

# PHILLIPS

PRESS RELEASE

## MARK BRADFORD, AI WEIWEI, TAUBA AUERBACH AND JULIE MEHRETU HEADLINE PHILLIPS CONTEMPORARY ART SALES

**EVENING AUCTION:** 12 FEBRUARY 2015, 7PM

**DAY AUCTION:** 13 FEBRUARY 2015, 2PM

**VIEWING:** 4-12 FEBRUARY 2015 Phillips, 30 Berkeley Square, London W1J 6EX

**AUCTION LOCATION:** Phillips, 30 Berkeley Square, London W1J 6EX

**LINK TO ONLINE EVENING SALE CATALOGUE:** <http://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/UK010115>

**LINK TO ONLINE DAYSALE CATALOGUE:** <http://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/UK010215>

**LONDON – 29 JANUARY 2015** – Phillips spring auctions of Contemporary Art will take place on 12 and 13 February 2015 in London and will offer an impressive selection of desirable, market-fresh works, the majority of which represent many of the most exciting artists of the past 15 years. The auctions have a combined pre-sale estimate of £16.4 million to £24.1 million (\$22.1 million to \$32.6 million / €24.5 million to €36.2 million).

The Contemporary Art Evening Auction will offer 30 lots with a pre-sale estimate of £13.6 million to £20.2 million (\$18.3 million to \$27.2 million / €20.4 million to €30.2 million). Leading highlights include **Mark Bradford's** *Biting the Book* (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million); **Ai Weiwei's** *Zodiac Heads* (estimate: £2 million to £3 million); **Tauba Auerbach's** *Untitled (Fold) X* (estimate: £1 million to £1.5 million); and Julie Mehretu's *Invisible Sun (algorithm 2)* (estimate: £700,000 to £900,000).

“We are delighted to be offering to auction for the very first time, the seminal work by Ai Weiwei *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads*. This celebrated work was conceived in two sizes and we are pleased to present to the market the indoor gold version from the edition of eight. We also look forward to presenting exceptional works by Mark Bradford, Tauba Auerbach, Julie Mehretu, Urs Fischer and Andy Warhol. Our Contemporary sales at our new London home in October 2014 saw a huge increase in visitor numbers – a trend which has since continued at our recent London auctions of Photographs and Editions – and we look forward to continuing this trend by welcoming art collectors and enthusiasts to Phillips for our upcoming preview and sales.” **Peter Sumner, Head of Contemporary Art, London.**



**AI WEIWEI**

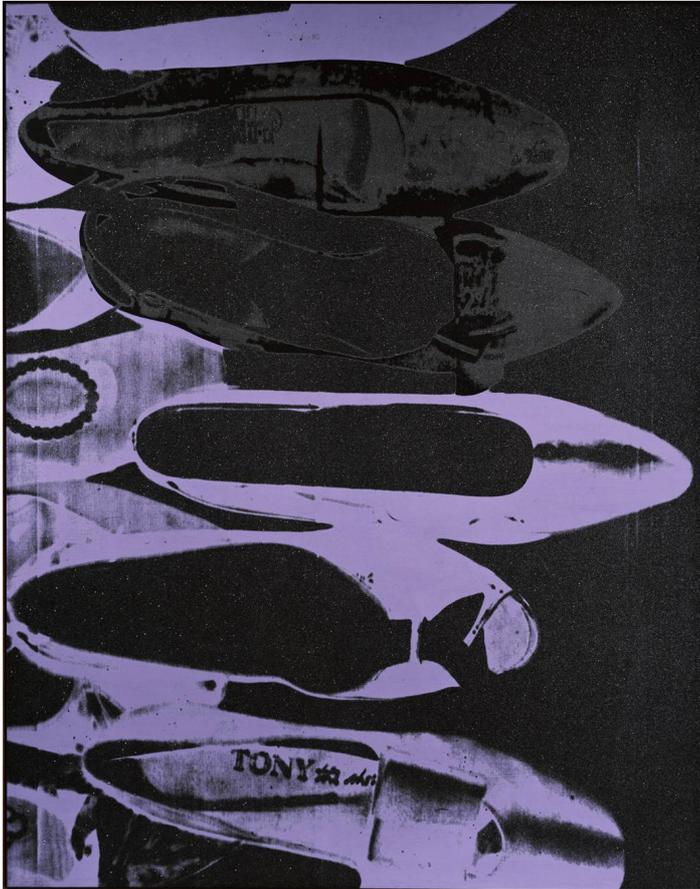
*Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads*, 2010

This work is number 7 from an edition of 8 plus 4 artist's proofs.

