

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART BREAKS ALL BARRIERS THIS SEASON

Starting at \$107 Million, the Spring Evening Sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art Offers Quality and Rarity from Important Estates

**Post-War and Contemporary Art
May 11 & 12, 2005**

New York, NY— Leading the market in Post-War and Contemporary art, Christie's offers rare masterpieces and important estates defined by extremely high quality and diversity, in the spring sales on May 11 and 12 at Rockefeller Center. The unprecedented selection of works in the sale spans from an unmatched grouping of classic Abstract Expressionist representing the best of the New York School, from a Private New York Collection (*see separate release*), and a major Edward Hopper from 1965 from the Collection of Helen and David B. Pall (*see separate release*), to exemplary works in Pop Art, Minimalism, sculpture, contemporary installation, photography and contemporary painting.

From the Collection of Ruth and Harvey Kaplan, a collecting couple known as great civic, cultural and business leaders in Chicago, comes **Philip Guston's** *The Street*, painted in 1956, the last great year of sensual abstraction for the artist (estimate: \$3,000,000-4,000,000). A bold purchase in 1959, the painting has not been on public exhibition since the early 1960s, and is one of the last seminal abstract paintings from the period that is not in a museum or private collection. *The Street*, one of a small body of paintings, represents the zenith of Guston's achievement as a first-generation Abstract Expressionist painter alongside childhood friend Jackson Pollock and cohorts Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko.

Sculpture reigns in the sale with exceptional examples by **David Smith** offered both in the Private New York Collection as well as in the various-owner sale. *Voltri* (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000) is from an

important series of 26 works that the artist created in Italy during May and June 1962 for the *Sculpture in the City* exhibition at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto. Smith utilized the materials found in outdated factories owned by the steel company Italsider in Voltri, a small town north of Genoa, and created a seminal body of work within his *oeuvre*. Most of the works from the *Voltri* series are in important public and private collections and rarely come to market.

Among the four **Alexander Calder** sculptures in the sale is *Femme couchée* (estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000), from the Collection of Francey and Dr. Martin L. Gecht, a sensual and elegant wire sculpture of Josephine Baker executed in Paris in 1930. Calder's sculpture mirrored the developments of other modern pioneers such as Matisse, Picasso, and Miró, who looked to the simplicity of line and the reduction of form as a way to achieve a new-age classicism. The Gecht collection was the subject of a notable exhibition at The Art Institute of Chicago in 2003-04. An early magnificent outdoor sculpture by the artist, and one of few left in private hands, is *Tripod*, 1939 (estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000).

Jasper John's *The Critic Sees*, 1961 (estimate: \$3,500,000-5,000,000) is one of 15 sculptures made between 1957 and 1964 and an icon of 20th century sculpture. A unique work, hand-crafted out of sculpted-metal on plaster with real glass for spectacles, *The Critic Sees* was formerly in the collection of Robert and Ethel Scull, the foremost collectors of Rauschenberg, Johns and Pop Art. The sculpture, inspired by a visit from a 'buffoon of a critic,' expresses John's lighter views that all critics are blind and see with their mouths, but on a deeper level it also explores the relationship between art and language, visual perception and the spoken word or written idea.

From the full range of **Jeff Koons'** works in the sale is *Small Vase of Flowers*, 1991 (estimate: \$2,200,000-2,800,000), an exuberant, explosive and sumptuous floral arrangement embodying 'beauty.' The work reflects an honesty and accuracy that fills it with earnestness while also eliciting pure visual enjoyment from the viewer. Also by the artist is the painting *Cut-Out*, 1999 (estimate: \$1,600,000-1,900,000), from the *Easyfun* series that launched him back into the center of the art world fray.

A major work by **Mike Kelly**, *Et's Long Neck, Two Brains, Penis and Scrotum* (estimate: \$300,000-400,000) is from an important group of soft sculptures from 1989. Like other works from this period, the artist joined two objects; in this case, a serpent and banana are sewn together and hang upside down on the wall, suggesting repressed male body parts.

Maurizio Cattelan is represented in the sale with three works: the commanding *Frank and Jamie*, 2002 (estimate: \$1,400,000-1,800,000), a critical piece from the artist's trilogy—Hitler, the Pope and New York's Finest—which depicts two police officers whose authority has literally been turned on its head; *Ostrich*, 1997 (estimate: \$1,200,000-1,600,000), a comic look at the artist's conflicting nature with success; and *Mini-me*, a unique self-portrait of the artist peering down from a shelf filled with art books,

executed in 1999 (estimate: \$350,000-450,000).

To have two of Britain's most important 20th century artists, Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud, represented in the same sale is truly remarkable. Bacon's *Seated Figure*, 1979 (estimate: \$3,000,000-4,000,000), is a searing representation of the human condition. The silhouette resembles Bacon's former lover, George Dyer, and is depicted as an intense seated figure trapped in a rigid suit with his mouth clenched in fear. The work conveys the screaming anguish of Bacon's existentialism and his belief in the agony and violence of life. Lucian Freud's *Naked Woman on a Sofa*, 1984-85 (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000) is a tender and vulnerable work that exemplifies the artist's intent of making the paint "work as flesh." The layers and layers of paint create such a dense textural surface that the viewer virtually feels the warmth of the sitter's flesh.

