

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT

Sale Interest: 37 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



PHILLIPS

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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Sale Interest: 37 Lots

Auction & Viewing Location

18 May 2022
432 Park Avenue, New York, NY, United States, 10022

Viewing

30 April - 18 May
Monday - Saturday, 10am-6pm
Sunday, 12pm-6pm

Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making enquiries please refer to this sale as NY010322 or 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale.

Absentee and Telephone Bids

tel +1 212 940 1228
bidsnewyork@phillips.com

Contemporary Art Department

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1
Anna Weyant
Buffet II
Estimate
\$100,000 — 150,000



2
Robin F. Williams
Nude Waiting It Out
Estimate
\$150,000 — 200,000



3
María Berrío
Burrow of the Yellow
Estimate
\$400,000 — 600,000



4
Hilary Pecis
Adrienne's Bookshelf
Estimate
\$300,000 — 500,000



5
Lisa Yuskavage
Northview (Impressionist Jacket)
Estimate
\$700,000 — 1,000,000



6
Mark Rothko
Untitled
Estimate
\$6,000,000 — 8,000,000



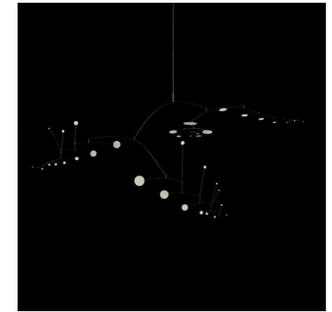
7
Yves Klein
Monochrome bleu sans titre (IK...
Estimate
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000



8
Shara Hughes
The Not Dark Dark Spots
Estimate
\$300,000 — 500,000



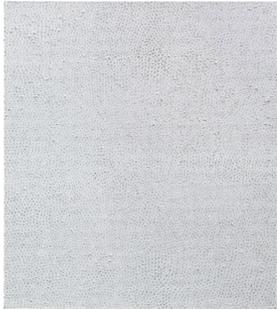
9
Helen Frankenthaler
Blue Dance
Estimate
\$1,800,000 — 2,500,000



10
Alexander Calder
39=50
Estimate
\$10,500,000 — 14,500,000

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New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



11
Yayoi Kusama
Untitled (Nets)
Estimate
\$5,000,000 — 7,000,000



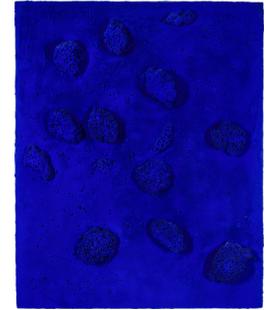
12
Jean-Michel Basquiat
Untitled
Estimate
Estimate On Request



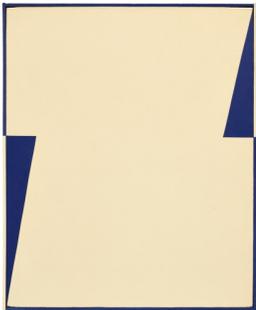
13
Andy Warhol
Multicolored Retrospective (Rev...)
Estimate
\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000



14
Pablo Picasso
Figures et plante
Estimate
\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



15
Yves Klein
Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (R...)
Estimate
\$14,000,000 — 18,000,000



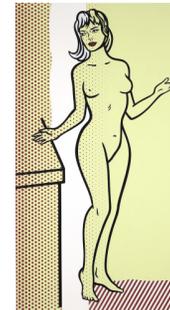
16
Carmen Herrera
Basque
Estimate
\$600,000 — 800,000



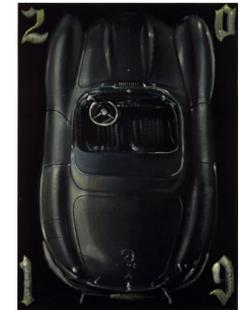
17
Amy Sherald
She was learning to love mome...
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000



18
Emmanuel Taku
The Three Damsels
Estimate \$50,000 — 70,000



19
Roy Lichtenstein
Nude
Estimate
\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000



20
Issy Wood
Actual car 2
Estimate
\$150,000 — 200,000

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New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



21
Wayne Thiebaud
Berry Cake
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



22
Andy Warhol
Flowers
Estimate
\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000



23
Reggie Burrows Hodges
Intersection of Color: Suite
Estimate
\$200,000 — 300,000



24
Robert Delaunay
L'Équipe de Cardiff
Estimate
\$700,000 — 1,000,000



25
Justin Caguiat
Doll 3 Eros
Estimate
\$380,000 — 450,000



26
Andy Warhol
The Star (Greta Garbo as Mata ...
Estimate
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000



27
Cecily Brown
Angie
Estimate
\$4,500,000 — 6,500,000



28
Hans Hofmann
In Upper Regions
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



29
Cy Twombly
Untitled
Estimate
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000



30
Matthew Wong
Day 1
Estimate
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

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31
Jonas Wood
Clipping E2
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000



32
Rafa Macarrón
La Perrera
Estimate
\$80,000 — 120,000



33
David Wojnarowicz
Fuck You Faggot Fucker
Estimate
\$800,000 — 1,200,000



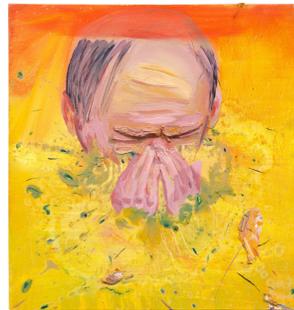
34
Dondi White
Rebel Rocking the Blind Light
Estimate
\$100,000 — 150,000



35
Lauren Quin
Second Palm Third Stem
Estimate \$40,000 — 60,000



36
Andy Warhol
Three works: (i-iii) Campbell's T...
Estimate
\$700,000 — 900,000



37
Dana Schutz
Sneeze 2
Estimate \$80,000 — 120,000

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New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



1

Anna Weyant

Buffet II

signed and dated "Anna Weyant 2021 ♥" on the reverse

oil on canvas

48 x 60 1/4 in. (121.9 x 153 cm)

Painted in 2021.

Estimate

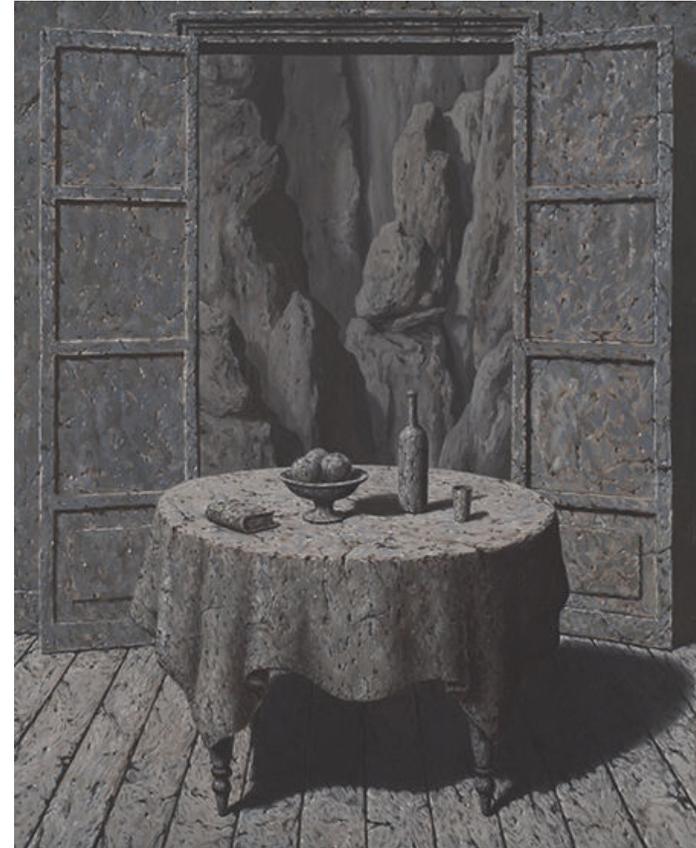
\$100,000 — 150,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"[The still life paintings] are very meditative and pleasant to make. I can make them alone. I set them up in my apartment, and I light them, and it's dark and very comfortable...I'd say these are my favorites. I'm very attached and fond of them."
—Anna Weyant

Painted in 2021, *Buffet II* is a seductive example of Anna Weyant's acclaimed still lifes. Presenting a basket of grapes, a glass of wine, fresh market produce, and eggs on a buffet table that spans beyond the picture plane, the artist draws the viewer into an eerie scene that teeters between striking realism and suggestions of the uncanny—a hallmark of her oeuvre. Offering a contemporary twist on the paintings of Dutch Golden Age masters, the present work showcases the artist's signature use of dramatic chiaroscuro and scrupulous brushwork in rendering compositions that are at once elegant and unnerving. *Buffet II* captures the artist's penchant for "filter[ing] her influences through mental and visual sieves to create charming canvases ripe with dark humor."ⁱ



René Magritte, *Souvenir de voyage*, 1951. The Menil Collection, Houston. Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"I have always loved the line in the children's book Madeline when Miss Clavel says, 'Something isn't right.'" —Anna Weyant

Drawing upon centuries of Western painting from the Dutch Golden Age to modern Surrealism, Weyant is best known for her meticulously rendered still lifes and figurative paintings of women imbued with psychological decadence. In *Buffet II*, Weyant situates herself within the lineage of her still life predecessors such as Gerrit van Honthorst, Pieter Claesz, and Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin while conjuring the Surrealist sensibility of René Magritte. Exemplifying the signature

sepia tone of her compositions, the present work reveals the artist's aim to avoid the "distraction of color," focusing on refined handling through a traditional painterly language. This materializes the sense of the uncanny purely through her representational choices, as Magritte did, allowing the viewer to engage with the narrative elements that appear conventional at first glance but reveal their disconcerting nature upon closer observation. Here, a single grape holds up the tablecloth, revealing what appears to be a mattress rather than a dining table, as red liquid eerily streams down the composition to fill a wine glass, its source placed out of the picture plane.



Pieter Claesz, *Still Life*, ca. 1625. The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: Art Institute of Chicago, Simeon B. Williams Fund, 1935.300

"Somewhat concealed and certainly not forced. It's the 'wrongness' of the details and/or the overall setup that creates [Weyant's] tragicomic narratives." —Sasha Bogojev

Weyant's painterly style ultimately reveals her fascination with tragicomedy that permeates her practice. When asked about this quality that defines her work, Weyant expressed, "Humor can be a way to control discomfort. Mark Twain said something about humor being 'tragedy plus time.' If there's humor in my work, it probably goes hand in hand with some sort of weird misery."ⁱⁱ In the present work, lighthearted humor is found in the "peek-a-boo" unveil by the single grape and the anthropomorphic envelopes, mitigating the ominous reverberation of the red liquid that suggests a violent ending of a horror story and the leek shaped like a pistol. Through this lens, Weyant

masterfully translates the theme of *vanitas* or *memento mori*—again harkening back to her Dutch still-life predecessors—in *Buffet II* through her singular sensibility of weaving the sinister with the charming, menacing with the enchanting, dark with the light. Encapsulating the "harsh elegance" of the emerging artist's alluring oeuvre, the present work embodies Rae Niwa's words. "[Weyant's paintings are] laden with a weight that is not to be played with or mistaken as passing novelty...Somewhere between the gentle repose of still lifes adorned with revolvers and irreverent symbols, the viewer is seized and seduced into a world of twisted intrigue...a mystery just out of reach."ⁱⁱⁱ



ⁱ Paul Laster, "Anna Weyant Embraces Dark Humor Through Realist Painting," *Art & Object*, April 16, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Anna Weyant, quoted in *ibid*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rae Niwa, "Anna Weyant: That Sliver is Painful," *Flaunt Magazine*, March 4, 2022.

Provenance

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

"Basel is Back: A Review of Art Basel 2021," *Juxtapoz Magazine*, September 28, 2021 (installation view illustrated)

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PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED EUROPEAN
COLLECTION

2

Robin F. Williams

Nude Waiting It Out

signed, titled and dated "ROBIN F. WILLIAMS NUDE
WAITING IT OUT 2017" on the reverse

oil and acrylic on canvas

64 1/8 x 44 1/8 in. (162.8 x 112 cm)

Painted in 2017.

Estimate

\$150,000 — 200,000

[Go to Lot](#)





The artist with the present work at right

"[Nude Waiting It Out] stands for that woman who is wearing a costume that is her naked body—she is performing...she is the nude in painting, or the one that gets imitated in advertisements as a super available woman... She is a '70s shampoo ad, the opposite of your high-art nude." —Robin F. Williams

Oscillating between subject and object, humanization and commodification, *Nude Waiting It Out* captures Robin F. Williams' acclaimed painterly practice that explores the notions of sexuality, commerciality, and desire through the landscape of the female body. Looking to vintage advertising as a vehicle to challenge art historical tropes, the artist here transforms an advertisement for shampoo into a painterly dialogue on the female nude. In the present work, Williams positions the viewer behind the seated woman and renders her figure's skin coarse through her textured painterly handling—at once denying our indulgence of the sensualized female body while showcasing the artist's masterful play of light and shadow in contouring form.



Vintage shampoo advertisement from Helene Curtis

"When paintings I love make me uncomfortable or angry, they are especially important as source material." —Robin F. Williams

Known for her alluring portraits of monumental female figures, Williams' paintings explore the relationship between gender and power in American culture. A graduate from the Rhode Island School of Design, the Ohio-born artist was drawn to the theme of the nude early in life after learning of Édouard Manet's *Olympia* in high school and swiftly painted her own version. "I wrote a paragraph [for school] explaining why it wasn't porn," she says. "That may have been my first artist statement."¹ This experience planted the seeds for the now 38-year-old Brooklyn-based artist who

drew inspiration from her “love-hate relationship” with Modern masters like Manet and Gustave Courbet, 1970s advertisements, and the “inevitability of the male gaze” for the present work.ⁱⁱ Fusing her fascinations with vintage marketing and representational painting in art history, Williams maps the pervading objectification of the female body in both “high” and “low” art that pervades commercial and institutional realms. In *Nude Waiting it Out*, Williams subverts a sensual view of her figure’s body by making it “stiff and creepy,” and in turn endows her subject with power.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, by stripping the figure of any sex appeal, Williams hopes that “people will take her more seriously,” because “you have to wait until no one wants to have sex with you anymore for your ideas to be taken seriously.”^{iv}



Gustave Courbet, *Bather at the Spring*, 1868. Musée d’Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art

Resource, NY

Working exclusively in oil, Williams fuses multiple painterly techniques such as analogue application, airbrushing, and staining the canvas to manifest varying degrees of realism in her work. Describing how her practice has evolved through progressing her methods, the artist explained, “As I’ve started to use an airbrush for instance, the way I ‘draw’ or ‘build’ form has responded to my masking process...They have a more computer generated or graphic look. The different techniques I use are meant to evoke effects that seem photographic or digital without looking like Photorealism.”^v This is showcased here in the airbrushed background that depicts drawings made in condensation on glass screens, evoking Avery Singer’s shower paintings as well as her masking-and-airbrush technique that conjures the digital world. Yet unlike Singer, Williams combines this technique with densely layered painterly passages, “the complexity and variety of the medium mirror[ing] the layered narrative of the works.”^{vi} In the present work, the artist materializes this vacillation between virtual and organic in the figure who appears at once like a robotic simulation and simultaneously strikingly human through Williams’ refined painterly handling. In Williams’ words, “Paintings are a virtual space while also being distinct objects, and the environments and bodies in my paintings are certainly constructed. I like the challenge of creating a person out of paint that is clearly a simulacrum, but that feels none-the-less sentient or alive; an image that sees and knows it’s being seen.”^{vii}

ⁱ Robin F. Williams, quoted in Randi Bergman, “Robin F. Williams is Reimagining the Female Nude,” *S Magazine*, April 11, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Randi Bergman, *ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Robin F. Williams, quoted in Alicia Cesaro, “Robin Williams’ All-Female ’70s-Inspired Artwork,” *Coveteur*, November 29, 2016, [online](#).

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v Maria Vogel, “Robin F. Williams Takes a Layered Approach in her Exploration of Gender & Power,” *Art of Choice*, April 2, 2019, [online](#).

^{vi} “Robin F. Williams: *Your Good Taste Is Showing*,” P.P.O.-W, New York, press release, 2017.

^{vii} Maria Vogel, “Robin F. Williams Takes a Layered Approach in her Exploration of Gender & Power,” *Art of Choice*, April 2, 2019, [online](#).

Provenance

P.P.O.W., New York

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, P.P.O.W., *Robin F. Williams: Your Good Taste Is Showing*, October 12–November 11, 2017
Palm Beach, GAVLAK, *Painting*, February 17–June 2, 2018

Literature

Alicia Cesaro, "Robin Williams' All-Female '70s-Inspired Artwork," *Coveteur*, November 29, 2016, online (installation view of the present work in progress in the artist's studio illustrated; titled as *Waiting It Out*)
"Your Good Taste Is Showing," *Meer*, October 6, 2017, online (illustrated)
Atesh M. Gundogdu, "Oct 19 Robin F. Williams," *artspeak*, October 10, 2018, online
Maria Vogel, "Robin F. Williams Takes a Layered Approach in Her Exploration of Gender & Power," *Art of Choice*, April 2, 2019, online (illustrated; erroneously dated as 2016)
"À la découverte de la peintre Robin F Williams," *Beware Magazine*, September 11, 2019, online (illustrated)

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New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A PACIFIC NORTHWEST
COLLECTION

3

María Berrío

Burrow of the Yellow

mixed media collage on canvas
60 x 72 in. (152.4 x 182.9 cm)
Executed in 2013.

Estimate

\$400,000 — 600,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"My characters are part of a full world who can't exist without others." —María Berrío

Fusing mythology and biography, *Burrow of the Yellow*, 2013, is a paragon of María Berrío's fantastical large-scale collages that teem with chromatic exuberance. Set in a kaleidoscopic room, four women recline with big cats and rabbits in a field of flowers. Here, the figures amalgamate with the surrounding flora and fauna as much as the flowers meld into the patterned wallpaper that extends past the window into the outer world. Blurring interior and exterior, *Burrow of the Yellow* showcases Berrío's practice of entwining material and conceptual layers that capture the "magical realism" of her acclaimed oeuvre.ⁱ



Gustav Klimt, *The Three Ages of Woman* (detail), 1905. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome.
Image: Scala / Art Resource, NY

"In my work, motherhood has produced a protective element... It's such a deep connection, so when you're doing something from your unconscious, it's obviously going to come up." —María Berrío

Based in New York, the Columbia-born artist is known for her ornate depictions of mythical utopias presenting women at one with nature, finding inspiration in South American folklore and her personal life. Based on a dream Berrío had as an expectant mother, *Burrow of the Yellow* is a highly autobiographical work that manifests how being a mother has influenced her work. "When I was pregnant with my son," she explained, "I had a dream where I gave birth to a rabbit, which my mother then put into a cage. Then, we all waited for it to turn into a human...it led to me making a painting of women laying on the floor surrounded by rabbits."ⁱⁱ The female figure cradling the rabbit and the tigers that lay with the women materialize her expression on the protective element of motherhood through her unique visual language, inviting us into the unconscious depths of her mind to "unveil the mysteries and beauty of our world, to explore and touch the unseen."ⁱⁱⁱ



"The women who inhabit my paintings are embodied ideals of femininity... These are the women I want to be: strong, vulnerable, compassionate, courageous, and in

harmony with themselves and nature." —*María Berrío*

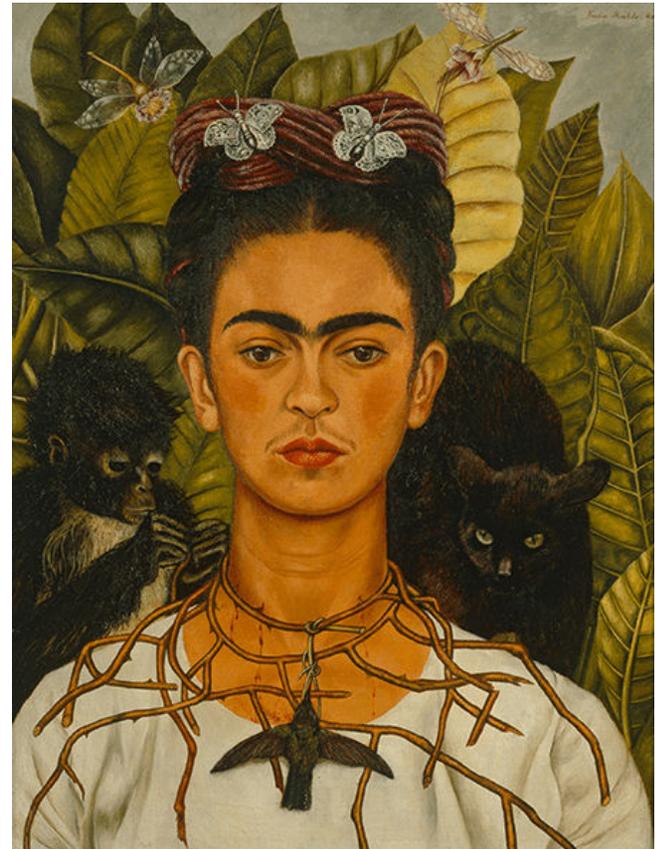
The floral abundance subsuming the women in *Burrow of the Yellow* signals to the theme of fecundity from Berrío's dream while recalling the artist's oft-cited connection with Gustav Klimt, whose flower-imbedded figures often symbolized the evolution of womanhood. Here, the artist epitomizes the evocation of her predecessor by adorning the canvas with gold leaf and oil paint. Berrío, however, refuses the sensual objectification of her figures through the ghostly pigmentation of their skin to suggest "an otherworldliness [so] they appear to be more spirit than flesh," in her words.^{iv} By outlining the body of the present figures in bright pink, Berrío further highlights this notion as if to suggest a halo around their bodies through divine femininity.



Henri Rousseau, *The Dream*, 1910. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

The present work features tigers which look to the mythic tales and traditions of the Kogi tribe in Colombia—"people of the Tiger"— which further appear in her monumental 2017 canvas *Aluna*, Ford Foundation, New York, as well as her major 2019 mosaic project for the Fort Hamilton Parkway station in Brooklyn, *There is Magic Underneath it All*.^v From birds to monkeys, horses to tigers, animals play a key role in Berrío's oeuvre, which in part look to her upbringing in Colombia

where her imagination was stimulated by the natural life around her. Here, Berrío ultimately captures the influence of Hispanic surrealists on her work including Frida Kahlo, Leonora Carrington, and Remedios Varos, who also tapped into mythology and psychology in conveying, as she expressed, the "interconnectedness of the universe...[the] fluidity between person and thing, human and animal."^v



Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940. Harry Ransom Center, Austin. Image: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"We are a prism of culture. My work celebrates this diversity—not explicitly, but

with fantasy—in an attempt to create a narrative that is as complicated and elusive as reality.” —María Berrío

As *Burrow of the Yellow* demonstrates, Berrío’s signature collage technique of sourcing culturally diverse materials is deeply symbolic. Crafting the composition with myriad layers of Japanese papers which she paints over with washes of watercolor, Berrío establishes a striking dialogue with the very origin of her paper by directly incorporating the imagery of Japanese *ukiyo-e* artist Utagawa Hiroshige in the background—the landscape pictures on the walls and the distant mountains outdoors deriving from his famous series *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, 1833-1834. In the present work, Berrío thus materializes the heart of her artistic program. “My work,” as she explained, is “informed by every bit of material layered in it, and by every place the materials hail from. This process of fusing cultural production from a wide range of places is inherent to the form and, more importantly, to the meaning.”^{vii}



Henri Matisse, *Odalisque in Red Culottes*, 1921. Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris. Image: © Michel Urtado / Benoit Touchard / RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

A notable nod to the work of Henri Matisse, Berrío’s technical process springs from her earlier practice of drawing patterns inspired by wallpaper and fabric samples. Through her mature practice of collage, Berrío brings the French master’s decorative interiors to life in *Burrow of the Yellow*, evoking his motifs of the open window and floral-patterned walls whilst employing actual paper with botanical designs. Here, one recalls Matisse’s *Odalisque in Red Culottes*, 1921, in the bottom right figure’s pose and the flowers that blend into décor. By placing this Eden-like scene in a room, Berrío invites the theme of nature indoors in both subject and technique, collapsing the space between the interior and exterior of minds and worlds that define her trailblazing practice.

Collector’s Digest

- Testifying to the artist’s meteoric rise to critical acclaim, Berrío received a solo presentation with Victoria Miro Gallery at Frieze Los Angeles this year, on the heels of her [major survey debut](#) at the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach in 2021.

- Berrío’s work resides at global institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Yuz Museum, Shanghai, among others.

ⁱ María Berrío, quoted in C.J. Bartunek, “As Complicated and Elusive as Reality”: María Berrío’s Many-Layered Collages,” *The Georgia Review*, Spring 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ María Berrío, quoted in “María Berrío,” *Gossamer*, no. 3, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ María Berrío, quoted in Amanda Quinn Olivar, ed., “María Berrío,” *Curator*, 2019, [online](#).

^{iv} María Berrío, quoted in C.J. Bartunek, “As Complicated and Elusive as Reality”: María Berrío’s Many-Layered Collages,” *The Georgia Review*, Spring 2019, [online](#).

^v Nicholas J. Saunders, *Icons of Power: Feline Symbolism in the Americas*, New York, 2013, p. 145.

^{vi} María Berrío, quoted in C.J. Bartunek, “As Complicated and Elusive as Reality”: María Berrío’s Many-Layered Collages,” *The Georgia Review*, Spring 2019, [online](#).

^{vii} *Ibid*.

Provenance

Praxis Art, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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4

Hilary Pecis

Adrienne's Bookshelf

signed, titled and dated "Hilary Pecis "Adrienne's Bookshelf" 2020" on the reverse
acrylic on canvas
54 1/4 x 44 in. (137.7 x 111.8 cm)
Painted in 2020.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"In paintings of interiors there is a sort of portraiture that takes place in what people choose to put on display. I love the idea that those objects either define who they are or who they aspire to be." — Hilary Pecis

Marking Hilary Pecis' largest canvas at auction to date, *Adrienne's Bookshelf* exemplifies the artist's captivating painterly language that elevates intimate, recognizable vignettes into vibrant celebrations of everyday life. Here, Pecis presents four rows of floating shelves in a cozy domestic setting, packing the composition with books, artworks, flowers, and paraphernalia in her signature aesthetic. Pecis' meticulous and individual treatment of each object begs us to look closer at the pictures on display and scan each book title—whether fully disclosed or only partially revealed—to find a gem of relatability, something we have seen or possess, while enticing us to decode the identity of this bookshelf's owner. Transforming still life into a portrait of the human psyche, the present work "delivers [Pecis'] own brand of portraiture by zeroing in on the objects and places that make up the person."¹



Félix Vallotton, *La bibliothèque (The Library)*, 1921. Musée départemental Maurice Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

"There is a pleasure in painting the way objects interact with each other as figures themselves." — Hilary Pecis

Best known for her vibrant still life interiors and landscapes that teem with art historical references, Pecis explores the notions of perception, identity, and meaning through the objects that populate our homes. Drawing from her own surroundings as inspiration, from friends' homes to lavish gardens—much like fellow Los Angeles-based painter Jonas Wood—the artist transforms these spaces through her painterly sensibility, employing popping colors and bold lines to imbue

“saturated life [into these] visually stunning, modest memorials.”ⁱⁱ Situating Pecis within a longstanding lineage of interior painters, *Adrienne’s Bookshelf* conjures the artist’s diverse range of influences including the work of Henri Matisse, Les Nabis members such as Félix Vallotton, and undoubtedly David Hockney. While recalling her oft-cited connection to the British painter’s Los Angelesian interiors and gardens, the present work captures Pecis’ signature approach of excluding figures from the composition. Translating these evocations through her unique visual language, Pecis reimagines portraiture by allowing the objects to narrate the entire story of their owners. As she explained, “I enjoy portraiture, but the closest I can get to a portrait is by painting someone’s surroundings. I think it can be as personal as a painting of their face.”ⁱⁱⁱ



David Hockney, *Beach House by Day*, 1990. Private Collection. Artwork: © David Hockney

“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

For the present work, Pecis depicted her friend’s bookshelf with her signature still life motifs: artist monographs and exhibition catalogues, various types of novels and plants, and pictures that both bear meaning for the owner of these objects and reflect Pecis’ own artistic inspirations. Here, the

artist’s subject is likely the home of her contemporary Adrienne Rubenstein, with whom Pecis exhibited at *Sun Gazers* at The Pit, Los Angeles in 2018, *The Armory Show* in 2020, and *10 Years* at the Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton in 2021. Pecis alludes to her peer’s eco-forward practice in the “SAVE THE PLANET” imagery on the top two shelves, where Rubenstein’s artistic influences feature in the depicted Peter Saul drawing and Emily Carr reference. Pecis further infuses the composition with her own art historical citations, as seen in her direct nod to one of her greatest inspirations, Matthew Wong, in the framed landscape picture on the second shelf. In this “painting-within-a-painting,” the artist incorporates her love for knick-knacks in the pencil depicted with her friend’s name, embodying how “I get to try out different marks and be a tourist in other people’s paintings,” in her words, “while staying as true to my own vocabulary of mark-making.”^{iv,v}



Matthew Wong, *Mood Room*, 2018. Private Collection (Sold Phillips, New York, July 2020). Artwork: © 2022 Matthew Wong Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

“By using images as a guideline, it frees me up to take liberties, like using abstraction in particular areas when it makes sense to do so... The abstraction of space in a representational painting still thrills me to the max.” — Hilary Pecis

Pecis paints from photographs she takes of her interior subjects. While rendering certain objects with near-exacting precision, Pecis abstracts others that are difficult to discern from her source photograph, resulting in a mix of legible and indiscernible scribbles scattered throughout the composition. At upper left, for example, we find a Stanley Whitney catalogue from his 2015 *Karma Gallery show*, rendered in all-red to mimic the book's real-life counterpart. In other areas, Pecis gives fewer clues, inviting us to insert our own narratives into the composition. Encapsulating the heart of Pecis' painterly practice, this teetering sensibility between representation and abstraction pervades throughout the present work's myriad suggested texts. The artist's concerns lie not so much in legibility as they do in embodiment, privileging an engagement with the painterly process and her fascination in exploring the formal aspects of text and language, such as font, alignment, and visual character. "There are a few fundamentals that I find really interesting in paintings, like line and color," she explained. "Text makes for a nice natural line. There's a beautiful way that the strokes appear."^{vi}



For Pecis, eschewing the presence of the human figure in her compositions allows objects to interact as figures themselves. "I love when there's text on things I'm [painting] because it can anthropomorphize objects. It lends character," she expressed.^{vii} This "anthropomorphization" is not about humanizing the object in relation to the referenced name on the book, but about the object carrying its own presence as she translates its physical being onto canvas—as one would in painting a human portrait. As Nancy Gamboa observed, "Each object and pattern carries its own topography, layered more or less with a conviction and a looseness that is amplified in the larger canvases."^{viii} In the last few years, the artist's shift towards working on a larger scale allowed her

to both pack further visual information into her compositions—resulting in more ambitious works as *Adrienne's Bookshelf*—and invite viewers into the space of her painted canvases, thereby filling the absence of a rendered human figure. "I like making the bigger paintings because, as a viewer, they have more of an entry point, like you can [physically] relate more to the scale," as she said. "And it's just more fun."^{ix}

ⁱ Nancy Gamboa, "Hilary Pecis Captures the Layers of Los Angeles's Landscape," *Cultured Magazine*, June 23, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ "James English Leary, Milena Muzquiz, Hilary Pecis, Ryan Steadman, Johannes VanDerBeek," Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton, press release, 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hilary Pecis, quoted in Gwynned Vitello, "Hilary Pecis: The Humble is Whole," *Juxtapoz Magazine*, June 14, 2021, [online](#).

