

Press Release

For Immediate Release  
14 February 2012

CHRISTIE'S

Contact:

Cristiano De Lorenzo

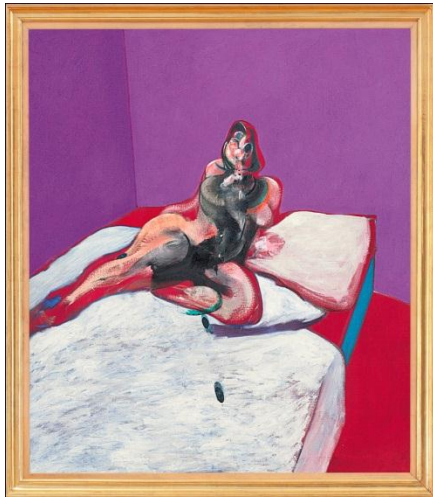
+44 (0)207 389 2283

[cdelorenzo@christies.com](mailto:cdelorenzo@christies.com)

## CHRISTIE'S LONDON

### EVENING AUCTION OF POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART

### TOTALS £80.6 Million / \$126.5 Million / €96.1 Million



Francis Bacon's *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes* realises £21.3 million

- International Buying brings Strong Results
- Three lots sold above £5 million / 16 lots sold above £1 million
- Record prices established for Wool, de Bruyckere, Houseago

**London** - Christie's evening auction of *Post-War & Contemporary Art* totaled £80,576,100 (\$126,504,477 / €96,127,287) selling 95% by value and 89% by lot. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest total for the category at Christie's London. The top lot of the sale was Francis Bacon's *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes* which sold for £21.3 million.

Combined with Post-War & Contemporary art offered from *Living With Art: A Private European Collection* on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February, sales in the category this month have realised £96.6 million to date.

**Francis Outred, Christie's Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Europe:** "I am thrilled with the outstanding results of our evening auction of *Post-War & Contemporary Art*, the second highest total in these rooms for the category, only surpassed by the June 2008 auction at the height of the market (£ 86.2 million). Following the exceptional success of the Henry Moore last week, the best of British was completed by the Francis Bacon, 'Portrait of Henrietta Moraes' which achieved over 20million pounds. Having had only two owners in its near 50 year history, the work had not been on the open market before and had not been seen in public for almost twenty years. As a result it created a fierce battle of 6 telephone bidders to achieve its over-estimate price. During the week of the opening of the extraordinary Lucian Freud exhibition at the National Portrait gallery, the 'Boat, Connemara' drawing, a complete discovery, went well beyond the estimate to achieve £657,250. In an Olympics year with so much profile on British art, Christie's is proud to have set these results as a message to the world of the strength and popularity of British art".

## Leading highlights of the sale:

- *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes*, one of the most seductive and sexually charged paintings by **Francis Bacon**, sold for **£21,321,250** (\$33,474,363 / € 25,436,251), becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> most valuable work of Post-War & Contemporary Art auctioned at Christie's London and the highest price achieved in the category in London since February 2008. Offered at auction for the first time having remained in the same private collection for almost thirty years, this rare painting depicts the artist's close friend and model Henrietta Moraes. It was painted by Francis Bacon towards the end of 1963, the year after his breakthrough retrospective at the Tate Gallery, London, and the same year as his first major American exhibition at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. For many years, the work formed part of the Schniewind collection of important post-War paintings, the present owner acquiring it from the family in 1983, almost thirty years ago. *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes* represents part of the pantheon of great paintings by Bacon executed in 1963, the majority of which are now housed in major international museum collections.
- **Gerhard Richter's** outstanding *Abstraktes Bild* sold for **£9,897,250** (\$15,538,683 / € 11,807,419), against an estimate of £5 million to £7 million. Created in 1994, this majestic painting belongs to the finest period of the artist's abstraction and was executed using the spontaneous squeegee technique which reveals layers of bursting azure, emerald and mauve throughout the canvas. The painting was shown in the historical monographic exhibition staged at the d'Offay Gallery in London in 1995.
- *Agrigente*, an extraordinary abstract landscape from the renowned series of 'Agrigente' paintings by **Nicolas de Staël**, realized **£5,305,250** / \$8,329,243 / €6,329,163 (estimate £3.5 million to £5 million), becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> most valuable work by the artist sold at auction. This particular work, which was realised in Provence in August 1953, on his return from a visit to Agrigento, Sicily, is one of the largest paintings from the series. The thick impasto is applied with a palette knife in a technique honed down by the artist, fully emphasising the large juxtaposed strips of vivid colour. De Staël unusually signed, titled and dated the piece on its reverse, revealing its particular importance.
- Rediscovered recently, the meticulous and emotional drawing *Boat, Connemara* was executed in 1948 by **Lucian Freud** and sold for **£657,250** / \$1,031,883 / €784,099, against an estimate of £200,000-300,000. Originally purchased from the artist's studio by accomplished architect, collector and patron W. G. Howell, this is the only known Irish landscape by the artist and is a significant piece in his oeuvre, showcasing his fine draughtsman-ship skills with just a pen and tempera, and reflecting his style of the late 1940s before the focus of his work switched to oil portraiture. Freud travelled to Ireland for three weeks in August 1948 and produced only two works during his stay on the Irish coast, one of which is *Boat, Connemara*, where he sketched his picturesque surroundings and the lonely vision of this large vessel resting upon the empty shore.
- Following the success of works from the collection in the Impressionist and Modern art sales last week, all nine Post-War & Contemporary lots from the **Hubertus Wald Collection** (lots 47-55) sold this evening realising a total of £6,464,450 (\$10,149,187 / €7,712,089). The top lots from this section were a 1959 *Achrome* by Piero Manzoni, fetching £1.7 million, and Wols' *Le feu*, which sold for £1.4 million. The profits from the sale will benefit The Hubertus Wald Charitable Foundation in Hamburg.

# # #

Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

\*Full results can be found at the following link: <http://www.christies.com/results/>