

April 15th, 2008

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The Modern and The Contemporary: A Dialogue

Christie's Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art Sale May 24th, 2008, Hong Kong

Hong Kong - After more than a decade since Christie's pioneered the category of Southeast Asian Art at its auctions, and since integrating its Southeast Asian art sales into its Hong Kong sale in 2002, this category has blossomed into a full category of richness and diversity that aspires to present the overwhelmingly beautiful, consistently creative and poignantly relevant. The Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art sale at Christie's, which recorded its highest sale in Autumn 2007 with sale total of USD 8.3 mil (HKD64.3 million), will be held in Hong Kong on May 24th, 2008 at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Center. Featuring over 130 superb and artistically, technically and culturally diverse range works from the region, the sale promises to be one of the most significant and representative of the category to date.

"The category's diversity is compounded over recent years with the coming of age of contemporary art, which has taken the market by storm. It is this constant dialogue between the Modern and the Contemporary that runs through the works featured in this year's sale," said **Ruoh-Ling Keong, Specialist and Head of Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's.**

This year, Christie's is delighted to offer the best of the Modern Masters, presenting the fine, impressionistic rendition of the ever-enchanted and lush tropical Bali by Belgian artist **Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès.** This is one of the finest examples of artistic expression inspired by colonial Southeast Asia.

Moving into the Modern era and taking the center stage are artists such as **Affandi** and **Hendra Gunawan** from Indonesia. Affandi's *The Port of Rotterdam* presented this season is a refreshing subject because it is different from what he usually paints – the commonfolk of the country. His work shows the subject being subjugated to the artist's signature style that effectively allows it to project a clear personality.

Affandi – The Port of Rotterdam
Estimate: HKD700,000- 900,000



On the other hand, Hendra's *Kuda Lumping* animates a scene so common in rural Indonesia, a communal activity that merges folklore, faith, theatre and dance to mimick a dancing horse by the performer swirling in the midst of the crowd, affording the best subject for an artist whose 'infatuation with all things Indonesian' is legendary.

Hendra Gunawan – *Kuda Lumping*
Estimate: HKD800,000 – 1,200,000



The Filipino Modernist is no less poignant. Presented this season is *Noche Clara* by **Fernando Zobel** which transcends the lineal quality of its composition that captures the essence of prose, poetry and rhythm in painting.

Fernando Zobel – *Noche Clara*
Estimate: HKD 350,000 – 450,000

Georgette Chan – *Still Life*
Estimate: HKD350,000-500,000

Another rare find in this season is the vibrant work of the Chinese born Singaporean **Georgette Chan** who came from a privileged background which gave the artist a French education that exposed her to the fauvists that lend her the bold outlining and warped perspectives in her oeuvres. Her eventual adopted home in Singapore impacted on her ferocious embrace of the colors unique to the tropics.



Whilst the Modernists take their place in history and have an established position on the pedestal, Contemporary artists are searching for their place in time. It is precisely this context of flux and change that make this arena intensely challenging and exciting.

This is also an area with works that encompass a dazzlingly rich variety of forms: landscapes, portraits, interiors, pictorial narratives with texts, and gesticulating and geometric abstractions which are executed in the most diverse painting styles, not to mention the use of different material and medium, new and old, conventional and unconventional. The range of source material is also rich, from daily news, comics, movies, music and novels amongst other things are combined to create a visual vocabulary where the personal and the public coincide.



I Nyoman Masriadi – Sports News
Estimate: HKD200,000 – 300,000

The bloated figures of **I Nyoman Masriadi** which has their roots in the much favoured cubist style of the Indonesian modernists provide a comic but poignant commentary of contemporary issues; whilst **Agus Suwage**, another contemporary artist from Indonesia, is constantly using his canvas as a cathartic process of internalizing and soul searching to depict himself regularly as the subject who reflects, asks and acts.



I Nyoman Masriadi – Wild Women
Estimate: HKD150,000 – 200,000

Haris Purnomo's work appears for the first time at Christie's. Touted as his 'homecoming to the world of art' after a considerable time of absence from the art community, Purnomo's *Yang Terus Tumbuh (Continue to grow)* continues to explore a cultural identity for the artist and his society at large as he uses the imagery of babies along with his preoccupation of the mythical *Garuda*.



Haris Purnomo – Continue to Grow
Estimate: HK\$65,000-75,000



Nona Garcia – Breakdown of Opposites
Estimate: HK\$40,000-60,000

The super-realistic and the figurative are best exemplified by the Filipino contemporary artists. In the company, are the uncanny but no less alluring works of **Geraldine Javier, Yasmin Sison, Nona Garcia** and **Wire Tuazon** – works which inevitably address a myriad of issues.



and sculpture as their artistic medium. Singaporean photographer **Russel Wong's** imagery of Huangshan, for example, is reminiscent of landscape masters whilst retaining a modern feel to them through use of photography.

The sale will also present more photographic and sculptural works, featuring some of the best and most original Southeast Asian talents who use photography



Russel Wong – North Sea in Mist, Huangshan, China (left), The majesty of Huangshan, Huangshan, China, 2007 (right)
Estimate on request



Gabriel Barredo – Angel
Estimate: HKD 50,000 – 70,000

Gabriel Barredo's quirky kinetic sculptural work, now a regular and much anticipated work in the category, is ever evocative of the quaint and the contemporary in our lives.



Gabriel Barredo – Vision in Flight
Estimate: HKD 30,000 – 50,000

Preview: St. Regis Hotel, 20 Tanglin Road, Singapore 247911 May 10-11, 2008

Auction: Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art May 24, 2008

High-res images of highlights from this Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Sale are available for download:
<http://cshk.myftp.org/Southeast%20Asian%20Modern%20and%20Contemporary%20Art/>

Images and highlights of the Hong Kong 2008 Spring Sale are available at:
<http://cshk.myftp.org/2008%20Christie's%20Hong%20Kong%20Spring%20Auctions/>

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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. In Asia, Christie's has offices in nine markets and has grown from strength to strength in recent years. Hong Kong has been the hub of Christie's Asian network and has grown to the 3rd largest Sales location after New York and London. (Visit www.christies.com for more information)

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium*