

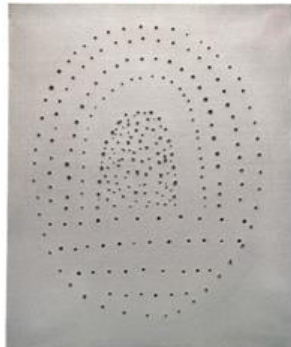


CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | MILANO
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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF CHRISTIE'S ITALY

MILAN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY THE BEST OF ITALIAN 20TH CENTURY ART TO BE AUCTIONED ON 11 APRIL 2018



Milano - In 2018 Christie's Italy celebrates its 60th anniversary, since the auction house opened its first ever representative office outside the UK in Rome in 1968. After 5 years of very successful **Milan Modern and Contemporary** auctions with average sell-through rates of 93 % by lot, Christie's will offer the 6th edition of this curated sale on 11 April at Palazzo Clerici with preview exhibitions starting from 23 March in Rome, Turin and Milan.

Reflecting a growing global appetite for the best of Italian post-war and contemporary art, Christie's Milan auctions have seen an increase of international participation over the years with registrants coming from 17 countries, including from Europe, Middle East, UK, Asia, North and South America.

"The April 2018 auction will offer a very tailor-made approach to satisfy the needs of our national and growing international collector group. All 58 lots are being sourced privately and many have never or not appeared at auction for decades. This year we have integrated a new section dedicated to the figurative artists, which is been celebrated with the current exhibition Post Zang Tumb Tuuum. Art Life Politics: Italia 1918–1943 at the Fondazione Prada until 28 June. We are again pleased to present such a great variety of 20th century Italian art movements in Milan, as this city continues to be a key location to buy the very best of Italian Art," commented **Renato Pennisi, Director and Senior Specialist, Head of Sale, Christie's Italy.**

"To mark the 60th anniversary of Christie's Italy, we are pleased to present an attentively curated auction, offering a complete overview of Italy's most sought-after artistic developments of the 20th century. Christie's role in promoting Italian art on the international scene has been rewarded by exceptional sale results registered not only in Milan but across all our locations, with London and New York in first place. The highlight of the auction on 11 April in Milan is without doubt the fine art collection initiated in the 1960s by Sergio Tomasinelli, enlightened connoisseur and prime example of Italian collecting," continued **Mariolina Bassetti, Chairwoman Christie's Italy.**

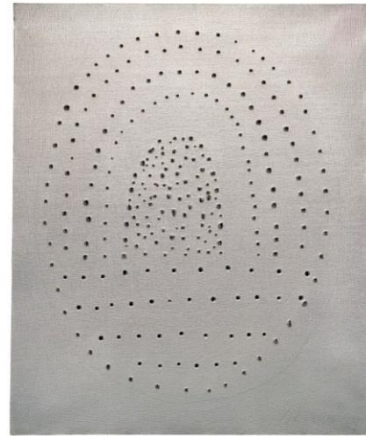
POST-WAR ITALIAN CLASSICS FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Leading highlights come from private Italian collections such as **Piero Manzoni's** *Achrome*, 1958 (estimate: €1,800,000-2,500,000) which is one of the earliest works of the artist's series bearing the same name. Never offered before on the art market, in the same collection since 1976 and exhibited in the 2014 retrospective of the artist in Milan, as well as documented in all catalogue raisonnés on the artist, the canvas was soaked in kaolin – a soft form of clay – which when set, forms natural layers, wrinkles and folds in the colour shades of the plaster itself. This shows Manzoni exploring the idea of a space freed of any image, colour, mark or material.



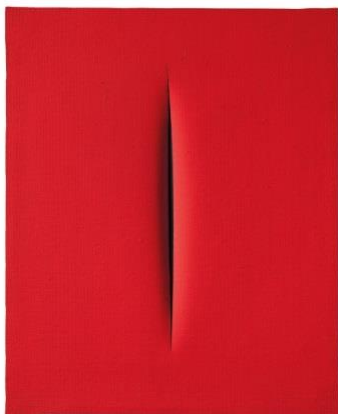
Salvatore Scarpitta's *annus mirabilis*, *Ammiraglio 'Admiral'* (estimate: €800,000-1,200,000) was executed in Rome in 1958, and was added to Sergio Tomasinelli's collection in the 1980s. It is a pivotal piece of Scarpitta's 'wrapped' or 'bandaged' series, where he deconstructed the anatomy of a painting, reconstituting its physical components to create a new and direct means of expression. Another work from the same unexhibited collection is the 1949 mystical abstract *Amalassunta su fondo rosso chiaro* by **Oswaldo Licini** (estimate: €400,000-600,000). It is 1 of the 9 paintings of the Amalassunta series, dedicated to the moon and was exhibited at the 1950 Venice Biennale.

