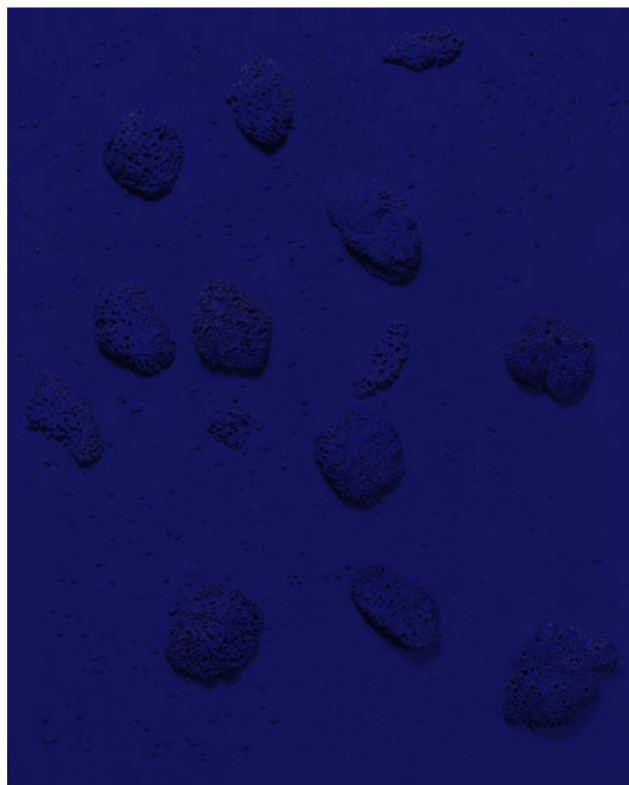


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## Masterwork by Yves Klein To Be Sold at Sotheby's in London

*RE 49, Relief Eponge Bleu* from the  
Collection HypoVereinsbank to be offered in the  
June Contemporary Art Evening Sale



LONDON, TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2010 --- Sotheby's London Contemporary Art Evening Sale on **Monday, 28 June, 2010** will be spearheaded by a remarkable Yves Klein work, *RE 49, Relief Eponge Bleu*, which comes to auction from the collection HypoVereinsbank. This work is one of exceptionally few large-scale blue *Relief Eponge* works remaining in private hands and was created at the climax of Klein's artistic career. The painting will be offered for sale with an estimate of £4.5-6.5 million.

Discussing the work, Cheyenne Westphal, Sotheby's Chairman of Contemporary Art Europe, commented: *"We are honoured to be offering in our June Contemporary Art Evening Sale this rare and stunning work, which showcases Yves Klein's boundless creativity and cements his position as one of the great artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Executed just before his untimely death in 1962, Klein's extraordinary sponge reliefs represent the culmination of his artistic vision. The majority of the highest prices ever paid for the artist at auction have been for Relief Eponge works by Klein\* and we expect that this exquisite example of his output, which last appeared on the open market over 15 years ago, will stir considerable interest among collectors and connoisseurs of Klein's work."*

HypoVereinsbank has an illustrious history of cultural commitment, based on the essential role the arts play in society. The art collection of the bank – one of the most important corporate collections in Europe – is steeped in tradition and was founded on the principle of the appreciation and support of the arts.

Commenting on their sale of this painting, Bärbel Kopplin, curator of the collection HypoVereinsbank said: *"Since the Bank has existed, we have shown works from the collection at our facilities and included them in exhibitions throughout the world too. A devoted and long-lasting cooperation with contemporary artists is very important for us. In order to adjust the collection for the future, we will continue to acquire works from promising young artists and will exhibit them publicly."*

*RE 49, Relief Eponge Bleu*, which was executed in 1961, has been exhibited in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt and is directly comparable to examples housed in esteemed museum collection such as Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and The Menil Collection in Houston. Struck by the beauty of a natural sponge soaked in his trademark blue pigment, Klein spontaneously pressed it on to the surface on a monochrome painting. The result, as the artist later wrote, was that *"in an instant this working instrument became a raw material"*. Individually chosen with fanatical precision, Klein varied the types of sponges he used; their nature, and absorption qualities in particular, led the artist to experiment further with the colour field, projecting his infamous International Klein Blue pigment into the third dimension with brilliant sculptural innovation and élan.

With a rich texture, colour saturation and an array of sponges, *RE49, Relief Eponge Bleu* alludes to a notion of a world other than our own. Growing up on the Mediterranean coast, Klein was deeply affected by the void of sea and sky as uninterrupted spatial fields, and was strongly influenced by ideas of physical and spiritual harmony, surpassing other artists of his time in his pursuit of the spiritual within art. This work

provides the viewer with a glimpse into Klein's deeply philosophical investigation into matters of space and form as seen through the realm of pure colour. In both size and stature, the present work is a dramatic synthesis of organic mass with the extravagant luxury of Klein's signature blue.

**Notes to Editor:**

\*Five of the top 10 prices at auction for works by Yves Klein are for his *Relief Eponge* works.

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