

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT

Sale Interest: 27 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



**PHILLIPS**

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Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT

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## Auction & Viewing Location

6 October 2023 7pm HKT  
G/F, WKCDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural  
District, No. 8 Austin Road West, Kowloon,  
Hong Kong.

## Contemporary Art Department

Danielle So  
Specialist, Head of Evening Sale  
+852 2318 2027  
[danielleso@phillips.com](mailto:danielleso@phillips.com)

## Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making  
enquiries please refer to this sale as  
HK010523 or 20th Century & Contemporary  
Art Evening Sale.

## Absentee and Telephone Bids

tel +852 2318 2029  
[bidshongkong@phillips.com](mailto:bidshongkong@phillips.com)

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1  
**Ebecho Muslimova**  
*FATEBE SINKHOLE*  
Estimate  
HK\$250,000 — 450,000



2  
**Miriam Cahn**  
*o.t.*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,000,000 — 2,000,000



3  
**Robin F. Williams**  
*Leave Britney Alone*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000



4  
**Hilary Pecis**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
HK\$5,500,000 — 7,500,000



5  
**Jadé Fadojutimi**  
*Debris is welcome in this stream...*  
Estimate  
HK\$4,000,000 — 7,000,000



6  
**Loie Hollowell**  
*Clouds, Cactus and Sun*  
Estimate  
HK\$3,000,000 — 4,000,000



7  
**Nicolas Party**  
*Still Life with an Olive*  
Estimate  
HK\$26,000,000 — 40,000,000



8  
**Yoshitomo Nara**  
*No Means No*  
Estimate  
HK\$52,000,000 — 72,000,000



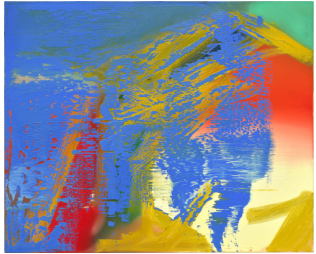
9  
**Zhang Xiaogang**  
*Bloodline Series - Father and Daughter*  
Estimate  
HK\$5,500,000 — 7,500,000



10  
**Liu Ye**  
*The End of Baroque*  
Estimate  
HK\$18,000,000 — 28,000,000

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11  
**Gerhard Richter**  
*Abstraktes Bild (456-2)*  
Estimate  
HK\$7,500,000 — 12,000,000



12  
**Lynne Drexler**  
*Meadow Aside*  
Estimate  
HK\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



13  
**Zao Wou-Ki**  
*10.05.76*  
Estimate  
HK\$12,000,000 — 20,000,000



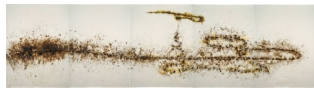
14  
**Chu Teh-Chun**  
*No. 164*  
Estimate  
HK\$6,000,000 — 10,000,000



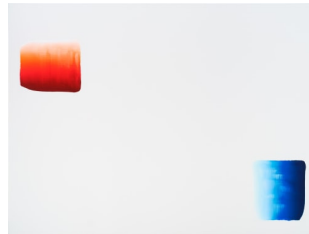
15  
**Zao Wou-Ki**  
*20.8.84*  
Estimate  
HK\$4,800,000 — 6,800,000



16  
**Zeng Fanzhi**  
*Untitled 07-3*  
Estimate  
HK\$6,000,000 — 9,000,000



17  
**Cai Guo-Qiang**  
*Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr. Ye Who ...)*  
Estimate  
HK\$9,000,000 — 14,000,000



18  
**Lee Ufan**  
*Dialogue*  
Estimate  
HK\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000



19  
**Andreas Gursky**  
*Stateville, Illinois*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000



20  
**Rudolf Stingel**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
HK\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000

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21  
**Hernan Bas**  
*The dead line*  
Estimate  
HK\$5,000,000 — 7,000,000



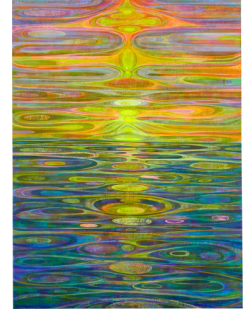
22  
**Issy Wood**  
*Swan / He won't 2*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,000,000 — 2,000,000



23  
**Chris Huen Sin Kan**  
*MuiMui*  
Estimate  
HK\$600,000 — 800,000



24  
**Chen Fei**  
*Life is Porn*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000



25  
**Huang Yuxing**  
*Sunrise and Sunset*  
Estimate  
HK\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



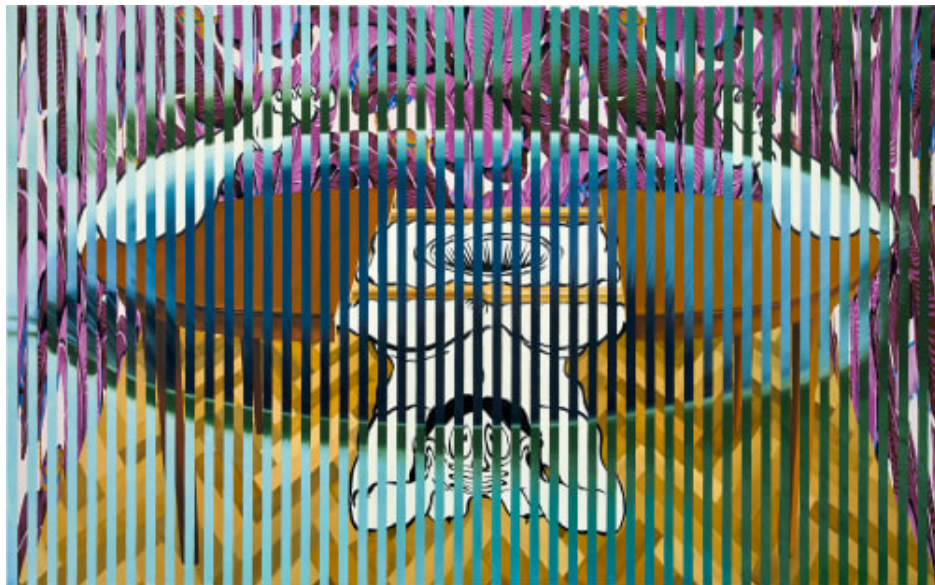
26  
**Mr.**  
*"Penyo-Henyo" Pyopyo Edition ...*  
Estimate  
HK\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000



27  
**Tomokazu Matsuyama**  
*Daylight In My Place*  
Estimate  
HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000

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1

### Ebecho Muslimova

#### *FATEBE SINKHOLE*

acrylic and oil on canvas  
152.4 x 243.8 cm. (60 x 95 7/8 in.)  
Painted in 2020.

#### Estimate

HK\$250,000 — 450,000  
€30,000 — 54,100  
\$32,100 — 57,700

[Go to Lot](#)



Making her first major auction debut, the Russian, New York-based artist, Ebecho Muslimova achieved recent acclaim after her solo exhibition with David Zwirner in London and her first institutional show at The Drawing Center in New York in 2021. Born in Dagestan, Russia, Muslimova received her BFA at Cooper Union in 2010.

During her time as an undergraduate, the artist created Fatebe (Fat + Ebe [her nickname])—initially conceived as a caricature of herself to reflect the artist’s state of mind and the world around her. In her current practice, Fatebe has matured beyond a simple self-portrait. The artist explains: ‘She began as a carnivalesque caricature of myself at a moment in my life. The tension at the time inspired a spill-over into this larger-than life character. She is of me, but her essence is an amplified version of my own character and personality. At times she is both an aspiration and a fear—like I am equally wishing to be able to confront life like her, and simultaneously horrified at this urge and possibility. She is a type of self-portrait, just not of me.’<sup>i</sup>

Placed in absurd, and at times, abject situations and environments, Fatebe is the artist’s sexually and bodily liberated alter-ego, touching upon anxieties, sexuality, femininity and vulnerability. The present work was first exhibited in May 2020 for her solo exhibition with Galerie Maria Bernheim: [FATEBE: EBECHO MUSLIMOVA](#). The show was centered around the idea of the *danse macabre*: ‘FATEBE interacts with skeletons and churches, stripping and playing in compositions that continue to defy received societal ideas of taste and decorum.’<sup>i</sup>

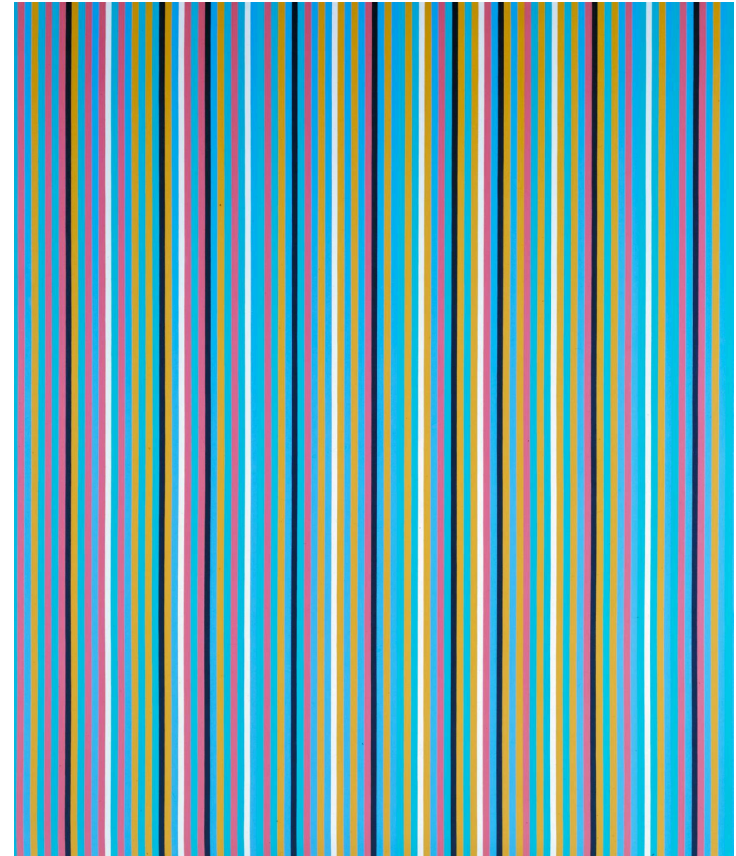
Painted in 2020, *FATEBE SINKHOLE*, is a sardonic display of the female nude. Contorting forms and figure, Muslimova’s treatment of her character is nothing short of generous: the figure’s legs stretch around the table—seemingly both pulling it apart and holding it together—while she hides the rest of herself beneath it. She clasps her hands around her mouth, looking directly up at the viewer, in horror, in secrecy, in fear—as if we’ve witnessed a moment, straddled between being caught and hidden. The scene is further distorted with a pattern of vertical stripes over the image, acting as a veil or curtain between the subject and viewer.

*“Throughout the history of figuration the veiled female subject has signified ... the impression of something behind the veil—that there is a secret pleasure hidden, a forbidden truth.... In contrast, Fatebe occupies an overabundant, visible, spectacular, and maximal body. In ‘lifting’ this veil, she embodies a pure plenitude of unbridled presence.” — Marie Heilich, Unrealism: New Figurative Painting*

## A Nod to Op Art

The rise of the Op art movement in the 1960’s was championed by artists like Bridget Riley, Victor Vasarely, and Josef Albers. Its beginnings can be traced back to the Renaissance, when artists were experimenting with perspective and thus gave birth to the use of *trompe l’oeil* within art. Much like

*trompe l’oeil paintings*, the Op art movement was driven by investigating various perceptual effects and optical illusions using light, color, and form.



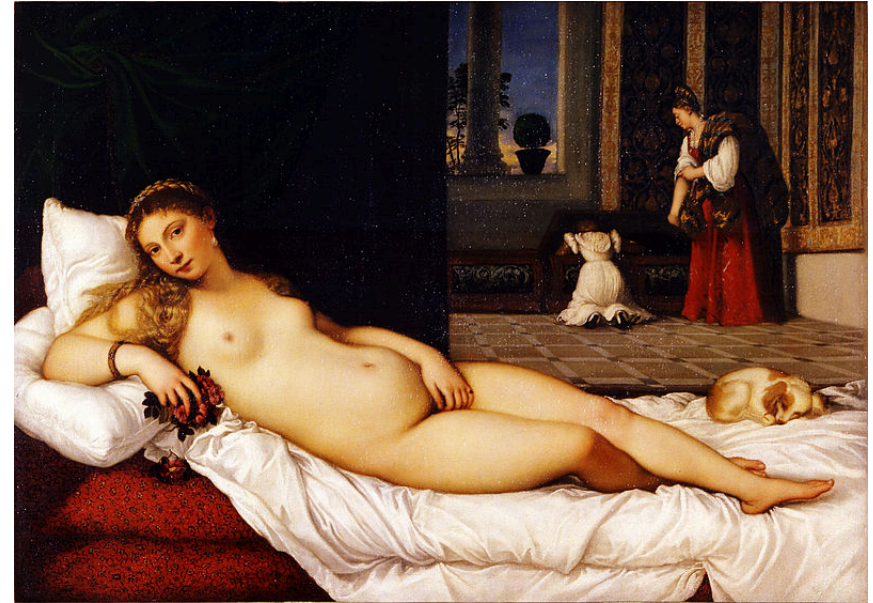
Bridget Riley, *Achaian*, 1981 Collection of the Tate, London Artwork: © Bridget Riley

Both Op art and *trompe l’oeil paintings* were concerned with manipulation of sight—also much like Muslimova’s use of these technical and formal devices to emphasize a latent psychological illusion at play. The illusion within *FATEBE SINKHOLE* are twofold: to conceal and to reveal. The vertical stripes along the work function as screen-like veils that simultaneously distort and emphasize—have the blinds been drawn on us or have we drawn the blinds on the scene presented?

*“What is seen of the screen is so manifestly shown...the extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) and the brilliance of the shifting patterns of light and shade on the screen helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation. Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world.” — Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’*

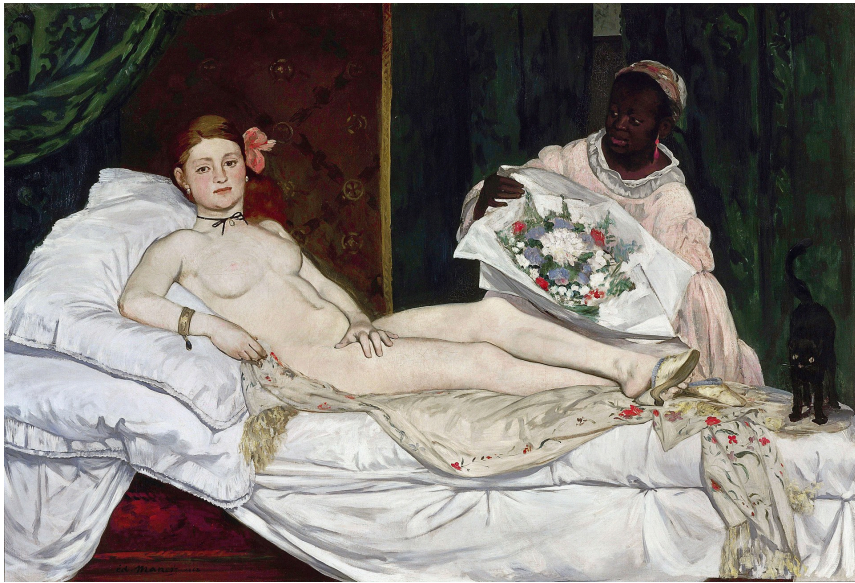
### The Naked and the Nude

While exploring themes of sexuality and gender through her practice—for Muslimova, Fatebe’s brazen display of the body seems to be the most modest aspect of the work. In this case, it is not Fatebe’s nudity that delivers a sense of humor or discomfort, but it is rather in the act of being caught within the figure’s nakedness, in which viewer’s gaze is held. In ‘Ways of Seeing’, John Berger makes a distinction between nakedness and nudity: ‘A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. (The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object.) Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display...To be on display is to have the surface of one’s own skin, the hairs of one’s own body, turned into a disguise which, in that situation, can never be discarded. The nude is condemned to never being naked. Nudity is a form of dress.’<sup>iii</sup>

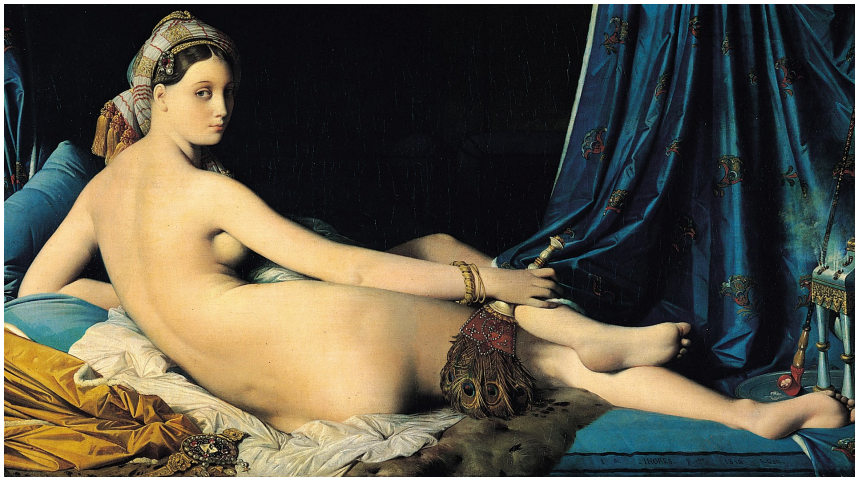


Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1534 Collection of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence





Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863-65 Collection of the Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814 Collection of the Louvre Museum, Paris

In the slightest of moments, Muslimova has so wonderfully captured the tension, the vulnerability, the fear, the horror, the humor, the joy, and the fantasies of being a woman on display. And whilst we decode the scene before us, Muslimova furtively presents a far more complex reversal of roles—a subversion of Berger's nude.

*“Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified...”*  
— Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’

<sup>i</sup> Ebecho Muslimova, quoted in Sam Gaskin, ‘Ebecho Muslimova, Outré Artist Backed by Zwirner, Wins Borlem Prize’, *Ocula Magazine*, 13 September 2022, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Galerie Maria Bernheim, ‘Overview of FATEBE: Ebecho Muslimova’, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> John Berger, ‘Ways of Seeing’, [online](#)

#### Provenance

Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

#### Exhibited

Zurich, Galerie Maria Bernheim, *FATEBE: Ebecho Muslimova*, 12 March - 30 May 2020

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2

### Miriam Cahn

*o.t.*

signed with the artist's initial and dated 'M

19.7.+31.9.17' on the stretcher

oil on canvas

185 x 180 cm. (72 7/8 x 70 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2017.

#### Estimate

HK\$1,000,000 — 2,000,000

€120,000 — 240,000

\$128,000 — 256,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Boldly unapologetic throughout her impressive career spanning across five decades, Swiss-born artist Miriam Cahn does not shy away from the depiction of controversial imagery in her thought-provoking body of work. Taking inspiration from the world around her under the influence of the feminist movements of the 1970s and 80s, Cahn's enigmatic figurative canvases are often set in nightmarish dreamscapes, filled with visceral depictions of violence, horror, and tragedy. Both raw and confrontational at once, these dystopian scenes are unpleasantly mesmerising, evoking strong physical, mental, and emotional feelings in viewers and often, provoking discomfort. Rather than pursuing shock value blindly, it is not the artist's intention to glorify trauma or normalise oppression. Instead, rooted in her view of ethics that people in our age and time should act humanely among fellow humans, Cahn's works not only form a deep probe into the human condition in response to current events, but also act as feminist critiques of the patriarchy and misuses of power, advocating for a larger role for women in the wider realm.

Painted in 2017, the same year that the artist was featured at *documenta 14, o.t., 19.07.+31.09.2017* is a dazzling large-scale example of her multi-standing nude figures. While the present work does not reference a specific moment in time, it showcases a powerful physical expression of violence and victimisation that could be compared to recent tragedies of our time and age. Set against a barren landscape composed of predominantly dark hues, three nude figures face the viewer, all of whom appear phantom-like due to their semi-translucent skin. Cahn sets the scene and strikes a nerve. The figure on the left, visibly more prominent than the other two in bold swathes of iridescent white, throws a strong punch forward; with the deranged figure in the middle, bruised in a myriad of auburns and sickly-limes with a missing arm, taking the brunt of the punch, almost as though its soul was knocked out of its body whilst the figure on the far right, with feminine features and lifeless dots for eyes, appears to stand in solitary. Although the depiction of nude bodies is very much present in the present composition, any hints of carnal pleasure are instantaneously overshadowed by the one-sided explicit brutality presented on the canvas. Intentionally not identifying her characters and keeping them gender-ambiguous, Cahn relentlessly awakens viewers to the horrors that plague our humanity, as well as its fragility.

## The Artist's Working Method: From the Feminist Movements to an Age of Correctness



Detail of the current lot

At the beginning of her artistic career, Cahn was deeply inspired by the performance art scene of the 1970s and 80s, and its focus on the female body. In her own words, she recalls, "it was something else, something totally new, and there were a lot of women in those movements." [Miriam Cahn, quoted in conversation with O. Zahm, *Purple Magazine*, Issue 35, Spring/Summer 2021.] Beyond the artistic realm at the time, the feminist activism movement also exploded in the United States and around the world, changing society forever by expanding women's rights, opportunities, and identities. Evoking the activist spirit of this very period, Cahn became involved in a number of feminist and anti-nuclear movements, and frequented highway bridges in Basel to create murals. She had devised a unique working method early on: a fast-working pace, in that her works are dated to the day they are made. Like the essence of performance art in which speed is key, Cahn uses her entire body during her artmaking process. "The body dictated more or less the speed or duration of a performance and I found that very interesting." From painting on the ground of her studio floor crawling on her hands and knees, sometimes even in the nude or with her eyes blindfolded to reduce the influence of the mind on her creative process, Cahn's treatment

of the body radiates beyond its physical condition, becoming not only a motif in her paintings, but also as a medium of its own.

In the pictorial worlds that she conjures up, similar to the present work *o.t., 19.07.+31.09.2017*, the artist counters the traditional representation of the female and gender-specific roles. Deliberate portrayals of her figures with androgynous features reflect an awareness of gender fluidity, whilst amputated or disfigured limbs addresses the themes of global conflict, exile, and refuge. The female figure that seems to cover her genitalia in shame or fear is a recurrent pose in her body of work and evokes female empowerment. Though in fear, she stands very much alive with her eyes meeting the viewer directly, and her form palpitates with a sense of totemic power. Rebuking the cancel culture of society today, Cahn represents all the complex worldly issues that we face in a raw yet empathetic way, one that is truly unique and unpretentious.

*“Female artists have a lot to do. Because art history is mostly done by men. So they have their vision on females, which means females are to be erotic [...] It’s a tradition in art history. So we have a lot to do. Because we have to rewrite the art history.” — Miriam Cahn*

When interviewed by Purple Magazine in 2021, Cahn spoke to Oliver Zahn about gender and the status of women in art history.

**Oliver Zahn:** One can sense that, with you — beyond gender positions, beyond sexual organs, the individual with his phallus, the other with her clitoris — there is this possibility of exchange, that in the end, we’re all the same, getting beyond this imposition of gender. Do you agree?

**Miriam Cahn:** Naturally, we are all the same, and that is sexuality! But not in the history of art. If you look at how women are shown, I mean, these individuals with a clitoris and a vagina, I really like what men did, but then, that’s the thing — it was done mainly by men! That’s why, in art, woman is reduced to sexualized, even pornographic representations. Her identity is also reduced to the mother figure, to the Virgin Mary, or model, or muse. This is changing hugely at the moment, and I think it’s really very interesting. I’m a feminist, and as women artists, we have the opportunity to invent new images. New images, not new paintings, and all that shit. With these images, you have to start showing true sexuality. And I do it from my own point of view, with my body as my instrument. This is my commentary on sexuality and on how it can be shown nowadays.

**OZ:** It’s a combat for you, as a woman, against representations of the female that are imposed by men.

**MC:** But that’s not enough. If women and men really are equal in life, like in art, and also in the art world, you have to start doing a lot more as a woman artist. And that is highly political. I wouldn’t like to be a man artist because they’ve done it all from their point of view already.

Read the full interview [here](#).

## Collector’s Digest

- Trained at the Gewerbeschule in Basel from 1968 to 1973, Miriam Cahn experimented with performance art, writing, murals and graphic design before fully directing her practice towards monochromatic, large-scale, charcoal drawings to painting with colour in the 1990s.
- She became the first woman to have a solo show at the Kunsthalle Basel in 1983 and represented Switzerland at La Biennale di Venezia in 1984.
- She has had a long history of key exhibitions, including early presence in European institutions.
- Cahn has realised numerous solo shows at major institutions such as the Kunstmuseum Bern, Haus der Kunst in Munich and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid.
- She has gained wider recognition relatively recently, including a large installation on view with Cecilia Alemani’s group show *The Milk of Dreams* at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022.
- Most recently, her works were exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris from 17 February to 14 May 2023. Titled *Ma pensée sérielle*, it is the artist’s first major retrospective in a French institution.
- Her works are in the collections of Tate Modern, London; the Museo Reina Sofia; and the Pinault Collection in Paris, among others. Prices for Cahn’s works have increased, with medium-sized works now costing from \$50,000 to \$105,000, or over \$1 million.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-GkCS3Z8mM&t=204s>

Miriam Cahn speaks about her works at her studio in Switzerland

## Provenance

Meyer Riegger, Basel  
Private Collection, Asia  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Karlsruhe, Meyer Riegger, *LACHEN MÜSSEN: Miriam Cahn*, 3 March - 5 May 2018

Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, *everything is equally important*, 5 June - 14 October 2019

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3

### Robin F. Williams

#### *Leave Britney Alone*

signed with the artist's initials, signed and dated 'RFW Robin F. Williams 2019' on the reverse; further signed and inscribed 'Robin Williams 276 Greenpoint Ave' on the stretcher

oil on canvas

109.2 x 152.4 cm. (42 7/8 x 60 in.)

Painted in 2019.

#### Estimate

HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000

€144,000 — 264,000

\$154,000 — 282,000

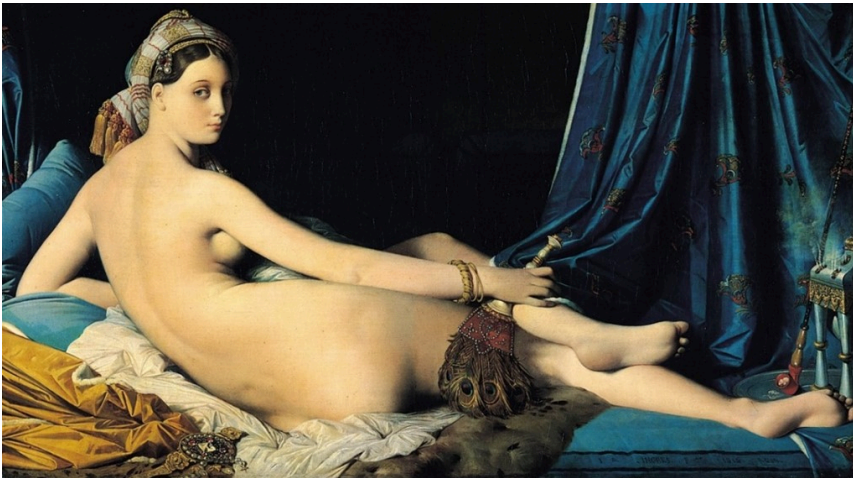
[Go to Lot](#)



*"I've been painting women that I like to think of as zombie nudes. They are reanimations of nudes from art history or pop culture." — Robin F. Williams*

## Sentient Portraiture

Renowned for her vividly cerebral portraits of commanding female figures, Robin F. Williams' paintings explore the complex interplay between gender and power in American visual culture. After discovering Édouard Manet's infamous *Olympia* in high school, the Ohio-born artist swiftly produced her own rendition, feeling compelled to defend its virtue in an accompanying essay. This formative experience planted the seeds for Williams' decades-long examination into representations of womankind. Throughout her practice, Williams has sought to challenge ingrained assumptions of gender and sexuality through depictions of cultural female icons she terms 'readymade nudes.' Renditions of characters like Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Ariel, and Farrah Fawcett examine the objectification and limited narratives imposed on these familiar faces. As the artist explains, her zombie-esque subjects exude an almost manic self-awareness in contrast to the oblivious availability of traditional nudes.<sup>i</sup>



Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814 Collection of the Louvre Museum, Paris

*"I feel like [traditional] nudes, by definition, are not aware or if they are aware, it's of no consequence. How they function for us culturally is that their persona—their nakedness—is an outfit. Their availability to us is a skin that they're wearing." —*

*Robin F. Williams*

Now based in Brooklyn, the 39-year-old Rhode Island School of Design graduate continues to draw inspiration from her youthful fascinations - from French masters like Manet to vintage advertisements to the male gaze's ubiquity across high and low realms. Fusing representational painting with commercial aesthetics, Williams deftly maps the pervasive objectification of the female form across institutional and consumerist landscapes. Her layered references and stylistic mashups invite the viewers to simply enjoy her dramatic compositions and textures on a visual level. She relishes uniting seemingly disparate elements into compelling new hybrids. For Williams, the idea is 'to paint a disturbing or subversive affect, something hard to interpret, and making that what draws the viewer in.'<sup>ii</sup> Many of her current pieces appropriate and re-contextualize found photographs and media images, yet alter them in thought-provoking ways.

## Britney Spears' Performance

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMX1xE-NE-iA>

Britney Spears *I'm a Slave 4 U* at the 2001 VMAs

As exemplified in the present lot, *Leave Britney Alone* is based on Britney Spears' captivating performance of 'I'm a Slave 4 U' at the 2001 VMAs, where she slinked across the stage flourishing a yellow serpent named Banana, cementing the ritualistic, animalistic overtones of the spectacle. It is this charged VMA moment that forms the basis of this painting, unveiled at Frieze London in 2019. Deriving its title from YouTube celebrity Chris Crocker's 2007 viral video 'Leave Britney Alone', the painting depicts Spears locked in an ophidian embrace, flashing the artist's signature ghoulish grin while her body is rendered in blue and red polka dots. She wears the snake like a scaly couture gown, its lurid green and yellow hues matching the pop star's own slinky performance look.

