

CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 18 APRIL 2018

Join Christie's in Berlin

Beauties and Beasts: Making and Collecting Art in Germany

From Albrecht Dürer to Gerhard Richter: Christie's to showcase German art and collecting during Berlin Gallery Weekend in a major public exhibition, 27 to 29 April 2018



Berlin – In June last year Max Beckmann's *Hölle der Vögel* (1937-38) - a nightmarish vision of man being tortured by vicious birds - sold for £36 million at Christie's in London, establishing not only the highest price ever achieved at auction for a work by Max Beckmann and a work of German Expressionist art, but also the highest price of any work of art by a German artist sold at auction in 2017. It was followed by record sales for other works by German artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Günther Uecker and Albert Oehlen.

A major Christie's exhibition in Berlin from 27 to 29 April 2018, coinciding with Gallery Weekend Berlin, will put these sales in context. *Beauties and Beasts: Making and Collecting Art in Germany* will explore the ideals of beauty and the fascination for the terrible by presenting extraordinary objects, which were created or collected over the last two millenia in Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. The exhibition, curated by Christie's specialist Tim Schmelcher, will comprise loans from private collections and works from upcoming sales and will feature over 80 works by artists; including Georg Baselitz, Gerhard Richter, Thomas Struth, Neo Rauch, Joseph Beuys, Otto Dix, Max Pechstein, Caspar David Friedrich, Joseph Heintz, Lucas Cranach and many others. Decorative arts including Augsburg silver and works by David Roentgen, antiquities and works of African, Indian and Chinese art, will also be shown.

Among the exhibits exploring how the view of what is beautiful in art have changed over time, and how the concepts of beauty and terror have shaped German art, is one of the finest paintings created by Max Pechstein during his 1910 sojourn to the lakes of Morditzburg. Pechstein's *Szene im Wald* (illustrated above, second on the right) is an important example of the highly expressive style developed by the Brücke artists during the opening decade of the 20th Century, celebrating the beauty and freedom of the naked body. *Leiche im Drahtverhau* (1924,

illustrated page one right) on the other hand, is the largest plate from Otto Dix's portfolio *Der Krieg* - one of the finest and unflinching depictions of war in Western art. On loan from the collection of Klaus and Erika Hegewisch, Hamburg, the work is one of the most gruesome and unforgettable of the series.

Another highlight of the exhibition is Martin Kippenberger's painting *Untitled* from the War Wicked series (1991-92, *illustrated page one, second from left*). Painted in the years both before and after the German Reunification, the War Wicked series was an ongoing conceptual riposte to the high seriousness of Neo-Expressionists like Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lüpertz and Georg Baselitz, who dealt with themes of war and division in their paintings of the 1970s and 80s. The motif of the canary was a particular dig at Baselitz, who had famously inverted the eagle, a symbol of deep historical and cultural significance for Germany.

An early 17th century take on the classical myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is *Leda and the Swan* by Joseph Heintz (1564-1609, *illustrated page one left*). On loan from an Augsburg collection, the painting shows the scene where Leda, wife of the Spartan king Tyndareus, is visited in her bath by Zeus in the guise of a swan and the infatuated beauty and the beast unite in an intricately interlocked pose. The painting was believed to be lost until 2013, when it was acquired and identified by a private collector from Augsburg as a masterpiece by Heintz, which was created in 1605 for the *Kunstammer* of Rudolph II in Prague. *Leda*, along with further paintings from the inventory of the Prager *Kunstammer*, was sold in 1623 to the jeweller Daniel de Briers from Frankfurt. Hereafter, all traces of the work were lost. The exhibition of *Leda* in the Czech Embassy in Berlin closes the cultural circle.



Christie's exhibition will take place at the Czech Embassy and Czech Centre, a brutalist building on Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin Mitte, which represents an ideal location – not only for its unique architecture, but also because the Embassy, completed in 1978, was one of the few newly constructed embassies in East Berlin during the GDR era and is therefore closely tied to German post-war history. The original 1970s interior was designed specifically for the Embassy, including the wooden cladding, Bohemian glass lamps and the chairs with red and orange leather upholstery, making it a late-modernist 'Gesamtkunstwerk'.

Tim Schmelcher, Curator and Christie's Prints Specialist: "As artists, collectors and spectators – and as human beings – we are forever in pursuit of beauty and at the same time drawn towards the abyss, towards anything that frightens or repulses us. In this exhibition, I wanted to examine how these conflicting impulses shape the way art is being made and seen. It is this tension between beauty and terror which fascinates me – and if this show feels like a great, slightly eccentric personal collection, I have succeeded."

