

# CHRISTIE'S

Press release | Milan  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 22 March 2016

## GLOBAL DEMAND FOR ITALIAN ART: MILAN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY



ALIGHIERO BOETTI (1940-1994)

*Mappa*

Executed in 1983

€800,000-1,200,000

**Milan** – Christie's will present the annual sale of *Milan Modern and Contemporary* on 5 & 6 April 2016 at Palazzo Clerici, Milan. Following the strong results of last year's auction, which was 100% sold in the evening section, realising over €20 million – a record for this category in Italy – and saw bidders from over 20 countries, this year continues to meet the ever-growing appetite for Italian art. The auction will offer a wide array of the great Post-War figures including Lucio Fontana, Alberto Burri, Enrico Castellani and Piero Manzoni; favourites from the Arte Povera canon – Alighiero Boetti, Pier Paolo Calzolari and Giulio Paolini; Pop art pioneers Mimmo Rotella and Tano Festa; as well as Modern classics by Gino Severini and Giacomo Balla. Highlights include an intricate and colourful embroidery, which forms part of Alighiero Boetti's most famous 'Mappe' (Maps) series of artworks (1983, estimate: €800,000-1,200,000, *illustrated above*).



**Renato Pennisi, Director and Senior Specialist, Head of Sale, Christie's Italy:** "We are pleased to present a rich array of works, which show the great variety of twentieth century Italian art movements. We are offering masterpieces ranging from early Futurism, Arte Povera icons through to the Masters of the Second World War - Fontana, Burri and Manzoni - and sections devoted to Pop art and Optical art."

### **FUTURISMO: THE FIRST AVANT-GARDE**

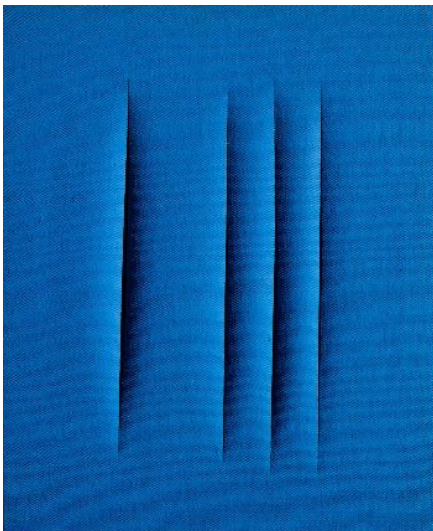
Headlining the auction are a pair of works that epitomise the revolutionary nature of the Futurist movement; Gino Severini's *Tango Argentino* (executed in 1913, estimate: €400,000-700,000, pictured above) and Giacomo



Balla's *Complesso colorato di frastuono + velocità* (c.1914, estimate: €400,000-600,000, pictured right) are presented alongside works by Roberto Marcello Iras Baldessari and Gerardo Dottori. Coming to auction for the first time, and originating from a private collection, Severini's *Tango Argentino* dates from when he was at the height of his artistic powers and captures the intricate, dynamic movements of the modern dancer, caught up in the rhythm of the latest fashionable dance.

Another debut auction appearance, Balla's *Complesso colorato di frastuono + velocità* was completed at the same time as when he was a leading proponents of the famous Futurist manifesto, glorifying the speed, noise and light of the modern world. Composed of a complex abstract web of interlocking planes of colour the work exudes a pulsating dynamism, heightened by radiant shades of red, orange and blue.

### **POST-WAR ITALIAN HEROES**



Discerning collectors and enthusiasts of Fontana's work will be offered a breadth of works by the artist, including *Crocifisso* (estimate: €300,000-500,000 illustrated below), a powerful and dynamic glazed ceramic sculpture that was executed in 1949 and combines an expressive figuration with the concepts of nascent Spatialism. Other examples of this series of works are now held in a number of museums across the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York and Museum Ludwig, Cologne. Additional works by Fontana that feature in the sale include *Concetto spaziale, Attese* (1966, estimate: €600,000-900,000, pictured left), a cerulean sea of paint sliced through four times and an example of his most famous series of cut paintings.