**ESTIMATE £2,000,000 - 3,000,000**

The twelve gold-plated sculptures portraying the signs of the ancient Chinese zodiac are inspired by those which once comprised a water clock-fountain at the Old Summer Palace. Built between 1750 and 1764 by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty, the Summer Palace was destroyed by French and British troops in 1850 during the Second Opium War at which time the fountainheads were looted.

Working from the seven originals that remain, **Ai Weiwei** and his team had to creatively imagine the five heads that are missing. This forced them to draw upon other sources for ‘authentic’ Chinese portrayals of these creatures, such as the dragon, which is based on images from tapestry and print. In spite of this, the set as a whole maintains glorious aesthetic coherence, challenging the idea that the original group was a work of perfection whose loss is an irredeemable tragedy. The fake is invested with the power to revive the past, and the marriage that is made – troubled, yet oddly serene – offers a lustrous exhibition of what might be a brighter, less confused and more beautiful future.



**ANDY WARHOL**  
*Diamond Dust Shoes*, 1980  
ESTIMATE £1,500,000 - 2,500,000

Like many of **Warhol's** best works, his *Diamond Dust Shoes* are as much self-portrait as metonym for twentieth century pop culture. They are among the most exciting pieces to emerge from the 1980s Retrospective series, in which Warhol reviewed and collated the defining images of his career: the shoes make reference to the genesis of his artistic practice as a commercial illustrator in 1950s New York, where he found early success as 'the Leonardo da Vinci of the shoe trade.'

The image is based on a Polaroid photograph, taken some 25 years earlier, of a box of shoes tipped onto the floor by Warhol's assistant Ronnie Cutrone. **Warhol** carefully adjusted the final composition of the resulting haphazard arrangement, and experimented extensively with his silkscreen technique to appropriately enshrine the shoes so totemic to his artistic ascendancy.

The shoes, a mass-produced commodity (a brand name is even visible in one insole) are sanctified and aligned with his iconic portraits of glamorous women: they are made into a suggestive facet of the glitzy and thrilling world of fame and fashion that **Warhol** inhabited.

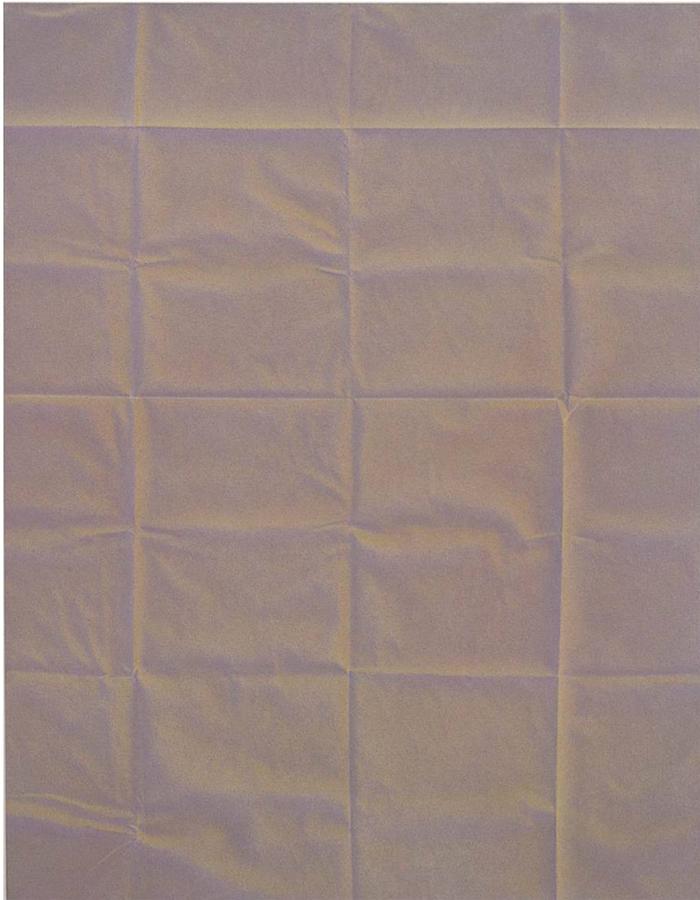
The shoes are a dark and powerful achievement. Magnificently ominous, beautiful and menacing, attractive and just a bit sleazy, they tell a richly lucid part of Warhol's story.



**MARK BRADFORD**  
*Biting the Book*, 2013  
ESTIMATE £1,000,000 - 1,500,000

**Mark Bradford** uses found media - paper from peeling billboards, newsprint, polyester cord, hairdressing endpapers from the perming process - to create an exhilarating and multi-layered fusion of his material environment with societal commentary, in a process that he has called 'social abstraction.' The works often have their genesis in maps, with veins and channels forming a plan beneath layers of accumulation and excavation.

*Biting the Book* is born of an exhibition that was based on the history of the US highway system, which tore a swathe through poorer urban neighbourhoods during its construction in the 1950s. The surface is a huge and ravaged landscape, tired, attacked, bleached and scoured, but fluorescent hints of sub-tectonic vibrancy shine through: erasure results in new opportunities. A complex urban dialectic of appearance and disappearance, of loss and gain, results in a work that is both sharply conceptual and exceptionally beautiful.



**TAUBA AUERBACH**  
*Untitled (Fold) X*, 2009  
ESTIMATE £1,000,000 - 1,500,000

Occupying a dazzling sphere of their own, **Tauba Auerbach's** *Fold Paintings* form a striking articulation of the gap between painting and sculpture. The present lot is one of her most seminal Fold works: a sculpted painting that enchants with its brilliant iridescence, and offers an enthralling demonstration of the artist's distinctive technique. The compelling intricacy of *Untitled (Fold) X* lies in its dichotomy of sculptural and two-dimensional elements. **Auerbach's** signature method in creating her Fold paintings arises from first pressing and folding the raw canvas, then restretching it once it has achieved a network of impressions. Afterwards, **Auerbach** sprays industrial paint at several angles in order to elicit a raw chromatic scheme — one which rarely betrays a single dominant hue. *Untitled (Fold) X* is mathematical in its folded impressions: clean lines establish a primary network of rectangular lines, clearly punctuated by secondary, more abstract folds that run across the middle of each initial rectangle. The stretched result is a wonderfully musical pattern of sharpness and lyricism, alternating between the definition of the primary folds and the caprice of the secondary creasing. Iridescence, or the changeable nature of colour, is another of **Auerbach's** most recognizable visual cues in this particular series.

The result is a picture originally designed by mathematical logic, yet beholden to the chaos that brings forth the many layers of its multifaceted beauty.



**JULIE MEHRETU**  
*Invisible Sun (algorithm 2)*, 2013  
ESTIMATE £700,000 - 900,000

The scope of **Julie Mehretu's** work is vast in every sense. She builds layer upon layer of over- and under-drawing, creating impossibly complex palimpsests of gestural mark and architectural structure. Often geopolitical in scope, her canvases can seem overwhelming, even chaotic in their dynamism, yet they maintain an awe-inspiring coherence of composition - in 2010, she completed an eighty-foot mural for the Manhattan lobby of Goldman Sachs. Taking cues from the swirling abstraction of Italian Futurism as well as the shapes of Kandinsky, **Mehretu's** restless multiple exposures reflect the displacements of her own narrative: born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1970, as a child she and her family fled revolution, immigrating to Alabama and later moving to Michigan.

**Mehretu's** vast stadia of articulate space and structure reward infinite exploration. While challenging misplaced idealism, her abstracted vision offers an inviting and absorbing map to our reality.



URS FISCHER

*Bad Timing, Lamb Chop!*, 2004-2005  
ESTIMATE £600,000 - 800,000

**Urs Fischer** is not an artist with a message. Rather, he is concerned with the capricious product that results through a combination of the act of creation with the physicality of materials. His work does not start with a concept, but with the materials. Through this process, and the appropriation of common images into his artworks, **Fischer** is able to explore the limits of representation via mimesis and scale. *Bad Timing, Lamb Chop!*, a seemingly random juxtaposition of objects from the everyday – a chair and a half-empty pack of cigarettes – is meant to generate ideas and to prompt questions without providing the answers.

Engaging the mind of the viewer as a way of generating ideas is a powerful apparatus that **Fischer** uses in order to captivate attention, while suggesting no narrative or socio-political message. The seemingly total disconnect between **Fischer's** two conjoined objects asks for consideration as a sort of sculptural still life of surreal proportions.

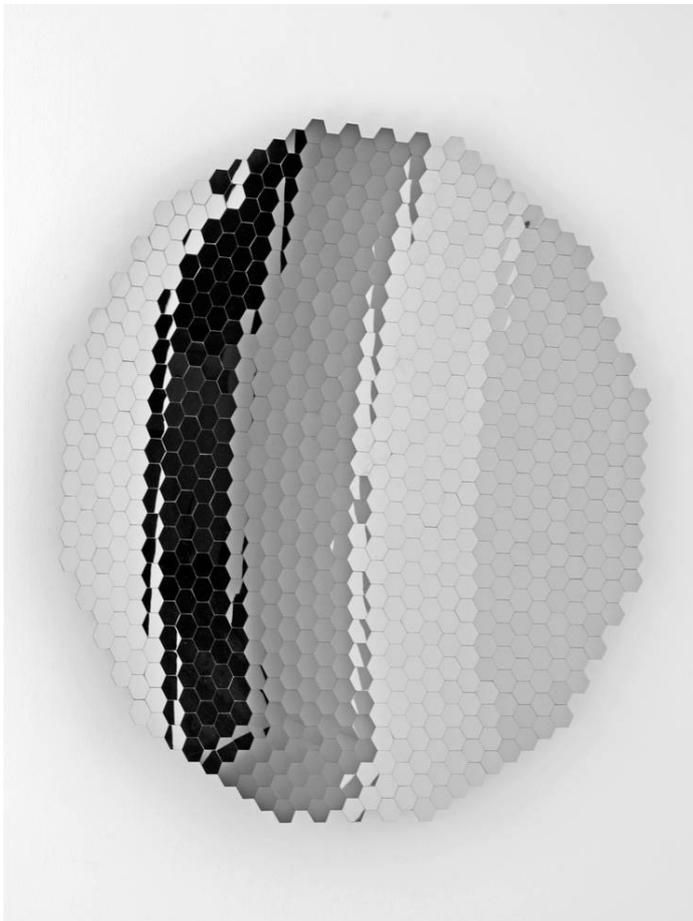
As an undeniably awesome spectacle, **Fischer's** objects call to mind the appropriation and large scale Pop works by artists such as Claes Oldenburg or Tom Wesselmann, while similarly following the Surrealists and Dadaists through the collision of distinctly different found images that warp our perceptions in their surprising juxtaposition.

Despite being in many ways an unsettling piece, a glaring disruption of our parameters of expectation, *Bad Timing, Lamb Chop!* is also puckishly humorous.

One of the most influential sculptors of his generation, **Anish Kapoor** creates abstract works that exist outside of material concern.

