

## For Immediate Release

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## SENSATIONAL BACON TRIPTYCH ON PUBLIC VIEW FOR THE FIRST TIME AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING SALE



Francis Bacon (1909-1992)  
*Three Studies for a Self-Portrait*, 1980  
(estimate: £3,500,000-5,500,000)

### Post-War and Contemporary Art, Evening Sale Christie's King Street 22 June 2006

**London** – Christie's will offer the largest-ever European evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art on 22 June 2006. Featuring one of the strongest and most exciting selections of art from both the European and American Post-War era, together with major stars of the Contemporary world, the sale is expected to fetch in the region of £21 million. The sale is led by a previously unseen Francis Bacon triptych. Further highlights include outstanding examples by Eduardo Chillida, Gerhard Richter, Yves Klein, Ed Ruscha, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Martin Kippenberger, Luc Tuymans, Peter Doig and Maurizio Cattelan among others. This sale follows Christie's New York record breaking week of sales in May when the Post-War and Contemporary Art evening sale totalled \$147million, the second highest total for a sale in this field.

*“Year on year, interest in this sector of the market continues to break new ground as seen most recently at Christie's New York sales in May. The broad global appeal of Post-War and Contemporary Art has seen an increasing*

numbers of new international collectors from sale to sale. As a result, we look forward to an exceptionally strong sale of both Post-War and Contemporary Art in London this June.” commented Fernando Mignoni, Director and Pilar Ordovas, Head of Evening Sale, Christie’s Post-War and Contemporary Art Department.

A highlight of the evening sale is a sensational raw and powerful triptych by Francis Bacon from an important private collection. Previously unseen by the public and never before published, *Three Studies for a Self-Portrait*, 1980 (estimate: £3,500,000-5,500,000) is one of his best self-portrait triptychs. The work was kept by Bacon for two years before he sold it directly to the current owner in 1982. Set against a black background, three distorted faces of Francis Bacon stare out at the viewer, the result of unflinching self-scrutiny and painful self-analysis. The work dates from a period when Bacon was becoming increasingly anxious about his own mortality; in part because he was conscious about aging but also because many of his friends had died over the past decade. Despite repeated claims that he had painted his last self-portrait, his face held a magnetic fascination for him. By choosing the self-portrait as a subject, Bacon was contributing to a long tradition in Western Art, but interpreting the subject-matter in his own unique style.

Joining this line up is David Hockney’s 1965 striking work *A Painted Landscape (Or Red and Blue Landscape)* (estimate: £500,000-700,000), which combines his interest in theatre and set design with an exploration of the limitations of two-dimensional representation, together with an early Andy Warhol work on paper from 1962, *Dance Steps* (estimate: £220,000-350,000). An important early work on paper by Francis Bacon entitled *Composition (Figure)*, 1933 (estimate: £350,000-500,000) is also included.

Two outstanding steel sculptures by Eduardo Chillida will be offered including a work that is considered by many to be his finest sculpture. An early iron masterpiece *Rumor de Limites VI*, 1960 (estimate: £600,000-800,000), is the sixth work in an important series that also marks Chillida’s first experiments with steel. Here the solid geometric forms of the metal seem to unfold space and develop in an almost organic way. *Elogie del Vacio V*, executed in 1984 (estimate: £500,000-800,000) forms part of Chillida’s important void series. As the title suggests, the work is a kind of cathedral of empty space, an open-form cage made from open-ended semi-circular forms enclosing empty space.

A further sculpture included in the sale is Gerhard Richter’s *Two Sculptures for a Room by Palermo*, 1971 (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Designed to be positioned facing each other, one is a self-portrait and the other a portrait of the artist Blinky Palermo. Richter took deliberate care to emphasise that these sculptures, made from plaster not bronze, are impostors, plaster masquerading as commemorative statues. In a complex interplay of content and values, Richter ridicules the cult of personality in this work.

Two important works by Yves Klein, both using his signature blue, will be offered in the sale. *IKB 234* (estimate: £600,000-800,000), a monochrome, is not an abstract painting but instead represents the spiritual levels of existence that surround us invisibly. Painted in 1957, the canvas was one of eleven works exhibited in the first show that displayed only his signature blue paintings. While in *Anthropometrie 152*, executed in 1960 (estimate: £300,000-500,000), Klein employed the technique of

covering a model in his signature colour 'International Klein Blue', followed by their pressing themselves against the picture surface, to create the *Anthropometries*.

