

For Immediate Release
26 September 2011

CHRISTIE'S

Contact: Cristiano De Lorenzo tel.+44 7500 815 344 cdelorenzo@christies.com

RICHTER

ILLUMINATES

CHRISTIE'S

POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING AUCTION

Christie's London, 8 King Street
14 October 2011



London - Coinciding with Gerhard Richter's Retrospective at Tate Modern (October 2011 to January 2012), Christie's is pleased to offer five definitive works by the artist in the Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Auction on 14 October. The group is led by the artist's seminal *Kerze (Candle)* painted in 1982, which has not been seen publicly since 1986 and is estimated to realise £6,000,000-9,000,000 / US\$9,100,000-14,000,000 / €6,800,000-10,000,000 (illustrated above right.) It also includes four exceptional abstract paintings by the artist including *Abstraktes Bild* (1992), *Grat (5)* (1989), *Abstraktes Bild* (1988) and *Sumpf (Marsh)* (1983) charting his investigations of the medium over a decade.

Francis Outred, Christie's Head of Post-War & Contemporary Art, Europe: "The mesmerising beauty of this candle captured in infinity marks it out as one of the finest examples of this legendary series. Thirty years after it was made, like all great art, it continues to reflect its times and change its meaning to successive generations. Richter left Dresden just before the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 and this painting was executed six years before the Wall came down in 1989 somehow coming to represent the silent protest against the regime".

Created in 1982, *Kerze (Candle)* is an icon of Gerhard Richter's painterly practice and one of the finest examples from the artist's series of candle paintings realized between 1982 and 1983. In *Kerze*, Richter has created a serene and transcendental image, the slim candlestick burning like a beacon in the dusky twilight. The rendition of technique here is intensely captivating through the countless tonal adjustments that constantly manipulate the spectator's focus. This awesome methodological mastery of pigment suspension and the subtlest chromatic variation is truly sublime.

Other works from the series can be found in major international art collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, Collection Rhône-Alpes, Lyon's Institut d'Art Contemporain, Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden, the LeWitt Collection, Connecticut, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In *Kerze*, the composition is based on a photograph taken by Richter in his own studio and has been influenced by old master *vanitas* painters such as Georges de la Tour and Francisco Zurbarán.

Richter is celebrated as one of the greatest of all abstract painters and the auction will offer the majestic and large-scale *Abstraktes Bild* (1992) from the height of his practice (*illustrated on the previous page, below left.*) Created in 1992, it has a rich exhibition history, being originally conceived for the landmark *Documenta IX* in Kassel in 1992, and later being installed in Richter's definitive and highly acclaimed travelling retrospective *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting* held first at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 2002 (estimate: £2,500,000-3,500,000).



Grat (5), executed in 1989 is an exquisitely executed painting from a series of five unique abstract works (*illustrated above left.*) The painting is estimated at £600,000-800,000 and was displayed at the artist's landmark retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1993. It later travelled to Bonn, Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Stockholm, Moderna Museet and Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

Painted in 1988, *Abstraktes Bild* is a majestic example of Gerhard Richter's celebrated medium, from the finest period of his abstraction (*illustrated right*). Perfectly square, the canvas offers up palimpsests of carmine and vermillion red, with flashes of cyan blue spreading throughout the composition. Having been acquired directly from the artist, this is the first time that this exceptional painting has been on view to the public in over twenty years (estimate: £500,000-700,000).



POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING AUCTION

AUCTION:

Christie's London

8 King Street

Friday 14 October 2011, at 6.30 pm - followed by *The Italian Sale*

VIEWINGS:

Christie's London

8 King Street

Sunday 9th October 12 noon-5pm

Monday 10th October 9am-8pm

Tuesday 11th October 9am-5pm

Wednesday 12th October 9am-5pm

Thursday 13th October 9am-6pm

Friday 14th October 9am-3.30pm