

CHRISTIE'S

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JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF ALEXIS ADLER

1-28 March 2014

Exhibition at Rockefeller Center
20th Floor on 1230 Avenue of the Americas

Including

- ** Works to be sold in the First Open sale, on March 6th ****
- ** Works to be sold in a dedicated online-sale, March 3rd – 17th ****
- ** A selection of works on loan from the Collection of Alexis Adler ****



©Alexis Adler

New York - Before Jean-Michel became Basquiat, and could afford studios and canvases, he painted all over his apartments — on walls, doors, refrigerators, clothes and any other bare surface he could find. In 1979, the artist began transforming the East Village apartment he was sharing with Alexis Adler, just such a living installation. Christie's is honored today to announce a blockbuster month-long curated exhibition featuring a grouping of approximately 50 works coming from the Lower East Side apartment, where she lived with Jean-Michel Basquiat from 1979 to 1980. The three major works, a glyph-like work on plaster that reads *Olive Oyl*, a door titled within as *Famous Negro Athletes* and *Milk* painted on a radiator will highlight the First-Open sale of Post-War and Contemporary on March 6th, and a selection of 41 works and items will be sold through a dedicated Online-Only sale to be held March 3-17. To be comprehensive, the exhibition will also present works and archive photographs on loan from Alexis Adler's collection.

The exceptional month long exhibition will take place on the 20th floor of 1230 Avenue of the Americas, at Rockefeller Center in March 2014. The show will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, featuring never before published images of the artist and several unique photographs of Basquiat taken by Alexis Adler.

"Jean was just a young and wonderful person that had a lot to say. Everything around us was about art at that time, everything was about creativity, and whatever he could find became art. He was only 19 and just absorbing and creating. It's been really wonderful living with these pieces for almost 35 years, and I hope that the next owners get as much joy as I did. Living with it is a responsibility. There are beautiful pieces, and they mean a lot to me because I was there, have remembrances. But I know that Jean gave them to me as a gift, and I enjoyed them as such, I have just the memories. I've always been interested in sharing and I have realize that today young people are willing to learn more about Jean and are really interested in his art. I'm really excited to be able to have the show at Christie's, as well as pass on, and share the artwork with other people so they can enjoy it. I've been enjoying it for a long time," **declared Alexis Adler.**

Jean-Michel Basquiat and Alexis Adler cohabited from 1979 to 1980, when Basquiat was nineteen, and creating punk-influenced photocopied collages and painted clothing for sale on the street. Alexis Adler's collection includes never before exhibited items including paintings, drawings and postcards as well as painted clothing kept private since the 80's when the artist and Alexis shared the Lower East Side apartment.

"It's a pleasure to be able to present to the public this wonderful grouping of material from the collection of Alexis Adler. The sum total of these works provide an intimate view of Basquiat before his fame and while he was practicing graffiti in the streets and getting by on his own wits and the good will of others who recognized his tremendous creative spark. His name was SAMO and it was written everywhere, he was infamous before becoming famous. This body of work exhibits the artist's early grasp of his ability and potential, many of the words and forms represented here carry over into his canvases which will be created just a few months later. We are indebted to Alexis Adler for having the foresight to preserve these early pieces and present them to the public now for the very first time," **stated Jonathan Laib, Christie's, Senior Specialist, Post-War & Contemporary Art.**

Adler has just graduated from college when they met. She became part of the downtown scene along with Basquiat, Michael Holman, Al Diaz and Shannon Dawson – young friends with an alternative style who became regulars at the Mudd Club and other downtown fixtures. When they first started going together neither Basquiat or Adler had a home, and they sometimes stayed together with some friends. In 1979, they both moved in an apartment on East 12th Street near Avenue B. It was his first permanent address after leaving his father's home in Brooklyn. He had a room in the back of the railroad apartment filled with papers where he made his drawings and poetic phrases. Adler had studied art history at Barnard, and majored in Biology in college; she is today a successful embryologist in New York. Basquiat was fascinated by her Biology textbooks, and copied many of the Biology and Chemistry symbols into his drawing.

The collection also includes writings and early drawings, as well as his postcards and painted clothes. In these early years, Basquiat painted on walls and objects in other apartments he stayed at, or left drawings on paper as gifts. But many of those were thrown away and painted over, and other objects sold when prices for his work first started rising.

**WORKS TO BE OFFERED IN THE FIRST OPEN OF POST WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART
6 March 2014**



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Olive Oyl
paint on wall
48 x 30 in.
Estimate: \$400,000-600,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Untitled (Famous Negro Athletes)
paint on door (Detail)
80 x 24 in.
Executed in 1980-1981
Estimate: \$800,000-1,200,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Milk
paint on radiator
24 x 16 x 6 in.
Estimate: \$300,000-500,000

"I met Jean (which is what everybody called him, I think, until he got famous—I never called him that while he was alive), toward the beginning of 1979 when he was 18. (I was at the self-dramatic Jesus's crucifixion age.) But we treasured the same information and we spoke the same language and that put us on the level. I never thought of him as a kid, but as a wise guy/wise man. He was a rebel. What are you rebelling against? What have you got? Hey, I found him by tracking down the words he wrote on walls on the street, and that was the beginning of a permanent friendship. I was always glad to see him show up. He was always up for perpetrating some fun. He would tell you something interesting, ask you a question you couldn't answer, give you a gift you didn't expect, play your records, look through your books and in the refrigerator, and leave you a drawing. Thanks!

Alexis's collection is the pure pro-bono production of an artist on fire with ideas. These are the roots and the seeds of thing to come. Already in 1979 he was developing his own vocabulary of words, characters (Popeye and Olive Oyl) and signs. Here's the crown and the wheel, the dotted line, the spilled ink. He's trying things out. With the postcards he's doing Warhol and Rauschenberg, pop art, and with the clothes he's doing Franz Kline and Pollock." **Glenn O'Brien, writer and friend of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Extract from the text written for the Christie's dedicated exhibition catalogue.**

**WORKS TO BE OFFERED ON THE ONLINE-ONLY SALE
3 - 17 March 2014**



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Untitled (Typical Cancer)
ink and collage on paper
11 x 8 1/4 in.
Executed in 1979-1980
Estimate: \$20,000-30,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Untitled (Rock Hudson)
collage and ink on paper
6 3/4 x 6 3/4 in.
Executed in 1979-1980
Estimate: \$20,000-30,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Untitled
collage and mixed media on paper
7 1/4 x 5 1/2 in.
Executed in 1979-1980
Estimate: \$8,000-12,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Mead Sketch Diary
spiral notebook with red ink inscriptions
11 x 8 1/2 in.
Executed in 1979-1980
\$80,000-120,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Untitled (Flag)
watercolor and typewriter type on paper
2 3/8 x 5 in.; 11 7/8 x 12 1/4 in. (framed)
Executed in 1979-1980
\$50,000-70,000



JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT (1960-1988)
Blue paint on sweatshirt
Executed in 1979-1980
Estimate: \$10,000-15,000

Exhibition

Rockefeller Center, 20th Floor on 1230 Avenue of the Americas
March 1 - 28, 2014
Monday to Saturday 10am - 5pm
Sunday March 2, 1pm - 5pm
Closed on Sunday March 9, 16 and 23

First open sale

March 6, 2014
Christie's 20 Rockefeller Plaza

Online-only sale

March 3 - 17, 2014
Christies.com/pwonline

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2013 that totaled £4.5 billion/ \$7.1 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 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. Private sales totaled £760.5 million (\$1.19 billion) in 2013, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

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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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