



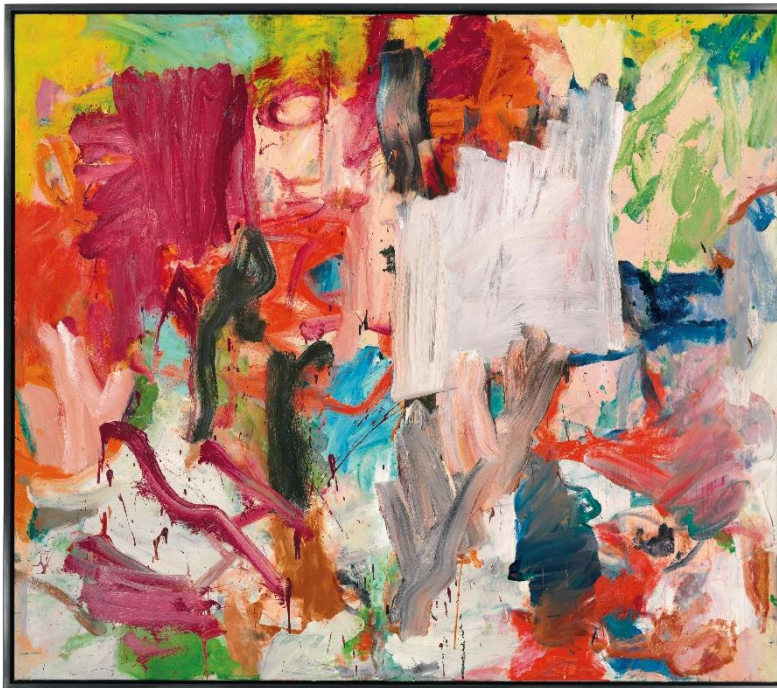
CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S OFFERS DE KOONING MASTERPIECE IN ITS NEW YORK EVENING SALE OF POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Being Sold Exactly 10 Years after Setting World Auction Record for Any Post-War Work of Art on November 15, 2006 at Christie's New York

On View in London at Christie's King Street Galleries Beginning September 30



Willem de Kooning, *Untitled XXV*, 1977. Estimate on Request

New York – Christie's is honored to present Willem de Kooning's 1977 masterpiece, *Untitled XXV*, in its November 15 Evening sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art in New York. Estimated in the region of \$40 million, *Untitled XXV* comes to the auction market for the first time since setting the world auction record for any example of Post-War Art in the very same saleroom exactly ten-years ago to the date.

Brett Gorvy, Chairman and International Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, remarked: "*Untitled XXV is an unequivocal Abstract Expressionist tour de force. We are very proud to be unveiling this work in London, where the extraordinary international presence of the Royal Academy's*

Abstract Expressionist show has been so well received. Untitled XXV is a pinnacle picture from one of the most remarkable years in de Kooning's career. Its vivid colors and painterly dynamism come together to form a totality of expression, resulting in a consummate example of the artist's approach to abstraction."

Untitled XXV comes from a remarkable series of large canvases that de Kooning made in a sudden burst of activity in the mid-1970s. In the spring of 1975, a comparatively long dry spell of painterly inactivity for the artist suddenly came to an end. In a flood of creativity that lasted until 1978, de Kooning found himself once again reveling in the act of painting. Fresh and re-vitalized by his recent exploration into sculpture and rejuvenated by an ever-deepening love affair with a young woman, Emilie Kilgore, de Kooning was able to sustain this output for a period of nearly four years. "I made those paintings one after the other, no trouble at all," he said. "I couldn't miss. It's a nice feeling. It's strange. It's a man at a gambling table (who) feels that he can't lose. But when he walks away with the dough, he knows that he can't do that again."

These years are now viewed by critics as the apex of de Kooning's painterly oeuvre, and 1977 a particular highpoint amongst them. The celebrated critic, David Sylvester called this year de Kooning's *annus mirabilis*, writing that the works from 1977 "belong with the paintings made at the same age by artists such as Monet and Renoir and Bonnard and, of course, Titian."

The artist's surroundings are often attributed in part to the fruitfulness of this period. When he had first moved to the Springs on Long Island, de Kooning had enjoyed the unique landscape of the area and this in many ways had entered and informed his work. However, in the mid-'70s he became increasingly preoccupied with his immediate environment, its light and topography as well as, in particular, the wateriness of the landscape around a spot called Louse Point.

At Louse Point, de Kooning spent hours observing the water and its effects. He became captivated by the shimmering surface of water and its ability to reflect and merge the imagery of the land, sky, figures and itself in a constantly shifting abstract surface of color and form. It was this mercurial effect that he began again to try to emulate in his paintings, attempting to translate these relationships into the equally fluid but more materially substantial and plastic medium of paint.

Untitled XXV is a joyous and heavily material painterly expression. Layer after layer of painted form and color is built up and overlaid within the square canvas to maintain a dynamic and tenuous balance. Somehow rooted in nature yet seemingly absent of any figurative appearance, the painting articulates a landscape of painterly form brought alive with a sense of the human through the length and scale, as well as the emotive power of the artist's vigorous brushwork and twisted painterly gesture.

***Note to Editors:** *Untitled XXV* sold for the first time at Christie's New York on November 15, 2006. At the time, it realized \$27,120,000, setting a world auction record for both the artist and for any post-war work of art sold at auction.

The current auction record for Willem de Kooning is now held by *Untitled VIII*, 1977, which was sold at Christie's New York in November 2013.

The record for a post-war work of art is now held by Francis Bacon's Three Studies of Lucian Freud (in 3 parts), which sold for \$142,404,992 at Christie's New York in November 2013

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2016 that totalled £2.1 billion / \$3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Christie's offers around 350 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.

2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. 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. Click [HERE](#) to view a short film about Christie's and the 250th anniversary.

Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 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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Images available on request

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