

## **RICHTER MASTERPIECE IN SOTHEBY'S LONDON SALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

THE MOST important painting by Gerhard Richter ever to have appeared at auction highlights an exceptional sale of Contemporary Art at Sotheby's in London on the evening of Wednesday, December 9, 1998.

Elena Geuna, the European Head of Sotheby's Contemporary Art department, said: "I am honoured and excited to present for sale this masterpiece by Richter unseen for almost three decades. *Domplatz, Mailand* is a monumental view of the Piazza del Duomo in Milan, one of Richter's most significant and influential works from his famous photo-paintings series and the largest he painted in the 1960s".

The masterpiece was acquired directly from Richter by the German electronics company Siemens, Italy in 1968 and it hung in their Milan offices until now. It is estimated at £800,000-1,200,000.

Richter used photographic images as a basis for his paintings and in *Domplatz, Mailand* he shows a blurred view of the busy streets of Milan, a city which has fascinated Richter for many years, to illustrate his concerns with the anonymous and the ordinary, capturing at the same time the essence of a particular moment.

In the same sale, a second important photo-painting by Richter, *Renate und Marianne*, from 1964, further illustrates the artist's concerns with the issues of perception and conception. Estimated at £550,000-750,000, the painting shows Richter's wife, Renate, in the company of one of the couple's friends, Marianne, spending a day on the beach.

A remarkable portrait by the British artist Lucian Freud, *Naked Portrait with Reflection* from 1980, exemplifies the artist's unique ability to depict and fuse together the physical with the spiritual. A reflection on the top right corner of the canvas showing the artist's legs is an interesting device which Freud uses to mark the distinction between presence and absence. Rendered in a harmonious palette of creams, browns and pinks, the painting is a wonderful example of Freud's ability to 'knead tissue' through vigorous brushstroke. The painting is estimated at £750,000-1,250,000.

Piero Manzoni's life-long experimentation with the white monochrome surface, led him to use different colourless materials. In the superb *Achrome (Panini)* from 1961/62, the best work by the artist ever appeared at auction, Manzoni used bread rolls which he then painted with kaolin to create a "white surface that is simply a white surface and nothing else". *Achrome (Panini)*, at 85 by 90cm the largest of Manzoni's famous Panini Series, is estimated at £250,000-350,000.

An outstanding example of Alberto Burri's important series of *Legni*, illustrates the importance of this artist and the impact he had on the Italian Post-war art scene. *Grande Legno Combustione* from 1958 is a magnificent example of the artist's manipulation of materials to make them become both the background and the subject of the work. It is estimated at £220,000-320,000.

The sale also includes an important group of works from the Gabriel Sabet Collection, highlights of which are: De Stael's *La Boite d'Aquarelle* from 1954, an exquisite oil from one of the most sought-after periods of the artist's work (estimate £250,000-350,000); two works by Serge Poliakoff, each titled *Composition Abstraite*, one executed in 1969 (estimate £100,000-150,000) and the other in 1967 (estimate £80,000-120,000); a very good work by Wilfredo Lam from 1944, *Oiseau-Lumiere, I (Entre les Palmiers)* (estimate £80,000-100,000); a magnificent work by Maria-Helena Vieira da Silva from 1954, *Peinture* (estimate £120,000-150,000); and paintings by Pierre Alechinsky and Yves Klein (see separate release).

By Andy Warhol is an important example of his Flower Series, *Four-foot Flowers* from 1964 (estimate £280,000-300,000), while Alexander Calder is represented by an early painted hanging mobile with two crescents from 1946 (estimate £200,000-300,000).

In addition, the sale will offer a magnificent example of Georg Baselitz's male figure paintings of the mid 1980s, *Die Musikstunde*, which is estimated at

£140,000-180,000 and Frank Stella's *Sketch Zinc Chromate* from 1964, an impressive work from a private collection which has not been seen in public for more than 30 years (estimate £100,000-150,000).

Also on offer are four important works by the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida which illustrate poetically his concerns with space, time and matter, spanning his career from 1952 to 1977. Executed in iron, steel and alabaster, this extraordinary group of sculptures has estimates ranging from £70,000 to £120,000.

Further Contemporary works of art, including exciting works by cutting-edge British artists such as Damien Hirst, Mark Francis, Richard Billingham, Julie Roberts, Brad Lachore and Ian Davenport, will be offered in Sotheby's sale of the Hiscox Collection of 20th Century British Art on Thursday, December 3rd, at 2.00pm. Highlight of this collection is Lucian Freud's remarkable portrait of his friend and fellow artist Frank Auerbach, estimated at £400,000-600,000 (see separate release).