Collected by another important Milanese collector is **Lucio Fontana's** *Concetto Spaziale* which was a 1966 birthday gift by the artist to the present owner. It demonstrates Fontana's continued fascination with buchi (holes). Perforating the canvas in a rhythmic, carefully executed geometric pattern, these holes reveal a glimpse into the space beyond the canvas, opening the viewer's eyes to the unknown, to a 4th dimension. A recurring motif in the artist's oeuvre is the symbolic shape of an oval or egg, offering him endless biological, spiritual and primeval inspiration. The lustrous silver paint, gives the work a celestial radiance (estimate: €800,000-1,200,000).



From the same collection are three works by **Alighiero Boetti**. *Tutto* from 1989 is a tapestry of modern life with everyday objects including scissors, knives, wristwatches and a bottle-opener, creating a dazzling spectacle of colour and rhythm (estimate: € 350,000-500,000). The letters E, B and D can be made out, a hidden linguistic code and a subtle play on words. The 'Tutto' series represents the central meaning of Boetti's art: the juxtaposition of order and disorder.

Executed in 1969, Boetti's *Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* is one of the first works after he artist changed his direction. He found great freedom in the repetitive and time consuming process which involved tracing the horizontal and vertical grid lines until the blank space across the diptych had been filled, (estimate: €60,000-80,000). The third work by Boetti is a 1974 version of *Ononimo*, which is born from a conflation of the Italian words anonimo and omonimo (eponymous), which Boetti invented as a self-reflective expression in 1971. Here again the order and disorder principal as well as the notion of non-authorship apply (estimate: €70,000-100,000). This work was part of the 2012 retrospective of the artist, first held at Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid and then at the MoMA in New York.



Lucio Fontana's *Concetto Spaziale, Attesa* (estimate: €700,000-1,000,000) shows a single clean slash through the red canvas. It was made in 1967, exactly 10 years after the artist introduced the series of *tagli*. These works were created during a period of exploration in space with the slash sometimes seen as a reference to the unknown, to the spatial dimension.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Leoncillo's *Taglio bianco* sculpture (estimate: €80,000-120,000), a rediscovered piece, offered for the first time at auction. Shaped, slashed and perforated, the work seeks, defines and moves the line between the static point and the spatial dimension. Choosing a white glaze, Leoncillo avoids all colour to highlight the layers and cuts within the clay, focusing on form and matter.



Senza titolo by **Gino de Dominicis** is a mature work in his mystifying oeuvre, where the use of silhouetted forms appear as if they were footprints or shadows of the gods. Acquired directly from the artist, and in the same private collection ever since, *Senza titolo* was part of the important exhibition dedicated to Gino De Dominicis held at MoMA PS1, in New York in 2008 (estimate: €100,000-150,000).



THE RETURN TO FIGURATION

In the wake of the horror and chaos of the First World War, artists across Europe desperately sought a new vocabulary that could adequately express and respond to the dramatic cultural and social shifts that were occurring in the aftermath. Many in Italy returned to figurative painting and traditional subjects looking for inspiration to the art of the past. One of the most influential groups to emerge in Italy during this period was the so called 'Scuola di Via Cavour,' also known as the 'Scuola Romana'.

Two works are representative of this movement **Scipione's** *Natura morta con tubino*, dating from 1929 with an estimate of €60,000-80,000. It transforms typical everyday objects into an ethereal stilllife, rich with symbolism and potential narratives. From the fashionable black dress and delicate pink ribbon that lie strewn across the bed, to the discarded top-hat and walking stick alongside it, each element implies a human presence which remains invisible to us, confined to a space beyond the edges of the canvas.





Towards the end of the 1930s the theme of le *bagnanti sulla spiaggia* (bathers on the shore) emerges in **Fausto Pirandello's** oeuvre until the end of his life. In *Spiaggia affollata* from 1939, the nude is no longer confined to the studio, it is no longer set in dull environments, but rather comes into contact with storm-corroded skies, strips of ocean. The female or male form is never depicted as an expression of beauty it is explored in every aspect of its reality – which is often violent, ugly and vulgar (estimate: €80,000-120,000).

PRESS CONTACTS:

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Touring Exhibition:

Rome, Museo Maxxi
Via Guido Reni
23 March 10.00am – 7.00pm

Turin, Ersel
Paizza Solferino 1
28 March 10.30am – 7.00pm

Milan, Palazzo Clerici, Via Clerici 5
6-10 April: 10.00am – 7.00pm

Auction:

Milan Modern and Contemporary Evening Sale
11 April 2017, 7.00pm

Milan, Palazzo Clerici, Via Clerici 5

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2017 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$6.6 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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