More Post-War Italian heroes represented in the sale include Enrico Castellani, whose *Senza titolo (superficie bianca)* (1959-60, estimate: €250,000-350,000) is from the





Collection of Jules and Marie Wabbest and is a clean, unbroken surface of cool tactility; and Paolo Scheggi, who features in the sale with *Zone riflesse* (1962, estimate: €250,000-350,000) and *Intersuperficie curva* (1969, estimate: €300,000-500,000), pioneering examples of his monochrome layered works that made paintings as objects. Piero Manzoni's *Achrome* (1962-63; estimate: €250,000-350,000) is another leading work in the auction and is one of Manzoni's celebrated series of works that employed Polystyrene and kaolin.

### **ALBERTO BURRI'S COMBUSTIONE PLASTICHE**

Another section of the sale will be dedicated to the founding moments of Alberto Burri's career. One of the first European avant-garde artists to consistently use fire in his art, Burri, like many of his European counterparts, realised that pictorial mimesis and illusionism was futile and that a new mode of picture making needed to be found.



Burri's *Combustione* (1964, *illustrated left*, estimate: €400,000-600,000) comes to the market for the first time, having remained in the same collection to the present day. Another example of Burri's pioneering practice, *Rosso Plastica* (1961 estimate: €180,000-250,000, *illustrated below left*) is a glowing red cellotex plane adorned with dramatically scorched and cindered pieces of burnt plastic. An early example of his series of *Combustioni plastiche* or plastic combustions that he began around 1960 this work dates from a period of experimentation in Burri's career that realised the creativity of destruction.



### **FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

The auction will also include firm favourites from the Arte Povera canon, such as Boetti's *Mappa*, pictured top, alongside Pier Paolo Calzolari and Giulio Paolini. Calzolari's *Senza titolo* (1974, estimate: €100,000-150,000 *pictured below*), employs a haunting cascade of alchemical materials lit with glowing burners that sit behind sheets of lead, tin and iron, evoking the candlelight chiaroscuro of baroque painting.

The depth and breadth of the material on offer this April is demonstrated by further highlights of the sale including Pop practitioners Mimmo Rotella and Tano Festa, who is represented in the sale by *Via Veneto*

2 (1961, estimate: €60,000 – 90,000). Festa first came to the fore through Galleria La Salita owned by Gian Tomaso Liverani (from where this work originates), at that time one of the most prestigious exhibition spaces in Rome for contemporary art. Another major draw will be the selection of Optical Art, featuring works by artists including Franco Grignani, Alberto Biasi, Mario Ballocco and Dadamaino who were all central to the development of the Optical Art movement in Milan and broke the boundaries of art, science and design to discover new optical possibilities and visual thrills during a revolutionary time for Italian art.



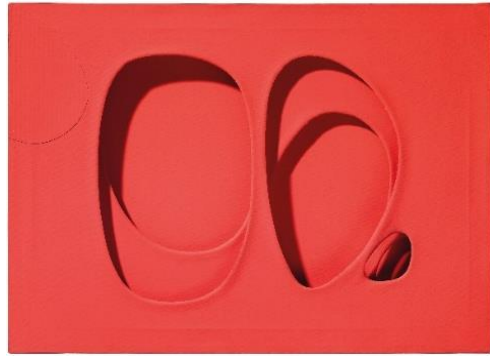
## CHRISTIE'S MILAN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY

Palazzo Clerici, Milan  
5 & 6 April 2016

PAOLO SCHEGGI (1940-1971)  
*Intersuperficie curva*  
Acrylic on canvas  
80 x 60cm  
Executed: 1969  
Estimate: €300,000-500,000



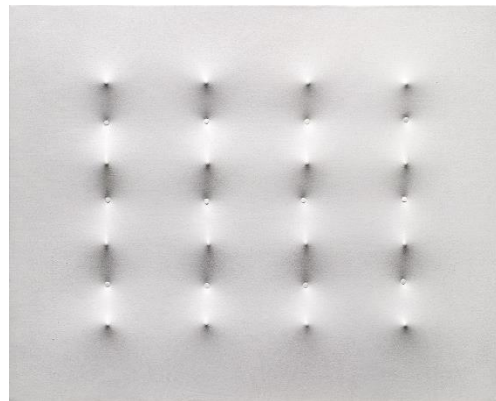
PAOLO SCHEGGI (1940-1971)  
*Zone riflesse*  
 Acrylic on canvas  
 50 x 70cm  
 Executed: 1962  
 Estimate: €250,000-350,000



PIERO MANZONI (1933-1963)  
*Achrome*  
 Styrofoam and clay on canvas  
 50 x 50 cm  
 Executed: 1962-63  
 Estimate: €250,000-350,000




