

For Immediate Release

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THE ITALIAN SALE

20th Century Italian Art at Christie's London this October



Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)
Mobili nella valle, 1927
(estimate: £900,000-1,300,000)



Lucio Fontana (1899-1968), *Concetto spaziale, Attese*, 1963 (estimate: £500,000-£800,000)

The Italian Sale
Christie's London
16 October 2006 at 7pm

London – Christie's is pleased to announce the sixth sale of 20th Century Italian Art will take place on Monday 16 October 2006 at 7pm. Italian art continues to capture the interest and enthusiasm of private collectors and institutions worldwide and is currently an area of market growth. This autumn's selection of Italian art will include major paintings and sculptures from Italy's foremost modern and contemporary artists with examples spanning the key artistic movements of important Italian 20th century art.

"20th Century Italian art is increasingly sought after on the international market and yet is still enticingly undervalued. Our high profile and selective sale in London this October will offer excellent opportunities for established and new collectors and institutions from all over the world," said Olivier Camu, International Director, Christie's London and a specialist in charge of the sale. *"The highlight of the sale is a group of sculptures and paintings by Lucio Fontana, eloquent and elegant works that cover the range of his Spatialist adventures. Other highlights include a number of museum-quality paintings and sculptures by artists such as Giorgio de Chirico, Piero Manzoni, Pino Pascali, Mario Merz, and Alighero Boetti,"* continued Mariolina Bassetti, a specialist in charge of the sale and Director of Modern and Contemporary Italian art, Christie's Italy.

Leading this year's Italian Sale is a strong section devoted to works by Lucio Fontana (1899-1968). Of particular importance is an unpublished *Concetto spaziale* from 1961 (estimate £500,000-800,000). This work is among the finest examples of Fontana's production during 1961, a year when he also painted his celebrated Venice paintings-- to which this work is clearly related. The sale also features a stunning white *Concetto spaziale, Attese*, 1963 marked by ten cuts (estimate £500,000-£800,000). Fontana's earlier output is represented by several works such as a large polychrome ceramic sculpture, *Testa di Medusa* from 1948 (estimate £400,000-600,000) and a lyrical *Concetto spaziale* from 1953 (estimate £130,000-180,000) composed of strewn glass pebbles on a square shaped canvas.

One of the many exciting highlights is a group of works by Alberto Burri (1915-1995), an artist whose pieces are highly sought-after by international collectors. *Sacco* from 1953 (estimate £500,000-700,000) leads the section of works by Burri, which also boasts an important and imposing metal piece, *Grande Ferro* of 1958 (£450,000-650,000), formerly in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

On the more classically modern side, the sale features three paintings by Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978). Leading this section is *Mobili nella valle* painted in 1927 (estimate: £900,000-1,300,000). His atmospheric 1920s painting *Una camera nel museo* (estimate: £300,000-400,000) perfectly encapsulates the strange and lyrical quality so distinctive in his works and which inspired the Surrealists. Meanwhile his 1951 *Torino metafisica* (estimate: £250,000-350,000) scenes of an arcaded *piazza* resplendent with many of the elements that mark his most accomplished pictures. A more contemplative atmosphere fills the still life paintings of de Chirico's former Metafisica colleague, Giorgio Morandi, for instance the famously reclusive artist's *Natura morta* of 1960 (estimate: £250,000-350,000).

Classical Post-War sculpture is represented by two pieces by Arnaldo Pomodoro (b. 1926). *Il Cubo* (estimate: £100,000-150,000), a rare and early work of 1961-62, and *Colonna* of 1989 (estimate: £100,000-150,000) both combine the artist's interest in texture and technology, with fissures in the smooth gilded surfaces teasingly revealing the hidden world of complexities and intricacies so distinctive of his sculptures.

The sale includes an exceptional section devoted to **Arte Povera**, a term reserved for a group of revolutionary artists who began using everyday materials and mixed media to create refined works that challenged the elitist aesthetic of artistic predecessors' works. Within an exciting group of works by Alighiero Boetti (1940-1994) are several exceptional rare pieces from the early stages of his career including *Planisfero Politico* of 1969-70 (estimate: £150,000-200,000), which was the predecessor of his famous *Maps of the World* as well as of his 'Biro' works. An example from the iconic map series is also

present, *Mappa* of 1989, an unusually large and colourful embroidery showing the nations of the world represented by their various flags, combining Boetti's interest in time, change, Sufism and politics. Another early work of particular note is Boetti's *Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (estimate: £200,000-250,000), which he himself cited as a great revelation and one of the starting points of many of his later pen works.

A museum quality work by Mario Merz (1925-2003), will also be offered from 1971, composed of a stuffed iguana, neon fibonacci numbers and a transformer (estimate £120,000-180,000), and *Albero*, a painting from 1980 (estimate £40,000-70,000). By combining modest, raw materials, with artistic invention and irony, Merz created unique pieces that have continued to challenge audiences through the years.

Testa di Drago by Pino Pascali (1935-1968), an extremely rare and iconic sculpture of 1966 from one of the most influential artists of this movement, is offered at the estimate £200,000-300,000. This work belongs to Pascali's famous sculpture series inspired by animals. A mixed media installation by Giulio Paolini (b.1940), *Le Tre Grazie*, 1978, composed of a plaster cast, three photographs, and cast on paper is estimated at £85,000-120,000 while an untitled 1974 work on canvas from Jannis Kounellis (b. 1936) incorporating a cello and a lamp is expected to fetch £200,000-300,000. The Arte Povera section will also feature works by other artists seldom seen at auction, for instance Giovanni Anselmo, Pier Paolo Calzolari and a selection of works by Giuseppe Penone.

The sale also includes works by other luminaries of twentieth century Italian art such as Rotella, Baj, Castellani, Santomaso, Paladino, Chia and Moreni.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the Web: www.christies.com

Note for the Editors

Christie's holds world records for works by major Italian artists Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Umberto Boccioni, Giorgio de Chirico, and Pino Pascali, among others. The 2005 Italian Sale achieved £12,844,800 the highest total ever for a sale of this category and established world records for 8 Italian artists.

International Exhibition Tour:**New York**

9-12 September: Christie's New York, Rockefeller Centre

Turin

27 September: 10.00am-4.00pm at Unicredito PB, Via XX Settembre, 31

Milan

29 September: 10.00am-6.00pm at Palazzo Clerici, Via Clerici 5

Bologna

1 October: 11.00am-4.00pm at Fondazione del Monte, De Bologna e Ravenna, Via delle Donzelle, 2

The sale will on public view at Christie's King Street:

Wednesday 11 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Thursday 12 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Friday 13 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Saturday 14 October	10.00am – 6.00pm
Sunday 15 October	10.00am – 12.30pm

Sale: Monday 16th October at 7pm

At Christie's 8 King Street, St James's SW1Y 6QT, London