^{iv} Hilary Pecis, quoted in Karen Rosenberg, "Artist Hilary Pecis on Traveling Remotely Through Painting," *Artful*, June 3, 2020, [online](#).

^v Hilary Pecis, quoted in Gwynned Vitello, "Hilary Pecis: The Humble is Whole," *Juxtapoz Magazine*, June 14, 2021, [online](#).

^{vi} Hilary Pecis, quoted in Chloë Ashby, "Painting by Letters: The Power of Words within Art," *Elephant*, March 21, 2022, [online](#).

^{vii} *Ibid.*

^{viii} Nancy Gamboa, "Hilary Pecis Captures the Layers of Los Angeles's Landscape," *Cultured Magazine*, June 23, 2021, [online](#).

^{ix} Hilary Pecis, quoted in Julie Smith Schneider, "Art in Focus Spotlight: Hilary Pecis," *The Center Magazine* [by Rockefeller Center, New York], July 7, 2021, [online](#).

Provenance

Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

East Hampton, Halsey McKay Gallery, *James English Leary, Milena Muzquiz, Hilary Pecis, Ryan Steadman, Johannes VanDerBeek*, July 21–August 23, 2020

Literature

Enuma Okoro, "Kanye West and the emotional power of home," *Financial Times*, September 11, 2021, [online](#) (illustrated)

Chloë Ashby, "Painting by Letters: The Power of Words within Art," *Elephant*, March 21, 2022, [online](#) (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



5

Lisa Yuskavage

Northview (Impressionist Jacket)

signed, titled and dated "Yuskavage © 2000
"Northview (Impressionist Jacket)" on the reverse
oil on linen
70 1/8 x 40 1/2 in. (178.1 x 102.9 cm)
Painted in 2000.

Estimate

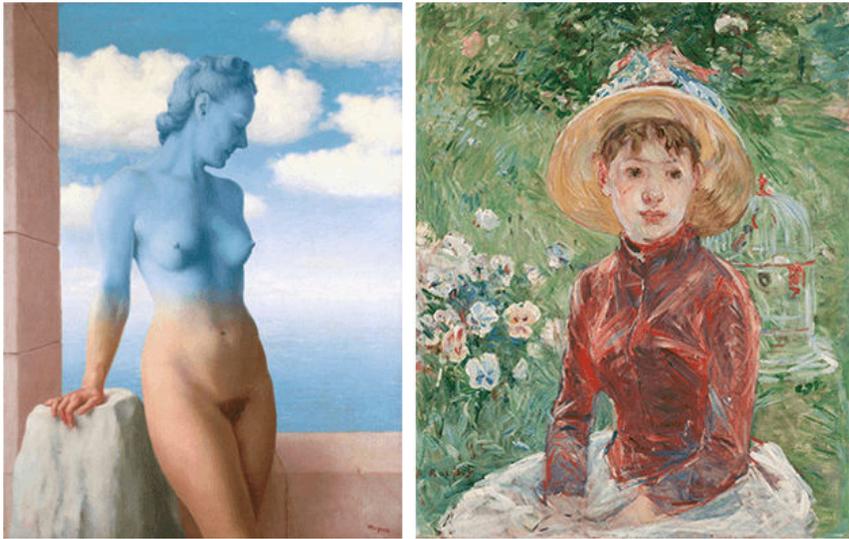
\$700,000 — 1,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Making a painting is being alone in a room with a very sensuous object, and making a painting is a very sensuous experience." —Lisa Yuskavage

Painted in 2000, *Northview (Impressionist Jacket)* is a paramount example of Lisa Yuskavage's acclaimed practice that reimagines the canonical trope of the female nude. Belonging to her eponymous series of six paintings that set her figures in a lavish Northview mansion in Westchester, New York, the present work marks the pivotal moment when the artist first began incorporating richly detailed environments into her compositions, signaling the shift to her mature practice. Here, a semi-nude woman looks out at a glowing dusk sky from an extravagant boudoir. Donning an Impressionist-era jacket as that seen in Berthe Morisot's *Young Girl on the Grass*, *The Red Bodice*, the figure chromatically blends with her environment and stands in three-quarter view, recalling René Magritte's nude in *La Magie Noir*. At once empathetic and jarring, intimate and sexualized, the present work showcases Yuskavage's painterly dexterity in "moving between the triad of the female body, the gaze, and the female soul."ⁱ



[left] René Magritte, *La Magie Noir (Black Magic)*, 1945. Musée d'Art Moderne, Brussels. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Berthe Morisot, *Young Girl on the Grass, The Red Bodice (Mademoiselle Isabelle Lambert)*, 1885. Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen

"The [Northview] series marks the first time the artist has dealt with a fully articulated interior instead of a fantasy or neutral space. In addition to the art-

historical references, other layers of meaning emerge." —Carey Lovelace

Exhibited at the artist's solo show at Marianne Boesky, New York in 2001, *Northview (Impressionist Jacket)* and its series reflect an evolution in Yuskavage's subject matter and technique that mark the beginnings of her mature practice. Departing from the surreal spaces inhabited by her earlier subjects of enormous-breasted women that were infused with overt vulgarity, the artist moved towards "a more traditional realism, with a hint of poignancy and even, here and there, of narrative emotional content," as Carey Lovelace explained.ⁱⁱ This shift came in part by Yuskavage's turn to using life-based models, which began several years earlier for her famous series inspired by the imagery in *Penthouse* magazine. Around the time of the present work's creation, the artist started using her childhood friend Kathy as a live model and, for her *Northview* paintings, staged her in an opulent boudoir at an acquaintance's mansion. Compared to the more cartoony countenances seen in other examples in the series, *Northview (Impressionist Jacket)* stands out for Yuskavage's highly realistic rendering of the figure, capturing "an accomplished, almost academic realism" and "sacrificing much of her [previous] work's psychological and formal bluntness," as Roberta Smith observed.ⁱⁱⁱ



Edward Hopper, *Eleven A.M.*, 1926. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Image: © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Heirs of Josephine Hopper / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

By placing her nudes in this lavishly decorated interior, the *Northview* series manifests Yuskavage's deep engagement with the art historical canon. Recalling the deep inspiration the artist found in the female subjects of Peter Paul Rubens, Giovanni Bellini, and Edgar Degas, the voluptuous figure in the present work is evocative of the surreal uncanny with which John Currin—a close friend and former Yale classmate of the artist—imbues his sexualized figures.^{iv} Yet ultimately, the pensiveness of Yuskavage's figure and her situation in an interior environment bears the introspective mood of Edward Hopper's women. Here, the 19th century aesthetic of the boudoir conjures the scenes of Édouard Vuillard, a profound influence on the artist's practice who remains a continuous reference in her recent work. In *Northview (Impressionist Jacket)*, the plush sofa and book-lined wall recall those seen in myriad compositions by the French artist, such as *Marguerite Chapin in Her Apartment With her Dog*, 1910.



Édouard Vuillard, *Marguerite Chapin in Her Apartment with Her Dog*, 1910. Fitzwilliam Museum,

Cambridge. Image: © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge / Art Resource, NY

"Yuskavage has cultivated a terrain of rich and disturbing ambiguities, making works that can be both tender and astoundingly harsh. She has been aided in this endeavor by her devotion to a second triad, that of light, color and flesh as they can be conveyed by the plasticity of oil paint." —Roberta Smith

Yuskavage found the *Northview* space as "intensely feminine" as the women she depicts, which stimulated her fascination with the interaction between her nude subject and the space she inhabits.^v The paintings comprising the series solidified the artist's unique painterly language, not just by incorporating interiors, but by further embodying "her first body of work where the environmental elements were *equal* to the figures."^{vi} Yuskavage materializes this here by rendering flesh, color and light all in pink, a choice that further heightens the notion of femininity pervading the composition. By encouraging viewers to see "surface as skin, skin as light, color as both, and everything as paint," she signals to the objectification of the female nude in the patriarchal art historical canon.^{vii} Yet the "mood of reflective domesticity" and insistent femininity that characterizes the present work—and her oeuvre hereon after—ultimately blur the lines between subverting the male gaze and illuminating the private corners of the female mind. In Roberta Smith's view, "Yuskavage has approached [her work] from both the outside and the inside: her distortions exaggerate the way women are objectified both by society and by themselves. But her real subject is, I think, the inside, the female soul and psyche."^{viii}

ⁱ Roberta Smith, "A Painter Who Loads the Gun and Lets the Viewer Fire It," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2001, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Carey Lovelace, "Lisa Yuskavage: Fleshed Out," *Art in America*, July 2001, p. 82.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roberta Smith, "A Painter Who Loads the Gun and Lets the Viewer Fire It," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2001, [online](#).

^{iv} Tamara Jenkins, "Holy Innocents," in Deborah Aaronson, ed., *Lisa Yuskavage: Small Paintings, 1993-2004*, New York, 2004, pp. 14-15.

^v Thomas Gebremedhin, "Lisa Yuskavage's Art Continues to Defy Characterization," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 6, 2018, [online](#).

^{vi} Lisa Yuskavage et al., "'Studies for 'Northview' Series," *Lisa Yuskavage*, artist website, 2018, [online](#).

^{vii} Roberta Smith, "A Painter Who Loads the Gun and Lets the Viewer Fire It," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2001, [online](#).

^{viii} *Ibid.*

Lisa Yuskavage

Provenance

Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York
Private Collection, United States
Phillips de Pury & Company, New York, May 12, 2011, lot 16
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Marianne Boesky Gallery, *Lisa Yuskavage*, January 6–February 3, 2001
Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, *Lisa Yuskavage*, May 17–August 26, 2001
New York, C&M Arts, *Naked Since 1950*, October 11–December 8, 2001, no. 38, n.p. (illustrated)

Literature

Carey Lovelace, "Lisa Yuskavage: Fleshed Out," *Art in America*, July 2001, p. 85 (illustrated, p. 84)
Jonathan Gilmore, "Lisa Yuskavage," *Tema Celeste*, no. 84, 2001, p. 94 (illustrated)
Eliza Williams, ed., *Zoo 09*, London, 2001, p. 117 (illustrated)
Isabel Venero, ed., *Curve: The Female Nude Now*, New York, 2003, p. 206 (illustrated, p. 207; detail illustrated, p. 17)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN
PRIVATE COLLECTION

6

Mark Rothko

Untitled

signed and dated "MARK ROTHKO 1959" on the
reverse

oil on paper mounted on Masonite

38 x 24 7/8 in. (96.5 x 63.2 cm)

Executed in 1959.

The following work is being considered for inclusion in
the forthcoming Mark Rothko Online Resource and
Catalogue Raisonné of works on paper, compiled by
the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Estimate

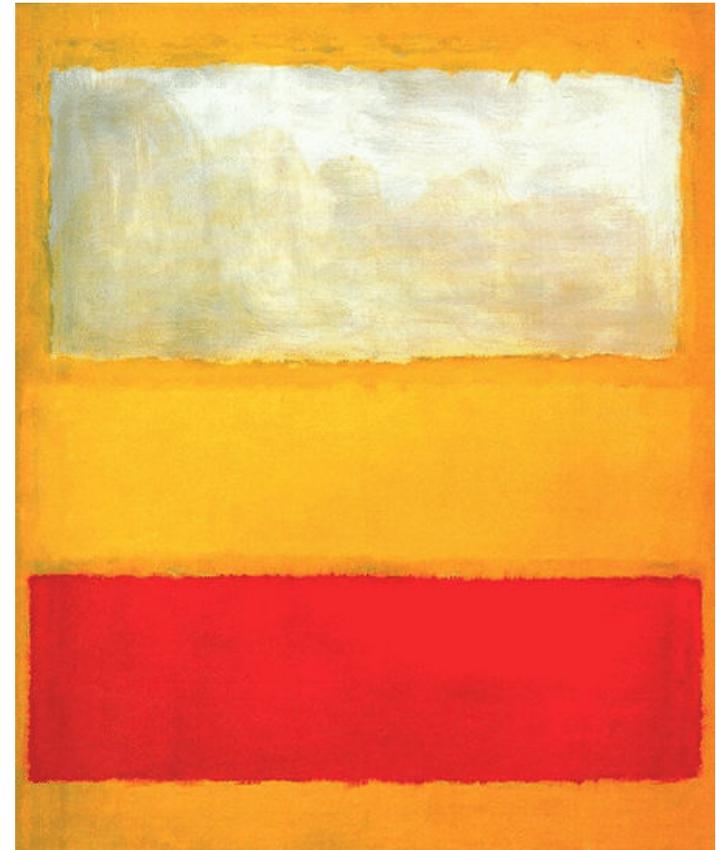
\$6,000,000 — 8,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Red, yellow, orange—aren't those the colors of an inferno?" —Mark Rothko

Maintaining the signature palette of Mark Rothko's first mature paintings, the present work from 1959 sustains the lineage of the artist's most celebrated works. Here, a scorching red field radiates between a glowing orange band and lustrous yellow passage, the quiet intensity conjuring his statement that he "wanted a presence, so when you turned your back to the painting, you would feel that presence the way you feel the sun on your back."ⁱ Showcasing the chromatic and structural ethereality Rothko achieved in the 1950s, *Untitled* manifests the tighter shape of his feather-edged rectangles by the end of the decade. The present work arrives at auction at a critical moment in the artist's scholarship, with a major retrospective of Rothko's paintings on paper slated for November 2023 to September 2024 at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design, Oslo.



Mark Rothko, *No. 13 (White, Red on Yellow)*, 1958. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Artwork: © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"The year 1959 presents a particularly interesting case...[The works on paper] are, to the best of our knowledge, the only paintings he produced of any kind during this time, save for the murals and related studies. Without doubt, they are among his very greatest works." —Christopher Rothko

Untitled is among a discrete group of compositions that defied the artist's shift to a dramatically darkened palette marked by the Seagram mural commission. The more subdued palette would dominate his painterly oeuvre from the late 1950s through the rest of career. Displaying the brighter chromaticism of his classic multiforms from the early to mid-1950s, the present work

manifests how Rothko still pursued the iconic high-keyed pigments of his signature color fields in his paintings on paper. Christopher Rothko revealed the respite Rothko found at this time with works such as *Untitled*. “In 1959, paper offers my father a different sense of scale, and a renewed sense of intimacy in his approach to the viewer...[These] papers represent a huge exhalation in the context of the mass and single-mindedness of the Seagram murals. Through the modest size of these works on paper, Rothko was redressing the measure of man—his viewer but first and foremost himself. Seeking to give the observer the same experience he had when creating the painting, he returned to a scale that was personal rather than institutional. The quiet beauty and calm that emanates from these works was no doubt hard-won in the white-hot atmosphere of passion and frustration that was the Seagram project.”ⁱⁱ



Mark Rothko, *Black on Maroon (Seagram Building Series)*, 1959. Tate, London. Image: © Tate, London /

Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

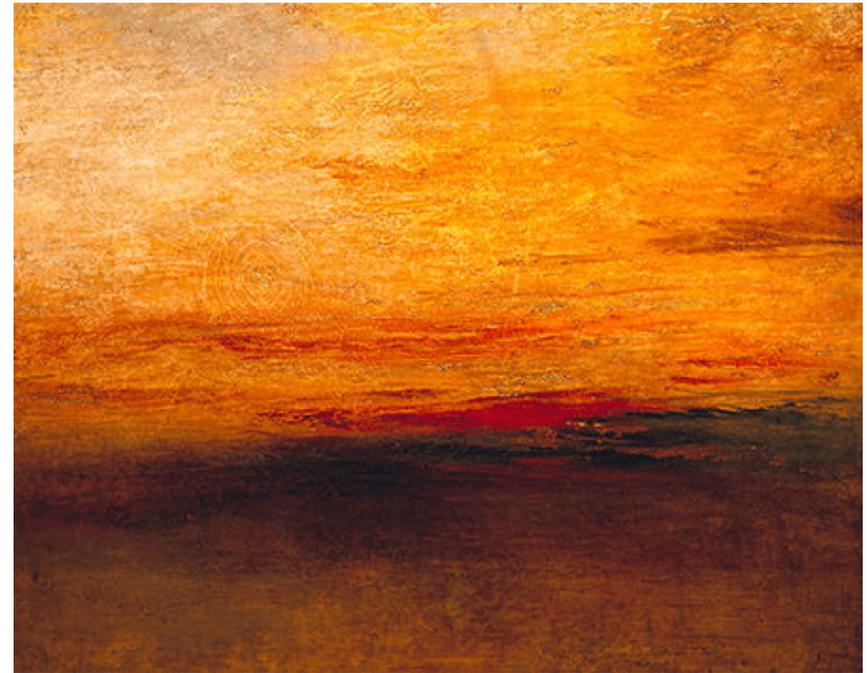
Indeed for Rothko, the bright could be as menacing as the dark. When a collector once asked the artist for “a happy painting, a red and yellow and orange painting, not a sad painting,” Rothko countered, “Red, yellow, orange—aren’t those the colors of an inferno?”ⁱⁱⁱ This Dionysian spirit is epitomized in *Untitled* through the fiery intensity engendered by the red field set against the lighter passages. Red was the paramount color of Rothko’s art, as Diane Waldman observed: “No other color appears so insistently in his oeuvre from the time of the multiforms. It dominates Rothko’s work of the fifties and sixties and, in fact, was the color of his last painting. Red is so potent optically that it overwhelms or obliterates other hues unless it is diluted or controlled by juxtaposing it, as Mondrian did, with equally strong colors, such as black and white, or the other primaries yellow and blue...altering its tonality according to the emotion he wishes to express. Perhaps Rothko was so drawn to red because of its powerful and basic associations: it is identified with the elements and ritual—with fire and with blood—and thus with life, death and the spirit.”^{iv}

"I'm interested only in expressing basic human emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom and so on...And if you, as you say, are moved only by their color relationships, then you miss the point." —Mark Rothko



Henri Matisse, *The Red Studio*, 1911. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Deeply influenced by Greek theater, with its themes of universal truths and emotion, Rothko championed color as the vehicle to communicate the deepest vulnerabilities of the human condition. His conviction in the sublime power of art “belongs very much in the tradition of metaphysicians of painting as Mondrian, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, for whom color was key to the realm of the spirit,” as Waldman noted. “However Rothko’s commitment to the expression of the spiritual rather than the physical was inspired not by their aesthetic theories, but by the evidence of their painting.”^v It is in this vein that Rothko saw profound inspiration in Matisse’s *The Red Studio*, 1911 and the work of J.M.W. Turner, influences that reverberate in *Untitled*. As the former stirred Rothko to explore the capabilities of pure color, so Rothko stirs the viewer to feel the present work’s chromatic evocations. The composition exudes an inner glow that evokes what Rothko sought to capture from Turner’s paintings, qualities that “on the one hand seem so solid and yet on the other are ungraspable,” Christopher Rothko shared.^{vi} From the material to ethereal, inner to transcendent expression, in *Untitled* “Rothko makes the concrete sublime.”^{vii}



Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Sunset*, ca. 1830-35. Tate, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY

"It was almost certainly his experience with the paradoxical nature of paper—absorbing and reflecting at the same time—that set him on his course to the great clearing away that his life’s work represents." —Dore Ashton

That Rothko’s paintings on paper from this period reveal a greater chromatic range than his contemporaneous canvases testify to their significance in the broader picture of his practice. Foreshadowing the artist’s decisive return to painting on paper in the 1960s, the present work reflects his devotion to the medium after his fervent explorations during his Surrealist period in the 1940s. The unique material properties of paper absorbed pigments with greater sensitivity than the canvas surface, which bolstered his investigations on capturing the essence of color and light for aesthetic transcendence. This is particularly evinced in the lower field of *Untitled*, in which Rothko scumbled the yellow ground with a thin, tinted layer of paint to evoke a translucent effect, capturing Bonnie Clearwater’s observation that such works appear “as if Rothko had peeled away the layers of his paintings in an attempt to unravel his own mystery and expose the core of his

art.^{viii}**Provenance**

Galerie D. Benador (Jacques Benador), Geneva
 Private Collection, Europe
 Christie's, New York, November 20, 1996, lot 17
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

ⁱ Mark Rothko, quoted by Murray Israel in James E. B. Breslin, *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, Chicago, 1993, p. 275.

ⁱⁱ Christopher Rothko, *Mark Rothko: From the Inside Out*, New Haven, 2015, p. 222.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mark Rothko, quoted in Hilarie M. Sheets, "Mark Rothko's Dark Palette Illuminated," *The New York Times*, November 2, 2016, [online](#).

^{iv} Diane Waldman, *Mark Rothko, 1903-1970: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, pp. 57-58.

^v *Ibid.*, p. 58.

^{vi} Christopher Rothko, "This man Turner, he learnt a lot from me," *Tate Etc.*, no. 51, Spring 2021, [online](#).

^{vii} Diane Waldman, *Mark Rothko, 1903-1970: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, p. 59.

^{viii} Bonnie Clearwater, *Mark Rothko: Works on Paper*, exh. cat., American Federation of Arts, New York, p. 39.

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN
PRIVATE COLLECTION

7

Yves Klein

Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)

pigment and synthetic resin on linen mounted on
board

30 5/8 x 21 7/8 in. (77.8 x 55.6 cm)

Executed in 1957, this work is registered in the Yves
Klein Archives under the number IKB 267 and is
accompanied by a certificate of authenticity signed by
Rotraut Klein Moquay.

Estimate

\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D401T5hF2I0&feature=emb_logo

"The real blue was inside, the blue of the profundity of space, the blue of my kingdom, of our kingdom!...the materialization of blue, the colored space that cannot be seen but which we impregnate ourselves with." —Yves Klein

Emerging from the seminal year of 1957 when Yves Klein inaugurated his self-proclaimed "Epoque bleue," the present work belongs to the artist's historic series of *Monochrome bleu* paintings that laid the foundation of his legendary career.ⁱ Showcasing the signature pigment that became tantamount to the artist's life and oeuvre, *Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)* immerses the viewer into a chromatic expanse of International Klein Blue (IKB). Yielding to a highly textured surface, softly raised ridges catch light as smoother recessions glow like a fluorescent blue sea, manifesting the dynamic incandescence that his color could achieve through his painterly experimentations with surface texture. Teetering between the material and immaterial, the present work testifies to the "idea of absolute unity in perfect serenity" that Klein captured in his legendary investigations with the monochrome which transformed the post-war European landscape.ⁱⁱ



Yves Klein at his exhibition *Yves Klein: Proposte monochrome, epoca blu* at the Galleria Apollinaire, Milan, 1957. Image and Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Among the earliest of nearly 200 blue monochrome paintings Klein created in his lifetime, *Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)* was conceived in the year Klein famously trademarked his signature hue and debuted this revolutionary body of work to the public at the Galleria Apollinaire, Milan. Radically departing from the various colored monochromes shown at his first two solo shows in 1955 and 1956, Klein presented 11 IKB monochromes of the same size, vertical orientation, and visual aesthetic at the Milan show, marking the beginning of the artist's paradigm-shifting Blue Period. The present work maintains the classic dimensions and richly textured surface of the canvases displayed at this groundbreaking exhibition, one of which was notably purchased by Lucio Fontana. Indeed, it perfectly embodies Pierre Restany's now famous appreciation of the early IKB monochromes from 1957: "Blue dominates, reigns, lives. It is the Blue-King of the most definitive of surmounted frontiers, the Blue of the frescoes of Assisi. This full void, this nothing which encloses Everything Possible, this supernatural asthenic silence of color which finally, beyond anecdote and formal pretext, makes the formal grandeur of a Giotto."ⁱⁱⁱ



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale - Attese*, 1962-1963. Städel Museum, Frankfurt. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Städel Museum, Frankfurt / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Fondation Lucio Fontana / Artists Rights Society, New York

"This sense of the complete freedom of sensibly pure space exerted upon me such a power of attraction that I painted monochrome surfaces to see, with my own eyes to SEE, what was visible in the absolute." —Yves Klein

Indeed, it was in this pivotal year that works such as *Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)* left a profound impact on Klein's Spatialist contemporaries including Fontana and Piero Manzoni, the former even remarking that "Klein is the one who understands the problem of space with his blue

dimension...He is really abstract, one of the artists who have done something important."^{iv} Born at the commencement of the Space Age zeitgeist, the early IKB monochromes comprising the present work both informed and solidified Klein's artistic philosophies on "the conquest of space."^v In his mind, this conquest was achieved not by technological achievements to allow man-made objects, and eventually humankind, to explore outer space, but by channeling the very sensibility of this immaterial realm through a "sensibly pure space," which he equated to color. As he declared, "Through color I feel the sentiment of complete identification with space; I am truly free...To feel the soul without explanation, without vocabulary, and to represent that feeling...This is, I believe, foremost among the reasons that led me to the monochrome!"^{vi}



Piero Manzoni, *Achrome*, 1957-1958. Art Institute of Chicago. Image: © The Art Institute of Chicago, Purchased with funds provided by an anonymous donor; promised gift of private collection, 2000.309 / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

*"First there is nothing, then there is a deep nothing, then there is a blue depth."
—Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, 1943*

For Klein, blue was the color that would allow him to realize the infinite, ethereal space of the universe on canvas. The artist, whose sensibility was partially informed by his upbringing on the Mediterranean coast in Nice, found the color of the sea and sky to reflect the immeasurable dimensions of nature. Klein's pursuit of painterly transcendence began as early as 1947 at the age of nineteen when, while laying on a beach in Nice with his friends Arman and Claude Pascal, he announced, "The blue sky is my first artwork" and proceeded to sign the sky.^{vii} As Hannah Weitemeier observed, "With this famous symbolic gesture of signing the sky, Klein had foreseen, as in a reverie, the thrust of his art from that time onwards—a quest to reach the far side of the infinite."^{viii} Having found affirmation in Bachelard's address on the imaginary beyond of the blue sky, which the artist had read in his early years, Klein eventually achieved his quest to materialize the immaterial world in works such as *Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)*. Here, the textured surface overflows to the edges of the canvas, abolishing spatial perspective and enveloping the viewer into the composition to suggest the expanse of eternity.



Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk By the Sea*, 1808-1810. Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Staatliche Museen, Berlin / Art Resource, NY

Wanting his viewers to "bathe in a cosmic sensibility" through his monochromes, Klein sought to capture the purest tone of blue that would radiate with the visual intensity and transcendent evocations he wished to convey.^{ix} Through the 1950s, Klein worked with a chemical retailer to realize a formula that would preserve the luminescence of raw blue pigment, as he found that

traditional fixatives like oil dulled the color's vitality. The result was the brilliant ultramarine seen here—his singular palette of International Klein Blue, created by suspending blue pigment in synthetic resin. With its piercing glow and mystical energy, the present work reflects Klein's conviction that the extrasensorial power of IKB would theoretically dematerialize the canvas, allowing the beholder to "impregnate himself with color and color [to] impregnate itself into him," and thus transcend reality by delving into an infinite spiritual realm.^x



Epitomizing Klein's now legendary notion of "impregnation," the present work materializes the artist's aim to entwine the viewer and the mystical realm of color into a unified essence with its weave-like surface. *Monochrome bleu sans titre (IKB 267)*, along with its eponymous series, marks the first and purest material expression of Klein's program that chartered the course of his all-too-brief yet revolutionary career. Beyond textured canvases, Klein would go on to embark on various explorations with his newly crafted medium of IKB, from his series of sponge works to planetary reliefs, folding screens to *Anthropométries*. Indeed the artist's IKB monochromes would form the cornerstone, not only of his entire oeuvre which he dubbed "The Monochrome Adventure," but ultimately his own self-identification as "Yves le Monochrome." Through this lens, the present work encapsulates Klein's poetic words: "My paintings are the ashes of my art. It is the monochrome that make me the most intoxicated...I do believe that it is only in the monochrome that I truly live the pictorial life, the painterly life of which I have dreamed."^{xi}

ⁱ Yves Klein, quoted in Jacques Caumont and Jennifer Gough-Cooper, eds., *Yves Klein, 1928 - 1962, Selected Writings*, exh. cat., Tate, London, 1974, p. 31.

