

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**THE KAUFMANN HOUSE, A SEMINAL MODERNIST
MASTERPIECE, TO BE OFFERED FOR SALE AT CHRISTIE'S**



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The Kaufmann House
May 13, 2008

New York - Christie's Realty International, Inc. is delighted to announce the sale of Richard Neutra's seminal Kaufmann House on the night of Christie's New York May 13 Spring 2008 Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening sale. Along with Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House and Philip Johnson's Glass House, Neutra's Kaufmann House is one the most important examples of modernist residential architecture in the Americas and remains singular as the most important example of mid-century modernist architecture in the Americas to remain in private hands. It carries an estimate of \$15,000,000 to \$25,000,000.

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In 1946, the Pittsburgh department store magnate, Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr., who had previously commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build Fallingwater, engaged Richard Neutra to build a house in the Palm Springs desert as a winter retreat for his wife and him.

Representing the purest realization of Neutra's modernist ideals, the Kaufmann House's rigorously disciplined design scheme integrates horizontal planes of cantilevered roofs under which blocks of glass floor-to-ceiling sliding walls shimmer. Set against the rugged backdrop of a mountainous landscape in the Palm Springs desert and positioned in an equally minimalist paradise of manicured lawns, placed boulders and plantings, this modernist icon represents the culmination of Neutra's highly influential achievement and contribution to architectural history.

When the current owners of this house acquired it in 1993, they were confronted with a radically altered structure than that which had originally been conceived by Neutra. A number of owners subsequent to Kaufmann, including the singer Barry Manilow, had added onto the house, and in the process had buried Neutra's original architectural plan.

A painstaking restoration was conducted during a period of over more than five years in which the current owners, in collaboration with the Santa Monica architecture firm Marmol & Radziner, returned the house to its original condition. The project consisted of a forensic study into the original conception of the house, and the integrity of the restoration that ensued is unparalleled. For example, in order to restore portions of the exterior as well as the fireplace surrounds, both which were originally made from Utah sandstone, a rock quarry in Utah that had not been used since the 1940s was reopened so that the precise color of the stone, used for these architectural components, could be matched.

The restoration of the Kaufmann House was the first of its kind to be conducted in such a manner, and resulted in an extraordinary public awareness of the important influence that mid-century modern design has played in architectural history. Neutra houses, previously often bought as tear-downs for their land value, are now viewed as seminal cultural products to be preserved and restored to their original integrity. Architectural firms, contractors, academics and many other professionals specializing in the restoration and preservation of mid-century modern architecture have emerged as a result of the phenomena.

Auction: The Kaufmann House

Viewing: On location in Palm Springs, by appointment only



The Kaufmann House will be offered for sale at auction in New York exclusively by Christie's Realty International, Inc. Christie's Great Estates, Inc. is cooperating with Christie's Realty International, Inc. and is the exclusive selling agent in California. Christie's Realty International, Inc is a wholly owned subsidiary of Christie's. Please direct all inquiries to 212 478 7113 or kaufmannhouse@christies.com

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