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CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER MONUMENTAL MASTERPIECE BY YVES KLEIN IN NEW YORK IN MAY 2010

- Iconic Klein painting using female body as the paintbrush to be offered for the first time at auction in New York
- The sale builds on strong prices seen recently for Klein in London where *Relief éponge or (Gold sponge relief RE47II)* realised £5.9 million / \$9.1 million, the most expensive Post-War and Contemporary work of art sold in London since October 2008



ANT 93, *Le Buffle* by Yves Klein (1928-1962)
Estimate in the region of \$10 million

New York Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Exhibition: 4 March to 12 March 2010, Duke Street Gallery, Christie's, 8 King Street

Auction: 11 May 2010 at 7pm, Christie's New York

New York – Christie’s will offer a large-scale masterpiece by Yves Klein at the auction of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* in New York on the evening of 11 May 2010. *ANT 93, Le Buffle* (“*The Buffalo*”), 1960-61, is a monumental work from the artist’s celebrated *Anthropométrie* series that stands over 9 feet wide (70 x 110 3/8 in. / 177.8 x 280.4 cm.). Offered at auction for the first time, the work is expected to realise in the region of \$10 million. The sale coincides with the first major American retrospective of the artist’s work for 30 years, *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers* which will be held at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., from 20 May to 12 September 2010 and The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, from 23 October 2010 to 13 February 2011.

The strength of Klein’s market was demonstrated at the London sales held this February, where the works of Yves Klein achieved a combined total of £16,355,500/\$25,576,169, with £10,234,500/\$15,988,406 sold at Christie’s alone. The particularly buoyant results that have been realised by Klein reflect the current wave of vested interest in the Art Zero Movement, of which *ANT 93, Le Buffle* (“*The Buffalo*”) is a perfect example.

Francis Outred, Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie’s Europe: *“We are delighted to present this highly important and monumental ANT by Yves Klein for exhibition in London directly following the two outstanding prices we achieved for his work at our recent auction of Post-War and Contemporary Art here on 11 February. Relief éponge or (Gold sponge relief RE47II) made £5.9 million (\$9.1 million), the highest price for any work in our field in an auction in Europe since October 2008 and the cover lot ANT 5 achieved £4.1 million (\$6.4 million), more than three times the low pre-sale estimate and over ten times the last time it sold at auction in London 2001 when it achieved £388,500. This success clearly shows that the market is re-valuing Klein as the Godfather of the Conceptual generation.”*

Brett Gorvy, Deputy Chairman, Christie’s Americas: *“Yves Klein is one of the most influential figures in Post-War European art; a pioneer of the ‘showman’ artist. Over the last 3 years his work has become increasingly popular with international collectors prompted by a number of his key works coming to auction. We look forward to offering this monumental masterpiece at Christie’s in New York alongside the outstanding works from the collection of Michael Crichton, including the epic and iconic ‘Flag’ by Jasper Johns.”*

ANT 93, Le Buffle (“*The Buffalo*”) was executed in 1960-61 and is a monumental work from the last great series created by the artist before his untimely death by way of heart attack at the age of 34. Photographs of the artist in his flat in Paris in the early 1960s reveal *ANT 93, Le Buffle* (“*The Buffalo*”) hanging prominently on his sitting room wall (as illustrated right; the artist with Martial Raysse). Additional examples from this small and rare group can be found at The Centre Pompidou, Paris and Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao.



Yves Klein and Martial Raysse in front of ANT 93 Le Buffle in Klein's sitting room

Painted in the distinctive ‘International Klein Blue’ – the artist’s patented pigment for which he is most recognised– it is a work that captures and presents the artist’s fascination with movement, form and human existence. Over a giant support, Klein orchestrated the movement of curvaceous women coated in his signature pigment to create this glorious rhapsody in Klein Blue which has literally used the beautiful female form as the paintbrush to create a giant animalistic image, hence the subtitle, *Le Buffle* (“The Buffalo”). “I personally would never attempt to smear paint over my own body and become a living brush; on the contrary, I would rather put on my tuxedo and wear white gloves. I would not even think of dirtying my hands with paint. Detached and distant, the work of art must complete itself before my eyes and under my command. Thus, as soon as the work is realised, I stand there, present at the ceremony, spotless, calm, relaxed, worthy of it, and ready to receive it as it is born into the tangible world” said Yves Klein as quoted by N. Rosenthal in ‘Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein (pp.89-135, *Yves Klein 1928-1962: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Houston, 1982, p. 124).



The human form as a living paintbrush

Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

Yves Klein (1928-1962) is recognised as one of the most influential artists of the Post-War period. Having lived in Japan studying as a judo teacher in the early 1950s, he returned to Paris in 1954 where he first found fame for his exhibitions of monochrome paintings and then for *Le vide*, an avant-garde exhibition held in 1958 which consisted of an empty gallery with white painted walls and a large cabinet. Klein experimented with a number of methods for applying paint including sponges and rollers. In 1960 he first exhibited works from a new series he called *Anthropométrie* for which he applied paint using the flawless female bodies of naked models. Also referred to as ‘living brushes’, Klein often dressed in evening wear and

pristine white gloves to conduct the production of his painting, done to the accompaniment of an orchestra playing his *Symphonie Monotone* – a single note played for ten minutes and alternated with ten minutes’ silence. These works drew a great reception in Europe and *Anthropométrie* become one of the artist’s most celebrated series.

The auction of *Post-War and Contemporary Art* in New York on 11 May will also offer paintings from the private collection of Michael Crichton, best-selling author of *Jurassic Park*, creator of the television series *ER* and acclaimed writer on American artist Jasper Johns (**separate release available**). The leading highlight of the group is *Flag* by Jasper Johns, one of the most important American Post-War works of art to be offered at public auction.

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