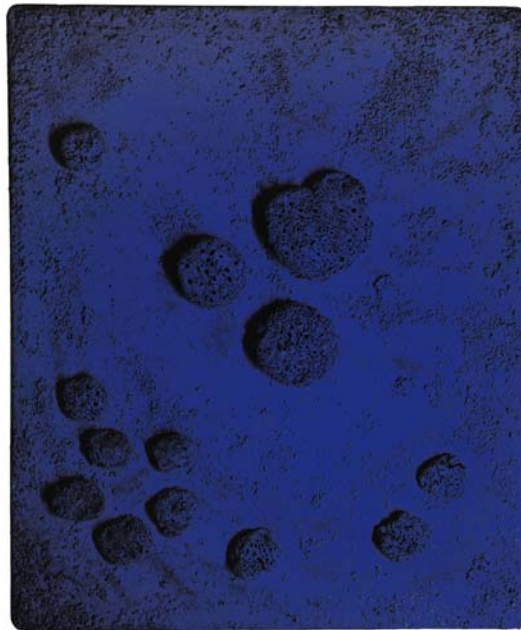


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Sotheby's New York to offer Yves Klein's Archisponge (RE 11) in the Evening Sale of Contemporary Art on November 11, 2008

Most Significant Work in Yves Klein's Celebrated *Relief Eponge* series



Pictured: Yves Klein, **Archisponge (RE 11)**, 1960,
est. in the region of \$25 million

New York, New York – Yves Klein's **Archisponge RE 11** (est. in the region of \$25 million*) from 1960, measuring 78 ¾ x 65 in (200 x 165 cm), will be offered on November 11th, 2008 as the cornerstone of the Evening sale of Contemporary Art at Sotheby's New York. Klein's *Relief Eponges* are the perfect encapsulation of the different strands of his art, combining his keen sense of aesthetics with his quest to express the immaterial, chance, mysticism and not least the theatrical. The synthesis of tactile organic mass

and his signature IKB (International Klein Blue) pigment renders this work, in both size and presence, the most significant work in the artist's *Relief Eponge* series. Significantly, Klein chose a prominent placement for *Archisponge (RE 11)* in the only museum show of Klein's work during his lifetime, which took place at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany in 1961, a year before the artist's death.

For Yves Klein, as well as other artists of the sublime such as Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still and Barnett Newman, the order and placement of his work in the overall environment of an exhibition was in itself an artistic enterprise. For an artist of such theoretical dimension as Klein, the relation of each work to the other, and most importantly, the concept for the interaction between art, space and the viewer was an important extension of the creative act. The artist's commitment to this practice was already manifest at the beginning of his blue monochrome period with the installation of *Proposte monochrome, epoca blu* at the Apollinaire Gallery in Milan in January 1957. The gallery was hung with eleven paintings of the same ultramarine blue and same dimension (78 x 56 cm) hung 20 cm from the wall on brackets. The pigment of these unframed works covered the sides of the panels, emphasizing the chromatic unity of Klein's aesthetic as it filled the small space. In May 1957 at Iris Clert's gallery, Klein included an element of performance and ritual with the release of 1,001 blue balloons to inaugurate the French showing of his *Monochrome Propositions* and promote his idea of expanding the monochrome into the total environment. That same month, Klein created the first *Immatériel* room in his exhibition of experimental works at Colette Allendy's gallery. Yet, the penultimate expression of Klein's desire to implement his Blue Revolution through proposed actions and the public presentation of his creations was the occasion of the only museum show of his work during the artist's short lifetime. *Monochrome und Feuer (Monochrome and Fire)* was not simply a retrospective of Klein's work, but a fully realized celebration of the almost limitless creativity of this visionary artist.

The Museum Haus Lange and Haus Esters in Krefeld, Germany began as private villas commissioned in the late 1920s by Hermann Lange, a chairman of a large textile consortium, as part of a somewhat larger building scheme that was only partially realized. Lange chose the avant-garde Mies van der Rohe as architect and set him the task of creating a living space that could also display his extensive art collection. A neighboring residence was also built for Lange's associate Josef Esters. After the war and Herr Lange's death in 1942, his son offered Haus Lange in 1955 as a public venue to the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum under the enlightened direction of Paul Wember with the provision that they be used for the display of Contemporary Art. (Haus Esters would follow several years later). Museum Haus Lange became a premier showcase for some of the

most adventuresome artists of the day, such as Alberto Burri and Georges Mathieu in 1959 and Jean Tinguely in 1960. In coming years, Christo would drape its room and Richard Serra would place his monumental steel structures throughout the first floor, but the greatest synthesis of artist and building was achieved by Yves Klein who demonstrated a natural sympathy to the cellular nature of van der Rohe's tranquil spaces and extensive white walls.

Klein was delighted when Wember invited him in February 1960 to exhibit at Museum Haus Lange. In a nine-page letter, Klein outlined an exhibit/event of a magnitude surpassing Wember's expectations which would unknowingly be the largest celebration in his lifetime of the variety of Klein's imaginative oeuvre. Klein studied the floor plan and visited the villa twice in 1960, resulting in an annotated sketch proposing the layout of the exhibition and requesting the addition of a wall partition between the living room and dining room to create a large enclosed entry gallery. For display within these designated chambers, Klein selected 54 objects: among them, 5 large scale Sponge Reliefs, 10 Monochromes in his signature blue, pink and gold, 3 obelisks in the same triad, 11 Anthropometries, 4 Cosmogies, several drawings and *Ci-gît l'espace*, the artist's tomb-like gold floor panel with blue wreath and pink flowers. Klein's handwritten list of selected works began with four major *Relief Eponges* including *Archisponge (RE 11)* which was placed on the center of the far wall flanked by doorways into the chambers for pink and gold works. As a key work in the main entrance gallery, *Archisponge (RE 11)* was surrounded by large IKB monochromes, sponge sculptures and other large Sponge Reliefs in blue. As Pierre Restany noted, the majority of the works, including *Archisponge (RE 11)*, in the exhibition were created by Klein during the year he was planning the show, so his creative output fulfilled his vision for the Krefeld exhibition. As Restany wrote, "Autumn 1960 was the apotheosis of a year of fertile events for Yves Klein, rich in realizations, prodigious in visionary bedazzlements." (P. Restany, *Yves Klein, le Monochrome*, Paris, 1974, pp. 141-142).

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium.

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