

# CHRISTIE'S

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## 'MAGICIANS' OF PRINTMAKING

### The Collection of Stamperia d'Arte 2RC

Christie's South Kensington, 26 February 2014



Alberto Burri (1915-1995)  
*Cretti: H*, 1971  
Estimate: £8,000-12,000



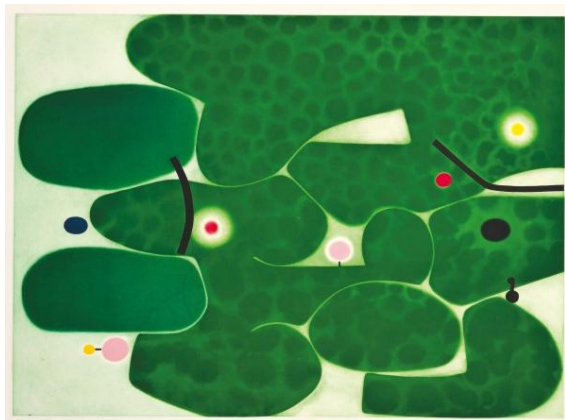
© Copyright 2RC 1975  
Pierre Alechinsky in *Stamperia 2RC all'Ara Coeli*, Rome

**South Kensington** – Christie's is pleased to announce the forthcoming sale of *BUONO DI STAMPA: Prints from the Archive of Stamperia d'Arte 2RC* to be held on Wednesday, 26 February in South Kensington. The 112 carefully selected works, which will be seen together for the first time, have been lovingly assembled over fifty years from the renowned studio of *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC*, that was founded in 1959 by the Rossi family in Rome, Italy. These unique prints, are the *bon à tirer* impressions, that tell the intimate story of trust and collaboration between artist and printer and are amongst today's most eminent artists, including **Alberto Burri**, **Pierre Alechinsky**, **Arnaldo Pomodoro**, **Afro Basaldella**, as well as **Sam Francis**, **Henry Moore** and **Victor Pasmore**, to name a few. *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC*'s long established talent and enthusiasm for printmaking has resulted in innovative and exciting techniques of style and scale. This sale presents an exceptional opportunity for established and new collectors around the world to acquire these important works; with estimates ranging from £700 up to £15,000.

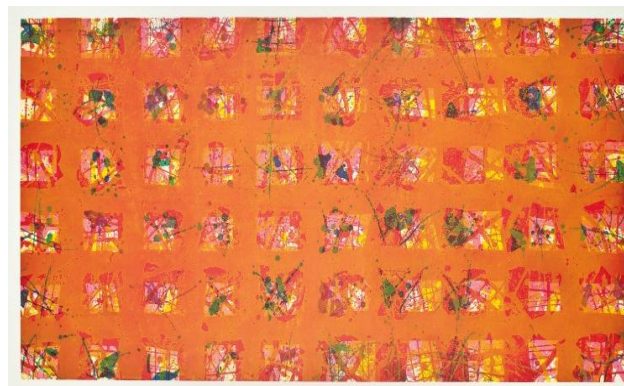
**Valter Rossi, Founder of Stamperia d'Arte 2RC** quoted: "I guess printmaking is in my DNA. For generations my family has been in the printmaking business, where I grew up in the workshop, watching the printers and typesetters at work and collecting wooden letters off the factory floor. Already as a boy, I had a keen interest in art; at the age of thirteen during a school trip to Paris I bought my first print - a Miró."

The notable works featured, demonstrate an understanding of paper press and colouring, on many occasions pushing the boundaries of traditional printmaking techniques. A love of teaching, practice and above all the creation of beautiful things led the Rossi family to develop lifelong friendships with many of the artists whose works are offered within this sale.

Leading the collection is a remarkable etching, aquatint and embossing titled *Cretti: H*, 1971, by Italian artist Alberto Burri (1915-1995), who was at the forefront of Italian Post-War Art (estimate: £8,000-12,000, *illustrated first page left*). This unique work depicting a cracked surface - is the only white subject from the *Cretti* series and is part of the on-going response to the devastating earthquake that hit Sicily in 1968, resulting in the abandonment of the small town of Gibellina.



Victor Pasmore (1908-1998)  
*Vigna Antoniniana*, 1980  
 Estimate: £3,000-5,000



Sam Francis (1923-1994)  
*Le Stagioni: La pioggia d'oro*, 1984  
 Estimate: £5,000-7,000

*“I found a magician of a printer called Valter Rossi, a collaborator more than an interpreter”*

Giulio Carlo Argan on Pasmore’s relationship with Rossi, 1982

Victor Pasmore (1908-1998) is particularly well represented in the sale, which comprises a total of 14 works by the artist. The strength of the bond established between the artist and the studio in the late sixties is reflected by the title of one of his works *Vigna Antoniniana*, 1980 (estimate: £3,000-5,000, *illustrated above left*), which was the name of the printing workshop, in Rome.

