London – Christie’s is pleased to announce the auction of Prints and Multiples, which will take place at King Street, London on Wednesday, 17 September 2014. The sale offers an array of works by leading artists of the 19th century to the present day, including famous masterpieces, rare proof impressions and important print series by Odilon Redon, Edvard Munch, Wassily Kandinsky, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Donald Judd, among others. Comprising 193 lots, the auction is expected to realise in the region of £4 million. The Prints season continues at Christie’s South Kensington on Thursday, 18 September 2014 with the sale of Modern Masters & Polígrafa: Celebrating 50 Years of Printmaking, presenting a selection of 150 lots from the archive of the celebrated Barcelona printers and publishers Polígrafa Obra Gràfica, who have been creating art history by collaborating and printing with many leading artists for over 50 years.

One of the treasures in the Prints and Multiples sale is Pablo Picasso’s linocut Buste de femme d’après Cranach le Jeune, 1958 (estimate: £250,000–350,000, illustrated above). Made at a time when Picasso was almost obsessively
re-working historic masterpieces in painting, sculpture and print, this large colour print was inspired by a postcard of a painting by Lucas Cranach the Younger (1564, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), which was given to Picasso by his dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler.

“Picasso’s exuberant adaptation of Cranach’s delicate portrait into a vivid display of colour and rhythmic pattern is not a reverential homage, but an iconoclastic re-imagining”, says Murray Macaulay, Director, Prints Department, King Street. “Picasso’s need to transform was, as Kahnweiler observed, an important part of his genius, and is powerfully demonstrated in this extraordinary linocut, perhaps his most layered and painterly of prints.”

A unique first-state impression of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s woodcut Akt mit schwarzem Hut, 1911/12 (estimate: £200,000-300,000, illustrated right) was inspired by another Cranach – Lucas Cranach the Elder’s Venus, circa 1525 (Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main), a reproduction of which Kirchner had seen in the studio of his fellow artist Otto Mueller. In this full-length portrait of the artist’s girlfriend Dodo Grosse, Kirchner intensified the mannerist tendencies already present in Cranach’s Venus by distorting the proportions and elongating the figure. One of the most haunting Expressionist works in any medium, its psychological intensity is in stark contrast to Picasso’s exuberant, predominantly formal reworking, thus revealing the very different artistic temperaments and interests of these two great modern masters. For Kirchner, Dodo remained the ideal model, muse and lover: many years later, in a diary entry of 1919, he still praised her beauty as superior to a Cranach Venus. The woodcut is part of the Ablers Collection, one of the finest and most widely exhibited private collections of German Expressionist Art to be assembled during the second half of the 20th century. Other works from the Ablers Collection to be offered in the sale include a perfectly preserved set of Wassily Kandinsky’s Kleine Welten 1922, (estimate: £150,000 – 250,000), the first major abstract work in the print medium, and other important prints by Edvard Munch, Erich Heckel and Kirchner.

The sale features a strong section of prints from the 19th century, with an important symbolist series by Odilon Redon and Félicien Rops, as well as collection of French lithography, reflecting the rage for printmaking which swept through Paris in the 1890’s. Key works and rarities include Pierre Bonnard’s Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris, 1899 (estimate: £15,000-20,000), a charming evocation of Paris street-life in the 1890’s; a complete edition of the groundbreaking Album de la Revue Blanche (estimate: £8,000-12,000); and Paul Ranson’s delightfully fierce and comical Tigre dans les jungles (estimate: £12,000-18,000). Edvard Munch’s lithograph Self-Portrait, 1895 (estimate: £50,000-70,000, illustrated left), in which the artist’s wan face floats disembodied on a pitch-black background, with a skeletal arm in the foreground, is a profound reflection on mortality; a theme which persists throughout the artist’s oeuvre, and is reflected in Madonna, 1895 (estimate: £50,000-70,000), his famous depiction of ecstasy, in which life is conceived, and death ushered in.
The dialogue between the art of the past and present, seen so vividly in Picasso’s *Buste de Femme* and Kirchner’s *Akt mit schwarzem Hut*, finds a contemporary expression in Andy Warhol’s screen-printed montage *Madonna & Self-Portrait with Skeleton Arm (after Munch)*, 1984 (estimate: £120,000-160,000, illustrated right). In this double-portrait Warhol appropriated two of Edvard Munch’s most iconic images in much the same way as he ‘warholised’ movie stars such as James Dean and most famously *Marilyn Monroe*, 1967 (set of ten screenprints, estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million, one of series illustrated below).