ⁱⁱ Yves Klein, quoted in *Yves Peintures*, exh. cat., Club des Solitaires, Paris, 1955, p. 33.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pierre Restany, quoted in Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 1994, p. 81.

Yves Klein

^{iv} Lucio Fontana, quoted in Tommaso Trini, “The last interview given by Fontana,” in *Lucio Fontana*, exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1988, p. 34.

^v Yves Klein, trans. Klaus Ottmann, *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves*, New York, 2007, p. 75.

^{vi} Yves Klein, “L’aventure monochrome” [1958], quoted in *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d’art moderne, Paris, 1983, p. 171.

^{vii} Yves Klein, quoted by Arman in Thomas McEvilley, “Yves Klein: Conquistador of the Void,” in *Yves Klein 1928-1962: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Institute for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, 1982, p. 46.

^{viii} Hannah Weitemeier, *Yves Klein, 1928-1962: Internacional Klein Blue*, trans. Carmen Sánchez Rodríguez, Cologne, 2001, p. 8.

^{ix} Yves Klein, quoted in Klaus Ottmann, *Yves Klein by Himself: His Life and Thought*, Paris, 2010, p. 53.

^x Yves Klein, quoted in Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 1994, p. 66.

^{xi} Yves Klein, trans. Klaus Ottmann, *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves*, New York, 2007, p. 143.

Provenance

Gallery One (Victor Musgrave), London

Illa & Josef Kodicek, London (acquired from the above circa 1960)

The Kodicek Collection of Modern Pictures, Christie's, London, June 23, 1993, lot 329

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Gallery One, *Yves Klein*, 1960

Cologne, Museum Ludwig (no. 22, p. 283, illustrated, p. 86); London, Hayward Gallery (no. 22, p. 282, illustrated, p. 86); Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (no. 24, p. 283, illustrated, p. 86; erroneously numbered as no. 22, p. 86), *Yves Klein*, November 8, 1994–August 29, 1995

Literature

Matthias Koddenberg, ed., *Yves Klein: in/out studio*, Dortmund, 2016, p. 300 (illustrated, p. 85)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT NEW YORK
COLLECTION

8

Shara Hughes

The Not Dark Dark Spots

signed and inscribed "Shara Hughes Greenpoint Ave"
on the stretcher; signed, titled, inscribed and dated
"SHARA HUGHES 2017 "The Not Not Dark Spots" NYC"
on the reverse

oil and dye on canvas

68 x 60 in. (172.7 x 152.4 cm)

Executed in 2017.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"[My paintings] start from a place of playfulness. It's usually about the material and color in the beginning, then they kind of evolve into psychedelic type spaces that almost seem to occupy your mind more than a real space." —Shara Hughes

Painted in 2017, Shara Hughes' *The Not Dark Dark Spots* is a spectacle of the artist's imaginary landscapes that have brought her international recognition. Monumental plant forms dominate the foreground, guiding the viewer's eye into a fantastical vista where sea and sky, night and day, the natural world and the manmade one all coexist in a singular panorama. Rendered with a lush palette reminiscent of Paul Gauguin's Tahitian vignettes, Hughes' versatile brushwork suggests a cloudy sky, calm waters, and twinkling city lights on a horizon. A paramount example of the artist's invented dreamscapes, the present work featured in her first major institutional survey at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis from 2021 to 2022.



Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night Over the Rhône River*, 1888. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource

"Pouring, splashing, spraying, dripping, churning or scraping—these are

innumerable physical actions Hughes might use as she negotiates form through paint." —Mia Locks

Hughes' landscapes can be more accurately defined as mindscapes, as they derive purely from her memory and imagination. A departure from her earlier interior scenes which were riddled with symbolic narrative, the landscape paintings, begun in 2014, mark the pivotal juncture when her practice shifted from programmatic to intuitive. In her spontaneous approach, Hughes develops her landscapes "backwards"—contrary to artists such as Cecily Brown who mold the figurative into the abstract, Hughes relies on abstraction as her starting point to *find* representation. As such, Hughes' subject in *The Not Dark Dark Spots* is not nature, but rather the painterly forms themselves.



[left] Milton Avery, *Dunes and Sea II*, 1960. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Image: © Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Edvard Munch, *Moonlight*, 1895. The National Gallery, Oslo. Image: © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 The Munch Museum / The Munch-Ellingsen Group / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"I wondered how I could take something that is seemingly so known and make it mine, while still getting all the satisfaction of painting, and the history of painting, in one." —Shara Hughes

Hughes' only "source material" is the work of other artists. In the present work, we see a nod to Milton Avery in the flat coastline and echoes of Edvard Munch's moody landscapes. Yet despite the myriad art historical influences evident in *The Not Dark Dark Spots*, Hughes' artistic choices ultimately derive from her unique painterly sensibility. The work's vertical orientation, for example, is a deliberate choice to guide the viewer through the painting. As she explained, "[My paintings] are different from a panorama-like landscape that suggests it keeps going beyond the edges of the picture. I'm conscious of the vertical format that I choose for my paintings and of making sure that

the viewer is more or less aware that I'm painting it this way for a reason, as in 'This is where you enter and this is where you escape.'ⁱ



"All landscapes are constantly changing, whether it's the time of day or the temperature or the weather patterns... The constant state of change creates so much possibility." —Shara Hughes

In the present work, inlaid strokes fill the spaces between broader swathes of paint, engendering a sense of time and space collapsing in on themselves—a signature quality of Hughes' oeuvre. Here, it is unclear where the sky ends and the sea begins, nor whether the scene depicts a sunrise or sunset, moonrise or moonfall. By conflating nature's various elements and shifts into one composition, the present work manifests how Hughes employs the landscape as a device to capture the inner world. As she expressed, "I think that nature reflects emotions in so many ways. Beauty, pain, peace, sadness can all be seen in one day."ⁱⁱ

Cut from the Archives

Video: <https://youtu.be/FIkExxQ1qA>

ⁱ Shara Hughes, quoted in Ian Alteveer, "Shara Hughes in Conversation," *Shara Hughes / Landscapes*, New York, 2019, p. 17.

ⁱⁱ Shara Hughes quoted in Emily Steer, "Shara Hughes Uses Painting to Reflect the Turbulent Human Mind," *Elephant*, March 16, 2020.

Provenance

Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2017

Exhibited

Katonah Museum of Art, *LandEscape: New Visions of the Landscape in the Early 20th and 21st Centuries*, March 17–June 16, 2019

Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, *Shara Hughes: On Edge*, September 3, 2021–February 27, 2022

Literature

Shara Hughes, *Shara Hughes: Landscapes*, New York, 2019, p. 74 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM THE MAYERSON FAMILY
COLLECTION

9

Helen Frankenthaler

Blue Dance

signed "Frankenthaler" lower right
oil on canvas
49 x 62 3/8 in. (124.5 x 158.4 cm)
Painted in 1963.

Estimate

\$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"The painter makes something magical, spatial, and alive on a surface that is flat and with materials that are inert. That magic is what makes paintings unique and necessary." —Helen Frankenthaler

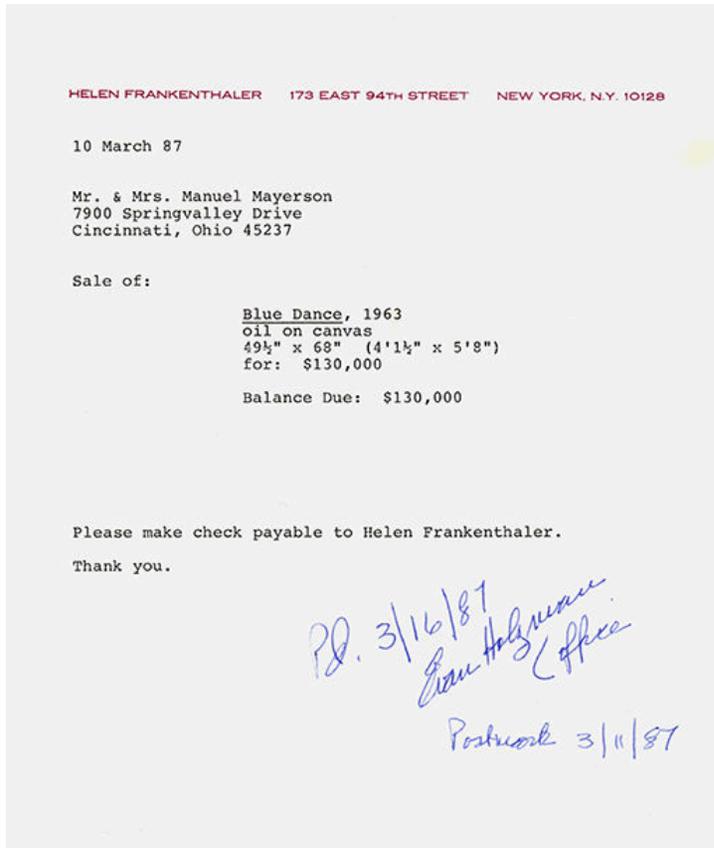
Painted in 1963, Helen Frankenthaler's *Blue Dance* marks the seminal moment in the artist's career when she established the painterly vocabulary that came to define her celebrated oeuvre. Here, dynamic passages of blue interplay with red, plum, and yellow, evoking a gently descending firework. Bridging two pivotal chapters of Frankenthaler's practice, *Blue Dance* showcases the groundbreaking soak-stain technique that the artist pioneered in the 1950s and the terrains of pure color that dominated her canvases beginning in the early 1960s. Arriving to auction for the first time, this exceptional work emerges from the Mayerson Family Collection where it has resided since its acquisition from the artist in 1987.



Helen Frankenthaler in 1964. Photograph by Alexander Liberman / Courtesy the Getty Research Institute © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2000.R.19). Artwork: © 2022 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

A passionate collector of Abstract Expressionist art, Rhoda Mayerson was first introduced to Frankenthaler in New York City in 1987 through art advisor Cindy Goodman and Frankenthaler's assistant Ed Youkilis. In October of the previous year, Goodman had informed Mayerson about four available paintings by the artist created in the early 1960s—including the present work and *Mountain Pool*, 1963, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, New York—noting that “these paintings are from her most desirable period to date...[they are] beautiful.”¹ In March 1987, Mayerson visited the artist at her studio and purchased *Blue Dance* directly from Frankenthaler, which until now has remained in the esteemed Mayerson Family collection of works by post-war American masters

such as Mark Rothko, Josef Albers, Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.



Invoice of the present work from the artist's studio to Rhoda Mayerson.

By the time Frankenthaler conceived *Blue Dance*, the artist had already become widely known for the innovative soak-stain technique developed the prior decade. After her pivotal visit to Jackson Pollock's studio and encounter with his ink works on paper, Frankenthaler conceived *Mountains and Sea* in 1952—her first work created by pouring thinned paint directly onto unprimed canvas, which would mark the dawn of the Color Field Movement and influence artists such as Kenneth

Noland and Morris Louis. Frankenthaler's unique staining method allowed the paint to soak into the canvas, rather than dry on top, resulting in an ethereal, halo-like quality around the pigment. In the present work, pools of color spontaneously bleed or nestle into the edges of one another, at once revealing the artist's controlled, mature painterly handling and her foremost concern to achieve an effortless, improvised appearance in painting that departs from "a labored, made, applied look." As she expressed, she sought to create "something that looks as if it was born all at once. As if it *happened*."ⁱⁱ



Morris Louis, *Point of Tranquility*, 1959-1960. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Artwork: © Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Whatever the medium, there is the difficult, challenge, fascination...of learning a new method: the wonderful puzzles and problems of translating new materials."
—Helen Frankenthaler

Blue Dance reveals the transformation from the gestural forms that characterized her work of the

late 1950s, to the all-over areas of color beginning in the early 1960s that would become the hallmark of her oeuvre. At this time, Frankenthaler had become dissatisfied with the sparser, more graphic paintings she was producing with her soak-stain method and sought to refine her painterly language towards greater structure, control, and clarity. “Now,” she expressed to Grace Hartigan in 1962, “I think more of the actual painting problems and when I read, see, hear what those around me are doing I often get a futile feeling; that what I’ve said is *fait accompli*...I feel a tremendous desire for a ‘new’ development...for this reason I hope to reach out from within and grow rather than give up and stop.”ⁱⁱⁱ This sentiment materialized into the “wild experiments and surprises” brewing in her studio, as she informed Hartigan in the year of the present work, when Frankenthaler began exploring with acrylic and composing her free-flowing forms with paint rather than line.^{iv} With its juxtaposed areas of lush-stained color elegantly spread and balanced across the canvas surface, *Blue Dance* embodies the artist’s mature practice towards a “total color image” that would chart the course of her legendary career.^v



Mark Rothko, *Untitled (Yellow, Red and Blue)*, 1953. Artwork: © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

While building upon the expressive focus on color espoused by her contemporaries such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Hans Hofmann, Frankenthaler forged her unique visual language within the Abstract Expressionist circle in her relentless pursuit to cultivate her own painterly sensibility. While here the sense of movement and the performative qualities of creation reflect Pollock’s influence on the artist, they are expressed through Frankenthaler’s singular vocabulary that cemented her as a leading figure of her milieu. By eschewing the dramatic brushwork of others in the movement that guided her practice in the previous decade, *Blue Dance* demonstrates the artist’s emphasis on the surface of the canvas itself, rather than deploying the

surface as a base to construct a sense of depth as her peers did. Revealing Frankenthaler's primary pictorial concerns on the harmonious interplay between form, color, and space across the flat canvas, the present work reflects the artist's practice of titling her works based on what the finished picture suggested to her. Here, blue engages with the warmer colors and negative space—which for Frankenthaler “has just as active a role as the ‘positive’ painted space”—in a chromatic waltz, a result of her vision to “let the picture lead you where it must go.”^{vi, vii}

Frankenthaler's 1963 Paintings in Institutional Collections



Canal, 1963. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



The Bay, 1963. Detroit Institute of Arts. Image: © Detroit Institute of Arts / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Blue Jay, 1963. Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio. Image: Toledo Museum of Art, Gift of The Woodward Foundation, 1977.52, Artwork: © 2022 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Mountain Pool, 1963. Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, New York. Artwork: © 2022 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Cindy Goodman to Rhoda Mayerson, October 6, 1986, unpublished letter.

ⁱⁱ Helen Frankenthaler interviewed by Arlene Jacobowitz, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Archives, unpublished transcript, May 23, 1966, p. 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Helen Frankenthaler to Grace Hartigan, Syracuse University Libraries, letter, July 4, 1962.

^{iv} Helen Frankenthaler to Grace Hartigan, Syracuse University Libraries, letter, May 20, 1963.

^v B. H. Friedman, "Towards a Total Color Image," in *Art News*, vol. 65, no. 4, Summer 1966, pp. 31-33, 67, 68.

^{vi} Helen Frankenthaler, quoted in Julia Brown, *After Mountains and Sea: Helen Frankenthaler 1956-1959*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1998, p. 41.

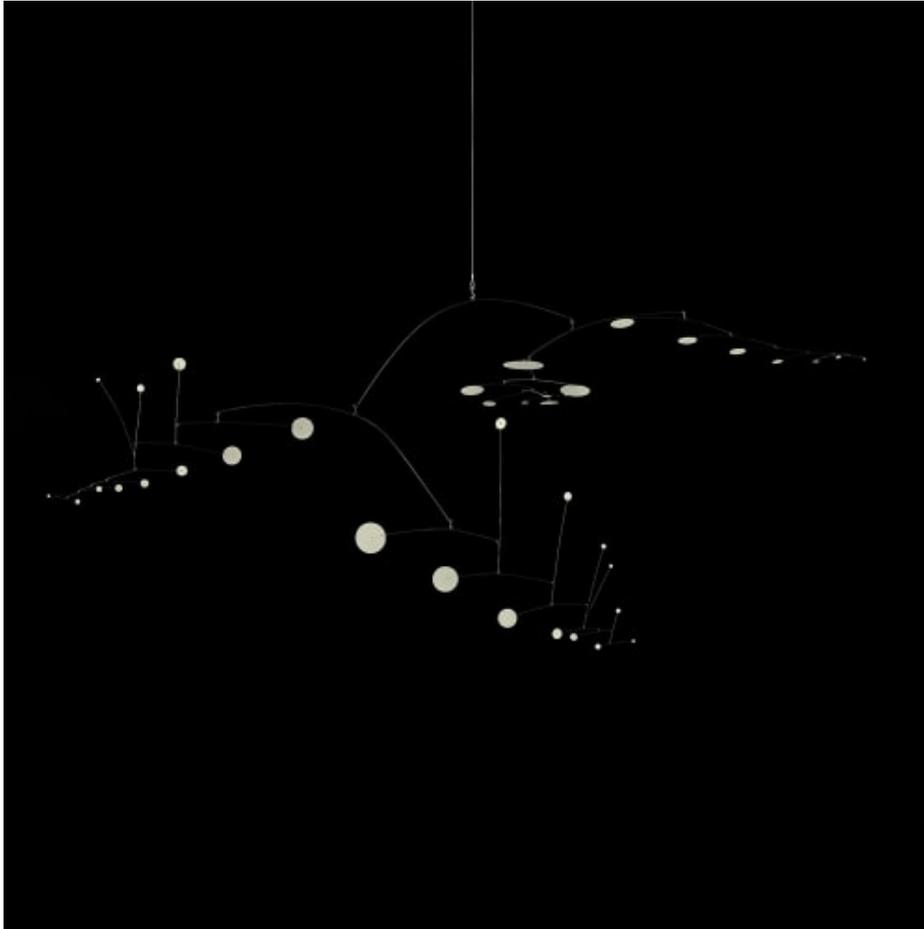
^{vii} Helen Frankenthaler, quoted in "Helen Frankenthaler, Back to the Future," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2003, [online](#).

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner in 1987

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE COLLECTOR

10

Alexander Calder

39=50

incised with the artist's monogram "CA" on one of the elements

sheet metal, wire and paint

47 x 102 x 5 in. (119.4 x 259.1 x 12.7 cm)

Executed in 1959, this work is registered in the archives of the Calder Foundation, New York, under application number A03753.

Estimate

\$10,500,000 — 14,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/J8ciOuf0HGk>

"You see nature and then you try to emulate it... The simplest forms in the universe are the sphere and the circle. I represent them by discs and then I vary them. My whole theory about art is the disparity that exists between form, masses and movement." —Alexander Calder

Executed in 1959, Alexander Calder's *39=50* is a magnificent example of the artist's unique ability to capture both the harmony and tension innate in the natural world and its forms. Part of Calder's highly coveted series of *Snow Flurry* mobiles, the work comprises 39 white discs that delicately flutter in space in a masterful triumph of balance and kinetic poetry. *39=50*'s cascading discs, like the natural forces they so poetically engage, dance before the viewer's eyes as the slightest gust of air or beam of light arouses the sculpture's infinite visual possibilities. Arriving to auction for the first time in over 25 years, *39=50* notably featured in Calder's major 1960s retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Milwaukee Art Center, Wisconsin, and Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris—the most comprehensive exhibition on the artist at the time.

Video: https://youtu.be/Qrox5s_nFgc?t=554

Calder with an early *Snow Flurry* mobile in Herbert Matter's *Works of Calder*, 1950.

Around the Globe: *Snow Flurries* and Related Works



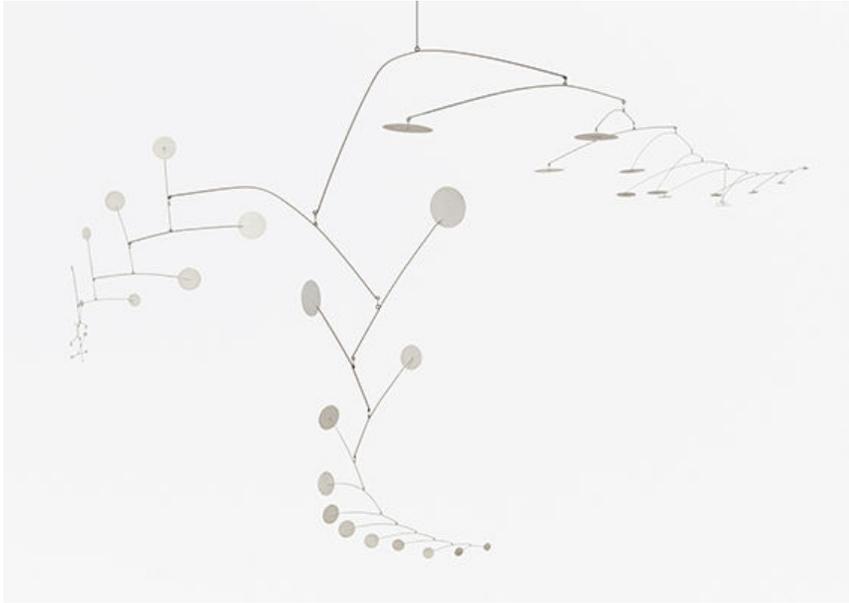
Blizzard, 1946. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Image: courtesy of Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



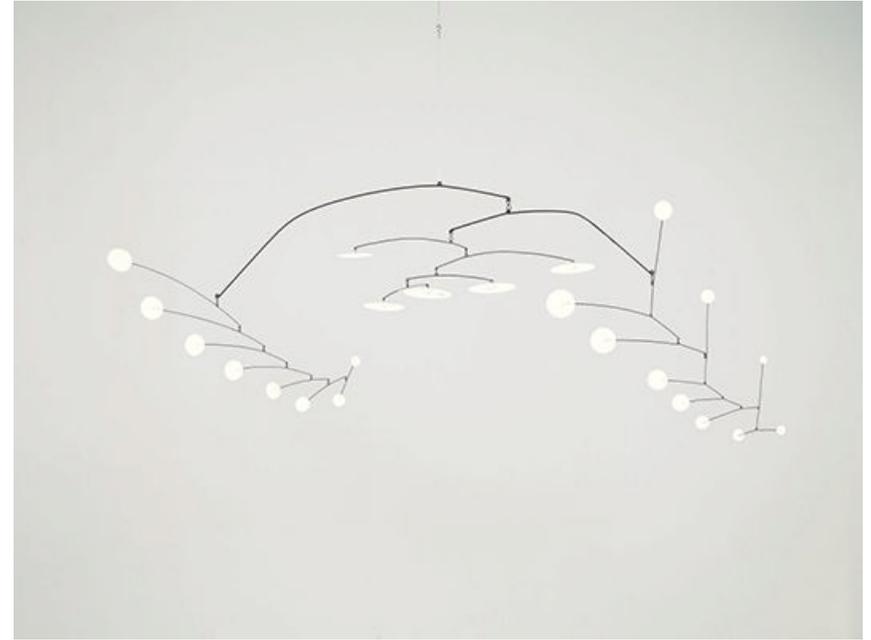
Snow Flurry I, 1948. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Snow Flurries, 1951. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Blizzard, 1950. Sprengel Museum, Hannover. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Sprengel Museum / Michael Herling / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Mantille blanche, 1968. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul. Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In the 1940s and 1950s, Calder created a series of *Snow Flurry* mobiles inspired by snowfalls at his home in Roxbury and resonant notions of ephemerality. The series of works is designated by their snow-related titles (typically *Snow Flurry* or *Blizzard*) and white-painted sheet metal discs suspended on wire, the elements decreasing in size as they move further away from the vertex of the composition. The *Snow Flurry* mobiles have established formidable institutional interest, with works residing in institutions across North America, South America, and Europe. Though the present work is distinguished from the series with its distinct title, the present work maintains Calder's "Snow Flurry" design and is part of this series.

Music of the Spheres

"Poet of movement, poet of the sky, his mobiles twist, turn, revolve—or remain immobile awaiting the wind's embrace—in a marriage of motion and unity. To ask what is a Calder is to ask what is a composition of Mozart." —Peter Bellew



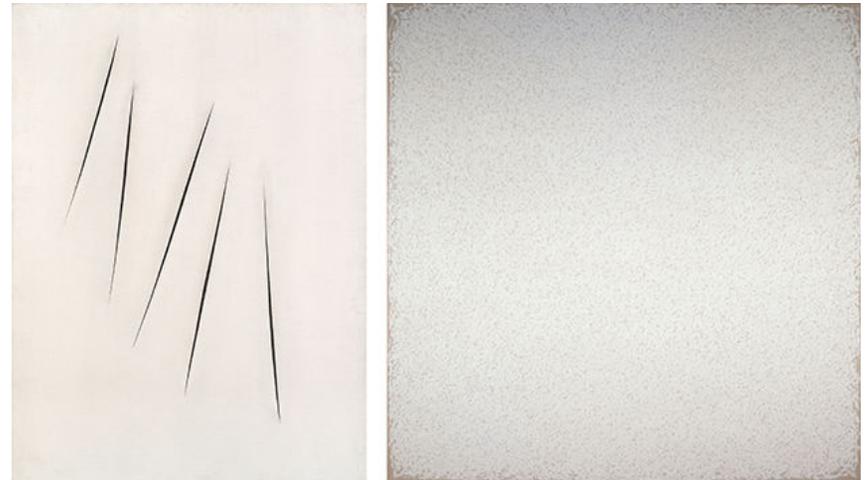
Calder with the present work (top left) at the installation of *Calder*, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1965. Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

39=50's singular title encapsulates both the number of elements and the intimate story behind the work's journey from the artist's studio. Calder's close friend, Peter Bellew, requested a mobile with

50 white elements in celebration of his wife's 50th birthday. Since the artist did not have a sculpture with 50 elements available, he gave the present work to Bellew with its current title. "To be in Calder's studio is like attending the rehearsal of a symphony orchestra," Bellew once remarked. "The air is charged with fragments of music."ⁱ *39=50* embodies this musical quality, the visual cadence evoking Calder's love of music and jazz through the meticulous arrangement of elements. The lyrical precision, lush dynamism, and organic vocabulary seen in *39=50* exquisitely conjure the concept of "music of the spheres," as the discs elegantly oscillating to the inherent rhythms of nature.

Monochrome in Motion

*"Why must art be static? You look at an abstraction, sculptured or painted, an intensely exciting arrangement of planes, spheres, nuclei, entirely without meaning. It would be perfect, but it is always still. The next step in sculpture is motion."
—Alexander Calder*



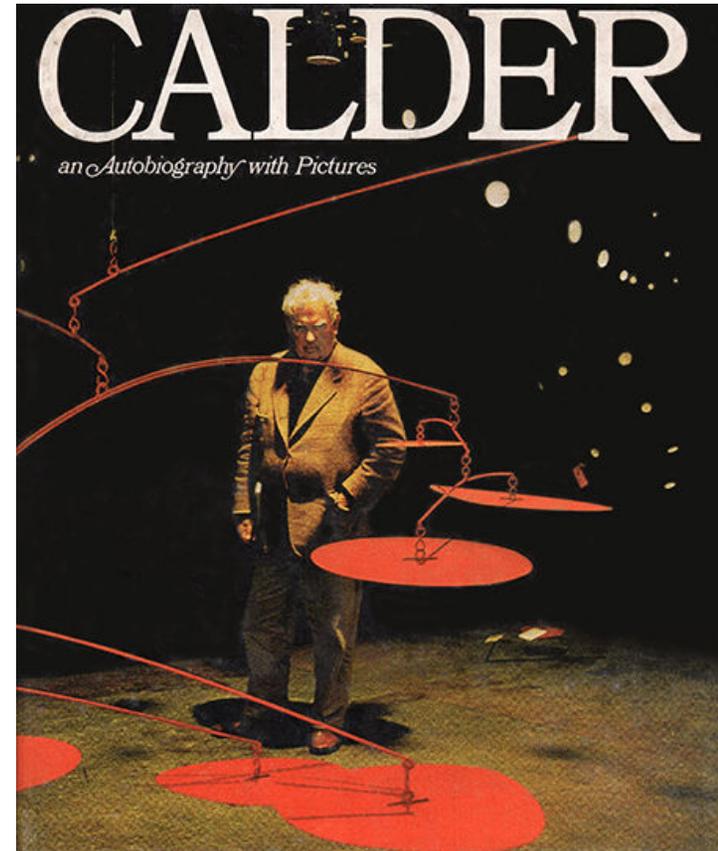
[left] Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale, Attese*, 1965. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Fondation Lucio Fontana/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Robert Ryman, *Chapter*, 1981. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Robert Ryman / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Within a lineage of "all-white" compositions by artists across the 20th century canon, the present

work is a testament to Calder's creative ingenuity that revolutionized Modernist sculpture. Notably originating with Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist Composition: *White on White*, 1918, the white monochrome has been explored by painters and sculptors as diverse as Robert Ryman, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Robert Rauschenberg, and Yayoi Kusama, among many others, to achieve the ultimate manifestation of abstraction. For Calder, deploying monochrome as seen in *39=50* was a means to channel his lifelong captivation with the forces of the universe by distilling nature to its most basic color and form through abstraction—in motion. A breathtaking expression of Calder's visionary practice, *39=50* perfectly captures the artist's famous words: "When everything goes right a mobile is a piece of poetry that dances with the joy of life and surprise."ⁱⁱ

Collector's Digest

- *39=50* is the first sculpture with Calder's "Snow Flurry" design to come to auction in a decade. In 2012, *Snow Flurry* (1950) sold for \$10,386,500 in New York—the highest price ever achieved for a hanging mobile at the time and currently within the artist's top 10 auction records to date.
- The artist with the present work graces the cover of Calder's autobiography (see below).



