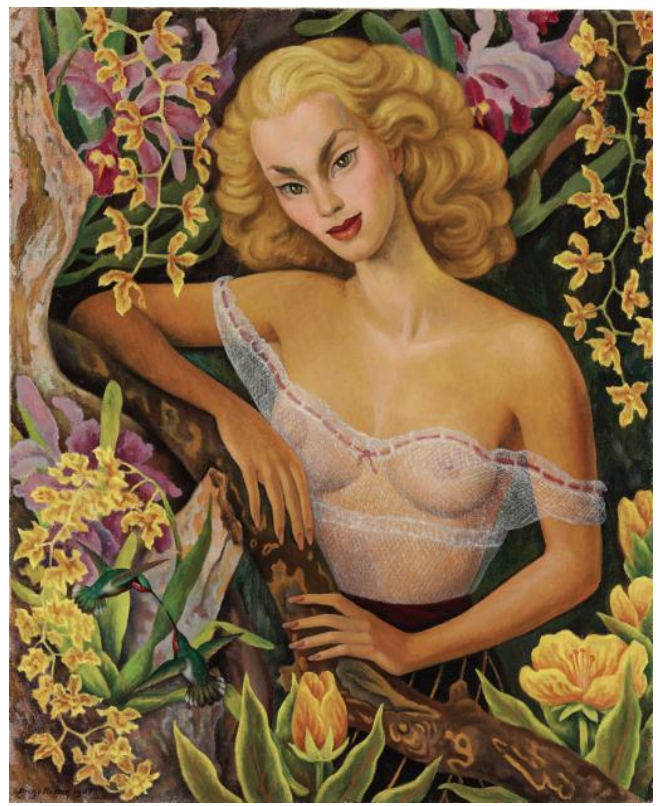


CHRISTIE'S

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PORTRAIT OF LINDA CHRISTIAN

**A RARE MASTERPIECE BY DIEGO RIVERA TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S
LATIN AMERICAN SALE ON NOVEMBER 20**



New York – On November 20, Christie's Latin American evening sale will offer one of the most provocative and beautiful portraits ever painted by Diego Rivera— the *Portrait of Linda Christian*, executed in 1947, (estimate: \$250,000-350,000), never before exhibited and virtually unknown to the general public and scholars alike. Originally painted fully topless, Christian's mother purportedly expressed concerns prompting Rivera to add the delicate and translucent off the shoulder top that now adorns the actress's torso. Featured on the cover of her 1962 autobiography, *Linda My Own Story*, the painting demonstrates Rivera's skills as a portraitist, expressing his brilliant use of light and color as well as his astute use of allegorical references. Rivera met actress Linda Christian in the 1940s and painted her at least twice in two portraits that survive to this day. In the present painting, the actress appears radiant and sensuous, while the playful hummingbirds explore the inner hollows of the orchids and tulips suggesting an erotically charged metaphor.



Linda Christian and Tyrone Power,
on location in Morocco, 1949

The Mexican-born actress Linda Christian (1923-2011) was one of Hollywood's most popular starlets during the 1940s and 50s. Christian and her family moved a great deal during her youth, living everywhere from South America and Europe, to the Middle East and Africa and as a result, she spoke multiple languages fluently. Christian dreamed of becoming a physician, but a chance encounter with her screen idol Errol Flynn, who would later become her lover, led her to change course and move to Hollywood, where Louis B. Mayer soon offered her a seven-year contract with MGM. And while her relationship with Flynn fizzled, Christian's movie career flourished starring in such film classics as *Holiday in Mexico* (1946), *Green Dolphin Street* (1947), and her best-known film role, Mara in the Johnny Weissmuller Tarzan film, *Tarzan and The Mermaids* (1948), as well as the first Bond Girl in the 1954 TV adaptation of the James Bond novel *Casino Royale*.

In addition to her high-profile liaison with Flynn, Christian is perhaps best known for having married the popular movie actor Tyrone Power from 1949 to 1956 with whom she had two children.

Diego Rivera developed a friendship with Linda Christian and painted at least two portraits of the actress that survive to this day. One, a full-length image in which the famous bikini-clad Bond Girl poses voluptuously on the beach—capturing one of the most vivacious presences to have graced the silver screen; and a second portrait, the present lot, rendered from the waist up, and unknown to the general public and scholars alike. Christian's own fondness for the portrait was clear as she selected it to grace the cover of her 1962 autobiography, *Linda My Own Story*— a testament not only to Rivera's great skills as a portraitist but to how well he captured the complex identity of one of Hollywood's first screen legends.



Diego Rivera (second from right) and Linda Christian (far right) with guests at the unveiling of the actress's life-size portrait, c. 1947

[For more information on *Portrait of Linda Christian*, please click here.](#)

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