

# CHRISTIE'S

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**ZAO WOU-KI'S LARGEST MASTERPIECE FROM THE 1960s**

**THE ARTIST'S MOST VALUABLE WORK FROM THE PERIOD  
TO BE OFFERED AT AUCTION**

***29.09.64.***

**WILL LEAD CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG'S  
20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ART EVENING SALE**

26 May | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre



**PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT ASIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION  
ZAO WOU-KI (ZHAO WUJI, 1920 – 2013)**

***29.09.64.***

oil on canvas

230 x 345 cm. (90 1/2 x 135 7/8 in.)

Painted in 1964

**Estimate: HK\$220,000,000 – 280,000,000/ US\$29,000,000 – 36,000,000**



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**Hong Kong** — Christie's proudly announces Zao Wou-ki's 29.09.64. (estimate: HK\$220,000,000 – 280,000,000/ US\$29,000,000 – 36,000,000), the largest and the most important canvas of the artist's "Hurricane Period" in the 1960s still in private hands today, which will lead the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Art Evening Sale on 26 May, at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

**Francis Belin, President, Christie's Asia Pacific**, remarked, "*Leading our Hong Kong Spring Auctions, 29.09.64. represents Christie's leading role in presenting masterpieces by Asian artists from different eras to art connoisseurs globally. Building upon the collaboration between our international specialist teams, 29.09.64. will continue our long history of establishing world auction records for prominent Asian artists, and will attract the attention of global collectors on the evening of 26 May through our wide livestreaming and social media platforms.*"

**Eric Chang, Chairman, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Art Department, Christie's Asia Pacific**, commented, "*In spite of current economic volatility, masterpieces by iconic Eastern and Western artists have established remarkable prices in recent years and continue to do so, reflecting the sustained demand for best-in-class artworks in the market. It is our ultimate honour to have been entrusted with the sale of the seminal 29.09.64.*"

*This masterful example demonstrates Zao Wou-ki's pioneering and distinctive style of abstraction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that fuses the essence of classical Chinese ink wash paintings with Western artistic explorations and cultures. A historic work of art that transcends time and space, it draws us into the artist's deep and expansive realms that are full of lyrical and philosophical reflections about human life, history, and the universe.*

*29.09.64. possesses a one-of-a-kind theme on a vast scale, alongside an exceptional provenance which confirms the painting was directly purchased from Zao Wou-ki by the previous owner's father, who himself was a celebrated architect and a close friend of the artist. The monumental canvas is claimed to be the most representative abstraction masterpiece in Asian Modern art, and is poised to set a new price benchmark for the artist."*



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Created in the 1960s — a decade which is widely recognised as a new phase of Zao Wou-Ki's artistic *oeuvre* and an intense period of his life on both an artistic and personal level — 29.09.64. is a seminal work which marries the artist's profound knowledge of Chinese classical *literati* painting, represented by the intricate networks of truncated black and white brushstrokes at the centre of the composition, with abstract explorations through a predominantly blue colouration that resembles a tumultuous seascape where water and sky unify as one. The painting was created after Zao moved to a more spacious studio on Rue Jonquoy in the Montparnasse district of Paris, allowing him to first experiment with larger canvases. The artist extended his compositions into larger formats, bringing him at once a bigger freedom of movement and a strong underlying tension as he confronted himself with the canvas. With its important dimensions and the vehement composition distinctive of the 1960s, 29.09.64. shows a monumentality in which the viewer is immediately caught.

## **29.09.64. – A masterpiece that launches a new era of Zao Wou-Ki's artistic oeuvre in the 1960s:**

- **The pinnacle of Zao's "Hurricane Period" in 1964:** The 1960s is universally recognised as a new phase of Zao's artistic achievement, which brilliantly translates in 29.09.64. Zao integrated his Chinese classical cursive writing approach into landscape and calligraphy, marrying these elements with Western abstract artistic explorations. 29.09.64. forges a new path for Asian Modern art, and is praised as a monumental milestone in art history.
- **Exceptional provenance:** Mr. M, the previous owner's father who originally purchased the work directly from the artist, was a successful French architect and engineer who saw flourishing professional activity during France's most opulent post-war years, commonly referred to as "The Glorious Thirty" spanning from 1945 to 1975. A period of intense modernisation and industrialisation brought the architect to conceive hospitals, various scientific research centres, and administration buildings throughout France and also in Algeria, still a French colony at the time. Technological progress and scientific discoveries, in which Mr M. played a crucial role, strongly influenced the development of a new modernist aesthetic in architecture, art, and design.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **Auction:**

**Hong Kong** | 26 May | Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, No. 1 Harbour Road, Hong Kong

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*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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