

For Immediate Release

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Three Centuries of Swiss Art History – From Arnold Böcklin via Giovanni Giacometti to Peter Fischli and David Weiss

Swiss Art Sale
1 December 2008, Zürich



Zürich – In the Swiss Art sale on 1 December 2008, Christie's Zurich will offer highlights from three centuries of Swiss art history: From one of the last Arnold Böcklin paintings in private hands (*Die Nacht* / *The Night* 1870, estimate: SFr 1,200,000 – 1,500,000), to an undiscovered masterpiece by Giovanni Giacometti (*Maternité*, 1908, estimate: SFr 2,500,00-3,500,000) up to the most important work by Peter Fischli and David Weiss ever presented at auction - *Der Lauf*

der Dinge / *The way things go* (1987, estimate: SFr 900,000-1,500,000, see separate press release).

Further highlights of the sale include: Two childhood drawings by Alberto Giacometti from when he was just 12 years old (*Vogel im Gebüsch* / *Bird in the copse*, circa 1911, and *Nach der Bärenjagd* / *After the bear hunt*, 1911/12, each estimated SFr 30,000-40,000), an important still life by Cuno Amiet (*Stilleben mit drei Vasen* / *Still life with three vases*, 1906, SFr 900,000-1,200,000) and an outstanding Félix Vallotton painting (*Femmes portant des corbeilles à Marseille*, 1901, SFr 600,000-800,000) from the important Emil and Alma Staub-Terlinden Collection. In a special section of the sale 60 works from a private Swiss collection will be offered - including two important Varlin paintings (*Grand Hotel Dolderer*

in Zurich, circa 1940, SFr 150,000-200,000 and *Der Sessel / The armchair*, 1972, SFr 100,000-150,000), as well as a pink winter landscape (1910, SFr 800,000-1,200,000) by Giovanni Giacometti.

The auction is led by a newly discovered masterpiece by **Giovanni Giacometti**: The recently uncovered family portrait *Maternité* (1908, estimate: SFr 2,500,000-3,500,000) has been privately owned for many years and was unknown even to scholars of Giacometti. It is titled, signed and dated on the reverse of the canvas. The painting shows Giacometti's wife Annetta, with three of their four children (Bruno on his mothers arm, Alberto on her left and Diego on her right). *Maternité* is a smaller version of the *Maternité* painting Giovanni Giacometti executed in 1908 for the Winterthur textile manufacturer and art collector Richard Bühler. The latter painting was honoured with a gold medal at the X. International Kunstausstellung in Munich, 1909. Both family portraits present Giovanni Giacometti at the pinnacle of his oeuvre.



In the same way as the June 2008 auction, this sale will celebrate the 100th birthday of **Max Bill**. With eight works by the *Zürcher Konkrete* artist offered in the Bill section at the beginning of the sale – estimates range from SFr 18,000-25,000 for *konzentration elementarfarben* from 1965, which will be sold to the benefit of the Museum Haus Konstruktiv, to SFr 100,000-150,000 for the painting *konstruktion um das thema 3 : 4: 5* from 1980.



The second section of the sale will be dedicated to Swiss Contemporary Art. The leading lot in this part is the most important work by **Peter Fischli and David Weiss** ever presented at auction: The installation *Der Lauf der Dinge / The way things go*, (1987) and the 16mm reel of the iconic short film *The way things go*, one of the most viewed art videos of all time, which brought the artists instant international recognition when it was first presented at the Kassel documenta 8 in 1987. *The way things go*, 1987 (estimate SFr. 900,000-1,500,000) will be offered by Swiss collector Alfred Richterich and will be sold to benefit the Alfred Richterich foundation which has

supported cultural and charitable projects and initiatives in Switzerland for two decades.
(See separate press release for further details).

Further highlights in the contemporary section include five Fischli/Weiss colour prints estimated from SFr 2,000-4,000 to SFr 10,000-15,000 as well the black and white photograph *Die Welle / The wave* (1995, estimate: SFr 20,000-30,000) by **Balthasar Burkhard**.



For the third section of the sale Christie's will offer 60 works from an important Swiss Collection including a pink shimmering winter landscape (circa 1910, estimate: SFr 800,000-1,200,000) by Giovanni Giacometti as well as two paintings by **Varlin** - the recto/verso canvas *Grand Hotel Dolderer in Zurich / Studio visit* (circa 1940, estimate: SFr 150,000-200,000) and *Der Sessel / The armchair*, 1972 (estimate: SFr 100,000-150,000). The latter shows the armchair in his studio, on which his famous

sitters, such as Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, sat during his painting sessions.



The Swiss Art sale will culminate in the fourth and largest part: 19th Century Swiss painting to Swiss Modernism. Alongside the newly discovered Giacometti masterpiece *Maternité*, (estimate: SFr 2,500,00-3,500,000) Christie's will offer one of the last **Arnold Böcklin** paintings in private hands: *Die Nacht / The night*, 1870 (estimate: SFr 1,200,000-1,500,000). Nearly the entire oeuvre of the Swiss symbolist painter is in museums. Christie's Swiss Art sale will be one of the last opportunities to acquire an important Böcklin. *Die Nacht / The night* (1870) was Böcklin's first approach to an

allegorical depiction of the night as a descending female figure. Especially remarkable is the way he painted the night's veil – no other artist understood how to paint this tender and mystical veiling and unveiling headdress as Arnold Böcklin did.

The artistic Giacometti family is not only represented by Giovanni Giacometti's family portrait and winter landscape, but also by two important childhood drawings by the 12 year old **Alberto Giacometti** (*Vogel im Gebüsch / Bird in the copse*, circa 1911 and *Nach der Bärenjagd / After the bear hunt*, 1911/12, each estimated SFr 30,000-40,000) and the flower painting *Rhododendron* (1938) by **Augusto Giacometti**, which is estimated to fetch SFr 400,000-600,000, from a private Swiss collection



Finally, there is the *Stilleben mit drei Vasen / Still life with three vases* (1906, SFr 900,000-1,200,000) by **Cuno Amiet**. It was painted in 1906, the same year when Amiet became a member of the artist group *Die Brücke* and is very typical of his style during this period. What makes *Stilleben mit drei Vasen* even more sought after is that it is one of the few remaining paintings from this period, as most of Amiet's paintings from that time were

destroyed in a fire at the Munich Glasspalace in 1931, where they were on exhibition.

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*Images available on request.
Christie's online: www.christies.com*

Notes for editors:

Exhibition tour:

Geneva Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues

Saturday, 15 November 2008, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sunday, 16 November 2008, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Basle Hotel Les Trois Rois

Tuesday, 18 November 2008, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Lugano Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola

Thursday, 20 November, 5 – 8 p.m.

Exhibition *Der Lauf der Dinge* (1987) by Fischli/Weiss

6 – 25 November 2008

Christie's Zurich, Steinwiesplatz, CH-8032 Zurich, T +41 44 268 10 10

Preview exhibition in Zurich

Friday, 28 November 2008, 2 – 6 p.m.

Saturday, 29 November 2008, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Sunday, 30 November 2008, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Kunsthau Zurich (Great lecture hall), Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

Auction SwissArt

Monday, 1 Dezember 2008

Kunsthau Zurich (Great lecture hall), Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totalled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totalled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium