

ARTCURIAL

# POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART

Auction on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 at 7pm, in Paris



Serge Poliakoff, *Composition abstraite*, 1950, oil on canvas, estimate: €300 000 - \$400 000 / 330 000 - 440 000

## *Exhibition*

From Friday 26th to Monday 29th May 2017

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**Paris** – On Wednesday 31st May 2017, during its week of prestigious sales dedicated to twentieth century art, Artcurial will host an auction devoted to post-war and contemporary art. While the major artistic movements of the second half of the twentieth century will be represented, such as Pierre Soulages and Serge Poliakoff's abstraction or New Realism by Raymond Hains, even rarer pieces will be auctioned, such as two steel sculptures by Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida.

In order to illustrate the permanence of certain themes in the history of contemporary art, the last chapter of the sale will be devoted to a transversal approach of a graphic element which has been at the heart of the work of many contemporary artists: the line. Thus 38 works (sculptures, drawings, paintings...) gathered around this theme, including Carl Andre and Sol Lewitt alongside Martin Barré and Pol Bury. This original curated proposal offers a singular dialog between the works and the artists.

*« We are proud to present works by d'Eduardo Chillida, rarely offered in France: A steel piece from 1989 and a 1962 plaque, a precursor for his future works.*

*A unique opportunity for collectors to acquire one of these pieces. »*

Karim Hoss, Post-war and contemporary art department manager, Artcurial

*« The chapter dedicated to The Line offers an ensemble of coherent works inclined to spark the interest of both amateurs and collectors by its quality and diversity, throughout this important theme, from the post-war era to today. »*

Hugues Sebilliau, Post-war and contemporary art department manager, Artcurial

The Post-War and Contemporary Art sale on 31st May will be part of the *Printemps Paris Tout P'tits chez Artcurial* programme. Several pieces at auction, identifiable by a little pink teddy bear next to the catalogue description will be sold without fees, benefitting the association. Paris Tout P'tits is an association by the 1901 law, providing assistance for babies under 18 months, from Parisian families in difficulty.



Eduardo Chillida, *Locmariaquer VI*, 1989, steel, estimate: €300,000 - 400,000/ \$330.000 - 440,000

## On the line...

In the introduction text of the chapter gathering 38 pieces on the Line theme, Serge Lemoine, Artcurial scientific and cultural advisor explains:

Here is a wonderful work of Victor Vasarely from 1949 (estimate: €3,000 – 5,000 / \$3,300 – 5,500): a landscape, Gordes, represented using a few strokes of a steady hand, confident, with no hesitation. A few lines that are sufficient to delineate forms, indicate directions, install spacial planes. This drawing, so austere yet so expressive, perfectly illustrates and summarizes the concept that brings together most of the works that we will discover throughout the catalogue: the line.

The line is both a form and a mode of expression. Straight, curved, zigzag, convoluted, it defines an element, it indicates a direction, it shares a plane. The line, the stroke, which are the expression of the drawing, are the opposite of the surface, the contrary of the volume. But along the path of the line, thanks to its conciseness and its ability to synthesise, with no need to resort to the spot or modelling, can perfectly convey volume and depth. There are many and varied uses for the line in different styles within this selection

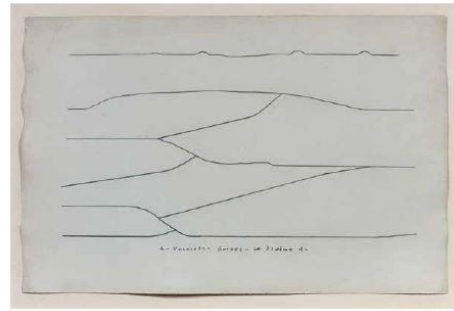
First of all, in the context of the opposition between geometrical and lyrical abstraction which remains fundamental, the work by Francois Morellet painted in 2001 (estimate: €18,000 – 25,000 / \$19,800 - \$27,500) With straight lines arranged in a zigzag pattern drawn with a ruler following preliminary calculations, is a controlled rejoinder to the spontaneity of Hans Hartung's charcoal and pastel drawing, carefully executed in 1957, whose free, accentuated lines combines harmoniously (estimate: €20,000 – 30,000 / \$22,000 – 33,000). As line on paper or volume in space, François Morellet's lines in his 1977 drawing (estimate: 12 000 - 15 000 € / 13 200 - 16 500 \$) and those of Sol LeWitt in his 1974 sculpture illustrate the same principles, grounded in neutrality and method (estimate: €120,000 - 180,000 / \$132,000 - 198,000).

In Georges Mathieu's paintings from 1957 (estimate: 70,000 – 90,000 € / 77,000 – 99,000 \$) and Martin Barré's from 1960 (estimate: 60 000 – 80 000 € / 66 000 – 88 000 \$), the lines are painted with colour straight from the tube applied to the canvas in an improvised way. More remote in time, purpose, animated by the same intentions, the works of Alberto Magnelli of 1951 (estimate: €35,000 – 50,000 / \$38,500 – 55,000) and Vera Molnar of 2007 (estimate: €8,000 – 12,000 / \$8,800 – 13,200) use delineating lines to create graphically rhythmic surfaces.

## Abstraction

Two pieces follow, from 1949 and 1950 where a preview of French abstraction can be noted: one by Pierre Soulages and the other by Serge Poliakoff.