Cover of Alexander Calder, *Calder: An Autobiography with Pictures*, New York, 1966. Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Peter Bellew, *Calder*, Secaucus, 1969, p. 9.

ⁱⁱ Alexander Calder, quoted in Jean Lipman, *Calder's Universe*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1977, p. 261.

Alexander Calder

Provenance

Peter Bellew and Hélène Kirsova, Paris (acquired directly from the artist in 1961)

Ib Bellew, London (by descent from the above)

Christie's, London, June 24, 1993, lot 68

François Pinault, France (acquired at the above sale)

Private Collection, New York (acquired circa 2007)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (no. 165, p. 100); Milwaukee Art Center, *Alexander Calder: A Retrospective Exhibition*; then travelled as Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne (no. 182, p. 39), *Calder*, November 6, 1964–October 15, 1965

Berlin, Akademie der Künste, *Alexander Calder*, May 21–July 16, 1967, no. 28, p. 41

Munich, Haus der Kunst (no. 47, p. 55); Kunsthaus Zürich (no. 43, p. 46), *Calder*, May 10–November 2, 1975

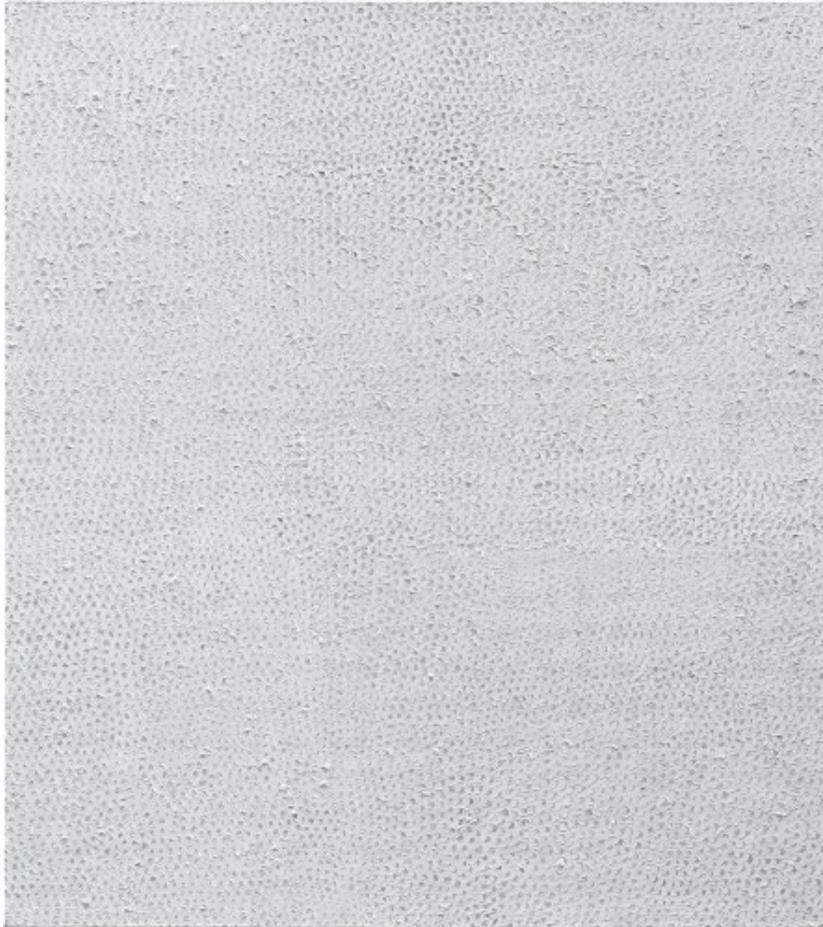
Literature

Alexander Calder, *Calder: An Autobiography with Pictures*, New York, 1977 (Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1965, installation view with the artist illustrated on the front cover)

Alexandre Calder en Touraine, exh. cat., Chateau de Tours, Tours, 2008, p. 89 (Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1965, installation view with the artist illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY OF AN AMERICAN COLLECTOR

11

Yayoi Kusama

Untitled (Nets)

signed and dated "KUSAMA 1959" on the reverse
oil on canvas

51 1/2 x 45 7/8 in. (130.8 x 116.5 cm)

Painted in 1959, this work is accompanied by a
registration card issued by Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

Estimate

\$5,000,000 — 7,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Everything—myself, others, the entire universe—would be obliterated by white nets of nothingness connecting astronomical accumulations of dots...And the spells of the dots and the mesh enfolded me in a magical curtain of mysterious, invisible power."

—Yayoi Kusama

Painted in 1959, Yayoi Kusama's *Untitled (Nets)* belongs to the artist's most coveted and renowned early series of white *Infinity Net* paintings. Teetering between the singular and infinite, the canvas surface is veiled with an intricate lattice field of small arcs and loops that appears to gently pulse before the viewer's eyes. Upon a closer look, smooth strokes yield to swells of impasto, their individual renderings infinitely multiplying with poetic gravitas. *Untitled (Nets)* marks a pivotal moment in the history of post-war abstraction, reflecting the liminal space between the painterly lush of Abstract Expressionism and the reductive aesthetic of Minimalism in which Kusama established her originality within the avant-garde. Previously in the collection of Günther Uecker, the present work featured in the first ever retrospective of the international ZERO movement, *ZERO: Internationale Künstler-Avantgarde der 50er/60er Jahre*, at the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf and Musée d'Art Moderne in Saint-Étienne between 2006 and 2007.



Günther Uecker, *Informal Structure*, 1957. Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart / Joerg P. Anders / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Evincing the profound impact of Kusama's early white *Infinity Net* paintings, many of the artist's peers went on to acquire them for their personal collections including Donald Judd, Frank Stella, and—in the case of the present work—Uecker. In 1960, Kusama exhibited with Uecker in the seminal *Monochrome Malerei* show at the Städtisches Museum Schloss Morsbroich in Leverkusen (where she and Rothko were the only artists selected to represent America) and, in 1962, became the only female artist to participate in the highly acclaimed *ZERO* international group exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam alongside Uecker, Otto Piene, Lucio Fontana, and Pol Burry. With their hypnotic magnetism and accumulative buzz, Kusama's early *Infinity Nets* find a close affinity with Uecker's protruding-nail reliefs as their respective material elements appear to spiral and converge into infinite spatial realms.



Günther Uecker, Otto Piene, Yayoi Kusama, and Heinz Mack, Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1964. Image: ZERO Foundation, Düsseldorf, Holdings Heinz Mack, Inv.-No: mkp.ZERO.1V.41

"My desire was to predict and measure the infinity of the unbounded universe, from my own position in it, with dots—an accumulation of particles forming the negative spaces in the net. How deep was the mystery? Did infinite infinities exist beyond our universe?" —Yayoi Kusama

Drawn to the vibrant post-war art scene in America, Kusama moved to New York City in June 1958,

aspiring to “grab everything that went on in the city and become a star.”ⁱ Shortly after, she embarked on her white *Infinity Net* paintings comprising the present composition. For hours on end often without eating or sleeping, the artist would apply one scallop of white paint after another over a grey or black ground through to the very edges of the canvas, obliterating any fixed focal point with the resulting net of ‘polka dots.’ She explained in her autobiography, “I would cover a canvas with nets, then continue painting them on the table, on the floor, and finally on my own body. As I repeated this process over and over again, the nets began to expand to infinity. I forgot about myself as they enveloped me, clinging to my arms and legs and clothes and filling the entire room.”ⁱⁱ



Kusama in her New York studio, ca. 1958-59. Image: © Yayoi Kusama

"Dissolution and accumulation; propagation and separation; particulate obliteration and unseen reverberations from the universe—these were to become the foundations of my art." —Yayoi Kusama

In October 1959, Kusama inaugurated her groundbreaking series of white net paintings with five mural-sized examples at her first New York solo exhibition at Brata Gallery. Attracting immediate

attention among contemporaries and critics, Kusama's *Infinity Nets* displayed a feverish application of paint whilst consciously departed from the sweeping gestural brushwork of Abstract Expressionism with their obsessive repetition and meditative nature. As Laura Hoptmann commended of the works created in the same year as *Untitled (Nets)*, “The 1959 Nets, with their severely restricted palette and all-over repetitive pattern, were nothing like what the artist had previously produced...These *Infinity Nets* boldly referenced the New York school and, on its own ground, challenged its hegemony. Describing the brushstrokes she employed as ‘repeated exactly in monotone, like the gear of a machine’ Kusama remembers that the painstaking sameness of the composition was a deliberate attempt to find an antidote to the emotionalism of Abstract Expressionism.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Collector's Digest

- Examples of Kusama's early white *Infinity Nets* reside in notable institutional collections including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, among others.
- In Hong Kong in 2019, a similar example from the series achieved \$62,433,000 HKD (\$7,953,653).
- After the major *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors* traveling retrospective from 2017-2019, the artist has continued to receive renewed institutional attention around the globe with recent retrospectives at the Gropius Bau, Berlin (April 23 – August 15, 2021) and at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (November 15, 2021 – April 23, 2022).

ⁱ Yayoi Kusama, quoted in Akira Tatehata, *Yayoi Kusama*, London, 2000, p. 11.

ⁱⁱ Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, trans. Ralph McCarthy, London, 2016, p. 20.

ⁱⁱⁱ Laura Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, London, 2000, p. 42.

Provenance

Günther Uecker, Dusseldorf (acquired via trade)

Private Collection

Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

Dusseldorf, Museum Kunst Palast (p. 317, illustrated, p. 158; titled as *Ohne Titel (Netzbild)*), *ZERO. Internationale Künstler-Avantgarde der 50er/60er Jahre*; then travelled as Saint-Etienne, Musée d'art Moderne (p. 317, illustrated, p.159; titled as *Sans titre (Trame)*), *Zero: avant-garde internationale des années 1950-1960*, April 8, 2006–January 15, 2007

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF YUSAKU
MAEZAWA

12 ♦♦*

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Untitled

signed, inscribed and dated "JEAN MICHEL BASQUIAT
MODENA 1982." on the reverse

acrylic and spray paint on canvas
94 1/4 x 197 1/4 in. (239.4 x 501 cm)

Executed in 1982.

Estimate

Estimate On Request

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Coming from the esteemed collection of Japanese entrepreneur Yusaku Maezawa, *Untitled* is one of Jean-Michel Basquiat's greatest masterpieces. Its potency and scale mark it as one of his most ambitious works: standing at almost eight feet tall and over 16 feet wide, it is among his largest canvases. Executed in 1982, the watershed year which shot the artist to international stardom, this *tour de force* is from a small series created in Modena, Italy, where Basquiat visited at the invitation of the dealer Emilio Mazzoli during two periods in the early 1980s.

This pivotal chapter, today regarded as one of the most desirable of his career, marked his transition from "SAMO©"—the pseudonym Basquiat used as a street poet and tagger whose nom de plume had begun appearing all over New York's disintegrating infrastructure in the 1970s—to an art world force to be reckoned with. Indeed, *Untitled's* vastness is so striking that it, coupled with the artist's use of spray paint and geometric shapes, is suggestive of a large mural or graffiti-covered city wall—a fusion of street culture with "high art" that reflects a radical shift in his career and approach to art-making.

"I don't think about art while I work. I try to think about life." —Jean-Michel Basquiat

This extraordinary work was made just months after René Ricard's watershed essay on Basquiat, "The Radiant Child," introduced the painter to the upper echelons of art society by situating him within the modern canon. "He has a perfect idea of what he is getting across, using everything that collates his vision," Ricard expressed. "If Cy Twombly and Jean Dubuffet had a baby and gave it up for adoption it would be Jean-Michel. The elegance of Twombly is there [and is] from the same source (graffiti) and so is the *brut* of the young Dubuffet."ⁱ



Characterized by an unparalleled painterly dynamism, *Untitled* embodies both the gestural lyricism and rawness that Ricard described. The work depicts a devil figure with blood red paint dripping from his horns. This demonic subject, whose body is defined only by black strokes delineating ribs, rises against a fiery expanse of gestural color evoking the physicality of Abstract Expressionism. Appearing with arms or wings spread across the canvas, he meets the viewer with a threatening grin and stares at us with piercing eyes. These exaggerated features—including an oversized triangular nose and a grid of teeth—immediately resonate as both a nod to the African masks that he admired and as a reply to European modernism's "primitive" aesthetic.

The central figure's primary identifiable characteristic beyond his devilish identity is a head of short, gravity-defying dreadlocks; considering their resemblance to the artist's distinctive hairstyle which he began to wear after cutting off his blonde mohawk around this time, *Untitled* is certainly at least partially a self-portrait. However refracted, it is a manifestation of a pivotal moment when his image of himself—and the art world's image of him—was rapidly evolving. *Untitled* is unequivocally one of the finest examples of the distinctive iconography and painterly prowess that triumphantly marked the peak of his all-too-short career.

1982: The Birth of Jean-Michel Basquiat



Annina Nosei and Jean-Michel Basquiat in his studio in the basement of the Annina Nosei Gallery, New York, 1982. Image: © Naoki Okamoto, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York

Basquiat first came to prominence in early 1981, a year before the execution of *Untitled*, when he was included in *New York/New Wave*, a groundbreaking multi-disciplinary exhibition surveying the city's burgeoning avant-garde scene at P.S.1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Inc., in Long Island City. Still billed under "SAMO©," he was the only artist to be given a prominent space in the show to exhibit paintings.

The show propelled him to overnight success. Not only did his raw, expressive dynamism win the admiration of nearly every critic, but he also caught the attention of gallerists Emilio Mazzoli, Annina Nosei, and Bruno Bischofberger—an international cohort of dealers with strong collector relationships who would become virtually responsible for catapulting his career. Mazzoli soon invited Basquiat to Modena, offering the young artist—still known as "SAMO©"—the first one-man show of his career in the spring of 1981 at his gallery. In addition to introducing him to the European art world, the sold-out exhibition endowed Basquiat with a fresh confidence in his transition from street culture to the commercial art world.



Basquiat with Emilio Mazzoli, 1981

Upon his return to New York, Nosei provided him with many of the tools he was lacking: canvases, high-quality paints, and a dedicated studio space in her gallery basement. In March 1982, she gave him his debut solo show as Jean-Michel Basquiat, which at last shed his former "SAMO©" identity and solidified his reputation as a major force in the Neo-Expressionist art scene. Around this time, at only 21 years old, he became the youngest artist to be invited to participate in the landmark Documenta VII exhibition in Kassel, Germany, scheduled for the summer of 1982. Energized by this as well as a string of other career-launching exhibitions, Basquiat spent the pivotal year executing depictions of himself and those close to him with invigorated passion—pictures which today are widely considered to be the finest of his career. "For Basquiat, it all converges in 1982," Jeffrey Deitch, the prominent art dealer and the artist's close friend, conveyed. "Those of us who were there at the time and saw those paintings just couldn't believe it. The level of achievement was just astonishing. It was almost a miracle."ⁱⁱ

"[In 1982] I made the best paintings ever." —Jean-Michel Basquiat

Basquiat returned to Modena in spring of 1982, where he began work on a series of approximately eight career-defining paintings in preparation for a second planned exhibition at Galleria d'Arte Emilio Mazzoli. Set up by the gallerist in a massive industrial working space, he was able to work on a much larger scale than Nosei's basement studio allowed. It was during this time that he executed three of the groundbreaking pictures, almost certainly self-portraits, that have made this chapter one of the most sought after of his oeuvre: *Untitled*, *Profit 1*, and *Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump*. Later feeling pressured to work at an unreasonable pace in order to satisfy the dealer's expectations and complete the remainder of the show, Basquiat canceled the exhibition, returning to the U.S. and soon after severing ties with both Mazzoli and Nosei.



Characterized by their monumentality, bold palette, and large foregrounded figures, these three masterpieces emanated self-assurance from his newfound international success. "His peers had already anointed him as the best artist in the community, and he had the accolades of 'New York/New Wave,'" which inspired "an increased confidence in the painting: in the strength, in the line," according to Deitch.ⁱⁱⁱ They reflect an artist not only working at his prime, but one coming into his own: unwilling to acquiesce to dealer demands, Basquiat executed these works when he was finally becoming assertive enough to work at his own pace and on his own terms.

*"Everybody around him knew that these [1982 paintings] were extraordinary."
—Jeffrey Deitch*

The Modena Masterpieces



Profit 1, 1982. Private Collection. Image: © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York



Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump, 1982. Collection of Ken Griffin, on loan to the Art Institute of Chicago. Image: akg-images, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York



The Guilt of Gold Teeth, 1982. Private Collection. Image: Erik Pendzich / Alamy Stock Photo, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York



Untitled (Angel), 1982. Private Collection. Image: Adagp Images, Paris, / SCALA, Florence, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York

School of MoMA

When Basquiat was as young as five years old, his mother began taking him to cultural venues across his native New York City, including the Brooklyn Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art. These formative memories provided him with a robust art historical repertoire, an extensive internal library of images which his work would reference time and time again. Though he much admired the Old Masters, visits to the MoMA were perhaps his favorite. “Jean knew every inch of that museum,” the artist’s girlfriend Suzanne Mallouk later recalled, “every painting, every room.”^{iv}

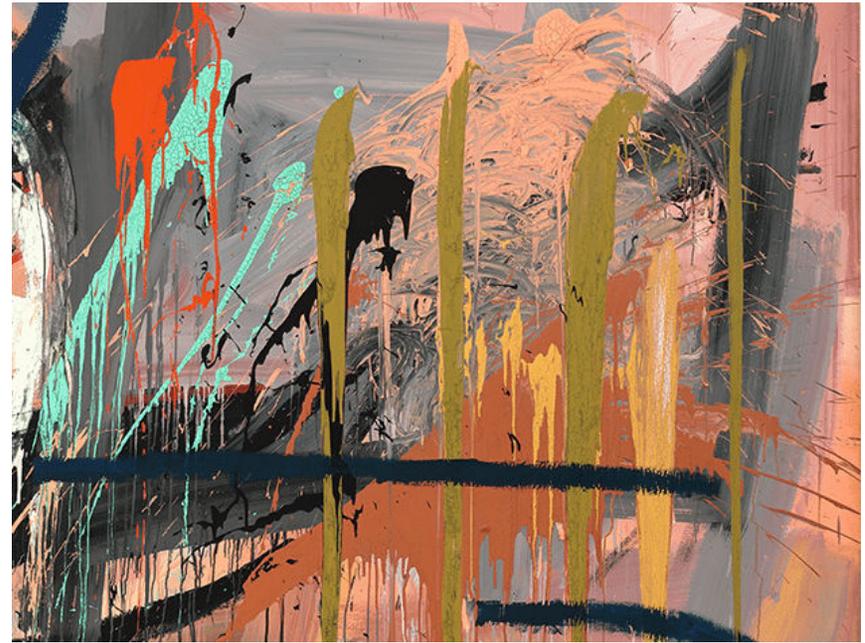


Jackson Pollock, *Blue Poles*, 1952. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Image: © National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Purchased 1973 / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"[Basquiat] was very knowledgeable about it all...from abstract practitioners like Pollock, de Kooning and Rothko, to old masters like Caravaggio." —Fab 5 Freddy (Fred Brathwaite)

It was at MoMA where Basquiat first encountered the work of several of the most significant figures of the 20th century art historical canon. He recalled feeling awestruck there by Claude Monet’s colossal *Water Lilies*, the scale and impasto-rich surfaces of which find an affinity with the present work. It was there that he also was likely introduced to the work of Franz Kline, which Basquiat himself acknowledged as among his greatest influences; the black ribs of *Untitled’s* central figure and the multicolored vertical gestures that surround him are reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionist’s signature linear strokes. Basquiat no doubt also saw Jackson Pollock’s revelatory “drip” paintings there, which are evoked by the liquescent flurry of bursts, splashes, and

daubs across the expanse of the present work.



Of all these hallmarks of modernism that Basquiat first viewed as a child at MoMA, however, it was Pablo Picasso who made the most significant impact. In a 1985 interview, Basquiat recalled: “Probably seeing *Guernica* was my favorite thing as a kid.”^v On a high school trip as a teenager, he became reacquainted with the work, which remained on extended loan at MoMA until it was returned to Spain in 1981.

Basquiat’s encounters with Picasso’s *Guernica* have been much mythologized—by both the artist, who emphasized its impact on him, and his most devout fans. Indeed, in the opening credits of Julian Schnabel’s 1996 biopic, the young painter and his mother stand before the iconic image; as she weeps, overcome by emotion, Basquiat stares up at the picture while a golden halo appears on his head in a magical anointment foreshadowing his artistic destiny. These visits to MoMA during his formative years birthed a career-long, impassioned engagement with both Picasso’s oeuvre and art history—one that was simultaneously critical and awestruck, irreverent and devoted.



Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1914-1926. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

Angels and Demons

Executed in 1937, *Guernica* was Picasso's loudest political statement. The grisaille painting, which stands over 11 feet wide, was a manifestation of the artist's outrage towards the German bombing of the Basque city after which the work is named. A plea against the terror and barbarity of the Spanish Civil War and a warning of what World War II would bring, this work is renowned as one of the most evocative and powerful images of the 20th century. A gored horse, a terrified woman with her arms raised, a weeping Madonna holding her dead baby, and other suffering figures compose a scene of intense anguish before a wide-eyed bull. Interpreted by many to symbolize Francisco Franco or the Fascist state, the sinister bull, seemingly devoid of apathy, was said by Picasso to signify "brutality and darkness."^{vi}

The monumental, horizontal format of *Untitled* has caused it to be likened to *Guernica*, and though Basquiat was no doubt struck by the compositional form so reminiscent of graffiti-covered walls, he also would have been intrigued by the iconography of the bull. Another one of Basquiat's recurrent motifs, the bull bears a strong visual resemblance to his devil—they share horns, bold eyes, and an aggressive snarl with visible teeth.



Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid. Image: Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The bull was an enigmatic symbol during this period in Picasso's career: images from his series of prints titled *The Dream and Lie of Franco*, also executed in 1937, depict a heroic bull fighting and goring Franco, an overt representation of the will of the Spanish people to overthrow their dictator. In this sense, Picasso used the animal as a visual device to rupture the dichotomy of good and evil, a thematic thread weaving together his entire oeuvre.

"Seeing Guernica was my favorite thing as a kid." —Jean-Michel Basquiat

It is no surprise that of all *Guernica*'s figures, Basquiat's self-portrait would most closely resemble the chilling bull overseeing the horrific scene. Like Picasso, Basquiat was fascinated by the binary opposition of "good/evil," and was especially driven to explore what identities embodied these representations historically. In this way, *Untitled* marks a distinct contrast to the artist's depictions of Black martyrdom and embodies his interest in the dualities of heaven and hell, good and evil, and sacred and sinful. The very strong compositional and formal affinity that the present work shares with another painting Basquiat executed in 1982 in Modena, *Untitled (Angel)*, implies that the two central figures could easily be reversed; the holy collapses into the blasphemous.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Pink Devil*, 1982. The Broad, Los Angeles. Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York

These Modena self-portraits are replete with such juxtapositions that blur the lines between goodness and evil: while in *Profit I*, Basquiat rendered himself as a sacred figure crowned with a nimbus, arms raised against a jet black expanse, in *Untitled* he is a devil ironically surrounded by an ebullient rush of color. These unexpected contexts, heaven and hell exchanged, underscore the duality that Basquiat considered to be central to humanity. Evoking Picasso in its disruption of set notions of good and evil, the present work serves as a reminder that these distinctions are porous, interrelated, and inherently defined by each other.

The “Primitive” Devil Incarnate

Basquiat’s engagement with Picasso and European modernism was much richer than just his formative encounters with *Guernica*. It was a complex, ambivalent relationship that is impossible to classify—one that was rife with homages to and subversions of Western art history.

It was first and foremost Picasso’s influence that permeated Basquiat’s work in immeasurable ways. In an interview, he revealed that he acquired a 1922 painting by Picasso that “took all [his] money”; he also dedicated at least a few paintings to the Spanish master.^{vii} In *Untitled (Pablo Picasso)*, 1984, what appears to be a portrait of the painter in his signature sailor jersey has also been read as a self-portrait of Basquiat, with the broad nose and unkempt dark hair that he typically used to depict himself blurring the two’s identities. Crediting the vitality of works such as *Untitled* to Picasso’s impact, curator and art historian Richard Marshall emphasized that “Picasso’s work gave Basquiat the authority and the precedent to pursue his own brash and aggressive self-portraits.”^{viii}



Untitled (Pablo Picasso), 1984. Private Collection. Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York

The kinship Basquiat held with his modernist forebear was palpable to many others as well. In 1983, just one year after the present work was executed, Diego Cortez, the curator behind *New York/New Wave*, published a short text deeming him the “Black Picasso,” a designation which was echoed by critics throughout Basquiat’s lifetime. An association that was intended to be flattering but was ultimately demeaning, this label proliferated because of Basquiat’s rapid rise to widespread fame, which was equated to Picasso’s celebrity, as well as mutual aesthetic interests.

"Both activist and parodist, [Basquiat] uses the marks and gestures of white Modernist masters to redraw their own civilization as an archaeological ruin of the

dream of its own future." —Thomas McEvilley

A primary visual theme that united them was “primitivism,” a mode of representation that idolized “primitive” cultures and appropriated motifs found in the art of non-Western peoples; primitivism was especially present in European modernist art and often perpetuated racist beliefs regarding non-white nations. In many ways, this imagery deeply informed the lexicon of Cubism, whose proponents were engrossed with the stylized and dramatic geometric reduction of form found in African and Oceanic sculptures and masks.

Untitled draws on the same aesthetic language as Picasso and the Cubists: the facial features are represented by only a few shapes, including an exaggerated triangle nose and large rounded eyes, which are rendered in a deliberately “primitive” manner. On one hand, this common lineage is reflective of Basquiat’s fascination with non-Western masks, which became a means of cultural exploration throughout his career from the perspective of a man of African descent born to Puerto Rican and Haitian parents.



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Head of a Woman (Tête de femme)*, 1907. Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Image: © Barnes Foundation / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Detail of the present work

On the other, Basquiat’s invocation of primitivism was always also rooted in a self-aware, ironic inversion of modernism’s relationship with it, and was what Thomas McEvilley called “a canny reversal of tactics from the white art tradition, a reversal that resonates with assertions, ironies,

and claims.” In this sense, *Untitled* takes aim at modernism and its co-option of “primitive” iconography; European art history was his greatest influence but also his biggest target. By rendering himself as a devil using this imagery, Basquiat ridiculed the art establishment’s historic debasement of non-Western cultures. Though Cubism had not been a dominant force in the European avant-garde for over a half-century before the execution of *Untitled*, his derision of art world prejudice still rang true: in 1982, Hal Foster named Basquiat the “new art-world primitive,” and a review of Documenta VII later that year called him “a true primitive.”^{x,xi} The present work’s self-caricaturization can thus be read as a response to being routinely reduced to his Blackness, whether that be explicitly as a “primitive” or in a veiled compliment as the “Black Picasso.”

"I'm not a Black artist, I'm an artist." —Jean-Michel Basquiat

“As a person of African descent, frequently plagued by myths of primitivism,” Jordana Moore Saggese asserted, “Basquiat was surely invested in the irony of a modern art history that systematically excludes artists of African descent while remaining indebted to them.” A self-portrait through the eyes of the predominately white art world Basquiat circumnavigated, *Untitled* reflects the struggles the artist faced even while being regarded as one of the leading figures of post-war American art.

Legacy of a Masterpiece



Untitled installed at Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, 1996. Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York

One of Basquiat’s greatest works, *Untitled* epitomizes the fresh vigor and idiosyncratic visual language that marked an unparalleled moment in his career. Since its execution, it has been renowned as one of the most iconic examples of Basquiat’s radical approach, even gracing the cover of the artist’s 1996 catalogue raisonné.

Despite its monumental size, the work has traveled around the world as a centerpiece in several of the artist’s major retrospectives. From Taiwan to France and Brazil to Italy and Germany, this masterpiece has awed Basquiat devotees across the globe and has stood as a symbol of his extraordinary oeuvre for art historians and the public alike. Its singularity was again solidified when it set the world auction record for the artist in 2016, igniting a renewed market appreciation for the artist’s work.

Returning for the first time to Japan since it was first exhibited at Akira Ikeda Gallery in Tokyo in 1985, the work has been a focal point of Maezawa’s collection for the last six years. “When standing in front of *Untitled*, it is overwhelmingly powerful yet melancholic, and this makes me feel a sense of euphoria and despair at the same time,” Maezawa reflected. “I believe that art

collections are something that should always continue to grow and evolve...Living with this art piece has made my love and interest for art deeper and stronger. I cannot begin to explain the influence that this masterpiece has had in my life, and I am certain it will be an unforgettable work for me.”



Yusaku Maezawa with *Untitled*. Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York

Selection of Views, London, 1972, pp. 137, 139.

^{vii} Jean-Michel Basquiat, quoted in “Interview by Becky Johnston and Tamra Davis,” *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Reader: Writings, Interviews, and Critical Responses*, Berkeley, 2021, p. 60.

^{viii} Richard Marshall, “Repelling Ghosts,” in Richard Marshall, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1992, p. 16.

^{ix} Thomas McEvelley, “Royal Slumming: Jean-Michel Basquiat Here Below,” *Artforum*, November 1992, p. 96.

^x Hal Foster, “Between Modernism and the Media,” *Art in America*, summer 1982, p. 15.

