

For Immediate Release
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THE ITALIAN SALE 20th Century Italian Art at Christie's London this October



The Italian Sale
Christie's London
15 October 2007 at 4pm

London – Christie's will stage its seventh sale of 20th Century Italian Art on Monday 15 October 2007 at 4pm. Italian art continues to dazzle international private collectors and institutions alike and interest in this category has been growing consistently throughout the years. This year's sale will offer 67 major paintings and sculptures from Italy's foremost modern and contemporary artists, with examples spanning the key artistic movements of Italian 20th century art.

"As in previous years, an outstanding array of prestigious Italian works of art has been gathered in what promises to be a fantastic sale. Included in this sale are two extraordinary private collections from Italy and Europe. This auction brings together pivotal pieces from modern and contemporary Italian artists encompassing Italy's major artistic movements, and will provide excellent opportunities for veteran collectors as well as new buyers from around the globe to take part in an exciting area of collecting," said Mariolina Bassetti, Director of Modern and Contemporary Italian art, Christie's Italy, and specialist in charge of the sale.

Representing classic **Modern** Italian art are works by Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) and Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964). One of the highlights from this section is *Piazza d'Italia* (estimate: £600,000-800,000), a painting that perfectly encapsulates the metaphysical tone so distinctive in de Chirico's works, which inspired the Surrealists.

Leading this section is a private collection of **still life paintings** spanning the major decades of 20th century art. A rare, lush still life of apples, pears, and grapes, *Natura morta su un tavolo*, by de Chirico from 1915 will be included in the sale and is estimated to fetch £300,000-500,000. The work was created during his stay in Ferrara, where he was influenced by the great Medieval and Renaissance masters. De Chirico's painterly approach is evident in his treatment of the subject matter, which is saturated by rich color and shades of white against a bold, dark background.

From the same collection is an early work by Alberto Magnelli (1881-1978) *Nature morte à la fleur*, painted in 1914 (estimate: £100,000-150,000). Radiating with vibrant colour, the geometrical composition is reminiscent of the works by Matisse and the Cubist artists working in Paris at the time, reflecting the importance of Magnelli's visit to the French capital that year. The collection also includes a work by Fausto Pirandello (1899-1975), *Tavolo e sedia con carte e drappo bianco*, 1929 (estimate: £45,000-65,000) and a still life by Mario Mafai (1902-1965), *Natura morta con manichino, maschera e abito rosso*, 1940 (estimate: £60,000-90,000).

The master of modern Italian still life painting, Giorgio Morandi, is represented in this section by contemplative works that demonstrate two different periods of his creative output. The earliest, and most important *Natura morta* (estimate: £400,000-700,000) also comes from the still life private collection and was painted in 1941. The Modern section also includes another *Natura morta* by Morandi from 1957 (estimate: £320,000-420,000).

Several of the lots in The Italian Sale form part of a collection discerningly assembled over the past half a century that showcases many of the developments of Italian art in the Post-War period. Among the star lots leading the section of works by **Post-War** artists is a stunning piece by Alberto Burri (1915-1995), *Nero con punti rossi*, 1957 (estimate: £400,000-600,000). Burri experimented with unorthodox materials, stitching together pieces of raw, industrial materials such as burlap and other remnants to create textural, abstract surfaces rather than painting directly onto the canvas. Burri was one of the pioneers of Italian **Informel** art, and together with Manzoni and Fontana, revolutionised the artistic production coming out of Italy in the 1950s and 1960s. The sale contains another piece by Burri, entitled *Sacco*, 1954 (estimate: £250,000-350,000).

