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PRESS RELEASE | NEW YORK | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 4 OCTOBER 2023

PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF DAVID GEFFEN

ARSHILE **GORKY** *CHARRED BELOVED I*



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ARSHILE GORKY (1904-1948)

Charred Beloved I

oil on canvas

Painted in 1946

Estimate on request

NEW YORK - Christie's New York is honored to announce that Arshile Gorky's *Charred Beloved I* (1946) will highlight this fall's 20th Century Evening Sale. A seminal painting by one of the most important, influential and tragic figures in the history of 20th century art, and estimated in excess of \$20 million, it is expected to reset the market for the artist at auction.

Max Carter, Christie's Vice Chairman of 20th and 21st Century Art, remarks, “*Charred Beloved I* rose from and immortalized one of mid-century New York’s legendary tragedies: the devastating fire that consumed Gorky’s studio. It heralded the future of post-war art in America. And, formerly owned by S.I. Newhouse, it has belonged for thirty years to David Geffen, whose career, collecting and philanthropy have no parallel. Offering this masterpiece, the finest Gorky ever to appear at auction, represents everything we aspire to at Christie’s.”

CATALOGUE LINKED [HERE](#)

Charred Beloved I was Gorky’s Phoenix-like response to the January 1946 studio fire in which some 20 paintings, along with his books and drawings, were completely destroyed. Within several weeks of the fire, Gorky began his “ballroom series” on the 17th floor at 1200 Fifth Avenue in New York City. The resulting four canvases, including *Charred Beloved I*, were among his greatest achievements. A strictly literal visual interpretation would place *Charred Beloved I* in the midst of the blaze, and the further pair of *Charred Beloveds* in its dying embers.

The 1946 fire might have been shattering, however it was not the first time Gorky was forced to start anew. The artist survived the Armenian genocide of 1915, emigrating to the United States at around age 16 in 1920. Despite the brevity of his life—cut short by suicide in 1948—his artistic legacy was immediate and instrumental. Gorky remains one of the critical figures of 20th century art: the last Surrealist whom André Breton claimed and the first of the Abstract Expressionists.

Charred Beloved I has an equally extraordinary history. It was exhibited for the first time in 1953 at the Sidney Janis Gallery and has since appeared in major museum shows at the Museum of Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Guggenheim. One of the two related grisaille canvases, *Charred Beloved II*, is held in the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. This November, it is being sold from the collection of David Geffen.

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