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IMPORTANT 20TH CENTURY ITALIAN DESIGN COLLECTION AT CHRISTIE'S PARIS IN MAY 2008

The Collection of Anna and Alessandro Pron: Design Italien
Christie's Paris ~ 27 May 2008



Paris - Christie's Paris is pleased to announce the sale of **The Collection of Anna and Alessandro Pron: Design Italien** on 27 May 2008. Owners of the *Galerie Italienne*, based in Paris since 2001, the collection comprises 69 items of groundbreaking post-war Italian art and design by major designers such as Ettore Sottsass and Gino Moratta. The sale is estimated to fetch in excess of €1 million, with estimates ranging from €1.000 to €60.000.

20th century Italian design was first recognized internationally in the 1972 exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* at the New York Museum of Modern Art. This groundbreaking exhibition explored the socio-cultural association between Italian design and designers such as Ettore Sottsass, Gino Marotta and Andrea Branzi who form the core collection of Anna and Alessandro Pron.

Rich in the cultural background and stylistic history of post-war Italy, the collection reflects both the designers' and artists' desire to recreate their world through new environments and objects. One of the most important sections in the collection are a number of works of **Gino Marotta** (b. 1935), who in the mid 1960s started to recreate his world by producing works in methacrylate, a then new material. According to Marotta, methacrylate is *'the only resistant material which does not degenerate, because it is a high-tech material'*.

Settling in Rome in 1955, Marotta associated with and was inspired by like-minded artists such as De Kooning, Kline, Balla, Fontana and De Chirico. Illustrating the interaction between art and design was a 1964 project by Mana Art Gallery in Rome which saw three contemporary artists - Marotta, Castellani and Fontana - each design a double-faced door in methacrylate, (either white or deep brown) and produce it in an edition of three. The sale includes an example by Marotta which is estimated between €10.000 to €15.000.

For Marotta, methacrylate allowed him to explore the subject of nature, *Natura Artificiale*, in the urban context, a theme which first appeared in his work in 1964. The collection includes a number of important works from this period including 'Mare Artificiale' and 'Pioggia Artificiale', sculptures created in 1969 which explores the sea and rain landscapes (estimate: €40,000–60,000 each, *illustrated above*). Further highlights include the unique *Fiore* table in methacrylate executed for one of the most influential art dealers of the 20th century, Léo Castelli for the exhibition dedicated to Andy Warhol's *Flowers* (estimate: €20,000–30,000). *Natura* also extended to the animal world which Marotta widely explored and the sale will offer an impressive methacrylate pink ostrich, *Struzzo artificiale*, designed in 1968 (estimate: €30.000-40.000).

Ettore Sottsass (1917-2007), the greatest Italian designer of the last half century, is best known as the founder of the early 1980s Memphis collective and for designing iconic electronic products for Olivetti, as well as beautiful glass and ceramics. The collection includes a complete set of the glass series 'Capricci' (estimate: €20,000-25,000 for each



piece, *illustrated right*) and 'Esercizi' which he designed in 1998 for Marina Barovier and Gallery Bruno Bischofberger (6 lots with estimates ranging from €10.000 to €60.000). The sale will also offer limited edition furniture pieces designed by Sottsass for the Gallery Rocca6, who held the first major exhibition for the designer in Milan in 1985, and the Galerie Mourmans (estimates range from €2.000 to €50.000).

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Images available upon request

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Auction: 27 May 2008, Christie's, 9 Avenue Matignon 75008 Paris

Pre-Sale Viewing: 24, 25 and 26 May 2008

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