

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**October 15, 2008****Contact:**

Kate Swan Malin +852 2978 9966 kmalin@christies.com
Yvonne So +852 2978 9919 yso@christies.com

Christie's Hong Kong Announces Fall 2008 Sale of Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art

Southeast Asian Modern & Contemporary Art
Christie's Hong Kong
Sunday, November 30, 2008

Hong Kong – Christie's, the world's leading art business and the leading auction house in Asia, announces the Fall sale of *Southeast Asian Modern and Contemporary Art* will take place on Sunday, November 30th at 11am. This sale follows on the heels of Christie's landmark Spring 2008 auction in Hong Kong which was its most valuable ever for category.

Elements of the theatrical and the dramatic underscore the offerings in this season's *Southeast Asian Modern & Contemporary Art* sale. A truly outstanding selection of works from modern masters is presented alongside invigorating works of top contemporary artists in a continued endeavor to trace affinities between the past and present, the timeless and the new. Offered alongside works in Christie's sale of *Asian Contemporary Art*, the sale of *Southeast Asian Modern & Contemporary Art* remains a unique and distinctive element in the art market of Hong Kong and contributes to the full richness and flavour of the art from Asia that Christie's offers each season.

COLONIAL CLASSICS & MODERN MASTERPIECES

The Colonial and Modern masters such as Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès and Hendra Gunawan continue to draw strong results and record prices at auction. This season Christie's will present collectors with several important examples from these artists and others.



Leading the selection of Modern works this season is ***Las Damas Romanas*** (*Roman Maidens*) by **Juan Luna** (The Philippines 1857-1899) [*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$8,000,000-10,000,000 / US\$1,025,600-1,282,000]. This work is one of the truly iconic Roman scenes from the artist, who stands as one of the most important Filipino

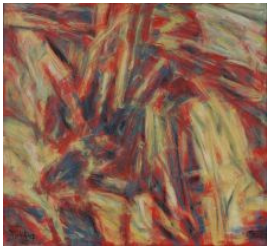
painters of the colonial period for his reformist stance and the role he played in highlighting the plight of the Philippine colony to the Spaniards. *Las Damas Romanas* is a classic work in the highest conventions of academic painting. Indeed, **the work won a Diploma of Honour at the Munich Art Exposition of 1886**. Depicting two Roman girls sporting with their hunting dogs, with flocks of doves symbolizing the divine, this work is in essence a picture of the abundant richness of life, with humankind shown in harmony with Nature. The artist observed and sketched classical Roman architecture and artefacts as studies and *Las damas Romanas* is a culmination of these observations.

Flower Vendors by **Hendra Gunawan** (Indonesia, 1918-1983) [*illustrated right*, estimate: HK\$650,000-950,000 / US\$83,300-121,800] is a strong example of the artist's poignant and enduring imagery of Indonesian women. Commonplace episodes are elevated to dramatic heights in Hendra's paintings, and this work stands as an enthralling rendition of daily Indonesian life, as flower vendors are some of the most typically-encountered women in ordinary street life in Indonesia. While the artist drew from close observation of everyday life, his female subjects are never particular characters he encountered, but rather figments from his recalled observation that universally bear elegant, undulating, voluptuous frames, and are readily identified as Indonesian by their batik accoutrements.



From **Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Mèrpes** (Belgium 1880-1956) comes ***Balinese Weavers*** [*illustrated left*, HK\$1,500,000-2,000,000 / US\$192,300-256,400], a work that was composed from the veranda of his beachfront house in Sanur, Bali. Arguably the most influential painter to render a particularly romantic image of Bali, Le Mayeur's preoccupation with light and the compositional arrangement of figures and objects makes him a key Impressionist painter who, unlike his

contemporaries in Europe, found and developed his visual language in the tropical climate of Southeast Asia. The classic painter-traveller who lived and worked in Bali, he is best known for his Balinese pictures, which are some of the most illustrious in his artistic career. Balinese women bathing, dancing or weaving were subjects that he visited and re-visited over and over again in his lifetime.



Further highlights include *Splinter Barks*, *Rimba Seris* from the celebrated Malaysian modern artist, **Latiff Mohidin** (b. 1938) [*illustrated left*, estimate: HK\$200,000-300,000 / US\$25,600-38,500]. *Rimba* translates as primaver forest. Creatively adapting the visual language of German Expressionism to depict elements of the tropical forest, the work demonstrates the artist's typical use of strong colour contrasts coupled with the swift and bold execution of brushstrokes and the simplification of forms.

CONTEMPORARY TOUR DE FORCE

Contemporary Southeast Asian artists are becoming an increasingly sought-after group in today's market and once again the region's key painters such as **I Nyoman Masriadi** and **Ahmad Zakii Anwar** and others are represented by strong works.

Among the star lots is *Marathon* [*illustrated right*, HK\$800,000-1,600,000/ US\$102,600-205,100], a work that is an exemplary and distinctly theatrical piece from Southeast Asia's most successful



contemporary artist, **I Nyoman Masriadi** (b. Indonesia 1973). Depicting five male runners left behind by a speedy female runner, it is a powerful work typifying of the artist's thematic interest in competition and rivalry. The world of sports fascinates Masriadi as is evident in the significant number of his images that depict figures as sportsmen and sportswomen. *Marathon* is a monumental work and one of the largest pieces the artist has done –it is a definite crowning achievement for him at the point of painting in 1999 when he was a mere 26 years old and fresh from art school. It is also perhaps the single canvas that best illustrates his longstanding interests in perfecting a painterly rendition of the human figure as well as the use of black.



From **Ahmad Zakii Anwar** (b. 1955), Malaysia's key figurative painter today, comes ***Smoker*** [illustrated left, HK\$160,000-240,000 / US\$20,500-30,800], from the artist's celebrated 'Smokers' series. The characters in his paintings are the art world's answer to the shadowy celluloid villains of pulp fiction and *noir* films – like these latter film characters, Zakii's smoking protagonists assume the importance of icons in their own rights. These self-possessed and inscrutable figures, whose origins, identities and affiliations are not immediately comprehensible, are shrouded in mystery and ambiguity.

Indonesian artist **Handirwirman Saputra** (b. 1975) is included in the line-up by the striking work, ***Seri Kertas Lipat II*** [illustrated right, HK\$200,000-280,000 / US\$25,600-35,900]. The work has emerged from the artist's unceasing formal exploration in form and material through his own handcrafted objects. In this way, his practice shuttles between the two-dimensional world of paintings and the three-dimensional world of objects.



Christie's continues to introduce younger and emerging artists from this region to a worldwide audience of art lovers. This season sees the works of Thai artist **Yuree Kensaku**, Indonesian artist **Arahmaiani** and Bali-based Italian artist **Filippo Sciascia** for the first time at auction.

Auction

Southeast Asian Modern & Contemporary Art

Sunday, November 30, 2008

Christie's Hong Kong – Grand Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

Viewing

Hong Kong

Thursday, November 27 – Saturday, November 29

Grand Hall, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

IMAGES OF SELECT HIGHLIGHTS CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE:

<http://cshk.myftp.org/2008%20Christie's%20Hong%20Kong%20Fall%20Auctions/Southeast%20Asian%20Modern%20and%20Contemporary%20Art/>

###

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 million / \$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, jewellery, 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.