

CHRISTIE'S

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MASTERWORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF ANTONI TÀPIES



Antoni Tàpies: Photographed at home

London – This autumn Christie's will present Masterworks from the Collection of Antoni Tàpies, one of the most famous Post-War artists of his generation who was celebrated for his exploration of the spirituality of the material world. Featuring artists including Alberto Giacometti, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso and Mark Rothko, works from his collection will star in the *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction* (6 October 2017), *Up Close* (3 October 2017) and forthcoming *Impressionist and Modern Art Auctions* in February 2018. Masterworks from the Collection of Antoni Tàpies will be on view at Christie's King Street from 29 September 2017 with highlights touring to Christie's Rockefeller Center, New York (12 September), Hong Kong (18 to 21 September) and Madrid (19 to 20 September).

Presenting artworks by some of the most important figures of the twentieth century avant-garde, the personal collection of Antoni Tàpies offers a unique insight into the powerful bond that existed between the artist and the paintings and sculptures he encountered over the course of his lifetime. These highly intimate objects were closely connected to Tàpies's own artistic practice, often acting as a catalyst for



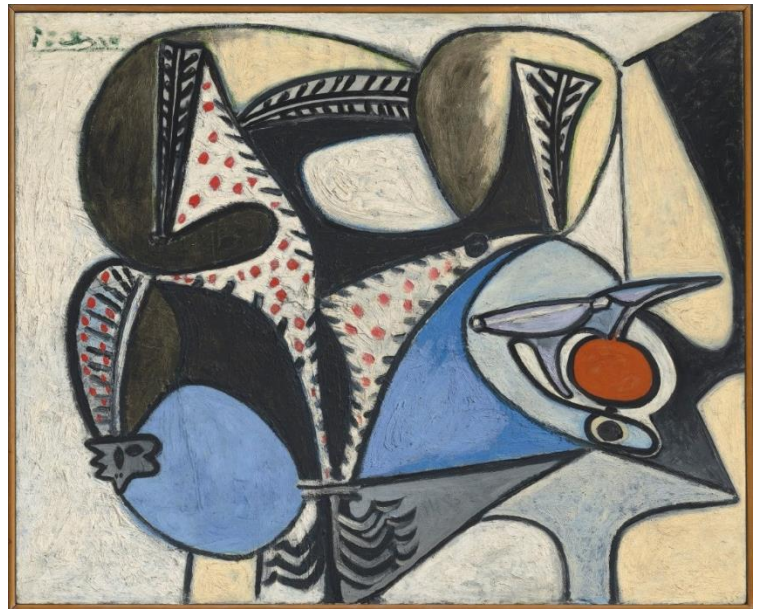
Mark Rothko *Untitled (Orange and Yellow)* (1969), acrylic on paper mounted on canvas, 71 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (182 x 97.8cm.) Estimate £4,000,000 – 6,000,000

his creative impulses, whilst also reflecting the seminal relationships, friendships and concepts that inspired him throughout his artistic career. Built on his desire to understand life's unfathomable mysteries, Tàpies's collection spans vastly different time periods and cultures, including examples of Khmer statuary alongside abstract modernist paintings, dreamlike compositions from the Surrealists, striking African idols and artefacts from antiquity.

Born in Barcelona in 1923, Antoni Tàpies grew up as the violence of the Civil War was being inscribed on the ancient walls of his city. From destruction, he forged one of the greatest bodies of abstract work of the twentieth century. Tàpies first came to prominence in the late 1940s, working in a Surrealist idiom that shared much with the ideas of artists such as Paul Klee and his fellow Catalanian Joan Miró. A scholarship to Paris in 1950-51 led to a meeting with Pablo Picasso. Informed by his interest in Zen philosophy as much as by the privation of Post-War Spain, Tàpies deliberately chose commonplace materials to infuse with new significance, invoking a transformative alchemy that prefigured the Italian movement of Arte Povera. Following his first American exhibitions in 1953, he represented Spain at the Venice Biennale in 1958; a celebrated solo show at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum followed in 1962, and another toured Europe in 1973-74. In 1984, he created the Tàpies Foundation, which holds his archives and over 2000 of his works, and continues to this day to promote the interdisciplinary study of modern and contemporary art. Major retrospectives were held at the Jeu de

Paume in Paris in 1994, at the Guggenheim in 1995, and at Madrid's Reina Sofía Museum in 2000.

