

For Immediate Release

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## **HCB: 100 photographs from the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation 11 November 2011**



**Paris** – Christie's France is honoured to be organizing the sale of 100 photographic prints by Henri Cartier-Bresson from the famous photographer's Foundation. This is the first time that images from his archives, considered to be good by Henri Cartier-Bresson, have been offered at auction. This selection is estimated to fetch around 1.4 million euros.

### **Henri Cartier-Bresson – "The eye of the century"**

Henri Cartier Bresson (1908-2004) made photo-journalism an art form. In 1947, along with Robert Capa, David Seymour, William Vandivert and Georges Rodger, he founded the Magnum photo agency.

In the early 1930s, HCB returned from his travels with surrealist snapshots which would forge his legend. He invented a style – the "decisive moment" – a combination of exuberant life and carefully controlled geometry. He thereby brought credibility to photo-journalism and made "imagination based on nature" an ethic and an aesthetic. In 1952, he exhibited his definition of photography in a book with the revealing title "Images à la sauvette" ("images on the fly", published in English as "The Decisive Moment"). He was one of the legendary figures of photography in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, through which he passed with an eye on the great historical landmarks that was consistently off-beat and revealing.

*"This sale is an unprecedented opportunity for collectors and, I'm sure, for museums around the world."* Peter Galassi, former Curator of Photography, the Museum of Modern Art, New York

## Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation

The Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation was set up in 2003 by the photographer himself, Martine Franck and their daughter Mélanie in order to preserve Henri Cartier-Bresson's work, facilitate knowledge and study of that work and promote its exposure to other creative professionals. Every two years the Foundation also awards the HCB Prize, in the form of support for creativity. The Foundation's articles of association include the possibility of selling signed prints in order to raise funds, subject to the strict condition that identical prints are included in the inalienable archive. In order to acquire a larger building, the Foundation is offering works by the photographer for sale for the first time and has selected Christie's to arrange the auction.

"Very many of the prints being sold are unique on the market, and the source, of course, is indisputable and first hand." Martine Franck, chairman of the board of directors and steering committee.

## All of Cartier-Bresson in 100 photos

The whole of Henri-Cartier Bresson's career is here in 100 photographs – from 1929, with an image taken in *Rouen* (estimate: €10,000–€15,000), to one of the latest works *Helmut Newton, Parc Monceau* in 2000 (estimate: €5,000–7,000).



And it also represents the world as seen by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Through his travels, which gave him an overview of the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, discovering Mexico (*Mexico* 1934, estimate: €6,000–€9,000), the United States (*Arizona, États-Unis*, 1947, estimate: €8,000–€12,000), Spain, (*Séville, Espagne*, 1933, estimate: €8,000–€12,000), the United Kingdom (*Couronnement du Roi Georges VI, Trafalgar Square, Londres*, 12 May 1937, estimate: €20,000–€30,000). He also explored the Far East during a three year stay there: in India (*Camp de refugies, Punjab, Inde*, 1947, estimate: €8,000–€12,000), China (*Pékin, Chine*, 1958, estimate: €8,000–€12,000), Indonesia (*Ubud, Bali, Indonésie*, 1949, estimate: €30,000–€50,000). He was also the first photographer allowed into the USSR following the détente (*Moscou, Union Soviétique*, 1954, estimate: €10,000–€15,000).

He criss-crossed France, always in search of that fraction of a second offering the unique moment. In 1970, he published the book "Vive la France", which would be followed by an exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris. *Marseille, France*, 1932, (estimate: €6,000–€9,000), *Brie, France*, 1968, (estimate: €10,000–€15,000), *Près de Juvisy-sur-Orge, Essonne, France*, 1955, (estimate: €20,000–€30,000) are all testimony of his travels.

Henri Cartier-Bresson's artistic and intellectual universe is laid out for us in this incredible selection: *Albert Camus, Paris, 1944* (estimate: €5,000-€7,000); *Pablo Picasso à son domicile, Rue des Grands Augustins, Paris, 1944* (estimate: €10,000-€15,000); *Palette d'Henri Matisse, Vence, France, 1944* (estimate: €30,000-€50,000).

These travels and encounters are all historical moments experienced by the artist: *Mur de Berlin, Allemagne de l'Ouest, 1962* (estimate: €5,000-€7,000); *Derniers jours du Kouomintang, Shanghai, Chine, December 1948-January 1949* (estimate: €6,000-€9,000); *Funérailles de Gandhi, Dehli, Inde, 1948* (estimate: €6,000-€9,000).

However, his gaze was particularly drawn to moments of daily life: *Asilah, Maroc, Espagnol, 1933* (estimate: €8,000-€12,000); *Dans un train Roumanie, 1975* (estimate: €8,000-€12,000); *Prostituées, Calle Cuauhtemotzin, Mexique, 1934* (estimate: €10,000-€15,000). These are all "decisive moments" which will excite the interest of collectors.



These 100 photographs are each works representing the artist's techniques and printing. Including both "vintage" prints as well as more recent ones, all originals (i.e. under Henri Cartier-Bresson's control, since no prints have been produced for collections since his death). All the prints are signed and marked on the back with the Foundation's stamp. *Beaumont Newhall, New-York, Etats-Unis, 1947* (estimate: €10,000-€15,000); *Lucian Freud, Londres, 1997, contemporary print* (estimate: €5,000-€7,000). This auction will particularly be an opportunity to discover an exceptional print of the iconic Cartier-Bresson image *Derrière la gare St Lazare, Paris*, taken in 1932 and of which this lot, dated 1946, is the oldest print known (estimate: €120,000-€180,000)

Exhibition: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November

Sale: 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

at 9 Avenue Matignon 75008 Paris

Two other photographic sales will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> November, one of 53 lots by the photographer Irving Penn and the other of 100 lots.

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**Images available on request**

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#### **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/US\$3.2 billion. In 2010 it achieved global auction and private sales of £3.3 billion/US\$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 US\$200 to over US\$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.*