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Iconic Masterwork by Edvard Munch to be Sold by Sotheby's New York on November 3, 2008



Vampire from 1894 is Estimated to Bring in Excess of \$30 million

Painting will be Exhibited in London and Moscow this October

September 23, 2008: New York, NY -- Sotheby's November 3, 2008 evening sale of Impressionist and Modern Art in New York will feature an exceptionally rare masterpiece by Edvard Munch -- **Vampire**, from 1894. This emotionally charged image numbers among the most iconic compositions in art history. A spectacular representation of love, sex and death, **Vampire** created a sensation when it was first exhibited and evokes a similar reaction today; calling to mind the provocative work of artists such as Goya, Francis Bacon and Damien Hirst. One of a group of four oil paintings of this theme that Munch completed between 1893 and 1894, **Vampire** is the only example not owned by a museum; the others residing in institutions in Oslo and Gothenburg. Never before offered at auction, the painting is expected to bring in excess of \$30 million*.

Emmanuel Di-Donna, Vice Chairman, Impressionist and Modern Art Worldwide and Head of Sotheby's Evening Sales, New York, noted "This painting could not have come on to the auction market at a better time. International buyers have already witnessed the potential of a great Munch with *Girls on the Bridge* which Sotheby's sold last May for over \$30 million, and the November sale represents a unique opportunity for those collectors who are avidly seeking a masterpiece as powerful and emotionally charged as some of the greatest works by Bacon, Freud and Hirst that have been making headlines in recent auction seasons."

"Few paintings pack as hard a punch as Munch's *Vampire*," commented Simon Shaw, Senior Vice President and Head



of Sotheby's Impressionist and Modern Art Department in New York. "Like *The Scream*, it distills extraordinarily intense feelings into a simple, unforgettable motif. The lovers, locked in their dark embrace, evoke love's paradox as a source of tenderness and pain."

Munch conceived of *Vampire* as a meditation on love for his grand opus of the 1890s, the *Frieze of Life*, which featured other celebrated images including *The Scream* and *Madonna*. The present version was shown

at his seminal exhibition at the Berlin Secession in 1902 and has been described by Petra Pettersen, Curator of the Munch-Museet in Oslo, as "one of the finest, most serene renderings of the motif."

Munch's original notion for *Vampire* came about one afternoon in his studio, during a modeling session when his acquaintance Adolf Paul paid him a visit. Munch's model had "long, flame-red hair that fell over her shoulders like congealed blood," according to Paul, who recounted that the artist directed him to play the following role: "Kneel down in front of her,' he shouted at me. 'Place your head against her,' I obeyed. She leaned forward over me and pressed her lips against my neck, her red hair spilling out over me. Munch started painting, and before long he had completed his *Vampire*."

This unforgettable masterwork has been exhibited widely, including more than 10 years on loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Executed in 1894, the painting was sold to Munch's avid collector John Anker in 1903. It was later acquired by a private collection in 1934, where it remained for more than seventy years. Prior to exhibition and sale in New York, **Vampire** will be on view at Sotheby's London from October 3-7, 2008 and in Moscow from October 16-19, 2008.

Exhibition schedule:

Sotheby's London: October 3-7, 2008

The Moscow Museum of Modern Art: October 16-19, 2008

Sotheby's New York: October 29-November 3, 2008

Auction

Sotheby's New York: November 3, 2008

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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