In portraying Spears, Williams focuses on her power and complexity at the height of her celebrity. The portrait blends Spears' femme fatale VMA persona with a Paparazzi-facing fury from later that same year. Williams also integrates craft techniques from amateur YouTube tutorials, which she used to achieve the marbling effect on the snake, linking Spears' own creative pursuits with quotidian domesticity. Williams deftly channels these layers into a singular portrait, a nuanced reflection on Britney Spears as both cultural construct and fallible human. As the artist says, her aim is to add to the conversation, not simply extract another piece of the pop star.<sup>iii</sup> Through her adept integration of digital and analog elements, Williams manifests 21st century figures that compellingly straddle the threshold between human and artificial construct.

<sup>i</sup> Samuel Anderson, 'At Frieze, "Leave Britney Alone!"', *Garage*, 6 October 2019, [online](#)

**Robin F. Williams**

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<sup>ii</sup> Robin F. Williams, quoted in Megan N. Liberty, 'Robin F. Williams: Model Behavior', *Juxtapoz Magazine*, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Robin F. Williams, quoted in Samuel Anderson, 'At Frieze, "Leave Britney Alone!"', *Garage*, 6 October 2019, [online](#)

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**Provenance**

P·P·O·W Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner



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4 ♦

### Hilary Pecis

*Untitled*

signed and dated 'Hilary Pecis 2022' on the reverse

acrylic on linen

188 x 162.6 cm. (74 x 64 in.)

Painted in 2022.

#### Estimate

HK\$5,500,000 — 7,500,000

€661,000 — 901,000

\$705,000 — 962,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Vivid, eclectic, and warm, Californian artist Hilary Pecis's intimate vignettes of interior spaces are celebrations of the sun-filled, laidback spaces of Los Angeles. Her canvases are joyful tapestries of colour, filled patchworks of pattern that are effortless and free, whilst simultaneously maintaining a certain meticulousness and intention with each mark.

Situated within the traditional genre of still life painting, Pecis's distinct style of flat yet vibrant colours form an idiosyncratic visual lexicon that mimics the warmth and cosiness of afternoon sunlight, tapping into the local Southern Californian aesthetic. Fittingly, the present work was first unveiled in the artist's solo exhibition, *Warmly*, with Rachel Uffner Gallery in 2022.

### Beauty is in the Details

Pecis's unique roster of quotidian motifs includes patterned fabrics, blooming flowers, multicoloured vases, stacks of art books, and luscious bowls of fruit inspired by the private homes of her own and her close friends. These motifs coalesce into her unique compositions that depict cluttered tabletop still lives, or wider vantages of light-flooded domestic spaces, placing an emphasis on the beauty of the small details in life:

*“When we spend a little extra time looking at the everyday objects around us, [whether] it is the things we see inside or outside, the living and inanimate, things staged and those that move such as shadows and reflections, we notice the magic in all of those things. My attempt is to pick up on some of the nuances and elevate those things.” — Hilary Pecis*

In the present work, a salon-style hang of picture frames on the back wall features an array of animals and flora, echoing the main subject matter in the foreground. Characterised by the use of Fauvist hues and flat blocks of colour, Hilary Pecis captures the laid back mood of Californian life with a unique colour palette that connects the natural movements of sunlight with shadow and reflection. Pecis's unique depiction of objects such as glass vases demonstrates the artist's technique prowess, whereby the nuances of light are carefully translated into smaller blocks of refracted colour.



Detail of the present lot

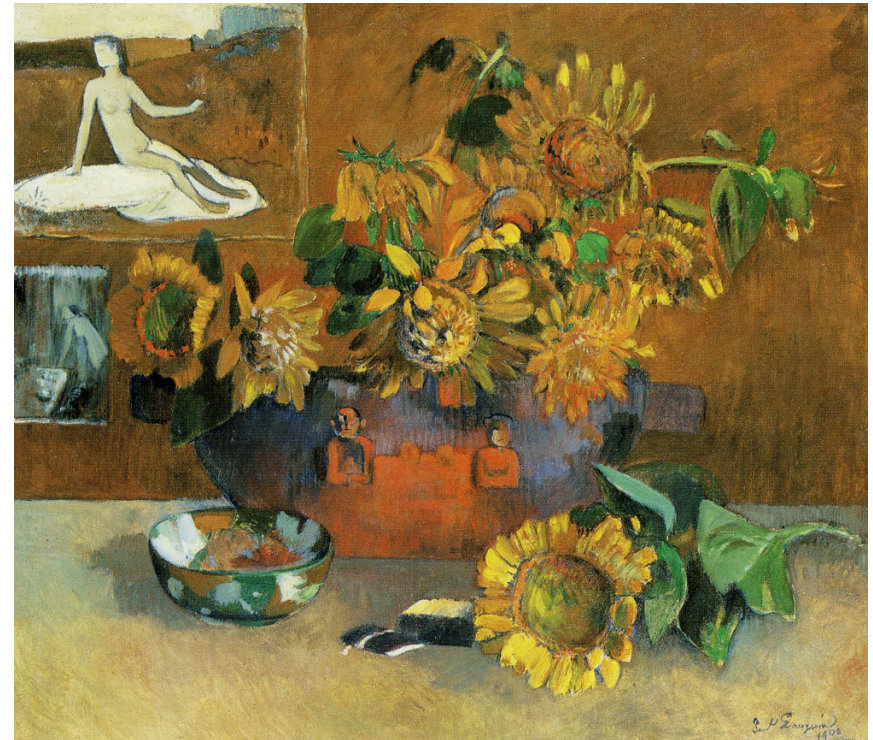
Rendered in bright yellow and orange, the tablecloth is a backdrop that vies for the viewer's attention against the vases of freshly blooming flowers at the centre of the canvas. In a more conventional still life, the crowded gallery wall of picture frames would be blurry and muted; but in Pecis's compositions, each element fights to be the centre of attention, seemingly clashing yet coexisting in complete harmony. This is achieved in part through a restricted colour palette: the blazing red is the same whether it colours a flower in the picture frame on the wall, the roses in the centre, or the ceramic vase to the right. The burnt ochre – one of Pecis's most characteristic colours – is present not only on the tablecloth, but also on the flowers and in the background.

Colour is flat, blunt, and wild in the artist's work, assembled in a certain order within self-determined constraints – like a paint by numbers drawing. For Pecis, the painterly quality of the acrylic medium is key in achieving the flatness of space: 'I love the flatness of acrylic. When I had a home studio I used acrylic out of necessity, but as my practice developed I embraced the qualities of the medium. My paintings have been likened to a paint-by-numbers, which is exactly how I go about making a painting. There are no blended parts that might require the ease of oil, and the flatness of acrylic really speaks to the way that I like to depict space.'<sup>1</sup>

## Reimagining Still Life

*“Still lifes and interiors are deeply rooted in the history of representational painting. There are all these opportunities to noodle away at other artists' or artisans' mark-making, trying to depict something that isn't mine... It's an opportunity to further my own vocabulary.” — Hilary Pecis*

Flowers and vases have been a key theme that still life painters return to throughout the years. Employing brushwork that is simultaneously effortless yet maintaining a methodical crispness, Pecis stays in close dialogue with Old Masters such as Pierre Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh and Henri Matisse, yet still keeps excellent company with Modernists such as David Hockney – both Pecis and Hockney share their love for depicting Californian light and lifestyles.



Paul Gauguin, *Sunflowers with Hope*, 1901 Private Collection



Vincent van Gogh, *Carafe and Dish with Citrus Fruit*, 1887 Collection of the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

In works such as *Untitled*, Pecis's use of a soft yet vibrant colour palette recalls works by Fauvist artists such as Matisse's *Still Life with Apples on a Pink Tablecloth*, who undoubtedly influenced Pecis's artistic approach. As she recalls the first time she saw his works: 'I remember thinking "That is the best painting I've ever seen in my life." It just shifted the way I looked at things.'<sup>ii</sup>



Left: David Hockney, *30 Sunflowers*, 1996 © David Hockney Right: The present lot

On the other hand, critics have often drawn parallels between Pecis and David Hockney, as both artists are known for their depictions of their own intimate versions of L.A.: one outdoor, one indoor – one that is filled with cool blue pools of water and rustic canyons, and one that is reminiscent of an art-loving friend's home that fills her space with picture frames, cosy cushions and fresh flowers. However, different from Hockney, Pecis does not include human figures in her work, emphasising the visual relationship between objects themselves. Despite the slight divergence between the two painters' stylistic choices, they're definitely on the same wavelength.

### A Room of One's Own

*"The things we surround ourselves with are signifiers of who we are and who we want to be." — Hilary Pecis*

Observation, deep attention, and the unique temporalities of the quotidian are precisely the

playing fields of Pecis's painting practice. Viewers are invited to inhabit Pecis's first-person experiences: each canvas is created in life-size formats, calling the viewer to step into the painter's shoes. The absence of any human figure positions the viewer as the protagonist, seated at the table with the exact view presented. Though generally devoid of figures, Pecis's work is still imbued with a distinct human touch – walking by her works, the presence of lives well-lived seeps through. There lies the cheerful existence of people who ate, cooked, read, lounged in these spaces, living their Bohemian L.A. lifestyle. When seen through Pecis' eyes, familiar interiors and landscapes of L.A. encourage us to celebrate the quiet power and vibrant beauty of the everyday.

*“I love the idea that those objects either define who they are or who they aspire to be. In addition to that, there is a pleasure in painting the way objects interact with each other as figures themselves.” — Hilary Pecis*

More importantly, the objects in Pecis's works become subjects and figures themselves that interact with each other, activating dialogue between the square of the picture frames and the voluptuous round lines of the flower vases. Each trinket carries its own presence as each line and pattern creates a layered topography that is amplified on a larger canvas. In examples by Van Gogh, Matisse and Hockney, we see this explored in a myriad of ways. All three artists experiment with their own unique vantage points, introducing different angles of portraying one's space: while Van Gogh brings a skewed perspective, [Matisse](#) presents a straight on wide angle view. Hockney, on the other hand, combines several vantage points into one, incorporating a unique Cubist flair.



Vincent van Gogh, *The Bedroom*, October 1888 Collection of the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam



David Hockney, *Large interior. Los Angeles*, 1988 Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York © David Hockney

These careful, lush depictions of relatively inexpensive decor — exhibition posters, tablecloths, picture frames, stacks of art works, wallpaper, paintbrushes — capture interior lives and aspirations better, perhaps, than direct portraiture might. In other words, you may not get a person’s face, but you get a sense of who they are. Each artist, including Pecis, explores found arrangements in private spaces – each one a pocket of expression that is rich with clues about its inhabitant’s lifestyle and values.

### Collector's Digest

- Hilary Pecis was born in Fullerton, California in 1979, and studied at the California College of Arts in Berkeley. Having spent much of her life in San Francisco, she moved to Los Angeles in 2014 and still works and lives in the city. Her works place a strong emphasis on local landscapes and domestic interiors, most known by her paintings that depict vases of flowers and stacks of art books.
- Pecis began her initial contact with the art world as a registrar at David Kordansky gallery, she then transitioned to a full-time artist in 2019.
- Since 2021, [David Kordansky has been representing](#) the artist in conjunction with Timothy Taylor and Rachel Uffner Gallery.
- Pecis’s first solo show with the gallery, and her most recent: [Paths Crossed](#), has just closed earlier this year on 22nd April 2023.
- Following a solo exhibition at Beijing’s Spurs Gallery in 2020, collectors with private museums in the Asian region have added her works to their collections. Her paintings now reside at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, the Zhuzhong Museum in Beijing, and the Sifang Art Museum in Nanjing, among others.
- The artist’s other solo exhibitions include: Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York (2022); Rockefeller Center, New York (2021); Timothy Taylor, London (2021) and Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York (2020).
- Her work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Flagler Museum, Palm Beach, Florida; Aishti Foundation, <sup>1</sup>Beirut; Columbus Museum of Art; Orange County Museum of Art, Santa Ana, California; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

<sup>i</sup> Hilary Pecis, quoted in ‘Hilary Pecis - ‘I think of painting as an endurance activity, a series of small movements that add up to a finished piece’’, *ARTSPACE*, 4 November 22, [online](#)

Hilary Pecis

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ii *ibid.*

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**Provenance**

Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York

Private Collection, USA

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

New York, Rachel Uffner Gallery, *Warmly*, 12 March - 14 May 2022

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



5

### Jadé Fadojutimi

*Debris is welcome in this stream of thought*

signed and dated 'Jadé Fadojutimi JF Feb' 2021' on the reverse

oil, oil bar and acrylic on canvas  
200 x 230 cm. (78 3/4 x 90 1/2 in.)

Executed in 2021.

#### Estimate

HK\$4,000,000 — 7,000,000

€480,000 — 841,000

\$513,000 — 897,000

[Go to Lot](#)





*“We are all colours that are constantly fluctuating, we change every day, we change every minute, and it was a wonderful thing to think about in terms of why these paintings feel so different to me all the time, because I am constantly changing, and the colours I am experiencing are constantly changing.” — Jadé Fadojutimi*

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9aLwsyZLFA>

Jadé Fadojutimi - 'The Numbing Vibrancy of Characters in Play' at PEER

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**Provenance**

Capitain Petzel, Berlin

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Berlin, Capitain Petzel, *Infinite Games...* 2, 26 February - 17 April 2021



6

**Loie Hollowell**

*Clouds, Cactus and Sun*

signed and dated 'Loie Hollowell 2016' on the overlap;  
further signed, titled and dated "'Clouds, Cactus and  
Sun" 2016 "Clouds, Cactus and Sun" Loie Hollowell Loie  
Hollowell' on the reverse

oil, acrylic, and sawdust on linen mounted on panel  
122 x 91.5 cm. (48 x 36 in.)  
Executed in 2016.

**Estimate**

HK\$3,000,000 — 4,000,000

€361,000 — 481,000

\$385,000 — 513,000

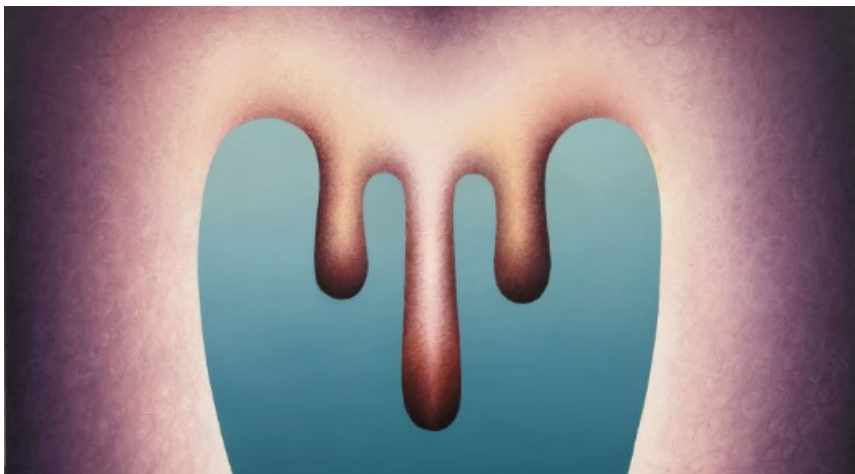
[Go to Lot](#)



Pulsating with light, colour and form, Loie Hollowell's unique and vibrant explorations of human sensuality have cemented her place as one of the most sensational artists in the contemporary art scene today. Fiercely vulnerable, Hollowell's allusions to the female body are often autobiographical, based upon blueprints of her own embodied experience. Scaled in accordance with the artist's body parts, these renderings of voluptuous, biomorphic forms protrude into the viewer's space with a curious sense of three-dimensionality, bearing a resemblance to motifs in science fiction. Intimate yet universal, they traverse the boundaries between painting and sculpture, constantly interchanging within her investigation of themes of sexuality, pregnancy, and birth.

*"Beauty for me is not just visual, it is also experiential. I want the viewer to come away not necessarily knowing what I was trying to tell them about, say, my birth experience, but absorbing an impression of brightness or richness or radiance that has something to do with their relationship to their own body."* — Loie Hollowell

## The Body as Landscape



Detail of the present lot

Figurative and abstract at once, *Clouds, Cactus and Sun* comes from a sensual group of works, presented as part of Hollowell's second-ever solo exhibition at Feuer/Mesler in 2016. Titled *Mother Tongue*, they collectively explore the duality of pictorial language between figure and

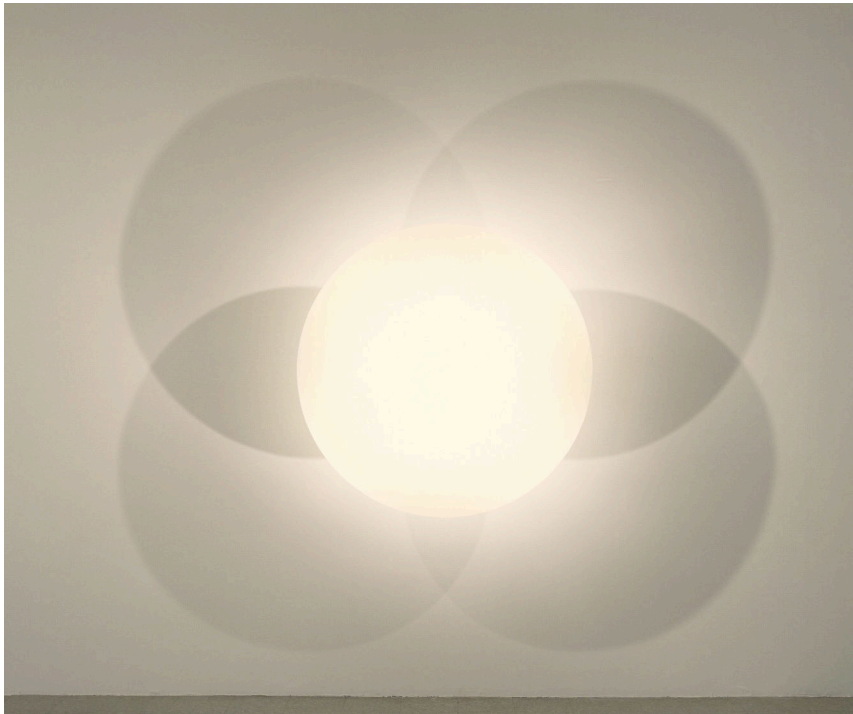
landscape through the introduction of ambiguity and metamorphosing forms. A literal representation of its title, the current work features two pastel purple clouds resting on both sides of the canvas as a blazing sun rises above the cactus. Bizarre and arousing, upon prolonged observation, the composition could be understood as sexually-explicit elements of the human anatomy – a sunrise over mountains and canyons, it is simultaneously reminiscent of a figure's backside and her legs spread, evoking a mysterious sexuality that leaves viewers transfixed to its surface.

*"[...] as I make the paintings, I'm not just working over a flat image, I'm actually dealing with depth and space and reality and thinking about real light versus illusionary light. I really put a lot of myself into it in that way, both physically and emotionally. I'm basically turning these paintings into bodies. They're like rectangular human manifestations of a specific time and place, or a specific emotional space. I guess, in that way, that could also be seen as some kind of spiritual journey; like communing with the painting."* — Loie Hollowell

When sculpting her creations, Hollowell plays with volume, texture, and surface in the molding of subtle layered structures that can easily escape the detection of the human eye. Using high density foam to build up flat canvases with protruding and concaving forms, it is then sealed with a thin shell of acrylic before being covered by oil paint via different tools. A kitchen sponge results in a stippled surface, whereas delicate soft swirls of the brush cheekily suggest body hair. The result is a lack of distinction between real and constructed depth that is almost indiscernible to the eye, blurring the boundaries between the flat plane and the three-dimensional.

## I See the Light

A native Northern Californian, Hollowell cites the state's flooding light as a source of inspiration, often referring to it as the main protagonist in her work. She was particularly influenced by the Light and Space movement, a group of artists in the 1960s who tapped into the potential of Californian landscape and its fiery sunshine. 'I realised that the light source was different here—it's a very dappled light on the East Coast,' Hollowell explains. 'In California it is oppressive and aggressive and white. With Robert Irwin specifically, I really resonate with his disc pieces that have a line in the middle— they really capture the potency of the Californian light.'<sup>1</sup>

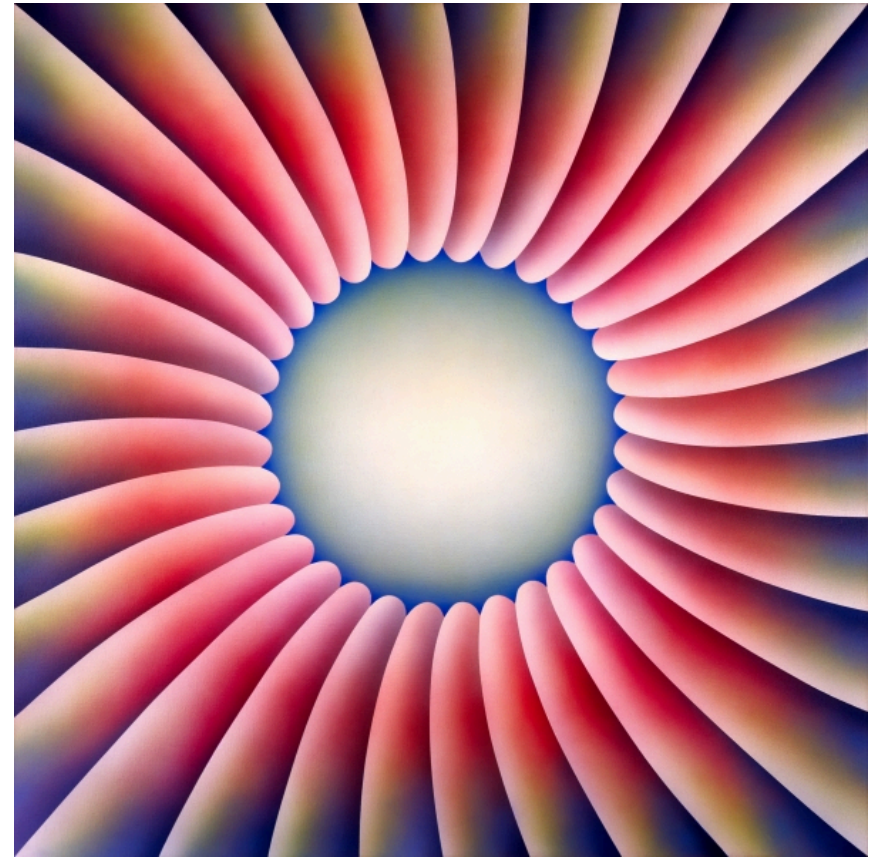


Robert Irwin, *Untitled*, 1968, Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2023 Robert Irwin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In *Untitled* (1968), American installation artist Robert Irwin challenges the viewer's perception of light and physical space by depicting a softly lit ball of light that casts a cloverleaf pattern of shadow. Similarly devoted to the exploration of light and shadow, Hollowell employs precisely-planned shading, surrounding the cactus in the present lot with soft white paint and slowly gradates towards varying degrees of yellow hues. Like a glowing ring of ethereal light, it further echoes the central sphere and its association with the sun. A literal representation of luminosity, the artist enhances the overall contrast of colour by choosing gradation over monochrome tones. She explains:

*"I think yellow is often the color I find the most forgiving, and also the most specific in its representation of light. It's just a very direct representation of light. [...] It's forgiving but it's also challenging to start with a bright yellow and turn it into a deep*

*color, because it can just get browned out and muddied. So I was really trying to play with how yellow would descend to orange and then descend to a burnt sienna and then let it go all the way to black."* — Loie Hollowell



Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower*, 1973 Collection of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York Artwork: © 2023 Judy Chicago / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Referencing notions of sex and femininity through abstract, elegant shapes, Hollowell places herself within the art historical lineage of artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Judy Chicago. Considered as the foremothers of the feminist art movement, they too shared a fascination in the

## Loie Hollowell

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use of colour and geometry, employing symmetrical, hypnotic patterns with contrasting colours in their powerful celebrations of womanhood. Notably, *Clouds, Cactus and Sun* is comparable with Chicago's 1973 work *Through the Flower*, which features a radiating female sexual organ akin to a beaming sun framed within optically illusive lines of light and shadow.

Inheriting the same visual lexicon from her predecessors, Hollowell highlights the illusion of space through her adept use of colour and three-dimensional elements, moving past the constraints of painting into the sphere of sculpture. Intended as a personal exploration of the bodily landscape, *Clouds, Cactus and Sun* elevates flat geometric expression with autobiographical analogies of the physical and psychological. Embracing formal and symbolic ambiguity at once, Hollowell's works are a stellar example of technical prowess and a deeper probe into female sexuality - visceral, honest, and seductive.

### Collector's Digest

- Born 1983 in California, Loie Hollowell lives and works in New York. Known for her oeuvre that transforms the female nude into abstraction, Hollowell quickly rose to global prominence after being discovered by Marc Glimcher, president of PACE Gallery, who praised her as a 'truly rare talent' <sup>ii</sup>. PACE quickly held several solo exhibitions for Hollowell, including PACE London in 2018; PACE Hong Kong in 2018; PACE New York in 2019; and PACE online in 2020.
- Most recently, the artist held her first US solo museum exhibition at the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art in Davis, titled *Loie Hollowell: Tick Tock Belly Clock*, which ran from 25 September 2022 to 8 May 2023. The artist is represented by PACE Gallery and Jessica Silverman Gallery; her first solo show with Jessica Silverman will be in 2024 in San Francisco.
- Hollowell's works are in the collections of Arts Council England, London (UK); He Art Museum, Shunde (CN); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (US); Long Museum, Shanghai (CN); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (US); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (CH), amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> Loie Hollowell quoted in Oliver Giles, 'Artist Loie Hollowell On How Motherhood Inspired Her Paintings', *Tatler Asia*, 14 April 2021, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Marc Glimcher, quoted in Nate Freeman, 'How Newly Minted Art Market Star Loie Hollowell's

Prices Rose More Than 1,200 Percent in Just Three Years', *Artnet News*, 15 September 2019, [online](#)

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### Provenance

Feuer/Mesler, New York

Private Collection, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

New York, Feuer/Mesler, *Loie Hollowell: Mother Tongue*, 27 October - 18 December 2016

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

7 \*

### Nicolas Party

*Still Life with an Olive*

signed and dated 'Nicolas Party 2013' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

139.5 x 183 cm. (54 7/8 x 72 in.)

Painted in 2012-2013.

#### Estimate

HK\$26,000,000 — 40,000,000

€3,130,000 — 4,810,000

\$3,330,000 — 5,130,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“I guess the word “still life” (or “nature morte”) is a good example of what art tries to achieve: merging two opposite notions into one object. Life is not still and nature is not dead, but maybe a painting can be.” — Nicolas Party*

Mesmerising and visually evocative, *Still Life with an Olive* is an exquisite example of Nicolas Party’s captivating interpretation of everyday objects and scenes. Set against a background of blue and light grey, a floral vase and plump fruits inject the foreground with life despite the lack of movement, their geometric forms evoking both reality and the surreal. Showcasing Party’s dexterity in colour application and painterly precision whilst injecting a unique refreshing twist, his biomorphic shapes form a lushly vibrant arrangement that alludes to traditional painting genres and influential figures within the canon of art history.

First unveiled at the artist’s 2013 solo show at The Modern Institute in Glasgow, *Still Life with an Olive* is one of a few oil works to ever be offered at auction, and one of Party’s few compositions to feature both fruits and flowers. Simultaneously embracing and moving away from the art historical canon, its harmonious balance between colour, composition, abstraction, and figuration is akin to the artist’s long-standing exploration into the relationships between human perception, the familiar and the otherworldly. Establishing a dialogue between the timeless genre of the still life and his reimagination of the material world, it is a masterful amalgamation of nature and fantasy that seeks to challenge the conventions of representational painting.



Installation view of the current lot at Glasgow, The Modern Institute, *Still Life oil paintings and*

*Landscape watercolours*, 6 April - 8 May 2013

## The Art of Re-working

Known to favour soft pastel as a medium for the majority of his output, oil makes up a small yet greatly important portion of Party’s extensive oeuvre. Although the artist began his career in soft pastels, the present lot originates from an exceptionally rare group of works – it was one of seven pieces created for *Still life oil paintings and Landscape watercolours*, Party’s only exhibition to feature oil on canvas works. In contrast to the immediacy and responsiveness of pastel, oil’s slow-drying nature allows for prolonged manipulation of paint after application, an attribute that demonstrates pronounced refinedness. Concerned with the relationship between the materiality of oil and canvas, Party grounds his practice in the possibility of the medium itself.

*“For a long time, I was working with oil painting, but it was just very slow—I was struggling with the idea that a work could take a year and a half to complete. It was just too long.” — Nicolas Party*

While the lengthy artistic process became a catalyst in Party’s switch to pastel, the act of reworking became a crucial element in his early works. Worked on over the course of ten to twenty months, like the present work, he constantly reorganises and modifies the composition to achieve his desired scene. Masterfully blending different shades and imprinting his brush strokes onto the canvas, Party’s handling of paint appears eerily smooth from a distance yet gestural up close. Visually pleasing and full of character, it reveals his sensitivity to colour and compositional efficiency in perfecting his static subjects.

## Distorting & Re-enchanting a Utilitarian Reality

*“Art is basically embracing that feeling and energy of needing to raise questions but only capturing that, and trying to create objects that can't be resolved. Magritte is a master at that: he creates this very clear enigma, but there are no answers. That to me is a successful artwork.” — Nicolas Party*



René Magritte, *Les valeurs personnelles* (Personal Values), 1952 Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art © 2023 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Evoking the formal vernacular of René Magritte, Nicolas Party's *Still Life with an Olive* encapsulates the same enigmatic quality as seen in the works by the Belgian Surrealist master. In *Les valeurs personnelles* (Personal Values), it shows a bedroom in the perspective with the front wall taken away, as though part of a dollhouse, with a myriad of objects painted at vastly different scales – on one hand, the bed on the left, the mirrored armoire on the right, two Persian rugs on the floor are sized naturally; yet on the other hand, he balances and places this giant tortoise-shell

comb vertically against the bed, an oversized pink wooden match on the rug to the bottom left, a goblet that is twice the height of the bed but smaller than the comb, a bristled shaving brush that spills out over the edge of the armoire, and a gigantic bar of oval-shaped brown soap to the bottom right. The complex composition conjures up a great sense of mystery and verges on to become rather unsettling. Sharing a similar passion in exploring the concept of inanimate objects as well as scale, *Still Life with an Olive* emits an equally Surrealist intrigue, echoing Magritte's means of visual expression. The fruits, the vase, the singular yellow tulip, and the olive are uncannily flat, almost as though the artist was intentionally allowing the work to oscillate between an optical illusion and eerie deception.