Guillermo Cid Pardo, Specialist, Christie's: *'We are delighted to be offering this stunning group of works from the personal collection of Antoni Tàpies. Named by Michel Tapié one of the four founders of the Art Informel movement – alongside Willem de Kooning, Jean Dubuffet and Lucio Fontana - Tàpies is undoubtedly one of the leading artists of his generation. In my country his life and work epitomises the cultural genome of the Post-War years and Tàpies has come to be associated with our way of being and with the way the world looks at us. He was a great humanist and an avid collector. His collection transcends the merely aesthetical and exemplifies with astonishing detail the path travelled in the maturation of his art and of the art of his peers; the mysterious presence of the 1920s Giacometti sculpture, the*



Pablo Picasso, *Le coq saigné* ('The bled cock') (1947-8) Oil on plywood, 31 7/8 x 39 3/8 in. (81 x 99.9 cm.) Estimate £2,200,000 – 2,800,000

perfect surreal touch of both Miró works, the bold message conveyed in the Picasso or the sublimity of his large-scale Rothko.'



Alberto Giacometti, *Homme (Apollon)*
Bronze with golden brown patina
Conceived in 1929, this bronze version cast
circa 1948–56 in an edition of six
Estimate: £800,000 – 1,200,000

Olivier Camu, Deputy Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art at Christie's added: 'Tàpies chose these works carefully, building within his collection a group of exceptional artworks from the Twentieth Century. Of course, his interests extended far wider than this period, but each of the works presented here reveal something interesting about Tàpies as an artist and a collector. They speak to his Catalan heritage, to his roots in the Surrealist movement, to his place as a leading figure within the Post-War art world. It is fascinating to be reminded through this small selection how sharp, sophisticated, informed and sensitive his eye was.'

Gathering together artworks, apparently epochs and cultures apart, Tàpies collected passionately, but in a unique and idiosyncratic manner. The eclectic collection was formed in the Tàpies family home, built by the renowned Catalan architect José Antonio Coderch in the early 1960s to the artist's designs. Within this elegant, atmospheric

setting, these artworks came to life, creating a unique, immersive, kaleidoscopic environment, in which the artist lived and worked. Each space was carefully curated by Tàpies and his beloved wife Teresa, the selection of objects within each room chosen for their ability to imbue the space with a mysterious, enigmatic energy, and for the effect they created when seen in combination with one another. These are the objects which captured his imagination, comforted him, inspired him and obsessed him on a daily basis.

Highlights of the collection include *Untitled (Orange and Yellow)*, a luminous vision dating from Mark Rothko's celebrated final period. Thin layers of yellow and orange pigment demarcate three powerful zones of colour, backlit by the vast, pale surface beneath and enshrined in a trembling border. Executed in 1969, the year before the artist's death, it belongs to the remarkable series of large-scale works on paper that number among his last and most poignant achievements. The resonant tones that saturate

Untitled (Orange and Yellow) demonstrate that despite his diminished physical capabilities, following an aneurysm in May 1968, Rothko continued to conceive of his art as a vehicle for the sublime.



Antoni and Teresa Tàpies pictured at home with Picasso's *Le coq saigné*
circa 1985

Created in 1929, during one of the most exciting and experimental periods in the life of Alberto Giacometti, *Homme (Apollon)* belongs to an innovative series of sculptures that brought the young artist's work to the attention of Paris's leading avant-garde group of the time: the Surrealists. From this moment onwards, Giacometti's sculptures would evolve to embrace an abstract, geometric style that was imbued with a strangely evocative

power, presenting simplified, stylised and deeply haunting visions of humanity. One of an edition of six casts, of which others now reside in museum collections including the Kunstmuseum Basel and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.

Leading the group of works headed for the forthcoming *Impressionist and Modern Art Auctions* in February 2018 is a work of compelling force: Pablo Picasso's *Le coq saigné* ('The bled cock' 1947-8, estimate: £2,200,000 – 2,800,000). *Le coq saigné* has been celebrated as one of the most visually complex and arresting works of the large series of still-lives that the artist painted during and immediately following the Second World War. A sinuously interlocking composition of colour, planar form, line and pattern, the subject itself becomes almost entirely abstract. Further highlights of the collection include Joan Miró's *Peinture* (1926, estimate £600,000 – 900,000), which belongs to Miró's famed series of 'oneiric' or 'dream' paintings, an enigmatic group of spectral compositions which the artist began in Paris in 1925 and Miró's *Tête d'homme* (1932, estimate £800,000 – 1,200,000) one of a small group of twelve intimately sized, experimental oil paintings which emerged at a pivotal moment in Joan Miró's career, following several years marked by what the artist termed a 'crisis of personal consciousness'. The elegance of Paul Klee's oil-transfer drawing, *Weibsteufel, die Welt behrrend* (1921, estimate £200,000 – 300,000), along with Wassily Kandinsky's gouache and watercolour *Allein* (1932, estimate £120,000 – 200,000), reflect Tàpies's highly discerning and sensitive eye as a collector. Together the works paint a compelling picture of not only Tàpies's relationships with the artists who were his friends and peers, but also a pioneering moment in the history of 20th-century art.

PRESS CONTACT: Belinda Bowring | 020 7389 2677 | email: bbowring@christies.com

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