

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Bendetta Roux 212.636.2680 broux@christies.com

CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK STAGES MOST IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART SALE EVER

Works by Picasso, Klimt, Kirchner and Schiele Highlight Historic Landmark Sale

Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale November 8, 2006

New York – When Christie's *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* occurs on November 8 at Rockefeller Center, the art world will witness the most valuable and important various owners sale ever organized in the field. With an aggregated value of \$340/490 million and a selection of works that include four Klimt paintings restituted to the heirs of Adele Bloch-Bauer (expected to realize in excess of \$93 million); a Blue Picasso consigned by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation (estimate: \$40 – 60 million); the most important Gauguin painting ever to have come to auction in the last thirty years (estimate: \$35 – 45 million); a quintessential Kirchner painting restituted to the heirs of Alfred and Thekla Hess (estimate: \$18 – 25 million); a group of dramatic Schiele works (expected to realize in excess of \$32 million) and other properties from the collections of Janice Levin, Paul Mellon, Arnold Newman, Johnny Carson and Otto Preminger, the evening will not merely present a sale, it will stage a historic landmark event.

“I am extremely excited and proud to be offering a number of the world's most iconic and legendary paintings of the late 19th and early 20th century in our evening sale of Impressionist and Modern Art,” said Guy Bennett, Senior Vice President and Head of the Impressionist and Modern Art department. “Never before have we presented a group of works in one auction which portray the diversity and genius of this field so poignantly. Christie's will write history on November 8.”

The restitution of five paintings by Gustav Klimt to Maria Altmann and the other heirs of Adele Bloch-Bauer earlier this year and the subsequent purchase of *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, Klimt's golden masterpiece and highlight of the group, by Ronald Lauder for The Neue Galerie made headlines all over the world. The other four paintings – *Adele Bloch Bauer II* (estimate: \$40 – 60 million); *Houses in Unterach on Lake Atter* (*Häuser in Unterach am Attersee*) (estimate: \$18 – 25 million); *Apple Tree I* (*Apfelbaum I*) (estimate: \$15 – 25 million) and *Birch Forest* (*Buchenwald*) (estimate: \$20 – 30 million) – will be offered at the sale (*see separate release*).

The magnificent Blue Period portrait of *Angel Fernández de Soto*, 1903, arguably one of the most important of this period in the artist's oeuvre will be offered by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation to benefit a variety of charities (estimate: \$40 – 60 million). One of the most accomplished and moving paintings from Picasso's Blue Period, the work shows characteristic themes of this stage in the artist's career, including a deep sense of isolation and social alienation (*see separate release*). Also by Picasso is *Plant de Tomates*, (estimate: \$5 – 7 million), a painting the artist executed on August 10, 1944, as part of a series of tomato plant renderings. The present picture is generally regarded as the finest of the series, as it is entirely finished and displays a brilliant contrast between the colored organic arabesques and the background of grisaille architectural ornaments

Paul Gauguin's majestic *L'homme à la hache*, 1891 (estimate: \$35 – 45 million), marks the artist's first arrival in Tahiti in 1891 and is one of the most important paintings of that period. In Noa-Noa, Gauguin's own account of his life and work in Tahiti, the artist describes the visual experience which led to the creation of this work. However, *L'homme à la hache* is a complex and multi-layered painting in which Gauguin combines direct observation, artistic freedom and symbolic meaning. Having left civilized life behind and in an attempt to free himself from values and opinions forced upon man by society, Gauguin's artistic search was mainly focused on a visual language with which he could transcend Western civilization. The relatively traditional, simple color-planes and arabesques used in *L'homme* are complemented with forms reminiscent of Greece and the Orient while the scene is set in a Tahitian landscape. The artistic wholeness created by fusing different elements and influences reflected precisely the spiritual wholeness by which Gauguin was so inspired by and desired.

The works for which Kirchner is most noted are those that predate his war service and culminate in the series of paintings of the erotic street life of Berlin. *Strassenszene, Berlin* (estimate: \$18 – 25 million), a magnificent painting restituted to the heirs of Alfred and Thekla Hess this past July, is one of the finest of this exceptional series of 11 pictures of Berlin life that Kirchner painted in this unique period in the years immediately before the First World War.

Kirchner's celebrated portraits of the bustling erotic street life of the metropolis mix eroticism, anxiety and the fast pace of city life into one of the first and most intoxicating expressions of the nature of modern urban existence in the whole of 20th Century art (*see separate release*).

Egon Schiele, whose *Herbstsonne* sold for \$21.7 million at Christie's London in June, will be represented in this sale by a group of four works, one painting and three works on paper. *Einzelne Häuser (Häuser mit Bergen)* (estimate: \$20 - 30 million) was painted in 1915. The sale also features *Kniender Halbakt nach links gebeugt*, 1917 (estimate: \$6 – 8 million); *Zwei Mädchen auf einer Fransendecke*, 1911 (estimate: \$5 – 7 million) and *Sitzender Mädchenakt mit schwarzen Strümpfen*, 1910 (estimate: \$1.2 – 1.8 million).

The sale will further include *Les trois personages devant le jardin*, 1922 (estimate: \$7 – 10 million); *Vénus* by Amedeo Modigliani, 1917 (estimate: \$6 – 9 million) and an impressive group of impressionist paintings formerly in the Collection of Janice Levin, sold to benefit the Philip and Janice Levin Foundation and led by Pierre Auguste Renoir's *Beaulieu, femmes et garçonnet*, 1890 (estimate: \$4 – 6 million) (*see separate release*).

Two extraordinary drawings by Piet Mondrian, from the Arnold Newman estate, present the most fully realized and finished of the artist's late works on paper. Study I for *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, drawn in 1942 (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) was given to Newman by Mondrian during a studio visit while Study II for *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), a more finished version of the composition, changed hands when Mondrian had invited Newman back three days later. Both drawings were deeply significant for the development of the famous painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, which Mondrian executed in 1942-43 and which was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York after its first showing in 1943.

From the Estate of Paul Mellon, one of the greatest art collectors of all times, comes Pierre Bonnard's *Le chemin jaune aux enfants*, circa 1939 (estimate: \$600,000-800,000) and Property from the Collection of Mrs. Otto Preminger, the widow of the famous Hollywood director, includes Marc Chagall's *L'écuyère en blanc*, 1941 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000) and Wassily Kandinsky's *Leise Deutung*, 1929 (estimate: \$500,000-700,000). Juan Gris's *Le Pierrot à la guitare* (estimate: \$1.2 – 1.6 million) is from the Estate of Johnny Carson, the legendary host of the television show *The Tonight Show*.

Christie's will continue on November 9 with *Impressionist and Modern Art Day Sale* and *Works on Paper*.

Auction: Impressionist and Modern Art
Impressionist and Modern Art

November 8 at 7 PM
November 9 at 10 AM

Works on Paper

November 9 at 2 PM

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

November 3 - 8

About Christie's

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Images available on request

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More information about Christie's sale of *Impressionist and Modern 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.