

CHRISTIE'S

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JACKSON POLLOCK MASTERPIECE WILL LEAD CHRISTIE'S 20TH CENTURY EVENING SALE



JACKSON POLLOCK (1912-1956)

Number 31

signed and dated 'Jackson Pollock 49' (upper left)
oil, enamel, aluminum paint and gesso on paper mounted on Masonite
31 x 22 ½ in. (78.7 x 57.2 cm.)

Executed in 1949.

Estimate on request; in excess of \$45 million

NEW YORK - Christie's is honored to announce that Jackson Pollock's *Number 31*, 1949 will lead the 20th Century Evening Sale taking place 12 May 2022 at Rockefeller Plaza (Estimate on request; in

excess of \$45 million). Painted in 1949, the work is among the richest and most powerful examples of Pollock's celebrated drip paintings, standing as an icon from a seminal moment in the development of twentieth-century art. It has been featured in a number of important exhibitions, including the 1967 Jackson Pollock MoMA retrospective in addition to the 1998 retrospective mounted at MoMA and The Tate. Held in the same private collection for over two decades, the work is incredibly fresh to market.

Pollock executed *Number 31* during a flurry of brilliant artistic activity during the end of 1949. The work was subsequently exhibited with Pollock's new dealer Betty Parsons later that year where critics described the exhibition as "the best painting he has yet done." *Number 31* will tour to Christie's Los Angeles where it will be on view from 19 – 22 April before returning to New York ahead of the sale.

Alex Rotter, Christie's Chairman of 20th and 21st Century Art, remarks, "*In the late 1940s, Pollock's drip paintings categorically redefined how we understand art. This moment saw the art world's center of gravity shift for the first time away from the museums and galleries of Paris and into the streets of New York. With his revolutionary new technique, Pollock effectively upended the existing framework of traditional painting practices. True drip paintings were—and still are—the ultimate in mid-century American avant-garde, and are rare to come across in the secondary market. Number 31 is a superb example. It is a fantastic, frenetic combination of rich hues—straight from the paint can. It stands as a brilliant demonstration of Pollock's rigor and effusiveness and we are thrilled to feature it as the top lot in Christie's 20th Century Evening Sale this Spring Marquee Week.*"

Essentially an unknown artist in the early 1940s, Pollock first began exploring his now infamous drip painting technique in 1948. By the latter half of 1949, Pollock had found himself catapulted to success as a result of the popularity of this body of work, with paintings acquired by five major museums and 40 prominent private collections. By the time he created *Number 31*, Pollock had truly mastered the process. Pollock created only thirteen of these drip paintings on paper in 1949—each then mounted onto Masonite, composition board or canvas. Only eight of these display the gleaming, metallic paint employed in *Number 31*, one of the fullest and most opulent compositions of the group.

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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