

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER ED RUSCHA'S *HURTING THE WORD RADIO #2* FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOAN AND JACK QUINN



"You can turn on the radio and the radio becomes the soundtrack for what you see out the window. And somehow I get more from doing this in Los Angeles than I do in another city." –
Edward Ruscha

On view at Christie's London from 2-4 October

New York – On November 13, Christie's Evening Sale of Post-War and Contemporary Art will be highlighted by Ed Ruscha's *Hurting the Word Radio #2*, 1964 (estimate: \$30-40 million)* from the collection of Joan and Jack Quinn, Beverly Hills. Joan Quinn and her late husband Jack, represent a pivotal moment in the history of Contemporary art, as Los Angeles came to symbolize an innovative and prolific brand of creative freedom. Ruscha's canvas being offered here is a sublime example of the conceptual creativity that emanated from Los Angeles in the early 1960's, that which would make Ed Ruscha into one of the most revolutionary artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Quinns acquired *Hurting the Word Radio #2* directly from the artist in the early 70s, making this the first time the canvas has ever been offered at auction.

Alex Rotter, Chairman, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christies: *"It is such an honor to offer Ed Ruscha's Hurting the Word Radio #2 from Joan and Jack Quinn's storied Californian collection. This consummate work by*

Note to editors: Ed Ruscha's artist record is held by *Smash*, oil on canvas, 1963, which sold for \$30,405,000 at Christie's New York on November 12, 2014

Ruscha is an early example of his revolutionary Text paintings, a body of work that established him as one of the most innovative and influential painters of his generation. The Quinns acquired Hurting the Word Radio #2 directly from Ruscha in the 1970's, and it is a testament to the couple's excellent, forward thinking taste that most of the artist's comparable canvases now reside in the permanent collections of major institutions. Our November sale will mark the first time that this work has ever been offered at auction, and it is particularly exciting for me on a personal level as Hurting the Word Radio #2 has long been on my list of the most desirable works in private hands."

Few individuals have left such an indelible mark on the artistic landscape of Southern California than Joan and Jack Quinn. As collectors, advocates and, above all else, friends to artists, the Quinns, both native Californians, helped propel their beloved Los Angeles into one of the world's leading cultural meccas. In the process, they built one the nation's preeminent private collections of southern California Contemporary art—the tangible representation of a lifetime's dedication to the creative process.

Married for over half a century, visionaries Joan and Jack Quinn were present from the earliest days of Los Angeles's artistic evolution when prominent figures and outposts such as the Ferus Gallery began to catch the attention of an international audience. For the Quinns, art was a dialogue between artist and viewer that yielded unending inspiration and lifelong friendships.

Jack Quinn, a prominent and influential attorney, was the youngest president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and founder of Quinn Kully & Morrow, a firm that later merged with the prestigious Washington D.C. firm, Arnold & Porter. Quinn utilized his skills to help an array of emerging artists and their dealers, including the Ferus, Nick Wilder and Corcoran galleries, navigate the worlds of law and business.

In 1978, Andy Warhol asked Joan Quinn to join his Interview magazine as its West Coast editor, which she did through 1989. In addition to her work at Interview, Quinn served on the California Arts Council for 17 years, was the society editor of Angeles magazine and Hearst's Herald Examiner, and the West Coast Editor for both Conde Nast Traveler and Germany's Manipulator magazine. Quinn's work at these publications – among others internationally – allowed her to further promote the work of their growing circle of Southern California creatives.

Known for her charisma, intelligence, and incomparable élan, Joan Agajanian Quinn has been a muse for artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Jean-Michel Basquiat, David Hockney, Ed Ruscha, Zandra Rhodes, Larry Bell, Frank Gehry, Ed Moses, Helmut Newton, Billy Al Bengston, Antonio Lopez, and many others. As artists sought to record her image across a variety of media, Joan Quinn has found herself with one of the world's largest and most important collections of Contemporary portraiture—a poignant representation of friendship, appreciation and respect.

Based in Los Angeles, Ruscha arrived at his own brand of Pop based on the utilitarian styling of words and letters. His participation in the Los Angeles art scene in the early 1960s firmly established him as an influential figure whose conceptual rigor played a leading role during the movement's early days. Ruscha's paintings from the early 1960s stand at a pivotal point in art history when the tradition of painting fought to maintain its relevance in light of the beginnings of the Pop movement. In work's such as *Hurting the Word Radio #2*, Ruscha successfully straddles both, connecting the painterly tradition to the new contemporary culture of advertising and mass-media.

Across an expansive sky blue canvas, the word "RADIO" is laid out in a juxtaposition of static and surreal sunshine yellow painted letters. *Hurting the Word Radio #2* is an iconic example of Ed Ruscha's c-clamp paintings, which also includes *Hurting the Word Radio #1* (Menil Collection, Houston) and *Not Only Securing the Last Letter but Damaging it as Well* (Boss) (Museum Brandhorst, Munich). Here, the bold, stately letters synonymous with Ruscha's practice become distorted and warped as trompe l'oeil c-clamps squeeze the "R" and tug on the "O," distorting and transforming them in to rippled rubbery notes. *Hurting the Word Radio #2* is an important early example of the artist's revolutionary Text paintings—a body of work that would establish Ruscha as one of the most innovative and influential painters of the 1960s.

By the time Ruscha painted Radio, the years of families gathering around the radio to listen to the news were over. However, the radio continued to make its presence felt in every car, becoming a part of the culture of freedom, youth

and individualism associated with automobiles. Looking at this significant early word painting, we can imagine the artist driving down Route 66 or over the intersecting freeways of Los Angeles, watching the advertisements and signs pass as a steady stream of rock 'n' roll issues from the dashboard, before slipping out the window and into the California sunshine.

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in the first half of 2019 that totalled £2.2 billion / \$2.8 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.

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