Two works by the revolutionary artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat are offered in the sale. *Negro Period*, 1986 (estimate: £1,000,000-1,500,000) reflects the artist's anxieties about race while providing a kaleidoscopic insight into his mind, while the figure in the right-hand panel perhaps commemorates Basquiat himself, linking him to the legacy of America's black heroes. In *General Electric*, 1985 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) Basquiat appears to rail against the American company, against capitalism and perhaps even against electricity itself. Ed Ruscha was inspired by road signs during his travels along Route 66. In *Purity*, painted in 1972 (estimate: £850,000-1,200,000) the visual language of advertising has been twisted and manipulated, so that the content jars with its appearance. The solitary word on the canvas packs a punch, jolting the viewing into reflection. Also included in the sale is Andy Warhol's striking painting *The American Indian (Russell Means)*, 1976 (estimate: £700,000-1,000,000) and Joseph Beuys's *Boxkampf für die direkte Demokratie*, 1972 (estimate: £200,000-300,000).

In Luc Tuymans's *Maypole*, 2000 (estimate: £900,000-1,200,000) a seemingly innocent image hides an ominous message. The image, taken from *Signal*, a notorious Nazi propaganda magazine, transforms into something brutal and sinister before our eyes with the mere application of context. Tuymans thereby manages to show the limitations but also the powers of manipulation of art. *Obne Titel (Lieber Maler male mir...)* 1983 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) belongs to one of Martin Kippenberger's most important series, a group of twelve paintings commissioned to be made for him by a film poster painter. The work is a paradox, as it is both an intimate image of ordinariness, supposedly made epic and extraordinary by its magnification and translation into art in the form of a shallow artificial medium. Other works offered include Albert Oehlen's *CT*, 1995 (estimate: £100,000-150,000) and Franz Ackermann's *New Building*, 1999 (estimate: £100,000-150,000).

An important work by Maurizio Cattelan is another highlight entitled *Frank and Jamie*, 2002 (estimate: £350,000-450,000) in which the artist attacks the Establishment, the world of power and authority. Here two wax models dressed as New York policeman are propped upside-down against a wall. Also included in the sale is an Important Private Collection of Spanish Contemporary Art including Miquel Barceló's frenzied work *Plaza con dos puertas*, 1990 (estimate: £150,000-200,000) in which a bullfight appears to burst from the canvas, blurring the boundaries between our world and the represented one.

### **Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art day sale, 23 June 2006**

The star lot of the sale is Gerhard Richter's abstract painting *Grat 2 (689-2)* (estimate: £300,000-400,000). Also offered is an important group of French Post-War Art, including *T1958-17*, 1958, by Hans Hartung (estimate: £70,000-90,000) and Maria Elena Vieira da Silva's *Untitled*, 1954 (estimate: £70,000-90,000). Other highlights include Andy Warhol's black *Diamond Dust Shadow* painting (estimate: £140,000-180,000) and an early Andy Warhol collage *Gold and Silver Shoe, circa 1955*, in gold leaf and silver foil (estimate: £55,000-75,000), given by the artist to fashion photographer Norman Parkinson. Roy Lichtenstein's large, hand-painted screen-print *Still Life with Lamp* (estimate:

£150,000-200,000) and Robert Rauschenberg's *Paraphrase (Quaker Oats Man c.)*, a rare early work on paper from 1965 (estimate: £50,000-70,000), will also be offered.

Leading the Contemporary works in the sale is *Portrait of Nureyev*, 1999 (estimate: £60,000-80,000) by the acclaimed young American painter Karen Kilimnik. Young German painters are represented by Eberhardt Havekost's *Spule*, 2002 (estimate: £30,000-40,000), Matthias Weischer's, *Untitled*, 2000 (estimate: £40,000-60,000) and Dirk Skreber's, *Untitled*, 1992 (estimate: £20,000-25,000). A section of Chinese works with Yan Pei-Ming's *Soleil Rouge III (Mao)*, 1993 (estimate; £18,000-22,000), Zao Wou-Ki's *16.9.85*, 1985 (estimate: £30,000-40,000) and *Untitled*, 2002 by Wang Gungyi (£25,000-35,000) is expected to attract a lot of attention following strong results in our Hong Kong sales.

*"When Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art day sale was created five years ago the sale total was approximately £3 million. The sale in February 2006 exceeded £9 million,"* said Laetitia Catoir, Director and head of sale. She continues, *"The market continues to go from strength to strength as the international focus on Contemporary Art grows. This is reflected not only in the demand for works by young emerging artists but in an enthusiastic thirst for knowledge, and increased attendance at new art fairs such as Frieze and Miami Basel. An exciting potential growth area is the Asian Art market with a group of contemporary Chinese artists offered for sale."*

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Images available on request

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### **Notes to Editor**

Christie's is the largest marketplace internationally for Post-War and Contemporary Art. The May 2006 Christie's New York evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art realized £79,158,709 (\$147,235,200) the second highest total for a sale in this field. While in February 2006, the highest ever European sales total for Post-War and Contemporary Art was achieved at Christie's London when the evening sale total realized £37,038,000 (\$64,557,234).