

# Sotheby's

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## Seminal Warhol Masterpiece To Make Auction Debut At Sotheby's

- Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster) To Go On View At Sotheby's In London on Friday 12 October -



Andy Warhol, **Silver Car Crash [Double Disaster]**, 105 x 164 1/8 in., 1963, estimate in excess of \$60 million  
Image Courtesy Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, Zurich

On 13 November 2013 Sotheby's will present **Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)** by Andy Warhol as the outstanding highlight of the New York auction season. At over 8 ft. by 13 ft., the monumental painting is one of only four *Car Crash* works of this scale in the pivotal *Death and Disaster* series and the only one remaining in private hands. The work, which boasts distinguished provenance including Gunter Sachs, Charles Saatchi, and the legendary Swiss dealer Thomas Ammann, has been in the same collection since 1988 and has been seen in public only once in the past 26 years. **Silver Car**

**Crash (Double Disaster)** is estimated to achieve in excess of \$60 million and goes on view at Sotheby's in London on 12 October before the New York exhibition on 1 November.

Tobias Meyer, Worldwide Head of Contemporary Art at Sotheby's commented: "With **Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)** Warhol consciously created work of such scale and ambition that it takes its place alongside paintings such as Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* and Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* as one of the definitive masterpieces of history painting."

The *Death and Disaster series* stands as arguably Warhol's most significant artistic achievement. The series explored many of the key themes that defined his entire artistic career – the potential of mass-media to transform anonymity to celebrity as well as a perceived indifference to death in the modern era - and is considered one of the most provocative, confrontational and brilliant projects undertaken by any artist in the 1960s. It is not coincidental that Warhol created the series at the same time as his iconic portraits of celebrities touched by death and disaster such as Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy who had found their private tragedy catapulted onto the public arena.

In **Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)** Warhol selects a subject matter considered particularly radical at the time, capturing the immediate aftermath of a car crashing into a tree, with the silk-screen impression bleakly dramatizing the deformed metal and twisted human body while the reflective silver paint creates a play of light and shadow. The impact of the repeated, cascading image on the left is heightened by the juxtaposition of the vast blank sea of silver on the right, adding to the overwhelming power of the work. The finality of the past meets the abstract permanent continuity of the present.

Given Warhol's fascination with celebrity and the "silver screen", it is not coincidental that the magnitude of the present work is roughly equivalent to that of a cinema in the 1960s. **Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)** is one of only four canvases on this monumental scale with the other three belonging to distinguished museum collections: *Orange Car Crash 14 Times* in The Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Black and White Disaster #4* in the Kunstmuseum, Basel; and *Orange Car Crash* in the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung, Ludwig, Vienna.

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