

For Immediate Release

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***CHRISTIE'S SPRING SALES OF POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART OFFER
MASTERWORKS RANGING FROM ROTHKO TO MURAKAMI***

Post-War and Contemporary Art

May 14 & 15, 2003

New York, NY – Masterworks by Mark Rothko including the jewel of the renowned Seagram Collection, a classic and pristine Andy Warhol portrait of Marlon Brando, and the first important three-dimensional figure composed by acclaimed Japanese artist Takashi Murakami are just a few of the many highlights in Christie's robust spring 2003 sales of Post-War and Contemporary Art. The sales at Rockefeller Center on May 14 and 15 will also offer important works by Arshile Gorky, Frank Stella, Yves Klein, Gerhard Richter, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and others from a variety of private collections.

The top lot of the sale is Arshile Gorky's 1947 masterpiece, Year After Year (estimate on request), a boldly colored classic image executed in the artist's signature style during the pinnacle of his career. Only a small number of Gorky's major paintings exist, due to a tragic fire in the artist's Connecticut studio in 1946 which destroyed much of his current work, and works from 1947 are rarer still as virtually every work from this critical year is in a major museum collection. The Museum of Modern Art, The Israel Museum, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and The Whitney Museum of American Art all own significant works by Gorky from 1947. Year After Year is one of the last 1947 works by Gorky still in private hands and it was once part of the renowned Gifford Phillips collection. This masterpiece by one of the pioneers of the Post-War Abstract Expressionist movement in America last appeared on the market in November 1993 when it fetched a then-record price at Christie's.

Another major highlight is Mark Rothko's No. 9 (White and Black on Wine), 1958 (estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000), a rare and monumental landscape-format painting by the artist that is also the only Rothko universally accepted as belonging to the first series of mural paintings produced for the

artist's now-legendary aborted commission for the Four Seasons restaurant in New York. It is well documented that Rothko backed out of the commission for the restaurant, which occupies the lower floors of the renowned Seagram building, citing a moral dilemma concerning his works hanging in such opulent surroundings. Not only does this painting occupy a place of particular importance in Rothko's personal history, it is also a superb example of his late 1950s work exhibiting the bold heavy colors, imposing scale and powerful balance of contrasting tones that are present in most celebrated paintings. Rothko considered the work to be among his most important throughout his lifetime and included No. 9 (White and Black on Wine) in his 1961 MoMA retrospective and his one-man retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery the same year.

Speaking of Rothko and the Four Seasons commission, Christie's will also offer Rothko's *Brown and Blacks in Reds*, 1957 (estimate: \$6,000,000–8,000,000), the highlight of the Seagram Collection, a collection meticulously assembled to accentuate the firm's landmark headquarters at 375 Park Avenue in New York. An extremely painterly work, *Brown and Blacks in Reds* is an imposing and deeply resonant work that is a classic example of the artist's mature style. It is also the only painting by Rothko in the renowned Seagram Collection and it long hung in the executive reception area on the fifth floor of the firm's celebrated building. Also from the Seagram Collection is Larry Rivers' *The Accident*, 1957 (estimate: \$200,000–300,000), a masterpiece by the artist and a chaotic composition that conveys the primal energy of its subject.

Christie's will offer nine important works from a private European collection, ranging from classic Abstract Expressionist works to Pop masterpieces to contemporary sculpture. Highlights include Sam Francis' *Big Orange*, 1954–55 (estimate: \$2,000,000–3,000,000), a seminal work from the artist's most important period and one of the few 1950s Francis paintings still in private hands. Executed while Francis enjoyed a creative outburst while living in Paris, *Big Orange* was once owned by the noted critic, art historian and museum director Dr. Franz Meyer, and was part of many important Abstract Expressionist exhibitions throughout Europe and the U.S. in the 1950s.

Another major highlight from this collection is Andy Warhol's 1962 painting *Dance Diagram (Fox Trot: "The Lindy Tuck-In Turn Man")* (estimate: \$2,000,000–3,000,000), from the rare series of *Dance Diagrams* that Warhol executed in the early 1960s—the same time that Warhol was painting advertisements for body-building and beauty products as well as his now-famous Campbell's soup cans. Of the seven paintings in the *Dance Diagram* series, six are in museum collections or foundations.

The sale will offer a wide selection of works by Andy Warhol from a variety of private collections. Among the most famous and enduring of Warhol's images is one of his first, the *Campbell's soup can*, and *Campbell's Soup Can (Pepper Pot)*, 1962 (estimate: \$1,500,000–2,000,000) is a classic example from the Tremaine Family Collection. Having elevated the banal and the ordinary to celebrity status with his

honorific soup cans, Warhol then reversed the process with his next series of iconic portraits of Hollywood celebrities, which revealed stars such as Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor to be brand images for another mass consumer industry. From this latter series, Marlon, 1966 (estimate: \$4,000,000–5,000,000), is an unforgettable image of a leather-clad Marlon Brando resting on his Triumph motorbike in a publicity still from the 1953 movie The Wild One. Executed on raw, unpainted linen, the rare material quality of this painting echoes the rough masculinity of the subject. One of just three paintings from this series, Marlon is in pristine condition and is an icon of Pop Art.

