

CHRISTIE'S

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THE BAD SHEPHERD

The Brueghel Dynasty in Conversation with Contemporary Art

Pieter Brueghel the Elder, Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Jan Brueghel the Elder,
Marten Van Cleve and Abel Grimmer
Peter Doig, Nicole Eisenman, Jeff Koons, Sarah Lucas, Neo Rauch, Thomas Schütte,
and Jeff Wall

PRESS PREVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION

10TH OCTOBER AT 10 AM AT CHRISTIE'S MAYFAIR, 103 NEW BOND STREET W1S 1ST



Pieter Brueghel II
The Good Shepherd
oil on oak panel
15½ x 21½ in. (40.2 x 54.5 cm.)



Peter Doig (B. 1959)
Night Fishing
oil on canvas
44.7 x 56.7in. (113.7 x 144cm.)
Painted in 1993

On 11 October 2014, Christie's Mayfair will open *The Bad Shepherd*, a major exhibition exploring the continued influence of Pieter Brueghel the Elder and his artistic dynasty in the 21st century. This is the first exhibition ever to present the work of the Brueghels in dialogue with contemporary art and features many rarely seen works from private collections.

Co-curators Darren Leak and Jacob Uecker, specialists in Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Department, comment: *"The works in the exhibition all have a strong narrative within, addressing universal themes that translate very well. With Brueghel it's the odd, the crude and the grotesque that are important and have resonance with contemporary works and the contemporary viewer. There will be one work by every artist on each floor, so viewers will be walking into a conversation between images and the vibration between Brueghel, his contemporaries and artists of our age, time and time again."*

Co-curator Alexis Ashot, Old Master Picture specialist says: *"What makes this juxtaposition so interesting is that Pieter Brueghel the Elder was unlike many of his own contemporaries, as his was a searching art that ranged far and wide in its unpicking of the beliefs, power structures and failings of his day. The uncompromising honesty of his work continues to resonate in our own time."*



One of the best-loved and most innovative Old Master painters, Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-69) brought a modern sensibility to European painting, portraying a contemporary, tangible vision of humanity and the natural world. He invented new secular subjects and introduced a sense of humour into art with his famously earthy scenes of carousing peasants and his pictures of fables, parables and biblical proverbs. Like his celebrated picture of Icarus, Bruegel's scenes are filled the detail of everyday life and the rhythms of nature and the seasons. So concerned was the

artist to achieve a naturalistic atmosphere that, according to one of his contemporaries, he would disguise himself as a peasant, pretending to be friend of the bride or groom at a wedding party, in order to portray a true sense of the revelry. Bruegel the Elder died young and produced only a small body of work, but his legacy continued through his sons Pieter Bruegel the Younger, who exemplified the artistic legacy of his father in works such as *The Adoration of the Magi in the Snow* (pictured above left) and *Spring: The Flower Garden* (pictured below left) and Jan the Elder, and his grandson Jan the Younger, who, in different ways, perpetuated his artistic themes and ideas, making Bruegel a household name in art to this day.

Now Christie's Mayfair revisits the work of the Brueghels through a contemporary lens, presenting the younger Brueghels and their contemporaries alongside prominent contemporary artists, such as Peter Doig, Jeff Wall, Thomas Schütte, Jeff Koons, Neo Rauch (pictured bottom right) and Sarah Lucas (pictured right). Exploring Bruegel's timeless themes of joy, wisdom, the natural and man-made world, good and bad, life and death, this exhibition creates a compelling visual dialogue between many Bruegel works unseen by today's audiences with works by contemporary artists who have, in various ways, been influenced by the Brueghels' modern sensibility and subject matter.



The Bad Shepherd is the first exhibition to bring together a cohort of the important contemporary artists with a significant number of works from the Bruegel canon. To highlight this juxtaposition of old and new, we have transformed Christie's Mayfair into a theatrical black box: the three-floor gallery space will immerse viewers in the pictures, encouraging them to focus on the works of art and respond on a purely visual level, undistracted by a sense of time and space.

The Bad Shepherd is the culmination of two years of research and planning involving specialists from the Christie's Old Masters and Post-War and Contemporary Art departments. It evolves out of Christie's long and successful involvement with the works of the Bruegel dynasty, including the recovery of the Courtauld's stolen *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* in 1992, as well as achieving the world record price for Pieter Bruegel the Younger's *The Battle of Carnival and Lent* in December 2011 (£6.9 million).



Their insightful observations of the human condition through timeless themes have made the work of the Brueghels a touchstone not only for painters through the ages - including Vasari and Sir Joshua Reynolds - but also for sculptors and scientists, poets - such as Baudelaire, William Carlos Williams, W.H. Auden and Sylvia Plath - as well as filmmakers, from Tarkovsky to Lars von Trier. *The Bad Shepherd* is accompanied by an extensive academic catalogue coupling the works of these artists with the rich responses that the canon has evinced in works of literature, theatre and journalism up to the present day.

Coinciding with the opening of Frieze London, this exhibition opens to the public on 11th October 2014 and continues until 16th January 2015.

Exhibition: *The Bad Shepherd*

Christie's Mayfair, 103 New Bond Street, London W1S 1ST

11th October 2014 – 16th January 2015

www.christies.com

#badshepherd

Editors Notes:

After having staged the celebrated exhibitions of *When Britain Went Pop*, *Turn Me On: European and Latin American Kinetic Art 1949-1979* and most recently *Richter/Polke*, *Polke/Richter*, Christie's Mayfair presents *The Bad Shepherd* as the fourth exhibition in its gallery. Christie's Mayfair is the flagship of Christie's global exhibitions programme, the philosophy of which is to look back through history from today's perspective and work with our colleagues across the organisation and in the wider art world to create public, museum-quality exhibitions with strong curatorial values.

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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.
