- The painting will be on public view in London for the first time at a special exhibition at Christie's on 11th, 14th and 15th April



Lucian Freud (b. 1922), *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995 (estimate: \$25 million-\$35 million)

Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Christie's New York, 13 May 2008 at 7pm

'What do I ask of painting?' Freud once said, 'I ask it to astonish, disturb, seduce, convince.'
(Lucian Freud quoted in *Lucian Freud*, exh. cat., Tate Gallery London, 2002, p. 37).

London – The most important work by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) to appear at auction is among the leading highlights of Christie's New York **Post-War & Contemporary Art Evening Sale** on 13 May 2008. The life-size *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995, depicts a naked Sue Tilley, a benefits supervisor from London, and is estimated between \$25 million and \$35 million. Appearing at auction for the first time, the work is offered from a private European collection and its estimate reflects that it may establish a new world auction record for any

work by a living artist sold at auction. The masterpiece will be on public view for the first time in London at a special exhibition on 11, 14 and 15 April 2008 at Christie's King Street.

“As the global market leader for Post-War and Contemporary art and works by Lucian Freud, Christie's is honoured to have been entrusted with this masterpiece. Appearing at auction for the first time, this work has been featured in a number of the major Freud exhibitions and is expected to set a new world auction record for a work by any living artist when it is offered at Christie's New York in May 2008,” said **Pilar Ordovás, Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Christie's London.**

Benefits Supervisor Sleeping is one of the finest of Freud's paintings from the 1990s. The work depicts a vast naked woman, Sue Tilley, lying asleep on a worn out sofa and is a bold and imposing example of the stark power of Lucian Freud's realism. This picture is a simple and seemingly uncomposed depiction of one of the key features of Freud's art - the forceful and undeniable physical presence of people and things.

Sue Tilley was introduced to Freud by the Australian performance artist Leigh Bowery - himself the subject of several monumental and yet also tender portraits that Freud made in the early 1990s. Bowery, who recommended several sitters to Freud, attempted to find models for the artist whose physicality would appeal to him. Freud had greatly welcomed the new possibilities that the bulk of Bowery's own imposing figure had offered him and it was this that had prompted Bowery to think of his friend, 'Big Sue'.

Tilley, who is now the author of Bowery's biography, was nervous on first meeting Freud but like most of his sitters grew more comfortable and confident as she came to know him. After Freud's first picture of her, *Evening in the Studio* of 1993, which was originally to have also included Bowery and for which she was forced to lie on the bare floor in an extremely uncomfortable pose, Freud bought the dilapidated sofa that appears in this painting for her to lie on.

Christie's is the leading marketplace internationally for Post-War and Contemporary Art with global sales in 2007 totalling £772 million/\$1,560 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. Christie's holds the top five prices for Lucian Freud, including the world auction record which was set in New York in November 2007 for *IB and her Husband*, 1992 which sold for \$19,361,000/£9,353,140. The further top four prices have included: *Bruce Bernard*, 1992 (£7,860,000/\$15,533,596 at Christie's London); *Red Haired Man on a Chair*, 1962 – 1963 (£4,152,000/\$7,703,153 at Christie's London); *Naked Portrait*, 2002 (£3,928,000/\$7,287,569 at Christie's London) and *Man in a String Chair*, 1988–1989 (£4,152,000 /\$7,220,869 at Christie's London).

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A selection of images is available on request*

Notes to Editors:

International Exhibition Tour

- 11, 14 and 15 April 2008: Christie's London
- 9-13 May 2008: Christie's Rockefeller Center, New York

- The current world auction record for a work by a living artist is *Hanging Heart (Magenta / Gold)* by Jeff Koons (b.1955) which sold in New York on 14 November 2007 for \$23,561,000 / £11,335,033.

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This 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 expertise, as well as 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 in 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 and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.