Dirk Boll, President Christie's: "Germany, which has been one of the leading economic regions for centuries, has developed a special tradition of collecting art and that's what we want to explore this spring during our first 'Christie's Pop-Up Exhibition', complementing Berlin Gallery Weekend. We will be showing art across 2,000 years of art history and various genres, which are relevant to Germany and its collecting tradition, and pay homage to Germany's artists and collectors of today."

The exhibition will be accompanied by a [catalogue](#) and a series of free public events, which will be kicked off by the lecture *From David to David – 18th Century Ebenistery to Contemporary Design* by Christie's Honorary Chairman The Earl of Snowdon on Friday, 27 April 2018, followed by free exhibition tours on 28 and 29. April

2018 with curator Tim Schmelcher and Aliko Brain of Christie's Education. For further information and registration to the free events click [here](#).

Coinciding with the exhibition, Christie's Education will offer a three-day education course, 25 to 27 April, at Soho House Berlin. Click [here](#) for further info.

**Christie's Exhibition in Berlin: Beauties and Beasts: Making and Collecting Art in Germany
27 to 29 April 2018**

Detailed info on the public exhibition and events as well as a link to the catalogue can be found [here](#).

Exhibition Opening Hours:

Friday, 27 April 2018, 11am – 9pm

Saturday, 28 April 2018, 11am – 7pm

Sunday, 29 April 2018, 11am – 7pm

Exhibition Location:

The Czech Centre

Wilhelmstraße 44, Access via Mohrenstraße

10117 Berlin

Lecture:

Friday, 27 April, 11:30am – 12:30pm

From David to David – 18th Century Ebenistery to Contemporary Design

Speaker: The Earl of Snowdon, Christie's Honorary Chairman

Location: Czech Embassy, Lecture theatre, Wilhelmstraße entrance

Places are free but limited – [registration](#) essential

Guide Tours:

Saturday, 28 April, 11:30am – 12:30pm

Defining the German Aesthetic

Speaker: Aliko Braine, Christie's Education

Location: Czech Centre, Mohrenstraße entrance

Places are free but limited – [registration](#) essential

Sunday, 29 April, 11:30am – 12:30pm

Beauties & Beasts

Speaker: Tim Schmelcher, Curator and Christie's Prints Specialist

Location: Czech Centre, Mohrenstraße entrance

Places are free but limited – [registration](#) essential

PRESS CONTACT:

Stephanie Manstein | +44 207 389 2962 | smanstein@christies.com

Notes to editors:

Christie's Germany, with offices in Dusseldorf (since 1971), Munich (since 1979), Hamburg (since 1980), Frankfurt am Main (since 1990) and Stuttgart (since 1997), has been the gateway to Christie's worldwide auctions. Headed by Chairman and Auctioneer Christiane Gräfin Rantzau and Managing Director Germany, Contemporary Art Specialist and Auctioneer Arno Verkade, the team of representatives and specialists in Germany coordinate Christie's services to collectors in the regions. The most important recent consignments from Germany include works from the collection of Wilhelm Reinold, patron of art and former board member of the Commerzbank in Hamburg (1895-1979), which achieved a total of £6.5 million pounds / €7,3 million in the London February sales of Impressionist and Modern art. Amongst the top lots were *Bathing scene from Åsgårdstrand* (1904-1936) by Edvard Munch (price realised £1,568,750) and Erich Heckel's

Blühende Apfelbäume (1907, price realised £ 1,508,750), which both sold above their high estimates. One of the most significant collections of Impressionist and Modern Art Christie's offered in 2017 was the Personal Collection of German patron of the arts Barbara Lambrecht, sold to Benefit the Rubens Prize Collection in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Siegen. It was 100% sold and realised a total of £20,112,100 / \$24,950,059 / €23,531,157.

Also the top lot of the March 2017 Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction in London, a captivating snow scene by Peter Doig from 1994, a pivotal year in his career, *Cobourg 3 + 1 More* (sold for £12,709,000 / \$15,530,398 / €14,640,768) had been consigned from Germany, by the corporate collection of Provinzial Rheinland insurer based in Dusseldorf. In October 2017 works from the collection of the German couturier Wolfgang Joop were offered in a single owner sale during the London Design sales, achieving £1,054,700.

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.*

###

Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

