

For Immediate Release

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RARE GEMS OF PRINTMAKING AT CHRISTIE'S

Prints and Multiples

November 4, 2003

New York – A well-balanced sale of 19th and 20th century prints will be offered on Tuesday November 4 at Christie's in New York. Although a wide selection of desirable images by artists such as Picasso, Miro, Warhol and Ruscha will definitely appeal to many, the collector/explorer will be delighted to discover three exquisite and rare treasures of American printmaking among the offerings.

Winslow Homer

The sea was one of Homer's main sources of inspiration and the two exquisite etchings offered in the sale express his maritime passion in a forceful way. Far from delivering a romantic image of waves and beaches, both images deal with the sea as a rough and powerful element, ready to take lives and fight human control. The Life Line (estimate: \$30,000–40,000) depicts an unconscious woman being snatched by a seaman from the grip of the turbulent waves. This print is a rare early working proof, bearing Homer's name and the date 1884 in the plate as well as the very unusual reference to Homer owning the copyright of this print. Eight Bells (estimate: \$50,000–70,000), an etching of 1887 and possibly a working proof, shows two seamen navigating a ship through tempestuous waters. It is a very fine impression of a stark image, rendered with an intensity that seems to emphasize the perilous character of the scene.

Edward Hopper

A painter at heart, Edward Hopper rarely ventured into the printmaking field, which makes his few prints real rarities. However, even in black and white, his images never fail to express the typical Hopper ambiance: a certain degree of loneliness mingled with an atmosphere laden with expectance.

American Landscape (estimate: \$30,000–40,000) evokes this theme all over again. The lonely house, backed up by a dark forest, gazes over wide nothingness while three seemingly totally out-of-place cows cross a deserted railroad track. For this print, Hopper used stark white paper and applied the darkest ink he could find, thereby creating a contrast that even heightens the lingering tension of the image.

Max Beckmann

The MoMA exhibition of Max Beckmann's work profiled a versatile and deeply passionate artist whose haunting images of Germany during and after the First World War are not easily forgotten. A selection of 50 prints, deaccessioned by the Saint Louis Art Museum, shows the same driven artist whether he depicts religious subjects, himself, or the German upper class. A splendid example of the latter is *Group Portrait, Eden Bar* (estimate: \$150,000–250,000), his biggest and most sophisticated woodcut. Beckmann depicts three elegantly dressed, cosmopolitan people in the bar of Berlin's most famous hotel. The woodcut technique provided him with the perfect medium to depict objective, accurate reality. In *Eden Bar*, he envisions vanity and isolation in all three figures – elegant yet empty. Other examples include *Woman with a candle* (estimate: \$18,000–20,000), a 1920 woodcut; *Taunentzienpalast* (estimate: \$18,000–22,000), a 1920 drypoint and two rather severe but impressive self-portraits. Interestingly, no other artist except Rembrandt ever portrayed himself so often than Beckmann.

Post War

The afternoon session, dedicated to post war prints, showcases a selection of David Hockney prints. Many of the artist's colorful and cheerful images will be part of the session such as *Lithograph of Water* (estimate: \$12,000–15,000), one of the cool and inviting swimming pool depictions; *Afternoon Swimming* (estimate: \$40,000–50,000), a very desirable image that has not been offered for quite some time; and *An Image of Celia* (estimate: \$70,000–90,000), the slightly psychedelic, cubist-inspired image of the ever-reappearing friend Celia.

A selection of Jasper Johns works is highlighted by *Target (ULAE 147)* (estimate: \$100,000–150,000), a bright and classic target image from 1974. Noteworthy is also the appearance of several complete portfolios by important late 20th century artists. Prints by Barnett Newman, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Jim Dine, Robert Rauschenberg, and many others complete the afternoon session.

One special note for Dieter Rot's extraordinary *Entenjagd (Ducks' Hunt)* (estimate: \$6,000–8,000). This multiple consists of a wooden case that contains a number of plastic ducks and armored men stuck and struggling to get out of a field of ... chocolate.

Auction: Prints and Multiples

November 4 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

October 31 – November 3

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Images available on request

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