BANKSY PAINTING FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIR PAUL SMITH WILL BE OFFERED IN CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK 21ST CENTURY EVENING SALE IN NOVEMBER

Property from the Private Collection of Sir Paul Smith
BANKSY
Sunflowers from Petrol Station
signed 'Banksy' (center left); signed and dated 'BANKSY OCTOBER 2005' (on the stretcher)
oil on canvas, in artist's frame
40 ⅝ x 34 ⅜ in. (102.6 x 87.5 cm.)
Executed in 2005.
Estimate: $12,000,000 - $18,000,0000

New York –Christie's New York is pleased to announce Banksy's *Sunflowers from Petrol Station* (estimate: $12,000,000- $18,000,000) from the collection of Sir Paul Smith will highlight Christie's 21st Century Art Evening Sale on Tuesday, 9 November 2021. The painting, executed in 2005, will be exhibited in Christie's Hong Kong galleries 7 – 12 October and in Christie's Los Angeles galleries 20 – 23 October before returning to New York, where it will be on view from 30 October – 9 November ahead of the sale.

Katharine Arnold, Christie's Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, Europe, remarks: "Following the record-breaking sale of *Game Changer* (2020) in March – another major oil on canvas by Banksy – we are delighted to offer *Sunflowers from Petrol Station* this November. Belonging to the legendary British designer, Sir Paul Smith, the work is an icon within Banksy's oeuvre, capturing not only his facility as a painter but also the wry humour that he brings to bear upon global issues. Here, the sheer comedy of wilted flowers bought from a petrol station becomes a means of highlighting our relationship with art and the environment: both, he reminds us, are transient."

Sir Paul Smith remarks: "What initially attracted me to Banksy was his confidence and clarity to communicate something exactly as it is, I was so impressed by his observations of what was happening in the world and that remains true of the work he's doing today. His political statements are completely on point, really profound, really brave and consistently delivered in a modern way. I was delighted to have the opportunity to be able to own a piece of his work and the Sunflower itself presents such a brilliantly unique way of thinking about things."

Sunflowers from Petrol Station was first exhibited in October 2005 as a part of Banksy's highly celebrated exhibition, *Crude Oils: A Gallery of Re-mixed Masterpieces, Vandalism and Vermin*. The twelve-day show featured an important group of caricaturized art historical masterpieces by the artist, including works referencing Monet's Japanese Bridge paintings, Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks,* and Warhol's *Marilyn*, which features Kate Moss as a stand in for Marilyn Monroe. This was the artist's first exhibition following the creation of his iconic mural on the West Bank barrier just two months prior, and his first major solo exhibition since *Turf War* in London in 2003. As recently as March of 2021, Christie's London successfully sold another seminal Banksy oil painting, *Game Changer*, which achieved over four times its high estimate of £3.5 million to realize £16.8 million—the current world auction record for the artist.

Sunflowers from Petrol Station is part of a limited group of Banksy works that belong in the realm of fine art objects as opposed to the street art editions for which he is best known. In this example, the artist presents a painterly and conceptual defacement of Van Gogh masterpiece, *Sunflowers.* As well as riffing on the comedy of wilted petrol station flowers – a far cry from Van Gogh's magnificent blooms – the title implicates the pollution of both nature and culture at the hands of big corporations. Banksy wittily subverts the institutional reverence surrounding the art-historical canon while simultaneously alluding to issues of environmental damage: both key concerns within his practice. The reference to Van Gogh also calls upon the historical auction moment that took place at Christie's London in 1987 when Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888) became the most expensive painting sold at auction at the time, realizing $39.9 million against an estimate of $15,000,000-$20,000,000—tripling the previous world record for any artwork sold at auction. This landmark moment also served as a catalyst for another celebrated Banksy series, a group of prints entitled *Morons,* which the artist began in 2006.

Pre-Sale Exhibitions:

Preview in Hong Kong: 7 – 12 October
Preview in Los Angeles: 20 – 23 October
Preview in New York: 30 October – 9 November

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