

For Immediate Release

October 7, 2005

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**LICHTENSTEIN'S *IN THE CAR* HIGHLIGHTS SALE OF
POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART AT CHRISTIE'S**

**Post-War and Contemporary Art
November 8, 2005**

New York – Christie's evening sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* on November 8, promises to be a strong successor of last season's record-breaking auction, offering some key collections formed in the field such as Property from the Collection of Edward R. Broida (see separate release), the Lee V. Eastman Collection (see separate release) and the Selma and Israel Rosen Collection. Important additions to this impressive group of works are Roy Lichtenstein's *In the Car* (estimate on request), consigned by Mitchell Lichtenstein, the artist's son and *Study for a Pope I*, one of the impressive pope figures by Francis Bacon (estimate: \$7 – 9 million).

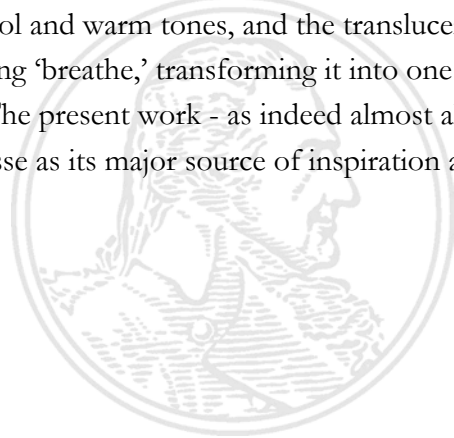
Roy Lichtenstein's work was much inspired by the consumer culture prevalent during the prosperous post-war years in America and *In the Car*, 1963 (estimate on request) exemplifies many of the 1950's elements to perfection. Lichtenstein captured his figures straight from ads and comic books and the present scene comes is derived from a 1961 issue of 'Girl's Romances.' Depicted is a well-dressed, glamorous couple in a car, she a perfectly coiffed blonde, he dark and handsome. However, for all the apparent and superlative glamour exhibited by the couple, their cold and stoic expressions suggest an atmosphere of tension and anger that fills the image to an almost tangible degree. Herein lays the brilliancy of Lichtenstein's imagery. By isolating and cropping his narratives, he illustrates a single frame so that the viewer is stranded with a solitary, frozen image in time. Moreover, *In the Car* shows no thought bubble, leaving the interpretation completely up to the viewer, thereby increasing both the intrigue as well as the psychological tension between the couple. The present work typifies Lichtenstein's mature style whereby he used commercial stencils to enlarge the dots that mimicked the cheap printing techniques of the times, thus stressing the idea that he based his images on reproductions rather than nature. His fascination with light and colors is also apparent in this work. The use of primary colors such as blue, red and yellow is reminiscent

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of Mondrian whereas his system of codes and signs for glass and mirrors reveals a highly sophisticated way of dealing with the complicated issue of rendering light.

The 20th century art, like indeed so many preceding centuries, has its own, unforgettable painted version of a pope, courtesy of Francis Bacon. The six major images Bacon executed in April-May 1961 – of which the present *Study for a Pope No. I* is the first (estimate: \$7 – 9 million) - seemed to show the slow, progressive descent of a man of pomp and circumstance into dementia and inner hell. Bacon was heavily influenced by Velazquez' formidable portrayal of Pope Innocent X, but he substituted Velazquez' state portrait with a candid glimpse of the pathetic man behind the aggrandized guise of his station. Bacon's pope is a Borges-like pope, shrunken and exposed without the slightest sense of dignity. This agonized figure breathes insanity and Bacon duly placed him in his own solitary, sound-proof, isolation chamber, utterly lonely, helpless and pierced by his own screams. It is the portrayal of an existentialist's idea of the loneliness of the human condition and in that Bacon mirrors the nihilistic viewpoint of his contemporaries such as Sartre and Becket. In the present version of the Pope, Bacon remains relatively faithful to Velazquez' portrait, matching the rich baroque colors but already using the haunting green that would constitute the background for many of his best works of the early 1960's.

The Selma and Israel Rosen Collection was based on three crucial ingredients: each and every work needed to evoke a passion with both spouses, the work had to represent a top example of the artist's talent and it had to demonstrate an important development in contemporary art. Theirs was a 'public' collection; although exhibited in a private house, it was a collection that was often visited and discussed by scholars, curators, and students. Selma and Israel Rosen had started their collecting journey in the 1940's, buying the cornerstones of modern art, the Cubists. In the 1950's and 1960's they moved along with many artists into the exciting new field of Abstract Expressionism, acquiring major works by Pollock, de Kooning, Gorky, Still and others. The sale will offer another key work of Abstract Expressionism, Mark Rothko's *Blue Over Red* (estimate: \$4.5 – 6.5 million), painted in 1953, during one of the most productive and active phases of the artist's career, marked by artistic breakthroughs and professional achievements. *Blue Over Red* is one of those works that embodies Rothko's confidence and sense of direction. The use of brilliant colors, set in harmonious relationships, creates almost imperceptible vibrations that activate the entire surface. The painting achieves a balance with cool and warm tones, and the translucency of the brushwork suggests a glow that makes the painting 'breathe,' transforming it into one of the 'organisms' Rothko so much longed to create. The present work - as indeed almost all of Rothko's mature paintings - is limitlessly indebted to Matisse as its major source of inspiration and guidance.



