

Press Release

**CHRISTIE'S**

佳士得香港有限公司

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**WALTER SPIES TO LEAD THE SALE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND  
20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY INDIAN PICTURES AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG**

*Southeast Asian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian Pictures*

*6 July 2003*



*Walter Spies (Germany 1895-1942)  
View across the Sawahs to Gunung Agung  
oil on board, 62 × 91 cm.  
Estimate: HK\$4,500,000-8,000,000  
(US\$576,900-1,026,000)*

*Hong Kong – The Southeast Asian Pictures sale at Christie's Hong Kong on 6 July offers an unprecedented selection by the masters of Southeast Asia art as well as a strong selection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian Pictures.*

*Indo-European Pictures*

*The Indo-European section is exceptionally strong this season featuring works of Walter Spies, Willem Hofker, Miguel Covarrubias, Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès and Rudolf Bonnet.*

*The works of Walter Spies (1895-1942), the renowned German artist whose images of Bali have created a vision of the island for posterity, have been breaking auction records for the last three seasons. Christie's will offer another masterpiece by Spies, View across the Sawahs to Gunung Agung in the spring sale (Estimate: HK\$4,500,000-8,000,000/ US\$576,900-1,026,000). This*

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*work dates from the artist's much celebrated 'magic-realist' period, during which Spies depicts his familiar motifs of Bali – the farmers, the paddy-fields, the animals and the tropical vegetation. In addition, he applied profound perspectives and a clever manipulation of light and shadow that highlights and outlines his subjects to such a dramatic effect, giving a translucent quality as well as spiritual depth to the painting.*

*Comparisons between View across the Sawahs to Gunung Agung and The landscape and her Children (sold by Christie's Hong Kong in October 2002 for a record breaking HK\$8,874,100/ US\$1,153,633) suggest that they were painted successively. Both works have one half of the composition taken up by the dark shadow of the sugar-palms, and are balanced in the same way with a smaller mass of shadow to the opposite side. Almost mirror image of one another, they contribute to the theory expounded by some critics that the present lot was painted as counter-piece to The Landscape and her Children, commonly regarded as the best representation of the artist's Balinese oeuvres.*

*Completed oils by Dutch artist Willem Hofker (1902-1981) are seldom seen on the market and Christie's is honoured to be offering a rare oil painting, Balinese Beauties, by the artist (Estimate: HK\$500,000-700,000/ US\$64,100-89,700). What distinguishes Hofker's works from many foreign and native artists who were also painting in Bali is the theatrical quality. In Hofker's paintings, the models were always poised and self-possessed, as if in the middle of the stage, conscious of the glances of their contemporaries as well as the viewer today.*

## *Vietnamese Pictures*

*The sale also features important works by Le Pho, Vu Cao Dam and Mai Thu, who belonged to the privileged group of the first generation Vietnamese artists. Leading this section is Women and Child in the Garden by Le Pho (1907-2001) (Estimate: HK\$280,000-320,000/ US\$35,900-41,000), which best exemplified the preoccupations of the first generation Vietnamese artist – a fusion of Western style with Vietnamese subjects.*

## *Filipino Pictures*

*The highlight of the Filipino section is Brown Brother's Burden by the contemporary Filipino artist, Bencab (Estimate: HK\$150,000-200,000/ US\$19,200-25,600). Dated in 1972, Brown Brothers' Burden was amongst the first series of Larawan that was exhibited in the Luz Gallery in 1972. It has long been recognised that the turning point for Bencab was his discovery of rare Filipiniana prints and photographs in London's antiquarian bookshops. These helped to inspire him to start Larawan, a series of sepia-toned acrylic paintings based on colonial iconography, which visually present in conceptual terms the past in relation to the present.*

