

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

佳士得香港有限公司

For Immediate Release

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Press Contact: Victoria Cheung 852.2978.9919 vcheung@christies.com
Dick Lee 852.2978.9966 dlee@christies.com

**CONTEMPORARY CHINESE, KOREAN, JAPANESE, INDIAN & PAKISTANI
ART TO SHINE AT CHRISTIE'S SPRING SALE IN HONG KONG**



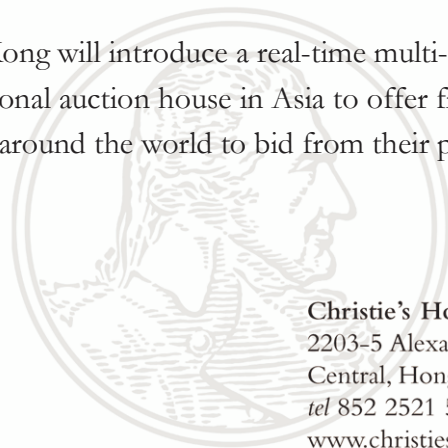
(left)
Zhang Xiaogang, *La Vie Continue - Love*
Oil on canvas
129 x 99 cm.
Painted in 1988
Estimate: HK\$1,800,000-2,500,000/
US\$230,800-320,500

(right)
Yue Minjun, *Portrait of the artist and his friends*
Oil on canvas
187 x 198 cm.
Painted in 1991
Estimate: HK\$3,500,000-5,500,000/
US\$448,700-705,100

**Asian Contemporary Art
27 May 2007**

Hong Kong – A dazzling array of cutting-edge Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indian and Pakistani art will take pride of place in Christie's Hong Kong Asian Contemporary Art sale to be held on 27 May. Reflecting a wide and dramatic variety of styles, media and forms, these exceptional works capture the creativity and extraordinary concepts by eminent artists in Asia, as well as the exciting art scene throughout the region.

In this Spring auction series, Christie's Hong Kong will introduce a real-time multi-media auction service Christie's LIVE™, becoming the first international auction house in Asia to offer fine art through live online auctions. Christie's LIVE™ enables collectors around the world to bid from their personal computers while enjoying the look, sound and feel of the sale.



Christie's Hong Kong Limited
2203-5 Alexandra House, 16-20 Chater Road
Central, Hong Kong
tel 852 2521 5396 fax 852 2845 2646
www.christies.com

CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART SECTION:

China's contemporary art movement, which arose in the 1980s, sees artists expressing their doubts and critiques of traditional values, culture and ideas through avant-garde works. Whilst the country was marching towards a vigorous modernization, a rapid surge of new viewpoints in the arts and humanities occurred.

In particular, the Art Current in 1985 sparked some of the most dynamic debates amongst both the artists themselves and the society at large. One of the most important groups of artists in the movement was the Southwest China Art Group whose key members included Zhang Xiaogang, Mao Xuhui, and Ye Yongqing. Through a rough and abrasive style, they intended to present to the viewers their inner thoughts and subconsciousness. Their expressive works often create high visual impact.

Zhang Xiaogang (born in 1958)

La Vie Continue - Love is the largest work by Zhang Xiaogang executed in the 1980s (estimate: HK\$1,800,000-2,500,000/ US\$230,800-320,500) reflects the artist's exploration and continuing questions about the nature of life, will, death, rebirth and love. Painted in 1988, it was the time when Zhang's insights into Western philosophy were melded with a more profound comprehension on Chinese thoughts and Eastern philosophy. Through his unmistakable brushstrokes, Zhang shows his concerns about human existence and particularly, the identity and specific dynamics of the Chinese people.

La Vie Continue - Love was also a vivid incarnation of Zhang's observations and fervent feelings about life. In this exceptional piece, the fundamental impulses of creativity return to an instinctive level where art conveys a genuine power and undeviating impact. Its primitive yet lyrical style is filled with a strong sense of gravity and depth, creating a suggestive and metaphorical language that would be further developed in Zhang's later works.