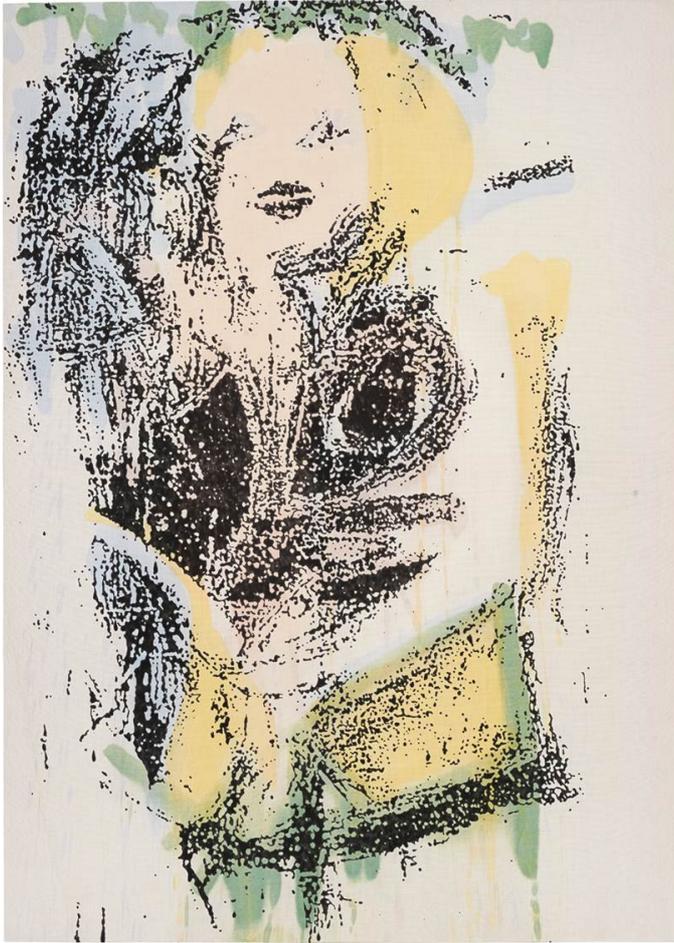
For **Kapoor**, space is the only truly abstract quality because it has no narrative; it is thus the goal of his mirrored works to deconstruct empirical space and project the viewer into a virtual realm, or, as he refers to it, 'a new sublime.' The concave form of works such as the present lot attracts the viewer's attention through a physical pull. At a distance, the inversion of the material world reflected back to the viewer warps their surrounding reality as well as their own image, implicating them in the aesthetic. These works invite the viewer to explore their perception of their own bodily existence through the way in which their image changes as they move around the space that the object occupies. Through these incursions, **Kapoor** asks the viewer to consider what is being looked at and what is taking place in the arena of the work.

By leaving no trace of the artist's hand, **Kapoor** makes his mirrored objects manifest in a space where they cease to be physical, becoming a self-made entity generative of independent meaning. While the materiality of the work exists in space, it is able to transcend its own physical existence through the way in which it distorts the perception of the viewer, transporting them to an ephemeral, abstracted plane of hovering self-consciousness.



ANISH KAPOOR

*Untitled*  
ESTIMATE £450,000 - 650,000

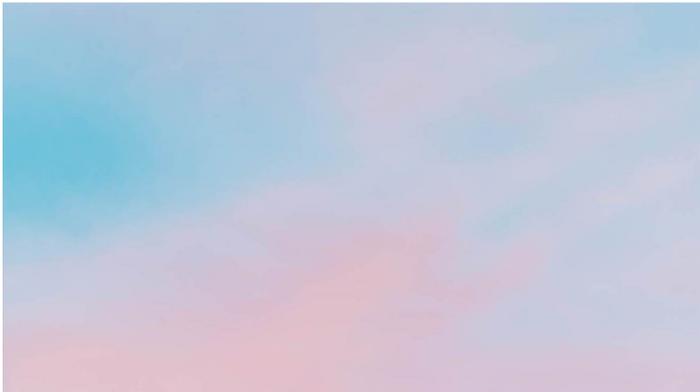


**NATE LOWMAN**  
*Trash Landing Marilyn #12, 2011*  
**ESTIMATE £400,000 - 600,000**

**Nate Lowman** emerged alongside Dan Colen, Dash Snow and Ryan McGinley as part of a contingent of brash young New York artists who burst onto the scene in the early 2000s. Famed for his iconic bullet holes, **Lowman** creates abrasive, often nihilistic works in the appropriative vein of Richard Prince, inheriting from graffiti, skateboarding and DIY punk aesthetics.

*Trash Landing Marilyn #12*, one of an extensive series of Marilyns, is emblematic of the semiotic confusion and disjunction that **Lowman** explores. Initially it appears to be a silkscreen, with the attendant smudges and imperfections of printed ink: however, on closer inspection this effect reveals itself as trompe l'oeil, in fact painted by hand from an image projected onto the linen. The image depicted is based on the Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning's 1954 painting Marilyn Monroe. **Lowman** reinterprets de Kooning's distinctively bellicose painterly style as part of an investigation into the violence of Pop culture: the Marilyns first appeared as part of his show Trash Landing, which also included pieces from his infamous Bullet Hole series.

Voracious and irreverent in his digestion of cultural tropes – apart from Marilyn and the bullet holes, he has worked extensively with smiley faces and more recently the Apple logo – **Lowman's** method darkly diagnoses the hysterical compulsions that drive our adoration of images of violence and beauty.



