

**For Immediate Release**

7 November 2006

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**EXTRAORDINARY MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART ON OFFER  
AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG AUTUMN AUCTION**

**Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art**

**26 November 2006**

**Hong Kong** – Celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Christie's Hong Kong will offer a diverse and dynamic selection of paintings and works of art in the Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art auction on 26 November. Comprising 138 sumptuous pieces of art from Southeast Asia, the sale promises to be a visual feast of colours, themes and styles that will provide thought-provoking engagement as well as pure enjoyment for all art collectors.

Having stood as a distinctive category for more than a decade, the Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art sale appeals universally to both connoisseurs with individual tastes and art enthusiasts while retaining its constant quest for cultural, national and spiritual identity.

**MODERN SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART:**

The post-war and post-colonial context in Southeast Asia, coupled with the fast pace of modernization, creates a vibrant scene for modern artists in the region in which new styles are developed and old aesthetics are re-interpreted.

**Filipino section**

Cubism was a prevalent style in the Philippines in the 1950s but was not adopted unquestioningly by the Filipino art scene. An ingenious artist, Arturo Luz (born in 1926) was committed to exploring every variation and possibility of line. The artist's penchant for lineal aesthetics has allowed him to incorporate the essence of Cubism in his work while maintaining his own unmistakable character and creativity. His inter-play of lines and geometric forms were done to level of maturity and beauty that had never been seen before in the Philippines.



## CHRISTIE'S

The cover lot of this season, *Estudiantina* painted in 1957 (Lot 49, Estimate: HK\$240,000-280,000/ US\$30,800-35,900) depicts a form of a young musician playing a guitar. Works by Luz from the 50s are famed as the prototypes of his celebrated musician-themed series, and are highly sought after by collectors. It is exceedingly rare to find such an important work from this period on the market.

Arturo Luz's contributed not only his artistic talent but also contributed generously to the development of the Filipino art scene. He established the Luz gallery, which has since run for decades, to showcase exceptional works by emerging young artists. Christie's is delighted to put under the spotlight Luz's *Estudiantina*, not only as a testament to Luz's illustrious career, but also as a commemoration of the artist's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Another rare offering in the Filipino section is *In the year 1900: a Sunday in Baras' Church, Rizal Province, Philippines after 8 a.m. mass* by Fernando Amorsolo (1892-1972) (Lot 60, Estimate: HK\$650,000-850,000/ US\$83,300-109,000). This masterpiece vividly captures the moment when the sky exudes the soft glow of the gentle morning sun of the tropics. The effervescent light is painted in its most pristine state. A work commissioned by the present Spanish owner, it is accompanied by a letter from the artist, who describes the composition well "...You may also see the famous fire tree, known as *caballero* at full blossom in the month of May. And at the left side of the church, the typical mango tree, known by all for its so exquisite fruit."

### Indonesian section

Highlights of the sale are also two exquisite private collections featuring two esteemed Indonesian artists. The collections are expected to arouse tremendous interest from aficionados of Southeast Asian art:

#### A Private collection featuring Lee Man Fong (1913-1988)

This private collection comprises 10 extraordinary paintings by Lee Man Fong that best exemplify the artist's penchant for Oriental aesthetics. Pre-dominantly depicting various landscapes in China, the collection also includes works with a horse theme, a celebrated subject for the artist, as well as the Rojak seller in Indonesia. The collectors who were working and living in Indonesia in the 50s came to know Lee personally and acquired the works directly from the artist. Meticulously kept are also the original receipts of some of these works, which date the acquisitions between 1958 and 1959.

The highlight of this collection is *Twin Horse* (Lot 75, Estimate: HK\$400,000-550,000/ US\$51,300-70,500).



# CHRISTIE'S

## A Private Collection of Joseph Borkin featuring Affandi (1907-1990)

Joseph Borkin was an economist, legal scholar, educator and writer. Having met Affandi, a much-revered Indonesian Modernist artist, he was deeply impressed by the artist's talent and thus began to amass his paintings.