The entry of *La Vie Continue - Love* into China's first official exhibition of contemporary Chinese art – namely Avant-Garde Exhibition staged by the National Art Museum of China in 1989 – marked the first peak in Zhang's career, as well as one of the landmarks in the development of the China's contemporary art scene.

Also on offer are two unique portraits by the artist: *Portrait in Red* (estimate: HK\$4,000,000-6,000,000/ US\$512,800-769,200) depicts Zhang's friend Mao Xuhui who is also an artist himself. The red colour of the sitter's face symbolizes the flowing lifeblood that metaphorically suggests purity and sublimity in Eastern philosophy. A nail-like object piercing Mao's chest towards the purple rose in the background sets off the reality of Zhang's subject against the imaginary space of the surrounding.



In *Portrait of Brother* (estimate: HK\$4,000,000-6,000,000/ US\$512,800-769,200), Zhang's younger brother is connected to a TV set showing a beating heart. This suggests the close relationship between individual, society and the nation. The work is also an inspiration to Zhang's later *Bloodline* series. In fact, these two portraits project respectively the artist's self-



identification as an artist, and his strong ties to the family.

Mao Xuhui (born in 1956)

Guishan Women (estimate: HK\$300,000-500,000/ US\$38,500-64,100) is the largest work by Mao that took on the theme of Guishan, a mysterious land situated on a plateau, inhabited by an ethnic minority called the Yi. Mao's *Mother of Red Earth-1*, *Mother of Red Earth-3*, and *Mother of Red Earth-Encounter* (estimate: HK\$250,000-350,000/ US\$32,100-44,900) will also be offered, in which thick oil pigments and red patches of colour imply the artist's yearning for life and desires.

Ye Yongqing (born in 1958)

Ye Yongqing produced in 1980s an array of paintings that revealed his longing for a simple lifestyle. In *Wing Blowing* and *Dreamers* (estimate: HK\$40,000-60,000/ HK\$5,100-7,700), the people seem to be interacting with trees and vines. On the other hand, *City and Bird Cages* (estimate: HK\$100,000-150,000/ US\$12,800-19,200) shows the smokestacks that confront the artist everyday, along with bird cages and unemployed youths loitering around. These icons stand for the cruel reality and the stifling atmosphere in an industrial society.

Yue Minjun (born in 1962)

Portrait of the Artist and His Friends by Yue Minjun (estimate: HK\$3,500,000-5,500,000/ US\$448,700-705,100) is a large work and of crucial significance in the artist's career. It was painted in 1991, during which time China was on its fast track of opening-up and reforms after the 1980s. Undergoing tremendous transformations, China's new generation of artists were pushed towards a new awareness of themselves, as well as a recognition of the outside world. Yue was on a quest to depict the characters of the ordinary people amidst that extraordinary period in China's history.

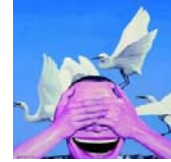
Illustrating himself for the first time on canvas, alongside the faces of his friends, *Portrait of the Artist and His Friends* demonstrates Yue's interest in re-exploring the identity of his fellow countrymen, the society and the role of himself as a new artist. Average men on the street were thus placed as the main subjects in this work to represent the rapidly-changing community in China.

More importantly, Yue had produced a style that would establish the later creative direction for much of his art through his distinctive brushworks and composition – his friends were portrayed in foreground close-up, pressing forward with exaggerated facial expressions, and seemingly ready to pop out of the frame to give personal greetings to the viewer. They all set out on in a sailing rig towards the sea of Yue's enthusiasm to pursue his artistic career upon graduation. Meanwhile, an angelic flock of fighter jets escorts them on their way to the great unknown of the larger world.

