

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 16 APRIL 2021

MARK ROTHKO'S PENULTIMATE PAINTING
UNTITLED FROM 1970
IN CHRISTIE'S NY 20TH CENTURY EVENING SALE IN MAY
ON VIEW AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG APRIL 17-22



Property from an Important Private European Collection
MARK ROTHKO (1903-1970)

Untitled

oil on canvas

68 x 54 in. (172.7 x 137.2 cm.)

Painted in 1970.

Estimate on request.

NEW YORK – Christie's is pleased to present Mark Rothko's radiant and stately masterpiece, *Untitled* from 1970, as a highlight of its upcoming *20th Century Evening Sale* at Christie's New York on May 11, 2021 (estimate on request; in the region of US\$40M). As one of only three works painted in 1970, during the final months of the artist's life, *Untitled* marked his triumphant return to full, vibrant color, and Rothko is said to have viewed these late works at his most profound achievements. Formerly part of the prestigious Paul and Rachel "Bunny" Mellon Collection for decades before entering into a distinguished private collection in 2014—from which it arrives to market at Christie's in May—*Untitled* stands as a deeply poignant finale to Rothko's prodigious oeuvre.

Emily Kaplan, Co-Head of Christie's 20th Century Evening Sale, commented: *"Rothko's penultimate painting, **Untitled** offers a parting vision of glowing, incandescent color; a luminous, resonant hymn that eloquently encapsulates the spirit of his life's work."*

In his 1998 catalogue raisonné, curator and scholar David Anfam features *Untitled* among Rothko's final few paintings, including his last work, a vivid red canvas, in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Departing from the somber palette of his "Black on Gray" paintings from the year prior, *Untitled* invites contemplation and is revelatory of the artist's mental and emotional state in the days and weeks leading up to his suicide in February of 1970.

"Shedding the mournful monochromatic hues that had occupied him for much of 1969, Rothko plunges one last time into the jewelled, intoxicating spectrum that had guided his practice for over two decades. His deep blue tone shifts and mutates as it catches the light, glimmering like a portal to the beyond," writes Kaplan.

The renowned American collectors and philanthropists Paul and Rachel "Bunny" Mellon acquired *Untitled* in New York in May of 1971, less than 18 months after its completion. As part of the Mellon Collection until Mrs. Mellon's death in 2014, *Untitled* took its place in the Mellon's world-class collection alongside masterworks by Seurat, Monet, Degas, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Stubbs, Bellows, Diebenkorn and many other renowned artists. Mellon began buying British art during the 1930's, resulting in a collection that would serve as the cornerstone of both the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Conn. and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in London.

Regarded as one of the preeminent collectors of Rothko, Mrs. Mellon possessed an exceptional eye for his work, and *Untitled* was almost immediately selected for the collection. The Mellons gifted several of the artist's most revered paintings to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D. C., among more than 1,000 works in total bestowed to the National Gallery from the collection. The Mellons also donated important French Impressionist and British paintings, as well as Decorative Arts, to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) in Richmond, VA, where Mellon served as a trustee for more than 40 years.

Untitled will be unveiled for viewing at Christie's Hong Kong from April 17-22 before returning to New York for exhibition at Rockefeller Center ahead of [Christie's inaugural 20/21 spring auction series](#).

For viewing times and details, please contact Christie's locations below.

PRESS CONTACTS:

New York: communicationsamericas@christies.com

Hong Kong: communicationsasia@christies.com

About Christie's

Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine, decorative and digital art, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting Private Sales for clients and online sales are offered year-round across all categories. Christie's global presence is spread across a network of international salerooms and 61 representatives and offices. Christies.com provides detailed articles and videos on the objects offered for sale alongside the latest advances in digital viewing tools to make Christie's accessible to all.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

###

Image available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

