

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2005

Contact: Bendetta Roux

212.636.2680

broux@christies.com

CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF EDWARD R. BROIDA

*“The very matter of painting – its pigment and spaces – is so resistant to will,
so disinclined to assert its plane and remain still...”*

Philip Guston, quoted in *Americas*, MoMA catalogue, 1956

Impressionist & Modern Art -- November 1, 2005

Post-War & Contemporary Art -- November 8, 2005

New York – *Property from the Edward R. Broida Collection* is one of the most extraordinary ensembles of 20th century art to have come to the market in recent years and Christie's is proud to present this group of 14 works in the evening sales of *Impressionist and Modern Art* and *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on November 1 and 8. Established in the past three decades and truly legendary in its scope and scale, the Edward R. Broida collection has taken on a three-dimensional quality, expressing wide diversity of style, radical variations in size and scale and a timeline that encompasses a full century. The 14 works offered each played a key role in the collection's development and texture and are expected to realize in excess of \$ 35 million.

Edward R. Broida embarked upon his collecting mission in the late 1970's following the advice of Sydney Feldman, an ardent collector himself and Broida's uncle. His first purchases were two late works by Philip Guston and this artist would remain the anchor point of the collection, which adhered strongly to Guston's aesthetics of a strong sense for the painterly and clear internal structure. Being gifted with the invaluable combination of instinctive attraction and intellectual curiosity, Edward R. Broida assembled a ravishing collection that focused on no single movement and excluded few, all the while acknowledging the inter-relatedness of styles and periods and exposing the depth of artists when placed within an artistic and historical context. Rooted in

Brancusi's immensely tender *Le baiser* of 1907-08, and strengthened by cornerstones such as Arp, Rothko, Guston and Bacon, the collection superbly balances the artistic weight of the full 20th century.

“we are image makers and image-ridden” – Philip Guston

Guston was a seeker, an artist who was continuously questioning the very nature of image making itself. Starting out in a figurative style in the 1940's, he followed his generation into abstraction in the 1950's, only to return to figuration from the 1960's onwards. Broida's first two purchases were late works by Philip Guston which he later complemented with the acquisition of earlier work by the artist, two of which are part of the sale. *Zone*, 1953-54 (estimate: \$4 – 6 million), is a dazzling and well-known example of Guston's abstract period. The composition is thick, heavy with impasto, and as one moves closer to the center of the canvas, the individual brushstrokes become incredibly dense, coalescing into a vibrant core of energy. Also offered is *The Mirror*, 1957 (estimate: \$3 – 5 million).

“to achieve this clarity is inevitably to be understood” – Mark Rothko

Rothko's *Homage to Matisse*, 1954 (estimate on request), is one of the major artistic achievements of the 20th century, a historical tribute paid by one sublime colorist to another. The intensity and serenity coming together in color and form elevate this work into the realm of the spiritual. *Homage to Matisse* is exceptional in its almost ethereal beauty and displays the exquisite sophistication of Rothko's mature style. Inspired by the pure saturation of color and depth of field of Matisse's *Red Studio*, 1917, – the artist's prelude to his late cutout designs for stained glass windows – Rothko creates a magnificent, formidable work that in its verticality and sheer size alludes to the important place it takes within his oeuvre. Like Matisse, he juxtaposes intense colors next to one another, generating a brilliant opposition and evoking a sense of spiritual transcendence, a light that resonates from within. *Homage to Matisse* is a moment of revelation in which Rothko's constant theme – the search for a higher presence – finds its sublime expression.

“the tenderest version of Brancusi's tenderest theme” – Sidney Geist

Brancusi's first version of *Le baiser*, executed in 1907-08 is widely recognized as a watershed moment in the artist's career and was described by the artist himself as his “road to Damascus.” Depicting two figures locked in an intimate embrace, the sculpture inaugurated one of Brancusi's most enduring themes, generating a series of celebrated versions over a span of four decades. Brancusi had started out as a sculptor heavily indebted to Rodin but by the end of 1907, he abandoned modeling and adopted direct carving. *Le baiser* reflects all that Brancusi wished to convey adopting this new technique: a sense of immediacy and authenticity as well as a taste for the ‘primitive,’ achieved through its sharply stylized simplification of form. In *Le baiser*, he even succeeded in purifying the subject-matter, creating an image of absolute sexual equality, the male and female

figure serving virtually as mirrors of each other. The present work is one of eight plasters that Brancusi cast from the first limestone version shortly after its creation (estimate: \$3 – 4 million).

