

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK SPRING POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART
EVENING SALE PRESENTS ITS MOST VALUABLE AUCTION TO DATE**

- **The Most Important Painting By Lucian Freud To Come To The Market**
- **One Of The Strongest Group of Abstract Expressionist Works To Appear In Recent Auction History**
- **Vintage Pop Masterworks by Warhol, Lichtenstein, and Wesselmann**



Lucian Freud, *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995
Estimate: \$25-35 million

**Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale
May 13, 2008**

New York, NY – Christie's is offering a superb selection of works in its highly anticipated *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale* on May 13, featuring exemplary highlights by seminal artists from some of today's most sought-after artistic movements. The sale contains 57 lots and is expected to realize in the region of \$280-390 million, a record pre-sale estimate for the department.

"We are thrilled to present this tightly edited selection of exceptional, fresh to the market works of art in our May Evening sale," said Robert Manley, Head of the Christie's Post-War and

Contemporary Art Evening Sale. “Many of these works gathered by Christie’s specialists are of the highest museum-quality and have the potential to achieve record prices at auction.”

Abstract Expressionist Masterworks from a Private Collection



The evening sale will present an extraordinary collection of Abstract Expressionist works from a private American collector including Mark Rothko’s *No. 15*, 1952 (estimate on request), Sam Francis’s *Black*, 1955 (estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000) and Adolph Gottlieb’s *Cool Blast*, 1960 (estimate: \$2,000,000-3,000,000).

Rothko’s *No. 15* with its impressive scale and glorious red and yellow colors demonstrates extraordinary power and monumentality. 1952 was a groundbreaking year for the Abstract Expressionists and it was Rothko’s most creative year. With this painting, his mesmerizing use of intense color is evidenced in an unprecedented manner. The painting’s large scale was Rothko’s optimum format and nearly consumes the viewer. In *No. 15*, one can see how Rothko set out to shape the viewer’s experience. The painting’s scale forces it into the viewer’s environment. There are few better examples of Rothko’s signature style, and for this reason, *No. 15* has the potential to set a new world record, as it did when previously sold at auction in 1999.

One of the masterpieces in the sale from the New York School is Clyfford Still’s, 1946 (*PH-182*) (estimate: \$8-12 million). Also from 1946 is Willem de Kooning’s *Untitled IV* (estimate: \$10-15 million), and from 1947 is his rare and singular *Self-Portrait in the Wilderness* (estimate \$2-3million).

A Human Study

Two of the most seminal British artists are represented by deeply intimate and stunning interpretations of the human subject: Lucian Freud’s *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995, and Francis Bacon’s *Study for Self Portrait*, 1976 are among the major highlights of the sale, and both carry an estimate of \$25 million and \$35 million. The most important work by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) to appear at auction, the life-size *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, which depicts a naked Sue Tilley, a benefits supervisor from London, is one of the finest of Freud’s paintings from the 1990s. The work portrays a vast naked woman, Sue Tilley, lying asleep on a worn out sofa and is a bold and imposing

example of the stark power of Lucian Freud's realism. This picture is a simple and seemingly uncomposed depiction of one of the key features of Freud's art - the forceful and undeniable physical presence of people and things. Appearing at auction for the first time, the work is offered from a private European collection and its estimate reflects that it may establish a new world auction record for any work by a living artist sold at auction. Christie's currently holds the world auction record for a work by Lucian Freud with *Ib and her husband*, which sold for \$19,361,000 on November 13, 2007

Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for Self-Portrait* is among the finest of an outstanding series of self-portraits the artist executed. Painted in 1976, it depicts the distorted but fragmented face of the artist rendered in three separate canvases. The sequential effect of the triptych's contrasting depictions endows the complete work with a sense of motion, fragility and life that is seldom achieved in Bacon's single panel portraits. The result is a unique and disturbing self-portrait by an artist who was compelled to render morality and death's looming presence with restless and violent unease.

