

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST MASTERPIECES FROM AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN COLLECTION**

#### **Property from a Prominent New York Collection Being Sold by the Jewish Communal Fund**

#### **Post-War and Contemporary Art**

**May 11, 2005**

**New York, NY** – Christie's evening sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on May 11 at Rockefeller Center will offer a rare collection of Abstract Expressionist masterpieces from an important American collection being sold by the Jewish Communal Fund. In one of the greatest private acts of philanthropy in the art world's recent history, a prominent New York collecting couple has given their collection of Post-War and Contemporary art to the Jewish Communal Fund, a publicly supported foundation that provides individuals, families and corporations with the support and advice they need to reach their philanthropic goals. The proceeds of the sale will be contributed to the couple's philanthropic fund at the Jewish Communal Fund to support issues of health, education, medical research and other needs in the global community.

“We are thrilled to have the rare opportunity to present an extraordinary group of works that represent the very best artists of the New York School,” said Laura Paulson, Senior Vice President, Post-War and Contemporary Art. “The paintings, drawings and sculptures being sold by the Jewish Communal Fund are of the highest quality, rare to the market and include the giants of Abstract Expressionism such as de Kooning, Kline, Rothko, Gorky and Smith. It is also a special privilege to offer a collection of this caliber that will be sold to benefit so many.”

The collection consists of fifteen paintings, drawings and sculptures by many of the greatest artists of the Post-War period, including Willem de Kooning's *Sail Cloth*, 1949, last seen in his 1994-1995 retrospective organized by The National Gallery, two rare boxes from Joseph Cornell, *Medici Princess* and *Medici Boy -Variant*, from his rare *Medici Slot Machine* series, as well as exemplary works by Arshile Gorky, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Isamu Noguchi, Robert Rauschenberg, Mark Rothko, and David Smith. These masterworks were lovingly put together over the past thirty years by a couple, longstanding in the New York world of art, education, health and scientific research, who share a common passion for art and a desire to live with beautiful works that they admired. Now, wanting to decide within their lifetime how to continue supporting charitable issues and be directly involved with the gifting process, this couple has made this singular gift to support the areas that matter most to them.

### Highlights

Departing from his edgy black and white New York City compositions of 1948 and 1949, Willem de Kooning's *Sail Cloth*, painted in the summer of 1949 (estimate: \$8,000,000-12,000,000) is from a small group of important abstractions that show the artist's renewed interest in color, landscape and the figure. Its rich palette and dynamic composition anticipate the *Woman* paintings, which would emerge in the early 1950s. Mark Rothko's *Untitled*, 1964 (estimate: \$8,000,000-10,000,000) is a deeply resonant canvas from his later years and is marked by a shimmering cranberry border and balance of contrasting tones. A masterful example from Franz Kline's black and white compositions is *The Crow Dancer*, 1958 (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000), which retains the beautiful tension of his powerful horizontal and vertical brushwork, creating great drama and a heightened sense of movement and power. From Robert Rauschenberg's *Combine* paintings is *Bride's Folly*, 1959 (estimate: \$3,000,000-4,000,000), an assemblage of found objects in a central composition.

Two very rare works by Joseph Cornell will present an unprecedented opportunity to collectors when *Medici Princess*, circa 1952 (estimate: \$700,000-1,000,000) and *Medici Boy -Variant*, circa 1950 (estimate: \$700,000-1,000,000), are offered. These works come from the artist's rarest series called *The Medici Slot Machines*. Arshile Gorky's *Composition II* of 1943 (estimate: \$900,000-1,200,000) is a masterwork and one of the most important and accomplished drawings by the artist to come to auction. The work reflects Gorky's mature and assured style and blend of automatism, line and color.

Additional highlights include Robert Motherwell's *The Pink Mirror*, 1946 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), which shows how the artist was influenced by Surrealism and Cubism; Barnett Newman's small yet powerful "white zip" painting *Untitled*, 1948 (estimate: \$1,500,000-2,000,000); and a grouping of sculptures: Isamu Noguchi's large bronze *The Cry*, 1959-63 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000) and classic basalt work called *Bindu*, 1966-67 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), and David Smith's

*Untitled*, 1953 (estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000), made of welded steel and found machine parts, from his most productive years.

### **The Jewish Communal Fund**

The Jewish Communal Fund is an independent, public charity serving the philanthropic community of Greater New York. Through donor-advised funds, the Jewish Communal Fund offers individuals and families a way to facilitate their charitable giving and to plan their philanthropy over time. In partnership with their donors, The Fund supports charitable organizations including art, health, education, social services, the environment and religion.

**Auction:** Post-War and Contemporary Art May 11, 2005  
An Important American Collection

**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](http://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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*Images available upon request*

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