

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **FOUR MAGNIFICENT RESTITUTED BLOCH-BAUER PAINTINGS BY GUSTAV KLIMT TO APPEAR IN CHRISTIE'S EVENING SALE OF IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART**

#### **Sale at Auction Builds on the Epic Story of Highly Prized Masterpieces, and Makes for Christie's Most Important Auction Ever**

**New York** – Christie's President Marc Porter today announced the sale at auction of four paintings by Gustav Klimt that were restituted to the heirs of Ferdinand and Adele Bloch-Bauer earlier this year. Their sale at auction will accent one family's heroic battle to recover cherished treasures and tell a profound story of lives destroyed through Nazi persecution. The sale will also reinforce the Bloch-Bauer heirs' effort to share these masterpieces with the world, having concluded blockbuster exhibitions on both the West and East coasts as well as the record setting sale of *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I* to the Neue Galerie in New York -- considered to be the most expensive painting ever sold. On August 7<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Bloch-Bauer heirs announced the selection of Christie's as their advisors on the sale of the four remaining Klimt paintings. Christie's has advised the family to sell at public auction, to best highlight those rare elements that the paintings possess: freshness to the market, quality, and provenance.

"Beyond recovering these masterpieces, my family and I are pleased and honored to have been able to present them publicly through two highly-visited and highly-acclaimed exhibitions," said Maria

Altmann, niece of Adele and Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer. “These paintings, their restitution, the subsequent display in Los Angeles and New York, along with extensive media coverage, have informed millions of people that, in this particular case, justice prevailed. Now that we have achieved this, we have entrusted Christie’s with placing these remaining paintings in important collections through their November auction. Christie’s chairman Stephen Lash has long been our friend and supporter in our recovery efforts, making it our pleasure to work with Christie’s to sell these paintings.”

“The addition of these four powerful artworks in our November sale will make it Christie’s New York’s most important auction ever,” said Mr. Porter. “This is a most fantastic moment following a decade of heroic efforts by the Bloch-Bauer heirs to recover these pictures and use that challenge to help educate the media, the art world and the larger public of the timeless beauty of these paintings and the profound story surrounding them. It will be our distinct honor to help place them in superb collections.”

All four paintings will be offered during Christie’s evening sale of *Impressionist and Modern Art* on November 8 in New York. Earlier this month The Neue Galerie announced the extension until October 9 of its Klimt exhibition, *Gustav Klimt: Five Paintings from the Collection of Ferdinand and Adele Bloch-Bauer*. The exhibition is led by *Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, Klimt’s golden masterwork, and further includes the four other works restituted to the family that will be offered at Christie’s: *Adele Bloch-Bauer II*, *Houses in Unterach on the Attersee (Häuser in Unterach am Attersee)*, *Apple Tree I (Apfelbaum I)* and *Birch Forest (Birkenwald)*. The four works are expected to realize in excess of \$93 million.

September’s Art In America magazine noted that, “In terms of artistic importance and monetary worth, this was the most significant of all recent Nazi-loot restitution cases.” Since the announcement of the paintings’ restitution earlier this year, the Austrian painter and his work have continually been in the news globally. *Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, a golden masterpiece painted in 1907 and one of the most magnificent works of art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was recently purchased by The Neue Galerie New York through the efforts of its co-founder, philanthropist Ronald Lauder, in a transaction in which Christie’s assisted Mr. Lauder and the Neue Galerie. The painting provided The Neue Galerie, an elegant museum devoted to German and Austrian art on Fifth Avenue and co-founded by Mr. Lauder, with its own ‘Mona Lisa’ and the exhibition of *Adele Bloch-Bauer I*,

together with the four other restituted Klimt works, has been one of New York's major cultural events of the summer. The highly reported, multi-million dollar sale placed *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* on a gilded pedestal but the painting creates mystery all by itself as the record thousands of visitors to the museum have discovered. Whether it is elegant society ladies, lush landscapes or enigmatic trees, Klimt's incomparable style and highly personal use of colors and motives has captured the public again. 21<sup>st</sup> century New York is just as mesmerized as fin-de-siècle Vienna.

### ***Adele Bloch-Bauer II***

*Adele Bloch-Bauer II* (estimate: \$40 million – \$60 million), is a celebration of colors, depicting Adele in a less formal way than her golden portrait. A pattern of red, green, blue and pink color patches, filled with Asian-inspired figures and flowers, supports the still splendid-looking figure of Adele dressed in whites and greys. Besides the outburst of colors, Klimt's second version of Adele differs from the first one in the way it clearly searches for the depths of her soul and mind, a feature which Klimt, duly impressed by the works of Kokoschka and Schiele, might have adopted from his younger colleagues. As noted by Michael Kimmelman of The New York Times, “. . . No longer gold and Byzantine with Egyptian flourishes, instead flowery, sketchier and brightly colored, like a Japanese print, she wears a halo made out of the brim of a huge black hat. Her dress is high-collared, not off the shoulder, her body face-forward and erect, a slender, sinuous Coke-bottle shape, more chaste than carnal.” “This extraordinary portrait shares an overpowering presence with the earlier *Adele*,” said Guy Bennet, Head of Christie's Impressionist and Modern department. “This adds even greater mystique to *Adele Bloch-Bauer II* and makes it all the more prized.”

