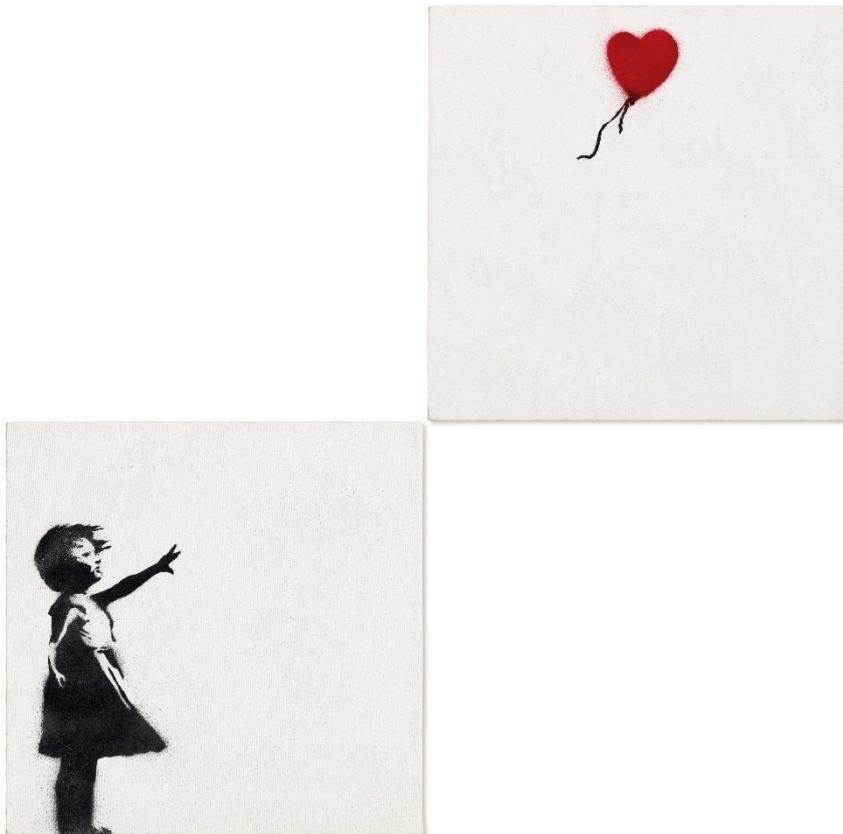


# CHRISTIE'S

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## BANKSY'S *GIRL WITH BALLOON (DIPTYCH)* IS UNVEILED IN LONDON AS A MAJOR HIGHLIGHT OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> / 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: EVENING SALE INCLUDING THINKING ITALIAN, LONDON, 15 OCTOBER 2021

- Banksy's *Girl with Balloon (Diptych)* is a poignant vision of innocence and hope
- Unveiled in London on 1 October, the painting will be a major highlight of Christie's flagship Frieze Week auction
- The painting is being offered with a pre-sale estimate of £2,500,000-3,500,000
- Christie's 20<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Evening Sale Including Thinking Italian, London will incorporate the Hong Kong and New York sale rooms, taking place on 15 October 2021



Banksy, *Girl with Balloon (Diptych)* (2005, estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000)

**LONDON** – Unveiled in London on 1 October, Banksy's *Girl with Balloon (Diptych)* (2005, estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000) will highlight Christie's 20th / 21st Century: Evening Sale Including Thinking Italian, London on 15 October 2021. A poignant two-part version of what is perhaps Banksy's most iconic image, *Girl with Balloon (Diptych)* is a vision of innocence and hope. The work consists of two canvases, each on an intimate 30 x 30 cm scale. In one stands a small girl, stencilled in black against the white background, with her hand upraised; in the other, a red, heart-shaped balloon drifts away into the sky. Created in 2005, one year after the *Girl with Balloon* motif appeared on London's South Bank,

the diptych heightens the simple pathos of Banksy's composition: the balloon has escaped from one panel into another, and the space between the two is palpable. In 2017, Banksy's *Girl with Balloon* was voted the nation's favourite artwork.

**Katharine Arnold, Co-Head, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's Europe:** "*Banksy created Girl with Balloon (Diptych) with the intention of reminding us that above all, there is hope. As the balloon escapes the hands of the girl who held it dearly and drifts upwards, we are reminded that our hopes and dreams are universal notions that elevate us. The symbolism is a fitting encapsulation of our collective experience over the last 18 months and we are delighted to offer the painting as a highlight during London's Frieze Week in our 20th / 21st Century: Evening Sale Including Thinking Italian.*"

The original mural of *Girl with Balloon* appeared outside a Shoreditch printing shop in 2002; two years later, another version sprang up on London's South Bank, this time accompanied by a message reading 'There Is Always Hope.' Much like Banksy's *Game Changer* (2020), also depicting a small child, the image's purpose and power lay in its universality. It was not a fixed entity confined to a gallery, but rather an ephemeral, constantly-evolving performance, one that lived among the people, and spoke to them in different ways. In 2005, Banksy produced another variant of the motif on the West Bank barrier wall, this time with a bunch of balloons lifting the girl into the sky. In 2014, a version featuring a child with a headscarf was projected onto Nelson's Column and other global landmarks in support of crisis victims in Syria.

Banksy has taken the world as his canvas since the 1990s, using graffiti as a powerful form of social commentary and critique. Beginning in his native Bristol, the anonymous artist moved to London towards the turn of the millennium, where his signature stencilled images became a distinctive part of the urban landscape. Over the years, his projects have taken him across the globe: from Gaza to Glastonbury, and from Los Angeles to the Louvre. Appearing by stealth in unexpected places, his images have addressed a host of social, cultural and political issues, most recently confronting topics such as Brexit, climate change, migration and the COVID-19 pandemic. Fuelling Banksy's practice is a belief that art should belong to the people, and that, in reflecting their concerns, it has the power to change the world for the better. *Girl with Balloon* has held a constant role in this mission for almost twenty years.

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