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Alberto Giacometti's *Le Chat* to Appear at Auction For the First Time in More than Thirty Years



Sculpture will be Included in Sotheby's Evening Sale
Of Impressionist & Modern Art on May 5, 2009 in New York

On the evening of May 5, 2009, Alberto Giacometti's *Le Chat* from 1951 will appear at auction for the first time in 34 years. This iconic bronze has been in a private European collection since the 1960s and will be one of the highlights of Sotheby's spring sale of Impressionist and Modern Art in New York. Prior to its exhibition and sale in New York, the rare composition will be exhibited in Moscow and London*. It is estimated to sell for \$16/22 million**.

Le Chat captures the form, character and movement of the feline. It is closely related to the artist's lean, wiry figures that reached their ultimate form in the years following the Second World War. His figures, both human and animal, were reduced to their essential form, displaying an austerity that embodies the artist's existentialist concerns. In 1951 Giacometti also executed a sculpture of a dog, *Le Chien*. Referring to the work, Giacometti told his friend, the writer Jean Genet: 'The dog is myself. One day I saw it like that in the street. I was that dog.' Similarly, the image of the cat can be interpreted as a symbolic representation

of the artist himself and, in a wider context of the post-war period, as a reflection of the lonely and vulnerable human condition, a theme that very much preoccupied the artist at this time.

The appearance of *Le Chat* on the market follows a number of outstanding prices recently achieved for sculpture at auction, most notably Edgar Degas' *Petite danseuse de quatorze ans* which sold for \$18.8 million at Sotheby's London in February, and Pablo Picasso's *La Grue* which brought \$19.1 million at Sotheby's New York last May.

In 1951, the year Giacometti executed *Le Chat*, the artist had his first solo exhibition at Galerie Maeght, Paris. The show, which included the plaster cast of *Le Chat*, was a tremendous success and helped propel Giacometti to his status as one of the foremost avant-garde artists working in Paris.

The last time a cast of *Le Chat* appeared at auction was on May 21, 1975 at Sotheby's New York where it sold for \$130,000. Other casts of *Le Chat* are in major public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Fondation Marguerite et Aimé Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the Berggruen Museum in Berlin and the Alberto Giacometti Foundation in Zurich.



*Exhibition schedule

Moscow	April 1-2, 2009
London	April 22-25 2009
New York	May 1-5, 2009

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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