

# CHRISTIE'S

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CHRISTIE'S EVENING AUCTION

OF

### *EYES WIDE OPEN: AN ITALIAN VISION*

sets a benchmark for Arte Povera and Post-War Italian art  
realising **£38,427,400 / \$63,020,936 / €46,074,453**

**EXCEPTIONAL PRIVATE COLLECTION LED BY ALBERTO BURRI'S RECORD-BREAKING  
MASTERPIECE *COMBUSTIONE PLASTICA* WHICH SELLS FOR £4.7 million /\$7.7million**

**14 artist records established including for  
Michelangelo Pistoletto, Jannis Kounellis and Mario Merz**



Jussi Pylkkänen, President of Christie's EMERI, selling the top lot of the sale:

**Alberto Burri *Combustione Plastica***

Executed in 1960-1961 it sold for £4,674,500 / \$7,666,180.

**London** - On 11 February at Christie's, the evening auction *Eyes Wide Open: An Italian Vision* realised a **total of £38,427,400/ \$63,020,936/ €46,074,453** establishing 14 artist records, and launching an exceptional week of Post-War & Contemporary Art auctions at Christie's London. The top price of the evening was paid for **Alberto Burri's Combustione Plastica**, which sold for £4,674,500 / \$7,666,180 / €5,604,726 (estimate: £1,700,000-2,200,000), a world record price for the artist at auction (*illustrated above*).

**Francis Outred, International Director and Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Christie's Europe:** "This evening's auction was a benchmark moment for 'Arte Povera', a movement which has long held a deep academic and artistic importance and which has welcomed increasing international demand over the last 5 years. The rarest and most important works by both well established and less renowned artists drew fierce international bidding, seeing 8 of the top 10 lots sell in excess their high estimate and establishing record prices for 14 artists, including Burri, Fabro, Kounellis, Merz and Pistoletto. Having presented this collection on a global platform, it is particularly pleasing to see so many artists rise up to their true market potential, especially those whose work is not so regularly seen at international Evening auctions, including Giulio Paolini, Fausto Melotti and Francesco Lo Savio, whose work quadrupled its estimate".

**Mariolina Bassetti, International Director and Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Christie's Europe:** "This evening's auction has highlighted the importance and influence of Arte Povera within the wider context of 20<sup>th</sup> century art and builds on the success of last October's record sale of 20th Century Italian Art in London, which also saw an unprecedented level of international bidding. It is a great testimony to the taste and vision of the collectors who assembled this collection that it drew such huge interest leading up to the auction, and that the public exhibition at Christie's Mayfair, which continues until Friday, has so far welcomed over 1,000 visitors".

### **TOP LOT:**

**Alberto Burri's *Combustione Plastica*** (1960-1961) sold for **£4,674,500/ \$7,666,180/ €5,604,726** (estimate: £1,700,000-2,200,000), setting a record price for the artist at auction. A major influence on Arte Povera, Alberto Burri explored materials and their transformation through processes such as chemical reactions and burning. The artist, who also influenced international artists such as Rauschenberg and Tapies, will be the subject of a major retrospective at the Guggenheim, New York in 2015.

### **FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SALE:**

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**Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Lei e Lui – Maria e Michelangelo*** sold for **£1,986,500/ \$3,257,860/ €2,381,814** (estimate: £600,000-800,000) setting a record price for the artist at auction. Executed at the beginning of 1968, this work was a centrepiece of one of Pistoletto's most famous exhibitions at the Galleria L'Attico, Rome, in 1968. In this life-sized, double-portrait 'mirror-painting' depicting the artist and his life-long companion and artistic collaborator Maria Pioppi, the reflections of light and movements triggered by the viewers are key elements of Pistoletto's paintings on mirrors, which remain some of his best-known works and are icons of Arte Povera.

The pair of works by **Alighiero Boetti: *Addition*** and ***Substraction*** from 1974 both witnessed outstanding results, making four times their pre-sale estimate with ***Addition*** fetching **£1,706,500 / \$2,798,660 / €2,046,094** (estimate: £300,000 - 400,000) and ***Substraction***, realising **£1,538,500/ \$2,523,140/ €1,844,662**. Equally successful was Boetti's ***Rosso Gilera 60 1232 – Rosso Guzzi 60 1305***, which achieved **£1,706,500 / \$2,798,660 / €2,046,094** (estimate: £450,000-650,000), as well as his poetic masterpiece ***I sei sensi (the six senses)*** (1974-1975) which sold for **£1,314,500/ \$2,155,780/ €1,576,086** (estimate: £600,000-800,000).

