

For Immediate Release

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Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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***THE FOOTBALL MATCH, 1949, BY L.S. LOWRY
IS EXPECTED TO REALISE IN EXCESS OF £3.5 MILLION
AT CHRISTIE'S IN MAY***



London – Having not been seen in public for almost 20 years, *The Football Match, 1949*, by Laurence Stephen Lowry, R.A. (1887-1976) will be offered at auction on 26 May 2011 in Christie's sale of *20th Century British Art*. An exceptionally rare depiction of one of Britain's most popular sports - football - by one of the country's most iconic British artists, this painting is a modern masterpiece. The property of a Private Collector, *The Football Match* has an estimate of £3.5million to £4.5million, setting a new benchmark for the artist's work at auction.

Philip Harley Director, Head of 20th Century British & Irish Art, Christies London and Rachel Hilderley, Christie's International Specialist and Director, 20th Century British Art:

“ ‘The Football Match’ by L.S. Lowry is the ultimate work for passionate connoisseurs of Lowry's work and of football. Having not been seen on the open market for almost 20 years, Christie's is proud to provide an international platform for this masterpiece in May. The large-format, panoramic, birds-eye composite view of Lowry's own landscape perfectly captures the spirit and drama of a town gripped by the excitement of the Saturday football match. The empty streets peopled only with occasional women, prams and shoppers contrast the busy crowd watching the football match. The artist warmly captures a Northern town relaxing during a week-end, following a busy working week, which he depicted so often in his revered industrial scenes.”

Reflecting the international appeal of Lowry, *The Football Match* - which was painted in 1949 at the high point of the artist's career - toured to London, America and Paris before entering a private collection in 1950, where it remained for over 40 years. This large format canvas, measuring 28 x 36 inches, is in excellent original condition. It provides collectors, institutions and dealers with a very rare opportunity as it combines the artist's highly sought after industrial landscape, peppered with rooftops; chimneys full of billowing smoke; spires; houses and streets scenes with incidental domestic moments, and teams this with magnetically pulling the viewer over the rooftops, through the deep crowds gathered on the side-lines, through the goalpost and into the midst of the football match itself, and then beyond.

Lowry was a keen football supporter himself, his team was *Manchester City*. He explored the subject of going to, or being at a football match, several times, but no other work provides this engaging panoramic birds-eye view deep in to the action on the pitch, through such extensive crowds, with the greater, highly detailed context of the homes and factories, flanking all four sides of the pitch, which are central to the livelihood of the supporters depicted.

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Image available on request
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Christie's and L.S. Lowry

- Since June 2006 Christie's have sold over 125 works by the artist realising in excess of £29.4 million
- Christie's holds the world auction record price for L.S. Lowry, with *Good Friday, Daisy Nook*, 1946, which sold for £3,772,000 in 2007; this is the highest price ever paid in the 20th Century British Art category.
- Between 2006 and 2011, to date, Christie's has 68% market share for works by L.S. Lowry sold at auction.
- To date, the top price for a Lowry work on the theme of football is 'Going to the match', 1953, measuring 28 x 36 inches, which sold at Sotheby's on 1 December 1999 for £1,926,500.

About Lowry:

L.S. Lowry, R.A. (1887-1976) was a curious character, working a '9 to 5' job with Pall Mall Property Company in Manchester until his retirement in 1952, and painted only in his spare time. Despite this restraint, he was hugely successful even within his lifetime; the Manchester City Art Gallery purchased *An Accident* in 1930, he was signed up to the Lefevre Gallery in London in 1939, elected an R.A. in 1962 and by 1967, the General Post Office issued a stamp reproducing one of his paintings. Lowry had been appointed official artist at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. He went on to turn down an O.B.E., a C.B.E., a C.H. (twice) and a knighthood on the grounds that he saw little point in receiving awards after the death of his mother.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2010 that totaled £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, 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