Playing with the manipulation of line, shape, and scale, Party dives deep into creating a unique visual world of his own, reimagining the inanimate objects as beautiful things. Instead of strictly observing the proportions of these everyday life objects, Party understands the relationships and distances between objects and begins his compositions with impulses from memory. Previously trained in 3D animation, his spatial understanding is perfectly translated in the present work, in which the fruits and objects in *Still Life with an Olive* appear as digital renditions of colours, shapes, and forms – the lack of shadow imbues them with the illusion of flatness; their artificiality enhanced by the smoothness of the defined contours; their clear lines and bright contrasting hues. Party's geometric forms appear larger than life, transforming a once mundane subject into a paradoxical tapestry of creativity. Evoking the uncanny and masterfully blending worlds, the two artists seem to meet in their unique visual vocabulary, conjuring a striking sense of mystery and the resurgence of the marvellous, whilst aiming to show the beautiful side of things as well as to re-enchant a utilitarian reality.

## In Dialogue with History and Time: the “Still Life”

*“I really like the word “still life”. Something alive, but with no movement... And when you paint a flower, the same thing is happening: the object you look at is moving, it's just that you don't see it because it's too slow. And if you were to observe the flower for two weeks, you would see that it's moving and transforming (...) I guess the word “still life” (or “nature morte”) is a good example of what art tries to achieve: merging two opposite notions into one object. Life is not still and nature is not dead, but maybe a painting can be.” — Nicolas Party*

Party's *Still Life with an Olive* is anything but still, with the vibrantly-coloured pears, the yellow tulip in the glass vase, and the olive imbued with playful energy on this expansive canvas. Here, we see Party's unique take on the still life subject, which, by definition, includes all kinds of man-made or natural objects such as cut flowers, fruit, vegetables, fish, game, and wine. Throughout the discourse of art history, the still life first appeared in the Middle Ages and Greco-Roman art and was popularised in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance. One of his very few



examples to include both flora and fruit, the present work adheres to the compositional conventions of the still life, forming a pictorial structure with meticulously arranged colours and a set path for the viewer's eye. Party's choice of objects seems deliberate – the pears intending to portray the transient nature of human life, representing fertility, youth, and abundance; the tulip, a flower that is often associated with the Netherlands, not only is a nod to Dutch paintings, but is also a symbol of new beginnings and hope; the olive, originating from an olive branch, represents reconciliation and healing. The combination of flora and fruits is particularly important as it is a subject that Party constantly returns to and revisits, as recent as in his works made in 2020, in which he investigates the sub-genre of still life painting, 'sottobosco', devoted to the botanical and zoological life in nature's darker regions.



Caravaggio, *Still Life with Fruit*, c. 1603 Collection of the Denver Art Museum



Paul Cezanne, *Still Life with Fruit Dish*, 1880 Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York



Félix Vallotton, *Poivrons rouges (Red Peppers)*, 1915 Collection of the Kunstmuseum Solothurn

Party echoes many of the artists who came before him. Under the genre of still life, a dialogue certainly exists between the assemblage of crops in the present work and the compositional strategies of a vast lineage of artists such as Caravaggio, Paul Cezanne and Félix Vallotton.

‘It’s a nice idea that your painting could somehow have a dialogue with another one,’ the artist shares. ‘Vallotton and I can’t have a conversation. But if you hang a Vallotton painting in the same room as one of my paintings, the two works will speak to each other.’<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the traditional still-life painting is typically modest in size, Party enlarges his objects to imposing dimensions, breathing life into them as though they are figures. With little differentiation between inanimate and animate objects for him, the pieces of fruit, the tulip, and the olive here are filled with vivaciousness and are clearly alive, each imbued with individual personality. Rejecting the idea of inventing new subject matters, Party deliberately chooses to portray banal themes. As popular imagery depicted since the dawn of painting, fruits are especially present in his oeuvre due to their simplicity in form and meaning. Ready to be consumed with little effort, their appearance has remained constant throughout history. Recognisable by all audiences, his intuitive use of stable motifs allows for freedom to innovate whilst transcending time and space.

*“If I paint an apple now, I know that the apple that Cézanne was painting was not the same one, but it didn’t change. It’s maybe a little bit more red now, but is more or less the same... But if you paint an iPhone and you’re the only one to do it, in 50 years, nobody will know what it is.” — Nicolas Party*

Although Party’s work is un beholden to time or place, stripped of background or additional detail, the titular objects in the present work exist purely in relation to their corporeal qualities and symbolism. As a result, these pieces of fruit elicit a sense of timelessness – audiences in the past, present, and future can all understand their significance, albeit in accordance to differing contexts. By sacrificing originality, Party’s canvases pay homage to the enduring yet ever-changing appeal of what he represents; by painting with oil in lieu of ephemeral pastel, his subjects become immortalised for generations.

### Collector’s Digest

- *Still Life with an Olive* is one of seven oil paintings created for and exhibited at Party’s 2013 show at The Modern Institute, Glasgow. Titled [Still life oil paintings and Landscape watercolours](#) and featuring custom mural backdrops, it was the artist’s first major solo exhibition in the UK. The work was also included in the 2013 group exhibition [Nur was](#)

## Nicolas Party

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*nicht ist ist möglich (Just What Is Not Is Possible)* at Museum Folkwang, Essen.

- A testament to the continuing strength of Party's market, the artist's top result at auction was recently achieved in Hong Kong in November 2022, and his top 10 results at auction have all been set in the past three years, half of which feature still life arrangements.
- Among his latest exhibitions are *Cretaceous* at The Modern Institute, Glasgow (9 June - 23 September 2023) and *Cascade* at Xavier Hufkens, Brussels (27 January—4 March 2023).
- Work by Party is held in over 30 public collections worldwide, including K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Long Museum, Shanghai; Fondazione Fiera Milano, Milan; M WOODS, Beijing; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

<sup>i</sup> Nicolas Party quoted in Rita Vitorelli, 'Interview Nicolas Party', *Spike Art Magazine*, Summer 2015, [online](#)

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### Provenance

The Modern Institute, Glasgow

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Glasgow, The Modern Institute, *Still Life oil paintings and Landscape watercolours*, 6 April - 8 May 2013

Essen, Museum Folkwang, *Nur was nicht ist ist möglich (Just What Is Not Is Possible)*, 8 June - 28 July 2013

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED ASIAN  
COLLECTION

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### **Yoshitomo Nara**

*No Means No*

signed, titled and dated "'No Means No" Nara [in  
Japanese] 06' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

162.5 x 130.8 cm. (63 7/8 x 51 1/2 in.)

Painted in 2006.

#### **Estimate**

HK\$52,000,000 — 72,000,000

€6,250,000 — 8,650,000

\$6,670,000 — 9,230,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“The little star dwellers give thanks to everyone They thank all the stars blinking in the Milky Way What haven’t been fulfilled are dreams What have been seem like dreams, but aren’t They’re living right in that terrifying real world Good dreams and bad dreams take shape: the real world Days like dreams, looking back they’re all scary scary shadows...” — Yoshitomo Nara’s diary entry on June 5th, 2000*

As Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara jotted down his dreamlike vision in the summer of the new millennium, the sensational artist broods on reinventing his synonymous oeuvre of the little girl that would soon launch his meteoric rise onto the international stage. Executed around this pivotal period, *No Means No* carves a milestone in his exhaustive perfection of a complex visual lexicon, marked by a young child who traverses between trepidation and bravery. An icon that appeared initially in the artist’s output in 1991, the young heroine spans almost two meters in height and suspends mysteriously before a void of pearly white, staring directly into the audience to absorb us into the very celestial universe conceptualized in Nara’s diary.

With a translucent opaqueness allegorically inviting introspection as windows do, the little star dweller’s intricately enlarged pupils consist of lustrously prismatic swathes, representing a sharp departure from the artist’s simple geometric execution of the eyes in the 1990s. An approach only realized a year prior to *No Means No*’s execution, the incandescent emerald irises are exclusively emphasized in contrast to the diminutive representation of her face. Citing the human eyes as ‘mirrors of the soul,’<sup>1</sup> Nara directs the viewer to encounter the girl’s gaze which has undertaken the purpose of a conduit. His little star dweller transports the audience into the milky way in his journal, away from the bad dreams and safely surrounded by the blinking stars inside the oculus. *No Means No* would launch Yoshitomo Nara’s most ambitious and career-defining project—a technical enquiry into how these very effervescent eyes arouse the most palpable universal emotions of tranquility, suspension, and connection, as manifested most recently in his *Starry Eyes* series of the 2010s.



Detail of the present lot

To be offered for the very first time in auction, *No Means No* exemplifies the height of Nara’s artistic prowess from its rarest period. This monumental canvas has been featured in various exhibitions around Europe, most notably one of the artist’s most significant site-specific exhibitions up to date named *Yoshitomo Nara + graf: A-Z Project*, which toured to Malaga, Hague,

Hiosaki, Bangkok, London, Yokohama, and Osaka. As testament to *No Means No*’s superb quality, Nara’s other stylistically and thematically linked canvases executed in the same year have already found homes in the most prestigious international institutions. Indeed, *No Means No* belongs to an increasingly scarce group of the artist’s most illustrious works since Nara’s 2006 monumental canvases have not surfaced in auction since 2015.



Yoshitomo Nara, *Sayon*, 2006 Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo © Yoshitomo Nara



Yoshitomo Nara, *After the Deluge*, 2006 Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego © Yoshitomo Nara

### Universal Self-Portrait

The present work's utmost significance must be appreciated in juxtaposition alongside his output of various times and medium. Growing up in the rural areas near the city of Hirosaki in the 1960s, Nara recalls a profound loneliness in his childhood. Alongside a generation of melancholic youths raised in the aftermath of World War II, a young Nara sought empowerment in the insurgent and cathartic pop culture of rock music. Tracing the origins of his interest in art to album covers, the visual elements of the 1970s Japanese underground culture informed the artist's archetypal little girl: the simplified shapes, bold colours, linear contour, and minimal background compose the image of a devious cherub with a protruding head, flatly standing against the void. Initially appearing in the early 1990s during the artist's continued art studies in Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in Germany, the little girl is inherently autobiographical, symbolizing an ambivalence resulting from physical isolation, a genuine desire for human connection, and a sneering attitude towards containment. In subsequent years, through experimentations with depth, colour, and texture, Nara refined her as a dichotomic emblem of innocence and vulnerability and ingeniously associates her with the adult emotions of anxiety and pain.

*"It is as if I'm confirm my own sense of self—as I am speaking to myself as I paint the face..." — Yoshitomo Nara*

Indeed, Nara's oeuvre of the early 2000s—encapsulated by the present work—address a crucial transition as he reflects on a fruitful twelve-year practice in Germany upon his return to Japan in 2000. Completed in 2006, the present work summarizes Nara's venture from representations of loneliness to envisioning beyond the figurative: In lieu of menacing expressions and chubby fists, Nara's rebellious warrior has been humanized into a singular figure of calmer demeanor and less distorted proportions. The anti-war logans and insurgent symbols of knives prominently featured in Nara's 1990s output have disappeared. Nara arms his heroine with his newly acquired European modernist vocabulary of reduced saturation, tremendous scale, and textural surface to overcome the boundaries of cultural references and language barriers. Possessing the power to embody anyone in her orbit, Nara's young girl now speaks for herself to channel a mesmerizing reality, at once intimate and inscrutable.

*“Nara captures the tension between innocence and experience, physical isolation and mental freedom, containment and independence. [He] embraces the whole of the human condition.” — Art historian Kristin Chambers in “A Visit to Naraland,” 2003*

### *No Means No: A Legacy of Peace*



Yoshitomo Nara, *No Means No*, 1991 Collection of the Aomori Museum of Art © Yoshitomo Nara

Dating back to 1991, the earliest iteration of *No Means No* appears as a work on paper now housed in the Aomori Museum of Art, portraying the artist's childhood memories of rumbling airplanes blazing across the sky. Born in 1959 in Hirosaki, a young Nara witnessed his country swallowing shame and melancholy as a failed aggressor in the second World War. Also raised alongside the gruesome Vietnam war, he fostered a poignant detest against war as he lived and breathed the uncertainties and trauma. At 21, Nara moved to Düsseldorf in 1988 where he further resonated with the anti-war sentiments of post-war Germany. In response, Nara embraced the directness and

rebellion of rock music and cartoons as remedies, incorporating these two influences from the onset of his career: slogans of protest as exemplified by the blazing words *No Means No* (1991) above the airplane have frequented the artist's visual vocabulary since the 1980s.

*"I remembered the darkness of a stormy night in my childhood. I was waiting in the dark for the power to be restored, hearing the thunder with my mother. I was looking at her profile lit by a candle while she was telling me a story about the war-time, when she heard the bomb attacks in the darkness with her mother." — Yoshitomo Nara in an interview with Hideo Furukawa in 2013*

Out of the seven iterations of *No Means No* revisited by Nara throughout his prolific career, Nara created four between 1991 to 1998, each executed at most three years apart to illustrate the phrase's utmost significance. In October of 2006, North Korea conducted nuclear experiments along the northeast coast of the Japanese sea, confronting Nara's deepest antipathy towards war. Completed in the same year, the present work renders the pacifist undertones quintessential to Nara's practice through its title and drastically evolved imagery. Whereas the title has been inserted into former renderings of *No Means No*, this colossal canvas witnesses a watershed development in the artist's oeuvre, powerfully evoking sensations of peace without words and symbols. The innocent nature of the girl, endowed by her creamy palette and round contours, tempers the presumed harshness of the titular message to oppose conflict, testifying to Nara's ever-expanding visual vocabulary.

## A Real World Fantasy

In 2001, Nara's largest and most comprehensive exhibition yet titled *I don't Mind, If You Forget Me* spanned over five rooms in the Yokohama Museum of Art. Launching a thorough investigation of the fundamental relationship between people and their surroundings, Nara invited the visitors to design dolls inspired by his artworks. In 2003, he joined forces with design collective Graf to further realize the exhibitions that cemented his worldwide acclaim: wooden huts adorned with the artist's personal collectibles serve as temporary residences for his artworks. Stepping inside each fantastical room, the audience has been transported into Nara's creative mindfield. Debuting this revolutionary concept at a major British gallery, *No Means No* finds home in one of the wooden structures in a Newcastle exhibition, welcoming the beholder into Nara's dreamscape.





Installation view of the current lot at Newcastle, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, *Yoshitomo Nara + graf: A-Z Project*, June 14 - October 26 2008 © Yoshitomo Nara

Most notably the pearlescent background, formal elements of the present work simultaneously mirror the connection between the observer and the observed, a seminal and timeless contribution to the art historical canon. *No Means No* harbors a transformative landscape through repeatedly applying varying degrees of a singular colour before finishing with a layer of luminescent wash to retaining the material traces of its creation. Considered by curator Taro Amano to be “another unconscious eye,” the ambiguous background pulsates, submerging the audience into an expanse beyond the confines of the canvas. A remarkable graduation from Nara’s previously flat cartoon representations, this approach brilliantly recalls the milky way referred to in Nara’s diary entry, embodying a gleaming universe devoid of childish fear and adult ambivalence. This incredible

revision of the background has become central to the artist’s lifelong mission of reaching into the unconscious imagination of himself, his character and his audience, as it frequents the artist’s canvases around this period and would later develop into simmering puddles.

### Collector’s Digest

- *No Means No* exemplifies the very best of Nara’s practice at a time where his market is stronger than ever. His big-headed child imageries dominate the artist’s top 20 auction record set in the past 4 years, including *Missing in Action* (2000), the current second-highest result achieved at Phillips Hong Kong in 2021, as well as *Hothouse Doll* (1995), a second-highest record at the time when Phillips Hong Kong sold it in 2020. The momentum has only continued to increase, as most recently this March, Phillips Hong Kong presented *Lookin’ for a Treasure*, generating one of the artist’s highest auction prices of 2023.
- Recent international exhibitions have cemented Nara’s unparalleled current influence: In the past three years alone, Nara’s solo exhibitions have christened the most prestigious global institutions such as the Art Gallery of Western Australia in Perth which ended this past June, Yuz Museum in Shanghai in 2022-2023, Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2021-2022, Dallas Contemporary in 2021, and the Kuandu Museum of Arts in Taipei in 2021.
- Rarely can a contemporary Japanese artist at Nara’s age matches his institutional prestige. His artworks are prominently collected by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, the British Museum, London, and the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Australia, amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> Yoshitomo Nara, quoted in 'An Interview with Yoshitomo Nara', *Asymptote Journal*, November 2013

### Provenance

Galerie Zink, Berlin

Private Collection, Michigan (acquired from the above in 2007)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Kanazawa, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, *Yoshitomo Nara: Moonlight Serenade*, 30 September 2006 - 21 March 2007, p.87 (illustrated pp. 54-55, 60, 80)

Berlin, Galerie Zink, *Yoshitomo Nara + graf: Berlin Baracke*, February 10 - April 21 2007

Newcastle, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, *Yoshitomo Nara + graf: A-Z Project*, June 14 - October 26 2008

**Literature**

Noriko Miyamura and Shinko Suzuki, eds., *Yoshitomo Nara: The Complete Works Volume 1: Paintings, Sculptures, Editions, Photographs 1984-2010*, Tokyo, 2011, no. P-2006-007, p. 390 (illustrated, p. 202)

Yoshitomo Nara, *Yoshitomo Nara: Self-Selected Works - Paintings*, Kyoto, 2015, pp. 99, 156 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Zhang Xiaogang

*Bloodline Series - Father and Daughter*

signed and dated 'Zhang Xiaogang [in Chinese] 2005'  
lower right

oil on canvas

199.8 x 260 cm. (78 5/8 x 102 3/8 in.)

Painted in 2005.

#### Estimate

HK\$5,500,000 — 7,500,000

€661,000 — 901,000

\$705,000 — 962,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“Painting should not present itself solely as painting, but through visual means, articulate concepts in order to engage the contemporary world.” — Zhang Xiaogang*

Painted in 2005, *Bloodline* is an exquisite work hailing from Zhang Xiaogang’s widely recognised series (first painted in 1993-1999). As an era-defining body of work which helped shape the discourse of Chinese contemporary art, it is representative of both Zhang’s maturity as an artist and of the development of the collective vision of socialist China by the end of the century. Navigating the strict confines of traditional portraiture, as well as drawing from the history of photography, Zhang constructs a vague yet captivating reinterpretation of intimate familial memories to depict moments from the past, frozen in time. Dissecting the psychological disposition of an estranged generation, Zhang’s celebrated oeuvre succeeds in questioning contemporary notions of identity and gives a voice to the collective dream. Fresh to the market, *Bloodline*, exemplifies a mature work by an artist accredited as one of the leading figures of contemporary Chinese art.

## Portrait of the Past

Moving away from his earlier work of the 1980s influenced by the Surrealists and Expressionists, the artist’s *Bloodline* series in 1993 denotes a shift in Zhang’s practice towards investigating national and collective history through an intimate portrayal of ordinary Chinese people and their struggles. The subject of portraiture marked the beginning of Zhang’s distinguished and prolific career and remains a genre he uses frequently and furthers Zhang’s introspective and personal existential mediations.

Triggered and inspired by the rediscovery of his Cultural Revolution-era family photographs, Zhang imbues an intricate psychological dimension to this body of work. In *Bloodline*, Zhang explores humanity, the relationships between people, and the links between the past and the present through the adoption of a new format – a smooth yet haunting aesthetic that borrows the language of vintage photography. As a dominant propaganda tool during the Cultural Revolution, photography production was also the very medium that catalysed transformation of Chinese visual representation, serving the state’s ideological aims and projecting a coercive revolutionary mode of social norms. It is in the *Bloodline* body of work that Zhang’s adaptation of the photographic medium truly stands out and breathes life into his subjects by connecting the personal to the history of the Chinese nation and its fraught emotions. In his own words, ‘So many things are embodied in history that we have neglected in the past. When I looked at the family photo, I saw my parents in their youth which contrasted with ours, and I was deeply moved.’<sup>1</sup>

*“I am seeking to create an effect of ‘false photographs’ — to re-embellish already embellished’ histories and lives.” — Zhang Xiaogang*



Left: Zhang Xiaogang’s elder brother with their parents, on the occasion of his 100th Day Celebration, 1950s Right: A retouched studio photograph showing a group of young factory workers, dated 12 January 1967 Collection of the Thomas Sauvin Archive © Beijing Silvermine

Invoking the studio portraits of the 1960s and 1970s in China, where families or work units typically sat or stood against a blank background and stared directly at the camera, *Bloodline* shows a solemn father-daughter duo with stoic expressions against a cool grey background, recalling the back sheet of a photography studio. Oscillating between realism and the dreamlike, Zhang masterfully replicates the look and feel of aged black and white photographs. The luminous effect, akin to a lens flare, achieved through Zhang’s meticulous work on the surface of the canvas and his delicate and layered brush strokes, contrasts with the dappled texture from the final touch of dry paint which evokes the mottling of worn images.

Zhang’s trip to Germany in 1992 and his encounters with artist Gerhard Richter’s work was decisive in altering Zhang’s relationship to painting. Richter’s exploitation of photography through painting and as a means of undermining the photograph’s assumed truth value, encouraged Zhang to consider how a psychological reality can be created and expanded on canvas.

*“In the past, artists used photographs in the painting process, but only as informational tools and reference points. Richter, however, looked at photos and saw their history and meaning, which greatly inspired me. I started to pay attention to the history, culture and aesthetics behind pictures and distilled these things into my own artistic language.” — Zhang Xiaogang*



Gerhard Richter, *The Wende Family*, 1971 Private Collection Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0187)

In an exclusive interview with Phillips in April 2018, Zhang spoke about the way in which Richter used photographs as more than mere reference points to painting but rather “he saw their history and their meaning.” By manipulating the photographic image and adding painted elements, Richter’s black-and-white photograph-paintings, as seen in *The Wende Family* (1971), blurs the line between reality and representation and plays with the sharpness and blur like actual photograph, creating a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty that invites the viewer to question their own perceptions of what they are seeing. Similarly to Richter’s approach in *The Wende Family* Zhang beautifully renders this father-daughter duo as eerily-calm figures through the use of the limited palette and the absence of discernible brushstrokes, in turn placing the emphasis on the psychological reality that remains and is left unsaid.

## Linked by Blood

*“The way I understand the big family is always associated with the danwei [the state-sanctioned work unit] and my own family [...] being a member of a big family is an identity deeply rooted in the Chinese blood [...] the phrase ‘big family’ stemmed from a Maoist slogan, ‘We all live in a big revolutionary family.’ This slogan emphasises collectivity and conformity, not individuality.” — Zhang Xiaogang*

Dressed in outfits typical of the Maoist era and, with rigidly blank expressions and conservative haircuts, the figures in *Bloodline* are representative of the universal memories of the Cultural Revolution in China. Despite the spatial closeness created by the confines of the painting’s dimensions, Zhang’s protagonists are restrained and seemingly distant from one another, their vacant stares directed towards an onlooking viewer and displacing a sense of unease. Despite an obvious difference in age, their faces are uncannily androgynous and strikingly archetypal, and the lack of definitive features removes any hint of individuality. A barely perceptible thread of crimson weaves around each person, connecting them to each other and to a space beyond the canvas’s limitations. While a familiar relationship is suggested by their similar appearance, it is these ‘bloodlines’ that undeniably unite these characters.



Frida Kahlo, *My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree)*, 1936 Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York © 2023 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Citing Frida Kahlo as the main inspiration behind his red-threaded 'bloodlines', Zhang draws parallels to her use of red lines as shared veins in *My Parents, and I (Family Tree)*. Where Kahlo makes explicit references to her own family members, Zhang is more ambiguous in his representation of connections, imbuing his figures with layers of meaning beyond the familial realm. Although the 'bloodlines' imply that he is depicting familial connections, Zhang never explicitly confirms their actual relationship. These red threads also recall how children were urged to draw clear lines between themselves and parents accused of transgression during the era of the Cultural Revolution. Zhang's red-threaded 'bloodlines' are truly more elusive in meaning, denoting both the familial relations between figures and the troubling memories that restrain them, in turn shedding light onto the fragile nature of human bonds on a greater scale.

Widely collected by private and institutional collections, Zhang's portraits like *Bloodline* are

extraordinarily poignant. As he invites his viewers to fill the void within each image with their own experiences and reflections, Zhang alludes to the dissonance between the past and the present. Successfully reinterpreting his own intimate familial memories, Zhang reflects upon the social undertones of a bygone era, deeply probing into his personal heritage, as well as giving a voice to the collective dreams, shared history, and psychological unrest of an estranged generation, resulting in a renewed vision that resonates with all people.

### Collector's Digest

- 1993 marked the beginning of Zhang Xiaogang's *Bloodline* series, which earned the artist critical acclaim within the international collecting community. In June 1994, four paintings of the series were exhibited at the São Paulo Biennale, winning him a bronze medal. The following year, 13 large Big Family paintings were exhibited at the Venice Biennale, marking the beginning of Zhang's distinguished and prolific career.
- His works are cemented in permanent collections of global institutions, including: HOW Art Museum, Shanghai; Long Museum, Shanghai; M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum, Japan; and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> Zhang Xiaogang, quoted in M Plus Museum Hong Kong, 'Zhang Xiaogang: Bloodlines and Family', 28 November 2018, [online](#)

### Provenance

The Farber Collection (acquired directly from the artist)  
Phillips, London, 13 October 2007, lot 507  
Private Collection  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

London, Saatchi Gallery, *The Revolution Continues: New Art From China*, 9 October 2008 - 18 January 2009, p. 228-229

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



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**Liu Ye**

*The End of Baroque*

signed and dated '98 Liu Ye' upper left  
acrylic on canvas  
200 x 170 cm. (78 3/4 x 66 7/8 in.)  
Painted in 1998.

**Estimate**

HK\$18,000,000 — 28,000,000

€2,160,000 — 3,370,000

\$2,310,000 — 3,590,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“I didn’t want to become an artist who portrays real life. I wanted to return to the early Renaissance, but not realism. Besides, I’m more interested in postmodernism, so I added elements of Surrealism... Regardless, I wanted to convey a certain state or feeling that was between Realism and Surrealism.” — Liu Ye*

The image of a ship ablaze, with its billowing smoke piling into a sky dyed orange by flames against a setting sun engulfs us in Liu Ye’s monumental *The End of Baroque*. Its size is formidable and rare: less than 30 works of such height have come to auction, and none of this scale has been seen on the market this year. The potency of this lone ship at sea is instantly arresting and powerful and evokes scenes of Rembrandt’s (hitherto lost) depiction of Christ on a raft amid turbulent waters, various paintings of hulking Dutch warships, René Magritte’s elusive *The Seducer* floating among clouds, or indeed J. M. W. Turner’s vermilion canvases of explosions, fires, and battles all come to mind. The visual lexicon of this work is undeniably rich and layered, as with the rest of Liu’s creations. Inexplicably, the view is surreally framed by white windows that swing out towards the vista outside. To our bottom left is a solitary figure who looks on, unperturbed by this seascape, surreal and catastrophically beautiful. Painted in 1998, a few years after the artist’s return to his native China, and the same year in which Liu Ye spent time training at Amsterdam’s Royal Academy of Fine Arts, *The End of Baroque* signals the close of an era and the dawn of new beginnings.



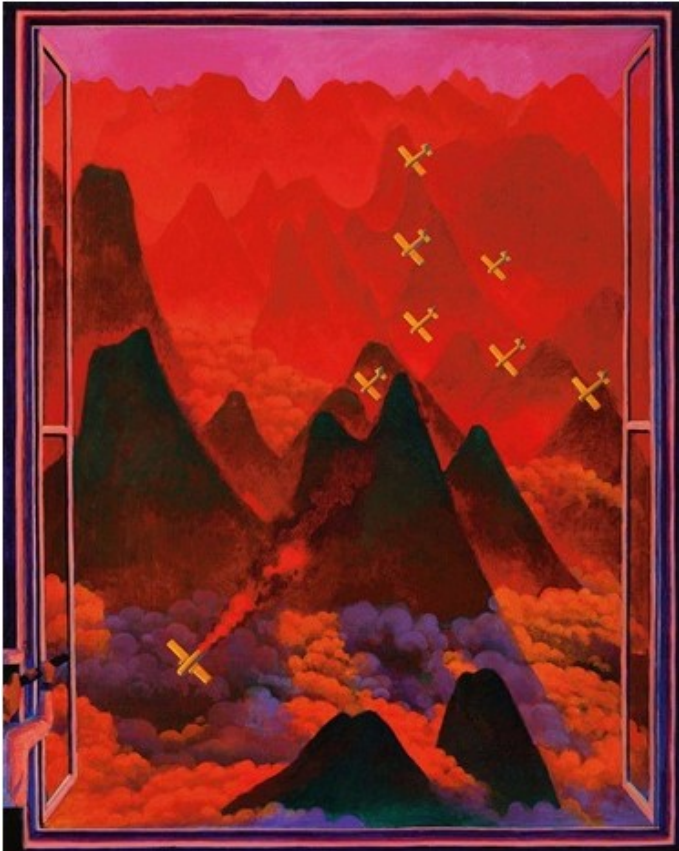
René Magritte, *The Seducer*, 1950 © 2023 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## Conduit of the Mind, Window to the Soul

Magritte was a key influence to Liu’s early body of work. About his 1933 painting *The Human Condition*, Magritte commented: ‘I placed in front of a window, seen from inside a room, a painting representing exactly that part of the landscape that was hidden from view by the painting. Therefore, the tree represented in the painting hid from view the tree situated behind it, outside the room. It existed for the spectator simultaneously inside the room on the painting and in his mind outside on the real landscape. This is how we see the world. We see it as outside us even though the representation of it is within us.’<sup>i</sup> Extraordinarily, Magritte’s summary of his work—of being both the room’s interior and exterior, simultaneously—holds true even for *The End of Baroque*. When considering Liu’s painting in this context, we can interpret this to one’s desire to look both forward and backward in time, and both internally and externally of oneself: a particularly fitting metaphor for the artist’s state of mind at the close of the nineties.