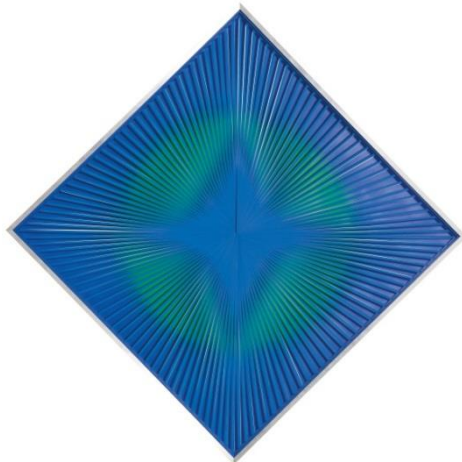
ENRICO CASTELLANI (1930)  
*Senza titolo (superficie bianca)*  
 Acrylic on Canvas  
 40 x 50cm  
 Executed 1959-60  
 Estimate: €250,000-350,000



MIMMO ROTELLA (1918-2006)  
*Topolino*  
 Collage  
 88 x 128cm  
 Executed in 1959  
 Estimate: €150,000-200,000





<p>TANO FESTA (1938-1988)</p> <p><i>Via Veneto 2</i></p> <p>Wood, paper and tempera on canvas</p> <p>149.7 x 179.7 cm</p> <p>Executed: 1961</p> <p>Estimate: €60,000-90,000</p>	
<p>ALBERTO BIASI (B. 1937)</p> <p><i>Ottico dinamico</i></p> <p>Embossed PVC</p> <p>144 x 144 x 102.5 cm</p> <p>Executed in 1967</p> <p>Estimate: €40,000-60,000</p>	

**Palazzo Clerici, Milan**

Tuesday 5 April 2016 - 19.00 lotti 1-49  
Wednesday 6 April 2016 - 15.00 lotti 50-89

**Previews:**

**TORINO**

Palazzo Birago, via Carlo Alberto  
16  
Mercoledì 16 marzo 2016,  
10.00-18.00  
(Selezione di Opere)

**ROMA**

Musei di San Salvatore in Lauro,  
nel Complesso Monumentale del Pio  
Sodalizio dei Piceni  
Piazza San Salvatore in Lauro 15  
Giovedì 24 e venerdì 25 marzo 2016,  
10.00-19.00  
(Selezione di Opere)

**MILANO**

Palazzo Clerici, Via Clerici 5  
Da venerdì 1 a lunedì 4 aprile 2016,  
10.00-19.00

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Leader mondiale del mercato dell'arte, nel 2014 Christie's ha raggiunto un risultato complessivo di 5.1 miliardi di sterline (8.4 miliardi di dollari) con le aste internazionali e le vendite private. Il nome e le sedi di Christie's sono indice di straordinarie opere d'arte, servizio senza uguali, grande esperienza e prestigio internazionale. Fondata nel 1766 da James Christie, nel corso dei secoli Christie's ha curato le aste più famose ed è oggi considerata la vetrina ideale per quanto esiste al mondo di esclusivo e bello. Christie's offre ogni anno più di 450 aste che spaziano in oltre 80 categorie, dalle belle arti e le arti decorative, a gioielleria, fotografia, oggetti da collezione, vini e molto altro. I prezzi partono da un minimo di 200 dollari e arrivano a superare i 100 milioni di dollari. Christie's ha inoltre una lunga tradizione nell'ambito delle vendite private condotte per conto dei suoi clienti in tutte le categorie e, in particolare, per le opere d'arte antica, impressionista e moderna, del dopoguerra e contemporanea, e per i gioielli. Nel 2014 le vendite private hanno realizzato un totale di 916.1 milioni di Sterline (1.5 miliardi di dollari), con un incremento del 20% rispetto all'anno precedente.

Christie's ha una presenza globale con 54 uffici in 32 Paesi e 12 sale d'asta in diverse parti del mondo comprese le città di Londra, New York, Parigi, Ginevra, Milano, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zurigo, Hong Kong, Shanghai e Mumbai. Recentemente, Christie's ha guidato il mercato dell'arte attuando importanti iniziative di espansione verso mercati emergenti quali Russia, Cina, India ed Emirati Arabi Uniti, con vendite ed esposizioni di successo a Pechino, Mumbai e Dubai.