

**For Immediate Release**

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**A PROFOUNDLY PERSONAL PORTRAIT BY  
FRANCIS BACON TO HIGHLIGHT CHRISTIE'S OCTOBER AUCTION  
OF POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART**



***Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale***

**Exhibition:** 15 to 19 October 2008 at Christie's, 85 Old Brompton Road

**Auction:** 19 October 2008 at 4pm, Christie's, 8 King Street, London

**London:** Christie's will offer Francis Bacon's *Portrait of Henrietta Moraes* at the *Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale* on 19 October 2008 in London. An intimate painting which offers a fascinating insight into the characters who shaped the thriving bohemian scene of Soho in the 1960s, the work is expected to realise £5,500,000 to £7,500,000. The painting was acquired by the Hon. Garech Browne in 1970; he was a close, personal friend of Francis Bacon, as well as many of the other leading figures of the time including Lucian Freud, the poet Dom Moraes and the sitter, Henrietta Moraes. Garech Browne's romantic home in the Wicklow mountains, Luggala, has been a creative centre of Irish culture for the last 50 years, and was described recently by U2's Bono as 'our epicentre' and 'our inspiration.'

**Pilar Ordovas, Head of Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's London:** 'This portrait of *Henrietta Moraes* is a wonderful painting which offers a fascinating insight into life and the characters of 1960s Soho. The painting was bought by Garech Browne in 1970, shortly after it was painted, and has remained in his care since. Garech Browne's influence on British and Irish culture in the last 50 years, combined with both the artist and the sitter of this work being close friends of his, makes it a wonderfully appealing painting which is sure to attract the interest of international collectors and institutions.'

**The Hon. Garech Browne:** *'I remember well my years in Soho even sometimes with my younger brother Tara, who inspired the Beatles song 'A Day in the Life'. We often went to the Gaston Berlemont's French pub officially called the York Minster and had lunch with Francis, my first cousin Caroline Blackwood (then Caroline Freud) and Lucian in Wheelers restaurant with my mother. We would then proceed to the Colony Club where the proprietress Muriel Belcher, one of the three known women Bacon ever painted, told me I was the only "member" ever allowed in under the age of 12. Later, Lucian would take me to the Gargoyle Club where Johnny Minton, Francis Bacon and Stephen Spender were often to be found. I would not be allowed in by the bouncers so Lucian would put me under his long overcoat and I walked on his feet to gain entry. It was only the doorman and not the proprietors who felt that I should not be allowed in to meet such "disreputable people" at such a young age. Many of the inmates were to be painted by both Francis and Lucian.'*

Henrietta Moraes was an integral character in Soho in the 1950s and 1960s, and she played a major part in making the scene so legendary. She was a great friend and drinking partner of artists, writers, musicians and poets, and she befriended Francis Bacon in the early 1950s before he had found fame. In the 1960s, Bacon turned to painting portraits of the people around him. He would ask John Deakin to take photographs of his proposed subjects, and then paint from the photographs themselves, ensuring that the presence of the sitter could not merge their appearance with the character and emotions which the artist wished to portray in them. The present work was painted in 1969; it is a profoundly personal portrait of one of the artist's greatest friends, and a searing, universal exploration of the human condition, and of the battle that is life itself.

The portrait was acquired by the Hon. Garech Browne in 1970 in London, and inscribed by the sitter on the reverse of the canvas. The inscription reads: *'For the first time A vision of me by my friend Francis Bacon with Gareth [sic] at Luggala 30-6-76 & 7 I love y 2 good heavens Henrietta Moraes'*. It has been exhibited at the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin in conjunction with the opening of the Bacon studio in its new permanent home; The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh; and the Kunsthalle in Hamburg. It will be on public view in London for the first time from 15 to 19 October at Christie's South Kensington.

Garech Browne was born into the Guinness dynasty, his mother being Oonagh Guinness, the youngest of the three 'Golden Guinness Girls'. In 1937, Ernest Guinness gave his daughter Oonagh the Luggala Estate as a wedding present and it fast became the gathering place for the Irish intelligentsia, as well as for artists and musicians from around the world. Garech Browne was first introduced to Lucian Freud at the age of 12 and he soon built friendships with many of the artists, musicians and poets of both London and Ireland, as Luggala continued to thrive as a creative centre for Irish culture. Garech Browne founded Claddagh Records and oversaw the founding of Irish group The Chieftains. He recorded traditional Irish music, as well as the works of Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Robert Graves. Lucian Freud has painted his portraits, John Boorman chose Luggala as the setting for the film *Excalibur* and the house has hosted a diverse range of artistic guests including Mick Jagger, John Hurt, Patrick Kavanagh and Lucian Freud. In an article in *Vogue* in 2005, U2's Bono stated that Luggala had *'become our epicentre'* and was *'our inspiration'*.



Christie's will present a series of exhibitions and auctions dedicated to Post-War and Contemporary art and 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian art from 15 to 21 October 2008, during a week when the international art world will gather in London for a showcase of contemporary art exhibitions and events including *The Frieze Art Fair*. A leading highlight is one of only two oil portraits of Francis Bacon (1909-1992) ever painted by Lucian Freud (b. 1922). The last known remaining oil portrait (the other was stolen from an exhibition in Berlin in 1988), the rarely-seen painting offers a tangible and intimate glimpse into the inspirational friendship of two of the greatest British artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will be exhibited to the public for the first time in London from 15 to 19 October at Christie's, 85 Old Brompton Road, and is expected to realise £5 million to £7 million.

The auctions will take place at the newly refurbished salerooms at Christie's, 8 King Street, St James's, and are scheduled as follows:

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Sunday 19 October at 4pm           | <i>Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale</i> |
| Monday 20 October at 7pm           | <i>The Italian Sale</i>                           |
| Tuesday 21 October at 10am and 2pm | <i>Post-War and Contemporary Art</i>              |

The public exhibitions for the sales will take place as follows:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Post-War and Contemporary Art:</i> | 15 to 19 October 2008 at Christie's, 85 Old Brompton Road |
| <i>The Italian Sale:</i>              | 15 to 20 October 2008 at Christie's, 8 King Street        |

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*Images available on request*  
*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

- For more details on Lugalla, please visit: <http://www.luggala.net/>

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global art sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. For the first half of 2008, art sales totaled £1.8 billion / \$3.5 billion. 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 conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales 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 \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai, Hong Kong and Zurich. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new 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