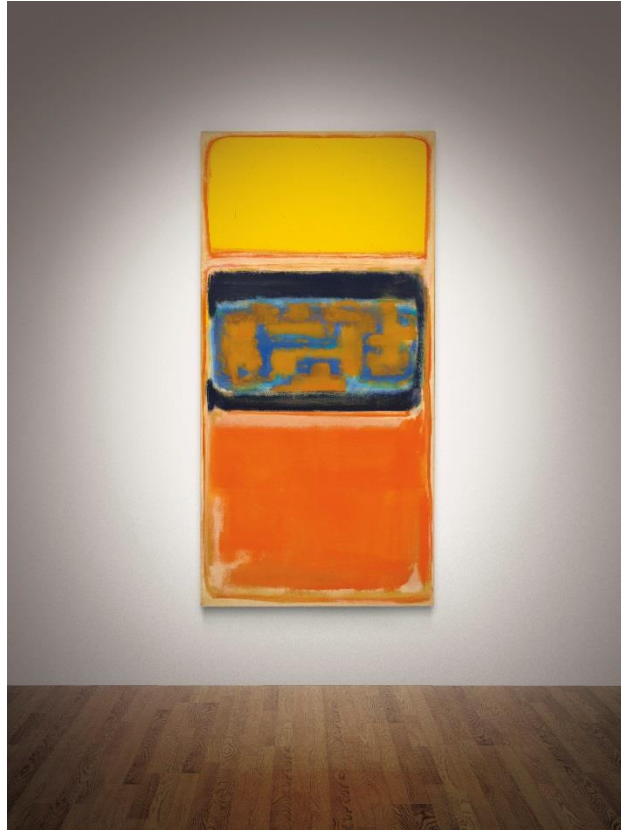


CHRISTIE'S

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ROTHKO AND RAUSCHENBERG: GIANTS OF AMERICAN ART IN LONDON

GLOBAL TOUR: HONG KONG – SHANGHAI – BEIJING – NEW YORK



MARK ROTHKO (1903-1970)

No. 1

Oil on canvas, 78.3 x 39.7 in. (198.8 x 100.8 cm.)

Painted in 1949

London – Two giants of Post-War American painting will be united in Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction on 7 March 2017 in London. Mark Rothko's groundbreaking *No. 1* (1949, estimate on request), is one of the artist's earliest examples of his mature artistic vocabulary, dating from the pioneering year of his practice and was first shown in 1950 as part of his historic solo exhibition at New York's Betty Parsons Gallery. Robert Rauschenberg's *Transom* (1963, estimate on request) comes to auction alongside a major retrospective of his work at London's Tate Modern, and demonstrates the radical new visual language that went on to lead a generation of American artists towards global domination. Together these two masters of 20th-Century painting will lead the field of American talent that will take centre stage during *20th Century at Christie's*, a series of sales that takes place from 28 February to 10 March 2017. Ahead of the auction the works will tour and be exhibited in Hong Kong (17-20 January), Shanghai (8 February), Beijing (11-13 February) and New York (24-26 February).



ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG (1925–2008)

Transom

Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, 56 x 50 in. (142 x 127 cm.)

Painted in 1963

Francis Outred, Chairman and Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art at Christies: “America is a profound force on the global stage and has been unstoppable in defining the contemporary culture of the last century. It is a privilege to present two seminal works that date from the beginning of this cultural dominance. Mark Rothko’s *No. 1* dates from 1949 and was one of his first works to incorporate the planes of colour as mood that defined his career. Robert Rauschenberg’s *Transom* is one of the breakthrough series of Silkscreen Paintings with which he not only sparred with Warhol but also became the very first American artist to win the Golden Lion at the 1964 Venice Biennale. Following the much-celebrated *Abstract Expressionism* exhibition at London’s Royal Academy and the major *Robert Rauschenberg* retrospective at Tate Modern we very much look forward to drawing a global audience to London in March.”

Having never been previously offered at auction, Rothko’s *No. 1* is one of the few works from the 1950 Betty Parsons Gallery show that remain in private hands and heralds the incandescent union of light and colour for which his work would come to be much celebrated. Of the suite of 12 paintings, nine are now held in major American museums including: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (*No. 2*), The Museum of Modern Art, New York (*No. 3*), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (*No. 4*), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (*No. 6*), National Gallery of Art, Washington (*No. 7*, *No. 8*), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (*No. 9*), and Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, New York (*No. 12*). The importance of *No. 1* to Rothko’s practice is underlined by the fact that he guarded the work and kept it in his possession until his untimely death. A glowing vision of rich orange and lemon-bright yellow, punctuated at its core by a dramatic zone of ochre strokes upon a bar of vaporous blue and teal, *No. 1* paved the way for the transformative painting as mood for which he is critically acclaimed.

Robert Rauschenberg honed the visual language of his series of Silkscreen Paintings between 1962 and 1964, which went on to earn him the Grand Prize for painting at the 1964 Venice Biennale. A central focus of the current Tate Modern retrospective is a room dedicated to the Silkscreen Paintings, reflecting their centrality to his oeuvre and the profound contemporary relevance for artists working today. Amongst the

first artists to use silkscreens in his practice, Rauschenberg commenced this series around the same time his friend Andy Warhol also started to employ the process. *Transom* demonstrates Rauschenberg's unmatched skill for the technique: against a white ground, repeated rooftop water towers are silkscreened in black and blue, framing the composition right and left as if each edge is a horizon. *Transom* sees images of war, urbanisation and consumer culture jostle for attention with a paragon of art history: Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus*. The iconic nude appears three times in the work - in a blaze of red and yellow in the centre of the canvas; in a slice of blue stretched along the upper edge; and at the lower edge her free-floating face peers out from her mirror below a red truck wheel. This vivid tableaux demonstrates Rauschenberg's talent at its height, marking the dramatic shift of focus towards America as the dominant force in contemporary culture.

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Public Exhibition:

Hong Kong (17-20 January)
Shanghai (8 February)
Beijing (11-13 February)
New York (24-26 February)
London (3-7 March)

Auction:

*Post War and Contemporary Art Evening
Auction*
7 March 2017
7pm

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2016 that totalled £2.1 billion / \$3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Christie's offers around 350 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 Art, Impressionist & Modern Art, Old Masters Paintings and Jewellery.

Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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