^{xi} Noel Frackman and Ruth Kaufmann, “Documenta 7: The Dialogue and a Few Asides,” *Arts Magazine*, October 1982, 97.

^{xii} Jordana Moore Saggese, *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Reader: Writings, Interviews, and Critical Responses*, Berkeley, 2021, p. 4.

Provenance

Annina Nosei Gallery, New York

Akira Ikeda Gallery, Nagoya (acquired from the above in 1985)

Tsurukame Corporation, Japan

Akira Ikeda Gallery, Nagoya

Enrico Navarra Gallery, New York (acquired from the above)

Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong (acquired from the above)

Private Collection, New York (acquired from the above)

Sotheby's, London, June 23, 2004, lot 32

Amalia Dayan and Adam Lindemann, New York (acquired at the above sale)

Christie's, New York, May 10, 2016, lot 36B

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

ⁱ René Ricard, “The Radiant Child,” *Artforum*, vol. XX, no. 4, December 1981, p. 43.

ⁱⁱ Alexa Gotthardt, “What Makes 1982 Basquiat’s Most Valuable Year,” *Artsy*, April 1, 2018, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

^{iv} Suzanne Mallouk, quoted in Olivia Laing, “Race, power, money—the art of Jean-Michel Basquiat,” *The Guardian*, September 8, 2017, [online](#).

^v Jean-Michel Basquiat, quoted in “Interview by Becky Johnston and Tamra Davis,” *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Reader: Writings, Interviews, and Critical Responses*, Berkeley, 2021, p. 52.

^{vi} Pablo Picasso, quoted in an interview with Jerome Seckler [1945], Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art: A*

Exhibited

Tokyo, Akira Ikeda Gallery, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Paintings*, December 2–25, 1985, no. 4, n.p. (illustrated)

Chiba, Makuhari Messe, *Pharmakon '90*, July 28–August 20, 1990, p. 438 (illustrated, pp. 74–75)

Paris, Galerie Enrico Navarra, *Jean-Michel Basquiat. Peintures*, April 2–June 12, 1996

Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts; Taichung, Taiwan Museum of Art, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, January 26–June 15, 1997, pp. 36–37 (illustrated)

Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, June 16–August 23, 1998, pp. 50, 116 (illustrated, pp. 51–53; Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, 1996, installation view illustrated, p. 111)

Venice, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, *Basquiat a Venezia*, June 9–October 3, 1999, p. 149 (illustrated, pp. 62–63, 114; Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, 1996, installation view illustrated, p. 134)

Naples, Il Museo Civico di Castel Nuovo, *Basquiat a Napoli*, December 19, 1999–March 4, 2000, pp. 60–61 (illustrated)

Rome, Chiostro del Bramante, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Dipinti*, January 20–March 17, 2002, pp. 70–71 (illustrated)

Paris, Fondation Dina Vierny-Musée Maillol, *Jean-Michel Basquiat. The Work of a Lifetime*, June 27–October 23, 2003, pp. 44–45 (illustrated; Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, 1996, installation view illustrated, p. 161)

Basel, Fondation Beyeler (no. 47, pp. 66–67, illustrated); Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (no. 45, pp. 70–71, illustrated), *Basquiat*, May 9, 2010–January 30, 2011

Literature

Jean-Louis Prat and Richard Marshall, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, Paris, 1996, vol. 1, p. 389 (illustrated, pp. 76–77 and on the front and back covers); vol. 2, p. 249 (Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, 1996, installation view illustrated)

Tony Shafrazi, Jeffrey Deitch and Richard Marshall, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, New York, 1999, pp. 110–111 (illustrated)

Galerie Enrico Navarra, ed., *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, Paris, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 72–73 (illustrated); vol. 2, no. 2, p. 99 (illustrated, p. 98); vol. 3, pp. 72–23 (illustrated); appendix, p. 46 (Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2010, installation view illustrated)

Adam Lindemann, *Collecting Contemporary Art*, Cologne, 2010, p. 129 (illustrated)

Koji Ozawa, "Yusaku Maezawa, who lives and shares his art," *GQ Japan*, August 16, 2016, online (installation view illustrated)

Hans Werner Holzwarth, ed., *Jean-Michel Basquiat and the Art of Storytelling*, Cologne, 2018, p. 494 (illustrated, pp. 200–201)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION

13 ♦

Andy Warhol

Multicolored Retrospective (Reversal Series)

signed, titled and dated "Andy Warhol 79 multicolored retrospective reversal series" on the overlap
acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas
50 3/8 x 63 3/4 in. (128 x 161.9 cm)
Executed in 1979.

Estimate

\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Encompassing five of Andy Warhol's most iconic motifs—Marilyn Monroe, Mao Zedong, the *Mona Lisa*, Campbell's Soup Cans, and his *Flowers*—*Multicolored Retrospective* is emblematic of the uniquely personal reflection that defined the last decade of his life. Executed in 1979 during the height of his fame, *Multicolored Retrospective* disrupted Warhol's expected seriality with its non-hierarchical, seemingly "collaged" surface in which his most-famous subjects, of diverse quantities, palettes, and sizes, converse in a post-modern visualization of "image overload." The *Retrospectives*, which were a discrete subset of Warhol's *Reversals* series (1979-1986), brought his oeuvre full circle: as his position was solidified as one of the most influential post-war artists, not even his own practice remained safe from his unceasing appropriation.

Revisiting the Past

According to Warhol, inspiration for the *Retrospectives* came from his friend Larry Rivers' *Golden Oldies* paintings from 1978, which represented fragments from his most well-known images of past decades. Recalling that many artists, including Barnett Newman, culled motifs from their early chapters for use in later ones, Rivers' pictures and the conceptual possibilities of revisiting older iconography appealed to Warhol. "It's like restating it once more," Rivers elucidated. "In a sense it's like saying: not only did I mean it, but it's rich enough for me to take it and do something with it."ⁱ

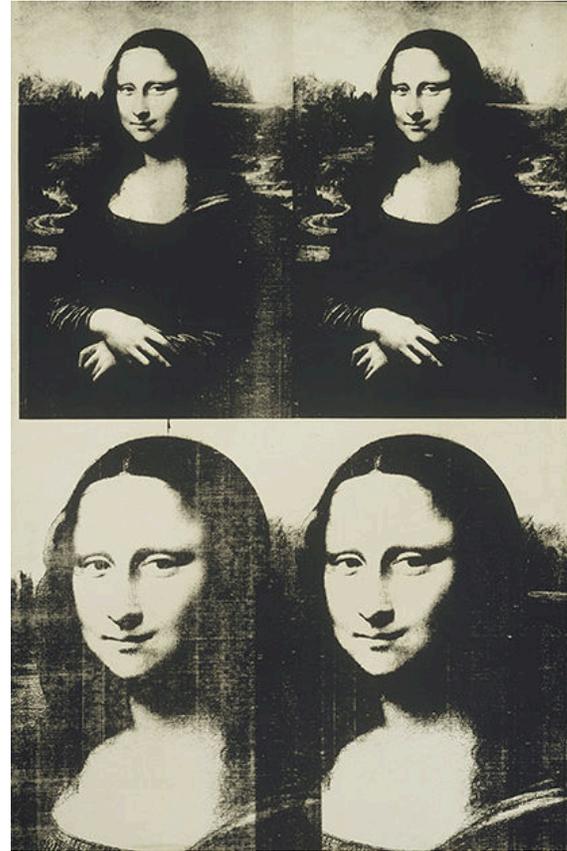


This notion of doubling down on the very images that solidified Warhol's position within 20th century art history resonated with the *Reversals* series he had begun around the same time. Depicting his previous subjects including Monroe, Mao, and the *Mona Lisa*, the *Reversals* were made from negative acetates of his source material, resulting in somber, contrast-inverted versions of his earlier work that denoted the passing of time. "Like the aging Giorgio de Chirico," Warhol's close associate and confidant Bob Colacello reminisced, "he plundered his own past, cynically dragging out his old silkscreens from the sixties..."ⁱⁱ He chose to represent the "reversed" images of the three figures in *Multicolored Retrospective*, each a triple reference to: the source photograph or artwork; Warhol's initial paintings from the 1960s or early 1970s; and to his 1979 *Reversals*.

Appropriating the Appropriator

"[Warhol] has given us an image of Mao with such brutal force that, however we formulated our mental picture of the Chinese leader a moment ago, he has supplanted it with his own." —Douglas Crimp

These myriad allusions reflect the evolutions that took place both in mass culture as well as Warhol's individual celebrity in the elapsed 17 years of his practice. Simply regarded as color-blocked advertising for a mass-produced food product during his original appropriation in 1961-1962, the Campbell's Soup Can label had subsequently been elevated by Warhol into the canon of "high" art. When the artist first depicted Monroe's image soon after her death in 1962, her photographs littered the covers of contemporary tabloids; by 1979, Warhol's paintings had long superseded any representations of the actress from her lifetime. And Mao's photograph was widely circulated in China during the Cultural Revolution when Warhol repeated the image in his 199 silkscreen paintings of him—but following Mao's death these works were considered artistic interpretations of a former historical moment.



Andy Warhol, *Mona Lisa*, 1963. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

“These were the images that had made him famous—the icons, symbols, and brands through which he had made his own name and which had therefore to some extent become associated with his own life, history, career and myth,” Roberto Marrone expounded. In this case of re-appropriation, “Warhol now bestowed upon them a new... mood reflective of the respective distance in time between their original use and the later moment of their re-creation.”ⁱⁱⁱ A master of timing and context, Warhol understood that revisiting his most iconic images years later—when his life became a point of media scrutiny and his work attracted as much public attention as his original source material—would imbue them with an entirely fresh meaning.

A Duchampian Gesture

The conceptual techniques Warhol employs in *Multicolored Retrospective* share a close affinity with those of Marcel Duchamp, the master of appropriation and forebear to Warhol's distinctly post-modernist approach. Warhol owned over 30 works by his greatest influence, including two examples of his famed *Boîte-en-valises*. These portable retrospectives—leather suitcases and cardboard boxes replete with miniature replicas of Duchamp's most iconic paintings and readymades—extended the artist's appropriation to the realm of his own practice and undoubtedly influenced the present work. Taking this self-imitation a step further than the *Boîte-en-valises*, the identical medium and comparable scale of *Multicolored Retrospective* to Warhol's "originals" challenge the very definition of a "reproduction."



Marcel Duchamp, *Box in a Valise (Boîte-en-Valise)*, from or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (de ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy), 1935-1941. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: © Philadelphia Museum of Art / The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950 / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris / Estate of Marcel Duchamp

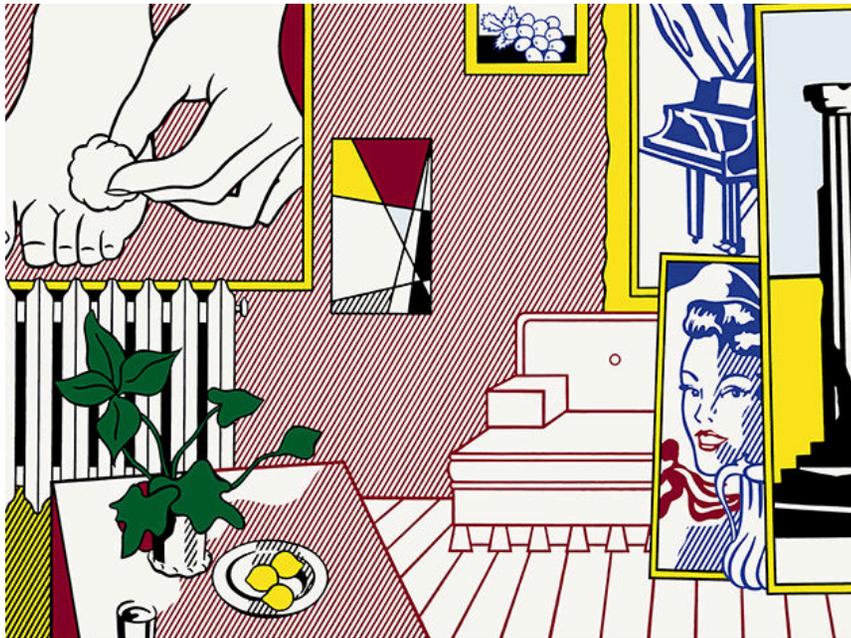
Often incorporating previous drawings and paintings in their collages, other Dada artists arranged found objects in enigmatic, non-hierarchical compositions—a practice Warhol had first experimented with when he was in college. Though the surface also evokes contemporaneous "Neo-Dada" discourse exemplified by Robert Rauschenberg's tactile, three-dimensional collaged

pictures, there is a signature Warholian visual trick at play in *Multicolored Retrospective*. The seemingly layered surface of the work is initially a compelling illusion; upon further inspection, the flatness inherent to the silkscreening process is revealed. Just as he began juxtaposing screen-printing with gestural brushwork in his 1970s portraits, the *Retrospectives* series sees him in dialogue with another leading post-modernist of his time.

Looking Back

"If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it." —Andy Warhol

Taking the pervasiveness of his own work as subject matter, Warhol joined the ranks of Duchamp as well as Gustave Courbet, Henri Matisse, and Roy Lichtenstein in distilling a "retrospective" of their oeuvre into a single canvas. A major institutional exhibition meant to honor and encapsulate an artist's career, the concept of a "retrospective" no doubt intrigued Warhol during a period that found him grappling with the passing of time. In the 1970s, he filled over 600-time capsules with documents, photographs, and ephemera from his daily life and introduced a personal dimension into his work, characterized by gestural brushwork and softer, more expressive portraiture, that his earlier chapter rejected. He always engaged with artists—Leonardo da Vinci, commercial designers, photojournalists, and publicity photographers—but in *Multicolored Retrospective* he approached his own acclaimed images, underscoring that from a distance they appear both the same and entirely different.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Artist's Studio "Foot Medication,"* 1974. Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © The Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

ⁱ Larry Rivers, quoted in Jeffrey H. Loria, "Golden Oldies: An Interview with Larry Rivers," *Arts Magazine*, November 1978, pp. 104-105.

ⁱⁱ Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*, New York, 1990, p. 429.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roberto Marrone, quoted in *Andy Warhol: Big Retrospective Painting*, exh. cat., Galerie Bruno Bischofberger, Zurich, 2009, p. 32.

Provenance

Galerie Bischofberger, Zurich

Astrup Fearnley Collection, Oslo (acquired from the above)

Christie's, New York, May 11, 2010, lot 64

Gagosian Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2012

Exhibited

Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Stuttgart, Württembergischen Kunstverein, *Andy Warhol - Retrospektiv*, July 2, 1993–February 6, 1994, p. 98 (illustrated, p. 99)

Kunstmuseum Luzern, *Andy Warhol. Paintings 1960–1986*, July 9–September 24, 1995, no. 67, pp. 165, 168 (illustrated, p. 143)

Oslo, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, *Andy Warhol by Andy Warhol*, September 13–December 14, 2008, no. 32, p. 130 (illustrated, p. 113)

Literature

Fabrice Midal, *Petit traite de la modernite dans l'art*, Paris, 2007, back cover (detail illustrated on the front cover)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

14 ♦

Pablo Picasso

Figures et plante

dated "4 Avril XXXII" upper left; inscribed "Boisgeloup"

upper right

oil on panel

7 1/4 x 9 3/8 in. (18.4 x 23.8 cm)

Painted on April 4, 1932.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/FwSKgfxqoNs>

"The day I met Marie-Thérèse, I realized that I had before me what I had always been dreaming about." —Pablo Picasso

Painted on April 4, 1932, Pablo Picasso's *Figures et plante* is a vibrant gem of the artist's portraits of his reigning muse, Marie-Thérèse. Among Picasso's finest painterly achievements, the works of this seminal year mark Picasso's *annus mirabilis* or "year of wonders," as described by the artist's biographer John Richardson, when Marie-Thérèse had claimed her exceptional presence in his art. Having resided in private hands for the last 20 years, *Figures et plante* reveals an expanded scene of *Buste de femme de profil (Femme écrivain)* which the artist had painted just three days earlier. In the present work, Picasso unveils the stage from left to right: Marie-Thérèse writing at a table in the Château de Boisgeloup near Gisors, which the artist had purchased in the summer of 1930 and where the lovers often met in secret. Beside her, he renders a second seated figure overarched by foliage sprouting from a vase that reflects the bright light streaming into the room.



Pablo Picasso, *Buste de femme de profil (Marie-Thérèse)*, April 1, 1932. Private Collection, formerly the Evelyn Sharp Collection. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Picasso met Marie-Thérèse in front of the Galeries Lafayette in Paris in January 1927, when he was still married to Olga Khokhlova. "I was an innocent young girl. I knew nothing—either of life or of Picasso," Walter recalled years later. "He simply grabbed me by the arm and said, 'I am Picasso! You and I are going to do great things together.'" This *coup de foudre* soon blossomed into a rapturous affair and would shape the course of Picasso's art by the turn of the decade. By the time Picasso created *Figures et plante*, her distinctive image had proliferated through every medium of his work. As Françoise Gilot, Picasso's final lover, later observed, "With her, Pablo could throw off his intellectual life and follow his instinct...I could see that she was certainly the woman who had

inspired Pablo plastically more than any other.”ⁱⁱ

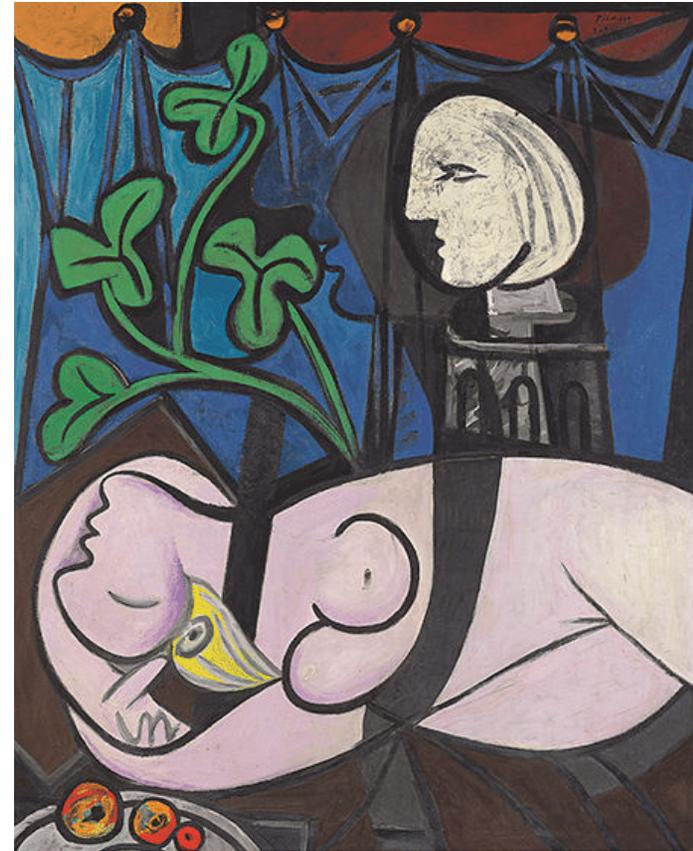


Flip book photographs of Marie-Thérèse Walter, 1930. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"All of [my paintings] are recherches. I search incessantly and there is a logical sequence in all this research... It's an experiment in time." —Pablo Picasso

While some have interpreted the figure on the left as Marie-Thérèse's sister (presumably in light of Picasso's later 1934 series of the two women reading at a table), it can also be read as a double portrait of Marie-Thérèse. For the left figure, Picasso incorporates the signifying Marie-Thérèse motifs he had explored in the months leading up to *Figures et plante*: the philodendron seen in *Femme nue, feuilles et buste (Marie-Thérèse)*, the lavender-yellow pairing he iconically ascribed to Marie-Thérèse, and the mirror—here suggestively doubling as the circular vase. In the present

work, he frames the fronds directly over the secondary figure and also shines the yellow light from the window upon her, completing the chromatic symbolism that defines Marie-Thérèse in some of his most renowned works from the period.



Pablo Picasso, *Femme nue, feuilles et buste (Marie-Thérèse)*, March 8, 1932. Private Collection, on long-term loan to Tate, London. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

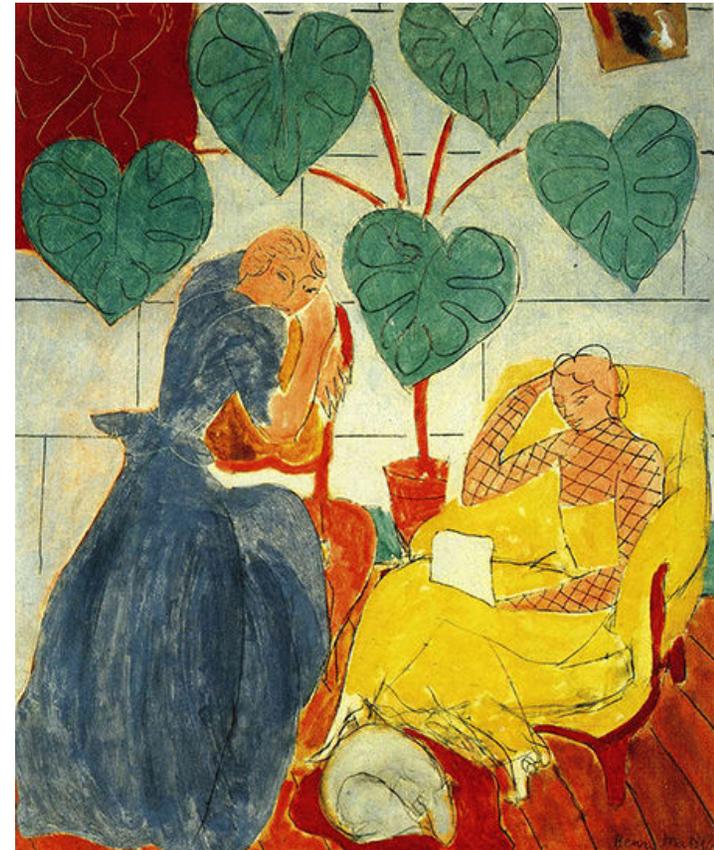
More cogently, it appears that Picasso treated the additional figure in *Figures et plante* similarly to that of Marie-Thérèse's mirrored reflection in his renowned *Jeune fille devant au miroir (Marie-Thérèse)*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, created less than a month before: the same

green, blue, and black of her sinuous hair, her body marked with the same bold red accent. It is therefore not unlikely that Picasso may have been aiming to fuse his investigations in *Jeune fille devant au miroir*, and *Buste de femme de profil* in the present work—after all, Picasso “preferred [*Jeune fille devant au miroir*] to any of the others in the long series he had completed that spring,” as Alfred Barr noted.ⁱⁱⁱ



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Jeune fille devant au miroir (Marie-Thérèse)*, March 14, 1932. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Detail of the present work

Picasso’s employment of the window to frame his figures and his use of contrasting colors to model light nods to the work of Henri Matisse, who had first embraced these devices in his Fauvist years. Indeed, their now well-known symbiotic rivalry was at a peak during this period, as Picasso was preparing for his historic June 1932 retrospective at the Galerie Georges Petit, where Matisse had his own retrospective just the year before. Yet, as John Elderfield observed, “Picasso’s Matissean paintings of the early 1930s are even more unusual in that they resemble not only earlier paintings by Matisse but, especially, the paintings that Matisse would make in response to them.”^{iv} The present work formidably manifests this reflexive dialogue, particularly with Matisse’s canvases of 1938, such as *The Conservatory*, when the French artist would first explore the philodendron motif that first held Picasso’s interest in the 1932 paintings.



Henri Matisse, *The Conservatory*, 1938. Collection of Joseph and Emily Pulitzer, St. Louis. Artwork: © 2022 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Conjuring the place of its very creation, *Figures et plante* is imbued with the space and light Picasso found in Boisgeloup, literally and metaphorically. It was the perfect sanctuary not only for the artist and his muse, but also for his artistic investigations that resulted in some of the most celebrated works of his oeuvre. The freedom he found there translated into his painterly sensibility as he opened up his handling and palette, and explored new themes towards a more Surrealist expression embodied in the present work. Indeed with all its allusions and complexities, *Figures et plante* ultimately captures Picasso’s telling words. “The work one does is a way of keeping one’s diary.”^v

Pablo Picasso

ⁱ Marie-Thérèse Walter, quoted in Pierre Daix, *Picasso: Life and Art*, trans. Olivia Emmet, New York, 1993, p. 202.

ⁱⁱ Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso*, New York, 1964, pp. 235, 241.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alfred Barr, *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art*, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York, no. 246, p. 156.

^{iv} John Elderfield, in *Matisse Picasso*, exh. cat., Tate, London, 2002, p. 233.

^v Pablo Picasso, in Tériade, "En causant avec Picasso," *L'Intransigeant*, June 15, 1932, p. 1.

Provenance

James W. Wise, Geneva, New York & Nice

Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd., London, June 19, 1964, lot 44

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Yayoi Gallery, Tokyo (acquired by 1982)

Private Collection

Sotheby's, London, December 7, 1998, lot 34

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Perls Galleries, *Four Masters: Rouault, Picasso, Utrillo, Raoul Dufy*, November 1–November 29, 1941, no. 8, p. 2 (illustrated on the front cover; titled as *Intérieur à Boisgeloup*)

Geneva, Musée de l'Athénée, *Picasso*, July 11–September 21, 1963, no. 27, n.p.

Literature

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1926 à 1932*, Paris, 1955, vol. 7, no. 404, p. 192 (illustrated, p. 179; erroneously described and dated as huile sur toile 4 août 1932)

Robert Wraight, "Record season in the London salerooms," *Studio International*, vol. 168, no. 858, October 1964, p. 159

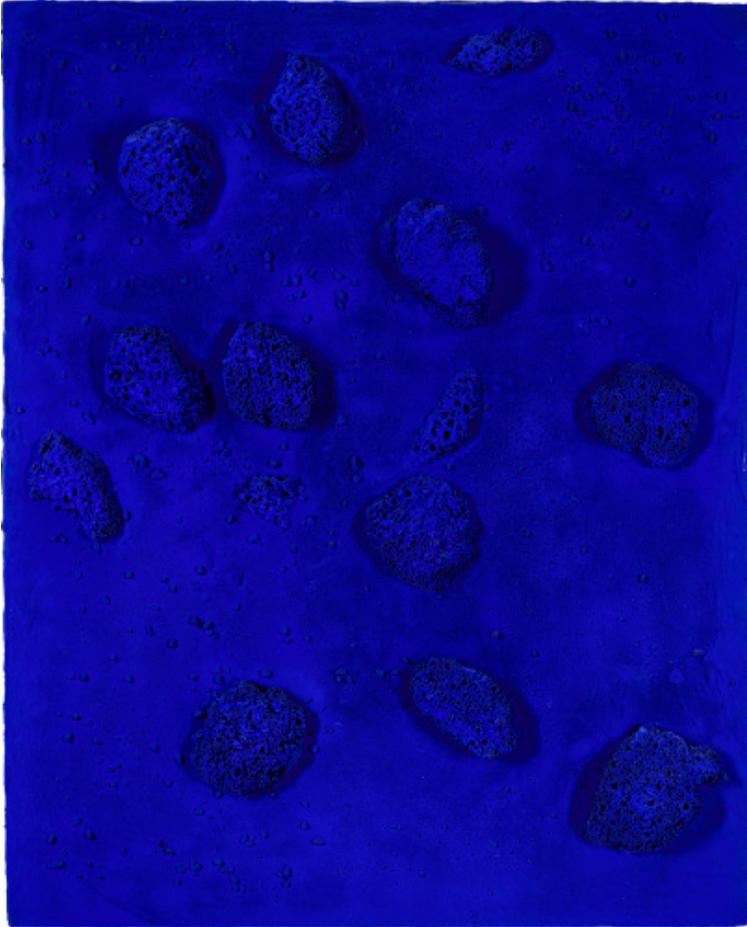
Fred. A. Van Braam and A.B. Ter Haar Romeny, eds., *World Collectors Annuary: Volume XVI, January 1st - December 31st 1964*, Voorburg, 1964, p. 321

The Evelyn Sharp Collection, exh. cat., The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, p. 76

Picasso 1932. Année érotique, exh. cat., Musée national Picasso-Paris, Paris, 2017, p. 141 (erroneously described and dated as huile sur toile 4 août XXXII)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED NEW YORK
COLLECTION

15 ♦

Yves Klein

Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)

signed with the artist's initials, inscribed and dedicated
"D'abord il n'y a rien, ensuite il y a un rien profond, Puis
une profondeur bleue chez Wilp! YK" on a label affixed
to the reverse

dry blue pigment and synthetic resin, natural sponges
and pebbles on panel

48 1/4 x 39 3/8 x 3 1/2 in. (122.6 x 100 x 8.9 cm)

Executed in 1961, this work is registered in the Yves
Klein Archives under number RE 49.

Estimate

\$14,000,000 — 18,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/D401T5hF2IO>

"One day I noticed the beauty of the blue in the sponge; at once this working tool became raw material for me. It is that extraordinary faculty of the sponge to become impregnated with whatever may be fluid that seduced me." —Yves Klein

With its grand scale and historic provenance, the present work is a masterpiece of the artist's most sought-after series, the *Relief Éponges*, or sponge reliefs, created between 1958 and 1961. *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)* unifies the two most important material discoveries of the artist's career: International Klein Blue and the incorporation of sponges onto his surfaces. Here, natural sponges and pebbles are drenched in Klein's signature color, the topography appearing to infinitely evolve before the viewer's eyes as light and shadow play across the velvety surface. Dedicated to Klein's close friend and legendary photographer Charles Wilp (1932-2005), the present work was created in the pivotal year of the important exhibition *Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer* at the Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, which marked the only institutional retrospective of the artist's lifetime due to his all-too-early death the following year.