Looking back on his oeuvre, Liu has once noted a distinct shift in his art form: ‘[i]t can be divided into approximate periods [...] For all of the nineties, I was greatly influenced by Surrealism and metaphysical art movements. From 2000 onward, I have been more interested in Minimalism and abstract art.’<sup>ii</sup> Painted in advance of the latter juncture, *The End of Baroque* thus exists as a relic of the artist’s rarer, earlier pieces.





Liu Ye, *Landscape*, 1997 Sold by Poly Beijing for ¥ 6,670,000, December 2011 © Liu Ye



Liu Ye, *The Window*, 1998 Sold by Sotheby's Hong Kong for HK\$ 5,015,000, April 2021 © Liu Ye



Liu Ye, *Lost Balance*, 1995 Sold by China Guardian Hong Kong for HK\$ 22,000,000 in October 2019 © Liu Ye

The window motif has long prevailed in Liu's works and is a symbol he has often returned to, serving as an early hallmark. It is also indicative of Liu's penchant for lineal precision, thanks to his love for Piet Mondrian's rigid grid compositions. The window motif appears as early as in the first entry of the artist's catalogue-raisonné, namely in the 1991 piece *Atelier*, where a sideview of open windows and plush curtains guides the eye to an enigmatic scene of the artist's own reflection in a broken mirror staring at us open-mouthed, either mid-yawn, mid-speech, or mid-scream. In all eventualities, this first work offers us a glimpse into the artist's psyche: eyes are said to be the windows to the soul, and there is something to be said about the act of seeing, to be seen, and the forbidden fruit of voyeurism. Even in *The End of Baroque*, the lonesome figure appears nonplussed, either unable, or unwilling, to react to the tragedy unfolding before her. There is undoubtedly something self-reflective in Liu's evocation of windows, which act as some kind of partition between this reality and another—that precise 'certain state or feeling that was between Realism and Surrealism'<sup>iii</sup> to which the artist refers.

### Liminal Realms

In terms of transitions and thresholds, the window in *The End of Baroque* is undoubtedly symbolic, especially as an in-between space signaling some permeable existence between realism and surrealism. But the key is also in the work's title, which heralds the end of an era; a definitive shift from one time to its cessation. When prompted, '[y]our early work was very baroque, very complex'<sup>iv</sup>, the artist responds immediately with a description of the present work's direct antithesis, namely *Baroque*: 'Yeah, I even made a painting in 1993 called *Baroque*. The skies are angry—red, yellow, blue—but it's quite Italian, with angels and a sunken palace [...] It's both baroque and surreal.'<sup>v</sup>



Liu Ye, *Baroque*, 1992-1993 Sold by Yongle Beijing, for ¥ 23,000,000, July 2023 © Liu Ye

In a sense, then, to grasp *The End of Baroque* would be to understand, at least figuratively Liu's fascination with Baroque, and his subsequent distancing from it. Having first been introduced to Western art history piecemeal during his youth, it was not until Liu's studies in Berlin in the early 90s that he was fully immersed in European paintings, even once musing, '[a]s soon as I went there [Germany], I saw too many things in the museum [all at once].'<sup>vi</sup> Baroqueism was a stylistic movement which flourished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, growing in tandem with the expansion of the Catholic Church and the propagation of its faith to colonies within European empires. With its ecclesiastical associations, the baroque style is often associated with being highly ornate and elaborate, allegorical and mythological, and imbued with drama. It is no wonder that Liu's *Baroque* pays homage to this legacy, evoking the apostolic images of Agnolo Bronzino, mixed with the mortality of Arnold Böcklin, steeped in deep blues, reds, yellows, and greens. The result is a work that speaks to man's impermanence in the world, with sombre and serious undertones.



Jean Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, circa 1775/1780 Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961.9.17

*The End of Baroque* also alludes to its own namesake—though in stark contrast to its 1992-1993 predecessor. The end of the Baroque period quite literally points to the Rococo era, the free-spirited offshoot (if not offspring) of its liturgical counterpart. Flamboyant, characterised by pastoral motifs and curved asymmetry, Rococo was a veritable medley of pastel free-spiritedness. It is this essence that is maybe most compelling about Liu's work, and a burst of energy can be felt in the present piece through the vibrant and raucous plumes of smoke and fire, more unleashed than in any other work.

*“Thick cloud masses gather in the sky, and wave crests glinting blue and yellow undulate across the sea's surface. There is grand beauty in the rendering of this vista, and at the same time it is filled with inconceivable dreaminess. In this picture, the warship as a hard-edged shape of social memory has been partly effaced, so that it serves as an embodiment of the 'magnificent world.' Its lofty shape is like a solemn cathedral or an ageless mountain range, summoning us to merge with it, to enter into boundless explorations.”* — *The art critic Zhu Zhu on Liu Ye's oeuvre*



Liu Ye, *Portrait of the Battleship*, 1998-2009 Sold by Christie's Hong Kong for HK\$ 19,925,000 in May 2019 © Liu Ye



Liu Ye, *Silence of the Sea*, 1995 M+ Uli Sigg Collection © Liu Ye

### Leaping to New Horizons: Starboard

One of the oft-remarked upon elements of Liu's works is his fascination with battleships: a remnant from films of his childhood, but also a recurring subject in adulthood, having become fascinated with Russian avant-garde art by artists such as Aleksandr Rodchenko, who included warships and aircrafts in his graphics. Liu's works of the nineties are immersed in and question the symbolic nature of the vessel. Apolitical and open to interpretation, the vessels and unfurled sails in the artist's body of works serve as metaphors for journeys travelled, underway, or ended prematurely.



Model of the warship William Rex, 1698 Collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Richard Houston, *Brandend schip op een kalme zee*, 1745 – 1794 Collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

In *The End of Baroque*, one can easily detect a particular nod to Liu's time in Amsterdam in 1998: with the Rijksmuseum housing various maritime pieces, it is not hard to imagine a young Liu becoming captivated by older iterations of modern-day battle ships, seen on a fortuitous trip to the museum. The present work draws thought-provoking parallels to a variety of objects in the museum's repertoire, infused with Liu's signature style. And yet, what is most endearing about the piece is its distinctive ability to convey an emotion utterly indescribable—a mixture of sorrow, nostalgia, excitement and vigour that seems to typify much of the artist's earlier works.

In the Arts, ships have long served as potent vehicles through which to explore the human consciousness. Coupled with the sea—both calm and chaotic—ships are conduits of the self, travelling through life's challenges. This is aptly captured in Friedrich's *The Stages of Life*, where various ships sailing into an auburn-tinged horizon are matched compositionally with characters in youth, adulthood, and old age. In Lorrain's painting *The Trojan Women Setting Fire to Their Fleet*, now housed in The Met, the artist captures a moment of pure elation as Trojan women set fire to their fleets to end years of wandering after their city was seized by Greeks. In this act of apparent destruction lies unblemished bliss: alas, nomadic days are over and finally one has come home. It is a combination of these sentiments that live on in *The End of Baroque*: A home-coming of sorts.

It has been said that ominous clouds, soon to crash planes, warships, sinking ships all point to the weight of history, ironically gesturing to declining empires. Looking out onto such a scene, we can therefore see the solitary figure in the present work as an evocation of the artist himself: ruminating upon his journey, both his and his country's past, European influence: all the while poised on *terra firma*, contemplating times yet to come and a sea of possibilities.



Caspar David Friedrich, *The Stages of Life*, 1835 Collection of the Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig



Claude Lorrain, *The Trojan Women Setting Fire to Their Fleet*, circa 1643 Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

## Collector's Digest

- Having exhibited extensively across the world, Liu Ye has been the subject of several museum shows including *Mondrian and Liu Ye at Mondriaanhuys, Amersfoort* (2016), and *Window on China at Kunstmuseum Bern* (2007). His upcoming solo show titled [Liu Ye: Naive and Sentimental Painting](#), will take place at David Zwirner London from 10 October — 18 November 2023.
- Liu's paintings are held in numerous prominent collections, including but not limited to that of the Long Museum in Shanghai, the M+ Sigg Collection in Hong Kong, and the Today Art Museum in Beijing. The artist, who is currently represented by David Zwirner, was recently the subject of an international solo exhibition, titled *Liu Ye: Storytelling*. It was first presented at Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai (2018-2019), then travelled to the Fondazione Prada in Milan (2020-2021). Undeniably at the forefront of Asian contemporary art, Liu's powerfully eloquent works are widely praised by critics and highly sought after by collectors.

<sup>i</sup> René Magritte, quoted in Alain Robbe-Grillet, (René Magritte), *La Belle Captive: A Novel*, 1995, p. 178

<sup>ii</sup> Liu Ye, quoted in 'Liu Ye in Conversation with Philip Tinari', Christoph Noe, *Liu Ye: Catalogue Raisonné*, 2015, p. 50

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Liu Ye, quoted in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Zhu Zhu, Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds., Denis Mair, trans., *Liu Ye: The Book Paintings*, 2021, p.168

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> Liu Ye, quoted in Zhu Zhu, 'Zhu Zhu: Inverview with Liu Ye', September 2012, [online](#)

## Provenance

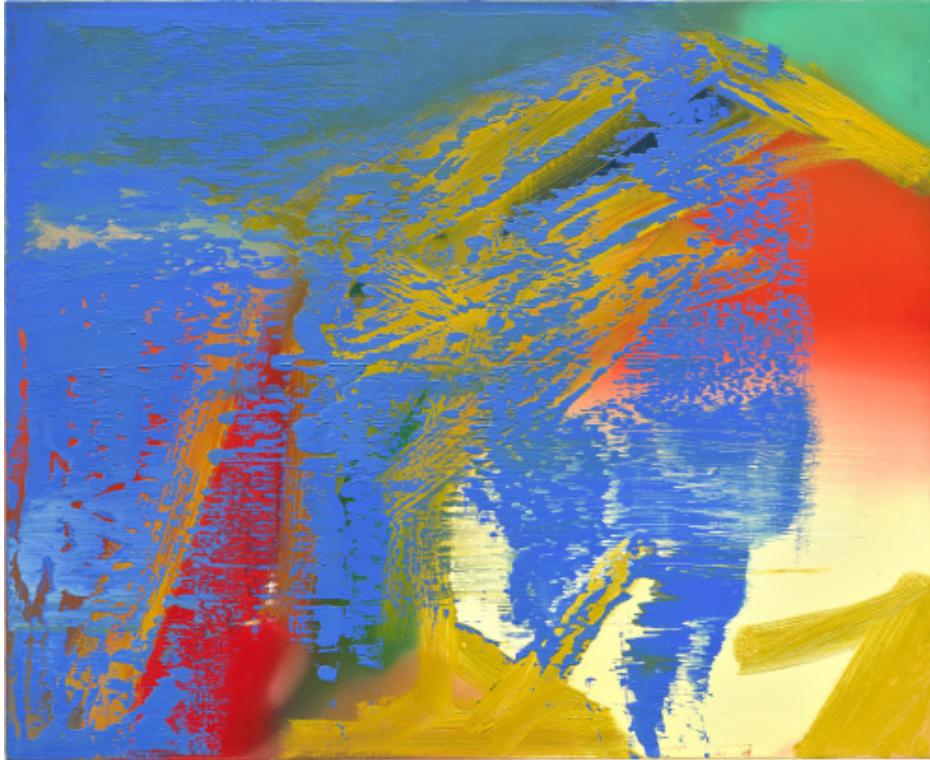
Galerie Serieuze Zaken, Amsterdam  
 Sotheby's, Hong Kong, 7 October 2007, lot 641  
 Private Collection  
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Literature

Christoph Noe, ed., *Liu Ye Catalogue Raisonné 1991-2015*, Berlin, 2015, no. 98-16, p. 283 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

11 \*

### Gerhard Richter

*Abstraktes Bild (456-2)*

signed, numbered and dated '456/2 Richter 1980' on  
the reverse

oil on canvas

65.3 x 80.3 cm. (25 3/4 x 31 5/8 in.)

Painted in 1980.

#### Estimate

HK\$7,500,000 — 12,000,000

€901,000 — 1,440,000

\$962,000 — 1,540,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“With abstract painting we create a better means of approaching what can neither be seen nor understood.” — Gerhard Richter*

Technically brilliant and hailed as one of the greatest living artists in the 21st century, Gerhard Richter has remained a key figure in the redefinition of painting by blurring the lines between figuration and representation. Already well renowned for his photorealistic paintings and attention to detail, Richter began experimenting with abstraction in the 1970s and created the first *Abstraktes Bild* work in 1976. Painted just 4 years after the first in the series, *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)* is a relatively early example of Richter’s non-representational works. More importantly, the present piece immediately follows the artist’s first ever squeegee work, namely *Abstraktes Bild 456-1*<sup>i</sup>, marking it as important and representational within Richter’s oeuvre. Marrying spontaneity with orchestration, it showcases the artist’s experimental approach to colour and technique as well as the unbridled nature of his compositions, elements that have remained recurring motifs in his celebrated masterpieces.



Gerhard Richter in his studio with *Spiegel (Mirror)*, 1981, and *Abstraktes Bild (Faust) (Abstract Painting [Faust])*, 1980, Düsseldorf, 1981. Image: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0200)

*“With a brush you have control. The paint goes on the brush and you make the mark. From experience you know exactly what will happen. With the squeegee you lose control.” — Gerhard Richter*

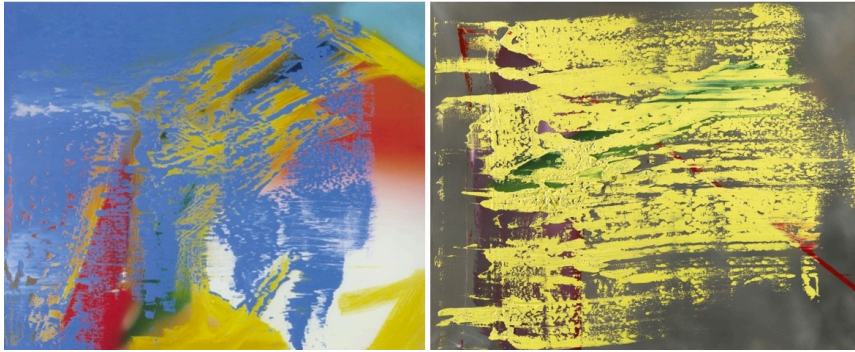
## Why Paint With a Brush?

At the start of the eighties, painting was making headway in reestablishing itself within the art world and was revitalised in part by neo-expressionism at the start of the decade. Led by figures such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Julian Schnabel, Christopher Le Brun, Paula Rego, across the US and Britain, neo-expressionism saw notable influence and development in Germany, with German neo-expressionists known as Neue Wilden (new Fauve [artists]). Some such Neue Wilde artists included Georg Baselitz and Anselm Kiefer in Richter’s native Germany, both of whom became synonymous with the movement.

Though coming to prominence during this time, Richter’s art was far different from his contemporaries. Although Baselitz and Richter for instance were seen as influencers in their own rights (even participating in a joint exhibition together in 1981), ‘...the two artists could not have been more different...Baselitz was a pioneer of the new, fiercely gestural return to figurative painting...Richter, on the other hand, worked to suppress any hint of emotion in his painting...[and] in his capacity as professor, influenced a host of artists who came through the academy, particularly those interested in photography and theories of media.’<sup>ii</sup>

It is against this precise background that the present piece was created in 1980. A vanguard amongst others, Richter’s initial forays into his *Abstraktes Bild* series were experimental. Discovering as he proceeded, the artist looked at new ways to approach oil paint that were vastly different from his peers. Shifting from his focus on browns and greys in the decade before, Richter employed bold, bright colours on his canvases, manipulated to create variations in depth, tone, form and perception.

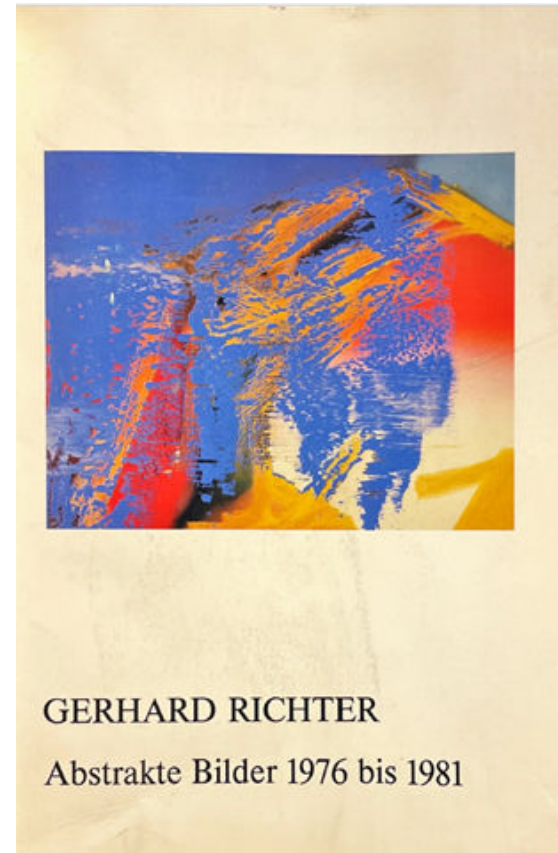




Left: The present lot Right: Gerhard Richter, *Abstraktes Bild 456-1*, 1980 – Richter’s first ever squeegee painting, painted in the same year as the present work. Artwork: Gerhard Richter 2023 (0200)

Notably, *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)* is the second proper squeegee painting ever produced by Richter. New and unfamiliar to him at the time, this method that allowed him to paint without a brush was also pioneered in 1980. The artist discovered that the scraping motion of a squeegee allowed him to replicate blown-up paint details found in his past works on a much smaller scale, an effect he first experimented with in *Abstraktes Bild (456-1)*—an effect the curator Camille Morineau has noted as a ‘theatrically enlarged simulacrum’<sup>iii</sup>, with the present lot being painted not long after. A tool that has since become synonymous with the artist’s practice, the flat blade also became the catalyst for his move away from source imagery and photographic references to total abstraction.

Layering different types of pigment, the squeegee is used to scrape away the still-wet paint, causing the colours to blend and melt into one another while also revealing what originally laid beneath. *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)* features vivid shades of primary colours mixed and blended in various directions, resulting in highly energetic sections of overlapping pigments that fill the foreground with a unique visual complexity. A seminal work executed during a pivotal turning point in Richter’s career, it was notably included in the 1982 show *Abstrakte Bilder 1976 bis 1981* that travelled across Germany, where the current lot was highlighted with a full colour illustration on the cover of and within the published catalogue, as well as within *Art Allemagne Aujourd’hui (German Art Today)* at the Musée d’art modern de la Ville de Paris in 1981. Richter’s catalogue raisonné also dedicated two pages to the introduction of *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)*, one of which features a full-page illustration, a testament to both the beauty and importance of this historic piece.



Exhibition catalogue of *Abstrakte Bilder 1976 bis 1981* featuring the present lot on its cover

Whereas previous abstract paintings created in the same year leave traces of the artist’s brush strokes, the squeegee leaves behind no hint of Richter’s involvement, instead achieving a more gestural surface layer as the paint spreads freely under the soft pressure and levelling action applied by the tool. In *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)*, unfilled gaps and smudges form part of the final product as hints of yellow and red peek through the dominating blue paint. Yet it is these marks which draw focus to the interactions between colour, texture and layers, a masterful display of pure abstraction composed purely of primary tones that encourages viewers to focus on the experience of seeing itself.

## Leaving Painting to Chance

*“Above all, it’s never blind chance: it’s a chance that is always planned, but also always surprising. And I need it in order to carry on. . .to introduce something different and disruptive. I’m often astonished to find how much better chance is than I am.” — Gerhard Richter, 1986*

Apart from providing a fresh perspective within his multifaceted practice, the use of a squeegee also added an element of chance into Richter’s works. The artist retains power over what colours to choose and mechanical control over the tool, allowing him to decide which direction to paint in or how much pressure to apply. However, Richter can never fully control how the paint streaks will turn out or if imperfections will occur. This introduction of the unknown holds some links with the practice of Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock and his radical ‘drip’ technique. Like Richter, Pollock does not leave traces of the brush on his canvases. Flinging thinned enamel paint onto the floor, he allows gravity and velocity to determine the final composition of his dynamic paintings.



Jackson Pollock, *One: Number 31*, 1950, 1950 Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York © 2023 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

But although spontaneity is crucial to Richter’s works, helping to blur the lines between intention and coincidence, the artist believed it was equally important to find structure within disorder. While Pollock primarily based his practice on short bursts of intuition, Richter sought to find a balance between chance and systematic painting. He explains, ‘Above all, it’s never blind chance: it’s a chance that is always planned, but also always surprising. And I need it in order to carry on, in

order to eradicate my mistakes, to destroy what I’ve worked out wrong, to introduce something different and disruptive. I’m often astonished to find how much better chance is than I am.’<sup>iv</sup>

Merging subjectivity and objectivity, accidental and premeditation, *Abstraktes Bild (456-2)* celebrates the instantaneous moment of creation, purposely uncontrollable and purely facilitating the application of paint rather than the final composition. Though Richter executes his paintings with strong visual logic, his repeated layering and destruction of its surface using an unpredictable tool prevents the final picture from even being predetermined, instead inducing the sensation of a long-lost figurative reality drifting just beyond the painting’s tangible surface that reconciles the relationship between painting’s ability to represent, and man’s capability to perceive.

## Collector’s Digest

- A tremendously influential powerhouse of contemporary art, Gerhard Richter was born in Dresden in 1932 and came of age during a period of intense political and cultural change. Richter studied art first at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts in 1951 and then at the Düsseldorf Academy in 1961. Celebrated globally as one of the most important artists of his generation, Richter’s oeuvre continues to explore the relationships between colour and form, abstraction and representation, and remains a paragon of the genre in art history.
- Throughout the course of his career, Richter’s ‘Abstract Paintings’ have attracted serious interest from many prestigious collections—*Abstraktes Bild 780-1*, 1992, and *809-3*, 1994, for instance, were acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and the joint collection of Tate Modern and the National Galleries of Scotland, respectively.
- In 2021, Richter permanently loaned 100 works to the Museum der Moderne in Berlin, which will held in a dedicated exhibition room once the museum opens in 2026. *Gerhard Richter: 100 Works for Berlin*, showcasing works from the collection, was recently opened on 1 April 2023 at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin. The exhibition will run until 1 April 2026.

<sup>i</sup> The Gerhard Richter Chronology, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Dietmar Elger, Elizabeth M. Solaro, trans., *Gerhard Richter: A Life In Painting*, 2010, p. 257.

<sup>iii</sup> *Camille Morineau on GERHARD RICHTER: PANORAMA*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 6 June - 24 September 2012.

<sup>iv</sup> Gerhard Richter, quoted in Hans Ulrich Obrist, ed., *Gerhard Richter: The Daily Practice of Painting—Writings 1962-1993*, London, 1995, p. 159.

**Gerhard Richter**

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**Provenance**

Fred Jahn Gallery, Munich

Collection Dieter Giesing, Hamburg

Christie's, New York, 11 November 2004, lot 182

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Art Allemagne Aujourd'hui*, 17 January - 8 March 1981

Kunsthalle Bielefeld; Mannheimer Kunstverein; Munich, Galerie Fred Jahn, *Gerhard Richter*.

*Abstrakte Bilder 1976 bis 1981*, 10 January - 26 June 1982, p. 63 (illustrated, p. 36, front cover)

Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie; Kunsthalle Bern; Vienna, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Gerhard Richter. Bilder 1962-1985*, 18 January - 21 September 1986, p. 392 (illustrated, p. 231)

London, Tate Gallery, *Gerhard Richter*, 30 October 1991 - 12 January 1992, p. 79 (illustrated)

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Bonn, Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Stockholm, Moderna Museet; Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Gerhard Richter*, 23 September 1993- 22 August 1994, no. 456-2, pp. 177, 182 (illustrated, n.p.)

**Literature**

Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter: Catalogue Raisonné, Volume 3: Nos. 389-651-2 (1976-1987)*, Ostfildern, 2013, no. 456-2, p. 180 (illustrated, p. 181)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



12

### Lynne Drexler

*Meadow Aside*

signed, titled and dated "'Meadow Aside" 1963 Lynne Drexler' on the reverse

oil on canvas

101.6 x 152.4 cm. (40 x 60 in.)

Painted in 1963.

#### Estimate

HK\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

€300,000 — 420,000

\$321,000 — 449,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Fresh to market, *Meadow Aside*, was painted in 1963, just two years after her break-out show at Tanager Gallery in New York and given to the present owner by Harry Bone, who was one of the beneficiaries of the Lynne Drexler estate. Bubbling and brimming with colours, the works of Lynne Drexler resemble aerial views of lush gardens or jagged metropolises. Elusive structures vie for attention and space against organic forms, as speckles, dashes, and rhombuses all wrestle for room on her canvases. Though Drexler's pieces have only recently been rediscovered in the artistic arena—having been unfortunately eclipsed by her male peers during her lifetime—her talent has thankfully not fallen by the wayside. Instead, her pieces have been met with vigorous demand, and her place among other Abstract Expressionists has been posthumously secured. The artist's works are in the permanent collection of several institutions, including the Portland Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

### A Concerto of Colours

Though Lynne Drexler's presence within the annals of Abstract Expressionism may be scarce to say the least, she was undoubtedly an artist of note during this period. In the fifties and sixties, when seismic shifts were underway in the post-war art world, and such a realm was male dominated (giants such as Jackson Pollock became synonymous with the movement), many women were operating in the shadows. Although their oeuvres were equally accomplished, likewise executed with gusto and prowess, women faced rejection in the largely misogynist gallery scene of New York, the new capital of Art. That her female contemporaries have finally enjoyed recognition for their contributions to the movement (decades late though this may be) is encouraging.

Drexler was born in 1928 in Virginia to parents who were immensely supportive of their child's immersion into visual and performing arts, and the artist was enrolled in a variety of different art courses from a young age. In pursuit of such a gift, Drexler moved to New York in 1955 and was subsumed into the Abstract Expressionist movement, studying under Hans Hofmann in both his Provincetown and New York schools. A proponent of colour theories, Hofmann's legacy can be felt in Drexler's art in the echoes of his famous 'push and pull' methodology of the 1950s and 1960s. Prescribing an approach that 'pushed' a plane into the surface, or 'pulled' it from one, Hofmann's enduring philosophy imparted the directive to create pictorial planes through this dichotomous ebb/flow of colour, where different layered hues interacted with one another in tonal repartees.



Hans Hofmann, *Pompeii*, 1959 Collection of The Tate, London Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

A similar effect can be seen in Drexler's creations, and this is evident in *Meadow Aside*, painted not so long after Hoffman's earliest teachings of colour theory. One can observe giant swathes of colours pulling in various directions, then also pushing into others to form vivid pools that come close to cascading into one another, but ultimately never do. From bright burgundy tracks of impasto to small globules of emerald dots, Drexler has created a kaleidoscope of brilliant shades. Eventually, the artist would continue tutelage under the renowned Robert Motherwell, whose intellectual machinations on Abstract Expressionism fuelled the young artist's own process and practices. It is a combination of both teachers that built the foundation for her oeuvre, eventually solidifying her signature blotch-like patterns and vibrant colour palette.

## Nature Reimagined in Song

Drexler's self-imposed hermitage of sorts to Monhegan Island, Maine (a scarcely populated island) in 1983 has been well documented, and yet the artist's relationship with the small isle began decades prior to her permanent move. In the early years of her marriage to painter John Hultberg, Hultberg's art dealer Martha Jackson had acquired a house on the island as a refuge for the couple, away from the bustling social life of New York. It was here that Drexler first encountered Monhegan Island's unfettered landscape and its enveloping solitude, often sketching outdoors while she summered there. It was then on these sketches that she would build atop of later on, reimagining them into larger abstract paintings upon returning to New York in the winters. Perhaps one might be able to infer a subject matter in the present work when also considering two other works created in the same year, 1963: lithographs held in the Museum of Modern Art's collection, entitled *Window Onto Valley* and, simply, *Valley*. It is easy to imagine Drexler preparing such images to later expand into works such as our present piece, envisioned initially while nestled amongst the tranquil valleys of Monhegan Island.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Path in the Park*, 1888 Collection of the Kröller-Müller Museum, The Netherlands

The theme of nature was also visited by some of Drexler's artistic equals at the time. One thinks to Joan Mitchell and her paintings of the picturesque French village of Vétheuil in the sixties, equally captivated by the verdant terrain. In her lively medley of colours, Drexler not only recalls artists such as Mitchell, but draws parallels tonally and gesturally to the likes of Vincent Van Gogh, whose unrivalled art form sought to crystallise nature in his emblematic brushstrokes. When coupled with Drexler's life-long love for music — often frequenting opera houses with sketchbooks to draw alongside the music — one gleans a melodious charm in the lyrical expressions bursting forth in technicolour undulations.

## Collector's Digest

Lynne Drexler remained in relative obscurity during her lifetime, despite being a pivotal member in the second-generation of Abstract Expressionist artist alongside figures such as Joan Mitchell. Having been rediscovered in recent years, she was the subject of a solo exhibition, [Lynne Drexler: The First Decade, presented by Mnuchin Gallery in collaboration with Berry Campbell Gallery in 2022](#). Her works are in institutional collections such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

### Provenance

The artist

Harry Bone, Maine

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT ASIAN  
COLLECTION

13 \*

### Zao Wou-Ki

10.05.76

signed 'Wou-Ki [in Chinese] ZAO' lower right; further  
signed and titled 'ZAO WOU-Ki "10.5.76."' on the  
reverse

oil on canvas

115.8 x 88.7 cm. (45 5/8 x 34 7/8 in.)

Painted in 1976. this work will be accompanied by a  
certificate of authenticity issued by the Fondation Zao  
Wou-Ki. This work is referenced in the archive of the  
Fondation Zao Wou-Ki and will be included in the  
artist's forthcoming catalogue raisonne prepared by  
Françoise Marquet and Yann Hendgen (Information  
provided by Fondation Zao Wou-Ki).

#### Estimate

HK\$12,000,000 — 20,000,000

€1,440,000 — 2,400,000

\$1,540,000 — 2,560,000

[Go to Lot](#)



As the eldest son of a successful banker, Zao Wou-ki did not have any interest in taking over the family business. Instead, his passion for art led him to enroll in the Hangzhou National Academy of Fine Arts, where he graduated in 1941 after completing a 6-year training programme. Although retained by Lin Fengmian to stay on as an assistant teacher, Zao remained inspired by artists such as Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse, and continued to foster a fascination in Western art through Parisian post cards from his uncle or reproductions of artworks published in American magazines bought from the French Concession.

