

MASTERS OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS GURSKY, THOMAS STRUTH, JEFF WALL DURING THE POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING AUCTION



Andreas Gursky (B. 1955), *Union Rave*, executed in 1995, estimate: £150,000-200,000

London – On 18 October, Christie's London Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction will present an outstanding selection of photography in a specially hung gallery dedicated to photography.

These works, assembled from different collections, illustrate the diversity present in photography since the 1970s, when it extended beyond the limits of documentation to become an autonomous artistic medium.

The selection is led by works from the groundbreaking German photographers of the 1990s, such as Andreas Gursky's monumental *Union Rave*, 1995 (estimate: £150,000-200,000; *illustrated above*) and Thomas Struth's *El Capitan, Yosemite National Park*, 1999 (estimate: £100,000-150,000; *illustrated on page 2, above right*) and *San Zaccaria, Venice*, 1995 (estimate: £150,000-200,000; *illustrated page 2, centre left*).

Further highlights include works by some of the pioneering conceptual artists of the 1970s, such as Jeff Wall, to the more recent contributions of Gabriel Orozco.

Francis Outred, Christie's Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Europe: "This season we are fortunate to be offering an outstanding selection of photography, providing a fantastic chance to see iconic photography from some of the top artists working in the field, including Jeff Wall, Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth. These artists have opened up new ways of seeing and fresh perspectives on representation and documentation,

redefining how we look at pictures. This is also an unprecedented opportunity for collectors to acquire important photographic works, many of which are also held in museum collections. The photography market has changed dramatically in the past decade. In 2005 Christie's sold the first photograph for over \$1m when Richard Prince's 'Untitled (Cowboy)' fetched \$1.25m. This was followed by an exceptional year in 2007, when nine photographic works fetched more than \$1m. In November 2011, Christie's made the world record for any work by Andreas Gursky at auction with 'Rhein II' realising \$4,338,500 at the New York Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction. And in the last eighteen months alone, artist records have been established for Thomas Struth and Jeff Wall. Photography at auction continues to attract the attention of international collectors, with results going from strength to strength, regularly eclipsing pre-sale estimates."

Each of the artists represented in our auction has played a significant part in bringing photography to the heart of the artistic mainstream alongside painting and sculpture. As illustrated on page 1, the first of **Andreas Gursky's** celebrated rave works, *Union Rave*, 1995, is a vast and awe-inspiring photograph, spanning over two metres in width. The camera's high vantage point creates a sense of separation and alienation, what has been referred to as Gursky's 'God's eye view'. As Gursky once explained, "The camera's enormous distance from these figures means they become de-individualised so I am never interested in the individual but in the human species and its environment" (A. Gursky, www.Postmedia.com [accessed 14 September, 2013]). From this point, Gursky would go on to create a number of rave works including his celebrated *May Day* series begun in 1997, and the *Cocoon* series in the 2000s. A key early work, *Union Rave* conceptually informs his entire practice.



Another large-scale photograph to be offered during the Christie's London Evening Auction of Post-War and Contemporary Art, is **Thomas Struth's** *San Zaccaria, Venice*, 1995 (estimate: £150,000-200,000; *illustrated left*). *San Zaccaria, Venice* is one of Struth's most accomplished photographic works and this is one of only three editions outside of museum collections. *El Capitan, Yosemite National Park*, executed in 1999 by Struth (estimate: £100,000-150,000; *illustrated above right*), takes the vast rock formation of El Capitan in California's Yosemite National Park as its inspiration. This image reflects Struth's ambition to create photographic images that capture how people are affected by and even controlled by their environment.

Framed by the steady stream of tourist-filled cars dwarfed by the towering boulder, *El Capitan, Yosemite National Park* takes its place among Struth's celebrated *Places of Worship* series in the 1990s. On seeing this famous natural monument, Struth said, "In an instant, my impression of the scenery bridged different eras of photography, or travel, imagination and the relationship between body and mind. It's almost as if the subject was more picture than mountain" (T. Struth, Berlin, 10 September 2010).



In the late 1970s, **Jeff Wall** began to adapt his intellectual understanding of the history of picture-making and composition to his medium, photographic light boxes, which have direct associations to media advertising. *The Crooked Path*, a defining photograph for the artist, was executed in 1991 and has been included in virtually all of his major exhibitions (estimate: £250,000-350,000; *illustrated left*). Wall captures this overlooked landscape with all the intricacy and precision of classical painting.

The title *The Crooked Path* is significant to the artist, as shown by his choice to use its name for his exhibition at Bozar, Brussels, where Wall selected 25 works to display alongside historical and other contemporary artists. Wall

sees the crooked path as an allegory for the creative process: "It's a metaphor for the uncertainty of development, the surprises that come along the way... in art you can make use of all the little parts of that crooked path. In life, things can be more complicated" (J. Wall, quoted in B. Grauman, 'Jeff Wall's Crooked Path', *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 May 2011, p. 13).

Gabriel Orozco has sought to present a fleeting sensibility in his work, but has imbued it with an element of the Surrealist uncanny – documenting found objects or magical and mysterious moments from the everyday, as exemplified by the present work, *Breath on Piano*, 1993 (estimate: £20,000-30,000; *illustrated right*).



In 1988, **Martin Kippenberger** produced eighty-five black-and-white, as well as colour photographs, largely taken in Spain and Brazil. They depict front yards, interiors, façades, masonry, sculptures, lamp posts, balconies, staircases, doorways, street curbs and the artist's own work. He titled this selection of photographs *Psychobuildings*, a term he coined to describe the objects he encountered because he saw them as examples of form not function.

Considered an extension of and critical to the development of the artist's sculptural practice, *Psychobuildings* was exhibited at *Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective* held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2008. Estimated at £120,000-180,000, this work is unique and can be displayed both vertically and horizontally as per the artist's intention (*illustrated above*).

Christie's will also be offering a significant work by **Sarah Lucas**. A key figure of the so-called Young British Artists alongside Damien Hirst, Lucas's unique visual language has helped to define a generation. *Fighting Fire with Fire (6 Pack)*, 1997, presents a façade that is deliberately masculine, defiant and tough, creating an icon of punk femininity for the 20th century, (estimate: £150,000-200,000; *illustrated right*). This provocative image is one of Lucas's best known portraits, versions of which are in the collections of the Tate Gallery, London, the National Portrait Gallery, London and the British Council Collection. Lucas is currently exhibiting at the Venice Biennale and has a show at the Whitechapel Gallery, London opening this October.



An instantly recognisable image, **Josephine Meckseper's** *Pyromaniac 2*, 2003, presents the viewer with an arresting photograph of a model posed defiantly with a lit match held between her lips (estimate: £20,000-30,000; *illustrated left*). Part of the artist's seminal series of anarchic photographs, the *Pyromaniacs* photographs have been widely exhibited, including in the artist's first significant retrospective at the Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart, in 2007 and at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in its 2006 exhibition *USA Today: New American Art from The Saatchi Gallery*, which later travelled to the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING AUCTION

Christie's - 8 King Street, St James's - London SW1Y 6QT

Friday 18 October 2013, at 7pm

Viewings:

Christie's - 8 King Street, St James's - London SW1Y 6QT

Sunday 13 October	12 noon - 5.00 pm
Monday 14 October	9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Tuesday 15 October	9.00 am - 8.00 pm
Wednesday 16 October	9.00 am - 9.00 pm
Thursday 17 October	9.00 am - 3.00 pm
Friday 18 October	9.00 am - 4.00 pm

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