Yves Klein at his exhibition *Monochrome und Feuer*, Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany, 1961. Photographed by Charles Wilp. Image: © bpk Bildagentur / Charles Wilp / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Yves Klein and Charles Wilp: A Pioneering Friendship

Klein dedicated the present work to Wilp on a label on the reverse: "d'abord il n'y a rien, ensuite il n'y a un rien profond, puis une profondeur bleue chez Wilp!" ("first there is nothing, then there is a profound nothing, then a blue depth in Wilp!"). A student of Man Ray, Wilp was an innovative German photographer, film editor, artist, and advertising designer at the center of the post-war avant-garde milieu. Best known for his iconic advertising campaigns for Afri-Cola and Volkswagen

as well as his ventures in space art, his multifaceted endeavors led him to closely befriend Klein, Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys, Lucio Fontana, and ZERO group founders Otto Piene, Heinz Mack, and Günther Uecker—among many other celebrated figures captured in his photographic portraits. Notably, it was Wilp who documented Klein working on his monumental project of sponge relief murals for the foyer of the Gelsenkirchen Opera House from 1958-1959, as well as the artist's iconic performance spectacle *Anthropométries de l'époque bleue* at the Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain in March 1960.

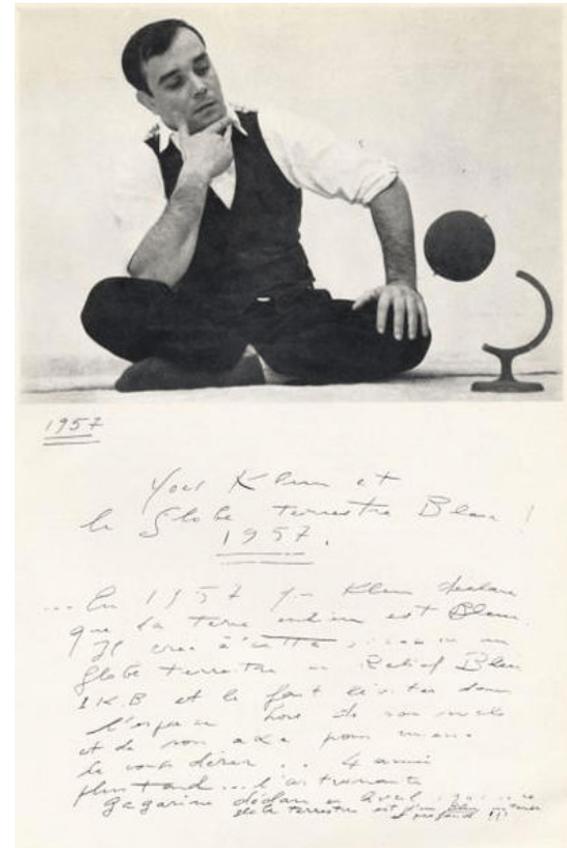


[left] Yves Klein by his sponge relief mural at the Neue Stadttheater, Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Lobby of the Opera House. 1959. Photographed by Charles Wilp. Image: © bpk Bildagentur / Charles Wilp / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris [right] Yves Klein's "Anthropométries de l'Époque Bleue" performance at the Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain, Paris, 1960. Photographed by Charles Wilp. Image: © bpk Bildagentur / Charles Wilp / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

"It will not be with rockets, sputniks or missiles that mankind will achieve the conquest of space, for he will then always remain just a tourist in this space. Rather, it is achieved by inhabiting its sensibility." —Yves Klein

A tribute to the friendship and kindred spirits of Wilp and Klein, *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)* further embodies the zeitgeist of the 1960s Space Age. In the year he created the present work, Klein called Wilp the "Prince of Space," a moniker mirroring the artist's own self-proclamation as the "Painter of Space."ⁱ Wilp held lifelong interest in aerospace and linked reality to the invisible and creativity to weightlessness, which aligned with the radical visions of groundbreaking conceptual artists like Klein who aimed to capture the unseen forces of the universe beyond. As with Klein's contemporaries associated with the ZERO group, the concept of

space travel was very much on the artist's mind in 1961, when he learned of the historic human journey into space undertaken by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, who famously declared, "I saw the sky very dark and the earth blue, of a deep and intense blue."ⁱⁱ Gagarin's observation from space confirmed for Klein, not only what he had espoused as early as 1957 that "the Earth is blue," but also his belief in the distinction between *traversing* and *being* space.ⁱⁱⁱ Equating the technological achievement of space travel to tourism, Klein rather championed that "a true space program would be the penetration of infinity with our sensibility and our intellect."^{iv} *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)* thus reflects Klein's conviction in the conquest of space not "through technical marvels," as he articulated in 1961, "but through a transformation of human sensibility into a function of the cosmos."^v



Yves Klein in 1961 with his *Blue Globe*, with the artist's inscription: "In 1957, Yves Klein stated that the Earth was entirely blue [...] Four years later...cosmonaut Gagarin stated in April 1961 that the Earth is of a deep intense blue!!!" Photographed by Harry Shunk and Janos Kender. Image: © Harry Shunk and Janos Kender, J. Paul Getty Trust, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

The Nature of Immateriality

"We may regard the solar systems as separate sponges, swimming in a World of Divine Spirit...In order to travel from one solar system to another it would be necessary to be able to function consciously in the highest vehicle of man, the Divine Spirit." —Max Heindel

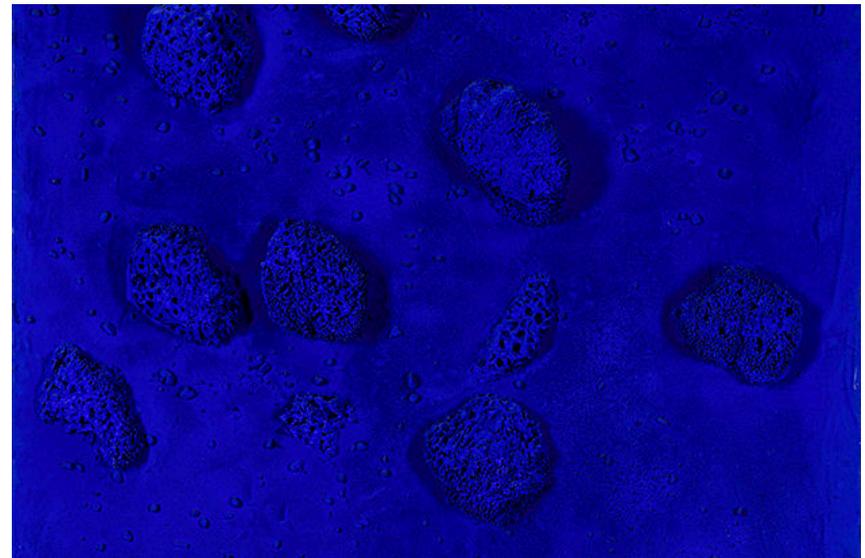
Conjuring the mysterious depths of the ocean floor or the graveled lands of extraterrestrial worlds, the accumulation of sponges and pebbles in the present work reflect Klein's advancement of his two-dimensional IKB monochromes into the next dimension with the *Relief Éponges*. Paradoxically, it was Klein's incorporation of earthly materials and the third dimension that brought him ever closer to drawing the viewer into an intangible universe. By projecting these organic elements from the surface, Klein positioned them as the mediating portal between the natural world inhabited by the viewer and the dematerialized world of blue. Here, the beautifully balanced arrangement of sponges recalls the placement of the stones at the Zen gardens he visited in Kyoto while living in Japan from 1952-1953 for his beloved Judo training.



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale*, 1953. Artwork: © Fondation Lucio Fontana / Artists Rights Society

(ARS), New York

Klein's practice was deeply influenced the Zen Buddhist philosophy of an infinite expanse of nothingness, as well as the gnostic principles presented in Max Heindel's *Rosicrucian Cosmo-conception* which the artist had first read in 1949. Alongside the sponges, the granular-sized pebbles here recall sand that function in remarkable parallel to Heindel's words: "Let the sand represent the Etheric region...[which] permeates the dense earth and extends beyond its atmosphere."^{vi} Bringing Klein's paramount achievements to the surface, *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre* (RE 49) captures the heart of the artist's conceptual sensibility with breathtaking physicality.

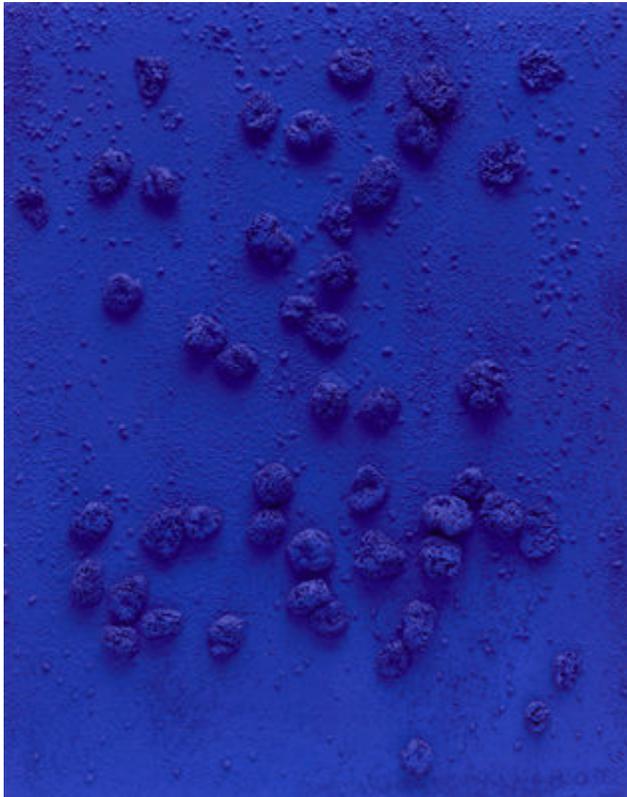


"Blue has no dimensions, it is beyond dimensions, whereas the other colors are not...All colors arouse specific associative ideas, psychologically material or tangible, while blue suggests at most the sea and sky, and they, after all, are in actual, visible nature what is most abstract." —Yves Klein

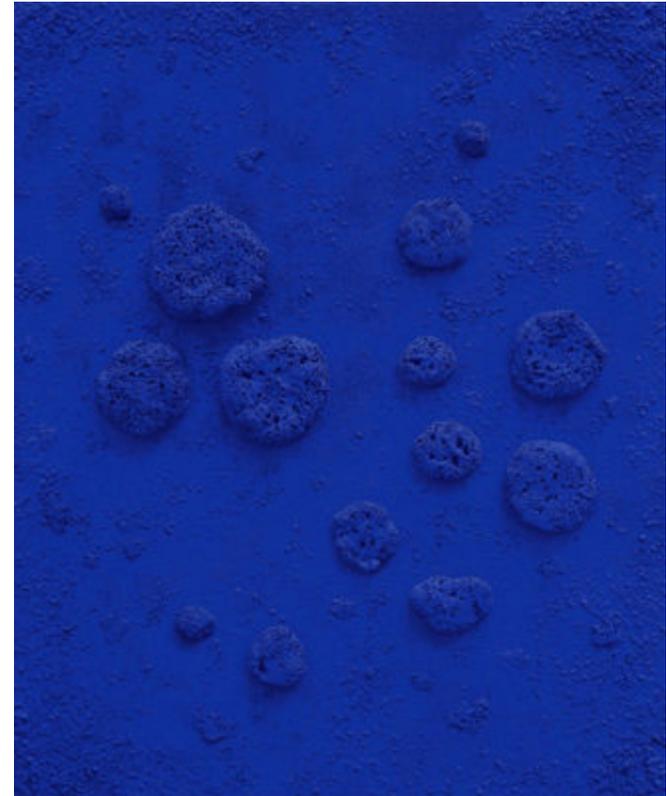
Klein's aim to communicate color as an immaterial reality in his art would serve as the basis of his brief but revolutionary eight-year career. After displaying various colored monochromes at his first two solo shows in 1955 and 1956, Klein realized that viewers misinterpreted his work as decorative and thereafter set on his quest to devote himself to a single color that would allow viewers to "bathe in a cosmic sensibility"—blue.^{vii} For Klein, blue embodied the "void," the ethereal space of

the universe, where the viewer could “impregnate himself with color and color impregnates itself into him,” thereby uniting humanity into an infinite spiritual realm.^{viii} To this end, Klein sought to capture the most pure tone of blue that would radiate with the visual intensity and mystic energy he wished to convey and, as *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)* demonstrates, he would achieve the most powerful chromatic expression by eventually expanding his painterly investigations from the second to third dimensions.

Relief Éponges in Museum Collections



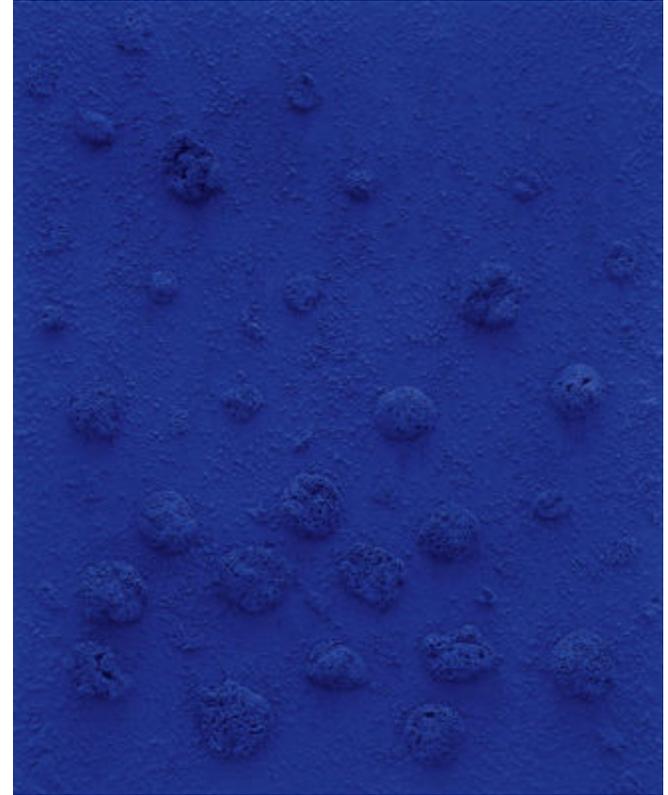
RE 6, 1961. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



L'accord bleu (RE 10), 1960. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



RE 19, 1958. Museum Ludwig, Cologne. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



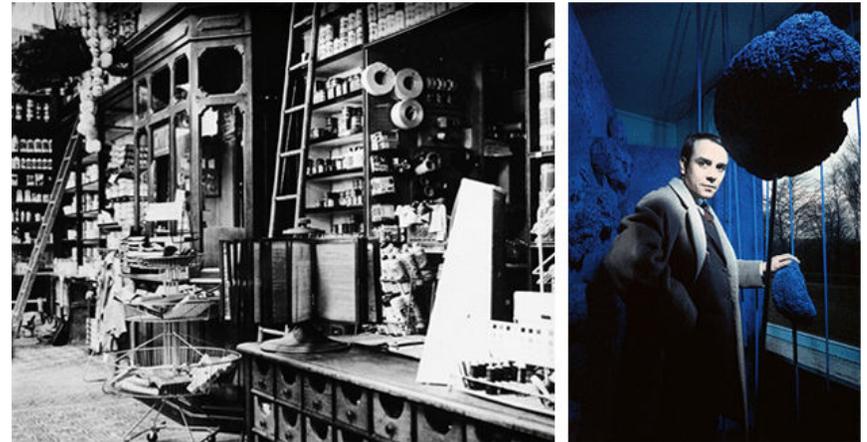
Requiem (RE 20), 1960. The Menil Collection, Houston. Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



RE 47 I, 1960. Städel Museum, Frankfurt. Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

A Vehicle to the Universe

Through the mid-to-late 1950s Klein collaborated with Édouard Adam, a chemical retailer in Montparnasse, to achieve the perfect formula for a blue that could retain the color's pure brilliance both materially and optically, which led to his famed International Klein Blue—the artist's patented medium that bonds the ultramarine pigment to synthetic resin. In 1956, the artist began using sponges from Adam's shop as a tool to apply paint to his blue monochromes and two years later, they would become a permanent presence on his surfaces, an inspiration that came in part by his sponge relief murals for the Gelsenkirchen project. By the year of the present work, Klein's blue *Relief Éponges* represented the apotheosis of his practice as evinced by their notable presence at his 1961 retrospective at Museum Haus Lange. Marking the apex of his career, this show was the largest lifetime celebration of the artist's oeuvre and self-curated by Klein, who placed his sponge reliefs in the "Blue Zone," the central space that also included his IKB Monochromes and Anthropometries.



[left] Édouard Adam's store in Montparnasse, Paris, 1960. [right] Yves Klein surrounded by his works at the exhibition *Yves Klein Monochrome und Feuer* at the Museum Haus Lange, 1961. Photo: Pierre Boulat. Image: © Pierre Boulat, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

"Thanks to the sponges—raw living matter—I was going to be able to make portraits of the observers of my monochromes, who, after having seen, after having voyaged in the blue of my pictures, return totally impregnated in sensibility, as are the sponges."
—Yves Klein

For Klein, sponges were the perfect vehicle to encapsulate his lifelong inquiries on materializing the immaterial. With their porous and absorbent qualities, sponges could completely saturate themselves with his blue pigment, physically and conceptually embodying his endeavor of subsuming the viewer into his non-dimensional realm of blue. Here, the pregnable material soaks up the IKB palette that envelops its entire body and seeps deeply into its pores. Indeed the artist himself very much resembled a sponge in his disposition, engulfing texts written by his artistic predecessors and literary theorists in articulating his own practice to the public, leading Klaus Ottmann to observe that even “Klein absorbed ideas like his sponges absorbed color.”^{ix} The artist’s inscribed dedication to Wilp in *Relief Éponge bleu sans titre (RE 49)* epitomizes this sponge-like sensibility, deriving from Gaston Bachelard’s *Air and Dreams* which Klein read in his early years and famously quoted at his 1959 lecture at the Sorbonne: “First there is nothing, then there is a deep nothing, then there is a blue depth.”^{ix}



Yves Klein at Charles Wilp’s studio in Düsseldorf during the film shooting of Peter Morley’s “The Heartbeat of France,” February 1961. Photographed by Charles Wilp. Image: © bpk Bildagentur / Charles Wilp / Art Resource, NY

ⁱⁱ Pierre Restany, *Yves Klein*, Paris, 1982, p. 227.

ⁱⁱⁱ Yves Klein, quoted in Guido Le Noci, “Nota della galleria,” in *Yves Klein le Monochrome*, exh. cat., Galleria Apollinaire, Milan, 1961, n.p.

^{iv} K.G. Pontus Hulten’s notes from Yves Klein’s 1959 Sorbonne lecture, *Jean Tinguely: “Méta,”* trans. Maij Whittall, Boston, 1975, p. 71.

^v Yves Klein and Wemer Ruhnau, “Projekt einer Luft-Architektur,” in Otto Piene and Heinz Mack, eds. *Zero*, Cambridge, 1973, p. 112.

^{vi} Max Heindel, *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-conception Or, Mystic Christianity; an Elementary Treatise Upon Man’s Past Evolution, Present Constitution and Future Development*, London, 1925, p. 53.

^{vii} Yves Klein, quoted in Klaus Ottmann, *Yves Klein by Himself: His Life and Thought*, Paris, 2010, p. 53.

^{viii} Yves Klein, quoted in Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 1994, p. 66.

^{ix} Gaston Bachelard, quoted in Klaus Ottmann, *Yves Klein by Himself: His Life and Thought*, Paris, 2010, p. 287.

Provenance

Charles Wilp, Cologne
 Gallerihuset, Copenhagen
 Collection Wenk
 Neumann & Partners GbR, Dusseldorf
 Achenbach Kunstberatung, Dusseldorf
 HypoVereinsbank, Munich (acquired from the above in 1996)
 Sotheby’s, London, June 28, 2010, lot 5
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Frankfurt, Schirn Kunsthalle (no. 42, p. 228, illustrated, p. 96; erroneously dated as 1960);
 Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (no. 42, p. 228, illustrated, p. 96; erroneously dated as 1960), *Yves Klein*, September 17, 2004–May 2, 2005
 Turin, Unicredit Private Banking SpA, 2005–2006 (on loan)
 Vienna, BA-CA Kunstforum, *Monet-Kandinsky-Rothko und die Folgen: Wege der Abstrakten Malerei*, February 28–June 29, 2008, no. 22, pp. 125, 190 (illustrated, pp. 124, 133)

ⁱ Yves Klein, *Dimanche: Le journal d’un seul jour*, November 27, 1960, p. 1.

Literature

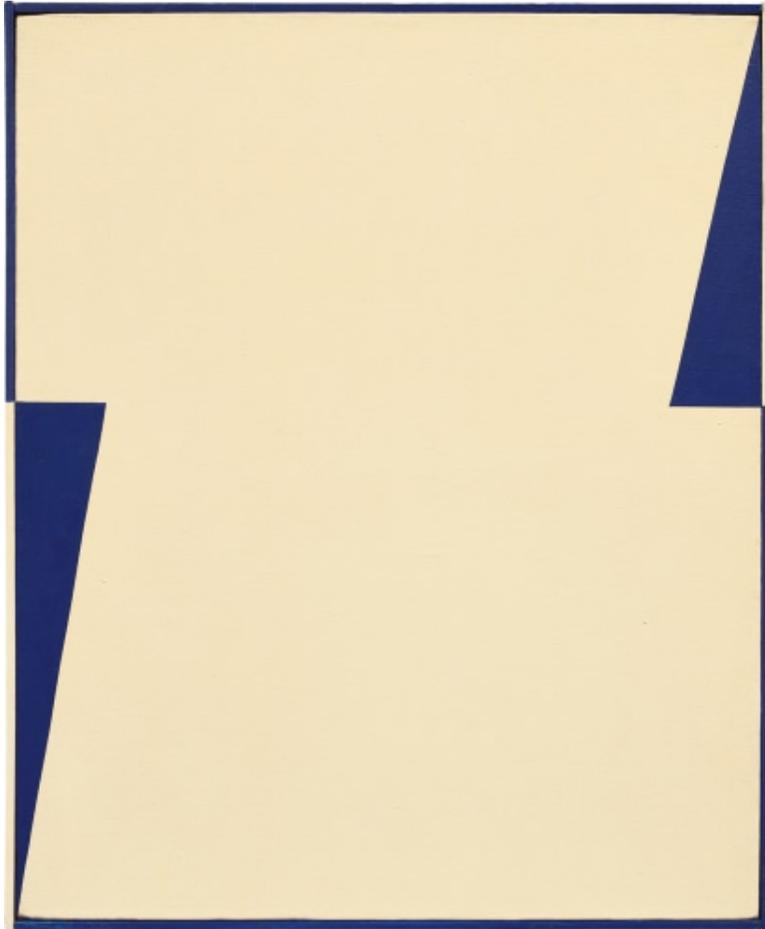
Colin Gleadell, "The Window Closes," *Art Monthly*, no. 339, September 2010, p. 40

Charlotte Appleyard and James Salzmann, *Corporate Art Collections: A Handbook to Corporate Buying*, Farnham, 2012, p. 56

Laurianne Simonin, "The Colors of Controversy," *Barnebys Magazine*, February 7, 2022, online (detail illustrated; installation view illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY OF AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTOR

16

Carmen Herrera

Basque

signed, titled and dated "'BASQUE" Carmen Herrera
1965" on the reverse
acrylic on canvas, in hand-painted artist's frame
23 5/8 x 19 1/2 in. (60 x 49.5 cm)
Painted in 1965.

Estimate

\$600,000 — 800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"There is nothing I love more than to make a straight line. How can I explain it? It's the beginning of all structures really." —Carmen Herrera

A meticulous rendering of cobalt blue triangular forms perfectly calibrated into a warm field of white, *Basque* is a timeless example of Carmen Herrera's lauded oeuvre of geometric, hard-edge abstractions. Created in 1965, the work hails from the pinnacle of the artist's practice when she had refined her mature aesthetic. *Basque* balances the tension between color and line, canvas and support, second and third dimensions in painterly and architectonic harmony. With the artist's recent passing at 106 years old, *Basque* preserves the extraordinary legacy of the Cuban-American painter who devoted herself to "a lifelong process of purification, a process of taking away what isn't essential."ⁱ

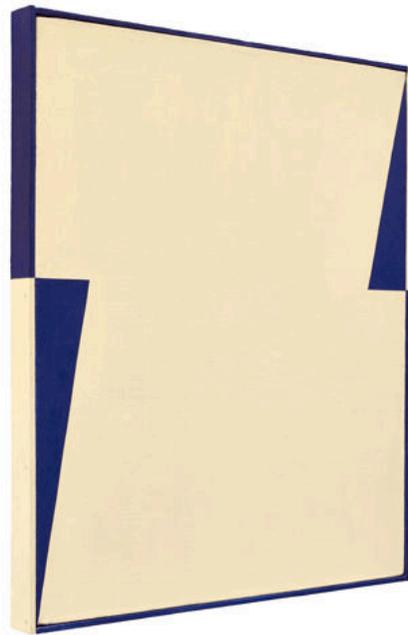


Carmen Herrera in her studio in Paris, ca. 1948-1953. Image: © Carmen Herrera, Courtesy of Lisson Gallery

"Painting the frame is my defense of the work, my way of protecting it." —Carmen Herrera

In 1952, during her critical sojourn in Paris (1948-1953), Herrera began hand-painting her frames as a compositional device, which became one of the most significant breakthroughs of her career. By painting the edges of the canvas as well as its support, Herrera crafted a highly innovative method of integrating the canvas's surrounding environment to foreground the materiality and "objectness" of her works. For *Basque*, Herrera alternated the color of the frame with that of the

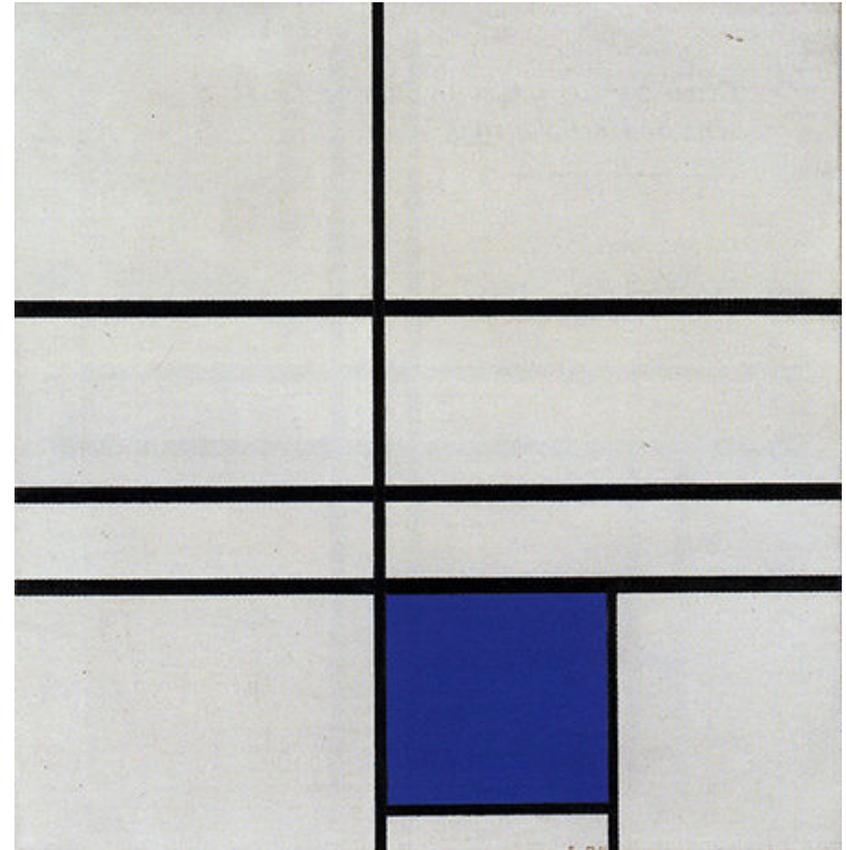
canvas edge, engendering a distinct sense of movement whereby the colors teeter in and out of the picture plane. Endowed with a remarkable sculptural quality, *Basque*, like the best of Herrera's works, "function[s] as a totality: color, form, surface, and edge are all enlisted in service to the composition," as Dana Miller explained.ⁱⁱ In *Basque*, Herrera reveals her painterly virtuosity in transforming a two-dimensional medium into an architectural space through "a process," in her words, "that must choose, among innumerable possibilities, the one that balances reason and visual execution."ⁱⁱⁱ



"In the chaos that we live in, I like to put some order." —Carmen Herrera

Manifesting the formal principles Herrera had established the prior decade, *Basque* also marks the artist's return to painting after a hiatus of several years. Herrera, who exhibited alongside Piet Mondrian and Josef Albers in Paris, officially settled in New York in 1954 where she befriended artists such as Barnett Newman and Leon Polk Smith, both of whom had a profound impact on her stylistic development. It was during these pivotal years that she developed her signature hard-edge style. Gradually paring down her paintings to two colors, the artist had resolved the distinction between color and form by *making* color her form, arriving at the radical simplicity and

arresting precision seen in *Basque*.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Double Line and Blue*, 1935. Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel

Like Herrera's *Iberia No. 25* of 1948, Haus der Kunst, Munich, *Basque* prefigures the artist's nod to Spain which she further explored in a later group of black-and-white works including *Escorial* and *Avila*, 1974. "In these instances," Miller observed, "we get rare glimpses of Herrera locating visual sources in the world around her."^{iv} The artist had certainly been to the Basque Country by the time of the present work's creation, including a trip to San Sebastián with her husband in 1953 after her residency in Paris. In the present work, Herrera's use of her signature cobalt blue—a prominent color in her oeuvre—and the warm white employed in her seminal *Blanco y Verde* series

(1959-1971) appears to suggest the essence of the eponymous coastal locale. This evocation in *Basque* precisely embodies what the artist called “alternatives,” or her assertion that the picture is open to visual interpretations. A testament to Herrera’s singular vision that has situated her in the canon of post-war abstraction, *Basque* ultimately materializes the artist’s proverbial words: “My quest is for the simplest of pictorial resolutions.”^v

Collector’s Digest

- The acclaimed 2015 documentary, *The 100 Years Show*, played a major role in reinvigorating interest in the artist’s work, which culminated in the artist’s seminal Whitney retrospective, *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, 2016-2017.
- Since her wide-spread institutional recognition, Herrera had a number of public installations, including a major outdoor exhibition at New York’s City Hall Park organized by the Public Art Fund in 2019. Her works currently reside in numerous major museum collections, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Tate, London.
- *Basque* achieved the artist’s world auction record at the time of its sale in 2015 at Phillips in New York. Phillips has achieved 4 out of the artist’s top 5 world auction records to date.