## *Indonesian Pictures*

*Other highlights include the works of the Indonesian artists Sudjana Kerton, Affandi and Hendra Gunawan. Indonesia My Country by Kerton (1922-1994) is undoubtedly a pivotal work by the artist (Estimate: HK\$700,000-900,000/ US\$89,700-115,400). Dated in 1986, the work is a later version of the mural commissioned for the Indonesian Embassy in the Hague, Netherlands in the 1960s. As indicated by the title, both works are expressions of his feelings about the daily life and culture of the people as remembered from his childhood. As is shown in a preparatory sketch, the composition symbolically represents the beliefs and foundation of the country.*

*Also of note is Two Gypsies by Affandi (1907-1990) (Estimate: HK\$280,000-400,000/ US\$35,900-51,300), one of the earliest work by the artist ever offered at auction. Kuda Lumping by Hendra Gunawan (1918-1983) depicts a dramatic scene of Javanese trance dancing, capturing the ceremony at its most intense (Estimate: HK\$2,000,000-3,000,000/ US\$256,400-384,600).*

## *Indian Pictures*

*20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian paintings section includes works ranging from the early part of the century to the present day.*

*Two artists with diverse styles of painting represent the first half of the century. The monochromatic works of a Santhal Girl and Deer (Estimate: HK\$40,000-60,000/ US\$5,100-7,700) are typical works of Jamini Roy from the 1940s and are characterized by strong bold lines and simplified forms that represent an emphasis on the compositional elements of the work. Woman with Pitcher by Hemendranath Mazumdar (Estimate: HK\$160,000-200,000/ US\$20,500-25,600) is a classic example combining his favorite theme of the woman, with particular attention paid to a naturalistic, three-dimensional rendering, as favored by the artists of the British Academic School.*

*The Progressives and their contemporaries form an important part of the selection of Indian paintings. Early works by Akbar Padamsee, Ram Kumar and Vasudeo S. Gaitonde figure alongside strong examples by Syed Haider Raza, Tyeb Mehta and Maqbool Fida Husain.*

*Ram Kumar's early figurative work from 1957 shows the artist's early preoccupation with the alienation of the human spirit, depicted through a desolate figure set against an equally somber cityscape (Estimate: HK\$140,000-180,000/ US\$17,900-23,100). The same concerns are evident in Mehta's Untitled work from 1974 that depicts two dismembered figures set against large fractured expanses of colour (Estimate: HK\$600,000-700,000/ US\$76,900-89,700). M.F. Husain has works ranging from the Sitar Player of 1979 (Estimate: HK\$200,000-250,000/ US\$25,600-32,100), which shows his appreciation for Indian Classical sculpture, to the more modern examples from his Chandramukhi series.*

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*The second generation of modern Indian artists is represented through a strong selection of works by Sakti Burman, Anjolie Ela Menon, Ganesh Pyne and Arpita Singh. Sakti Burman's Gypsies on the Road is a characteristically colourful work that examines the lives of those around him (Estimate: HK\$140,000-180,000/ US\$17,900-23,100), while Ganesh Pyne's Tempera of the Monkey Prince shows autobiographical references to the artist's own insecurities (Estimate: HK\$100,000-150,000/ US\$12,800-19,200).*

*Two important works by Narayan Shridhar Bendre and Bikash Bhattacharjee from the Collection of the Times of India Group are also included. The 1987 work by Bendre is an example from the artist's experimentation with Pointillism, and shows a peaceful rural scene of women set against a landscape executed in delicate colours (Estimate: HK\$120,000-180,000/ US\$15,400-23,100). Bhattacharjee's work, She with a Newspaper, depicts one of the artist's favorite subject: the female. (Estimate: HK\$65,000-85,000/ US\$8,300-10,900).*

<i>Viewings:</i>	<i>Singapore</i>	<i>16 – 17 May</i>	<i>Grand Hyatt Singapore</i>
	<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>4 - 5 July</i>	

*Auction: Southeast Asian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian Pictures, 6 July at 10:00 am*

*More information about Christie's sale of Southeast Asian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian Pictures can be found on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.*

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*Images available on request*

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