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PRESS RELEASE

**PROVENANCE: JAPAN TO FEATURE IN 20th CENTURY & CONTEMPORARY ART AUCTIONS
FEATURING WORKS BY YOSHIHARA, SHIRAGA, UFAN, YAMAGUCHI, KAWAGUCHI**



JIRO YOSHIHARA
Untitled, circa 1965
Estimate \$500,000 – 700,000

PROVENANCE: JAPAN

AUCTION: 8 November 2015 7:00 pm

AUCTION: 10 November 2015 11:00 am

VIEWING: 31 October– 10 November 2015 Monday – Saturday 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Sunday 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm

AUCTION LOCATION: Phillips, 450 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022

LINK TO ONLINE CATALOGUE: http://issuu.com/phillipsauction/docs/provenance_japan?e=16544782/30971833

NEW YORK – 29 OCTOBER 2015 – Phillips is pleased to present a selection of seminal postwar Japanese art from the immediate aftermath of the war into the late 1980s. Sourced exclusively from Japan and curated by Alison Bradley, Provenance: *Japan* presents a select grouping of painting, sculpture and photography to be included in the 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening and Day sales.

Though the collective Gutai and the Mono-ha school have received attention through recent museum and gallery exhibitions, the remarkable work of many influential Japanese artists remains largely unknown in the West. The works on offer highlight key artists who were essential to the formation of the avant-garde movement in Japan in these early decades of the postwar era.

Characterized by bold experimentation and a rogue artistic expression, the postwar artists responded to an altered and changing Japan, entering into an international dialogue of art-making and pioneering aesthetics.

The 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale and Day Sale will include 24 lots of postwar Japanese painting, sculpture and photography carrying a pre-sale estimate of \$4,555,000 to \$6,687,000.

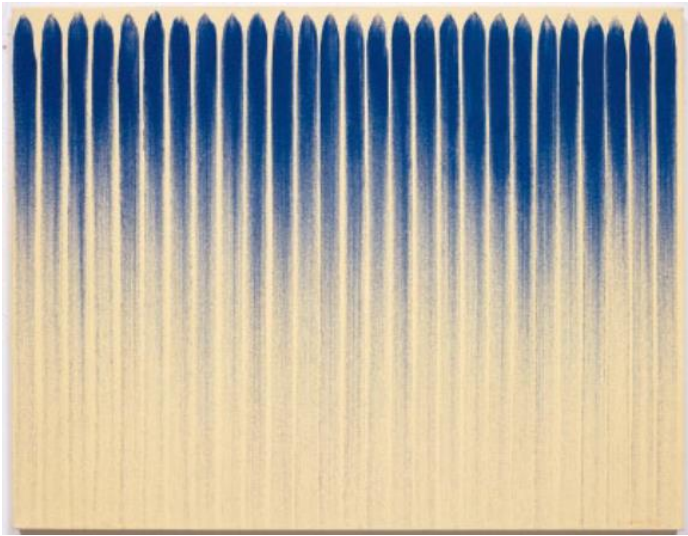
“I am proud to present this selection giving collectors the opportunity to discover more about Japanese postwar art.” said Alison Bradley, Curator of the Sale. “All coming from Japan, these masterworks have been assembled to celebrate the essence of what is unique and internationally engaging about the avant-garde art from this era. Selected to bring forward artists and their significant works seminal to this period, the grouping as a whole features artwork at an institutional level and of historical importance.”

A pre-sale viewing will run from 31 October – 10 November at 450 Park Avenue, New York, NY.



Kazuo Shiraga
Untitled BB64, 1962
 Estimate \$2,000,000 – 3,000,000

Untitled BB64 is an exemplary work from Shiraga's mature period, a time when he achieved capturing the balance between the beautiful and the grotesque. His long-time interest in classic hero stories such as the action-filled *Suikoden* (Water Margin), a fourteenth-century Chinese novel about 108 outlaws, formed his belief that painting must carry force and individualism as strong as those represented by the characters. In Shiraga's work, the paint as material became both the subject of the work and an agent of the artist's body reviving his presence in mind each time it is seen by the viewer.