The 'self-images' of Yue, depicted in his later works, appear with absurdly broad grins in dramatic poses that project a high degree of self-confidence. These 'self-images' are also set in specific and pre-determined situations where the backgrounds reflect the recent developments of China. Representative works playing on the themes of survival such as *Pagoda* (estimate: HK\$500,000-700,000/ US\$64,100-89,700); themes about growing-up as illustrated by *No. 5* (estimate: HK\$200,000-300,000/ US\$25,600-38,500) and *No. 16* (estimate: HK\$50,000-100,000/ US\$6,400-12,800). Also on offer is *Sky, Animal, Human Being* that centres upon globalization issues (estimate: HK\$400,000-600,000/ US\$51,300-76,900).



Pagoda



Sky, Animal, Human Being

CONTEMPORARY KOREAN ART SECTION:

Paik Nam June (1932-2006)

The centrepiece of the contemporary Korean section is *Baby Buddha* by Paik Nam June (estimate: HK\$1,700,000-2,300,000/ US\$217,900-294,900). *Baby Buddha* is a "sculpture" made with vintage American radios and television sets that resemble a baby sitting with his legs on his side, holding his arms open for embrace. The head is a Philco Predicta, a popular vintage model made in a "futuristic" style. The arms are two Philco 1937 cathedral shaped radio consoles with plain knots. The torso, right and left legs are made with vintage television consoles. This seated *Baby Buddha* has video fed to its limbs, head and torso. The video consists of a stream of images of Buddha, and mostly of the Buddha's various hand gestures, mudrās. To Paik, these televisions represent his interest in broadcast media, while the Buddha emblems relate to origins, religion, tradition and the East.



Choe U-Ram (born in 1970)

Choe's technological creations explore the boundary between fine art and science. His cybernetics works resemble living animals and microorganisms. With electronic motors instilling them with the breath of movement and artificial life, these 'creatures' appear almost organic. *Varietal Urbanus Female* (estimate: HK\$450,000-550,000/ US\$57,700-70,500) – with a Latin-sounding scientific name 'Anmopista Volaticus Floris Uram' – claims to be an organism that inhabits a utopian strata 200 meters above the metropolis. It lives on photosynthesizing 'urban energy' in the city. Through his works, Choe hopes to draw the viewer's attention to the adverse consequences brought by human activity upon nature which leads to the breeding of alien forms.

Hong Kyong Tack (born in 1968)

Pencil I (estimate: HK\$550,000-850,000/ US\$70,500-109,000) executed over a three-year time period, is one of the grandest works among Hong's 'pen and pencil' series. A large triptych, *Pencil I* is filled with overlapping multiple layers of pens and pencils. Viewers are amazed by the depth meticulously built up on the flat and

sleek surface of canvas through these layers. At the same time, the smooth and glossy paint surface addresses a unique sense of fantasy that tempts the viewers into the world of Hong's imagination. The decorative parts, reminiscent of daisies and musical notes, are particularly interesting and adds flavour to this piece.

CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ART SECTION:

Yasuyuki Nishio (born in 1967)

Yasuyuki Nishio's sculpture *Organ* (estimate: HK\$120,000-160,000/ US\$15,400-20,500) will be offered in the sale. Unlike other artists, Nishio creates hand-made clay molds and pours concrete directly into them in a process of 'working from the inside out'. Nishio also does not depend on any tool in shaping the lines of his sculptures. This produces an overall style reminiscent of ancient Greek architecture, while at the same time possessing an unusual mystery of its own with high textural variations. The traces of the passage of time during his creation process are left on his work in the form of fingerprints and impressions of his hands.

Ryuki Yamamoto (born in 1976)

The War is an Individual No. 2 by Ryuki Yamamoto (estimate: HK\$100,000-150,000/ US\$12,800- 19,200) is filled with the artist's multiple of naked self-portraits in a circular arrangement symbolizing powerful inner restraints and solidarity. Yamamoto seeks to re-establish a connection with our estranged surroundings through repetitive and continuous self-portraits, believing that people need to understand themselves before understanding their environment. In the ultimately aimless landscape of Yamamoto's works, the collective insecurities of the people and socially unacceptable urges may at least find manifestation in full poetic brutality.

