

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**MODERN MASTERS LEAD CHRISTIE'S MARCH SALE OF
*FINE AMERICAN PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURE***

**INCLUDING PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF
DR. MARK AND IRENE KAUFFMAN**



Jack Levine, *On the Block*, oil on canvas, Painted in 1986-92
Estimate: \$150,000 – 250,000

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce the spring sale of *Fine American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* on March 1, featuring an array of works with notable provenance that are fresh to the market, including the Collection of Dr. Mark and Irene Kauffman. The sale offers outstanding and rare pieces by Jack Levine, Ben Shahn, and Max Weber, as well as a wide range of artistic movements, from 19th century paintings and 20th century Abstraction to American Modernism. The sale consists of 210 lots and is expected to realize in excess of \$3.7 million.

The cornerstone of the sale is the Collection of Dr. Mark and Irene Kauffman. The Kauffmans, who reside in Longboat Key, Florida, began collecting in the 1980s with assistance from some of the most renowned gallery directors in the country, enhancing their knowledge of 20th century American Art with every purchase. Constantly seeking to grow their collection in both value and depth, the collection reflects the major movements in 20th century American art. Over the years, the Kauffmans have been committed to sharing their collection with others, and a three-stop tour of most works traveled to the Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, and to the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, in 2003 and 2004. Among the 82 lots from the collection, highlights include *On the Block* by Jack Levine, *Hamilton Fish Park* by Ben Shahn, and *Figure in Rotation* by Max Weber.

One of the most inspired observers of America's social eccentricities, **Jack Levine** (1915-2010) is renowned for his uniquely modern brand of Social Realism that he infused with satirical wit and enchantment equal to Old Masters' Honoré Daumier and William Hogarth. Levine's *On the Block* was completed over the course of six years from 1986 to 1992 (*pictured on page 1*, estimate: \$150,000-250,000). It is the largest work in a series of paintings in which the artist bitingly comments on the New York art scene. Standing six feet tall, the canvas is composed of a lively scene in an auction room. The crowd of bidders includes several recognizable figures from the art world including Leo Castelli, Larry Fleischman, Andy Warhol, Edith Halpert, and who is believed to be Christie's own Christopher Burge presiding as the auctioneer.

A watercolor and gouache on paper by **Ben Shahn** (1898-1969) entitled *Hamilton Fish Park* is also from the Collection of Dr. Mark and Irene Kauffman (*pictured right*, estimate: \$25,000-35,000). An artist of varying media, Shahn was extremely productive in Depression-era New York and he often embraced socio-political themes. *Hamilton Fish Park*, is a quintessential work by Shahn, where the composition is derived from two separate photographs taken by the artist, one from which he painted the three men sitting in the foreground and the other, the background. Compelling examples of social realist art in their own right, both original photographs will be included in the lot.





Also by **Ben Shahn** is a maquette for *Apotheosis* (pictured above, estimate: \$30,000-50,000). The mixed media study was executed in 1956, when the New York State Board of Education commissioned Shahn to create a mural for the William E. Grady Vocational School in Brooklyn. Adhering to his common motifs of religion and socio-political issues, *Apotheosis* is composed of several vignettes, which depict the fall of man after the destruction caused by war, followed by a phoenix to suggest the rebirth of man through allegories for art, philosophy, astrology and music. With the finished mural aptly placed in a school, these are all elements imperative to the foundation of education.

A painter of social subjects, **Philip Evergood** (1901-1973) was one of the leading voices among the politically engaged artists of his generation. Based primarily in New York, Evergood sought to express his social protest in his paintings, and as a result, his body of work forms one of the most compelling commentaries on the perplexity of the modern world. The Kauffman collection includes Evergood's *The Quarantined Citadel*, painted in 1945, in which the artist makes satirical attack on war (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), and *There'll be a Change in the Weather*, 1962, which depicts a schoolyard scene and the struggles of desegregation (pictured right, estimate: \$30,000-50,000).



'*Figure in Rotation*' by **Max Weber** (1881-1961) is one of the two sculptures being offered from the Kauffman collection (pictured left, estimate: \$200,000-300,000). As one of the first American cubists, Weber embraced primitive and African art and has incorporated it clearly in this piece, with the figure's exaggerated pose and disproportionate facial features. Modeled in 1915, after the groundbreaking Armory Show of 1913, '*Figure in Rotation*' helped establish Weber as a frontrunner of the avant-garde movement.



Among the modernist works from other collections in the sale is *Untitled* by **Katherine Sophie Dreier** (1877-1952), a Brooklyn-born artist, who was also a writer and collector (*pictured left*, estimate: \$6,000-8,000). Dreier was a follower of the Dadaist movement and, in 1920 she co-founded the Société Anonyme, Inc. with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, to promote the American public's understanding of Modern Art. Other works among the modern grouping are *Untitled (Cityscape)* by **Francis Criss** (1901-1973) (estimate: \$10,000-15,000), and a cubist work dated 1939, *Untitled*, by **Charles Green Shaw** (1892-1974) (estimate: \$7,000-10,000).

A selection of remarkable illustrations are also offered in the sale including, *'It Was Such a Warm Little House, There,' Said She, Huskily* by **Newell Convers Wyeth** (1882-1945) (*pictured left*, estimate: \$70,000-100,000). Originally featured in a 1905 *Harper's Magazine* piece entitled, "Back to Indiana," the oil on canvas depicts a man and woman seated beside one another in front of a covered wagon and gazing at a camp fire. The painting has been consigned by The Farnsworth Art Museum to benefit The Andrew Wyeth Endowment Fund.



William Trost Richards' (1833-1905) *On the Inlet, Atlantic City, New Jersey* will also be presented in the sale (*pictured below*, estimate: \$10,000-15,000). Richards was an American



landscape painter from Pennsylvania, who turned to the Hudson River School after the style was no longer at the height of its popularity. *On the Inlet, Atlantic City, New Jersey* depicts the artist's adaptation of the genre to include meticulous details of the scene, creating a more realist landscape, rather than the idealized view embraced by the majority of Hudson River School painters.

A grouping of Western Art is also offered and highlights include **Eanger Irving Couse's** (1866-1936) *Indian, A Taos Hunter* (estimate: \$30,000-50,000), and **Gerald Harvey's** (b. 1933) *Country Store* (estimate: \$8,000-12,000).

Auction: *Fine American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture Including the Collection of Dr. Mark and Irene Kauffman*
1 March 2012 at 10am
Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York

Viewing: Saturday, 25 February – 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Sunday, 26 February – 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Monday, 27 February – 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Tuesday, 28 February – 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Wednesday, 29 February – 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

About Christie's

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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