Lee Ufan
From Line, 1979
 Estimate \$400,000 – 600,000

The composition of *From Line* literally reflects the artist's presence in front of the canvas with brushstrokes faithfully recording his tactile handle of rigidity and fluidity at once rather than an image of the world as viewed and processed by his mind. His disciplined hand senses and follows subtly and gradually the changing tension from the brush as it leaves ink onto the surface.



Jiro Yoshihara
Untitled, circa 1965
 Estimate \$500,000 – 700,000

In this sublime work, *Untitled*, the deep lacquer orange circle starkly floats on the pitch dark background, representing one moment of sublimation of this motif in Yoshihara's decade long obsession with it. Upon close observation, one can clearly detect traces of brushstrokes within the thick line of this circle. Unlike the calligraphic movement in lines that Yoshihara used in his 1950s abstract experiments, this work exposes a much slower passage of time through the accumulation of strokes; Yoshihara was painting rather than writing. As a number of his last works used stroke shapes of Japanese letters, mostly Kanji characters, one can only assume that in his last years Yoshihara was searching for the thin line between painting and writing.



Takeo Yamaguchi
Sequence of Squares, 1956
 Estimate \$100,000-150,000

Yamaguchi's signature style of geometric forms, built up with layers of paint applied by a palette knife against black background, reached its maturation in the mid-1950s. *Sequence of Squares* is highly representative of this style. Slightly awkward and disjointed ochre colored rectangles have more sculptural weight than a painterly touch, reflecting Yamaguchi's prewar practice in Cubist sculpture while the crisscross pattern creating relief-like depth reminisces another Cubist technique of collage. When the gestural movement and rugged surface of Art Informel was just starting to cause a whirlwind trend in Japan, Yamaguchi remained true to his commitment to pure form and singularly created his own language of post-Cubist minimalism.



Tatsuo Kawaguchi
Stone and Light, 1971-89
 Estimate \$150,000-250,000

An iconic sculptural work by Kawaguchi, *Stone and Light* opens up a new perspective into the world by the stark contrast between the stillness of the stone and the constant electric current inside the fluorescent tube that pierces through the stone. The choice of the materials was a result of the artist's scepticism in painting to effectively capture the concept of time and his commitment to relationalism, a theme consistent in his life's work. By juxtaposing the immobile dark presence of the stone and the ephemerality of light, Kawaguchi produced a kind of visualization device that allows us to sense a series of extreme ends in the spectrum of the environment in which we exist — stillness and movement, darkness and brightness, the ancient and the new.



Masahisa Fukase
Noboribetsu Hot Spring, (mFv75), 1977
 Estimate \$12,000 – 18,000

Published as page 15 in the photo book *Karasu (Ravens)*, 1986, this is a rare vintage work from this most seminal series, entitled *The Solitude of Ravens*. It was exhibited in the landmark show *Japan: A Self-Portrait* (International Center of Photography, NY, 1979). The location for this photograph is Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands, and specifically Noboribetsu, famous for its hot springs. The photography critic Kotaro Iizawa describes the series as Fukase's monologue marked by "the depth of his solitude of this time," where "filled with a consistent tone of icy desolation, captured images materialize his solitude itself, through a combination of images of ravens, presented as his alter ego, and those of landscapes, objects, and humans, inserted in-between."



Daido Moriyama
Kamakura, 1966
Estimate \$8,000-12,000

This exceedingly rare and early print is representative of Moriyama's unique photographic expression, formed alongside, yet distinct from, the influences of the older generation of influential photographers such as Shomei Tomatsu and Eikoh Hosoe. This vintage work also indicates how Moriyama was printing in this earliest stage of his career. His vintage prints of this period are highly treasured items; almost entirely collected by Tokyo Polytechnic University, they rarely appear on the market.

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