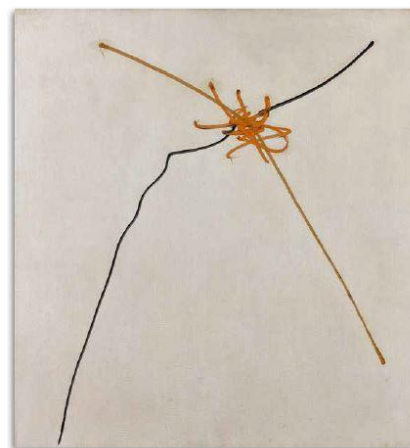
*L'Encre de Chine sur papier* by Pierre Soulages, created in 1949, is a prime example of this trend (estimate: €120,000 – 180,000 / \$132,000 – 198,000). Confident to achieve a "landscape of snow," the artist seeks to create the contrast to create a surge of colour. For this, he reveals the white with the black, its chromatic opposite. This black is applied with Indian ink, a technique he uses before walnut stain, a natural pigment made from the extract of the walnut tree bark. The year 1949 marks the beginnings of fully



Victor Vasarely, *Gordes, la plaine 9*, 1949, lead on paper, estimate: € 3,000 - 5,000 / \$ 3,300 - 5,500



Sol LeWitt, *Incomplete Open Cube (Quasi-Cube) 9/1*, 1973, email sur aluminium, estimate : €120 000 - 180 000 / \$132 000 - 198 000



Martin Barré, *60-T-51*, 1960, Oil on canvas, estimate : €60,000 - 90,000 / \$66,000 - 99,000

assumed abstraction and avant-gardism by Soulages who declares on the subject: "moreover apart Pollock, nobody else painted abstract paintings. Rothko himself only began in 1949". The Indian ink used garners an aesthetic query, all the while creating a historical context marked by a reclaiming policy that makes Pierre Soulages' painting the prerogative of a new era.

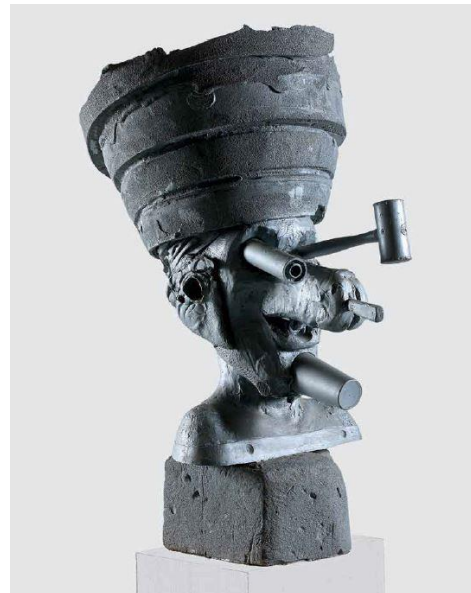
The second key piece of this collection is an oil on canvas *Composition abstraite* by Serge Poliakoff (estimate: €300,000 – 400,000/ \$330,000 – \$440,000). Created in 1950, it represents the discovery of abstraction and conveys the energy that the artist describes as follows: « Many people say that there is nothing in abstract painting. As for myself, if my life was to stretch three-fold, I would still not have enough time to describe all I see in it». *Composition abstraite* offers a particularly contrasted set of colours, the predominant black and ochre blend with the red to create a surge in the yellow elements, and finally, the single white fragment, the keystone of the piece, seemingly built for this ultimate burst of light.

Abstract art will also be honoured with the Basque Spanish sculptor Eduardo Chillida with two works up for auction. The first is a marble plaque inlaid with lead, *Marmol incrustacion plomo*, created in 1964 (estimate: €60,000 – 80,000/ \$66,000 – 88,000), and the second entitled *Locmariaquer VI*, a rectangular iron dated 1989. The title of the work refers to the name of a small town in Brittany famous for its menhirs, dolmens and other megalithic monuments dating from -2 000 years. While visiting the region, Eduardo Chillida is inspired to create these Locmariaquer. The piece echoes the entrance to a cave, its uneven stones eroded by time.

Amongst other trends of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Raymond Hains pop piece, *Saffa*, from 1964, offers a fresh glimpse at New Realism (estimate: €50,000 – 70,000/ \$55,000 – 77,000). Furthermore, figurative art will be represented by American plastic artist Paul McCarthy's silicone sculpture *Hammer Head*, estimate € 150,000 – 250,000 / \$165,000 – 275,000



Pierre Soulages, *Encre de Chine sur papier*, 1949, Indian ink on paper, estimate: €120,000 - 180,000/ \$ 132,000 - 198,000



Paul McCarthy, *Hammer head*, 2004, silicone and wood casing, estimate: €150,000 - 250,000/ \$165,000 - 275,000

## About ARTCURIAL

Founded in 2002, Artcurial, a multidisciplinary auction house based in Paris, reinforcing its leading position in the market of the international art in 2015.

With 3 sale venues in Paris, Monte-Carlo and Hong Kong, the House totals 210.1 million euros in sales volume in 2016, doubling its turnover in 5 years (+10% compared to 2015).

It covers the whole spectrum of major specialties: Beaux-Arts to decorative arts, collector automobiles, jewellery, collector timepieces, fine wines and spirits...

Resolutely turned toward the international market, Artcurial asserts its network abroad with representation offices in Brussels, Milan, Monte-Carlo, Munich and Vienna as well as a presence in Beijing and Tel Aviv, and biannual exhibitions in New York. In October 2015, Artcurial organised its first sale in Hong Kong and in Morocco.



HD visuals available upon request  
[www.artcurial.com](http://www.artcurial.com)

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