Unlike Chinese artists before him, who were expected to return and cultivate the future generations of the nation after studying abroad, Zao sought to fully immerse himself in Europe to further his personal artistic development. With his father's blessing, the young artist began his journey in 1948 with his eyes set on Paris, passing through multiple cities before arriving in the French capital. On the first day of his arrival, Zao's visit to the Louvre finally allowed him to encounter in person the works of art titans that he had only ever seen in books or magazines. As his determination to seek recognition as an artist with no geographical labels grew, he would come to befriend other Paris émigrés including Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung, Joan Mitchell, and Sam Francis as he occupied a small studio in the creative district of Montparnasse.

*“Although the influence of Paris is undeniable in all my training as an artist, I also wish to say that I have gradually rediscovered China. [...] Paradoxically, perhaps, it is to Paris that I owe this return to my deepest origins.” — Zao Wou-Ki*

Initially planning to only stay in the capital for two years, Zao's voyage to France would eventually become a permanent residency. Unlike many contemporaries who struggled to make a name for themselves, the innovative liberties and artistic spirit of the vibrant city of Paris gave the artist the freedom to create and to develop an artistic language truly of his own. Inspired by like-minded peers who also identified with multiple cultures, Zao began to experiment with a variety of mediums such as oil painting and took a holistic approach in incorporating Chinese traditions and post-war Western influences into his art.

In 1951, Zao stumbled upon the works of Paul Klee in Switzerland during his tour of Europe, with its expressive colours and musical sensibilities resonating. This encounter marked the beginning of the artist's transition into abstraction, coinciding with the re-incorporation of bold Chinese influences into his work by the mid-1950s which saw the emergence of his Oracle Bone period inspired from ancient hieroglyphic scripts. By the time his Hurricane Period began in 1959, a time that was widely-recognised as his creative peak, his grand and majestic style synthesising Chinese and Western styles as well as ancient and modern elements had garnered substantial acclaim across Europe and in the United States.

## Spurred by Grief: A Return to His Roots

*“Everybody is bound by a tradition; I am bound by two.” — Zao Wou-Ki*

Though Zao was well versed in Chinese painting traditions due to the formal training undertaken in his early years, he had previously rejected embedding traditional Chinese art forms in his practice as an effort to innovate and to distance himself from his home culture. Painting primarily in oil until the early 1970s, Zao was encouraged to re-explore ink painting in 1971 by French poet and good friend Henri Michaux. Much more than a stylistic choice, his reconnection with the medium served as a serene escape from constant bouts of personal turmoil, despite reaching the apex of his career. Chan May-Kan, the artist's second wife whom he loved passionately for over a decade, had become plagued with health issues, and tragically passed away in March 1972. The same month marked Zao's homecoming, as he returned to Shanghai to visit family, the first time in 24 years since his departure from home.

The death of May left a heavy impact on Zao, who became emotionally overwhelmed and was unable to paint during his long months of grieving. Plunged into a veritable nightmare, the artist described the period as ‘ten years at full speed, the same at which I was driving a fast car.’<sup>i</sup> However, his return to China had a profound influence on his artistic development as it further reintroduced him to the Chinese ink as a viable source of inspiration. Though he remained trapped in a deep abyss, Zao was captivated by the imagery and physical motion of the traditional medium, which subsequently rekindled his enthusiasm for art in an effort to reach self-liberation. By 1973, the artist had picked up a paintbrush again, returning to the art world with a refreshed sense of direction as he begins a new chapter of his artistic career.





Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, 1842 Collection of the Tate, London

Painted in 1976, *10.05.76* moves away from the signature central-axis composition of the Hurricane period and the wild, flowing style of cursive calligraphy that characterised the 1960s. In contrast to the rich colour layerings of his previous works, *10.05.76* heavily features hefty areas of dark paint meticulously deployed with the artist's new approach of evoking thin ink washes to achieve soft tonal gradations. Irregular compositionally yet highly dynamic and theatrical, his gestural brushstrokes create the illusion of movement filled with ephemeral light and sensual wonder.

This atmospheric, landscape-like sensibility recalls Joseph Mallord William Turner's stylistic treatment of the sea, sky, and wind. Famed for his marine paintings, Turner utilised rays of diagonal and horizontal arcs to capture a striking impression of nature, such as the turbulent blizzard in the 1842 work *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*. Setting mankind against the enormity of nature with the clever use of empty space, sophisticated colours, and virtuosic brushwork, these are elements that can also be commonly found in Zao's practice.



Ma Yuan, *Scholar viewing a waterfall*, early 13th century Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1973.120.9

Whilst assimilating Western colour composition and layout, much of the artist's technique in *10.05.76* is still heavily rooted in ancient tradition. Inheriting the spirit of the Chinese ink medium, it is reminiscent of the Song Dynasties and its great classical landscapes. Atop the multi-layers of neutral earth colours and greens, Zao decorates the edges of the canvas with dark, wide strokes akin to the swirl of energy in the centre of the canvas. Adopting calligraphic methods into oil painting, Zao's textured brushwork references both *feibai* ('flying white'), where a lightly steeped brush smudges across silk for the illusion of flight, and *cunfa* (crack technique), used to depict the texture of rocks and mountains. In particular, the angularity of the forms on the left echoes the one-sided, sharp compositions of Song painter Ma Yuan.

To better mimic the aesthetic effects of ink, Zao experimented with the properties of oil paint to reach the correct consistency needed to emulate its ethereal quality, an idea that hails back to *The Record of Famous Painters from All the Dynasties* by Tang art historian Zhang Yanyuan. There,

Zhang deliberates on the notion of “manipulating ink to produce tones that correspond to the five colours, which includes 'concentrated ink', 'dense ink', 'light ink' and 'clear ink', of which, each can vary in terms of the degree of wetness and concentration. Zao achieves a similar effect by thinning out paint with turpentine, imbuing it with a sense of fluidity to create translucent washes reminiscent of ink on ancient literati paper paintings.

Adhering to the principles of various methodologies, *10.05.76* achieves a harmonious blend between heritage and the avant-garde, the East and West, seamlessly integrating Zao's roots with the boldness of Western modernism. A reflection of the artist's own life, the central vortex hints at the outburst of emotions experienced during his hardest moments, yet an air of peacefulness remains radiating in its surroundings. Having triumphed over his demons and hence regaining internal peace, both Zao and his paintings had reached a new height once again – undisturbed, tranquil, and elegant.

## Collector's Digest

- With his charm and unquestionable talent, Zao cultivated an extensive circle of friendships with fellow artists and influential cultural figures during his lifetime, and is since become one of the most important Chinese painters of his generation.
- Widely recognized for his reconciliation of Chinese traditional and Western aesthetics, Zao has received numerous accolades in Europe and Asia, as well as being one of the only Chinese-born artists to become a member of the Académie des beaux-arts in Paris alongside Chu Teh-Chun and Wu Guanzhong.
- Known for his works in oil, watercolour and ink, Zao has been celebrated with numerous museum shows at institutions including the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; Asia Society Museum, New York, USA; and STPI, Singapore. Showcasing the artist's diverse oeuvre, a retrospective of his print works is currently being exhibited at [he Hospice Saint-Roch Museum in Issoudun](#), to be held until 30 December 2023. A major retrospective also opens on 19 September at China Academy of Art Museum in Hangzhou.
- As a truly global artist and cultural synthesiser, Zao's works can be found in over 150 public collections across 200 countries, which include the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, and Tate Modern, amongst others. His legendary legacy continues to inspire generations of creators that come after, proving him to be of paramount importance in art history with unprecedented levels of contribution towards shaping and defining the face of contemporary art today.

<sup>i</sup> Zao Wou-Ki, quoted in Zao Wou-Ki, *Autoportrait*, Paris, 1988, pp. 139, 142

## Provenance

Private Collection, Europe

Christie's, Hong Kong, 24 November 2018, lot 19

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## Literature

Jean Leymarie, *Zao Wou-Ki*, Paris and Barcelona, 1978, pl. 453, p. 305 (illustrated)

Jean Leymarie, *Zao Wou-Ki*, New York, 1979, pl. 453, p. 305 (illustrated )

Jean Leymarie, *Zao Wou-Ki*, Paris and Barcelona, 1986, pl. 483, p. 344 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT ASIAN  
COLLECTION

14

### Chu Teh-Chun

No. 164

signed 'CHU TEH-CHUN [in Chinese and Pinyin]' lower  
right; further signed, titled and dated 'CHU TEH-CHUN  
[in Chinese and Pinyin] 1963 "No. 164"' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

119.8 x 60 cm. (47 1/8 x 23 5/8 in.)

Painted in 1963, this work is accompanied by a  
certificate of authenticity signed by the artist's wife,  
Chu Ching-Chao.

#### Estimate

HK\$6,000,000 — 10,000,000

€721,000 — 1,200,000

\$769,000 — 1,280,000

[Go to Lot](#)

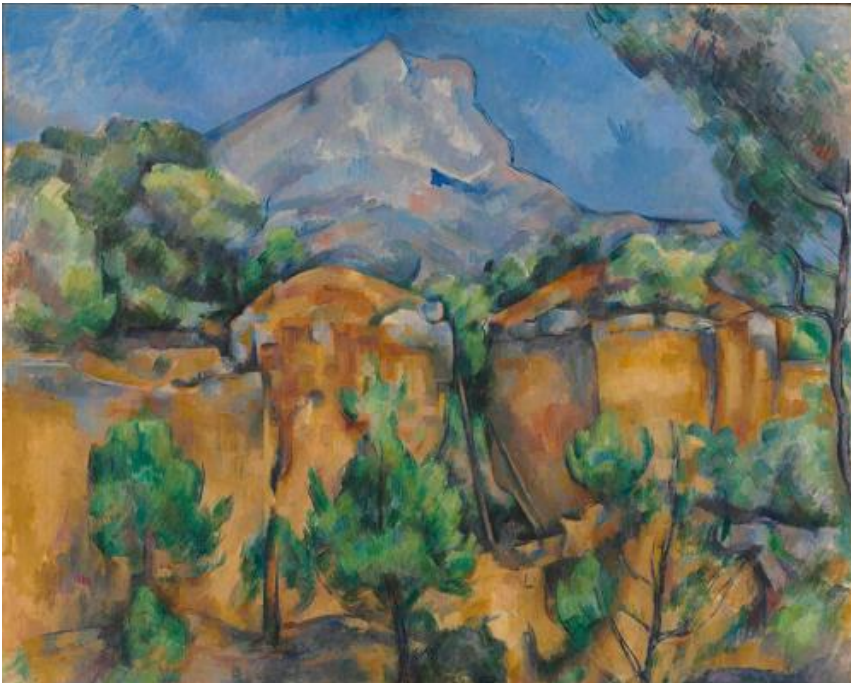


One of the leading Chinese abstract artists of the 20th Century, Chu Teh-Chun's oeuvre continues to have an abiding influence on artists of subsequent generations. He is venerated amongst the greats of Chinese modern art, affectionately referred to as one of the 'Three Musketeers' of Chinese modernism along with his old friends and classmates from the National Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, Wu Guangzhong and Zao Wou-Ki. Born to a family of collectors of traditional Chinese calligraphy and ink painting, Chu was exposed to different modes of artistic representation from a young age. Persuaded by his father who recognised the young boy's talent, Chu entered the Hangzhou National Academy of Fine Arts at the age of 15, and eventually studied under the tutelage of the late Lin Fengmian, a legend of modern Chinese art who espoused a visionary synthesis of Eastern and Western aesthetics. With access to Western art magazines their professors brought back from Paris, students at the academy were introduced to works by Renoir, Matisse and Picasso, as well as Cézanne, whose work Chu has cited as a notable influence. Here, Chu became close with Zao and Wu, and although Chu was the first ethnic Chinese artist to be elected to the prestigious Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Zao and Wu too, were later appointed as members. Already an accomplished artist by the 1950s, Chu continued to be captivated by the works of French Impressionists and the stories shared by his former professors, prompting the artist to voyage to France in 1955.

Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from the Bibémus Quarry*, circa 1895-1899 Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art

*"The artist absorbs what he sees in nature and refines it in his mind, and it is the power of the artist's imagination, his sensibility, and his inner character that are revealed on the canvas. This is where the concepts behind Chinese painting and abstract painting very neatly come together." — Chu Teh-Chun*

It was in France that Chu mastered his union of classical Chinese painting with Western abstraction. Immersed in an unprecedented creative era in Paris, the city provided Chu with intense artistic stimulation. Not only did the artist have unlimited access to the International Avant-Garde, extensive museum collections and rich cultural history, he was surrounded by like-minded artists investigating various forms of non-representation. This provided the ideal context for Chu to develop his own mode of abstraction: not by basing his technique on existing works, but instead as a fusion between Eastern and Western cultures.



## A Turn Towards Abstraction



Nicolas de Staël, *Marathon*, 1948 Collection of the Tate, United Kingdom Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Turning away from figurative art and embracing abstraction upon his arrival to Paris, the abrupt change in Chu's practice was partly inspired by his encounter with Abstract Expressionist Nicolas de Staël. First coming across de Staël's works in his 1956 retrospective, the use of thick impasto and non-geometric manipulation of form led Chu to see abstraction as a viable method of self-expression, freed from the constraints of tangible forms.

Likening de Staël's controlled spontaneity to that of caoshu and its uninterrupted stroke, Chu recalls, 'It was a real revelation of the freedom of expression to me. From now on I freed myself from my twenty years of figurative work to follow my path in non-figurative painting. I slowly turned towards the inspiring thinking of traditional Chinese painting. I discovered the poetry in it and its way of observing nature which is close to Western neo-impressionist painting and particularly to abstract art. Working unconsciously on a synthesis of the two cultures, I suppressed emotion as the driving force and prolonged it through pictorial expression.'<sup>i</sup>



Zhang Daqian, *Landscape in Blue and Green*, 1964 Collection of the British Museum, London

## An Ode to Personal Heritage: When East Meets West

*“The uncontrollable nature of ink allows a surprising ‘uncanny result’ with ‘superlative craftsmanship.’ While practicing ink painting, I wondered why don’t I integrate this ‘superlative craftsmanship’ into oil painting? Going through numerous challenges and experiments, I discovered ‘another world lies beyond.’” — Chu Teh-Chun*

Painted in 1963, *No. 164* is a mesmerising example from the artist’s most defining period, demonstrating Chu’s exceptional mastery of form, texture, and depth. Moving away from the dominance of muted blacks and browns in the early 1960s, the current lot showcases a gradual shift towards lively colours, a feature that would eventually become the hallmark of Chu’s later works. Shades of deep blue and green merge with hues of saturated reds, all highlighted by solid black lines. Diluting oil paint to achieve the effect of thin ink washes, there is an added air of translucency to his unbridled, broad brushstrokes, reminiscent of grand ink masters such as Zhang Daqian’s *modus operandi*. Layered to create variations in thickness and tone, Chu’s canvas comes alive through the spontaneous energy of the artist’s hand, as singular lines morph into a graceful, swirling symphony of overlapping colours.



Ma Yuan, *Singing and Dancing*, Southern Song Dynasty. Collection of Beijing Palace Museum

Although Chu adopted the European medium of oil painting, his distinct visual language was thoroughly informed by Chinese ink painting, in particular the grand landscapes of the Tang and Song Dynasty. Set against a white modulated background, *No. 164* is presented in an unusual vertical format which recalls classical scroll-mounted paintings. Deliberately leaving negative space at the top of the canvas, the artist draws attention to the concentrated *mélange* of organic forms, drawing resemblance to the serene mountain scenes of Ma Yuan. Unlike the literati painters of the Southern School however, Chu does not mean to represent the real world. Rather, his ambiguous compositions serve as outward expressions of the artist’s interior experience, producing poetic representations of the sublime that are emblematic of his harmonization between tradition and modernity.

*“Previously, I was an objective painter, but now I am no longer interested in this way of painting, because after having begun to study abstract painting, I profoundly and obviously felt the freedom of expression to which it testifies.” — Chu Teh-Chun*

Encouraged by his father to study the kuangcao (wild-cursive script) of Wang Xizhi when young and having studied caoshu under the modern ink master Pan Tianshou, Chu’s relocation to France did not stop his exploration of calligraphy throughout his career. More than rediscovering a long-lost passion for writing, Chu realised the possibility of integrating calligraphy concepts into his abstractions. Central to the current lot are striking black calligraphic lines that run through the entire painted surface. They not only highlight his assured brushstrokes and provide compositional structure, but also enhance the dynamism of the canvas by injecting a vibrant energy across the work, giving the illusion of instantaneous movement. In marrying the delicateness of traditional ink with techniques of Western abstract art, Chu successfully unites the aesthetics of both cultures on a singular painterly surface, a testament to his legacy as one of the greats of Chinese modern art.

### Collector’s Digest

- Not long after his move to Paris in 1955, Chu’s work began to garner much interest, and the 1960s witnessed his rise on the international art stage. Testament to the significance of his work, Chu was invited to exhibit at the São Paulo Biennale in 1969, and decades later in 1997, he became the first French painter of Chinese origin to be elected to the Académie des beaux-arts in Paris.
- In 1958, Chu was offered an exclusive 6-year contract by Maurice Panier, the Creative Director of Galerie Legendre. 1963 marked the crowning year of his collaboration with the gallery as the artist held his third solo show.
- Chu’s paintings are in the permanent collections of more than 50 museums around the world, including the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville, Paris; Musée Cernuschi; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgium; Shanghai Opera House, Shanghai; National Museum of History, Taipei; and Taipei Fine Art Museum, Taiwan.

<sup>i</sup> Chu Teh-Chun quoted in ‘Interview with Gérard Xuriguera’, *Les Années 50*, Arted, 1984

### Provenance

Private Collection, France

Private Collection

Phillips, Hong Kong, 24 November 2019, lot 13

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



15

### Zao Wou-Ki

20.8.84

signed 'Wou-Ki [in Chinese] ZAO' lower right; further signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'ZAO WOU-Ki "20.8.84" Dédié à Claude Pompidou Amitié de Françoise et Wou-Ki [in Chinese] ZAO Paris 1996' on the reverse

oil on canvas

73.2 x 92 cm. (28 7/8 x 36 1/4 in.)

Painted in 1984.

#### Estimate

HK\$4,800,000 — 6,800,000

€577,000 — 817,000

\$615,000 — 872,000

[Go to Lot](#)





As the eldest son of a successful banker, Zao Wou-ki did not have any interest in taking over the family business. Instead, his passion for art led him to enroll in the Hangzhou National Academy of Fine Arts, where he graduated in 1941 after completing a 6-year training programme. Although retained by Lin Fengmian to stay on as an assistant teacher, Zao remained inspired by artists such as Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse, and continued to foster a fascination in Western art through Parisian post cards from his uncle or reproductions of artworks published in American magazines bought from the French Concession.

Unlike Chinese artists before him, who were expected to return and cultivate the future generations of the nation after studying abroad, Zao sought to fully immerse himself in Europe to further his personal artistic development. With his father's blessing, the young artist began his journey in 1948 with his eyes set on Paris, passing through multiple cities before arriving in the French capital. On the first day of his arrival, Zao's visit to the Louvre finally allowed him to encounter in person the works of art titans that he had only ever seen in books or magazines. As his determination to seek recognition as an artist with no geographical labels grew, he would come to befriend other Paris émigrés including Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung, Joan Mitchell, and Sam Francis as he occupied a small studio in the creative district of Montparnasse.

*“Although the influence of Paris is undeniable in all my training as an artist, I also wish to say that I have gradually rediscovered China. [...] Paradoxically, perhaps, it is to Paris that I owe this return to my deepest origins.” — Zao Wou-Ki*

Initially planning to only stay in the capital for two years, Zao's voyage to France would eventually become a permanent residency. Unlike many contemporaries who struggled to make a name for themselves, the innovative liberties and artistic spirit of the vibrant city of Paris gave the artist the freedom to create and to develop an artistic language truly of his own. Inspired by like-minded peers who also identified with multiple cultures, Zao began to experiment with a variety of mediums such as oil painting and took a holistic approach in incorporating Chinese traditions and post-war Western influences into his art.

In 1951, Zao stumbled upon the works of Paul Klee in Switzerland during his tour of Europe, with its expressive colours and musical sensibilities resonating. This encounter marked the beginning of the artist's transition into abstraction, coinciding with the re-incorporation of bold Chinese influences into his work by the mid-1950s which saw the emergence of his Oracle Bone period inspired from ancient hieroglyphic scripts. By the time his Hurricane Period began in 1959, a time that was widely-recognised as his creative peak, his grand and majestic style synthesising Chinese and Western styles as well as ancient and modern elements had garnered substantial acclaim across Europe and in the United States.

## A Physical Portrayal of Serenity

*“I want to paint invisible things: the breath of life, wind, movement, the vitality of forms, the unfolding and intermingling of colours.” — Zao Wou-Ki*

Believing in the oneness of nature and humanity, Zao continued his exploration of cultural synthesis in the 1980s with a renewed sense of joy, freedom and confidence. Already a highly celebrated artist, the artist not only received his first major retrospective in France at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, but also embarked on extended artistic activity in North America. Marking his return to the US art scene, Zao became formally represented by Pierre Matisse, son of Henri Matisse, who would go on to organize two exhibitions in 1980 and 1986 respectively: the former was Zao's first show in America since the closure of Kootz Gallery in 1967, while the latter featured *20.8.84* as one of the exhibited works. Simultaneously, Zao remained an influential figure in Europe as he was made an Officier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur by the French Minister of Culture in 1984, the same year the present work was created.



Detail of *20.8.84*

Parallel to his personal achievements, Zao's work in the 1980s encountered another stylistic shift, with his recovery from past trauma bringing forth a newfound appreciation in life. Being more settled personally, his paintings were distinctly calmer too as he pivoted from monochromatic hues to a bright, luminous palette. Predominantly composed of lighter tones, the vibrancy that exudes from *20.8.84* takes on a pearlescent lustre. Zao's softened brushstrokes introduces an enhanced fluidity, removing the sharp angular compositional planes present in his previous works. Streams of black, ochre and blue sprout from the lower left edge and dance upon the canvas, with their diluted quality retaining Zao's brilliant manipulation of translucency from the 1970s. As they slowly merge with the iridescent white light in the upper half, his seamless transition between colours appear to be boundless and infinite, mirroring his frequent international travels throughout his dynamic journey of life.

*"I admire how Mi Fu arranged space. This differentiates Chinese landscape painting from Western oil painting. In my paintings, a lot of spaces are also left empty. However, as oil paint does not splash as easily as ink, I actually work more meticulously on the empty spaces than the occupied spaces. The ever-flowing, cadenced rhythm resulting from the interaction between the real and the virtual in Chinese paintings has given me significant inspirations." — Zao Wou-Ki*



Mi Youren, *Cloudy Mountains*, 1130 Collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art Image: Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J.H. Wade Fund, 1933.220

An ever-burgeoning universe, *20.8.84*'s spirituality is further constructed by the spatial arrangement of elements in the work. With form and colour concentrated on the lower half of the canvas, its empty space again draws comparison with Song Dynasty landscapes. Like artists such as Mi Fu and his son Mi Youren, Zao makes use of the traditional concept of *liubai* (to leave blank) to provoke interactions between emptiness and form. But while not seeking to be a representation of reality, the delicate paint layers in his surreal abstractions make their way back to nature – separated by a diagonal, it is almost as if the viewer is observing up close a mountain towering into the sky. Seemingly evoking the presence of mist, it concurrently evokes the Mi family's wet ink technique and their hazy, atmospheric paintings.

Frozen in time, the ethereal world of *20.8.84* sees the world, seasons, ink painting and Western artistic sensibilities collide<sup>4</sup>. Demonstrating the successful marriage between abstraction and Chinese brushwork, Zao perfectly combines the contrasting ideals of unconscious discovery and

self-awareness. Rejecting the long-standing notion of orientalism, Zao's brilliance and uniqueness stems from his intrinsic integration of his diverse culture as a Chinese artist. With no sign of human desire or the bustle of life, the artist's works provide an illusionary sanctuary for the mind and encourages one to reconsider the meaning of existence and faith. Finally triumphant in his search of tranquillity, it is this very intuitiveness that simultaneously propelled Zao onto the cannon of Modern Art, within China and abroad.

### Collector's Digest

- With his charm and unquestionable talent, Zao cultivated an extensive circle of friendships with fellow artists and influential cultural figures during his lifetime, and is since become one of the most important Chinese painters of his generation.
- Widely recognized for his reconciliation of Chinese traditional and Western aesthetics, Zao has received numerous accolades in Europe and Asia, as well as being one of the only Chinese-born artists to become a member of the Académie des beaux-arts in Paris alongside Chu Teh-Chun and Wu Guanzhong.
- Known for his works in oil, watercolour and ink, Zao has been celebrated with numerous museum shows at institutions including the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; Asia Society Museum, New York, USA; and STPI, Singapore. Showcasing the artist's diverse oeuvre, a retrospective of his print works is currently being exhibited at [he Hospice Saint-Roch Museum in Issoudun](#), to be held until 30 December 2023. A major retrospective also opens on 19 September at China Academy of Art Museum in Hangzhou.
- As a truly global artist and cultural synthesiser, Zao's works can be found in over 150 public collections across 200 countries, which include the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, and Tate Modern, amongst others. His legendary legacy continues to inspire generations of creators that come after, proving him to be of paramount importance in art history with unprecedented levels of contribution towards shaping and defining the face of contemporary art today.

<sup>i</sup> Zao Wou-Ki, quoted in Zao Wou-Ki, *Autoportrait*, Paris, 1988, pp. 139, 142

**Provenance**

Private Collection (acquired directly from the artist)

Sotheby's, London, 30 June 2011, lot 156

Private Collection

Huchen Auctions, Beijing, 18 May 2014, lot 1560

Private Collection

Poly International Auction, Beijing, 3 June 2015, lot 4019

Private Collection

Poly Auction, Hong Kong, 3 October 2016, lot 134

Private Collection

Poly International Auction, Beijing, 6 December 2018, lot 3207

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

**Exhibited**

New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, *Zao Wou Ki, Paintings 1980-1985*, 6-31 May 1986, no. 9  
(illustrated)

**Literature**

Yves Bonnefoy and Gérard de Cortanze, *Zao Wou-Ki*, Paris, 1998, p. 218 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

16 ж

### Zeng Fanzhi

*Untitled 07-3*

signed and dated 'Zeng Fanzhi [in Chinese and Pinyin]  
2007' lower right

oil on canvas, triptych

each 260 x 180 cm. (102 3/8 x 70 7/8 in.)

overall 260 x 540 cm. (102 3/8 x 212 5/8 in.)

Painted in 2007.

#### Estimate

HK\$6,000,000 — 9,000,000

€721,000 — 1,080,000

\$769,000 — 1,150,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“Out of this interplay of mind and music emerges a tracery of brushstrokes that form as if by chance.” — Zeng Fanzhi*

Walking the tightrope between pure abstraction and figuration, *Untitled 07-3* highlights the vital years in Zeng Fanzhi’s artistic career where the restless artist was searching for new ways to shed the constraints of figuration and semiotics. Zeng’s diverse oeuvre spans across several periods, beginning in the early 1990s with his seminal *Hospital and Meat* series – visceral explorations of human and animal mortality – prefiguring his well-known *Mask* series, encapsulating the contradictory dualities between internal emptiness and external pretence, marked by his move to the metropolis Beijing in 1993. As Zeng sought an increasingly earnest visual language, his ‘unmasking’ of figures propelled him into expressive, raw brushstrokes, foreshadowing his flirtations with abstraction beginning around 2002 in his *Chaotic Strokes* or loose brush (*luanbi*) series. In the present lot, the vast, barren land runs panoramically, with heavily gestural brushstrokes evoking an array of bare branches and thorns.

### Ambidextrous Duplicity

Zeng’s brushstrokes are charged with an electric thrill, zigzagging in all directions in lightning bolts, intertwined with tangles of coal-black lines which echo the opulent swaths of cobalt blue, magenta and yellow underneath. The lines – appearing as thin wires, seaweed strips undulating with the waves, or wheat swaying in the wind – injected with a degree of uncomfortable vagueness. It obscures, as much as reveals, the image beneath; Zeng renders his layers inseparable from one another, such that it must be considered wholly, from a distance.

In *Untitled 07-3*, chaos and instability writ large, likely pertaining to the artist’s own internal psyche: ‘Everything is autobiographical and everything is a portrait,’ declared Lucian Freud, an artistic influence of Zeng.<sup>i</sup>

*“In the last decade I became increasingly reliant on introspective representation. My sentimental fluctuation leads to the periodical differences among my works.” — Zeng Fanzhi*

This summoning of chaos is explored through Zeng’s unique two-hand brush technique: holding multiple brushes in each hand, he paints free from the constraints of mimetic precision; the left hand altering what the right has established, as if playing the piano. The chance creation of such a technique came about following the artist’s injury to his dominant right drawing hand. The

dichotomy between left and right, emergence and divergence act as calligraphic line, echoing the constant flux of inner turmoil, or revealing ‘traces of the subconscious’ on canvas, perhaps harkening back to surrealist automatism.<sup>ii</sup> Through this duplicity, Zeng positions physicality as central to his artistic practice. He activates a kind of calligraphic gesticulation, his process akin to performance art or the lauded drip paintings of the abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock.



Jackson Pollock, *No. 5*, 1948 © 2023 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## A Nightmarish Realm or a Glimpse into Renewal

*Untitled 07-3* reads from right to left with a panoramic perspective that overcomes the limitations of conventional linear perspective, particularly the cyclops eye from which a single vanishing point is established. Instead, Zeng grants the peripheries of the present work to gain equal gravitas as the centre, continuing a long lineage of scroll paintings of literati motifs. Incidentally, the dried withered branches and attention to rendering the horizon call to mind the winter landscapes of the Song Dynasty. Often didactic, these landscapes emblemise human endurance in the face of harsh, unyielding external factors, or simply acts as a reminder of the unwavering resilience of nature.



