

CHRISTIE'S

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WARHOL, ELVIS, MARLON THE GREATEST ICONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY CULTURE

ANDY WARHOL'S UNIQUE PAIRING OF SUPERSTARS TO BE AUCTIONED AT CHRISTIE'S FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER

TRIPLE ELVIS & FOUR MARLONS

ACQUIRED IN THE 1970S BY THE GERMAN WESTDEUTSCHE SPIELBANKEN GMBH & CO. KG,
TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING SALE IN NOVEMBER



ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)
Triple Elvis [Ferus Type]
silkscreen ink and silver paint on linen
82 x 69 in. (208.73 x 175.3 cm)
Executed in 1963.



ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)
Four Marlons
silkscreen ink on unprimed linen
81 x 65 in. (205.7 x 165.1 cm)
Executed in 1966.

New York - Christie's is delighted to present for the first time at auction, the three greatest cultural icons of the 20th century reunited, representing the ultimate heroes of art, music and cinema. Two iconic portraits by Andy Warhol featuring the towering figures of Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando, the most important male celebrities in Warhol's pantheon of stars, which epitomize the archetype of cool and glamour and exude a raw sexuality and intense power rarely found in his work. Christie's will present these paintings on tour in Asia, Europe and US—probably the first time that the international public will have the opportunity to admire these two incredible portraits side by side—before being sold at auction in New York on November 12th. Together *Triple Elvis [Ferus Type]* and *Four Marlons* are expected to realize in the region of \$130 million.

"As such complementary examples of Warhol Superstars, - sharing the same large scale, extreme rarity and supreme quality, there is a strong possibility after the record breaking price achieved for the Bacon triptych a year ago, that our top masterpiece buyers will try to acquire both portraits and keep them as a unique pair. Many will make their own choice over favoring Elvis or Marlon. It is going to be a battle of the greatest super heroes ever, where in the end, someone could buy both. Unseen on the market for almost 40 years, these masterworks represent the greatest icons of the 20th century and Warhol's career," stated **Brett Gorvy, Chairman and International Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art.**

"The sale of these two art works by Andy Warhol will allow us to continue pursuing our existing gambling offerings to the population of North-Rhine Westphalia and to meet the challenges ahead. This is why we've decided to sell both masterpieces. Given the current strength of the market, especially for works by Andy Warhol, it is now the right moment to part from these works, which had been acquired for decorative purposes of our casino in Aachen in the late 1970s," explained **Lothar Dunkel, Managing Director of WestSpiel.**

The arrival on the market of *Triple Elvis [Ferus Type]* and *Four Marlons*, the two greatest icons of the 20th century culture, never seen at auction before, is an exceptional and unique opportunity for collectors and institutions to acquire iconic masterpieces. In recent seasons, Christie's has achieved unprecedented heights for contemporary art of this exceptional quality, due in large part to a surge of interest from buyers in both established and growth markets. Warhol stands among the most coveted of these artists, and Christie's is honored to be the market authority for the artist and maintain an exclusive partnership with the Andy Warhol Foundation. Over the last decade, Christie's has set the highest prices for works by Warhol at auction and within the private sales sector, including most recently the sale of Warhol's *Race Riot* for \$62.9 million, far exceeding its pre-sale estimate of \$45 million, and for *White Marilyn*, another iconic portrait, which fetched \$41 million above its pre-sale estimate of \$12 - \$18 million.

Triple Elvis [Ferus Type] – 1963

Standing 82 inches tall and 69 inches wide, the full-figure triple portrait of the singer turned Hollywood star is one of a series of artworks that Warhol produced for his 1963 show at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles, the triple version is one of the rarest. Standing with his trademark proud stance, legs apart and his pistol recently drawn from the holster hanging from his famous hips, Andy Warhol's rendition of Elvis Presley dominates the canvas just as the singer dominated the cultural landscape of the 1950s and 1960s. This image joins the pantheon of the Pop master's Hollywood superstars and it was only natural that, having portrayed Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and Marlon Brando, he should turn to Elvis as his subject matter. For Warhol, who was fascinated by popular culture, fame and celebrity, Elvis was the perfect subject.

The strong sense of presence, created by the clarity of this particular screen and the strong rendition of Elvis himself, is a poignant reminder of the enduring power of the Elvis personality. A cultural behemoth during his lifetime, even his early death in 1977 did nothing to diminish his star power, and in *Triple Elvis* Warhol depicts with remarkable foresight the continuing power of Elvis's iconic image. Intriguingly, unlike in the handful of earlier images of Elvis that Warhol had produced the previous year (such as *Red Elvis*, 1962), in *Triple Elvis*, Warhol selected a publicity image for a movie, *Flaming Star*, directed by Don Siegel. It is therefore all the more appropriate that Elvis is shown here against a silver background, a substitute for the silver screen. Warhol was a huge fan of cinema, and so it was only natural that he took his idols from movie screen to silkscreen.

Repeated three times, the use of repetition was an important strategy for Warhol. For *Triple Elvis [Ferus Type]*, Warhol uses it to create overlapping images that are reminiscent of a film sequence. The image refers to Elvis the King, the Hollywood product designed to be adulated. *Triple Elvis [Ferus Type]* pays homage to the new American cowboy and

reflects the star system's tactic of role playing and impersonation, of promoting a new image in order to add prestige or diversity to an existing image.