The Cool and the Eternal



Striking, sexy, and effortlessly cool, Andy Warhol's *Double Marlon*, 1966 (estimate on request), is the pinnacle of the 20th century male icon. Taken from a still of Brando's controversial film, *The Wild One*, the work exemplifies Warhol's obsession with celebrity and fascination with Hollywood. By placing Brando on his devotional roster of Hollywood subjects (*Marilyn, Liz, and Elvis*), Warhol returns to one of his favorite subjects at a time when his own film career had skyrocketed. In this interpretation, he commands the viewer's attention through the sheer stunning beauty of the actor's image contrasted against the stark expanse of the raw canvas to the left field of the painting.

The catalogue's cover lot, Jeff Koons's *New Hoover Convertibles, New Shelton Wet/Drys 5-Gallon, Double Decker* (estimate on request), consists of two brand new vertical standing Hoover Convertible

vacuum cleaners and two Shelton Wet/Dry drum vacuum cleaners displayed in a monolithic plexiglas box illuminated from beneath by tubes of fluorescent lighting. Conceived and executed in 1981 to 1986, the work forms part of the celebrated series known as "The New". The pristine showroom-like presentation and household familiarity of the piece illuminated by an intense, eerie light, gave these mundane objects a strange anthropomorphic quality as though they are beings worthy of veneration or bearers of some sacred message. By celebrating the banal, the ordinary and even the kitsch, Koons attempts to seduce the viewer back into openly marvelling at the pure aesthetic appeal of these objects and consciously positions himself as a successor to the legacies of Duchamp and Warhol. Another work by Jeff Koons also executed in 1986, *Jim Beam Box Car*, (estimate \$1-1.5 million) will be featured in the sale.



Early Pop Masterpieces



Painted in 1962, Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can (Pepper Pot)* (estimate: \$6-8 million) is an important early example of Warhol's classic pop subject. The work conceived as part of the series shown at the famed Ferus Gallery Warhol exhibition in Los Angeles in 1962, which displayed 32 Campbell's soup cans paintings, each a different flavor, painted in a uniform manner on 20 x 16 inch canvases. One of his earliest silkscreens, *Campbell's Soup Can (Pepper Pot)* was acquired at the Ferus Gallery in 1962, has been in the same private collection for the past 46 years, and is being offered at auction for the first time.

In a seminal painting of 1963, Roy Lichtenstein's *Ball of Twine* (estimate: \$14-18 million) transforms a simple ball of twine into a resonant Pop Art emblem. Dating to his early classic Pop period, *Ball of Twine* is part of an important series of single image works depicting objects drawn from advertisements and catalogues in radically pared down black and white compositions. Lichtenstein audaciously challenged painting's very foundations through such works, with their crude subjects

and seeming lack of expression. With its distinctive benday dots and graphic contours, Lichtenstein pays ironic homage to his source's mechanical roots, while also reworking the found image with a linear fluidity and formal rigor that rivals abstract painting's best. Among the most celebrated themes by Tom Wesselmann, *Smoker #9*, 1973 (estimate: \$4-6 million) is a unique and alluring rendition of a seemingly banal act.

The Evening sale will also feature works from prominent artists in today's market. Additional highlights include Gerard Richter's *Abstraktes Bild (625)* (estimate: \$7-10 million), Richard Prince's *Man Crazy Nurse #2*, (estimate: \$6-8 million) and Cai Guo-Qiang *Drawing for Fireworks from Heaven* (estimate: \$500,000-700,000).

To view videos on the sale, interviews with specialists and artists, attach the below link to your browser:

<http://www.christies.com/features/auctions/0508/pwc/?CID=544700001602a>

Auction: 13 May 2008 at 7pm

Viewing: 9-13 May 2008, Christie's Rockefeller Center, New York

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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Images available on request

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

More information about Christie's sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* can be found on 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 provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.