Another seminal painting is Franz Kline's *Washington Wall*, 1959 (estimate: \$2.5 – 4 million), one of the splendid works in which Kline enhances his black and white compositions to achieve an even greater visual complexity of the structure by adding color. By the mid 1950's, Kline had refined his black and white paintings and was searching for innovations in his work. In 1956, he introduced color to his black and white compositions, with great bravado and without losing the combination of gravitas and dynamism his earlier work had been known for. *Washington Wall* was one of the two commissions Kline accepted in 1959 and was executed for a private collector in Washington DC who kept the work until 1979. The work is theatrical and exudes a strong vitality which is emphasized by the combination of opposite directional pulls to the extreme right and left sides. The presence of a 'sequence,' a 'time' component adds to *Washington Wall's* extraordinariness. The narrative consists of an introduction, crescendo and denouement and this sequence needs to be discovered and acknowledged in order to comprehend the full image.

David Smith's *Jurassic Bird*, 1945 (estimate: \$2 – 3 million) clearly evokes an ancient and primitive spirit. Consistent with Smith's method of utilizing a theme and developing it over time, the Jurassic bird idea was re-used several times and the present work is one of five specters that were executed during the 1940's and is based in part on a skeleton of a prehistoric diving bird that Smith had seen during a visit to the Museum of Natural Science in New York. For all its haunting and spectral beauty, *Jurassic Bird* exudes danger, the graceful and imperial presence being but a façade for a merciless and cruel predator and carnivore. In this, the sculpture reflects Smith's continuous fascination with the themes of brutality and death.

A group of 4 sculptures represents some of the most influential sculptors of the mid 20th century: Arp, Lipchitz, Laurens and Hepworth. Jean Arp's *Sculpture de silence, Corneille*, executed in 1964 (estimate: \$900,000-1,200,000), shows the artist's strong belief in simplicity. Stripping human and animal forms to their essence, Arp sought to return to the natural world and his working method often consisted of taking a detail of one of his earlier works and use it as 'a seed' for new sculptures. Although derived from an earlier work, *Sculpture de silence, Corneille*, retains its own unique presence.

Henri Laurens' *Le matin*, conceived in 1944 (estimate: \$900,000-1,200,000), is one of the works that represents the artist's emotional response to World War II. The sculpture depicts a kneeling figure which appears to be carrying the weight of the world on its shoulders while it struggles to stand upright. The work may well have been an homage to France, as the country slowly began to develop cautious sentiments of hope for its recovery from the ravages of war.

A Russian of Jewish descent and a leading modernist sculptor, Jacques Lipchitz had good reason to fear the consequences of the German invasion of France in 1940. Assisted by friends, Lipchitz and his wife finally moved to New York in 1941 where they took an apartment at Washington Square East and a studio on East 3rd street. Lipchitz then began working on *Benediction*, his first major sculpture since his arrival. In his memoirs he mentions how the news that Paris had been occupied made him wish to create a lullaby for the city which had now been put to sleep but which would reawaken later. *Benediction I*, a uniquely cast bronze, is the first large version of the subject (estimate: \$400,000-600,000).

Barbara Hepworth, one of the leading British 20th century sculptors, is represented with *Figure (Ascending Form)* (estimate: \$700,000-900,000), a sculpture executed in 1956, using painted wood and string. Works of this period and quality are extremely rare to appear on the market.

Further included in *Property from the Edward R. Broida Collection* are Francis Bacon's *Two Figures*, 1961 (estimate: \$ 2.5 - 3 million); Richard Diebenkorn's *Untitled* (estimate: \$350,000-550,000); Fernand Leger's *Etude pour La Grande Parade* (estimate: \$300,000-400,000), one of the studies the artist made for two large compositions rendering his favorite theme, the circus; and an extremely visionary and unsettling painting, Alice Neel's *Nazis murder Jews*, painted in 1936 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000). Neel's message, intended as a kind of wake up call to the world, depicts a Communist march that protests the murder of innocent Jews well ahead of the world's awareness of the scepter of National Socialism. The mass of caricatured humanity spilling down the canvas brings James Ensor's *Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem* to mind, as well as the paintings of Edvard Munch, filtered through the Social Realist concerns of the time.

Auction: Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale
Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale

November 1 at 7 p.m.
November 8 at 7 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

October 28 – November 8

#

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about Christie's sale of *Property from the Edward R. Broida Collection* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.