

For Immediate Release

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LUCIAN FREUD'S PORTRAIT OF KATE MOSS TO LEAD CHRISTIE'S SPRING SALES IN FEBRUARY 2005

Never Exhibited in Public Before, Painting Expected to Fetch up to £3.5 Million



Naked Portrait 2002 by Lucian Freud (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000).

Post War and Contemporary Art – Evening Sale

9 February 2005

London – *Naked Portrait 2002* by Lucian Freud (b. 1922) will be offered at Christie's in London in the evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art on 9 February 2005 (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000 / \$4,500,000-6,500,000). An almost life-size, full-length reclining portrait of a naked and pregnant young woman, *Naked Portrait 2002* is very rare in Freud's oeuvre for being one of only a few portraits the artist has painted of well-known or famous people. In this case, Freud's sitter is, with the exception of Queen Elizabeth II, probably the most famous figure to be painted by the artist. His model is the British 'supermodel' Kate Moss. The painting has never been exhibited to the public.

The strangely appropriate collaboration between Freud and Moss that produced *Naked Portrait 2002* represents the coming together of two very different ends of a spectrum. The slow scrutiny and technique of the Old Masters meets the world of Contemporary fashion, fleeting magazine covers and commercial advertising.

Freud's art, almost fanatically devoted to the visual appearance of reality, makes a stark and intrusive contrast to the glamour of fame. Exposing everything to a cold and all-pervasive light, Freud's fierce, curious and analytical gaze scrutinises the smallest of details. Slow to

produce, painstakingly crafted and difficult to fabricate, Freud's painting carries with it integrity and a visual truth that acts almost as an antidote to the fast-paced, quickly-packaged world of glitz and sound-bite that characterises so much of the cult of celebrity in the modern world. A world that in some ways, the iconic face and body of Kate Moss has both adorned and been used to advertise and promote for nearly fifteen years.

Freud's decision to paint Kate Moss, not only one of the most 'looked' at but also one of the most famous people in the world, was arguably a challenge for an artist who prefers to paint people he knows well and who are not professional models. Well versed at holding poses, models are often too "*hardened*", Freud has said, "*they've grown another skin because they've been looked at so much.*" (Lucian Freud cited by William Feaver, May 2002).

As with all his sitters, what interests Freud most is seeing them dispassionately and objectively as unique examples, even specimens of physical animation. "*I'm really interested in them as animals*", he has said, "*Part of liking to work from them naked is for that reason. Because I can see more: see the forms repeating right through the body and often in the head as well. One of the most exciting things is seeing through the skin, to the blood and veins and markings*". (Lucian Freud cited by William Feaver, May 2002).

In painting someone like Kate Moss, Freud investigates the physical form of a person who has been probed and projected in almost every way by the camera lens. Applying his own strict discipline of scrutinizing the figure under new light, like a scientist inspecting a new life form, Freud creates a wholly different image of Moss. It is one that shows another person entirely from someone who is normally so recognisable.

It was Kate Moss herself who originally suggested the painting by revealing in an article in *Dazed and Confused* magazine that one of her remaining ambitions was to pose for Freud. It takes between six months and a year of regular sittings for the artist to complete a painting but Moss had explained in the same article that she was unconcerned by the length of time it would take. The artist seems to have heard about her wishes.

Freud began painting in 2001 and started with Moss' slightly pregnant stomach so as to fix it in paint. The fact that the sitter is pregnant forms a key feature of the painting and enhances the already uncharacteristic image of such a famous model. The normally waif-like Moss is here presented as an imposing physical presence, looking both more corporeal and physically substantial than any fashion photograph would, or could, ever show. Staring directly at the viewer with a look of resolution her body seems disproportionately large, even growing in magnitude, as through perspective it approaches the viewer. The effect is that Moss's face, normally the dominant force in any photograph of her, is overshadowed. *Naked Portrait 2002* is an extraordinary and highly important painting and is a fascinating and ultimately successful collaboration of two very different worlds.

Portraits by Lucian Freud are particularly rare at auction and are highly sought-after. The current market for all works by Lucian Freud is very strong with Christie's leading the market in achieving successful sales. *Factory in North London* sold in February 2004 for £2,077,050. Market interest has been further heightened by a major exhibition of recent works by Freud at the Wallace Collection in London followed by the Acquavella Galleries in New York, which received unprecedented interest and confirmed Freud as arguably the UK's most celebrated living artist.

Naked Portrait 2002 was acquired by a private collector shortly after it was painted who has now decided to offer the work on the international market.

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