

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

CHRISTIE'S

### From art school to artist: Michael Craig-Martin

*In the first of a series of films ahead of the Goldsmiths Gallery Project auction at Christie's, former Goldsmiths professor Michael Craig-Martin remembers the 'wonderfully exciting' YBA years — and discusses his own studio practice*

David Kemp and Michael Craig-Martin



#### **You've got a great studio, how do you use it?**

'Everything is planned here, everything is worked out here. It's kind of the centre of my thinking. I come here every morning and stay into the evening.'

#### **What are your memories of Goldsmiths?**

'The Seventies was a wonderful time to teach. There was an academic freedom that doesn't exist today; you could do anything, and so we did. Today things are more regulated. There's a desire to avoid making mistakes, and that takes away some of the adventure we had.'

#### **What did the YBAs mean to you?**

'I've never taught in any school at a time when I didn't have good students, but there were a lot of them in those years. They had a chemistry – a friendship – but there was also a competitiveness. It was a wonderfully exciting time. I didn't invent it, but if I could have, I'd invent it again.'

'There is no house style for the YBAs. Between Liam Gillick and Damien, Fiona Rae and Gareth Hume, Sarah Lucas and Mat Collishaw, there are enormous differences of interest – of medium, of style, of concern. But they share a passion, intensity, and clarity about what they're doing.'

They have a very clear idea of their own centre, and I think that's something that I tried to encourage people to locate.'

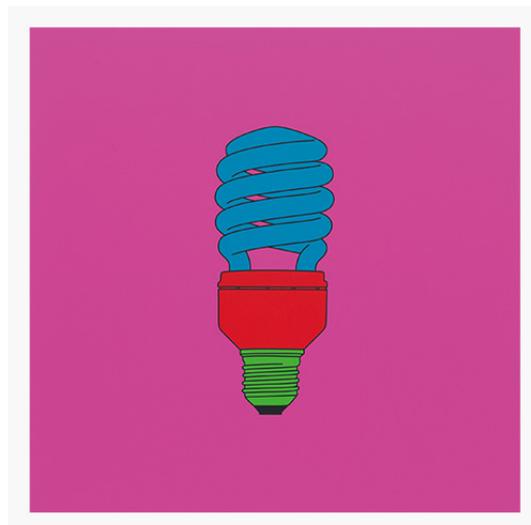
**What advice would you give to someone finishing an undergraduate BA?**

'The advantage of being at an art school is that you feel part of something. When you leave art school, you lose that community, that sense of directive purpose. You have to be able to conjure that for yourself.

'The essence of art is really in belief. And it's my belief as an artist, my conviction in what I'm doing. But the belief has to be shared by the viewer – and if the viewer can't share it, it doesn't work.'

**What work will you be including in the auction at Christie's to raise funding for the new gallery?**

'I've donated a painting. It's four feet square, and it's just a single image – a painting of a lightbulb, but a new, green, energy-saving lightbulb.



*Michael Craig-Martin (Teacher at Goldsmiths: 1974-1988, 1994-2000), Untitled (Light Bulb), 2014.  
Acrylic on aluminium. 48 x 48 ins. (121.9 x 121.9 cm.)  
Estimate: £16,000-20,000*

'Obviously the lightbulb is the image for having an idea: it's the image for enlightenment, for lighting up the room from day to night. As an energy-saving bulb, it's touching on green issues. There are so many things that one associates with that, and they all seem like important contemporary references.'

*Work by Michael Craig-Martin and many of his celebrated former Goldsmiths students will be offered at the Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Auction featuring The Gallery at Goldsmiths London. Christie's, King Street, 12 February 2015. Viewing 7-11 February.*