Themes of the works collected include the artist's celebrated scenes of cockfighting, wild boars, the Indonesian landscape, as well as rare pieces that illustrate the scenery of the United States. On offer in the sale are 11 exceptional works including *Charles River, Boston* (Lot 99, Estimate; HK\$400,000-550,000/ US\$51,300-70,500), *Times Square, New York* (Lot 100, Estimate: HK\$400,000-550,000/ US\$51,300-70,500 – image left), and *San Francisco Bay Bridge* (lot 101, Estimate: HK\$320,000-480,000, US\$41,000-

61,500). Superbly executed in the prime years of the Affandi's career, these works best demonstrate the artist's unique compositions which are usually constructed in clusters of smears of paint. Varied colours and textures allow whatever subject is depicted to float across the surface of the canvas and to be animated only by the ebullient brushwork that never fails to convey a vivacious atmospheric effect.

Mr. Borkin became a staunch supporter of Indonesia, the young republic of the 1950s. A personal friend of Affandi and President Soekarno, the republic's first president, the collector had a devotion and affection for this newly independent country. Mr. Borkin was also well connected in US political, journalistic and legal circles, and has since built bridges between Indonesia and the international world.



In juxtaposition to the private collections is *Pura Kembarn, Sanur* by S. Sudjojono(1914-1986) (Lot 110, Estimate: HK\$880,000-1,200,000/ US\$112,800-153,800). Undeniably a leading figure in the Indonesian Modernist movement and known for his eloquent exposition of the movement's artistic principles, Sudjojono declared "...high art is work based on our daily life transmuted by the artist himself who is immersed in it, and then creates."



In the light of these words, *Pura Kembarn, Sanur* is a delightful display of the artist's conviction. Depicting a temple in Bali in 1972, the composition is full of the deep emotional resonances which make him a true Expressionist artist and no less a Romantic in his own right. Idiosyncratic details in the work include the sporadic white Frangipani on the tree, the truncated pavilion on the right and the offerings in the foreground strewn in front of the temple. These subtle and poetic elements imbue the work with a sense of spontaneity that, in spite of its enduring nature as a scene transposed to a canvas, affords viewers a fleeting sense of a very unique moment captured.

Also on offer are masterworks by Indo-European artists such as Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès(1880-1958), Raden Saleh(1807-1880) and Jan Daniel Beynon(1830-1877).

## CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART:

Attracting attention in the world auction market, contemporary Southeast Asian art offers inexhaustible surprises and delights to collectors. It is an exciting area encompassing works in a dazzlingly rich variety of forms: landscapes, portraits, pictorial narratives with texts, and gestural and geometric abstractions executed in the most diverse painterly styles. The use of different materials and media, both new and old, conventional and unconventional, coupled with the interesting range of source materials - from daily news, comics, movies, music to novels - altogether create unrivalled visual vocabularies in which artist's personal thoughts and the public coincide.



Of particular note are *Es krim & minuman berenergi (Ice Cream and Energy Drink)* by I Nyoman Masriadi (born in 1973) (Lot 28, Estimate: HK\$65,000-95,000/ US\$8,300-12,200) addressing social issues with a comic fervour; and the eloquent yet non-representational *Sisi (Mental series)* by Handiwirman Sahputra (born in 1975) (Lot 5, Estimate: HK\$20,000-30,000/ US\$2,600-3,800) that serves as an antithesis to the prevalent overtly political 'social commentary' works of the 90s throughout Southeast Asia.

The attempt of Ramon Orlina (born in 1944) to make a readable vision and to crystallize it for a contemporary audience is manifested in *Emerald Vision* (Lot 6, Estimate: HK\$32,000-48,000/ US\$4,100-6,100). On the other hand, in *Untitled* by Neal Oshima (born in 1951) (Lot 9, Estimate: HK\$20,000-24,000/ US\$2,600-3,100), the artist intends to raise the question of 'when a photograph stops being a photograph to become a painting'. As in quirky kinetic sculptural work *Breakfast for a visionary* by Gabriel Barredo (born in 1957) (Lot 8, Estimate: HK\$45,000-65,000/ US\$5,800-8,300 – image right), history and fantasy are richly interwoven to reflect his passion for classical objects that still sparkle in people's minds, such as opera and classical ballet.



### Previews:

Singapore	Copthorne King's Hotel	23-24 October
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	24-25 November

### Auction:

Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art	
Grand Hall, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre	26 November, 10am

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More information about Christie's sale of *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian 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.