

RARETIES OF LATIN AMERICAN ART TO BE SOLD AT SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK NOVEMBER 20, 2000

- **Tamayo Masterpiece, *Sandias* (est. \$900,000/1.2million)** —
- **Miniature Frida Kahlo self-portrait comes to the market for the first time** —
- **Exceptional Diego Rivera oils, watercolors and drawings** —
- **Earliest known oil painting of São Paulo, Brazil** —



Rufino Tamayo, *Sandias*, 1958 oil on canvas, est. \$900,000 – 1.2 million

New York, NY — Latin American art comes to the forefront this Fall, as Sotheby's New York offers exceptional discoveries from many regions of Latin America in its November 20th evening sale. With periods ranging from Colonial to Contemporary, and artists representing fourteen countries, the sale affirms the broad scope of the current Latin American art market. Included in this season's offerings are remarkable pieces by recognized masters like Rufino Tamayo, Diego Rivera, and Frida Kahlo, along with a unique group of Brazilian works commemorating the country's 500th anniversary.

Sotheby's marks an important milestone with the return to auction of Rufino Tamayo's vibrant masterpiece, *Sandias*, (est. \$900,000/1.2 million) painted in 1958. The painting was last seen at auction in 1978, when it was the cover lot for the first auction dedicated to Mexican paintings. A large canvas painted in lush shades of red, pink, orange and ochre, the painting resonates with vivid color and strong brushwork. Watermelons were a familiar subject of Tamayo's, and this piece is a quintessential example of his masterful painting style. This painting's reappearance in the market comes at a time of increased interest in Latin American art and underscores the dynamic growth that has fueled collecting activity in recent years.



Another auction first by record-setting artist Frida Kahlo distinguishes this sale. Not only is *Autoretrato en Miniatura* (est. \$150/200,000) the smallest painting Kahlo ever made, this is the first time that it is to be seen in public, having been in the same family for over five decades. Following the resounding success of the previous Frida Kahlo self-portrait — sold at Sotheby's New York May, 31 2000, which set the record for the highest price ever paid for a work of art done by a woman and also the highest price paid for a work of Latin American art — this gem of a painting is sure to capture collector attention. Although small in scale, measuring two inches high, it contains the essence of the artist's strength, beauty, and indomitable spirit. Kahlo gave her diminutive cameo self portrait, painted around 1946, to the artist José Bartoli, with whom she was romantically involved for several years when Bartoli came to live in Mexico City. After receiving the love token from Kahlo, Bartoli kept the small treasure in his possession for the rest of his life. The dedication *Para Bartoli con amor, Mara*, is on the reverse of its small oval panel. Kahlo styled the portrait on her painting, *Arbol de la Esperanza*, in which she appears in Tehuana costume, her hair braided and crowned by a red ribbon or flowers. Her gaze is direct, her features youthful and serene, and her amorous inclination is clearly revealed in this intimate and precious memento.

This sale also features exceptional works by another Mexican master, Diego Rivera, who was married to Frida Kahlo. The offerings in this sale come from a variety of U.S. collections, leaving them open to international buyers. Among the Rivera offerings are two magnificent and moving portraits of children, *Modesta*, 1939 (est. \$500/700,000) and *José Guadalupe de Castro Sosa*, 1936 (est. \$500/700,000). According to Professor Luis-Martín Lozano, Rivera often chose children as the subjects for his paintings because they represented Mexico's future and had the most to gain from the improved social climate that the Revolution promised. Rivera's portraits of children often convey a sense of dignity and wisdom beyond their youth, which can be seen in both of these sensitive depictions of children from Mexico's working classes.

Rivera's early Cubist period produced the still life *Naturaleza Muerta*, signed and dated Paris 1916 (est. \$300/400,000). During his time in Paris Rivera was strongly influenced by Cubist spatial arrangements and compositional innovations, which greatly expanded his formal artistic development. This Cubist still life, in all of its multi-dimensional dynamism, shows Rivera reaching into deep conceptual innovations to expand upon a classic painting theme. The Rivera offerings are enhanced by a fine selection of watercolors and drawings, where his consummate skills as a draftsman and colorist are evident.

Brazil celebrates its 500-year national history this year, and Sotheby's celebrates with the sale of a spectacular find made recently in Rio de Janeiro — a rare panoramic painting of São Paulo, Brazil, done by the French court painter Arnaud-Julien Palliere c.1821. Carrying an estimate of \$600/800,000, the oil painting is "by far the most important early image of the city, and its rediscovery is a major event for Brazilian art and scholarship," according to Sotheby's representative in São Paulo, Pedro Corrêa do Lago. Until its discovery last year, it was thought that no oil painting of South America's largest city had been done prior to the 1880s. The oil painting had remained in the collection of a family in Rio de Janeiro for four generations, without anyone realizing the treasure they had hanging on their wall. The expansive painting shows São Paulo as it was in 120 years ago, when the population was only 20,000 people — a mere thousandth of its current population of 20 million.

Rounding out the offerings from Brazil are a pair of baroque carved wood torches, estimated at \$60,000 – 80,000, a painting by famed modernist Lasar Segall (est. \$90/120,000), Cicero Dias' 1923 Surrealist watercolor *Aurora Mulher*, Emiliano di Cavalcanti's *Duas Mulheres* (est. \$70/90,000), an early topographical landscape by Friedrich Hagerdorn c. 1882 (est. \$20/25,000) and a painting by contemporary artist Adriana Varejão (est. \$28/32,000). The entire collection will be exhibited prior to the sale at Sotheby's New York galleries from November 16 – 19, 2000.

Highlights from the upcoming auction will be on exhibit at Sotheby's locations in Miami October 24th and 25th, and in Los Angeles October 30-November 2, with a lecture on November 1st, 2000.

For more information, please call the press office at (212) 606-7176