

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

佳士得香港有限公司

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**EXCEPTIONAL MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST
ASIAN ART TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG
AUTUMN SALE**



LEE MAN FONG (Indonesia 1913-1988)

Rojak seller

oil on board

36 x 49 in. (90 x 122 cm.)

Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-2,000,000 (US\$153,800-256,400)

Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art

27 November 2005

From the romantic nostalgia of the 'Old Masters' to the exciting and provoking art of current times, the *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art* auction to be held on 27 November at Christie's Hong Kong is one of the most kaleidoscopic of its kind. This season's sale offers an exhilarating concentration of different artistic methods, unified in its celebration of this tropical Orient and diverse styles of the artists.

Ruoh-Ling Keong, Vice President and Head of Christie's Southeast Asian Paintings Department said: "Since the relocation of our Southeast Asian Pictures sale from Singapore to Hong Kong in spring 2002, our sale has been growing steadily with numerous world auction records being set. We have also achieved a dominant market share in the modern and contemporary Southeast Asian Art market, affirming our position as the leader in this category."

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Important works by traveller artists are featured in the sale. Among these artists is **Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès** (Belgium 1880-1958). The November sale features a comprehensive presentation of works by the artist on scenes ranging from that of tropical Bali to the warm interiors and the lush garden scenes. Completing the series will be Le Mayeur's provocative charcoal and pastel works which demonstrate his skilled draughtsmanship and attention-to-detail - a charming testament to the artist's versatility with different media. The highlight is a superb painting *Women in an interior* (Estimate: HK\$2,800,000-3,500,000/ US\$359,000-448,700), illustrating his unabashedly impressionistic palette that depicts the lush, tropical environment with vigor and fervor.

Lee Man Fong (Indonesia 1913-1988) was born in China and later moved to Singapore and Indonesia. His *Rojak Seller* (Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-2,000,000/ US\$153,800-256,400) is a superb work displaying the artist's skill at its most eloquent. The positioning of the objects and the rendering of the sitters clearly demonstrates Western perspective and training in anatomy. By contrast, the sprinkling of grass and rocks in the foreground and the twirling foliage have an oriental lyricism that immediately gives the work a soft and gentle mood. Another excellent piece *Three Horses* by the artist is also offered (Estimate: HK\$800,000-1,200,000/ US\$102,600-153,800).

An important work by National Filipino artist, **Carlos V Francisco** (The Philippines 1913-1969), better known as Botong, is a further highlight in the sale. *Magpupukot (Pulling in the net)* (Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,600,000/ US\$153,800-205,100) is a hearty depiction of fishermen reeling in the nets to avail the catch of the day. With a keen appreciation of folk values, the artist created great synergy between the vivid colours and kinetic rhythms of the fishermen, almost literally moving the work to life, symbolising the intoxicating energy of the pioneers who contributed to the wealth of the current nation.

A contemporary of Le Mayeur, **Rudolf Bonnet** (The Netherlands 1895-1978) has a remarkable piece, *The Balinese girl* (Estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$76,900-102,600), painted at the time when he had just arrived in the Dutch East Indies. This is a rare offering in the market as there are very few known oil paintings by Bonnet during his Bali period. The present lot presents the signature qualities of the artist who is known for his depiction of the graceful, the elegance and the beautiful; a tendency which Bonnet has acquired during his days in Italy.

Miguel Covarrubias (Mexico 1904-1957) is represented by *The Bath* (Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,600,000/ US\$153,800-205,100), a painting of a lone female subject bathing against a backdrop of lush tropical flora and fauna. Even with the subject's back turned from the viewer, Covarrubias manages to communicate sensuality using deceptively simple lines to create the scene.

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The Franco-Vietnamese artists shared the same impetus as the traveller artists' experiences of the tropical landscapes whilst maintaining and introducing their own traditions into their work. *A l'approche de Tet* by **Le Pho** (Vietnam 1907-France 2001) is a magnificent example (Estimate: HK\$600,000-800,000/ US\$76,900-102,600). It was painted using ink and colour on silk as its canvas, which is not uncommon in works originating from Vietnam. Though painted using French art techniques, the subject and motifs are selected very much Oriental.

Two girls with fruit baskets (Estimate: HK\$350,000-500,000/ US\$44,900-64,100) and *Girl with roosters* (Estimate: HK\$350,000-500,000/ US\$44,900-64,100) by **Anita Magsaysay-Ho** (The Philippines 1914) are of particular note. The artist is influenced by the modernist movements, an exciting period in the Philippines when young artists were burning with the desire to revolutionise, and turned their back on accepted aesthetics. These two landmark works are extremely important as they were completed during the height of that era. A spectacular *Mother and Child* sculpture (Estimate: HK\$45,000-65,000/ US\$5,800-8,300) by the artist will also be offered.

The sale will also showcase the captivating developments of Contemporary Southeast Asian Art, where many artists, now reputed as the 'Old Masters', are exploring and creating their own unique visual vocabulary across disciplines. This category received extremely encouraging results at our inaugural offering of Southeast Asian Contemporary Art in May this year.

Oh Johnny! by Indonesian artist **I Nyoman Masriadi**(1973) (Estimate: HK\$45,000-55,000/ US\$5,800-7,100) shows a female subject clad holding a kettle of hot water and a pair of scissors, apparently just after castrating her unfaithful husband. With the scantily clothed model juxtaposed with the tools for sterilisation, it is an ingenious commentary of contemporary society's cultural liberties.

Nothing something nothing by **Handiwirman Sahputra's** (Indonesia 1975) (Estimate: HK\$20,000-30,000/ US\$2,600-3,800) is a simple but evocative piece telling of literally nothing. This work is inspired by going against the current grain of making works with 'meaning'.

Kamin Lertchaiprasert (Thailand 1964) and **Jakapan Vilasineekul** (Thailand 1964) are well-known for both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works. Lertchaiprasert's meditative sculpture *The more you keep, the more you suffer, if you don't let go* (Estimate: HK\$55,000-70,000/ US\$7,100-9,000) embodies a quiet but powerful philosophy reflective of his introspection. The peace transpired by the work is probably a statement of contemporary society's pace. This sculpture is accompanied by a print which was used as a study upon which the sculpture was created. Vilasineekul's sculptures are often based on Thai proverbs and carry either an overt political or social undertone. The sculptural *Apparatus to value* (Estimate: HK\$55,000-70,000/ US\$7,100-9,000) is made from natural materials

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such as wood and metals as opposed to plastics, which is regarded as a celebration of simplicity in life.

Pre-sale Exhibitions:

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| Singapore | 7 – 8 October | Grand Hyatt Singapore |
| Hong Kong | 25 – 26 November | Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre |

Auction: *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art*, 27 November, 9:30am
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

More information about Christie's sale of *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian 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.

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