"It was thrilling to see the Ferus Gallery with the Elvises in the front room and the Lizes in the back. Very few people on the (West) Coast knew or cared about contemporary art, and the press for my show wasn't too good. I always have to laugh, though, when I think of how Hollywood called Pop Art a put on! Hollywood ?? I mean when you look at the kind of movies they were making then — those were supposed to be real???"

—Andy Warhol, **POPism**: The Warhol Sixties, New York: Harc Burt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.

As well as recalling the silver of the cinema screen, the background of *Triple Elvis* gives the impression of opulence, and reflects the sanctified notions of Hollywood glamour. The success of this aesthetic would be evidenced when the artist had to abandon his Firehouse studio, and set up the famous Factory, which he coated with silver paint and foil. The effect was a strange, almost-mirrored space that was glamorous and at the same time futuristic. It was like being inside a gleaming machine, a concept that particularly appealed to Warhol who often stated that he wished to be a machine. Wealth, clinical practicality, glamour, science fiction -- all these were referenced in the burnished walls of the Factory, and indeed in the background of *Triple Elvis*. This was also the look at the Ferus show, when the walls were filled top to bottom with vast edge-to-edge silver panels with the repeated image of Elvis everywhere. In the silver of *Triple Elvis* there is splendor as well as glamour. There is a religious feel to the silver, recalling some of the altarpieces of the Russian Orthodox Church, Byzantine mosaics, and the Catholic Church of Warhol's own family roots, which had such a presence in the Pittsburgh of his youth. Elvis is presented as the glistening new god for a more secular age.

Four Marlons – 1966

This dramatic rendition of Marlon Brando, his dark inscrutable eyes staring out nonchalantly from underneath his peaked cap, provides an unrivalled portrayal of one of the greatest twentieth century cultural icons. Displayed here at the peak of his fame, Brando's appearance in the 1953 film *The Wild One* (from which Warhol took this source image), captured a rebelliousness that, in the mind of the public at least, had subsumed the previously acquiescent American teenager and became something of an anti-hero for an entire generation of misunderstood youth. In *Four Marlons*, Warhol took a publicity still from the movie and rendered it four times across a vast expanse of raw canvas, creating a larger than life portrayal of Brando and his character Johnny Strabler. This work is the only one from the series with the four portraits covering the entire canvas, executed on raw and unprimed linen, the material quality of *Four Marlons* echoes the rough masculinity of its subject.

When compared with the classic beauty of Liz Taylor or Marilyn Monroe, the raw grittiness of Brando and *The Wild One* seem an unexpected departure from Warhol's other gods and goddesses of the silver screen. Together with James Dean's *Rebel Without a Cause* (released two years later in 1955), *The Wild One* cemented an entire genre of Hollywood movies that depicted the troubled and misunderstood American teen, rebelling against the status quo and desperately searching for their place in the new post-war society. 'Johnny,' along with his iconic leather jacket, distinctive peaked cap and Ray-Ban sunglasses, becomes the icon for an entire generation of disaffected youth—the generation that created the culture of 'cool.'

Warhol's decision to immortalize Brando, alongside his other pantheons of the silver screen, was both a prophetic and a personal one. Obsessed with the movies from an early age, Warhol had long looked to Hollywood for his heroes as well as his artistic inspiration. Some of his most celebrated images are those stars who found themselves part of Warhol's hallowed beatification-like process. So it was only natural that Warhol should turn to Marlon Brando to induct into his Hollywood Hall of Fame. Warhol's decision to use the canvas in its natural state adds to the subversive nature of the painting, enhancing the feeling of masculinity and edginess and adding another layer to the depiction of the counter-culture that is already contained within the image itself. Unlike his other renditions of Hollywood's biggest and brightest

stars, *Four Marlons* becomes a fleeting glimpse of Warhol's unique insight into the world of popular culture and a *memento mori* of one of its greatest icons.

Note to the Editors:

Christie's is the leader for Post-War and Contemporary Art worldwide, and holds the highest prices for any works of art sold at auction and sale totals.

*On November 12, 2013, at Christie's New York, Francis Bacon's *Three Studies of Lucian Freud*, was sold for \$142,405,000 setting the new world auction record for any work of art ever sold at auction.

The Evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art, on May 13, 2014, totaled \$744,944,000 – the highest auction total in art market history.

Preview:

Hong Kong	3 - 5 October 2014
London	11 - 16 October 2014
New York	1 - 5 November 2014

Viewing:

New York	8 - 12 November 2014
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Auction:

New York	12 November 2014 at 7pm
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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2014 that totaled £2.69 / \$4.47 billion, making it the highest half year 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 in the first half of 2014 totalled £498.9 million (\$828.2 million).

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.

About WestSpiel

WestSpiel (full Westdeutsche Spielbanken GmbH & Co. KG) is the state-licensed casino operator in North Rhine Westphalia, Germany, headquartered in Duisburg. WestSpiel operates seven casinos, which are located in Aachen, Bad Oeynhausen, Bremen, Bremerhaven, Dortmund-Hohensyburg, Duisburg, and Erfurt. The company's sole shareholder is NRW.BANK, the state development bank of North Rhine Westphalia. WestSpiel's duty is to offer state controlled gambling opportunities in a responsible manner corresponding with the objectives of the applicable German Gambling Acts while complying with the youth and gambler protection laws. As a state-licensed casino company, WestSpiel's revenues also provide public services. Most of this money goes to non-profit foundations, which use it to support social projects. <http://www.westspiel.de/en/>

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