Attributed to Liu Songnian, *Snowy landscape with rustic riverside retreat*, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Zeng's experimentation with landscapes began at the beginning of the 2000s, starting with obscuring the figures in his famed Mask series with abstracted strokes. And thus, the luanbi (loose brush) technique was born: while injured and relying on his left hand, the artist honed his luanbi xiantiao technique of loose brush lines. At times, Zeng would use two brushes simultaneously: one thick, larger one which would render backgrounds, while a thinner more precise brush would

create delicate lattices of tree branches.



Detail of the present lot

Later the technique took on even more complexity, whereby the artist would use a palette knife to scrape, drag, and manipulate wet impasto, often imbuing his works with a frenzied, highly gestural quality, not unlike the works of the abstract expressionism movement aforementioned.

The present work parses as a culmination of all such interests, carrying a beguiling yet eerie glow of white starkness against the otherwise wild and desolate landscape. With a luminescence resembling white-hot flames, the V-formation appears to be jolting towards us with a foreboding warning of environmental torment. But there is hope of a rejuvenated nature: jagged, pronounced strokes of neon green emerge from the bottom right of the composition, hinting at regrowth and renewal.



Zeng Fanzhi, *Untitled*, 2018 Collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

## Collectors' Digest

- Among the most prominent Chinese artists of our time, Zeng Fanzhi has received widespread international acclaim for his works. He is honoured with numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, most recently including *Zeng Fanzhi* at Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles (2023), *Zeng Fanzhi: Van Gogh* at Van Gogh Museum (2018), *Arcadia* at Gagosian, Hong Kong (2017), *Show and Tell* at The MET Museum (2016-2017) and *Zeng Fanzhi* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (2013-2014), among others. In 2019, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art acquired the phenomenally scaled *Untitled* (2018). Zeng is also in the institutional collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the M+ Museum in Hong Kong.

<sup>i</sup> Lucian Freud, quoted in Sarah Howgate, 'Lucian Freud: Portraits', 2012

<sup>ii</sup> Hugo Hess, 'Zeng Fanzhi', *Widewalls*, 22 March 2012, [online](#)

### Provenance

Gallery Hyundai, Seoul

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Singapore Art Museum, *Zeng Fanzhi: Idealism*, 30 April - 3 June 2007, p. 66 (illustrated, p.67)

### Literature

Fabien Fryns and Richard Shiff, *Zeng Fanzhi: Every Mark Its Mask*, Stuttgart, 2010, p. 260 (illustrated, 172-173)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

17 \*

### Cai Guo-Qiang

*Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr. Ye Who Loves Dragons)*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "'Ye Gong Hao Long" [in Chinese and English] Explosion Project for Tate Modern Cai Guo Qiang. 2003.1.31. Sketch created on [in Chinese] 1.29.' lower right  
gunpowder on paper, pentptych  
each 405 x 304 cm. (159 1/2 x 119 5/8 in.)  
overall 405 x 1520 cm. (159 1/2 x 598 3/8 in.)  
Executed in 2003.

#### Estimate

HK\$9,000,000 — 14,000,000

€1,080,000 — 1,680,000

\$1,150,000 — 1,790,000

[Go to Lot](#)





*“Eternity in a physical sense is not important. Sometimes something that is ephemeral, that exists only momentarily, has much more eternity to it.”— Cai Guo-Qiang*

On 29 January 2003, Cai Guo-Qiang sprinkled gunpowder like powdered charcoal around the line of firework fuses and detonated it with a slow burning incense. The result, an ignition: a blazing, garish light, a loud eruption and impenetrable smoke that startled the viewers, who crowded around in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern in anticipation of their explosive celebration of Chinese New Year. What remained on the xuan papers was the byproduct, the present lot— a dragon caught mid-air, its undulating silhouette formed by blotches of ash and gunpowder.



View of *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons): Explosion Project* for Tate Modern at London, Tate Modern, 29 January 2003 Artwork: © Cai Guo-Qiang

One of two ‘gunpowder drawings’ produced during the event, *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons)* is not only a spectacular example of Cai’s signature methodology, but also directly related to the outdoor pyrotechnic event of the same name that took place two days later on 31 January. Commissioned by Tate Gallery as part of their Tate & Egg Live program, which invited distinguished artists to create performative works in relation to their museum spaces, Cai staged a thirty-second long explosion which traced across the Millenium Bridge over River Thames. The dragon-like trail reached and encircling the museum façade, as it coiled around the museum’s tower before burning out into smoke. Starting 2003 off with a literal bang, it marked the start of a fruitful year for the successful artist, who went on to curate two more major gunpowder commissions for Central Park in New York and the Siwa Art Project in the Sahara Dessert.

### An Allegorical Illusion

From the 1990s onwards, dragons have become a constant motif of Cai’s – since 1989, more than 30 works have contained or relate to the mythical creature. Notably, the long, winding characteristic of his gunpowder paintings and explosions recall the snake-like form of traditional Chinese dragons. Auspicious symbols of strength and fortune in the East, they are inextricably tied to and rooted in Chinese mythology, politics and religion for millennia. From its earliest known totemic depiction dating back to the Hongshan culture (c. 4500BC), its cultural significance became laden in the Han dynasty, when Emperor Gaozu of Han was believed to be conceived after his mother’s encounter with a dragon, thereby equivocating dragons to power from its emergence.

<sup>i</sup> For this reason, Chinese often refer to themselves as descendants of dragons.



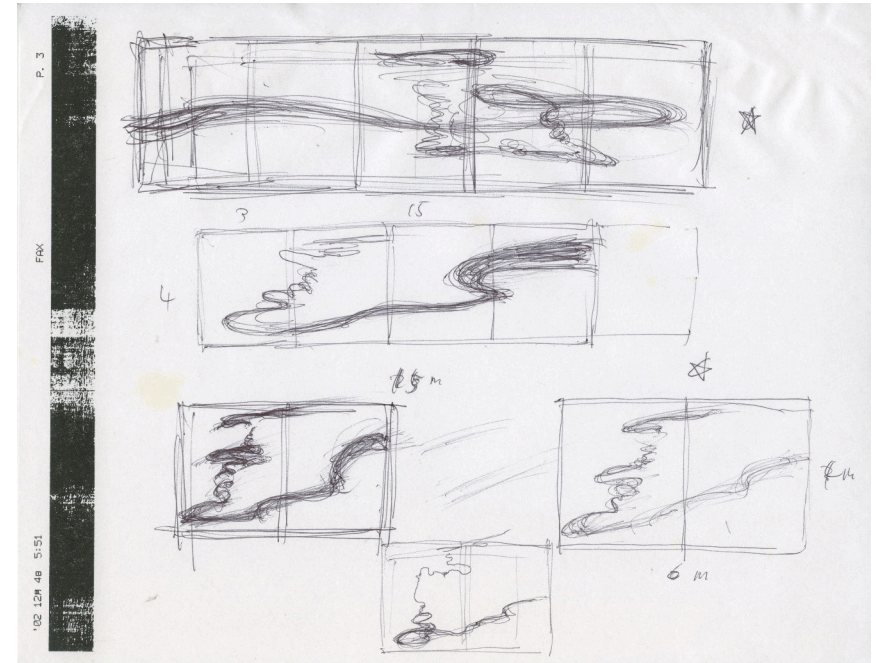
Left: Rank Badge with Dragon with Deer Hooves, 18th-19th century Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Right: Bernat Martorell, *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1434-1435 Collection of the Art Institute Chicago

More than a symbol of imperial power, Cai's frequent usage of dragons is indirectly tied to the difference in perception between the East and the West, inspired by the conflicting information he encountered as a Chinese artist living in America. In particular, the artist noticed the vastly different connotations dragons contained in opposing cultures. Although East Asia sees them as prosperous motifs, Western audiences may regard these fire-blazing creatures as menacing and evil. During a period which saw the emergence of China as a new world power, their use of the motif in asserting power was seen as a threat, leading American news media to portray dragons as symbols of aggression. However, the negative attitude towards dragons is also deeply rooted in the ferocious, often evil depictions typically found in European folklore.

Building upon this dichotomy, Cai references these differing ideals by alluding to a famous Chinese idiom from the Han Dynasty. The title of the current lot refers to *Ye Gong Hao Long*, a tale within the book *Xinxu* by imperial librarian Liu Xiang. It details a story of Mr Ye who claimed to love the creature and decorated his house with abundant dragon motifs. Yet when a real dragon, touched by his sincerity, descended from the skies to pay him a visit, he fled sheepishly, essentially revealing his self-proclaimed admiration to be fear. Pointing out the contradiction between self-proclaimed interest and reality, *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons)* is open to interpretation for the viewers who witnessed its creation - subtly hinting at Western attitudes towards modern day China, it simultaneously refers to the never-ending appearance of dragons as a subject matter in Cai's career. Making use of a familiar cultural icon, the artist both embraces his own heritage and dissects the notion of orientalism in his perpetuation of Eastern stereotypes as a immigrant artist working in the West.

## Potent Matter

*"The aesthetics of explosions are always somewhat imperfect, which is a relief." — Cai Guo-Qiang*



Cai Guo-Qiang, Sketch for *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr. Ye Who Loves Dragons)*, 2003 Artwork: © Cai Guo-Qiang

At once conceptual, performative, and visual, *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons)* surpasses any categorial constraints, fluctuating between ephemerality and permanence. Cai's material explorations have proliferated throughout his career, yet the artist returns instinctively to gunpowder on paper. One of the four great inventions of ancient China, gunpowder, was invented and initially used for its healing properties in the late Tang dynasty despite its contemporary connotations of warfare and destruction, thus obtaining its Chinese name, 'Fire Medicine'.

Growing up in Fujian, a province famous for its manufacturing of fireworks, Cai became acquainted with gunpowder from a young age. A significant aspect of Chinese culture, fireworks were used to

mark all types of significant social occasions, ranging from the celebration of birth and weddings to funerals of loved ones. Having experienced the Cultural Revolution in his adolescence, cannon blasts and explosions also existed as a common occurrence in Cai's early life.

*"I am looking for the unchanging through the always changing. The changes in nature are always changing, but the fact of change or evolution never does." — Cai Guo-Qiang*

Aware of the positive and negative ways gunpowder was utilised, the artist once commented, 'I wanted to look at the destructive and constructive nature of gunpowder, and to look at how destruction can create something as well.'<sup>ii</sup> Focusing specifically on its spontaneous nature, Cai saw the medium as manifestation of Daoism and the principle of cosmic energy generated by opposites meeting: order and chaos merging through the unification of solid substance and fire, as the disintegration of gunpowder leads to the creation of unique artworks. Striking a delicate balance between control and the unknown, the feathery scorch marks in the present lot surround the more concentrated trail with a kind of energetic resonance, resembling iron filings crowding around a magnetic pole, altogether summoning a distinctive aura.



Detail of the present work

First experimenting with the medium in 1984, Cai has since perfected the execution of his famed gunpowder paintings. Beyond the extravagant bright flashes and explosions, the successful creation of his works lies in the technical details developed over the years. Japanese paper, chosen for its thickness and fibrous quality, ensures that the heat and impact from the prolonged combustion can be fully absorbed. Using stencils to control the direction of the ignition, they are weighted variably throughout to achieve different levels of progression and intensity. This results in an undulating line of scorch marks that varies in density and width, dark and dense in the centre but slowly fading in colour at its periphery.

On its own, the act of burning gunpowder and the subsequent explosions are fully ephemeral, as

the process ends once the chemical reaction subsides. But by applying the compound to paper, the risk and unpredictability of the ignition translates into a lasting marker of time and materiality. In *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons)*, its ash trail embodies a poltergeist, rendering a fleeting spectacle permanent. As viewers recover from the shock of the blast, the finished product renders yet another moment of reflection - on the legacy of gunpowder in Chinese culture, on the significance of the dragon, and on the intracultural relationships that surround its creation. Blurring the vast expanse of time, at once recalling long lineages of ancient myths, it revels in the present spectacle and perpetuates its potency for future generations to come.

### Collector's Digest

- Among the most inimitable Chinese contemporary artists working today, Cai Guo-Qiang has been awarded the Golden Lion at the 48th Venice Biennale (1999) and was bestowed by the Japanese royal family as painting Laureate (2012), after being chosen to oversee the opening and closing ceremonies at the Beijing Olympics (2008).
- For the past three decades, Cai has held numerous solo exhibitions in major art centres globally, including recent exhibitions *Ramble in the Cosmos, The National Art Center*, Tokyo (2023), *Odyssey and Homecoming, The Palace Museum*, Beijing (2020–2021), *Cai Guo-Qiang: The Transient Landscape, National Gallery of Victoria* (2019) and *Cai Guo-Qiang: Gunpowder Art, Ashmolean Museum* at the University of Oxford (2019–2020) among others.
- Cai Guo-Qiang's works have been collected by countless prestigious institutions including Faurschau Museum in New York, Uffizi Galleries in Florence, Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai, MoMA, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Pinault Collection in Paris, M+ Museum in Hong Kong, and Tate Collection in London, for which the present lot was commissioned.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5HOcvjtFws&ab\\_channel=TECHSMEX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5HOcvjtFws&ab_channel=TECHSMEX)

The current work being created at London, Tate Modern, *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons)*: Explosion Project for Tate Modern, 29 and 31 January 2003

<sup>i</sup> Translation of Sima Qian, 'Records of the Grand Historian', 10 January 2017, p. 4, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Cai Guo-Qiang, quoted in 'Why does Cai Guo-Qiang like blowing things up?', Phaidon Books, 11 October 2016, [online](#)

### Provenance

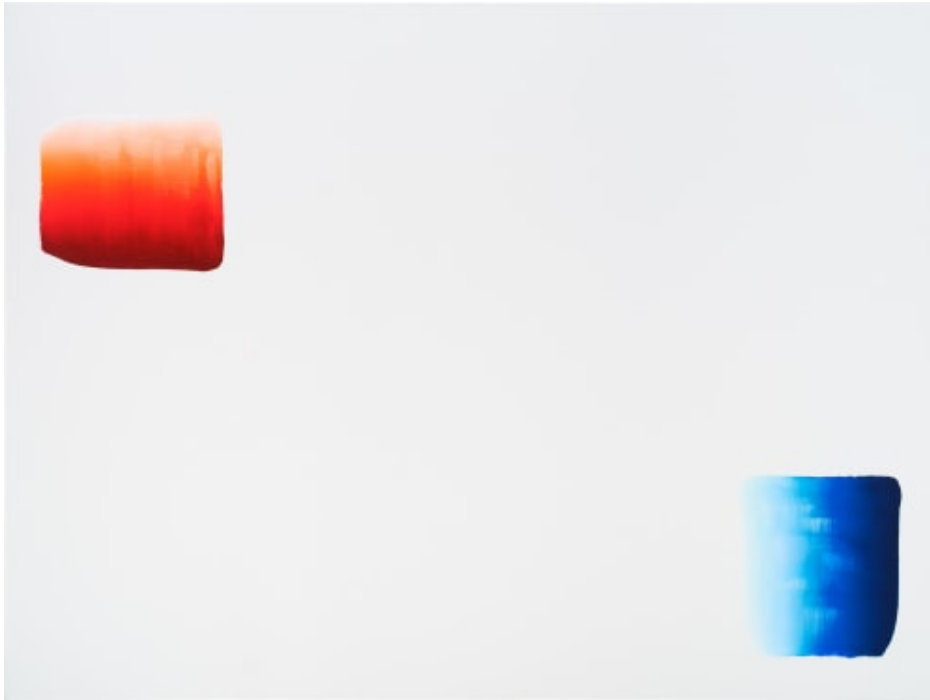
Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

### Exhibited

London, Tate Modern, *Ye Gong Hao Long (Mr Ye Who Loves Dragons): Explosion Project for Tate Modern*, 29 and 31 January 2003

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



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### Lee Ufan

#### *Dialogue*

signed and dated 'L. Ufan 15' on the stretcher; further signed, titled and dated "'Dialogue" 2015 Lee Ufan' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

218 x 291 cm. (85 7/8 x 114 5/8 in.)

Painted in 2015.

#### Estimate

HK\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

€961,000 — 1,440,000

\$1,030,000 — 1,540,000

[Go to Lot](#)



## Presence and Absence

Born in 1936 in Haman County, South Korea, Lee Ufan initially studied painting at the College of Fine Arts at Seoul National University. He moved to Japan in 1956, where he studied philosophy at Nihon University in Tokyo. His philosophical background has deeply influenced his artistic practice over the years. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lee Ufan became a central figure in the Mono-ha (School of Things) movement in Japan. This movement emphasized the relationships between natural and industrial materials and the spaces they inhabit. Instead of manipulating materials, Mono-ha artists preferred to let the materials 'speak' for themselves, highlighting their natural properties.

*“Using my hand, a brush, and pigment, I face the canvas on the floor. I hold my breath and slowly lay down one stroke (or two or three). The energetic, gray touch of the brush and the taut, white field stimulate each other, producing vibrations in the surrounding air. The space of the painting is opened up by the correspondance between painting and nonpainting.” — Lee Ufan*

The *Dialogue* series is a set of paintings that Lee Ufan began around 2006, evolved from *Yohaku* (an empty space), a central theme of his *Correspondance* paintings that he started in the 1990s. Lee suggests that *Correspondance* is 'a site for dialogue between self and others.'<sup>1</sup> Works in the *Dialogue* series are a perfect embodiment of his philosophical ideas on presence and absence. Each painting in this series typically features one or a few brushstrokes on a large canvas. These brushstrokes are carefully placed, often after long contemplation, and capture the energy and movement of the gesture. Lee Ufan uses a technique where he loads the brush with pigment and then applies it to the canvas in a single gesture. As the brush moves, the pigment gradually decreases, creating a gradient effect. This technique captures the essence of the moment and the passage of time.



Lee Ufan, *Dialogue*, 2010 Collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Artwork: © 2023 Lee Ufan / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

A significant portion of the canvas in the *Dialogue* series is left untouched. This emptiness is not a void but a space filled with potential, resonating with his philosophical ideas about the duality of presence and absence. The vast empty spaces in his works are as significant as the areas with material presence. This duality invites contemplation and emphasizes the importance of emptiness in understanding fullness.

## It is All Relational

*“The practice of painting is a precious way of life, an untiring exploration of a higher level of life... The painter encounters the world through the gesture of painting and physically confirms or experiences a dialogue with the world.” — Lee Ufan*

Lee Ufan believes that meaning arises from the interplay of elements in relation to each other and their surroundings. One of the central ideas in his philosophy is to investigate not only the individual objects or elements but also the relationships between them.



Installation view of Lee Ufan's work presented at Hôtel Vernon, a 16th-century private mansion that was once the home of the Dervieux family in Arles, France. Having opened earlier this year in 2022, the stately building has been reconverted into a museum to highlight Lee Ufan's legendary imprint, as well as serve as an exhibition space for emerging artists. Artwork: © 2023 Lee Ufan / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Different from the artist's typical grey palette, *Dialogue* made in 2015 uses burnt orange and bright blue positioned on the opposite sides of the canvas. It is interesting to note that these minimalistic shapes are not a line nor a dot, but a state in between. The simplicity and openness of the *Dialogue*

paintings invite viewers to engage deeply. The viewer is encouraged to contemplate and find meaning, making them an active participant in the dialogue that the painting initiates. In essence, Lee Ufan's *Dialogue* series is not just about the visual elements on the canvas but about the relationship between those elements, the space around them, and the viewer. Through this series, Lee invites viewers to engage in a philosophical exploration of existence, time, and the nature of art itself.

In the vast expanse of silence, Lee Ufan whispers to the canvas. His philosophy weaves tales of encounters where nature and man's creations meet, not as adversaries, but as one harmonious consonance.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE7eqy2t8Uc>

Meet the Artists: Lee Ufan

Video courtesy of Art Basel

## Collector's Digest

Over the decades, the legendary Korean artist Lee Ufan has gained international recognition and accumulated an impressive portfolio. He was the third East Asian artist to have a solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City in 2011 which established his position as a leading artist in contemporary art. In addition, he was featured at major institutions such as the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul (1994) and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale (2007). Two of the most prestigious awards he received were the Japan Art Association's Praemium Imperiale for painting (2001) and the UNESCO Prize (2000). Having published 17 books, Lee is a critic, philosopher, and poet who wrote influential essays on contemporary art and Asian culture. In 2010, the Lee Ufan Museum designed by Tadao Ando and dedicated to the artist's creative endeavours opened on the Japanese island of Naoshima. Lee continued to turn to the architect Ando to design Space Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea in 2015. Lee Ufan Arles, a new art museum housing Lee's permanent collection recently opened in France on April 15, 2022. The site is located at Hôtel Vernon, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century mansion in the city's historic centre.

<sup>i</sup> Lee Ufan, quoted in *Marking Infinity*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2011, p. 123.

**Provenance**

Galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris

Private Collection, Hong Kong (acquired from the the above in 2017)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Paris, Galerie Kamel Mennour, *Lee Ufan*, 3 June - 23 July 2016



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



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### Andreas Gursky

*Stateville, Illinois*

signed 'A. Gursky' on a label affixed to the reverse  
chromogenic print, in artist's frame  
image 184 x 285 cm. (72 1/2 x 112 1/4 in.)  
artist's frame 206 x 307 cm. (81 1/8 x 120 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2002, this work is number 2 from an  
edition of 6.

#### Estimate

HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000

€144,000 — 264,000

\$154,000 — 282,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“[Gursky’s] compositions extend from a central starting point and reach out beyond the borders of the image. . . On approaching the image and upon closer scrutiny, a flickering microcosm of detail reveals itself to us. Should our gaze from afar be subtly guided by a detail, we are confronted close-up by a bounteous offering of possibility and discovery. . .” — Thomas Weski*



Andreas Gursky, *Shanghai*, 2000 Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago © 2023 Andreas Gursky/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Powerful and arresting, one is quickly engulfed by the geometric precision and monumental scale of Andreas Gursky’s *Stateville, Illinois*. A successor to his famous series depicting grids of hotel rooms, such as *Shanghai* in 2000, the formidable building in this eponymous photograph presents

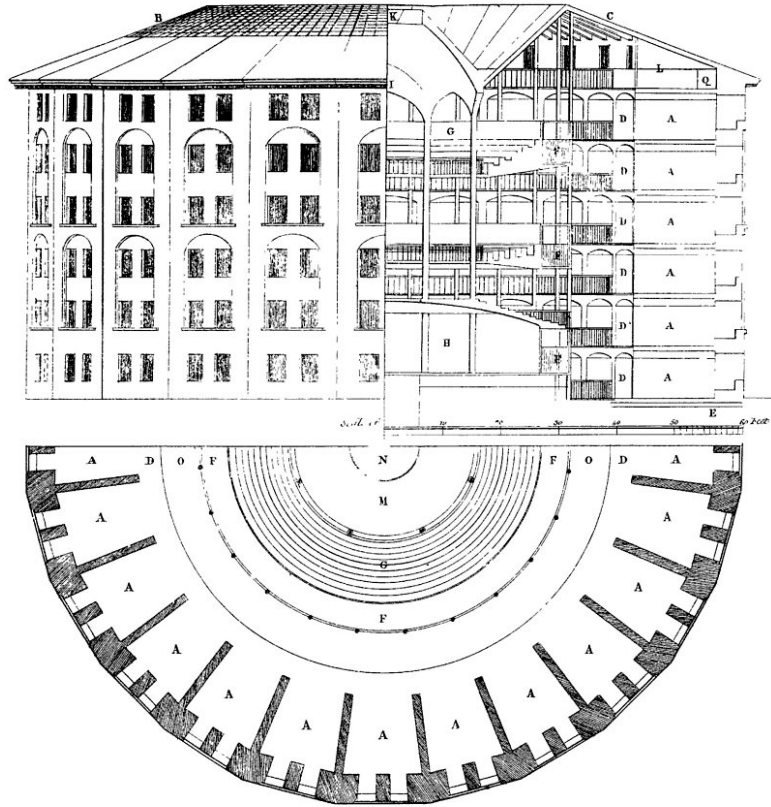
a comprehensive view of its internal structure, as the four-storey construction appears to extend indefinitely past the camera frame. Having shifted his focus from landscape photography to the exploration of urban structures and interior spaces a decade before, the 2000s saw him continue his examination of collective behaviour in private and public spaces. Unlike the pure sublimeness found in his previous works however, a darker undertone exists in the present work – its subject is no other than Stateville Correctional Centre in Illinois, a maximum-security prison notorious for its history of violence.

Fascinated by the exploration of architecture’s relationship with aesthetic concern and contemporary society, Stateville provided Gursky with both an intriguing subject matter and an abundance of breathtaking formal qualities. Comprising rows of caged cells in an expansive, minimalistic space, its repeating patterns and dull colours presents a detached view of the densely populated building. As the connecting walls physically compartmentalise each enclosure, it mirrors the criminals housed inside, who are individually locked away behind bars for the crimes they committed. But instead of focusing on the inmates it houses, he instead shines light on the design choices that gave the prison its prominent yet infamous reputation, painting a striking portrait of a colossal spectacle that embodies the definition of control.

### Seeing Without Being Seen: The Construction of Constant Surveillance

*“The Panopticon (...) must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men... it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form.” — Michel Foucault*

*Stateville, Illinois* was taken within ‘F-House’, deliberately chosen by Gursky due to its unique structural layout. Built in accordance with British philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon prototype, its roundhouse design consists of tiered cells arranged around a central viewing platform in a circular pattern. Utilising blinds, one could look out but never look in, allowing just one warden to exude the illusion of constant observation. Bentham’s revolutionary concept would later inform the theories of French philosopher Michael Foucault, who described the idea of continuous surveillance to be ‘permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action,’ where the subject is ‘caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.’<sup>1</sup>



Willy Reveley's sketch of a panopticon prison for Jeremy Bentham, 1791

Prominently featuring its curved design, Gursky's neat composition alludes to the power dynamics at play inside Stateville, where maximum control is achieved through minimal surveillance. Locating the image's vantage point from his own perspective, the viewer is positioned exactly where the observation tower is located, thus taking on the omnipotent gaze of the warden and their control over the inmates. Offering a panoramic vista that overwhelms those observing, Gursky elevates his audience to a godlike status. Whether the viewers embrace their newfound authority or contemplate the effects of their participation, they are forced into direct confrontation with the individuals under their observation. More than a documentation of the prison's iconic layout, the artist makes explicit the monstrous efficiency of its design and the subsequent pressure it brings about.

## Playing With Perspective and Scale



Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Fördertürme, Belgien, Frankreich* (*Winding Towers, Belgium, France*), 1967-1988 Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Art

Photographing the current lot with a strictly frontal point of view, Gursky's practice was heavily informed by German conceptual artists Bernd and Hilla Becher. Previously a student at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Gursky studied under the pair, whose repetitive imagery, centred in perspective and the use of distance in photographing industrial buildings, inspired him to investigate the sameness of modern life. Taking this idea one step further, *Stateville, Illinois* makes use of Gursky's signature 'poly-ocular perspective' by digitally combined multiple images taken of

the subject into a single photograph. Seamlessly weaving together the most desired versions of each detail, he flattens the depth of field with a computer software. The result is an image where every section is given equal emphasis, preventing the viewer from focusing solely on one aspect of the depicted scene. In Gursky's own words, 'Figuratively speaking, what I create is a world without hierarchy, in which all the pictorial elements are as important as each other. The experience of space dissolves in favour of a dissected plane that is gradually scanned and read in its linear structure.'<sup>ii</sup>



Detail of the present lot

Apart from the manipulation of technology, the substantial visual impact brought upon by Gursky's photography is also influenced by the monumental scale of his creations. Beyond his use of a wide-angled lens, the current lot measures almost two by three metres in size, dwarfing the people within the work. On one hand, the large scale allows onlookers to soak in the totality and vastness of Stateville Correctional Centre. On the other hand, observing up close rewards the viewer with small details that form an integral part of the experience. Characterised by their yellow and blue

uniforms, one can clearly make out each cell and the inmates contained within, simultaneously stripped of individuality yet uniquely themselves. While most are unaware of the camera's presence, some directly meet our gaze, marking a rare instance in Gursky's works where humans engage.

In capturing 56 prison cells to form a larger overall image, *Stateville, Illinois* moves away from photography's temporal nature and its typical connection to a singular moment in time. With each inmate revealing different attitudes through their actions, it is as if 'everything everywhere all at once,' packaged inside the bleak yet eerily beautiful interior of the prison's façade. Navigating his own path in understanding the histories, patterns, and ideals of mankind, Gursky defies traditional photography by forging a unique approach in seeing and ordering the world, as he urges his audiences to do the same.

### Collector's Digest

- Born in Leipzig, Germany, Andreas Gursky studied at the Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen from 1977 to 1980, and subsequently graduated from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 1987, where he was appointed Professor of Liberal Arts in 2010.
- Gursky has received major solo exhibitions from institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art; and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, amongst others.
- Other editions of the current lot are included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich.
- Organised by Fondazione MAST, Bologna, Gursky's ongoing exhibition at the gallery will be held from 25 May 2023 - 7 January 2024. Titled *Andreas Gursky. Visual Spaces of Today*, it is the artist's first large-scale anthology in Italy covering four decades of his artwork.

<sup>i</sup> Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York, 1975, p. 215

<sup>ii</sup> Andreas Gursky, quoted in The Creators Project, 'Andreas Gursky and Richie Hawtin Stage a Photo-Techno Mashup', *Vice*, 10 November 2016, [online](#)

**Provenance**

Galerie Monika Sprüth, Cologne (acquired from the artist)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2005

**Exhibited**

New York, Matthew Marks Gallery, *Andreas Gursky*, 8 May - 27 June 2004 (another example exhibited)

London, Sprüth Magers; New York, Matthew Marks Gallery, *Andreas Gursky*, 23 March - 12 May 2007, p. 143 (another example exhibited and illustrated, pp. 126-127)

Darmstadt, Institut Matildenhöhe, *Andreas Gursky: Architecture*, 11 May - 7 September 2008, p. 110 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 80-81)

Kunstmuseum Krefeld; Stockholm, Moderna Museet; Vancouver Art Gallery, *Andreas Gursky. Arbeiten - Works 80-08*, 12 October 2008 - 20 September 2009, p. 254 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 196-197)

London, Hayward Gallery, *Andreas Gursky*, 25 January - 22 April 2018, no. 42, pp. 88, 157 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 89)

**Literature**

Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, New Haven and London, 2008, p. 169 (another example illustrated)

Dorothea Eimert, *Art of the 20th Century*, New York, 2013, p. 387 (another example illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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20 \*

### Rudolf Stingel

*Untitled*

electroformed copper, plated nickel and stainless steel

120 x 120 x 4 cm. (47 1/4 x 47 1/4 x 1 5/8 in.)