Prompted by Anthony D'Offay, Andy Warhol set out to create a series of new self-portraits in the winter of 1985/86, using what had by that time become a completely artificial self-image. Warhol had morphed into the 'Shadow,' his face a mass of dermatological transformations and his trademark peroxide wig an adornment he could not do without. In the present *Self-Portrait* (estimate: \$2.5 – 3.5 million), Warhol the phenomenon has completely eclipsed Warhol the person. But the image reaches far beyond mere disguise, as Warhol depicts himself as a fragile and aged creature, exposing his weaknesses and agonies in a stark and direct way. When the Self-Portraits were on display at D'Offay, they created a shock effect, causing deep emotions and with hindsight, an uncanny sense of the nearness of mortality since Warhol died shortly after their execution from the complications of a routine operation. Among the most moving and iconic of Warhol's works, these paintings also powerfully embody the artist's own advice "If you want to know about Andy Warhol, then just look at the surface of my pictures, my movies, and me and there I am, there's nothing in between."

From the same Private European Collector is the *Self-Portrait* of and by Jeff Koons (estimate: \$2 – 3 million), a marble bust from an edition of three, executed in 1991 and the centerpiece of Koons' infamous 'Made in Heaven' series. The series, consisting of sugary confection of overly narcissistic and kitsch images of the artist and La Cicciolina, his new wife, was intended to mark Koons' apotheosis as both artist and man. This bust commemorates the artist's new status as a god, seemingly rising from a kryptonite-like amalgam of crystals, his eyes closed in apparent contemplation of his own state of perfection.

The sale offers three powerful works by Richard Prince, each of them reflecting a major theme in his oeuvre. *Untitled (Cowboy)* (estimate: \$900,000-1,200,000) stems from a series Prince began in the late 1970's when he was employed as a press cutting collator in a publishing firm. It was there that the artist started to clip, cut, reframe and re-photograph groups of images that to him had a seductive resonance in their banality. *Untitled (Cowboy)*, taken from the popular Marlboro cigarette advertising campaign, is at once abstract and mimetic, beautiful and banal and it is arguably the most important and iconic example of Prince's work. Also offered is *Intimate Nurse* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), an example of his work whereby the artist appropriated the covers of romance novels featuring nurses in varying pulp fiction situations. In *Intimate Nurse*, a rare full-figure portrait, the subject appears to be removing the last of her uniform, rendering this nurse the only one from the series to be so revealing. In her cap and underwear, she seems vulnerable, but her expression is sinister, creating an almost cinematic tension. *Telling it over* (estimate: \$500,000-700,000), painted in 1989, is one of his famous joke paintings, in which Prince tackles issues such as ownership and representation. By painting a joke, the artist takes ownership of it, though the viewer knows it is borrowed property at best.

November 9 will continue strong with the Morning and Afternoon sessions offering a wide array of artists, ranging from the classic Post-War to the cutting edge Contemporary. The Morning Session begins with a continuation of the magnificent Collection of Lee V. Eastman, including a rare offering of five paintings by Joseph Albers, highlighted by *Homage to the Square: Warm Silence*, 1971, a four-colored yellow painting from his famous series (estimate: \$120,000-160,000). Andy Warhol is as hot as ever; our selection includes *Blue-Green Mao* and *Marilyn*, both from his Reversal Series, as well as *Blue Flowers*, 1964 (estimate: \$350,000-550,000), from the Jeffrey Warhola Family Collection. The Morning Session will also feature a selection of important West Coast paintings, led by David Park's *Red Bather*, 1958 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) from the Steinmetz Family Collection as well as works by Wayne Thiebaud, Richard Diebenkorn, Paul Wonner, Nathan Oliveira and others.

The afternoon will continue with an impressive number of *Untitled*'s including by artists such as Damien Hirst, 1995 (estimate: \$300,000-400,000); Richard Prince (Cowboys), 1986 (estimate: \$250,000-350,000); Doris Salcedo, 1995 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000); Dan Flavin's (To Don Judd, Colorist), 1987 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000); and Agnes Martin, 1999 (estimate: \$120,000-180,000).

Auction: Post-War and Contemporary Art

November 8 at 7 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

November 4 - 8

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Images available on request

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

More information about Christie's sale of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* 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.

