

For Immediate Release
Tuesday 6 March 2012

CHRISTIE'S

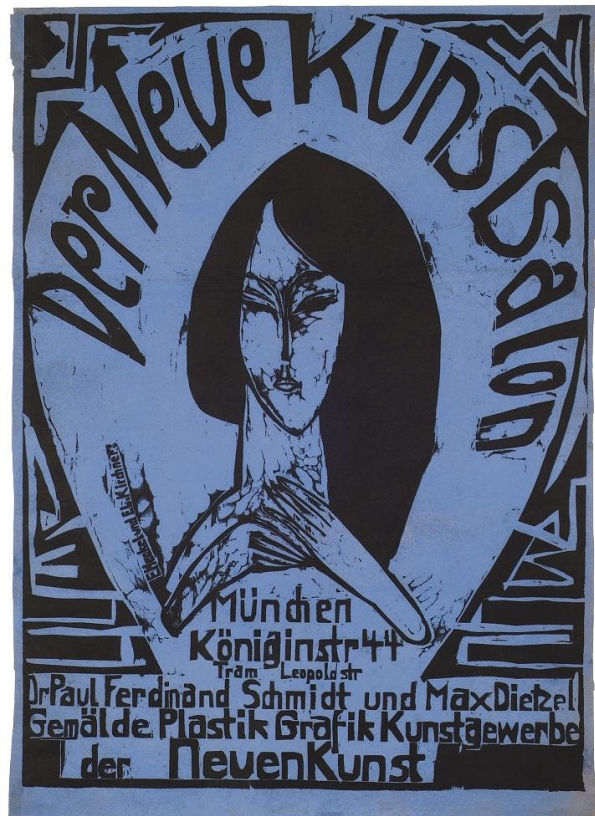
Contact: Dernagh O'Leary

+44 207 389 2398

doleary@christies.com

RARE WORKS BY GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER LEADS CHRISTIE'S LONDON PRINTS SALE IN MARCH

- 164 lots spanning over 500 years of printmaking
- Rare Old Master, Modern & Contemporary Prints on offer at a wide range of estimates

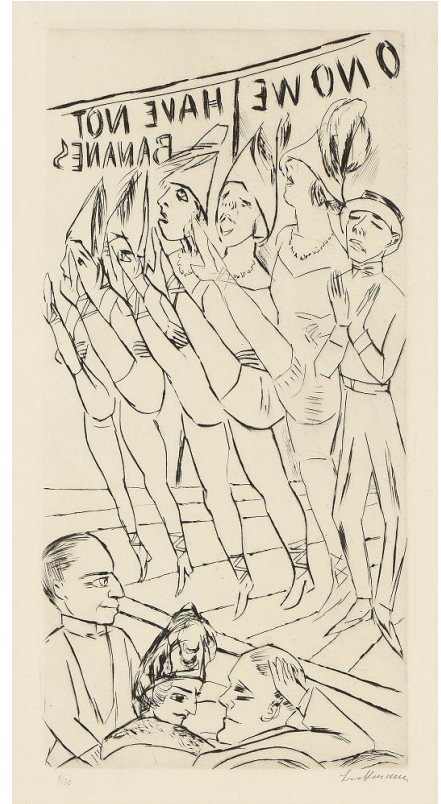


London – Christie's presents *Old Master, Modern & Contemporary Prints* on Wednesday, 28 March 2012. Featuring 164 lots and spanning over 500 years of printmaking the sale promises to provide bidding opportunities for collectors at every level with estimates ranging from £1,000 to £200,000. The sale is expected to realise in excess of £2 million. Leading the sale is a very rare woodcut by German Expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938), *Englische Steptänzerinnen*, 1911 (estimate: £200,000-300,000), *illustrated top left*. Kirchner was one of the founding members of the artists group Die Brücke, formed in Dresden in 1903. Printmaking was central to the groups' artistic practice, in particular to Kirchner, who thought of prints as the most expressive and most revealing of all media. The present, hand-printed woodcut is one of only five known impressions. *Englische Steptänzerinnen* is one of the major colour prints by Kirchner, who is today considered one of the great printmakers of the 20th century.

MODERN PRINTS

The new and exotic dance performances in the cabarets and music halls in Dresden and Berlin before the Great War provided Kirchner with endless inspiration and became the subject of some of his most celebrated colour prints. The date which Kirchner chose to inscribe on *Englische Steptänzerinnen* gives an interesting insight into the psychology that can affect even the most committed artist; whilst there is no doubt that this woodcut was executed in 1911, he was so keen to appear to be the most precocious and innovative of the Brücke artists that he back-dated it by seven years. *Plakat 'Der neue Kunstsalon'*, 1912, is a rare example of a combined work by two members of *Die Brücke*: Kirchner, who cut the image and Erich Heckel (1883-1970), who cut the text (estimate: £20,000-30,000), *illustrated page 1 top right*. This poster advertises the first exhibition in Munich to be solely devoted to the Brücke-artists.