**ALEX ISRAEL**  
*Sky Backdrop, 2013*  
**ESTIMATE £400,000 - 600,000**

**Alex Israel** produces radiant, wistful panels of colour that offer a flawless window into the rosy skies of his native Los Angeles. *Sky Backdrop* has its origins in his 'Flats' series, which arose through a connection to Warner Brothers studios.

The present lot exemplifies the vibrancy of **Israel's** work, blushing with gently tropical luminosity that speaks of swaying palm trees and endless sun-soaked freeways.

**Israel's** sky appears as a divine portal to a 'better life,' both inviting and confounding in its obviously virtual promise; the absolute beauty of the sunblushed mirage transcends its ultimate unreality, and we are left nourished rather than frustrated, basking in the glow of studio lights.



**ANTONY GORMLEY**  
*Settlement*, 2005  
ESTIMATE £250,000 - 350,000

**Antony Gormley's** 'Blockworks' form a crucial part of his monumental, meditative investigations into the body and space.

Based on a form cast directly from the artist's own body, they constitute what he calls 'a kind of weaving mass with void; a push and pull between blocks that are present and blocks that are absent.' They are delicate yet robust, stable yet dynamic, employing careful cantilever and poise to create an 'architectonic language' that explores the internal and external human condition. *Settlement* is concerned with a particular collective experience.

The work's title captures a duality, *Settlement* recalling a collection of dwellings as much as the settled repose of the figure. Its face-down form appears to have been deposited, crystallised from an informational flux.

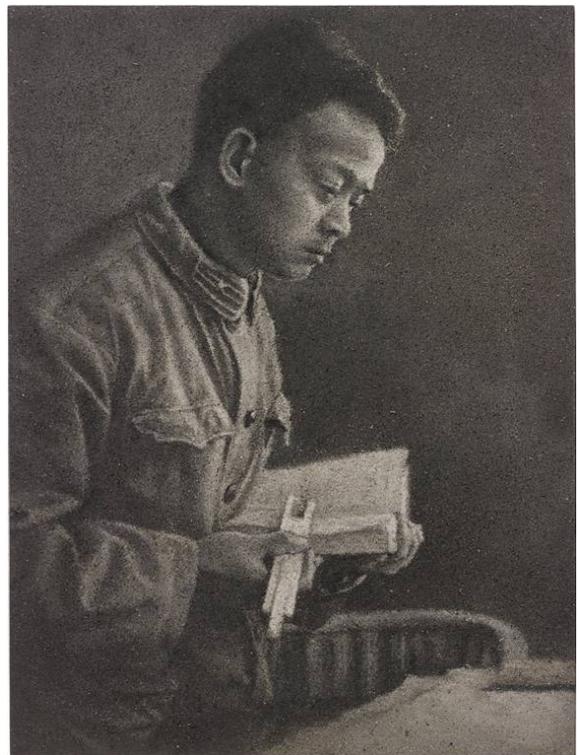
An acute balance must be struck in this fragile yet solid configuration, and the resulting play of positive and negative spaces addresses the effort of simply existing

Here, the orange-rusted iron that **Gormley** uses in his cast pieces is eschewed in favour of bright mild steel, painstakingly bolted together.

The Contemporary Art Day Sale on 13 February includes fresh to auction works as well as more established, internationally recognised artists. Works by artists not seen at auction before include **Oliver Osborne** and **Chris Succo**.



**GEORGE CONDO**  
*Smiling Young Woman*, 2008  
ESTIMATE £120,000 - 180,000



**ZHANG HUAN**  
*Callipers*, 2008  
ESTIMATE £100,000 - 150,000



**CHRIS SUCCO**  
*GO TELL THE WOMEN THAT WE'RE LEAVING [DR], 2013*  
**ESTIMATE £7,000 - 9,000**



**OLIVER OSBORNE**  
*Untitled, 2013*  
**ESTIMATE £6,000 - 8,000**

**PHILLIPS:**

As the only international auction house to concentrate exclusively on contemporary culture, Phillips has established a commanding position in the sale of Contemporary Art, Design, Photographs, Editions and Jewelry. Through the passionate dedication of its team of global specialists, the company has garnered an unparalleled wealth of knowledge of emerging market trends. Founded in London in 1796, Phillips conducts auctions in New York and London and has representative offices throughout Europe and in the United States. For more information, please visit: [phillips.com](http://phillips.com).

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