Tim Schmelcher, Head of the Prints Department, King Street, commented: “Andy Warhol’s portrait of ‘Marilyn’ has become synonymous with the artist and Pop Art on the whole. We all know the image - yet to stand in front of ten huge multi-coloured screenprints, glowing in the most intensely saturated inks, is a dazzling experience. A complete, original set of ten ‘Marilyns’ is the holy grail of contemporary print-collecting and we are thrilled to have this set from a private European collection in our sale.”

Three years before Warhol’s *Marilyn* series, he had already turned a photo of a screen-goddess into a trademark image: in 1964 he had portrayed Liz Taylor in front of a red background, with blood-red lips and green blobs of eye-shadow. At the time, Leo Castelli Gallery in New York was publishing cheaply printed offset lithographs on occasion of their first Pop Art exhibitions. Today, these ‘hand-outs’ are among the most sought-after prints of the period. A group of extremely well-preserved examples from these editions, including Warhol’s *Liz*, 1964 (estimate: £25,000 – 35,000) and Lichtenstein’s *Crak!,* 1963-64 (estimate £8,000 – 12,000), *Crying Girl*, 1963 (estimate: £25,000-35,000), and *Shipboard Girl*, 1965 (estimate: £20,000-30,000, illustrated right), bear witness of the early days of American Pop – they are as fresh and lively today as they were then.

Several of these prints come from the collection the late Peter Bendixen, a passionate collector of works on paper, who often had the courage and foresight to buy works long before their creators had become stars of the art world. Other works from this remarkable collection, including prints and multiples by Joseph Beuys, Claes Oldenburg, Keith Haring, Gerhard Richter, and Sigmar Polke, will be offered in this sale as well as in South Kensington the following day.
The South Kensington sale of Modern Masters & Polígrafa: Celebrating 50 Years of Printmaking on Thursday, 18 September 2014 will offer 150 carefully selected prints and multiples from Polígrafa Obra Gràfica, the legendary printmaking studio founded in 1964 by Manuel de Muga in Barcelona, Spain. Offering works in a wide variety of media and formats, from aquatint, etching, woodcut, lithography and screenprint, to contemporary 3D multiples, the sale demonstrates the variety of styles and techniques employed by some of the masters of the 20th century European avant-garde, including Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Pierre Alechinsky, Karel Appel, Eduardo Chillida and Antoni Tàpies.

Rufino Tamayo and Juan de Muga in Polígrafa’s workshop © Catala Roca

Further to the workshop’s extensive collaboration with Spanish artists, this family of printers and publishers helped a new wave of Latin American artists to find their voice on the international stage during the Post-War years. José Luis Cuevas, Fernando de Szyslo, Guillermo Kuitca, Carlos Cruz Díez, to name but a few, have all collaborated with Polígrafa over the years.

Among the highlights are the droll yet somewhat menacing, heavily textured aquatints by the Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo, including La Cirquera, from: Rufino Tamayo 8 aguafuertes, 1984, (estimate: £1,500 – 2,500, illustrated above left); Figura en Negro, from: Rufino Tamayo 15 aguafuertes, 1980 (estimate: £1,000 - 1,500, illustrated above centre) and Máscara, from: Rufino Tamayo 8 aguafuertes, 1984 (estimate: £1,500 - 2,500 illustrated above right).
The skill of these great printers to adapt their methods according to each artist’s sensibility is demonstrated by their work with the Chinese-French artist Zao Wou-Ki. His lyrical abstract style, reminiscent of Chinese traditional painting as well as the French avant-garde, is perfectly expressed in the complete set of 15 lithographs titled À la Gloire de L’Image et Art Poétique, 1976 (estimate £30,000 – 50,000 illustrated below).

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Demonstrating the depth and breadth of works on offer and the accessible range of price points, additional highlights in the Modern Masters & Polígrafa sale include:

Peter Doig (b. 1959),
 значка - Island
Estimate: £2,000-3,000

Victor Pasmore, (1908-1990),
 Senza Titolo 8
Estimate: £1,000-1,500

Bridget Riley (b. 1931),
 To Midsummer
Estimate: £5,000-7,000

Henry Moore (1898-1986),
 Head of a Man
Estimate: £5,000-7,000

Howard Hodgkin (b. 1932),
 Venice Afternoon, from: Venetian Views
Estimate: £10,000-15,000

Samvel Baghdasaryan (b. 1956),
 Re-pressions (35 pressing)
Estimate: £700-1,000
About Christie’s

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Christie’s has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. 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.*