

For Immediate Release
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IRVING PENN

THE LARGEST COLLECTION EVER AUCTIONED IN EUROPE

MORE THAN 50 PHOTOGRAPHS AT CHRISTIE'S PARIS



Irving Penn

Harlequin dress (Lisa Fonssagrives-Penn), 1950,

Estimate: €200,000 – 300,000

Paris – On Saturday 12th November, for the first time in Europe, Christie's will be offering a large collection of photographs by Irving Penn. The selection spans all themes covered by the photographer. Comprising 52 images, it is estimated to fetch around €1.6 million. Proceeds from the sale will be donated to Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières.

The collection pays homage to one of the masters of 20th century photography. Born in 1917, Penn was a respected fashion photographer, especially for *Vogue*, and also photographed the small trades in Paris, London and New York during the early 1950s. This series notably includes *Butchers, Paris*,

1950 (estimate: €20,000-€30,000), *Cleaning Women*, London (estimate: €20,000-€30,000) and *Deep Sea Diver*, New York, 1951 (estimate: €15,000-€25,000) which will be included in the sale.

Also interested in the extinction of world cultures, from 1948 to 1971 he travelled to photograph indigenous populations in Cuzco, Crete, Estremadura, Benin, Cameroon, San Francisco, Nepal, New Guinea and Morocco. *Children in Shopfront*, India circa 1944-45 (estimate: €7,000-€10,000), *Cuzco Children*, Cuzco, 1948 (which holds the auction record for a photograph by the artist of \$529,000 at Christie's New York in April 2008), *Running Children*, Morocco, 1952 (estimate: €20,000-€30,000), *Three Asaro Mud Men*, New Guinea, 1970 (estimate: €30,000-€50,000), *Three Dahomey Girls*, *One Standing*, Dahomey, 1967 (estimate: €10,000-€15,000), *Three Rissani Women with Bread*, Morocco, 1971 (estimate: €25,000-€35,000), *Two New Guinea Young Women with Feathers*, New Guinea, 1970 (estimate: €15,000-€25,000) are all testimony of his travels certain to arouse collectors' interest.

Penn published extracts from each series in Vogue magazine before collecting them in the book *Worlds in a Small Room* in 1974, accompanied by the following remarks:

"I preferred the limited task of dealing with the person himself away from the accidentals of his daily life, simply in his own clothes and adornments, isolated in my studio. From himself alone I would distil the image I wanted, and the cold light of day would put it onto the film... Removing subjects from their natural environment and placing them in a studio in front of the lens was not simply to isolate them, it transformed them."

This private collection reveals a genre in which he excelled and which marked his century: portraiture. Whether photographing indigenous people, nudes, fashion models, poppies or well-known personalities, they are all portraits and they are all taken in the studio. He remained loyal to studio photography all his life.

Penn photographed a number of famous figures from all walks of life from Marlene Dietrich, New York, 1948 (estimate: €20,000-€30,000) and Jean Cocteau, Paris, 1949 (estimate: €8000-€12,000), to Truman Capote (Kneeling on chair), New York, 1948 (estimate: €10,000-€15,000).

The human figure occupies a major place in his work. For him, the subject's personality plays an important role, particularly in his fashion photography, making his images very close to portraits, for instance the images of his wife, Lisa Fonsagrives-Penn. We find her posing in a Moroccan palace in 1951 (estimate: €200,000-€300,000) as well as the famous photograph *Harlequin dress (Lisa Fonsagrives-Penn)*, 1950 (estimate: €200,000-€300,000). These two images hold third and fourth place respectively for Penn works at auction. Among these photographs, *Black and White Fashion (with Handbag) Jean Patchett* is a leading light of the collection (estimate: €30.000-50.000).

Finally, intended as a portrait, *Poppy: Glowing Embers*, New York, 1968 (estimate: €70,000-€100,000) is another perfect example.

Having quickly set the benchmark in the art of portraiture, he went on to do the same in the still-life genre. He is known for his art of enhancing the most banal objects, as in *Italian Still Life (B)*, New York, 1981 (estimate: €20,000-€30,000).

Each lot represents an opportunity to discover his photographs, their aesthetic and technical qualities, the discipline of the production process so characteristic of his stamp and his art. The presentation of past work alongside more recent images shows the extent to which the photographer was at the cutting edge of photography and excelled in the artistic printing process.

The sale of this collection continues the great monographic photography auctions held in New York, London and now Paris since 2010. It also follows the sale by Christie's New York in April 2010 of *Three Decades with Irving Penn: Photographs from the Collection of Patricia McCabe*.

This sale will be preceded by the auction of the Henri Cartier-Bresson collection on Friday 11th November at 7pm (please see separate press release) and a general sale on Saturday 12th November at 5pm.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the web at www.christies.com

Public exhibition: From Monday 7th to Friday 11th November 2011

Sale: Saturday 12th November 2011 at 7pm – 9 Avenue Matignon 75008 Paris

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2011 that totaled £2.0 billion/\$3.2 billion. In 2010 it achieved global auction and private sales of £3.3 billion/\$5.0 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 450 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 \$100 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Zurich, Dubai and Hong Kong. More 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. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.