

For Immediate Release

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**CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK LATIN AMERICAN ART EVENING SALE
REALIZES \$11,004,350 / £5,585,964 / €7,099,581**

Rediscovered Painting by Mario Carreño Leads Sale at \$2,188,100

**Five new world auction records set for Leonora Carrington, René Portocarrero,
Helio Oiticica, Roberto Aizenberg, and Lygia Pape**

New York – Christie's highly anticipated *Latin American Sale* totaled \$11,004,350, led by strong results for Mario Carreño, Leonora Carrington, and Diego Rivera. Five new world auction records were achieved for artists Leonora Carrington, René Portocarrero, Helio Oiticica, Roberto Aizenberg, and Lygia Pape. The sale was 68% sold by lot and 77% by value.

"Icons of Latin American modernism led the sale tonight with strong results for the top three lots, all of which date from the 1940s. We are particularly excited about the long overdue recognition and important world auction record for Leonora Carrington, whose work surpassed the \$1 million dollar mark, and for the spectacular price realized for the rediscovered masterpiece Fuego en el batey by the Cuban master Mario Carreño, which became the second highest auction price achieved for the artist. In addition, a new record was set for a self-portrait by Diego Rivera," said Virgilio Garza, Head of Latin American Art at Christie's.

One of the finest examples by Leonora Carrington, *The Giantess*, also known as *The Guardian of the Egg*, painted circa 1947, set a new artist record at \$1,482,500, doubling her previous record for *Juggler, el juglar*, 1954, which sold for \$713,000 at Christie's in May 2008. In this surrealist seascape, a towering Giantess allegorically commands the flora and fauna of the earth, sea and sky. *The Giantess* embodies Carrington's fascination with mystical femininity and the enchantments of the cosmic world. Between her palms she clasps a mysterious black egg, a symbol the artist frequently includes in her work.

Exceptional results were achieved for four major works from the Collection of the late Milton and Nona Ward of New York. The lead lot of the group was Mario Carreño's *Fuego en el batey* (Fire in the farm) from 1943, which sold for \$2,188,100. The painting was widely regarded as a lost masterpiece of Cuban modernism until it was recently rediscovered in the couple's private

collection, where it had been for over 50 years. Known to scholars and collectors, but never published in color, *Fuego en el batey* achieved an iconic stature over time as a key missing link in the scholarship of one of Cuba's most accomplished artists. *Fuego en el batey* is one of the three masterpieces from a brief series of paintings in Duco that he painted in Cuba in 1943.

Among the other major works in the Ward collection were two other previously unpublished and unknown works by Carreño and his contemporary René Portocarrero. *Untitled* (Woman with Flowers) from 1945, sold for \$60,000, and *Untitled*, a portrayal of a trio of masked musicians from 1938, realized \$146,500, well above its pre-sale estimate. René Portocarrero's *Untitled* (Woman with Umbrella), achieved \$52,500, a new world auction record for a work on paper by the artist. Total sales achieved for the collection were \$2,447,100.

A self-portrait by Diego Rivera, commissioned by Sigmund Firestone achieved \$1,022,500. Firestone was an American engineer and art collector from Rochester, New York, who met Rivera and Frida Kahlo on a business trip to Mexico in 1939, and subsequently maintained a friendship and correspondence with the artists, commissioning self-portraits from each. The painting was sold along with 14 letters exchanged between Rivera, Kahlo and Firestone during their years of friendship. In one letter, Kahlo affectionately signed the letter with magenta-pink kisses, one for "Sigy" and one each for his daughters, Alberta and Natalie.

Additional strong results were achieved for Brazilian artists, with two new world auction records achieved for Helio Oiticica and Lygia Pape. Oiticica's abstract grid painting *Metasquema 19*, painted in 1957-58, set a record at \$186,500; Lygia Pape's *Untitled (Grupo Frente)*, a wood relief from 1954 set a record at \$86,500. Earlier in the sale, Emiliano di Cavalcanti's *Baianas*, 1959, drew \$56,250, Candido Portinari's *Menino sentado*, 1945, sold for \$218,500, and the final lot of the sale, Adriana Varejão's *Azulejaria de cozinha com peixes* (Kitchen tiles with Fish), 1995, achieved \$146,500.

Argentinian artist Roberto Aizenberg's *Pintura*, painted in 1988-1989, also set an auction record at \$146,500.

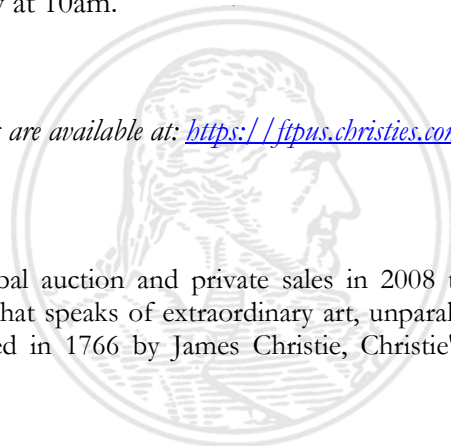
The Latin American Sale will continue tomorrow at 10am.

Note to editors:

- *Images of the sale highlights, and saleroom views are available at: <https://ftpus.christies.com>
Username and password: christies*

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totaled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. 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



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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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