*Le Stagioni: La pioggia d'oro*, 1984, is a monumental abstract work (estimate: £5,000-7,000, *illustrated above right*) by American artist Sam Francis (1923-1994). The artist was an accomplished printmaker prior to his work with *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC* however, responding to the artist’s frequent spells of illness, the Rossi’s developed portable presses that would allow Eleonora Rossi to bring all the necessary equipment to the artist in California. Other prints by Francis, including *Senza Titolo I* and *Untitled Yellow* were completed after the birth of his youngest child, Augustus, which show an intense explosion of joy embodied in vibrant colour.

**Further highlights include:**



Afro Basaldella  
*Presenza Grafica '71*, 1971  
 Estimate: £1,500-2,500

**AFRO BASALDELLA (1912-1976)**

The Rossi family encountered Basaldella through Alberto Burri and patiently waited until the timing was right to begin collaborating during the late 1960’s. Understanding the artist’s paintings and translating the complex structures of colour planes into the print medium was a huge challenge for the printmakers; the work *Presenza Grafica '71* signalled the beginning of a new technical achievement with aquatint, pleasing not only to Basaldella but to the subsequent artists working with *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC*.



Arnaldo Pomodoro  
*Sogno 8*, 1994  
Estimate: £2,000-3,000

#### ARNALDO POMODORO (B. 1926)

Pomodoro, a celebrated sculptor who began working with *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC* during the 1970's. The result of this intense cooperation was a series of sculptural bas-reliefs, which challenged the perception of what could be considered a print. The sculptor realised his prints first in his primary and most familiar material, clay. From this, resin moulds would be cast and pressed onto thick Fabriano card, thus creating a three dimensional paper surface. The artist continued to work and experiment with the Rossi family producing the exquisite book *Frammento*, in which metal elements are combined with sculpted paper to elevate printmaking to a new level of technical accomplishment.



Graham Sutherland  
*Bees*, 1977  
the complete set of fourteen etchings &  
aquatints in colours  
Estimate: £5,000-7,000

#### GRAHAM SUTHERLAND (1903-1980)

Sutherland was a versatile artist working across many mediums, returning to etching; a technique he first explored during the 1920-30s. Sutherland was guided by his knowledge and trust in the competence and sensibility of *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC* - shared by many of his fellow artists. The portfolio *Bees* bears witness to his complete immersion in the subject matter and his regained confidence with the etching technique, which allowed him to express his observation of nature.



Pierre Alechinsky  
*Arbre de vie*, 1973  
Estimate: £3,000-5,000

#### PIERRE ALECHINSKY (B. 1927)

In the 1950's Alechinsky developed an interest in oriental calligraphy, a key element of his printed oeuvre. The artist's relationship with the Rossi family was born out of shared experiences during an Eastern Mediterranean holiday. The sun, the sea and the delicate play of light that captured the imagination of artist and printmaker; so inspired, work on the copper plate for *Arbre de Vie* was commenced on board the sailing boat in the Bay of Bodrum in 1973.



Henry Moore  
*Stone reclining figure*, 1984  
Estimate: £8,000-12,000

#### HENRY MOORE (1898-1986)

Henry Moore's printed oeuvre is often defined by his relationship to the sculptural and three dimensional works for which the artist is most celebrated. The perseverance of Valter Rossi to work with Henry Moore was rewarded after arranging a specially designed paper press to be made available near the artist's summer home. The scale and monumentality of these prints is only one facet of their complexity. It is the way in which aquatint has been exploited to its greatest and most subtle effect that commands reverence. The artist described one of his first aquatints as "*a black with its shadow*".

## Notes to Editors:

### Lecture and Reception

A Gallery Talk by the Printers from *Stamperia d'Arte 2RC* - Valter, Eleonora and Simona Rossi

Monday, 24 February 2014: 6.00pm

Christie's South Kensington: 85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7 3LD

RSVP: [ahailes@christies.com](mailto:ahailes@christies.com)

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#### **PUBLIC EXHIBITION:**

Saturday, 22 February 2014: 11:00am – 5:00pm

Sunday, 23 February 2014: 11:00am – 5:00pm

Monday, 24 February 2014: 9:00am – 7:30pm

Tuesday, 25 February 2014: 9:00am – 5:00pm

#### **AUCTION:**

*BUONO DI STAMPA: Prints from the Archive of Stamperia 2RC*

Wednesday, 26 February 2014

2:00pm

### **Christie's South Kensington**

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from under £1,000. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Popular Culture Memorabilia, Vintage Couture, Islamic Art, Jewellery, 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, amongst others. In 2012 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the third consecutive year with sales of £139.4 million / \$223.1 million having welcomed a 10% growth in registered bidders and a 20% increase (£ / \$) in total sales.=

### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. 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 around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

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.*

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