Korehiko Hino (born in 1976)

Works by Korehiko Hino often strike his viewers with the sitter's helpless and shocked state, expressed through its bewildered eyes and awkwardly crouching pose. On the other hand, the sealed-in background in the painting reflects the intense suffocation and anxiety of Japanese society caused by the explosion of information. The innocent and guileless young figure in *Licking a Hand* (estimate: HK\$70,000-100,000/ US\$9,000-12,800) is partly based on the image of his wife, suggesting that a seemingly mature individual is sent back to a young and even infantile state. The artist attempts to reflect the helplessness of people living in the contradictory contemporary world in face of the ever-encroaching pressures.



CONTEMPORARY INDIAN AND PAKISTANI ART SECTION:

Atul Dodiya (born in 1959, Indian)

Dodiya's allegorical collages fuse fragments of art historical masterpieces with moments of pop culture, current events and his own autobiography. *Vishal*, painted in 1989 (estimate: HK\$1,000,000-1,500,000/ US\$128,200-192,300), is from an important series concerned with the simultaneous pictorial depiction



of the interior and exterior of a given space. Taking cues from the flat candy coloured pop of David Hockney, *Vishal* belongs to Dodiya's 'photo-realistic' period when the artist often based the works on photographic images to capture their lifelike qualities. Dodiya carefully controls the shadow and light in this work. Masterfully mirroring shapes, the two door frames serve to enhance the unbroken yet divided picture frame, while the static figure of the boy is further reflected in the angled basketball hoop in the 'exterior'.

Rashid Rana (born in 1968, Pakistani)

In *Offshore Accounts - 1* (estimate: HK\$310,000-460,000/ US\$39,700-59,000), Rana arranges thousands of individual images by colour and composition into a massive grid. From a distance, the seemingly random display merges into a legible rendition of a seascape. Rana uses images of garbage interspersed with fine art renderings of sailboats to create his ocean. He intends to suggest that in continuing with our environmentally-unconscious behavior, the nature will be eventually replaced by garbage and remembered only in art or history.

In *I Love Miniatures* (estimate: HK\$80,000-120,000/ US\$10,300-15,400), Rana once again plays with ironic juxtaposition in his choice of imagery. Choosing a famous subject from Mughal miniature paintings, Rana composes a portrait of a courtier out of various billboards found throughout Pakistan today.

Jiten Thukral (born in 1976, Indian) & Sumir Tagra (born in 1979, Indian)

Collaborative artists Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra address current issues in urban India through a wide variety of media. In *Somnium Genero - Aeris 05* (estimate: HK\$350,000-450,000/ US\$44,900-57,700), the artistic duo plays with Photorealism and Surrealism in their depiction of an interior scene, just outside the boundaries of real life. Through a strict adherence to naturalism and scrupulous attention to detail, the artists create a virtual reality on their canvases. The work implies the colour scheme of a cloud strewn sky, oddly filled with various media and recording devices. It also suggests the repetition and pattern of wallpaper. Melding space age designs with elements from outdated transistors radios and vintage TVs, the whimsical painting combines nostalgia and the cutting-edge.

Pre-sale Exhibitions:

Singapore	Grand Hyatt Singapore	27 - 28 April
Shanghai	Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel	12 - 13 May
Beijing	The Ritz-Carlton Beijing	15 - 16 May
Taipei	Fubon Life Assurance Building	19 - 20 May
Hong Kong	Convention & Exhibition Centre	25 - 26 May

Auction:

Asian Contemporary Art, 27 May 2007, 5:30pm

Convention Hall, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

CHRISTIE'S

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totaled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. This 36% increase over 2005 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 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, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars 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 markets such as China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai and Russia. Christie's also offers its clients worldwide access to its sales through Christie's LIVE, its unique, real-time online bidding service.

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