Further highlights of the Modern Prints section include several prints by Max Beckmann (1884-1950). Often acknowledged as Germany's leading 20th century artist, Beckmann, like Kirchner, was a highly prolific printmaker. Although a contemporary of the Brücke artists, and certainly influenced by the Expressionist movement, Beckmann remained a singular figure with a style of his own. *Frontal Self-Portrait with House-Gable in Background*, 1918, is an example of his great skill as a portraitist and, more specifically, a self-portraitist (estimate: £8,000-12,000). In his almost obsessive self-interrogation in dozens of self-portraits he is perhaps rivalled only by Rembrandt in the history of printmaking. Another subject which fascinated him - just as it inspired Kirchner and the other expressionists - is the night-life of the big cities of Weimar Germany. His drypoint *Variété* of 1924 however demonstrates his very different take on the theme of the cabaret dancers.

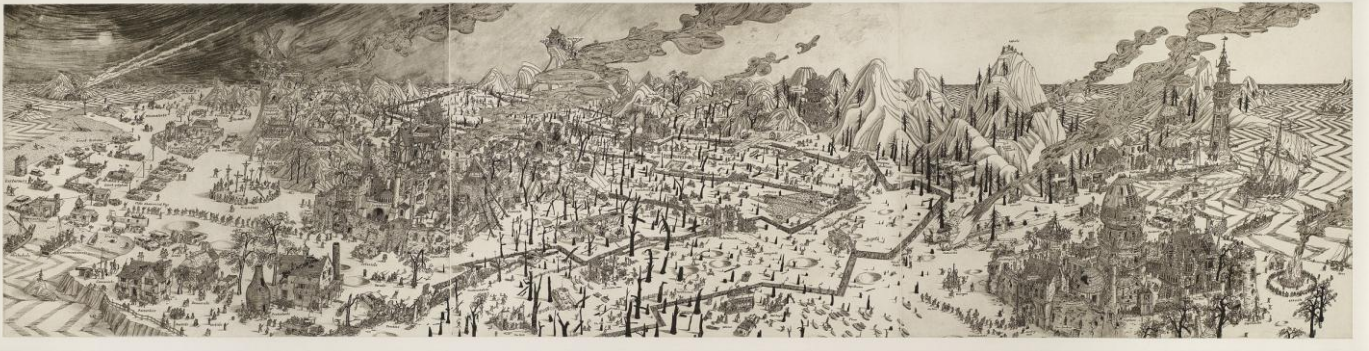


OLD MASTER PRINTS



Leading the Old Master section are two impressions of Albrecht Dürer's 'Master Prints': *Knight, Death and the Devil*, 1513, (estimate: £15,000-25,000) as well as the highly important *Melencolia I*, 1514, (estimate: £15,000-25,000) *illustrated left*. A complete set of four engravings by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), *The Four Disgracers*, 1588, are estimated to realize between £10,000 and £15,000. In this magnificent and highly eccentric series of prints, Goltzius depicts *The Four Disgracers*: Tantalus, Icarus, Phaeton and Ixion, *illustrated right* - having offended the Gods through arrogance and disrespect - falling to their punishment, tumbling down to earth or being cast into Hades. The theme of *The Four Disgracers* presented an irresistible formal challenge: the depiction of nude, muscular bodies from the most unusual viewpoints and in complex positions.





Highlights from this section include a print by one of the more recent stars of the Contemporary Art world, Turner-Prize winner Grayson Perry (b.1960). *Print for a Politician*, 2005, is influenced by Chinese scroll paintings and is over 7 feet long. This print depicts groups of tiny figures populating a large, intricately described landscape. The various groups of people are randomly identified with captions as representatives of different social classes, communities or minorities, such as “Northerners”, “Celebrities” or simply “The Old”, all seemingly at war with each other. *Print for a Politician* is an ironic and brilliantly funny reflection on stereotypes, prejudices and the fragmentation of society (estimate: £20,000-30,000), *illustrated above*.

In addition to other works by key contemporary artists such as David Hockney (b. 1937) and Lucian Freud (1922-2011), prints by Andy Warhol (1928-1987) also feature. As the leading figure of Pop Art, Warhol created prints that are instantly recognisable. *Campbell's Soup II*, 1968, a complete set of ten prints, offers the chance to purchase one of the artist's most famous and most impressive exploration of consumer culture. Warhol's *Electric Chair*, circa 1978, is an example of another of the artist's obsessions which



dominated much of his early oeuvre: his interest in violence and death and the representation of these themes in mass media. Unusually for Warhol who is mostly associated with bright colours, this unique, unpublished screenprint is printed in stark black on white paper – a very fitting and powerful treatment of this gritty, iconic subject.

###

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Website at www.christies.com

Complete catalogue available online at www.christies.com or via the Christie's iPhone app

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions 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 also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth 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.*