**Pino Pascali's *Torso di negra al bagno*** (1964) sold for **£1,538,500/ \$2,523,140/ €1,844,662** (estimate on request). A mesmerizing totem of femininity that appears to have erupted from the floor, this black 'Venus' is a masterpiece of Pascali's tragically brief career. It is the sole stand-alone sculpture in the series of deliberately artificial hollow canvas 'feigned-sculptures' and 'object-paintings' that Pascali made for his first solo exhibition at La Galleria Tartaruga in Rome in 1965.

**Lucio Fontana's *Concetto Spaziale, Natura*** sold for **£1,258,500 / \$2,063,940 / €1,508,942** (estimate: £900,000-1,500,000) setting an auction record for a terracotta concetto spaziale by the artist. Executed in 1959-1960, this terracotta by Fontana is a unique and rare work in the artist's *Natura* series of sculptures, which reflect his fascination with the elements. These rock-like forms, appearing at once natural and man-made are regarded as some of the most significant works of the post war era.

**Luciano Fabro's *Piede*** sold for **£962,500 / \$1,578,500 / €1,154,038** (estimate: £800,000-1,200,000) setting a record price for the artist at auction. This striking sculpture with its startling contrast between a giant, claw-like polished bronze foot and its thin, light, towering column of radiant blue silk reaching to the ceiling, is part of the extraordinary series of *Piedi (Feet)* made between 1968 -71 that Fabro exhibited at the 1972 Venice Biennale. Fabro has described these works as 'revelatory' structures that transform their surroundings into the realm of a fairy tale.

**Arte Povera transformed the landscape and language of contemporary art in the late 1960s and 70s and has become one of the most influential art movements of the past half century, exerting a profound impact on art around the world, including conceptual art, minimalism and the YBAs. The present collection, on view at Christie's Mayfair until Friday 14 February, explores the movement's roots in the work of Post-War Italian artists Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni and Fausto Melotti and its influence in the works of artists such as Michelangelo Pistoletto, Alighiero Boetti, Mario Merz, and Luciano Fabro. Exceptionally, this collection also investigates Arte Povera's legacy in the work of artists as diverse as Cy Twombly, Olafur Eliasson, Anish Kapoor, Tony Cragg, Rosemarie Trockel and Thomas Schütte.**

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## The Post-War & Contemporary Evening Auction will take place on 13 February, at 7pm.

The sale includes masterpieces by Francis Bacon, Gerhard Richter and Jeff Koons and will showcase the evolution of British art from the 1960s to the present day, with outstanding examples by Bridget Riley, Gerald Laing, Jenny Saville, Damien Hirst, Chris Ofili, Gary Hume and Peter Doig. The entire sale is expected to realize £87 million to £107.5 million, the second highest pre-sale estimate for a London auction in the category at Christie's, and the highest for the February season.

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## The Post-War & Contemporary Day Auction will take place on 14 February, at 1pm.

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### ARTIST RECORDS:

### Previous record

Lot 17, <b>Alberto Burri</b> , £4,674,500 / \$7,666,180 / €5,604,726	£3,177,250, October 2011
Lot 19, <b>Michelangelo Pistoletto</b> £1,986,500 / \$3,257,860 / €2,381,814	£1,273,250, February 2013
Lot 28, <b>Jannis Kounellis</b> , £1,258,500 / \$2,063,940 / €1,508,942	£735,650, October 2008
Lot 79, <b>Francesco Lo Savio</b> , £1,142,500 / \$1,873,700 / €1,369,858	£229,250, October 2011
Lot 44, <b>Mario Merz</b> , £1,058,500 / \$1,735,940 / €1,269,142	£792,000, February 2005
Lot 35, <b>Luciano Fabro</b> , £962,500 / \$1,578,500 / €1,154,038	£668,450, October 2005
Lot 66, <b>Rosemarie Trockel</b> , £722,500 / \$1,184,900 / €866,278	£962,500, May 2011
Lot 23, <b>Giulio Paolini</b> , £338,500 / \$555,140 / €405,862	£253,250, October 2012
Lot 7, <b>Fausto Melotti</b> , £314,500 / \$515,780 / €377,086	£192,500, October 2007
Lot 32, <b>Marisa Merz</b> , £206,500 / \$338,660 / €247,594	n/a
Lot 30, <b>Pier Paolo Calzolari</b> £194,500 / \$318,980 / €233,206	£114,000, October 2006
Lot 88, <b>Emilio Prini</b> , £56,250 / \$92,250 / €67,444	£13,500, May 2013
Lot 70, <b>Julia Mangold</b> , £13,750 / \$22,550 / €16,486	£9,760, May 2011
Lot 105, <b>Urs Lüthi</b> , £40,000 / \$65,600 / € 47,960	£26,400, October 2004

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### 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.*

**Images available on request**

Complete catalogue available online at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) or via the Christie's iPhone app

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