Executed in 2014.

#### Estimate

HK\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000 ▲

€841,000 — 1,200,000

\$897,000 — 1,280,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Initially working in a photorealist style as a commercial portrait artist until the 1980s, Italian-born artist Rudolf Stingel became a prominent figure that dealt with Conceptual painting with his constant experimentation with collective participation and in doing so, expanded the ways of creating art throughout his prolific career. His continued embracement of the Conceptual movement in the late 1980s, despite its decline in popularity, allowed for an exploration in the process of creation. Based upon an underlying conceptual framework and working with non-traditional materials that were unassociated with fine art, Stingel actively moves away from the constraints of paint and canvas, instead placing an emphasis on the creating process and its effect on his audiences. Visually pleasing yet radically counter-institutional, the artist's enigmatically impressive oeuvre brings to question the contemporary notions of authenticity, meaning, hierarchy and authorship in redefining painting as a medium.

*“All possible pictures have already been made. The only useful thing left to do, I believe, is to confront yourself with the picture, pushing it almost to the edge of a pit of failure and destruction.” — Rudolf Stingel*

## Destructive Beauty

*Untitled* is an iconic example of Stingel's famed monochromatic Celotex works, which stems from a site-specific series of environmental installations investigating the relationship between beauty, alchemy, and ephemerality. First initiated in 2001 at his solo exhibition at the Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Trento, Italy, this participatory installation was then repeated at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003); Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2006); and at his mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Art, Chicago (2007), which travelled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, later that year. Much more than a static piece of art, the metallic form represents the finished product of a multi-step mark-making approach that begins with an interactive installation. Plastering the walls and floors of gallery spaces with insulation panels, Stingel invites those visiting to interact with the mirrored surfaces.

*“The first time I covered a gallery with insulation board, I knew that people would walk on it and ruin the floor, but I was stunned that they would write or draw on the walls.” — Rudolf Stingel*

Although visitors were not given explicit instructions on how to interact with their surroundings, the panels naturally eroded from human movement due to their malleability, which in turn empowered some to further engage through inscriptions on the walls. Going against common museum protocol of one not being allowed to touch art, Stingel centers his work around the creative potential of destruction. By inviting his audience to draw, write and make imprints, he

effectively removes any artistic privilege from the mark of the individual and hands it over to the collective gestures of thousands of viewers in these installations. As a result, the weight of the human body is felt, as literal impressions of the human passage, through the many marks and fractures on the defaced surfaces.

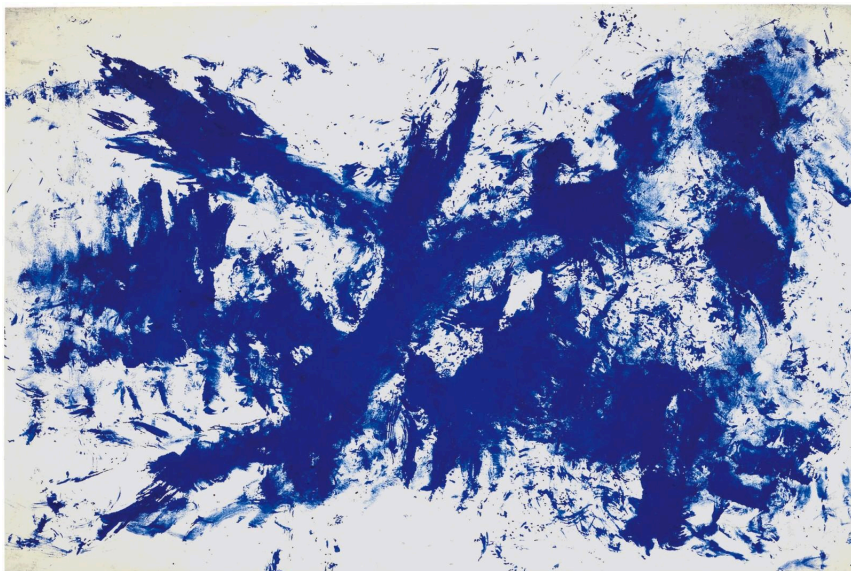


Installation view of the current lot at Milan, Massimo De Carlo, Rudolf Stingel, 16 September - 8 November 2014

Undertaking the conceptual framework of these environmental installations from the 2000s, cast in copper and plated with nickel, *Untitled* is a prime example that harkens back to his Celotex paintings from that period and can be seen as a poetic monument celebrating and memorialising the passage of time. Like the fragments of those inscribed walls, every indentation and imperfection, and even the most delicate surface detail, is captured through a unique electroplating process - a method devised and developed to ensure detailed copies of each insulation panel, transforming the random marks and inscriptions alchemically and permanently into a pristine, reflective surface that is new and imbued with an otherworldly beauty. As a result, the present work is a masterful snapshot of timeless opulence that captures a specific moment in time, encompassing each stage of its creation.

## Redefining Painting: In Dialogue with His Contemporaries

Be it silkscreen paintings or carpet installations, the process of creation has remained central to Stingel's artistic investigation. In 1989, he published *Instructions*, a manual directing readers towards the steps and tools needed to create their own Stingel painting. Exploring the essence of making, gesture, and expression, Stingel challenges the traditional boundaries of art and its hierarchies, rethinking the parameters of painting, a theme that is carried onto his Celotex works, and parallels that of his many radical contemporaries.



Yves Klein, *La Grande Anthropométrie bleue (The Great Blue Anthropometry)*, 1960 Collection of the Museo Guggenheim Bilbao © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Rejecting typical methods of artmaking, instead of using paint or ink, Stingel incorporates performance into the work, echoing the work of French artist Yves Klein, in particular, his Anthropometry series, where he employed models as “living paintbrushes” to press their blue paint-covered bodies against prepared sheets of paper. Like Klein, Stingel utilises the human body as a medium, capturing the fleeting momentary exchanges and eventually turning them into sculptural forms. Whilst Klein's paintings gravitate towards abstracted traces of his subjects, *Untitled* presents a literal record of its associated performance, in which participation becomes the

main component of its aesthetic value.



Installation view of Jirō Yoshihara, *Please Draw Freely at Ashiya*, Outdoor Gutai Art Exhibition, 27 July – 4 August, 1956

Inviting the audience into his artistic process, Stingel introduces another crucial element in his works, that is the very allure – chance. While the artist anticipates interaction, he is unable to control what his visitors choose to mark or destroy, removing any artistic privilege of the individual. This idea of going beyond the conventional boundaries and pursuing the possibilities of pure creativity is similarly found in the Gutai movement through the works of Yoshihara Jirō. Setting up a board within Ayisha Park, his 1956 work *Please Draw Freely* invited children to draw as they



please on its surface. In doing so, both artists further go against the idea of singular creative acts by complete removal of their presence.

*“I am by far not the first one questioning the ‘fairy tale of the creativity of the artist.’ It derived first and foremost from a feeling of honesty towards myself.” —  
Rudolf Stingel*

When creating a traditional painting, the artist is granted authorship through the completion of the final work with their own hands. While Stingel remains involved through the conception of his multi-step pieces, each course of action in the creation process is instead spearheaded by other individuals: the viewers first collectively take part in marking the panels, and the cast is then produced by craftsman Jan Eugster. With no trace of Stingel’s hand, the present work questions the notions of authorship and the significance of third-party involvement in these works. Rather than focusing on the final product of a finished cast, Stingel presents art at its most inclusive, offering viewers an alternate viewpoint by repositioning intentionality and collaboration as its most important aspect. Toying with the boundaries of artistic genres and definitions, the beauty of *Untitled* lies not in its sheen, but its redefinition of what painting can be – singular yet participatory, ephemeral yet ever-lasting.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lclUX0HqZuQ>

Rudolf Stingel at Fondation Beyeler. Interview with Art Producer Jan Eugster

## Collector’s Digest

- Born in Merano, Italy in 1956, Rudolf Stingel gained prominence in the New York art scene for his 1989 conceptual manual *Instructions*. Since then, his cross-boundary works have continued to challenge preconceived notions of painting and creative production. Represented by Gagosian, Stingel had worked with the gallery on a number of shows, including his monumental, eight-part exhibition at their New York gallery in 2015 that showcased his artistic versatility
- Stingel has been the subject of numerous self-titled solo exhibition in recent years. This includes at Gagosian in Paris (17 March – 27 May 2021); at Paula Cooper Gallery in New York (5 November – 22 December 2022); at Sadie Coles HQ in London (31 October–17 December 2022); and at Galerie Max Hetzler in Berlin (8 September – 11 December 2021)

## Provenance

Massimo De Carlo, Milan

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

Milan, Massimo De Carlo, *Rudolf Stingel*, 16 September - 8 November 2014

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



21 ♦

### Hernan Bas

#### *The dead line*

signed with the artist's initials and dated 'HB 11' lower right; further signed with the artist's initials, titled and dated "'The dead line" HB 2011' on the reverse  
acrylic, airbrush, block print and screen print on linen  
244 x 275 cm. (96 1/8 x 108 1/4 in.)  
Executed in 2011.

#### Estimate

HK\$5,000,000 — 7,000,000

€601,000 — 841,000

\$641,000 — 897,000

[Go to Lot](#)



The enigmatic paintings of Hernan Bas offer a contemporary take on traditional portraiture, imbuing his adolescent subjects with a palpable psychological tension. Working in mixed media, Bas renders the faces and bodies of androgynous youths in minute detail, yet places them against flat, undefined backgrounds that create an intriguing sense of dislocation. Infused with ambiguous symbols and references, his works draw out timeless existential themes of youthful experience.

The present lot, *The dead line* was exhibited at the artist's landmark exhibitions, including *Hernan Bas: The Perennial affairs* at Galerie Peter Kilchmann in 2011 and his major 2012 retrospective, *Hernan Bas: The Other Side*, at the Kunstverein Hannover. Bas' dreamlike composition draws viewers into a contemplation of their own inner psychological landscapes. He uses both natural and imagined landscapes to surround subjects with evocative environments that align with or counterpoint their inner states of mind and being. The settings become an important part of the overall narrative and symbolic meaning of his paintings. As exemplified in *The dead line*, the solitary figure walks precariously along a thin line, holding onto a bamboo stick as his point of balance. The figure appears languid and moody, yet the symbolic use of bamboo in this painting reflects the underlying metaphor of resilience and personal growth that emerges from the vulnerability of life and the inevitability of death.

## Bamboo: A Symbol of Strength and Resilience



Zheng Xie, *Misty Bamboo on a Distant Mountain*, Qing dynasty (1644–1911)

In traditional Chinese art, four esteemed plants are known as the 'Four Gentlemen,' each representing virtues idealised in Confucian thought. But of these botanical metaphors, it is the bamboo that is most revered. With stalks remaining erect and verdant through winter's barrenness, the bamboo exemplifies strength and tenacity. Yet its hollow stems symbolise modesty and honesty, an uprightness aligned with Confucian ideals. While the plum, orchid, and chrysanthemum each convey singular nobility, the bamboo synthesizes multiplicity – at once firm yet flexible, constant yet hollow, thriving in adversity yet humble in manner – the bamboo elegantly balances contradiction, proving integrity can partner flexibility, resilience can flourish through restraint.<sup>i</sup>

In the same way that Chinese paintings of plants are seen as reflections of human characters, the

isolated, lonely figures in Bas's paintings reflect the solitary nature of death. They are often positioned in contemplation or preparation for the transition. In *The dead line*, death is treated as a passage or transition, not an end. The line symbolising the fragility of life, a state of uncertainty that we all face growing up. By bridging a line between the haunting architecture in the background and descending towards the bamboo field in the foreground while the figure is positioned in between, Bas creates a liminal quality, a space in-between that evokes a sense of the threshold.

## The Southern Gothic

Drawing inspiration from 18th and 19th century Gothic literature, art, architecture, and aesthetics, Bas deftly adapts its key motifs to capture the emotions and passions of contemporary youth culture. Often set against shadowy voids or architectural ruins, Bas's subjects exhibit a melancholy so characteristic of the Gothic sensibility.

In the backwaters of Florida, where paranormal sightings haunted his childhood like episodes of the *X-Files*, Bas cultivated his penchant for the macabre. The writings of Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and Oscar Wilde—nefarious yet decadent—fomented his fascination with morbidity, isolation, and eccentric humour. The predominance of subdued greys, taupes, browns, and faded hues in the present painting evokes a sense of nostalgia and the ephemeral, fleeting nature of youth. The colours seem gently weathered or aged, reflecting on adolescent years as a transient moment. Bas' witty use of pun for the title of the painting, *The dead line* further alludes to the ephemeral nature of life itself.

*"I don't like to think of it as portraiture at all. I've been quoted as describing it as the state of where you don't really know what or who you are. Or back to literature, a Catcher in the Rye type of thing. It's all there. And I've always been drawn to that sort of in-between. I mean, no one wants to read a book where the character is so easily understood and defined." — Hernan Bas*

Together these visual cues create an atmosphere of disquiet, melancholy, and mystique that draws viewers into the intimate, introspective world of Bas's adolescent subjects. Since winning early acclaim, Bas has distilled the fleeting effervescence of youth into an aesthetic at once nostalgic and timeless. By immersing brooding youths in surreal landscapes of the mind and creating psychological depth through symbolism, he transforms adolescent curiosity and precariousness into a universal metaphor for the human condition.

## Collector's Digest

- Bas has held numerous successful solo exhibitions in recent years. This includes at the Rubell Museum in Miami; *Creature Comforts* at Perrotin in Paris (17 October 2020 – 30 January 2021); *Venetian Blind* at Victoria Miro in Venice (8 February – 14 March 2020); and *TIME LIFE* at Lehmann Maupin in New York (7 November 2019 – 4 January 2020).
- 2021 marked Bas' debut in China when his retrospective, *Choose Your Adventure*, was held at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai.
- His works are held in numerous prestigious public collections around the world, including: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Saatchi Collection, London; Samuso: Space for Contemporary Art, Seoul; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; and the Brooklyn Museum, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

<sup>i</sup> "Bamboo Painting." China Online Museum, [online](#)

### Provenance

Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2011

### Exhibited

Zurich, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, *Hernan Bas, Perennial Affairs*, 11 June - 30 July 2011

Kunstverein Hannover, *Hernan Bas: The Other Side*, 18 February - 29 April 2012, p. 66-67 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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22

### Issy Wood

*Swan / He won't 2*

signed and dated 'Issy Wood 2019' on the reverse  
oil on linen

161.1 x 217.8 cm. (63 3/8 x 85 3/4 in.)

Painted in 2019.

#### Estimate

HK\$1,000,000 — 2,000,000

€120,000 — 240,000

\$128,000 — 256,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Unveiled at the London-based interdisciplinary artist's first solo show [daughterproof](#) in New York in 2020 at JTT, a gallery that launched the careers of many rising talents, *Swan/He won't 2* is a brilliant example of Issy Wood's great ability as a "medieval millennial"<sup>i</sup> to bestow peculiarity to familiar objects and render them in a classical fashion, marking the passage of culture and time with enigmatic moments of hyper-loaded collision and fusion. Furthermore, the present lot is the titular subject of her EP album cover 'The Blame, Pt.2' released the same year ([click to listen on Spotify](#)).

Taking inspiration from a variety of sources including banal moments of daily life, her grandmother's heirlooms, auction catalogues, and screenshots of pop culture, a haunting malaise permeates Wood's cropped depictions of an array of ephemera. Turning to objects that range from antique to contemporary and isolating them in darkness, portrayed as though they fade into obscurity, she toys with the idea of time as a sort of temporal gaslighting and configures them from being alluring objects to items of conjured tragedy. As such objects of the antique and the contemporary are strewn across the picture plane of the present work, *Swan/He won't 2* perfectly sits in the artist's darkly imaginative world and exemplifies her exploration into the relationships between consciousness and commodity, life and form, and objects and objectification.

*"I'm convinced the way I configure these otherwise alluring products and garments often lowers them, literally, in tone, or happily switches them from being an advert to an expression of perversion, in the way painting can do." — Issy Wood*

### The Uncanny & The Familiar in Wood's Materiality

As in Wood's signature technique of painting on velvet depicting images of leather jackets and car interiors, *Swan/He won't 2* is equally representative of her seductive style and delights in painting the likeness of a material onto a surface of another through the representation of everyday commodities, transforming the banal daily life into something quite extraordinary and simultaneously unsettling.

Painted on linen, she masterfully renders a close-up image of a decorative swan ornament with a flower bud in its mouth, embellished with luscious green foliage, bearing a resemblance to the retro, mass produced swan vases that almost every household would have in the late 1960s and were the perfect gift at weddings, housewarmings, Mother's Day or to celebrate the birth of a child. The motif of swans seems to be of fascination to the artist and has appeared multiple times in her paintings, with her various Instagram posts revealing her captivation of the animal since 2019, be it a mid-century swan console table or actual swans at the pond. Her placement of pearly white highlights and loose feathery brushstrokes echoes the beauty and grace of a swan, and she subsequently intensifies the ceramic sheen to perfection.



Winning entry for the 1959 Auckland flower arranging competition sponsored by Crown Lynn



Should I buy this table

9:54 am

Do you even have to ask

[Left] The artist's Instagram post on 12 December 2019 [Right] The artist's Instagram post on 11 October 2020

Rendered with such a precision for detail, one might be mistaken for misinterpreting the smooth canvas surface for a tactile, three-dimensional object. This cognitive confusion is what Wood herself describes as 'a sort of joke with myself about painting, alluding to painting a fabric on a different fabric [...] it has an uncanniness to it.'<sup>ii</sup> The still-life of the swan ceramic is used as a form that represents a distinct connection with the human body and potentially as a neglected object of the past. Juxtaposing the denseness of the materiality of the ceramic swan, Wood inserts another recurring motif, the clock, in the upper right corner of *Swan/He won't 2*, which is strangely positioned in the painting at first glance. The conjunction of the two objects would not normally be associated with each other and the result is electrifying as it's both playful and menacing at the same time.

The uncanniness is comparable to Salvador Dali's *Lobster Telephone* from 1938, in which a lobster is balanced on a telephone, fitting snugly and with its tail blending perfectly over the mouth part of the receiver. Clearly observing the lessons of Surrealists in finding strange beauty in the unexpected and the disregarded, Wood's unique pointillist techniques sets the tone of a surreal scene in the present work. Playing with the contradictions of the two objects, Wood amplifies the inherent oddity with her unique style of execution and beautifully distorts reality through an enlarged lens depicting a mysterious environment that one cannot fully understand, to the extent that even everyday items are able to conjure up feelings of uneasiness.



Salvador Dalí and Edward James, *Lobster Telephone*, 1938 National Galleries of Scotland © 2023 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## Visions of Vanitas: Fragility & Impermanence

*“What does ‘from life’ even mean in this day and age?” — Issy Wood*

Combining elements of the past and present in an unlikely marriage, Wood projects visions of vanitas and infuses contemporary anxieties into a classical lexicon, collapsing time in her paintings. As evidenced in *Swan/He won't 2* and like her body of works made in 2022 for the Micheal Werner gallery show *Time Sensitive*, she inserts a clock face in the upper corner of the canvas, alluding to the idea that time can be wasted easily online in this day in age. As a recurring motif, the clock not only evokes an Alice in Wonderland-esque escape into Wood's dark imaginary world, but also brings to attention how one can lose track of time in this digital era inundated with social media, emails and text messages. As she explains further, 'Time is so many things - it's this huge deal and arbitrary measure. It is the enemy of the depressed person, for whom the days and nights are always too long. It is lateness and pissing people off, earliness and waiting. Ageing, jet lag, school,

sport.' iii



Detail of the present lot

Radically decontextualising her still life subjects with a cynical humour, the artist leaves the door open for interpretation and mixed messages that can realise themselves as dark and murky as the ideals projected onto her canvas. It is hard to determine whether the ceramic swan or the clock face in *Swan/He won't 2* are relics from the past or mass-produced items from the 21st century. Her practice holds an obsession with texture and surface, their contents and tonalities, which call to mind the forms of Giorgio de Chirico's Metaphysical paintings, home to the unsettling combination of antiquity and modern inventions.





Giorgio de Chirico, *Le chant d'amour (The Song of Love)*, 1914 Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

An intriguing facet of Wood's practice is how she 'lifts' images from her sources, an approach that began during her time at the Royal Academy Schools in London. Browsing auction catalogues, she was fascinated by the glossy presentations of rare items coming up for sale that would soon disappear once again from the public eye and out of private hands. As she explains, 'It made me think about my own family's hypothetical afternoon sale – our emotional provenance [...] – and I turned to the objects belonging to my maternal grandmother: her taste [...], her tureens, her silverware, the hideous watch she held onto out of familial duty.'<sup>iv</sup> Similarly, the artist also noticed this phenomenon on social media platforms, where objects, possessions and even people come and go at the flick of a swipe. Drawing inspiration from this sense of impermanence, Wood is

fascinated by the potential tragedy associated with these objects, where ideals are rendered non-existent by consumerism and where heritage is leveraged as a transaction.

Returning these familiar objects and making them somehow strange, as depicted in *Swan/He won't 2*, Wood highlights our dependence on commodities, and the strained relationships we forge with them. She has a precise sensitivity to the correct ratio between the banal and the sinister and perfectly encapsulates the seductive artificiality in her pictorial planes, which is a testament to her popularity amongst art collectors and institutions alike as an accomplished painter.

## Collectors Digest

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR2l\\_S71maM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR2l_S71maM)

Cortisone by Issy Wood, 2020

- Currently living and working in London, artist and musician Issy Wood received her BA in Fine Art and History of Art from Goldsmith's in 2015 and a MA from the Royal Academy Schools in 2018.
- Since her first major institutional show with Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art in September 2018, Wood has shown her work at institutions world-wide, including the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and Tate St. Ives. Her first Asian museum solo show, titled *Good Clean Fun*, was exhibited at Beijing's X Museum from 6 December 2020 - 28 February 2021.
- A testament to her increasing popularity in Asia, Wood made her debut in Korea on 7 September this year at the Ilsan Museum of Art. Titled *I Like To Watch*, the show will run until 12 November 2023.
- Cementing her auction record in 2022 at Phillips London, which hammered down for GBP 441,000 against pre-sale estimates of GBP 100,000 - 150,000, Wood's works are becoming increasingly sought after.
- Her top 10 auction results were achieved in the past 3 years.
- Wood's work is held in the permanent collections of The Dallas Museum of Art; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in Philomena Epps, 'Issy Wood Talks Painting the Tragedy and Ambivalence

Lurking in Luxury', *Garage*, 18 March 2019, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Issy Wood in conversation with Sarah McCrory, *Luncheon*, No. 8., 2019, p. 60-61.

<sup>iii</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in 'Interview with Issy Wood and Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel', *Lafayette Anticipations*, 31 July 2023, [online](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in Philomena Epps, 'Issy Wood Talks Painting the Tragedy and Ambivalence Lurking in Luxury', *Garage*, 18 March 2019, [online](#)

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#### Provenance

JTT Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

#### Exhibited

New York, JTT Gallery, *daughterproof*, 8 January 2020 - 9 February 2020

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



23

### Chris Huen Sin Kan

*MuiMui*

signed, inscribed and dated 'C. Huen 2021 uk' along  
the right edge

oil on canvas

220 x 280 cm. (86 5/8 x 110 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2021.

#### Estimate

HK\$600,000 — 800,000

€72,100 — 96,200

\$76,900 — 103,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“I would consider my works as depicting a specious present that is paused at a reference point, and replayed whenever it is being observed.” — Chris Huen Sin Kan*

Imbued with the spirit of traditional Chinese ink paintings, the spontaneity of *plein-air* landscapes and the fluidity of ink on paper, Hong Kong-born and London-based artist Chris Huen Sin Kan’s *MuiMui* marks his return to a minimal pastel palette. Steeped in the individual’s recollection and perception, yet retaining the familiarity of moments of déjà-vu, the present lot brilliantly demonstrates Huen’s unique interplay of space and form.

### A Time and Place?

Seemingly languid moments of countryside life are captured with rhythmic lyricism, punctuated by small yet intentional brushstrokes that echo the intermittency of morse code. Painted from Huen’s studio in rural Yuen Long – just North of the dense urban center Kowloon – *MuiMui* encapsulates viewers in a dimension respite from the hectic flurry of urbanity.

*“What I usually draw is all about my home or what’s going on around me; they come in everyday repeatedly and begin to take shape in my mind.” — Chris Huen Sin Kan*

In this archetypal work, Huen utilises his recurring cast of subjects as anchor with his foster dog ‘MuiMui’ at its foreground. Pictured amid lush foliage, it curiously glances at viewers, with its ears perk up and tail curled up vigilantly.



Chris Huen Sin Kan, *MuiMui*, 2016 Sold by Phillips Hong Kong, 4 December 2020, for HK\$907,200

Of identical subject matter, the deconstructed geometric forms and soft tones in Huen’s earlier work, *MuiMui*, evoke the same spiritual resonance – one of six principals of Chinese paintings established by art historian Xie He. In the present lot, however, the artist abandons Western principles of linear perspective in his rendering of seemingly contradictory planes of vision: the dog appears to be viewed from below, yet we are not privy to even a glimpse of the horizon or sky. Heavily diluted with turpentine, two yellow floods of light add depth to the background, a discernible shift from the Huen’s more subdued night-time scenes from his [2018 solo show at Simon Lee gallery](#).



Charles Ephraim Bruchfield, *Dusty Road in July*, 1952-58 Artwork: Reproduced with permission of the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation

Swinging the double-edged sword that is his practice, Huen's rendering of light balances between peculiar and beguiling; a balance that recalls the watercolours of American modernist, Charles Burchfield. In the present lot, the faint but resonant light resembles dipped headlights of an incoming car, juxtaposing the otherwise daytime scene, thereby prompting viewers to question whether it is day or night. These seemingly incoherent details challenge innate desires for rationality, thereby situating viewers in an alluring array of nonspecific locales.

### Specious Present and Blankness

*“Most of the time, I work on several paintings at once, allowing time and space to escape from being overly concentrated on a single picture, as what I want to depict is the experience of witnessing an accumulation of scenes from daily life, rather than specific moments.” — Chris Huen Sin Kan*

Through his distinctive practice, Huen investigates the 'specious present', a concept first coined by American psychologist, E. Robert Kelly in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, referring to the present as a nonzero

duration that is shaped by past experiences. In *MuiMui*, we witness the specious present unfold and materialise on canvas, with layers of dabbed paint emerging gradually. Incidentally, Huen's artistic practice parallels our viewer experience: he eschews preliminary drawings or photographs from which to base his scenes. Huen favours intuition over mimesis, explaining as such: 'I try very hard to let it evolve. In a way it becomes a very natural thing, more like in the real world in our daily experiences, things aren't scripted or planned.'<sup>i</sup> This practice aligns his *oeuvre* with the fundamentals of Chinese calligraphy, where brushstrokes are improvised at the moment of writing with fluid spontaneity.



Detail of the present lot

Informed by hazy recollections of quotidian scenes, Huen unveils glimpses of negative space, exposing the bare canvas beneath. The deliberate omission of details alludes to the gaps in our memory of what is often overlooked. In the present work, a dark diagonal space – indicative of the dog's path – stands in stark contrast to the white spaces directly below; Huen intentionally diverts our gazes to what is unseen or forgotten, evoking the delicate transience of a fleeting moment, or perhaps beckoning viewers to fill in the spaces like missing pieces of a puzzle. While his brilliant adoption of negative space may be read as an adherence to post-war minimalism, even a nod to [Robert Rauschenberg's white paintings](#), the concept of nothingness has been ubiquitous in Taoist philosophy since the late Tang Dynasty. The aesthetic value of the 'intended blank' is seen to evoke

purity of the mind, enabling subjects to gain spiritual resonance – particularly apparent in *MuiMui*.

### Collector's Digest

- Indicative of the ongoing strength of Huen's market, his top 20 auction prices were set in the past 3 years, with the current highest result set in June 2023.
- Sold at Phillips Hong Kong in November 2021, *Dog Allowed* surpassed the lower estimate fourfold and along with the majority of his top 15 lots sold at auction, feature the subject of MuiMui, comparable to the present work.



Chris Huen Sin Kan, *Dog Allowed*, 2014 Sold by Phillips Hong Kong, 29 November 2021, for HK\$1,260,000

- One of the most prominent Hong Kong young artists, Huen has held numerous

successful exhibitions at prominent galleries worldwide, including *New Moroism*, White Cube, Hong Kong (group - 2023); *Chris Huen Sin Kan: Artist in Residence*, Royal Academy, London (solo - 2022); *Blossoms in the Shade*, Ota Fine Arts, Singapore (solo - 2022); *Puzzled Daydream*, Simon Lee Gallery, London (solo - 2020); *Tall Trees - and the things I might have forgotten*, Gallery Exit, Hong Kong (solo - 2019); *Of Humdrum Moments*, Pilar Corrias, London (solo - 2017) among others.

- He is currently represented by Simon Lee gallery and Ota Fine Arts.
- Huen's works are held in notable collections globally, including Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris and San Francisco; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney among others.

<sup>i</sup> Chris Huen Sin Kan, quoted in, 'Chris Huen Sin Kan: Process', *Simon Lee Gallery*, 29 October 2021, [online](#)

### Provenance

Simon Lee Gallery, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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24 ж

### Chen Fei

*Life is Porn*

acrylic on linen

180 x 240 cm. (70 7/8 x 94 1/2 in.)

Painted in 2015.

#### Estimate

HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000

€144,000 — 264,000

\$154,000 — 282,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“An encounter with a Chen Fei painting is likely to evince an instinctive wince, or a smirk depending on the viewer’s age, gender, and sexual persuasion. Shame. Hatred. Impotence, ennui, despair. A certain hostility. These emotions suffuse the paintings.”*  
— Karen Smith

If Chen Fei’s art should read like storyboards, or film stills, it would be thanks to the artist’s training at the Fine Arts Department at the Beijing Film Academy for screenwriting. Having been denied entry to the Central Academy of Fine Art, the young artist pursued another route, one steeped in cult movies, cinematography, and screenwriting. The present work—with the Chinese characters for ‘Goodbye’ blazoned across its centre—is immediately reminiscent of the final Credits of a movie: ‘*So long now, folks, this is The End, Fin, we are finished, goodbye now!*’ it seems to comically scream. Except that even in this final scene, as the proverbial curtains are soon to fall, the main character is hardly finished. We have caught him mid-act despite coming to the story’s finale, and we are met with sheer irreverence. With his back turned, our star is depicted either relieving or pleasuring himself, fully naked on a rooftop, unperturbed and unashamed despite his nudity, vulgarity, or even surroundings. One soon realises that the work is entitled *Life is Porn*, after all.