By the time Warhol painted Marlon in 1966, he himself had become a star and idol in his own right. Warhol's largely self-constructed face was better known than any other artist's in America and his self-image was as much a conscious act of self-promotion as a mask to hide behind. His 1966–67 series of self-portraits, including Self-Portrait, 1967 (estimate: \$900,000–1,200,000), reflects that duality by presenting Warhol's face half-hidden in shadow and semi-abstract.

Frank Stella's Bethlehem's Hospital, 1959 (estimate: \$5,000,000–7,000,000), is one of the artist's earliest, large-scale "Black Paintings," long considered a watershed in the history of Post-War American painting. Stella's "Black Paintings" were dramatically different than other paintings executed at the end of the Abstract Expressionist decade and laid the foundation for the advent of Minimalism. Bethlehem's Hospital is the first major "Black Painting" to appear on the market since Christie's sold Turkish Mambo in the famous sale of the Victor and Sally Ganz Collection in 1997.

Further highlights include Yves Klein's RE 2, 1958 (estimate: \$3,000,000–4,000,000), the second painting from the artist's highly celebrated series of sponge reliefs. Christie's sold Klein's RE 1 for a record price of \$6.7 million in November 2000. Pater (estimate: \$1,500,000–2,000,000), executed by Jean-Michel Basquiat in 1982, at the height of his creative development and fame, presents a generalized, archetypal image of a father scrawled in brilliant color against a dramatic abstract background. Executed in Basquiat's signature raw style, Pater presents an ambiguous figure that is both totemic and personalized, complete with a halo above his head and graffitied genitalia.

Painted in 1987 from a photograph Gerhard Richter took of the German countryside around Laachersee, Laacher Wiese (Laacher Meadow) (estimate: \$2,600,000–3,200,000) is an excellent example of the artist's heralded landscapes of the late 1980s, which blur the distinction between the photographic and the painterly. "Untitled" (Fortune Cookie Corner), 1990 (estimate: \$600,000–800,000), an installation piece composed of approximately 10,000 fortune cookies, is the first of Felix Gonzalez-Torres' "generous offerings" works, which breaks the traditional divide between viewer and artwork by inviting the viewer to eat a cookie and receive a fortune.

Following Christie's record-breaking sales of Takashi Murakami's Hiropon (May 2002) and When the Double Helix is Aroused I Hear a Familiar Voice (November 2002), Christie's will offer the acclaimed Japanese artist's first three-dimensional figure, Miss Ko², 1997 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000) this spring. Executed in the artist's signature Japanimation style, Miss Ko² is every straight male's fantasy with flowing blonde hair, huge innocent eyes, a tiny waist and mile-long legs.

Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale, May 15

The morning session of the day sale will offer an outstanding selection of masterworks, many of which exemplify the groundbreaking art historical movements of the 20th century. A strong selection of Abstract Expressionist works is led by Adolph Gottlieb's Blast II, 1957 (estimate: \$150,000-200,000), from the prestigious Seagram Collection. Leading the Pop selection are Wayne Thiebaud's Sugar, Salt and Pepper, 1970 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000) and Gerhard Richter's Wolkenstudie (Study for Clouds), 1970 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000). A special grouping of Color Field painters includes Morris Louis' Number 1-37, 1962 (estimate: \$80,000-120,000) and Helen Frankenthaler's Herald, 1970 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000).

The afternoon session will feature several works by Takashi Murakami, including the large painting Dream of Opposite World, 1999 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000), and the enormous helium balloon Guru Guru, 1998 (estimate: \$60,000-80,000). Untitled, 1996 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) is a startling and unique work by Maurizio Cattelan featuring a taxidermied white rabbit with ludicrously elongated ears. Photography highlights include excellent examples by Thomas Struth, Gregory Crewdson, and Cindy Sherman including Untitled Film Still #7, 1978 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000) and Untitled #85, 1981 (estimate: \$100,000-150,000).

<i>Auction:</i>	<i>Post-War and Contemporary Art evening sale</i>	<i>May 14 at 7 p.m.</i>
	<i>Post-War and Contemporary Art day sale</i>	<i>May 15 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.</i>

<i>Viewing:</i>	<i>Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza</i>	<i>May 9-14</i>
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Christies.com: The sales of Post-War and Contemporary Art will be featured on www.christies.com in a special subsite which will include a gallery talk with Brett Gorry, International Specialist Head, Post-War Art. All lots in the sales can be viewed online, along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®. The Post-War and Contemporary Art subsite will be featured on christies.com two weeks prior to the sale date.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com