

CHRISTIE'S

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CONVERSATION ACROSS THE CENTURIES: CONTEMPORARY VIDEO ART IN DIALOGUE WITH OLD MASTERS

CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK TO HOST **NEW MEDIA | OLD MASTERS**, A SPECIAL EXHIBITION OF
WORKS BY BILL VIOLA AND EVE SUSSMAN | RUFUS CORPORATION
AS PART OF OLD MASTERS WEEK
JANUARY 26-29



Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation
Jeff's Kennedy Moment, still photograph from
The Rape of the Sabine Women, 2005
single channel high definition video,
83 minute feature film



Bill Viola
The Last Angel, 2002
plasma screen, speakers
120.7 x 72.4 x 10.2 cm,
Overall installation 83 x 90 x 9.5

New York - Christie's is pleased to present a special exhibition of contemporary video art by Bill Viola and Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation from January 26-29 as a highlight of **Old Masters Week** at Christie's in Rockefeller Center. Sussman's 2005 film *The Rape of the Sabine Women* and Viola's 2002 installation *The Last Angel*, take their inspiration from the same mythical subject matter that inspired the great masters of European Art, including Leonardo da Vinci, Giambologna, Nicolas Poussin, Peter Paul Rubens and Jacques-Louis David, among others. This juxtaposition of two powerful contemporary video installations alongside the works of their predecessors promises to create a unique viewing opportunity for connoisseurs at all levels and to create new opportunities for dialogue about art across the centuries. The four-day, free video exhibition will coincide with the public preview of Christie's *Old Masters Week* sales, the annual week-long series of public previews and auctions devoted to the best of European Art from the 14th to 19th centuries.

ABOUT THE SPECIAL EXHIBITION : NEW MEDIA | OLD MASTERS

Today, overloaded with an abundance of visual stimulation throughout our daily lives, the simple power of an image is in danger of becoming diminished. Like their Renaissance antecedents, the current generation of contemporary artists is developing a new visual language that builds on the traditions of the past whilst giving voice to their own present-day artistic concerns. Led by **Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation** and **Bill Viola**, these artists weave together strands of myth, emotion and drama to produce visual narrative of stunning complexity and beauty.

- ***The Rape of the Sabine Women*** is a feature length allegorical film loosely based on the myth of the founding of Rome, in which women from the neighboring Sabine tribe were kidnapped in order to propagate future generations of Romans. Created with Rufus Corporation, the company Sussman founded in 2003, the film re-contextualizes the myth, setting it in the 1960s and casting the Sabine women as butcher's daughters and the Romans as G-men. The film, conceived in an operatic five act structure, is set in five locations with clear metaphorical, psychological and historical implications: the Pergamon museum, Tempelhof Airport, the Athens meat market, a Case-Study style modern summer house, and the Herodion Theatre where the final fight choreography culminates. Famously treated by Nicolas Poussin in the 1630s (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Musée du Louvre, Paris), by Jacques-Louis David in 1799 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), and by Edgar Degas in the 1860s (Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena), the subject is a touchstone in European art for the principles of classical design and storytelling, with compositions of the purest formal elegance and clarity relating a tale of chaos and sexual violence.
- Bill Viola's ***The Last Angel*** is a ten-minute meditation on spirituality. Projected lengthways on a large plasma screen, the cryptic and hypnotic imagery depicts the lazy flow of water at the top of the frame, much like clouds scudding across the sky. While we are being mesmerized by this slow-motion imagery, eventually some bubbles start to collect at the bottom of the screen. In the final moments of this looped video, a fully-clothed angel emerges, plunging upwards through the shadowy underwater realm, creating a poetic visual experience. His sudden arrival hauntingly evokes innumerable Renaissance depictions of divine visitations, visions and resurrections, with a beautiful, startling immediacy.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation incorporates film, video, installation, sculpture, and photography into her work, and focuses on the visual interaction of the viewer and their surroundings. Eve Sussman | Rufus Corporation creates films that break the mold and test the viewer's expectations, translating well known masterworks into large scale re-enactments.

Bill Viola is considered a pioneer in bringing video installation to the fine art world. He has traveled the world filming cultural performances and natural sounds. These travels have greatly influenced his video and sound installations; which explore human emotions and his interest in Zen Buddhism, Islamic Sufism and Christian mysticism.

OLD MASTERS WEEK AT CHRISTIE'S

Old Masters Week, the highly-anticipated annual series devoted to the best of European Art from the 14th through 19th centuries, takes place from 26-31 January at Christie's in Rockefeller Center. This year, the series

includes major sales of *Old Master Paintings* and *Old Master Drawings*, as well as two exciting additional sales: *Renaissance*, a curated sale of paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture that includes masterpieces by Fra Bartolommeo, Agnolo Bronzino, and Sandro Botticelli; and *Albrecht Dürer – Masterpieces from a Private Collection*, a dedicated sale of the most important prints by the artist to come to auction in recent history. Each of the five sales of *Old Masters Week* will offer artworks of outstanding quality, rarity, and provenance for collectors of all tastes and levels.

Sales Schedule

29 January | *Albrecht Dürer – Masterpieces from a Private Collection*

30 January | *Old Master Paintings Part 1*

30 January | *Renaissance*

31 January | *Old Master & Early British Drawings & Watercolors*

31 January | *Old Master Paintings Part 2*

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To view the e-catalogues for Old Masters Week, [please click here](#)

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.*

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Images available on request

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