

New York | +1 212 606 7176 | Lauren Gioia | Lauren.Gioia@Sothebys.com | Darrell Rocha | Darrell.Rocha@Sothebys.com
London | +44 (0)20 7293 6000 | Matthew Weigman | Matthew.Weigman@Sothebys.com | Mitzi Mina | Mitzi.Mina@Sothebys.com

MODIGLIANI: THE TRIUMPH OF THE NUDE

La Belle Romaine to lead Sotheby's November 2010
Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale



4 October 2010 – Amedeo Modigliani's *Nu assis sur un divan (La Belle Romaine)*, the finest painting by the artist to appear at auction in recent years, will lead Sotheby's 2 November 2010 Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale in New York (est. in excess of \$40 million**). *La Belle Romaine* ranks among the definitive nudes in the history of Western art, continuing in the tradition of Botticelli's *Venus*, Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus*, Ingres' *Baigneuse turque* and Manet's *Olympia*. The work will be on view in Sotheby's Hong Kong and London galleries before returning to New York for exhibition and sale*.

Simon Shaw, Head of Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art Department in New York, said, "**La Belle Romaine** is a true icon. Alongside other nudes in the series, she represents Modigliani's greatest achievement in painting. The work and artist both have a distinguished history at Sotheby's. **La Belle Romaine** last appeared on the market in 1999, when it sold at Sotheby's New York for \$16.8 million, a world record price for any work by Modigliani at the time. In addition, Sotheby's set the current record for a painting by Modigliani in 2004 with our sale of *Jeanne Hébuterne (devant une porte)* for \$31.4 million."

La Belle Romaine is from Modigliani's most important series of nudes, all painted circa 1917. Seven of the works caused a sensation upon their début in Paris that year at the Galerie Berthe Weill, attracting a crowd as well as the local police, who temporarily shut down the exhibition. The depiction of contemporary women, removed from any allegorical or historical narrative and exuding a confident sensuality, was a new and shocking experience.

The erotic allure of **La Belle Romaine** is reflected in both Modigliani's palette and his model's pose. The amber and rose tones evoke the radiant warmth of the figure and the intimate atmosphere in which the artist depicts her. Seated on a cushioned surface and draped in a sheet, the model entices the viewer with her coy attempt to shield her nudity. The tilt of her head, piled with lustrous black hair, the strained exposure of her neck and the arch of her brow, all communicate an unmistakable seduction.

Modigliani began painting nudes in 1908, but it was only after he abandoned sculpture in 1914 that he developed the signature style epitomized by **La Belle Romaine**. The influences of the Italian Renaissance, Cubism and African art are all apparent in this work: the provocative pose of the model recalls the curvaceous anatomy of Titian's *Venus of Urbino*; the linear simplicity and three-dimensional appeal demonstrate the influence of African tribal carvings as well as the artist's own experience with sculpture; the composition recalls Picasso's monumental female nudes from his Rose period.



* Exhibition Schedule

Hong Kong 4-6 October 2010

London 11-15 October 2010

New York 29 October – 2 November 2010

**Estimate does not include buyer's premium

#

#

#