### Movie Buff, Maverick, or Madman?

Exhibited in the 2016 show, *The Day Is Yet Long* at the Galerie Urs Meile, the present work formed part of a collection of comic strip-like paintings that were each autonomous snapshots with individual narratives. All ambiguously autobiographical (the likeness of the artist and his girlfriend repeatedly feature), the pieces not only captured Chen’s personal life but also served as intriguing representations of a post-80s generation. Distilling a rich cinematographic language into a gripping visual vocabulary, Chen Fei’s paintings can be readily digested, absurd though his scenes may seem. Each work is immaculately rendered with careful attention paid to realism, and with a keen eye for graphics and colour, the artist successfully creates what are, in essence, movie scenes. In the present piece, for instance, we are greeted with cascading hills and sunset-backlit silhouettes of trees clashing with the startling modernity of a solar panel and contemporary houses, the weight of the protagonist warping what seems to be a precarious metal rooftop. We feel a confused, lost, even angsty energy latent in the character, as the tableau is vaguely evocative of a movie we may have once seen—and yet, the man is purposefully turned away from us, refusing psychoanalysis.

Coming of age in the advent of anime, manga, and other animated movies, it is unsurprising that Chen’s works are not only ‘cartoon-like’ in their delineation, but also downright farcical. Drawing heartily from the wisdom of comics, the artist’s oeuvre often deals with heavy subjects with a characteristically sarcastic lightness, as if refusing to take himself seriously. In such a way it is not difficult to group Chen Fei with the likes of Takashi Murakami, a proponent of *Superflat*, i.e., the

conflation of high and low art: though in Chen’s case, a conflation of heavy and light matters is perhaps more accurate. In the artist’s universe, arbitrary scenes, objects, words, all flow together frivolously in an attempt to make sense of the world.

One also draws pictorial links to Ed Ruscha: in *Start Over Please*, the consequence of failure and rejection meet the (willfully blind) optimism of its imperative: START OVER PLEASE. Each word lands on its own particularly symbolic band of colour that makes up the sunset in the background, each gradient representing an increased sense of keenness and proactivity, perhaps. The typeface makes no sense against its backdrop, but perhaps this is entirely the point—in a post-modernist, nihilistic, even millennial sense.



Ed Ruscha, *Start Over Please*, 2015 Artwork: © Ed Ruscha

Similarly, *Life is Porn* is equally deliberately nonsensical, forcing its viewer to draw their own



conclusions. As Karen Smith notes about the work, 'Goodbye to what, we can only guess; Chen Fei is not quite so obvious in his delivery. The farewell is maybe a lament to seed spilt on infertile ground, but equally is the perfect, punkish parody of 'The End,' both as phrase and the final scene of countless movies, which rest on a utopian optimism for the future, even following devastating adventures that amount to an apocalypse. That glorious sunset sky, with its 'happily ever after' message, works so well against the aura of desolation or alienation that is embodied in this figure of the solitary male on a rooftop looking out to a non-entity landscape.'<sup>i</sup> In the face of an ever-changing, confounding world, perhaps sardonic wit is our best cure: 'who cares if this is goodbye forever?' the central character seems to ask.



Eric Fischl, *Sleepwalker*, 1979 Artwork: © 2023 Eric Fischl / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## Prevarication/Provocation

What is so successful about Chen's art is its ability to disarm its audience: we are often made to feel like intruders upon scenes, witnesses to human foibles perhaps best kept secret. Yet it is also this stark honesty that makes his art so compelling yet perplexing. One is instantly reminded of the art of Eric Fischl: though painted in an entirely different manner, Fischl never shied away from voyeurism, and often captured intimacy in all its awkwardness. *Sleepwalker*, painted shortly before the artist's rise to prominence in New York, catches a young man standing in a small paddling pool

with his genitalia in hand. Whether he is truly sleepwalking as the title may suggest, or whether he is urinating, or even engaging in some brazen prepubescent sex act is a mystery to us. The setting is all the more baffling, set against the banality of some deck chairs, in an unassuming backyard. We may turn away in disgust, but the effect is palpable: we partake in the boy's vulnerability; we feel a tinge of his youthful recklessness. In a related but different direction, one also thinks about Andy Warhol's provocative *Oxidation* pieces from the late seventies, where the artist invited his studio hands and other acquaintances to either urinate or splash sexual fluids onto primed or copper-coated canvases. Such experiments can be interpreted as bold interrogations of morality, masculinity, and social etiquette, and were perhaps even more satirical and controversial given the climate of Abstract art that was prevalent at the time.

The same triggers exist in Chen's works, and as succinctly summarised by Smith, '[f]or Chen Fei, the bad taste that we might at times sense in the visual elements of the works is intentional.'<sup>ii</sup> In his bold executions, the artist forces us to confront often uncomfortable truths. In his self-deprecation and mockery (the artist is often the butt of his own jokes), he shows his audience that all is well, and *the day is yet long*, so there is no need to take oneself so seriously. As remarked upon by art critic Zhang Yizhou, 'Under Chen Fei's brush, the content in his paintings are all simple things around him. They might be familiar people or details, a simple scene, a classic movie scene, a fairy tale or a painting. With his interpretation, these things are not the same as what we have gotten used to. He uses his strange imagination to add a kind of weird, illusionary and attractive imago to the plain and ordinary things. Meanwhile, this gives people a kind of pleasant sensation similar to peeling off a hypocritical mask.'<sup>iii</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Chen Fei was born in 1983 in Hong Tong, Shanxi Province, China, and studied cinema at Beijing Film Academy, before choosing to focus on painting. His most recent exhibitions include the solo shows *Morning Market and Reunion*, at Yuz Museum in Shanghai (27 February 2021 – 9 May 2021) and Perrotin in New York (2 November 2019 – 21 December 2019), and the group shows *Glitches in Love: A New Formula*, at the University Art Museum (Chinretsukan Gallery section) and the Tokyo University of the Arts, Tokyo, Japan (24 March – 9 April 2023), *On/Off 2022: Carousel of Progress* at HEM - He Art Museum in Shunde, Guangdong, China (4 February 2022 – 5 June 2022).
- Chen's artworks are part of the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, of the Franks-Suss Collection in London and the DSL collection in Paris, France, among others.

<sup>i</sup> Karen Smith, 'Borrowing from Batman', 2016, [online](#)

ii Ibid.

iii Zhang Yizhou, 'A NIGHT DIALOGUE WITH DEATH - CHEN FEI'S PAINTING', 2012, [online](#)

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**Provenance**

Galerie Urs Melle, Lucerne

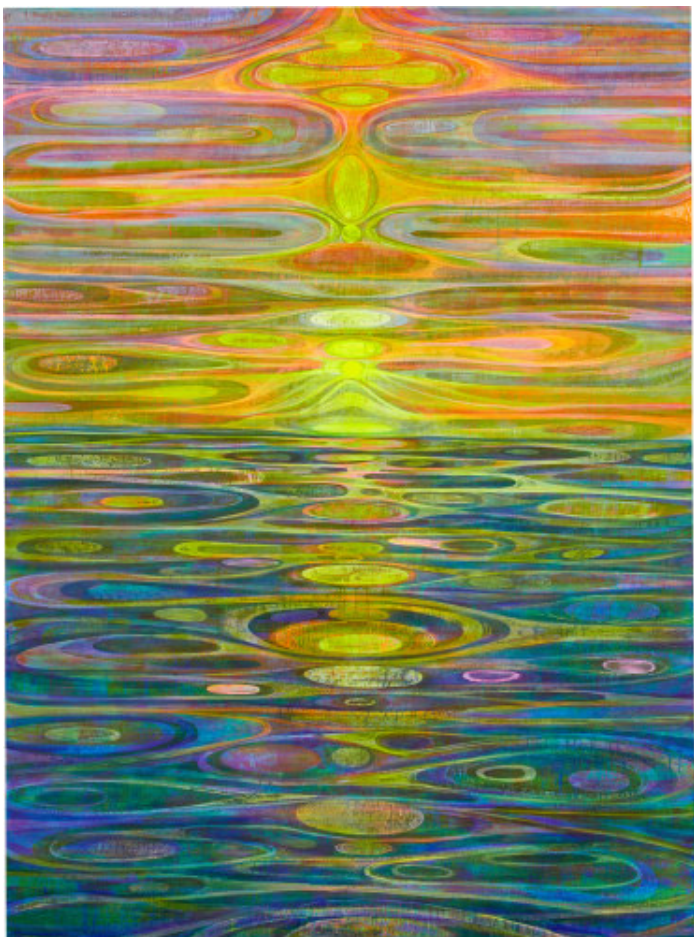
Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Beijing, Galerie Urs Meile; Lucerne, Galerie Urs Meile, *The Day Is Yet Long*, 12 March - 30 July 2016

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



25 ж

### **Huang Yuxing**

*Sunrise and Sunset*

signed and dated 'HUANG. Yuxing 13' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

230 x 170 cm. (90 1/2 x 66 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2013.

#### **Estimate**

HK\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

€300,000 — 421,000

\$321,000 — 449,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“Painting is a way of creation that can be passed on, like a torch that can look back at the past and illuminate the future. It can be a dialogue with the old masters and a way to think about the unknown world.”— Huang Yuxing*

Rich eruptions of vibrantly effused colourways occupy Huang Yuxing’s *Sunrise and Sunset*, entrancing viewers with its hypnotic evocation of organic forms. The present work confidently demonstrates Huang’s distinct visual vocabulary that skilfully marries Western techniques with undercurrents of Taoist and Buddhist philosophies. The unrestrained palette of blazing orange and pastel purple – harkening back to the aesthetics of ‘Y2K’ (the abbreviation for Year 2000 which saw a lot of short-lived trends and the aesthetic had a distinct reflection of the time, primarily futuristic, glittery, cyber-obsessed, and full of teenage angst) – proves a drastic departure from the artist’s earlier works in 2012 from his *Keyhole* series, filled with sombre undertones. Following the wake of the Cultural Revolution, the subdued greyish tones and cryptic imagery gave way to fluorescent hues forming picturesque sceneries, testament to his genesis as an artist.

### From Past to Future: A Meditative Synaesthesia

Just as a pointillist landscape is made up of small, distinct dots of colours, Huang’s works are comprised fully of fluid geometric forms. A signature motif of his *oeuvre*, concentric elliptical rings flow into one another at their borders, demonstrating a playful exchange between colour and form. *Sunrise and Sunset* strikes more like a symphony of colour than a landscape, reminiscent of Kandinsky’s colour studies.



Kandinsky, *Farbstudie - Quadrate mit konzentrischen Ringen*, 1913 Courtesy Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich Image: Artothek / Bridgeman Images

Through foreshortening these shapes, Huang achieves an elusive spatial depth with concentric rings reaching a crescendo at the horizon before receding into the distance. Washes of blue-green tides shine with iridescence, echoing the way water droplets create ripples with swinging cadence in his *River* series (see for example, [lot 11](#)). One can almost hear the rhythmic drops of water cascading across the composition, evoking a meditative union of the visual and sound. Altogether, this synaesthesia recalls the expressionist landscapes of Edvard Munch – particularly, his lurid palette and warped forms. With a view of painting as ‘a way of creation that can be passed on, like a torch that can look back at the past’, Huang puts himself in ‘dialogue with the old masters.’<sup>i</sup> Whilst Munch’s subjectivised lines elicit a sense of impending doom, Huang’s biotic ripples conjure up a serene oasis.



Edvard Munch, *Despair*, 1894 Courtesy Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich Photo © Munchmuseet

## The Flow of Life

*"Today's chaos is all a dream; the setting sun only sees the water flowing East."  
— From "Memories of the Past" by Wei Zhuang*

During a pivotal journey to the Himalayas towards the end of 2009, Huang observed a monumental shift in his works as the influence of Tibetan culture grew large. In *Sunrise and*

*Sunset*, Huang discovers parallels between the water cycle and Buddhist beliefs of reincarnation, denoting that 'life itself is not just a process from the beginning to the end; it will, like the river, become clouds, and turn into water, returning to the starting point through another form.'<sup>ii</sup>



Detail of the present lot

The cyclical nature of life and death is epitomised through the exclusive use of ellipses; as viewers trace the soft brushstrokes of the work, they find themselves returning to their origins. Imbued with significance and dominating half of the composition, water is the essence of life: oceans and rivers occupy miles of the earth; it is the most abundant molecule in all cells. At once macroscopic and cellular, Huang finds inextricable, enigmatic connections between bodies of water:

*"It is a view of the world in which the small is large and the large is small, a world in which everything is interconnected and has some connection."* — Huang Yuxing

At the heart of Huang's practice, water carries both spiritual and physical significance: he superimposes thicker layers of oil paints over his translucent layers, diluted with water to mobilise its pigments. The sea's tumultuous currents act as a reminder of the transient nature of life and time, in a state of flow and retreat, conjuring Taoist teachings that one's path of life contains constant motion and flux.

## Collector's Digest

- Born in 1975 in Beijing, Huang Yuxing graduated from the Mural Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2000 and currently works and lives in his hometown.
- Huang Yuxing was the first guest artist to be invited to display site-specific works at the Yuz Museum Project Room, Shanghai (2015). Since then, his highly sought-after practice has received recognition internationally; key solo exhibitions include *An Absolute Power We Cannot Find* at Almine Rech, New York (2022), *Heaps of Brocade and Ash* at Almine Rech, Brussels (2021), *Essence of Landscape* at König Gallery, London (2019). His most recent exhibition was held at Almine Rech, Shanghai in 2022 and showcased his [latest drawings](#).
- Sold by Phillips Hong Kong in June 2021, *Bubbles* surpassed its lower estimate more than tenfold, testament to the ongoing strength of Huang's current market.
- Huang was invited to collaborate with Louis Vuitton for their 2021 'Artycapucines' collection.
- His first NFT project, *Meta-morphic*, released online in 2022, was sold out within one minute of the launch.

<sup>i</sup> Huang Yuxing, quoted in Shu Wen, 'Painting is an intuition', *Artnow*, May 2022, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Huang Yuxing, quoted in, 'Introducing Meta-morphic: The Genesis of Huang Yuxing', *LiveArt*, 14 September 2022, [online](#)

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## Provenance

Private Collection, Asia

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

Hong Kong Auction / 6 October 2023 / 7pm HKT



26

**Mr.**

*"Penyo-Henyo" Pyopyo Edition "Good Morning, Good Morning"*

signed and dated 'Mr. 2005' on the underside of the left foot; further signed and dated 'Mr. 2005' on the underside of the base

fiberglass, steel, acrylic resin, iron and various fabrics  
272 x 100 x 100 cm. (107 1/8 x 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in.)  
Executed in 2006.

**Estimate**

HK\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

€240,000 — 361,000

\$256,000 — 385,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Reflecting a multilayered and heightened personal interest, Japanese artist Mr.'s large-scale paintings and sculptures immerse viewers within imaginary worlds of anime, manga and video games, bringing to life a kaleidoscopic world of cartoonish characters, emojis and internet slang. Positioning himself as a 'translator' of *otaku* culture, Mr. reinterprets this distinctive aesthetic for an international audience. His works are closely tied to his surroundings and environment, from his daily activities, to 'all the logos and signs in the city, and all sorts of symbols—anything and everything' <sup>i</sup>.

First unveiled in 2006, "*Penyo-Henyo*" *Pyopyo Edition "Good Morning, Good Morning"* is one of the artist's many bobblehead-looking sculptures that were on display at Mr.'s 2006 exhibition, *NIN-STEALTH*. The present lot depicts a little girl with an oversized head, dressed in a white skirt, red tank top and standing on a helipad atop a high-rise building, as small scenes, ranging from dinners to a plane crash and a burglar breaking in, are scattered across the detailed street architecture. Often conjuring a fantasy world that references the quotidian Japanese life, Mr.'s exhibition created an atmosphere akin to a child's playground with the inclusion of paintings that mimic the illustrated comic styles of Japan alongside multiple large sculptures.

## Kawaii culture in 3D

Mr. first gained traction in the early 2000s for his colourful, bright-eyed characters that follow the footsteps of the *Superflat* aesthetic that is heralded by Takashi Murakami, and is regarded as Murakami's protégé. The *Superflat* aesthetic blurs the boundaries between art and illustration with a deceptively simplified visual language, utilising thick outlines and flat blocks of colour – techniques that can be traced back to its origins in Japanese *Ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

An early example of Mr.'s large-scale sculptures, "*Penyo-Henyo*" *Pyopyo Edition "Good Morning, Good Morning"* is composed of formal elements that have since become synonymous with the artist's extensive oeuvre. Featuring an energetic female protagonist with a wide smile, coloured hair and blush-tinted cheeks, her exaggerated characteristics embody the Japanese concept of *kawaii* to evoke a sense of cuteness and innocence. The neon bracelets and plush toy bag charms could be seen as a tribute to Harajuku fashion – a vibrant, expressive street style that was particularly popular among the Japanese youth in the 2000s.

*"I was inspired by the heroic female anime characters, which appeared in the '90s. From the 1970s to 1980s, I noticed that there were mainly male heroic characters in anime. However, from the 1990s, Sailor Moon became one of the popular heroine anime characters. And 10 years later, another popular anime series called Pretty Cure dominated the anime industry in Japan. Hence, my artworks only feature female characters because I want to provide them with power in our society."* — Mr.

In particular, the girl's sparkling pupils are filled with other cartoon characters, bento boxes and landscape scenery that seem to mirror her personal interests. Mr. explains, 'From one point, I started painting girls' eyes in a way that they seem to have a reflection of something, and since then, I cannot paint eyes without any reflection. There must be something reflecting in the eyes of the girls I paint.' <sup>ii</sup>

More than a symbol of joy however, her determined stance and unwavering optimism defines her as a bold individual and a courageous risk-taker despite her sweet and juvenile appearance.

## In Interview: From Otaku to the World

*"Aside from just me being an otaku— in Japan, anime, manga, and video games, which used to be a niche, are no longer minority obsessions, they have become quite popularised. I think it would be good if this leads to more possibilities, coexisting and mixing with other cultures globally."* — Mr.

In 2022, Mr. was interviewed by Designboom on the occasion of his exhibition with Lehmann Maupin, New York, where he delved into the influence of *otaku* culture on his work and beyond.

**DB:** *You have compared yourself to a translator when it comes to otaku culture. What, in your opinion, makes this Japanese subculture so appealing to the international art world?*

**Mr.:** People who are interested in it now are much younger than I am. I've heard that people who grew up watching reruns of Japanese anime from the 70s to the 90s, like *Grendizer* and *Dragon Ball* in Europe and Asia, and *Pokemon* in the US, are now getting to a point where they feel nostalgic for these works, so I think they are becoming more and more interested in reconstructing them through visual art.

**DB:** *What are some of your influences besides otaku?*

**Mr.:** I have always been influenced by Japanese anime, and I also now get inspiration from mountain climbing and mountain worship. I also find inspiration in The *Superflat* movement, which is an artistic movement created by Takashi Murakami. To me, the definition of this movement might be slightly different from his (or maybe not!), but I see it as an Oriental or East Asian style that is characterised by using a flat space (2D) that also weaves cultural and historical connotations that inform it, as it goes back to the end of World War II and the birth of Pop Art—after the defeat of Japan during the war.

Read the full interview [here](#).



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## Collector's Digest

- Born in 1969, Mr. grew up with anime and *Otaku* culture at the forefront of his daily experience – the characteristic anime style we recognise today originated in the '60s, and the fandom culture that Mr. documents in his works began to enter the mainstream in the '80s. He honed his artistic practice at the Sokei Art School in Tokyo, graduating from the Department of Fine Arts in 1996. Just the previous year, he was discovered by Takashi Murakami and has been involved with his mentor's Kaikai Kiki Gallery ever since.
- A consistent participant in gallery shows, museum exhibits, and art fairs since the launch of his career over two decades ago, Mr. continues to inspire an international audience and is one of the biggest names in Japanese contemporary art today.
- The artist's most recent solo exhibition was with [Pheonix Museum of Art in Arizona, USA](#), which just closed on 12 March 2023.
- Other recent exhibitions include: *Mr.: Beyond the Alley, There...*, Lehmann Maupin, New York, 2022; *Mr.: Quotidianist*, HOW Art Museum, Shanghai, 2021.

<sup>i</sup> Mr., quoted in Sofia Lekka Angelopoulou, 'BEYOND THE ALLEY, THERE...' AT LEHMANN MAUPIN', *designboom*, 12 April 2022, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Mr., quoted in Nadja Sayej, 'Japanese Artist Mr. Celebrated Anime Before It Went Mainstream', *Garage*, 20 February 2019, [online](#)

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### Provenance

Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Miami, Perrotin, *Mr.: NIN -STEALTH-*, 4 March - 4 June 2006

### Literature

Carlos Suarez de Jesus, 'Anything Goes: It's all fun and games at Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin', *Miami New Times*, 30 March 2006, [online](#)

Melissa Chu, Mr., and Tamaki Saito, *Mr.*, Hong Kong and Tokyo, 2011, pp. 42-43, 45 (illustrated)



27

**Tomokazu Matsuyama**

*Daylight In My Place*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "'Daylight In My Place" 8. 2019 NYC Tomokazu Matsuyama [in English and Kanji]' on the reverse  
acrylic and mixed media on canvas  
254 x 185 cm. (100 x 72 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2019.

**Estimate**

HK\$1,200,000 — 2,200,000

€144,000 — 264,000

\$154,000 — 282,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*“A lot of people see my work as a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures. It’s not only so. I am not looking at the world in black and white, but trying to find the grey areas, where I can find new perspectives and ideas.” — Tomokazu Matsuyama*

Blending the ornamental and conceptual, traditional and modern, the arresting works of Japanese artist Tomokazu Matsuyama seek to dismantle the rigid cultural parameters often found in contemporary society. Growing up between Japan and America, Matsuyama became familiar with the contrasting visuals and cultural dialects that exist in the world, and soon found interest in exploring the dichotomy between his dual identities, by injecting his canvases with explosions of diverse, global references.



The artist sitting beside the current work in 2019

Highly committed to furthering his aesthetic evolution, the artist undertakes many hours of intensive research into source imagery and applies a multitude of custom paint blends onto each of his vivid mash-up like paintings. In *Daylight in My Place*, a young figure with brilliant hair stands at the centre of the canvas amongst a flourishing and luscious ecosystem. Imagery from traditional sources and modern society blend into one dreamlike landscape. Exploring questions of national and individual identity through the subject matter of his paintings, Matsuyama employs an exceptionally unique visual language to reflect on the experience of contemporary diaspora and to articulate themes of selfhood and diversity in the context of globalisation. As a result, his paintings act as a lens for viewers to confront their own conceptions of cultural homogeneity as we all navigate the natural chaos of our social environments.

### Bridging the Gap: When East Meets West

*“I want to create work that is digestible to different audiences based on the viewer’s upbringing. At the end, we are a global self, we are one human. [...] We live in this organic chaos where the definition of our being and culture is complex. I want to portray that in my art; it is my ultimate goal.” — Tomokazu Matsuyama*

Bold yet delicate, Matsuyama’s fluorescent compositions of polychromatic patterns and electric colourways showcases the artist’s vast vocabulary of iconographical material. Influenced by a variety of subjects, ranging from Japanese art from the Edo and Meiji periods, classical Greek and Roman statuary to French Renaissance painting and post-war contemporary art, Matsuyama brings together an amalgamation of widely recognisable cultural references in his paintings. Intentionally giving such narratives no distinct separation, he reckons the familiar local with the familiar global, merging visual and cultural dialects into a singular, harmonious scene and subsequently, transcends all worldly boundaries.



Left: Robe (Kosode) with Mandarin Orange Tree and Auspicious Characters, second half of the 18th century Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Right: Cranes, Pines, and Bamboo, early 18th century Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The artist's unique spirit of visual diversity is clearly visible in *Daylight in My Place* and pays direct homage to his Japanese roots. Posing like a model from fashion magazines, the protagonist is dressed in a flowing cloak tied at the back by a red ribbon, which recalls the traditional garment kosode worn throughout the 12th to 19th centuries, similarly fastened at the waist too. Intricately rendered with floral and bamboo patterning, the colourful imagery echoes the flora and fauna in the background. Like the boundless landscapes of Edo-period folding screens, Matsuyama adorns his canvas with hyper-realistic depictions of lush vegetation, from the succulently-green foliage to the cherry blossoms and wild flowers in full bloom, all natural imagery that are typically endowed with propitious symbolism: flowers represent beauty and trees, strength and longevity. In the lower left foreground, a cat with luscious pearl-white fur and red ears can be seen on the prowl, bearing resemblance to the recognised fortune cat 'maneki-neko' believed to attract good luck and fortune. In sampling elements of history, the US-based artist fully embraces the heritage of his home country and brings focus to uniquely Asian ideals as a means of celebrating the parabolic nature of Japanese art.



Detail of the present lot

Whilst *Daylight in My Place* is deeply rooted in traditional East-Asian subjects, there are hints of modernity, commodity, and Western influences scattered across the composition. Although the artist takes inspiration from folding screens, the choice of a shaped canvas points towards postwar art and the movement's determination to depart from the 'flat rectangle' and its constraints. The contrast in cultures is further heightened in the depiction of the protagonist and his attire. Underneath the traditional Japanese garment, it appears that the figure is wearing pink sweatpants printed with innumerable and repetitive Japanese 'Hello-Kitty' characters, a stark contrast to the white 'maneki-neko' cat in the lower left foreground, as a double-edged motif symbolising the effects of mass-consumerism and the emergence of 'kawaii' culture that grew internationally. Looking further down, the figure wears stylish open-toed sandals, revealing light blue nail polish on his toes, a reference to both the evolution of footwear and the growth of the beauty industry in contemporary society. Standing on a red gingham blanket, it immediately calls to mind the most iconic American picnic traditions such as the Fourth of July Picnic and The Southern Picnic, where picnickers would enjoy a meal taken outdoors (al fresco) as part of an excursion in picturesque settings with grand views.

Utilising a highly specific aesthetic that incorporates a world of contrasting visual and cultural dialects, Matsuyama's paintings are thus masterful combinations of long-lasting traditions and contemporary trends - while some images may have existed for centuries, others may have been conceived one month ago and while some motifs are recognisable by all, others require more perspective to facilitate a deeper understanding of his works. In mixing aspects of international culture that do not normally coexist, Matsuyama successfully creates visually pleasing paintings like *Daylight in My Place* that appear simultaneously familiar and strange. On one hand, it represents the artist's personal limbo as he straddles two opposing cultures abroad and on the other hand, it conjures up a universal experience that transcends all memories and dreams, as well as the past and present. Taking advantage of mankind's ever-growing curiosity, Matsuyama

cleverly challenges the definition of culture and what it means to be a global citizen in the 21st century.

### In Interview: The Search For Individuality

In 2023, Matsuyama spoke to DailyArt Magazine's Ania Kaczniska about how personal experiences, observations and interests informed his unique multi-cultural practice.

**Ania Kaczniska:** Your artistic practice is often described as cross-cultural, combining both Eastern and Western influences, such as ukiyo-e prints or European Renaissance paintings, and melding their aesthetic principles together. This results in a style that resists any categorization. What does this collision of cultures mean to you?

**Tomokazu Matsuyama:** For me, it's not just about the clash of cultures, but more about what we can relate to as individuals. I live in America and have also spent time in London, which is a very multicultural city.

America, particularly New York, is a melting pot of cultures and languages, with more than a hundred religions being practiced. This results in a diverse range of values that we all live with and independence being celebrated and encouraged.

However, as a New Yorker, I question what individualism really means. Is it just about being loud and proud about our backgrounds and identities, both positive and negative? I find it challenging to connect with people from different backgrounds because everyone is so unique and there is no norm.

Although the art world is still dominated by white men, at the same time there are many voices and identities being amplified to be accepted. This is where I bring in my reality and try to create something visually elegant and artistic.

**AK:** And where did this interest to engage with art historical themes emerge in your practice?

**TM:** My creative motivation is to include art history references, such as Picasso or Japanese paintings, along with consumer and popular culture references, like bags of potato chips and current fashion attire.

I'm interested in how visual information becomes validated as historical and why certain pieces are deemed important and displayed in museums.

I find it subjective and wonder what makes art historical or contextual. As an Asian artist, I don't try to adapt to what's considered art history but instead try to find my own connections between different pieces, even if they seem to clash, such as corporate logos and historical paintings. I see

no difference in the information we consume in daily life and the pieces displayed in museums.

Read the full interview [here](#).

### Collector's Digest



Installation view of the current lot at Chongqing, The Long Museum, Accountable Nature, 7 March - 23 May 2021

- Born in Gifu, Japan in 1976, Tomokazu Matsuyama received his MFA in Communications Design from the Pratt Institute, and currently works in Brooklyn, New York. Influenced by a variety of sources, his works take inspiration from subjects such as Japanese traditional art, the French Renaissance, post-war artistic movements and mass consumer culture. The artist's works are held in the permanent collections of global institutions such as the Long Museum, Shanghai, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco and LACMA, Los Angeles.
- Matsuyama has exhibited widely worldwide including at the Japan Society in New York; the Katzen Arts Center at American University in Washington D.C., and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts among others. His upcoming solo show at the Hirosaki Museum of

**Tomokazu Matsuyama**

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Contemporary Art, titled *Fictional Landscape*, will be held from 27 October 2023 - 17 March 2024.

- Since 2019, Matsuyama has engaged in a series of public works, from murals in The Bowery, New York, and Beverly Hills, California, to two monumental public sculptures unveiled in Tokyo in July 2020. Most recently, the artist unveiled a mural at SUNY Upstate Medical Institute, New York in 2023, and will launch the installation Infinity Trinity at CHUNICHI BUILDING, Nagoya in spring of 2024.
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**Provenance**

Kotaro Nukaga, Tokyo

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Shanghai, Long Museum West Bund; Chongqing, The Long Museum, *Accountable Nature*, 12 November 2020 - 23 May 2021