### ***Houses in Unterach on the Attersee (Häuser in Unterach am Attersee)***

Painted when Klimt spent the summer months with the Flöge family in Weissenbach, at Lake Atter, the idea for *Houses in Unterach on the Attersee (Häuser in Unterach am Attersee)*, 1916 (estimate: \$18 million – \$25 million), might very well have originated in 1913 when the artist sketched two villages at the Garda Lake. The fabulous view of the village Unterach on the water shows Klimt's fascination with colors, using them as building stones for his composition and creating at the same time a more liberated, more fluent image. In an inimitable way, Klimt masterfully ignores all rules of perspective: the smooth facades of the houses simultaneously seem to merge with and burst from the surrounding trees.

### ***Apple Tree I (Apfelbaum I)***

Throughout his career, Klimt visited and revisited trees as a subject matter, often even devoting his full attention to the texture and lushness of one single specimen. *Apple Tree I (Apfelbaum I)* (estimate: \$15 million – \$25 million), was painted in 1911 or 1912 and is one of the illuminating examples of Klimt's unique method to render the tree through gradations and shades of colors rather than to structure it formally. The result is a tree that is alive and breathing, its foliage touched by a floating breeze while rays of light play games with the leaves. Through these exquisite tree paintings, Klimt created a symbol for the symbiosis of nature and light, with at its center the magnificent Tree of Life.

### ***Birch Forest (Birkenwald)***

*Birch Forest (Birkenwald)* (estimate: \$20 million – \$30 million), the earliest work by Klimt to be offered, dates from 1903 and is one of the few wood scenes executed by the artist. It is in the wood paintings – in 1901, he painted *Pinewood* and 1903 saw another version of the *Birch Forest* – that Klimt connected most with the Impressionist movement. The spectator is presented with a view reminiscent of the dark density of the heart of a wood, devoid from any light or an opening to the sky, while a fall atmosphere is suggested through the red and brown fallen leaves that cover the ground and the slightly withered and grey tree trunks. “This deeply intense, magical picture of the forest interior draws one into Klimt's world,” said Mr. Bennett. “Its palette is absolutely breathtaking and an extraordinary investigation into the artist's technique and use of color.”

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) was an Austrian painter and one of the founding members and the first President of the Vienna Secession movement. He began his career as a painter of interior murals in large public buildings and later moved on to portraits and landscapes which he executed in his very distinct, elegant style. Influences on his work come from different sources including Egyptian and Byzantine inspirations as well as medieval European paintings, Henri Matisse and Japanese Ukiyo-e.

### **The Family and Restitution**

As a wealthy Austrian industrialist who had made his fortune in the sugar industry, Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer sponsored the arts in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Among the artists he supported was Gustav Klimt, a founding member of the Vienna Secession, a group of artists that broke away from more traditional styles of 19<sup>th</sup> century painting. Bloch-Bauer's wife, Adele, modeled for Klimt and

became the only model who was painted twice by the artist. His second picture of her, *Adele Bloch-Bauer II*, was completed in 1912 and is now being offered for sale by Christie's.

Adele Bloch-Bauer had indicated in her will that these and other Klimt paintings should be donated to the Austrian State Gallery. After she died in 1925, her widowed and childless husband was forced to flee Austria when the Nazis took over. His property, including these Klimt paintings, was confiscated in 1938. The five paintings were eventually placed in Vienna's Austrian Gallery Belvedere.

In 2000, the Bloch-Bauer heirs began a protracted court battle in the United States, following efforts originally initiated in 1998 in Austria. The family ultimately brought its case before the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 2004 that United States courts had jurisdiction to decide the case. The parties ultimately submitted the case to binding arbitration in Austria, and in January 2006, an Austrian arbitration panel unanimously determined that the paintings should be returned to the heirs under Austria's 1998 art restitution law.

**Auction:** Impressionist and Modern Art

November 8 at 6.30 PM

**Viewing:** Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

November 3 – 8

### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global sales in 2005 that totaled \$3.2 billion. It is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers nearly 1,000 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 90 offices in 30 countries and 16 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai. In 2005 Christie's annual global sales increased 38% to \$3.2 billion, the highest total in company history and propelling the auction house into global market leadership.

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*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

More information about Christie's sale of *Impressionist and Modern Art* can be found on [www.christies.com](http://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](http://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.

### Notes to Editors

- Images of the four paintings are available from the press officers noted at the top of this press release.
- In 1993, Christie's was the first auction house to hold a theme sale dedicated to German and Austrian Art. Since then, Christie's has established many of the current auction record prices for the leading German and Austrian artists including, George Grosz, Heinrich Campendonk, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Oskar Schlemmer among others. In 1997, Christie's London sold Gustav Klimt's *Schloss Kammer am Attersee II*, 1909, for £14,521,500 (\$23,490,000) and in 1994 it sold his *Bauergarten* (1905 -1907) for £3,741,500 (\$5,844,270). In February 2006, the German and Austrian Art portion of the London Evening Sale realized £24.5 million and established new auction records for: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's double-sided canvas *Frauenbildnis in weissem Kleid*, 1908, which sold for £4.9 million, and Heinrich Campendonk's *Kuh Mit Kalb*, 1914, which realized £1.68 million, as well as a setting a new auction record for a drawing by Egon Schiele, *Kniender weiblicher Halbakt (Kneeling female half-nude)*, 1917, which sold for £4.15 million. The German and Austrian Art section of the June 2006 Evening sale totaled £24.3 million bringing sales in this category to £48.8 million in London this year. That auction included the sale of *Herbstonne*, 1914, by Egon Schiele which sold for a record £11.7 million (\$21.7 million).