ⁱ Carmen Herrera, quoted in “Remembering Carmen Herrera,” Lisson Gallery, February 16, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Dana Miller, *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, p. 23.

ⁱⁱⁱ Carmen Herrera, quoted in *Carmen Herrera: A Retrospective, 1951-1984*, exh. cat., The Alternative Museum, New York, 1984, p. 4.

^{iv} Dana Miller, *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, p. 34.

^v Carmen Herrera, quoted in Estrellita B. Brodsky, “Ascetic Equation,” in Dorothy Feaver, ed., *Carmen Herrera: Works on Paper, 2010-2012*, exh. cat., Lisson Gallery, New York, 2013, p. 7.

Provenance

Rastovski Gallery, New York
Private Collection (acquired from the above)
Phillips, New York, November 18, 2015, lot 10
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Dusseldorf, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, December 2, 2017–April 8, 2018, no. 39, p. 248 (illustrated, p. 134; detail illustrated, p. 135)

Literature

Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2016, no. 33, p. 128 (illustrated; detail illustrated, p. 129)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



17

Amy Sberald

She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves

signed and dated "Amy Sberald 2017 ♥" on the reverse
oil on canvas
54 1/8 x 43 in. (137.5 x 109.2 cm)
Painted in 2017.

Estimate

\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I paint people who I want to see exist in the world, but then I also want to create a narrative that's extricated from a dominant historical narrative." —Amy Sherald

An exemplar from the artist's mature oeuvre, Amy Sherald's *She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves*, 2017, was underway upon her as Michelle Obama's portraitist, as illustrated in the announcement by [The New York Times](#) in October that year. Set against a flat lilac backdrop, the present work depicts a confidently posed figure gazing directly at the viewer. Weaving memory, history, and imagination, *She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves* embodies Sherald's trailblazing practice that reimagines the genre of portraiture "to tease out unexpected narratives and situate Black heritage centrally in the story of American art."ⁱ



As with the [dress she chose](#) for the former First Lady, the figure's outfit in *She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves* looks to the quilts created by the women of Gee's Bend, a small African-American community in Alabama. Sherald, whose mother is from Alabama, felt a profound connection to the Gee's Bend quilters after seeing the Whitney Museum's related exhibition in the early 2000s. "The significance of those patterns is something that never left me," she explained.ⁱⁱ Conjuring the stitched "bar" design of notable quilters like Loretta Pettway and Annie Mae Young, the patterned top also echoes the colorful compositions of Stanley Whitney, whose work similarly cites Gee's Bend quilting. Through this evocation, Sherald both elevates the medium of quilting to high art and sheds light on a community of Black female artists whose profound contributions to American visual and material culture are underrecognized, illuminating "a craft that is oftentimes forgotten though it be a huge part of a lot of family

traditions...something that could be not only for [the Black community], but also for the American people as well."ⁱⁱⁱ



[left] Loretta Pettway, "Bars" work-clothes quilt, 1970s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: Pitkin Studio/ Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Loretta Pettway Bennett/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Faith Ringgold, *The Bitter Nest, Part II: The Harlem Renaissance Party*, 1988, Smithsonian American Museum, Washington, D.C. Image: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Faith Ringgold / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

"I want people to be able to imagine a life outside of the circumscribed stereotype... [and] imagination allows you to bend the rules of the temporal world. I just want them to see that a more beautiful world exists beyond the confines of your environment." —Amy Sherald

Sherald explains that by rendering the figure's skin in her signature *grisaille*, or grayscale, she excludes the notion of color as race "by removing 'color' but still portraying racialized bodies as objects to be viewed through portraiture."^{iv} In *She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves*, the refined grayscale modelling of light and shadow evokes the aesthetic of vintage daguerreotypes—a profound influence on the artist's painterly practice. "They were after the invention of the camera," she explained, "when we were able to become authors of our own narrative and show our connection to a history that was connected to love and not just oppression and struggle. That was a huge affirmation for me."^v



Sherald's mature practice is marked by the flat monochrome realms that her realist figures occupy, a technique that literally and metaphorically abstracts a sense of time and place. Departing from her early speckled backgrounds, the flat backdrop reflects how Sherald "solved the problem of space," as she said, "because I've always been a painter that just wanted to focus on the figure."^{vi} In *She was learning to love moments, to love moments for themselves*, the lilac field presents a dramatic contrast, propelling the figure forward out of the picture plane. The lighthearted, mythical evocations of the lilac background capture the heart of Sherald's artistic program: "My work is about taking blackness past the stereotypes and opening it up to the imagination...These paintings exist in the liminal space between fantasy and reality."^{vii}

"When I'm reading, I sometimes come across sentences that are just perfect...I find some of [my paintings] illustrate these exact moments that women have written in history, from Lucille Clifton and Gwendolyn Brooks, and different poets." —Amy Sherald

A lover of poetry, Sherald culls her titles from many disparate sources. Here the artist looked to a line in "We're the only colored people," a vignette in poet Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha*, 1953, which explores a Black couple's experience at the cinema. In the verse, the female protagonist is enchanted by a technicolor film and savors the moment as a brief escape from the White gaze that defines their reality. The composition presents a remarkable reverberation with Brooks' narrative: the figure's gaze (an iconic motif of Sherald's), the technicolor attire, and the lilac background which recalls Sherald's own love of cinematography by alluding to the great influence of Wes Anderson's

films on her work. Here Sherald's visual lexicon thus shines through with a striking dialogic force that teeters between the textual and visual, past and present, real and visionary.

Cut from the Archives

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPQSKQ7Rnyo>

ⁱ "Amy Sherald: the heart of the matter...", Hauser & Wirth, New York, press release, September 10, 2019.

ⁱⁱ Amy Sherald, quoted in "Virtual Conversation: The Obama Portraits—Featuring Artists Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald," The Art Institute of Chicago, video, June 18, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Amy Sherald, quoted in Victoria L. Valentine, "Portrait of an Artist: Baltimore-based Amy Sherald Wins Smithsonian's Outwin Boochever Competition," *Culture Type*, March 26, 2016, [online](#).

^v Amy Sherald, quoted in Victoria L. Valentine, "Portrait Artist Amy Sherald Discussed Her Practice at the National Gallery of Art: 'I Paint American People. Black People Doing Stuff,'" *Culture Type*, November 7, 2017, [online](#).

^{vi} Amy Sherald, quoted in "Virtual Conversation: The Obama Portraits—Featuring Artists Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald," The Art Institute of Chicago, video, June 18, 2021, [online](#).

^{vii} Amy Sherald, quoted in Mary Carole McCauley, "Baltimorean Amy Sherald Wins First Prize in Smithsonian Portrait Context," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 11, 2016, [online](#).

Provenance

Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2017

Literature

Robin Pogrebin, "After a Late Start, an Artist's Big Break: Michelle Obama's Official Portrait," *The New York Times*, October 23, 2017, online (installation view of the present work in progress in the artist's studio illustrated)

Andrew Goldstein, "Amy Sherald, Michelle Obama's Chosen Portraitist, Is Now a Bona Fide Art-Market Success Story," *Artnet News*, December 6, 2017, online (illustrated; titled as *Untitled*)

David Morgan, "Portraitist Amy Sherald," *CBS News*, February 18, 2018, online (illustrated)

Grace Ebert, "Remarkable Portraits by Artist Amy Sherald Render Subjects in Grayscale Against Vibrant Backdrops," *Colossal*, June 5, 2020, online (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A PROMINENT PRIVATE
COLLECTION

18

Emmanuel Taku

The Three Damsels

signed and dated "Taku 2021" lower right
acrylic and collage on canvas
78 7/8 x 78 3/4 in. (200.5 x 200 cm)
Executed in 2021.

Estimate

\$50,000 — 70,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"In capturing the layered essence of the Black bodies in my work, I seek to capture a sense of balance and conflict within a single entity captured as a demi-god. I have always looked to push the boundaries of representation and I believe it is important to celebrate the complexity of existence." —Emmanuel Taku

Presenting three demi-goddesses unified by a sea of floral paisley, Emmanuel Taku's *The Three Damsels* is a monumental example of the Ghanaian artist's acclaimed practice of "figurative surrealism."ⁱ In the present work, the highly refined rendering of the figures stands in dramatic contrast to the abstract flatness of their silhouetted clothing. Their eyes, depicted as glowing orbs of white light, enhance the surreal nature of the composition and highlight the powerful mystique of these subjects. Capturing his singular painterly vocabulary that places him amongst the vital contemporary figurative painters who seek to reframe Black narratives within the art historical canon, *The Three Damsels* embodies Taku's swift rise as "an extraordinary emerging talent in contemporary painting [who] addresses pertinent issues surrounding race and identity with an elegant complexity."ⁱⁱ



Umberto Boccioni, *Three Women*, 1909-1910. Banca Commerciale Italiana, Milan. Image: © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY

"There is an adage in my language that says, 'If one person stands, he is defeated easily. But if they are two or more, they are able to defeat whatever is attacking them.' That is why most of the time you don't see any gaps or space between [my subjects]." —Emmanuel Taku

Best known for his large multi-figure compositions that combine realist portraiture and abstraction, Taku studied at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design from 2005 to 2009 where he met his close friends and contemporaries Amoako Boafo, Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, and Kwesi Botchway. Taku developed a figurative style unique from his peers, focusing on multiple figures

united through their clothing “to create a sense of consolidation, synergy and unity,” as he explained. “The anthropomorphic silhouettes created by the bodies engulfed in silk screened fabric print are emphatic of this unity.”ⁱⁱⁱ Here, the three women are ultimately fused together through the fashionable, abstracted attire they wear, capturing the artist’s aim to embody the power of a unified humanity. As he expressed, “When we come together, it doesn’t matter the color of your skin—white, Black, or other...Nothing can break us because we think the same way and we want to establish and accomplish. That’s why we must come together, so we can fight and be strong. That’s why I try to make them look like they’re one person.”^{iv}



Paul Gauguin, *Three Tahitian Women*, 1896. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1997, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002

“My work reflects my love for textiles with a silk-screening approach and my commitment to capturing black bodies in the abstract – one as reflection of the other.” —Emmanuel Taku

The Three Damsels showcases Taku’s signature silkscreen approach, in which he designs the floral pattern of the figures’ clothes on the computer before transferring it onto canvas. Deriving from his longstanding passion for textiles, the design seen here references the significant role that patterned fabrics have played in the history of identity in African culture as well as in his personal life. As the artist expressed, “The use of floral paisley prints comes from my personal fascination with the pattern and fabric that has always been a part of my life since youth—whether as

tablecloth or in garments. I also felt that paisley represents a melting pot of cultural identity.”^v As illustrated by his reveal of *The Three Damsels* in progress on [Instagram](#), the artist transforms the earthy palette of the silkscreened clothing into an ethereal purple through his painterly application, adding layers of abstraction as a means to “reclaim dominant narratives about black bodies and to reject their objectification.”^{vi} Taku furthers this investigation in the present work by collaging magazine and newspaper clippings onto the skin of his figures, which for him “captures the essence of the power of the press as custodians of truth” and functions as a device to subvert stereotypes of Black representation in the media.^{vii}



*“I remember watching Man of Steel and Superman, and when they get to that level of power, their pupils vanish and they have white eyes. To me, it signifies strength.”
—Emmanuel Taku*

Based on Taku’s fascination with Superman since his youth, his pupil-less Black figures embody the essence of power and strength—superhero style. “This body of work came to me as an idea when I heard John Akomfrah speak about his experience as a child referring to museums capturing artwork by Turner and Constable as a ‘Temple of Whiteness,’” Taku elucidated of works such as *The Three Damsels*. “I just remembered how that clicked for me and I truly wanted to create my own ‘Temple of Blackness’ capturing black people as demi-gods or heroes without pupils or eyes: unapproachable splendor.”^{viii} By portraying his figures as supernatural characters, the present

work reflects Taku's elevation of the Black subject in the Western art historical canon, transforming historically politicized bodies to those of potent reverence.

Collector's Digest

- In 2020, Taku became the pilot artist in residence for the Noldor Artist Residence, Ghana's first independent artist residency. Maruani Mercier announced its worldwide representation of Taku and his first solo show with the gallery in April 2021, soon followed by the artist's solo exhibition at the M Art Foundation, Shanghai that November. In a [November 2021 interview](#), Taku revealed he is preparing for two solo shows forthcoming this year.

- Phillips achieved Taku's current world auction record in March 2022 in London, when [Sisters in Lilac](#) achieved £214,200 (\$282,996), soaring over 10 times the work's estimate. The present work marks the artist's Evening Sale auction debut with Phillips.

ⁱ Laurent Mercier, "Emmanuel Taku," Maruani Mercier, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Emmanuel Taku, quoted in Cristina Samper, "Feel Hypnotised with the Gaze and Clothes in Emmanuel Taku's Subjects," *Art of Choice*, June 28, 2021.

^{iv} Emmanuel Taku, quoted in Freya Drohan, "God Amongst Men! How Emmanuel Taku is Reclaiming Black Identity in his Acclaimed Artwork," *Daily Front Row Magazine*, November 30, 2021, [online](#).

^v Emmanuel Taku, quoted in Cristina Samper, "Feel Hypnotised with the Gaze and Clothes in Emmanuel Taku's Subjects," *Art of Choice*, June 28, 2021.

^{vi} "Emmanuel Taku," Maruani Mercier, 2021, [online](#).

^{vii} Emmanuel Taku, quoted in conversation with Danielle Gorodenzik, "Joseph Awuah-Darko and Emmanuel Taku Interviewed by Africa First," *Africa First*, February 24, 2021, [online](#).

^{viii} Emmanuel Taku, quoted in Cristina Samper, "Feel Hypnotised with the Gaze and Clothes in Emmanuel Taku's Subjects," *Art of Choice*, June 28, 2021.

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE
COLLECTION

19 ♦

Roy Lichtenstein

Nude

oil and Magna on canvas
82 1/2 x 45 in. (209.6 x 114.3 cm)

Painted in 1997, this work will be included in the
forthcoming catalogue raisonné being prepared by the
Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

Estimate

\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ZZvhXtWwohA>

Among Roy Lichtenstein's final paintings, *Nude* encapsulates the artist's reflections on both his career and modernism as a whole—on his own terms and through his own approach. An image of radiant beauty and unadulterated allure, Lichtenstein's bombshell seduces the viewer with a soft smile and brilliant red lips, inviting our gaze with averted eyes. Executed in 1997, the year of Lichtenstein's death, this superb example from his last major body of work (1993-1997) sustained his career-long preoccupation with cultural clichés: once again seizing the cartoon imagery that featured in his earlier work, he deviated from his original source material only by visualizing them without their clothes. Their metamorphosis into another stock image of femininity perpetuated by printed media—that of the erotic, domestic blonde—veiled by his arresting Ben-Day dots, his stock-in-trade, reflects his ever-evolving dialogue with pop culture and the art historical canon.



Roy Lichtenstein in his studio in Southampton, New York, 1997. Image: © Bob Adelman Estate, Artwork: © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

The first body of work executed after his monumental retrospective in 1993 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the *Nudes* were Lichtenstein's last contributions to art history and many are now held in important institutional collections, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and The Broad, Los Angeles.

Lichtenstein's Nudes

Lichtenstein's nudes were birthed from his concurrent *Interiors* series, caricatures of pristine *Architectural Digest*-esque representations of post-war bourgeois domesticity. First contained within decorative paintings on the walls, his nudes soon began to inhabit these homes themselves, their picture-perfect physiques as satirically commodified as the lavish furnishings which surrounded them. *Nude* is the culmination of this progression: the primary subject of the painting, Lichtenstein's figure stands next to a plinth or table in a bare room only schematically rendered.



Pamela Anderson as C.J. Parker in "Baywatch". Image: Collection Christophel / Alamy Stock Photo

The artist considered these late *Nudes* to be a marked distinction from his iconic representations of sentimental comic book romances, which he characterized as “perfectly pure” and “ended in a nice kiss.”ⁱ Though these figures encapsulate the same eroticism as his earlier work, “the 1990s nudes take pleasure in their own company without the slightest hint of needing or missing a man. They are not paralyzed by their emotions,” Avis Berman observed. “In contrast to Lichtenstein’s original romance-comic pictures, this world flourishes exuberantly without men or engagement rings or kisses.” Indeed, perhaps reflective of wider social changes in the second half of the 20th century, *Nude*’s sexuality is presented in new terms; within a 1990s context, the figure is perhaps evocative of Pamela Anderson’s status as the ultimate American sex symbol during the contemporaneous run of *Baywatch*. “The older norm didn’t disappear, but needed to be adjusted,” Berman continued. “Even as he updated the stereotypes of erotic fantasies, Lichtenstein wove them into the consistent narrative of his own career.”ⁱⁱ

“Why bother doing nudes, you might ask? I get a kick out of the fact that the nude is so insistent.” —Roy Lichtenstein

Following in the footsteps of many of his forebears, including Henri Matisse, Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, and Pablo Picasso, Lichtenstein rendered the classic theme of the nude—likely the canon’s most persistent trope—in his distinctive aesthetic idiom late in life, often as a means of indexing art history itself. “The king of the blown-up comic-book frame had seemed to be settled into a quiet, Old Masterly period of late—but he’s broken out with a bang with his new series of nudes,” the *New York Daily News* declared when the artist returned to the motif in 1993.ⁱⁱⁱ On one hand, the subject bears an immediate resemblance to Picasso’s volumetric *Standing Nudes* from the 1920s. On the other, the preliminary tracing paper study for Lichtenstein’s *Nude* depicts the figure gripping a flowing piece of fabric, betraying that the likely original inspiration for the picture was among the first life-sized representations of the female nude in Western art history: the Ancient Greek sculpture *Aphrodite of Knidos*, executed by Praxiteles circa 4th century BC. Indeed, Lichtenstein’s 1997 canvases are replete with references to antiquity; ironically, it was in the final paintings of his lifetime that he returned to the very first images of Western art history.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Nude (Study)*, 1997. Artwork: © The Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Art History’s Favorite Subject

“The later women paintings and nudes that Roy did are just absolutely gorgeous...in terms of beauty and engaging imagery—interesting, viral imagery—the women are fantastic.” —Jeff Koons



Copy after Praxiteles, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, ca. 350-340 BCE. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich. Image: © Vanni Archive/ Art Resource, NY



Titian, *The Venus of Urbino*, 1538. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Image: Scala/Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource, NY



Francisco Goya, *The Nude Maja*, 1797-1800. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Image: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY



Auguste Renoir, *The Source*, 1906. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY



Pablo Picasso, *Standing Nude*, 1922. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Francis Picabia, *Femmes au bull-dog*, 1941-1942. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



John Currin, *Honeymoon Nude*, 1998. Tate, London. Artwork: © John Currin, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London

Painting about Painting

Despite the classical richness of the subject matter, it is her translation into Lichtenstein's signature vernacular that distinguish *Nude* as a meditation on the act of painting. As a critic illuminated, "Lichtenstein's work... is not so much about the subject matter as about what his treatment—outlines, unmodulated color, Ben-day dots—does to the subject."^{iv} After a career critically interrogating the potentialities of a post-war machine aesthetic, Lichtenstein ironically employs the language of mechanism in *Nude* as a means of reflecting on the act of painting.

His signature Ben-Day dots suggest contouring, and the diagonal lines in the lower right of the picture establish the illusion of depth that defines the space in which the woman stands. Though these motifs allude to the building blocks of draughtsmanship and rudimentary chiaroscuro, they figure more as a two-dimensional decorative patterning, emphasizing the flatness of the picture plane. "My nudes are part light and shade, and so are the backgrounds, with dots to indicate the shade," Lichtenstein elucidated. "The dots are also graduated from large to small, which usually suggests modeling in people's minds, but that's not what you get with these figures."^v Redolent of the printing process, these dots and diagonal lines are mechanical marks that are typically intended to go unnoticed, but in *Nude* they emphatically convey a complete deconstruction of space. The dots that fill the left side of the figure bleed into the plinth and wall beside her, collapsing the illusion of depth; a white stripe (and the small area of the figure's hair that it intersects) disrupts any coherency, reminiscent of a glitch or printing error.



"As these dots, following their own formal and psychic logic, spread beyond the body," Harry Coplans remarked, "they escape narrative and depiction to become identified instead with the surface of the painting, the plane where the subject and object, artist/ beholder and model, would meet."^{vi} In a sense, these inconsistencies shift the subject of *Nude* from the central figure to the act of depiction itself. It is possible to read the illusionistic "errors" in reference to the unparalleled and evocative power of painting, which always remained his primary métier despite his various experiments with other media, such as sculpture and printmaking. Indeed, his figure's signature blonde hair is rendered here in the palest of blues, reminding the viewer that she is not "real," but of the artist's own invention. In response to an increasingly mechanized world, *Nude* seems to express the controlled palette and representational limits of printed and computer-generated imagery in Lichtenstein's final homage to his greatest love: painting.

A Post-Modern Reflection

"He deduced and acknowledged the nude as a form through which a new syntax could emerge by means of an understated narrative that implies a relationship between the artist-creator and the nude." —Sheena Wagstaff

Underscoring the conceptual post-modern rigor that has always defined his approach, his choice of

the nude as his final major subject—a motif as prevalent in art history as his previous comic book subjects were in pop culture imagery—saw his career come full-circle. After four decades of radically probing fundamental questions of art and artmaking, it was apt for him to select this as a symbol of returning to the beginning of both his oeuvre and art history.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Woman: Sunlight*, 1996. The Broad, Los Angeles. Artwork: © The Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

In typical Lichtenstein fashion, the subject has no reference to reality except that of an artist-represented reality—and it is relationship, between model and creator, that so preoccupied the artist in the final year of his life. “It is the discovery and convulsive act of formal genesis—and

Lichtenstein’s symbolic transfiguration of pictorial skin and gristle—that signals its real pictorial metamorphosis, and thus become the means of simultaneously overcoming yet emphasizing its narrative associations,” Wagstaff expounded. “Lichtenstein’s *Nudes*, created in the last four years of his life, are a profoundly innovative and active meditation upon the relationship of creation and perception.”^{vii}

ⁱ Christine Temin, “West meets East with a Pop,” *The Boston Globe*, March 21, 1997, p. C12.

ⁱⁱ Avis Berman, *Roy Lichtenstein: Classic of the New*, exh. cat., Kunsthau Bregenz, Vienna, 2005, p. 143.

ⁱⁱⁱ Stuart Klawans, “Museums,” *New York Daily News*, December 3, 1994, p. 24.

^{iv} Marina Isola, “Going Dotty over Roy Lichtenstein,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 28, 1995, p. 141.

^v Roy Lichtenstein, quoted in Michael Kimmelman, *Portraits: Talking with Artists at the Met, the Modern, the Louvre, and Elsewhere*, New York, 1998, p. 89.

^{vi} Harry Cooper, “On the Dot,” in *Roy Lichtenstein: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., The Art Institute of Chicago, 2012, p. 33.

^{vii} Sheena Wagstaff, “Late Nudes,” in *ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

Provenance

Estate of the Artist

Castelli Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2015

Exhibited

Madrid, Fundación Juan March (no. 97, illustrated, pp. 112, 152), *Roy Lichtenstein: Beginning to End*; then travelled as Pinacothèque de Paris (no. 97, p. 152, illustrated, p. 112), *Roy Lichtenstein: Évolution*, February 2–September 23, 2007

New York, Gagosian Gallery, *Go Figure*, May 9–August 21, 2009, pp. 48, 56 (illustrated, p. 49; installation view illustrated, p. 66)

Literature

“The Lichtenstein Catalogue Raisonné Project,” *IFAR Journal*, Vol. 8, Nos. 3 & 4, 2006, fig. 2, p. 92 (illustrated)

Roy Lichtenstein: A Retrospective, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2012, fig. 18, p. 103 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
COLLECTION

20

Issy Wood

Actual car 2

signed and dated "Issy Wood 2019" on the stretcher
oil on velvet

60 7/8 x 43 3/8 in. (154.6 x 110.2 cm)

Executed in 2019.

Estimate

\$150,000 — 200,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Wood treats [her subjects] like textbooks of desire, manuals for mysterious constructions of want." —Matthew McLean

Presenting a black luxury convertible that appears to emerge from a dark abyss, *Actual car 2*, 2019, is a manifestation of Issy Wood's "intoxicating interplay of desire, luxury and degradation."ⁱ Extracting her source material from online auction archives and catalogues, her grandmother's heirlooms, and her own photographs, the emerging London-based artist is best known for her uncanny depictions of cars and leather jackets. Here, she appears to draw from a found aerial shot of a 1950s Mercedes Benz 300 SL, reimagined through her painterly sensibility. Showcasing Wood's signature technique of painting on velvet, the present work exemplifies the artist's investigations on the relationships between consciousness and commodity, masculinity and femininity, glamor and tragedy.



Domenico Gnoli, *Ladies Shoes*, 1968. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

"Cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object." —Roland Barthes

In her car series, Wood weaves notions of gender and desire that permeate her work by playing with the slippery distinctions between object and objectification. While the artist's paintings of leather jackets "represent a kind of woman...I think of the cars as quite a masculine environment," the artist explained. "The car is an escape for a man, it's where one can experience a kind of

freedom—or at least that’s how advertising sells a car...It’s fun to try that on for size, to see what it would be like to be a man for whom this is a desirable object.”ⁱⁱ Wood further addresses this notion of desire in her writings, where she quotes Roland Barthes’ statement in her observation of the hallowed and erotic aura that surrounds sports cars in modern culture. In *Actual car 2*, the convertible is presented like a divine object as the interplay of light and shadow sensually highlights its body.



[left] Luigi Russolo, *Dynamism of an Automobile*, 1912-1913. Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [right] Robert Bechtle, '71 Buick, 1972. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Robert Bechtle and Whitney Chadwick Trust. Courtesy of the Robert Bechtle and Whitney Chadwick Trust, and Gladstone Gallery

"A found painting surface, such as an old tarpaulin, a dark-coloured velvet...already has its own structure and history. Such surfaces are not neutral; they are not passive, but instead already have a voice of their own and the power to evoke mood."—Max Hollein

In a 2019 interview, the artist revealed that works such as *Actual car 2* mark a new development in her car series by making the color of her subject the same as that of the respective velvet support. By painting directly on velvet, Wood at once explores the visual and tactile through her painterly process, revealing the power of materiality to convey mood and meaning. Here, the rich black velvet and matched palette engenders the dark and eerie mood pervading the composition, evoking the black-hole silence of the background and barren seats. In the Western art historical canon, velvet paintings originated as a sanctified medium reserved for portraying religious icons and, by the 20th century, became kitsch statements of anti-art eventually elevated into the realm of “high art” by artists such as Julian Schnabel. The present work thus situates itself within the charged history of the velvet medium as Max Hollein observed, while also alluding to a timeless fabric that—like modern luxury cars—symbolize power, desire, and wealth. In this way, *Actual car 2* captures the striking dialogue between representation and materiality, past and present, with

which Wood engages in expressing the “seductive artificiality” and “angst” of glamor.ⁱⁱⁱ



Julian Schnabel, *Saint Vulture*, 1983. Rubell Museum, Miami. Artwork: © Julian Schnabel/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"I'm playing with time, too. I lay the foundations for something that hints at the early twentieth century and throw in [a contemporary clue], as a sort of temporal gaslighting."—Issy Wood

Calling herself a “medieval millennial,” Wood devised the term in referencing her signature

classical style that is now widely recognized as her unique brand of Neo-Surrealism. Trained at the Royal Academy of Arts, Wood's mastery and use of a historic painterly language often leaves viewers perplexed on the date of her works. "It's gratifying...if someone can't tell whether [my] paintings were made in 2010 or 1910," she shared, though at times she enjoys "throwing in a contemporary reference, a couple of clues that maybe this wasn't [the past]."^{iv,v} Here, she paints the year of the work's creation onto the composition, a device discretely used throughout her practice thus far. Yet, Wood does not simply date the work for clarity, but rather adds another layer of temporal complexity by rendering the numbers in Gothic font, epitomizing her oxymoronic self-identification. As she reflected, "What does 'from life' even mean in this day and age?"^{vi}



ⁱ Rosanna McLaughlin, "Issy Wood," *Mixing it Up: Painting Today*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 2021, p. 112.