The sale also features great examples of works by the notorious *enfant terrible* of Italian art, Piero Manzoni (1933-1963) and the founder of Spatialism, Lucio Fontana (1899-1968). Manzoni is represented by an elegant and simple *Achrome* dated 1958 (estimate: £750,000-1,000,000). The Fontana section boasts a rich selection of works by the artist, which span his



career. The stunning green and gold *Concetto spaziale*, 1961 (estimate: £750,000-950,000), with its thickly impastoed surface and swirls of brightly textured green and metallic paint, belongs to Fontana's *Olii*, a group of works that brought a more baroque flavour to the Spatialist aesthetic. Other *Concetti spaziali*, include some stunning examples of his iconic *Tagli* (cuts), the most important one being large white *Concetto spaziale, Attese*, 1949-50 (estimate: £400,000-600,000), as well as a perforated, red *Concetto spaziale* executed in 1961 (estimate: 300,000-400,000).

Amongst the sculptural highlights is a piece by Arnaldo Pomodoro (b. 1926), *Disk with Shattered Radial III*, 1966 (estimate: £150,000-200,000), with fissures in the smooth gilded surfaces teasingly revealing the hidden world of complexities and intricacies so distinctive of his sculptures, and two pieces by Fausto Melotti (1901-1986): *Vascello fantasma*, 1979 (estimate: £70,000-100,000), and *Tema e variazioni*, 1969 (estimate: £50,000-70,000). The sale also includes an Agostino Bonalumi (b. 1935) piece from 1969, entitled *Scultura angolare* (estimate: £80,000-120,000).

Leading the **Arte Povera** section is an installation by the great, flamboyant Arte Povera artist, Pino Pascali (1935-1968). Pascali's strangely lyrical *Confluenze*, 1957 is made up of twenty-two steel containers filled with dyed water, which is expected to achieve between £500,000-700,000. Among the other highlights from this section are several exciting pieces by Mario Merz, Michelangelo Pistoletto, and a group of works by Alighiero Boetti (1940-1994), that include an iconic embroidered *Mappa*, 1984 (estimate: £250,000-350,000), an *Arazzo* from 1988 (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and a *Biro* work entitled *Aerei*, 1982 (estimate: £100,000-150,000). Pistoletto (b. 1933) is represented by two of his *Quadri specchianti*, works in which everyday people and objects are represented against a mirror-like background creating a direct interaction between the work and its viewer: *Il cordone* (1970) and *Lampadina* (1962-72) are both estimated at £100,000-150,000. In addition, the sale will offer Mario Merz's (1925-2003), *Untitled (Oar)*, comprising of a series of numerals and a wooden oar, capturing Merz's idiosyncratic mixture of hidden order and the arcane (estimate: £150,000-200,000).

The Italian Sale also includes works by other luminaries of twentieth century Italian art such as Emilio Vedova, Enrico Castellani, Mimmo Paladino, Enzo Cucchi, Piero Dorazio, Mario Schifano, and Gino de Dominicis.

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Images available on request

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Note for the Editors

Christie's holds world records for works by major Italian artists Piero Manzoni, Umberto Boccioni, Giorgio de Chirico, and Pino Pascali, among others. The 2006 Italian Sale achieved £15,657,600, the highest total ever for a sale of this category and established 5 world auction

records. Christie's also holds works of Modern and Contemporary Art twice a year in Milan. The next Milan sale will take place on 27 November 2007.

International Exhibition Tour:

Rome

26 September: 10.00am-6.00pm at Palazzo Massimo Lancellotti, Piazza Navona 114

Turin

2 October: 10.00am-4.00pm at Palazzo dell'Arsenale, Via Arsenale 22

Milan

4 October: 10.00am-6.00pm at Palazzo Clerici, Via Clerici 5

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

Wednesday 10 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Thursday 11 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Friday 12 October	9.00am – 4.30pm
Saturday 13 October	9.00am – 6.00pm
Sunday 14 October	10.00am – 12.30pm
Monday 15 October	9.00am – 3.00pm

Sale: Monday 15th October at 4pm

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

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2006 that totalled £2.51 billion / \$4.67 billion. Worldwide sales for the first half of 2007 totalled £1.63 billion / \$3.25 billion, an increase of 32% by £ and 45% by \$ from the same period last year and highest half year sales ever in art market 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, 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 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.