Andy Warhol's *Flowers*, 1965 (estimate: \$7,000,000-10,000,000), one of only seven monumental-size paintings from his famous *Flower* series, and the iconic *Judy and Liza*, 1978 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), also highlight the sale. A vintage Pop master drawing by Roy Lichtenstein titled *Diana*, 1965 (estimate: \$700,000-900,000), is an extraordinary example from his pantheon of images of women. Another remarkable drawing is **Jasper Johns'** *Winter*, 1986 (estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000), a moving allegory and self-portrait in his trademark *grisaille*.

Minimalism is represented in the sale with **Donald Judd's** purple lacquer sculpture, *Untitled*, executed in 1968 (estimate: \$350,000-450,000) and **Agnes Martin's** *Untitled #6*, 1998 (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000), an exquisite example that speaks to the quiet aesthetic and intimacy that Martin developed at the end of the 1990s.

A very strong selection of contemporary paintings will be offered this season, including a provocative work by **Luc Tuymans** titled *Sculpture*, 2000 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), which appeared at the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2001, and is part of the artist's famous *Mwana Kitoko Beautiful White Man* series. This painting, based on a sculpture in an Antwerp restaurant, touches on the most debated and infamous periods of Belgium's past—the colonization of Congo.

Peter Doig stands out amongst his generational peers by his choice of subject matter, defined mainly by a love of landscape. *Briey (Concrete Cabin)*, 1994-1996 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), part of a series made from 1991 until 1996, based on Le Corbusier's 'Unité d'Habitation' in Briey-en-Forêt, France, is the most iconic of his large paintings whose depiction of landscape and building conveys nature's survival despite the forward march of mankind.

A rare to market **Martin Kippenberger** titled *Kasperle XII* (estimate: \$250,000-350,000) is one of the more finely painted examples from the *Kasperle* paintings made in 1993. The series of self-portraits,

created during a time when the artist seemed to be suffering a mid-life crisis, is based on the ‘Kasperle’ character defined by German theater and puppetry as the classic jester or buffoon—funny yet perhaps pathetic in his lack of control.

The Morning Session celebrates the eye of the collector with its exceptional offering of single-owner collections. Works from the Property from the Francey and Dr. Martin L. Gecht Collection will continue to be offered in the day sale, including **Alexander Calder’s** *La botte (maquette)*, circa 1959 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000), a model for the monumental sculpture of the same name in the collection of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Other highlights from the same collection are **Jean Dubuffet’s** *Arbre bleu à l’éploiement*, 1969 (estimate: \$120,000-160,000), a three-dimensional object from his *Hourloupe* series; **Harry Bertoia’s** *Sound Sculpture*, circa 1970s (estimate: \$30,000-40,000), a grand scale and harmonious example from the *Sound Sculpture* series and **Lucio Fontana’s** *Concetto spaziale “Natura 1967”* (estimate: \$30,000-40,000). From the Estate of Oscar M. and Zelia P. Ruebhausen, are **William Bazotes’** painting *Oriental*, 1952 (estimate: \$60,000-80,000) and **David Smith’s** drawing *Ark*, 1953 (estimate: \$30,000-40,000), both given to the New York couple by their personal friend, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, in the early 1950s, as well as an important **Hans Hofmann** painting, *Pan*, 1958 (estimate: \$300,000-500,000). Highlights from the Collection of Eugene Stevens, a collector, museum trustee and arts patron, is **Richard Diebenkorn’s** *O.P. 85 #3*, 1985 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000), to be included in the artist’s forthcoming catalogue raisonné and **Alex Katz’s** *Yellow Morning*, 1995 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000). Additional works from important private collections include **Frank Stella’s** painting *Les Indes Galantes (small version)*, 1961 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), **Ellsworth Kelly’s** *Blue, Black, Red*, 1965 (estimate: \$280,000-350,000), **Ed Ruscha’s** *Do A& I Do*, 1988 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) and **Tom Wesselmann’s** *Seascape #26*, 1970, (estimate: \$350,000-450,000).

The Afternoon session is particularly strong in all areas of contemporary art, highlighted by a great grouping of **Richard Prince** works including *Untitled (Oriental Glasses)*, 1982 (estimate: \$150,000-200,000), a large size work from his *Fashion* series; *What I Kid I Was*, a large white painting executed in 1988 (estimate: \$180,000-220,000); and *5 Jokes Painted to Death*, 1987 (estimate: \$180,000-220,000), an early work from his *Joke* series. A seminal, early work by **Mike Kelly** titled *The Poltergeist*, 1979 (estimate: \$180,000-220,000), will be offered. This work opened themes that became projects for later bodies of work. Two other major pieces by Kelly are *Filth I, II and III* from 1986 (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) and *They See God (Stained Glass Mattress)* from 1989 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000). From a Private American Collector comes **Martin Kippenberger’s** *Sanatorium Haus am See negative, positive, seitenverkehrt*, 1985 (estimate: \$180,000-220,000) and **Luc Tuymans’** *Untitled*, painted in 1987 (estimate: \$200,000-300,000). There are also three exceptional **Raymond Pettibon** works on offer as well as a

great representation of younger artists such as **Elizabeth Peyton, Kai Althof, Jim Hodges, Julie Mehretu, Tom Friedman** and **Francis Alÿs**.

Auction: Post-War and Contemporary Art May 11 at 7 p.m.
Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sales May 12 at approx. 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries, 20 Rockefeller Plaza May 7-11

The sales of Post-War and Contemporary Art will be featured on www.christies.com. 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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