ⁱⁱ Issy Wood, quoted in "Issy Wood in Conversation with Sarah McCrory," *Luncheon*, no. 8, 2019, p. 61.

ⁱⁱⁱ Philomena Epps and Issy Wood, quoted in "Issy Wood Talks Painting the Tragedy and Ambivalence Lurking in Luxury," *Garage*, March 18, 2019, [online](#).

^{iv} Issy Wood, quoted in Griselda Murray Brown, "Paint the Moment: Why millennials are Turning to Oil and Canvas," *The Financial Times*, April 20, 2018, [online](#).

^v Issy Wood, quoted in Matthew McLean, "Get Weird: Justin Fitzpatrick, France-Lise McGurn, Issy Wood and Tom Worsfold," *Frieze*, no. 194, March 12, 2018, [online](#).

^{vi} Issy Wood, quoted in Margaret Kross, "Issy Wood: From Life," *CURA*, no. 31, Summer 2019, p. 200.

Provenance

Carlos/Ishikawa, London

John Wolf Fine Art, Los Angeles (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A SOPHISTICATED COLLECTION

21 ♦

Wayne Thiebaud

Berry Cake

incised with the artist's signature and date "♥ Thiebaud 2018" upper right; incised with the artist's signature and date "♥ Thiebaud 2017" lower left; signed and dated "♥ Thiebaud 2017 2018" on the reverse
oil on board

18 x 18 in. (45.7 x 45.7 cm)

Painted in 2017-2018.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I'm interested in foods generally which have been fooled with ritualistically, displays contrived and arranged in certain ways to tempt or seduce us." —Wayne Thiebaud

An arresting example of Wayne Thiebaud's most iconic imagery, *Berry Cake* embodies the artist's reinvigoration of still-life painting through his unique Pop lexicon that explored the joys of modern American culture. Belonging to his career-long series of mouthwatering cakes and desserts, the present work, painted in 2017-2018, reflects Thiebaud's mastery of the subject that first engrossed him in the early 1960s. In the present work, the artist manifests his signature technique of "object transference," in which his rich application of paint mimics the object he depicts. Here, thick impasto doubles as luscious frosting while textured slathers of purple imitate a fresh spread of berry preserves, bringing the delectable cake to life in oil paint. Transforming the mundane into the extraordinary under Thiebaud's painterly hand, *Berry Cake* encapsulates the artist's amusing response on the sensual edibility of his works: "the painting and the frosting...that's a real indulgence."ⁱ



Giorgio Morandi, *Still Life*, 1948. Galleria d'Arte Moderna Bologna. Image: © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Giorgio Morandi, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome

Best known for his tantalizing paintings of confectionary goods on display, Thiebaud began his investigations at the onset of his career in 1961 and revisited the theme over the course of the next five decades. Belying their creation from memory, Thiebaud's desserts are rooted in nostalgia and the experiences of his youth. In the artist's words, "Most of the objects are fragments of actual experience. For instance, I would really think of the bakery counter; of the way the counter was lit, where the pies were placed but I wanted just a piece of the experience... Those little *vedute* in fragmented circumstances were always poetic to me."ⁱⁱ Here, Thiebaud offers a glimpse into the inner layers of the otherwise whole cake by depicting a quarter sliced off, revealing his exploration of complex relationships with shape and shadow while materializing the lyricism he found in "the *vedute* in fragmented circumstances." The present work further captures a striking allusion to memory in the hazy suggestion of the cake stand lid that creates an elusive aura around his subject oscillating between presence and absence.

"I [chose confections] because I hadn't seen anyone paint those things, which I looked upon and found quite interesting and beautiful. If you really look at a lemon meringue pie or a beautiful cake, it's kind of a work of art, and that's what attracted me." —Wayne Thiebaud

Emanating a sense of idealization and nostalgia that pervades the artist's oeuvre, *Berry Cake* captures Thiebaud's unique take on Pop. Though widely remembered as a Pop artist, Thiebaud departed from his contemporaries such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenburg by offering an introspective celebration of American life and consumer culture in his work. As Adam Gopnick observed, "[Thiebaud's work]...has the effect not of eliminating the Pop resonance of his subjects but of slowing down and chastening the associations they evoke, so that a host of ambivalent feelings—nostalgic and satiric and elegiac—can come back later, calmed down and contemplative: enlightened."ⁱⁱⁱ In the present work, the artist elevates the cake into an object of Giorgio Morandi-esque contemplation, shining the light seductively onto his subject and emboldening its stately presence in the deep shadow that suggestively extends past the composition. Here, Thiebaud conjures the deep influence of Edward Hopper on his work by presenting a meditative reflection on everyday life in modern America.

loaded and you recognize a kind of stillness which tends to vibrate. When I stroke around the object with a loaded paintbrush it is calculated to echo the presence of that object." —Wayne Thiebaud

The literal and metaphorical evocations found in *Berry Cake* are engendered by Thiebaud's process of "object transference," which plays in tandem with what he calls the "isolation of the object." Placing his subjects against a single-colored background, his objects are quite literally brought to the surface through rich brushwork and luscious hues, mimicking their source through the materiality of the paint. Here, the cake's cream-colored icing emerges from its background through Thiebaud's variegated application of paint. Further manifesting the artist's mastery of color, the juxtaposition of warm and cool tones in *Berry Cake* showcases his critical technique dubbed "halation," presenting a prismatic orchestration of color that contours and energizes each elemental form of the composition. From the confection and cake stand, to the imparted shadows and rendered surfaces, the sensational visual effect offered by the present work embodies Adam Gopnick's observation of Thiebaud's most recognizable subject. "The cakes, which seem so honestly and forthrightly described, turn out, when they're seen up close, to be outlined with rings and rainbows of pure color; bright blues and reds and purples, which register at a distance only as a just perceptible vibrator. These rings are Thiebaud's own invention; there's nothing quite like them in any other painting."^{iv}

Thiebaud's Confections in Museum Collections

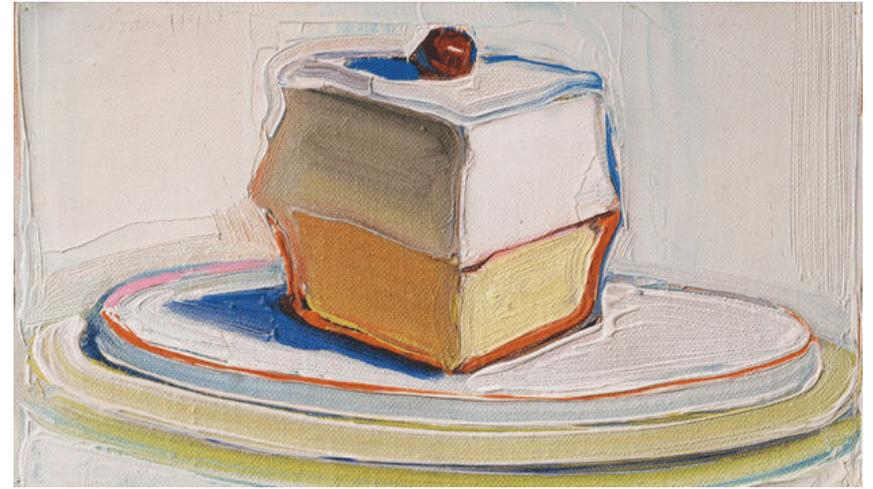


[left] Edward Hopper, *Table with Ladies*, 1930. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Heirs of Josephine Hopper / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Claes Oldenburg, *Floor Cake*, 1962. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Claes Oldenburg

"Staring fixedly at an object does something to expand time. The more you look at it, the more the edges, the inside and the minute particles quiver. It is almost as if it is



Cut Meringues, 1961. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Wayne Thiebaud Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Cake, 1963. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Wayne Thiebaud Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Pie Counter, 1963. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Image: © Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Wayne Thiebaud Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Dessert Tray, 1997. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Artwork: © 2022 Wayne Thiebaud Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

ⁱ Wayne Thiebaud, quoted in Martin Gayford, "Geometry, pastries and paint: an interview with Wayne Thiebaud," *Apollo Magazine*, September 16, 2017, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Wayne Thiebaud, quoted in Steven A. Nash, "Unbalancing Acts: Wayne Thiebaud Reconsidered," in *Wayne Thiebaud: A Paintings Retrospective*, exh. cat., Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, 2000, p. 18.

ⁱⁱⁱ Adam Gopnik, "The Art World: Window Gazing," *The New Yorker*, April 29, 1991, p. 80.

^{iv} Ibid.

Wayne Thiebaud

Provenance

Lebaron's Fine Art, Sacramento

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



22

Andy Warhol

Flowers

stamped twice by the Estate of Andy Warhol and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. and numbered "PA53.012" on the overlap; numbered "PA53.012" on the stretcher
acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas
48 x 47 7/8 in. (121.9 x 121.6 cm)
Executed in 1964.

Estimate

\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



An exceptionally vibrant example from one of Andy Warhol's most iconic series, *Flowers* radiates bursts of scarlet, cadmium red, and violet against a sea of emerald green. The present work, which was executed among his first *Flowers* in 1964, signaled a shift from his depictions of timely, instantly-recognizable branding to a more abstracted and timeless imagery—though, of course, still seizing source material mediated by popular culture and print magazines. Embracing a distinctive hyper-flatness that presaged Warhol's later explorations in wallpaper, this body of work represented the culmination of his iconic Pop aesthetic before announcing his short-lived “retirement” from painting. Electric yet macabre, distinctive but mechanical, the *Flowers* marked a seminal chapter in Warhol's career and are iconic relics of 20th century art history.



Jeff Koons, *Mound of Flowers*, 1991. Tate, London. Artwork: © Jeff Koons

A Time for Change

"But now it's going to be flowers—they're the fashion this year... They're terrific!"
—Andy Warhol

Following a string of high-profile exhibitions that had cemented Warhol's reputation as one of the leading figures of the burgeoning Pop movement, the artist joined Leo Castelli Gallery in early 1964. His previous attempt at showing with the pioneering gallerist in 1961 was rejected, but he was now granted the opportunity to share a historic roster with formidable art world personalities such as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and Frank Stella. Expertly talented in self-marketing,

Warhol had cleverly focused his gallery presentations on a single subject or theme, including his *32 Campbell's Soup Cans* and *Elvis* shows at Ferus Gallery in 1962 and 1963; the *Death and Disaster* series which debuted at Galerie Ileana Sonnabend in January 1964; and his *Brillo Box* sculptures at Stable Gallery in April of that year.

With his inaugural Castelli exhibition slated for autumn 1964, the summer afforded Warhol the time and space to conceptualize a new body of work to symbolize this major professional turning point. Henry Geldzahler, the artist's friend and then-curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, visited Warhol while he was mulling over ideas at the Factory. “I looked around the studio and it was all Marilyn and disasters and death,” Geldzahler recalled. “I said, ‘Andy, maybe it's enough death now.’ He said, ‘What do you mean?’ I said, ‘Well, how about this?’ I opened a magazine to four flowers.”ⁱ



Andy Warhol with his assistants at the Factory, New York, 1964. Image: © Ugo Mulas Estate, All rights reserved, Artwork: © 2022 Andy Warhol Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Warhol's Flowers

Flipping to a page in the June 1964 issue of *Modern Photography*, the two saw a foldout of four photographs of seven hibiscus blossoms captured by the magazine's executive editor, Patricia Caulfield. The images were intended to illustrate the myriad visual outcomes possible from varying exposure periods and filter settings from a new Kodak color processing system; thus, each reproduction possessed subtle tonal distinctions, a striking seriality that no doubt appealed to Warhol's predilection for repetition and successive imagery—as well as his desire “to be a

machine.”ⁱⁱ

"[The Flowers] were totally successful and we sold them all! And you could keep selling them right now! That's it. That's one of those immortal images."—Ivan Karp

While adapting the source photograph for painting, the artist made substantial alterations: he cropped it into a square composed of only four large flowers, rotated the individual blossoms, and then transferred his new composition to several non-uniformly sized screens. During this process, Warhol requested his assistant Billy Name-Linich “run the photo repeatedly through the Factory's new photo stat machine” at least a dozen times because he “didn't want it to look like a photo at all. He just wanted the shape, the basic outline, of the flowers.”ⁱⁱⁱ Subsequently, the artist and his assistants applied continuous, flat planes of paint to the canvases before silkscreening the photographic representation on top. One of the 24 original 48-inch canvases produced, the present work was executed by Warhol before he had even officially determined that the *Flowers* would be the subject of his Castelli show.



Source material for the *Flowers*. The Archives of the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh Art. Artwork: © 2022 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Following his ultimate decision to present this new body of work at the exhibit, the *Flowers* were met with both critical and commercial acclaim, in addition to intense legal debate. Claiming that Warhol made unauthorized use of her photograph, Caulfield sued Warhol in 1966 for copyright infringement. The polarizing litigation attracted wide interest thanks to its deep-seated irony: the artist had built his career appropriating ubiquitous yet patented logos such as Coca-Cola bottles and cans of Campbell's soup, but judicial issues arose only after his use of a photograph of a garden flower that he had heavily altered. In fact, Pop scholar Michael Lobel noted that Warhol's modifications to Caulfield's undoubtedly hibiscus flowers went as far as to make the blooms ambiguous: "In the *New York Herald Tribune* they were identified as anemones, in the *Village Voice* as nasturtiums, and in both *Arts* and *Art News* as pansies."^{iv} Though she won her case, Caulfield's suit paradoxically seemed to double down on the very concerns of post-modernism—questions of image ownership, reproduction, and originality—that had preoccupied Warhol throughout his oeuvre.

"Now We're Doing My Flower Period!"

"[They're] like cut-out gouaches by Matisse set adrift on Monet's lily pond." —David Bourdon

Imbued with Warhol's idiosyncratic visual language, the *Flowers* are his contribution to one of art history's richest genres: the age-old aesthetic heritage of flower painting. "With the *Flowers*," Gerard Malanga expressed, "...he was kind of repeating the history of art. It was like, now we're doing my Flower period! Like Monet's water lilies, Van Gogh's flowers, the genre."^v Less interested in portraying a realist or gestural representation of blossoms than a modern, mechanical reproduction of a representation of them, Warhol's flora are rendered in synthetic, fluorescent hues that eschew any evocation of nature.



Jan Davidz de Heem, *Vase of Flowers*, c. 1660, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 1961.6.1, Andrew W. Fund

The artificiality of *Flowers* is reminiscent of 17th century Dutch "impossible bouquets"—marvelous collections of flowers that, at the time, could never be found together due to geographical and seasonal restraints. The impossibility of these arrangements no longer resonates with viewers today, as global trade and mass consumerism have made them not only plausible but commonplace. Similarly, despite their synthetic color and exaggerated flatness that would seem to have no corollary in reality, Warhol's manufactured flowers are redolent of the representations of nature that feel most familiar in the post-modern era. "Warhol's flowers are the flowers of the city rather than of the field. Flat and unrealistic, they bring to mind both the plastic and artificial flowers so common in our society..." art critic Paul Bergin elucidated. "They are flower images

stripped of their flower-ness, the reduction of the flowers which gape at us from awnings, wallpaper and contemporary centerpieces. Silk-screened onto the canvas, Warhol's flowers reside there in all their machine-made glory, a valid presentation of the twentieth-century flower...^{vi}

The Flash of Beauty

Despite Geldzahler's hope that this seemingly ebullient subject matter would index a departure from Warhol's death and tragedy tropes, *Flowers* has been interpreted as a funereal coda to his earlier work. The pitch-black background acts as a *memento mori* to the lively vibrancy of the blossoms it envelops, and Warhol's macabre inclusion of his Jackie Kennedy portraits, which were appropriated from a photograph captured soon after her husband's assassination, in the Castelli *Flowers* show lend them a similarly devastating connotation. "What is incredible about the best of the flower paintings (especially the very large ones) is that they present a distillation of much of the strength of Warhol's art—the flash of beauty that suddenly becomes tragic under the viewer's gaze," the writer and curator John Coplans elucidated. "The garish and brilliantly colored flowers always gravitate toward the surrounding blackness and finally end in a sea of morbidity. No matter how much one wishes these flowers to remain beautiful they perish under one's gaze, as if haunted by death."^{vii}

ⁱ Henry Geldzahler, quoted in Tony Sherman and David Dalton, *POP: The Genius of Andy Warhol*, New York, 2009, p. 235.

ⁱⁱ Andy Warhol, quoted in Gene Swenson, "What is Pop Art? Interviews with Eight Painters," *Art News*, November 1963, p. 26.

ⁱⁱⁱ Tony Scherman and David Dalton, *Pop: The Genius of Andy Warhol*, New York, 2009, p. 237.

^{iv} Michael Lobel, *Andy Warhol: Flowers*, exh. cat., Eykyn Maclean, New York, 2012, n.p.

^v Gerald Malanga, quoted in David Dalton and David McCabe, *A Year in the Life of Andy Warhol*, New York, 2003, p. 74.

^{vi} Paul Bergin, "Andy Warhol: The Artist as Machine," *Art Journal*, vol. 26, no. 4, Summer 1967, p. 360.

^{vii} John Coplans, *Andy Warhol*, New York, 1978, p. 52.

Provenance

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., New York
 Thomas Ammann Fine Art, Zurich
 Private Collection, United States
 Phillips, New York, May 15, 2014, lot 25
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Literature

Georg Frei and Neil Printz, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Sculptures, 1964-1969, Vol. 2A*, New York, 2004, no. 1318, p. 295 (illustrated, p. 291)

"Andy Warhol: The Pope of Pop," *Barnebys Magazine*, May 3, 2018, online (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



23

Reggie Burrows Hodges

Intersection of Color: Suite

acrylic, oil and pastel on canvas

48 x 60 in. (121.9 x 152.4 cm)

Executed in 2019.

Estimate

\$200,000 — 300,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Figures created by Hodges are made sharper, and more haunting, not because we see those things in their eyes, we see it in their bodies, their postures, the endless desire for humans not to be alone, and to connect. To that Hodges adds all that wonderful blackness." —Hilton Als

Executed in 2019, the present work is an example of Reggie Burrows Hodges' painterly meditations on identity, memory, and the everyday. Belonging to his *Intersection of Color* series, the work presents three figures presumably seated at the front row of a skybox. Rendered as silhouettes, their facial features are completely abstracted—only their poses and abstracted setting suggest a pictorial narrative. Here, Hodges' flat application of rich black pigment to compose his characters starkly contrasts with the gestural and chromatic brushwork of their clothes and background. Coinciding with the artist's meteoric rise on the global art scene, the present work featured at the artist's show, *Reggie Burrows Hodges: Intersection of Color*, at the Press Hotel in 2020.



Honoré Daumier, *Theater Audience*, ca. 1856-1860. National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

While many of the artist's subjects engage in leisurely activities such as playing sports, dancing, or

riding unicycles, the present work is among several pictures within the series that positions his Black figures as observers. As Hodges often looks to his own upbringing in Compton for his work, the present composition perhaps portrays a personal recollection, whilst evoking the spaces of modernity such as theaters and racecourses depicted by 19th-century painters including Honoré Daumier, Édouard Manet, and Mary Cassatt. The Impressionists' representations of such scenes reflected the voyeuristic observation of daily life through the lens of public spectacle and class privilege, often inviting the viewer into a participatory role through compositional perspective. In *Intersection of Color: Suite*, Hodges inserts his Black subjects into contemporary dialogue with these tropes, transforming them for the present day through his unique painterly sensibility.

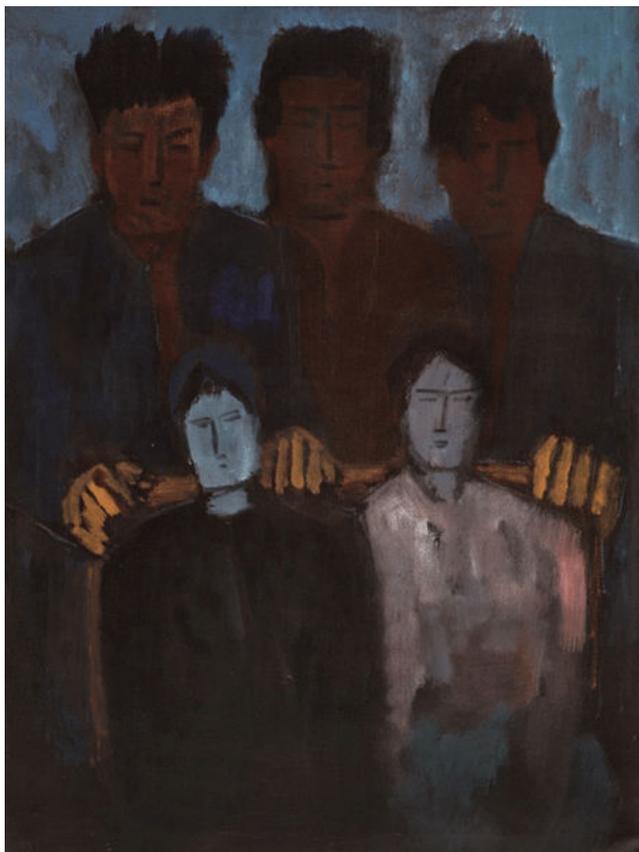
"I start with a black ground [as a way] of dealing with blackness's totality. I'm painting an environment in which the figures emerge from negative space... If you see my paintings in person, you'll look at the depth." —Reggie Burrows Hodges



[left] Helen Frankenthaler, *Toward Dark*, 1988. Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, New York. Artwork: © Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Robert Motherwell, *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 133*, 1975. Sammlung Moderne Kunst, Pinakothek der Moderne, Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Sammlung Moderne Kunst / Pinakothek der Moderne / Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen / Munich / Germany / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Dedalus Foundation, Inc. / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

In the present work, the artist fuses reminiscences of Color Field and modern American predecessors, at once recalling the palette of Helen Frankenthaler's *Toward Dark* and Robert Motherwell's *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 133*, as well as the work of Milton Avery and Marsden Hartley. By developing the work's narrative elements through abstraction rather than refinement, Hodges evokes Avery's layered storytelling. His figures are shapes conjured from the

essential qualities of his medium; the brighter pigments act as a counterpoint to bring unequivocal presence to the black hues that emanate from the painting's surface. "I'm always drawn to artists that allow black to perform within their paintings and this is a force that draws me to Hartley," the artist explained. My use of this concept is to enroll the Black figure as a stand-in for humanity."ⁱ Here, Hodges appears to build his compositions around his figural subjects, leaving them as silhouetted forms while painting their attire and inhabited space through his dynamic brushwork. In so doing, he forges an eloquent embodiment of Hilton Als' words on Hodges' process: "Seeing as an event."ⁱⁱ



Marsden Hartley, *Fisherman's Family*, ca. 1943. Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento

"My practice has been inspired by the study of moments and translating the essence of them through color, figuration, abstraction, and various techniques of mark making...I'm interested in intersecting an internal experience and symbolizing that in my work in order to present a view of my personal heritage and journey."
—Reggie Burrows Hodges

By having his figures literally emerge from their surroundings, Hodges ultimately investigates the conceptual relationship between human beings and their environment. This direct painterly dialogue is captured in the hazy atmospheric qualities and faceless figures of *Intersection of Color: Suite*, which epitomizes his practice of coalescing themes of memory and identity through the act of painting. The work is "an exploration, first and foremost, of that most elemental of the artist's endeavors: paint," Als observed of Hodges' oeuvre. "What this teaches us about [his] painting, in particular, is that he does admit the viewer into his work...once you get past your preconceptions about blackness, and what it's supposed to mean, either as 'pure' paint, or as a figure."ⁱⁱⁱ The present work encapsulates this vacillation in its very title, capturing the "intersection" of color both in the creation of art and racially charged bodies, reflecting how "history, heart, and meaning imbue every mark [Hodges] makes."^{iv}

ⁱ Reggie Burrows Hodges, quoted in Suzette McAvoy, "Some Holes Can't Be Filled," in *Reggie Burrows Hodges*, exh. cat., Karma, New York, 2021, p. 17.

ⁱⁱ Hilton Als, "Nature Abhors a Vacuum," *Reggie Burrows Hodges*, exh. cat., Karma, New York, 2021, p. 12.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} David Everitt Howe, "Reggie Burrows Hodges," *Artforum*, February 18, 2021, [online](#).

Provenance

Dowling Walsh Gallery, Rockland
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Portland, The Press Hotel, *Reggie Burrows Hodges: Intersection of Color*, January 17–March 27, 2020

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, BEVERLY HILLS

24

Robert Delaunay

L'Équipe de Cardiff

signed "Delaunay" lower right
pastel on paper laid down on board
41 3/8 x 29 1/2 in. (105.1 x 74.9 cm)
Executed in 1922-1923.

Mr. Richard Riss has confirmed the authenticity of this work.

Estimate
\$700,000 — 1,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Sky over the cities, balloons, towers, airplanes. All the poetry of modern life: that is my art." —Robert Delaunay

An emblematic work from one of the leading artists of his generation, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* perfectly captures Robert Delaunay's distinctive blend of chromatic brilliance and dynamic form that defines his celebrated images of 20th century modernism. Featuring fragments of the urban landscape, advertising imagery, and borrowing its central motif from photographs printed in the weekly illustrated sports publication *La Vie au Grand Air*, it is at once a quintessential scene of modern Parisian life and a striking example from one of Delaunay's most recognizable series. Following his iconic images of the Eiffel Tower and kaleidoscope *Fenêtres* paintings, Delaunay first embarked on the *Équipe de Cardiff* series towards the end of 1912. Significant as the earliest appearance of the athletic body in motion in Delaunay's work, the paintings, pastels, and sketches belonging to the series also make a striking counterpoint to the abstraction he was pursuing in these earlier years and would return to in his later *Formes circulaires*. As with its sister examples residing in institutions such as the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, and the National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh, the present work is a testament to Guillaume Apollinaire's famous declaration upon seeing a version of Delaunay's *Équipe de Cardiff* at the 1913 Salon des Indépendants: "If cubism is dead, long live Orphism. The kingdom of Orpheus is at hand."ⁱ



Source photograph for the present work at bottom. *La Vie au Grand Air*, no. 748, January 18, 1913. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Paris, Modernity, and the *Équipe de Cardiff*

By the dawn of the 20th century, Paris had firmly established itself as the preeminent city of modernity, with the immense steel structure of the Eiffel Tower standing as a feat of engineering and symbol of the technological age. A native Parisian, Delaunay was particularly taken by the city's embrace of modernity, and as poet Blaise Cendrars recalled "Robert Delaunay and I were possibly the only people in Paris to speak of machines and art, and to have the vaguest awareness of the great transformation of the modern world."ⁱⁱ Blending Cubist form with a bold Fauvist-

inspired palette, Delaunay and his wife, the artist Sonia Delaunay-Turk, were central to the development of Orphism in Paris during these years, earning him the title “l’hérésiarque du cubisme” as he bridged the gap between these early avant-garde movements and a more fully realized abstraction achieved through combinations of color and light effects.ⁱⁱⁱ



Robert Delaunay, *L'Équipe de Cardiff*, 1913. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

The Eiffel Tower emerged as a primary motif for the artist between 1909 and 1913, appearing prominently in his early paintings and *Fenêtres* series, and reimagined in the simplified forms and vibrant hues of the *Hommage à Blériot* and *L'Équipe de Cardiff* works, where the unmistakable landmark appears alongside the leaping sportsmen. For Delaunay, these competitive pan-

European sporting events recorded and circulated in a newly dominant mass-media format were as fundamental to the representation of modern life as the Eiffel Tower itself. In the present work this is especially pronounced in the closer focus on the action of the figures, which mirrors the tower in their stacked triangular arrangement.

Adhering to the same basic compositional structure, the works belonging to the *Équipe de Cardiff* series all feature the same prominent arrangement of rugby players set against a fractured “range of images associated with ariel vision: the Eiffel Tower, the Grande Roue, an airplane in flight, and a poster that reads ‘ASTRA’ in reference to La Société Astra, a company that...became one of the foremost aeronautic construction conglomerates in France.”^{iv} A reference to the advertising posters that were becoming increasingly commonplace across the city, Delaunay incorporated fragments of text in his *Équipe de Cardiff*, which here are reduced to the representative letters “A” and “L”. The juxtaposition of text, fractured imagery, and the momentum of the rugby players create a striking sense of movement throughout the composition which reflects the very energy of the urban city the artist so admired.



Nicolas de Staël, *Footballers*, 1952. Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Color and Simultaneity

Executed shortly after Robert and Sonia Delaunay's return to Paris in 1921 following the couple's self-imposed exile in Spain and Portugal during the First World War, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* returns to these earlier themes and motifs and reasserts the primacy of color over form established by Orphism's extension of Cubist principles. As the artist reflected on these later *L'Équipe de Cardiff* works, "The actions of the colors are sharper, physically more pure, more suited to the representation of action in movement. Painting is not a symbol. It is a harmony of rhythms, in the

spirit of a representation."^v Indeed, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* is a striking example of Orphism's employment of color as a function of space, as well as the laws of simultaneous contrast established in the color theories of 19th century chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul which Delaunay's work built on during these important years. "Simultaneous contrast may at the same time affect the optical composition of colors and the depth of their tone," in Chevreul's words. "Colors so contrasted must purify each other and become more intense."^{vi}

"The new art aims at the formal representation of space continually in movement...and colors are, in their simultaneous contrasts, the marvelous means of expression." —Robert Delaunay



Umberto Boccioni, *Dynamism of a Football Player*, 1913. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: ©

The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

Delaunay was not alone in expressing a formal interest in the athletic body in motion and finding in the cut and thrust of contact sports something wholly modern. Brimming with energy and a palpable sense of dynamic movement, Robert Delaunay's *L'Équipe de Cardiff* can be contextualized alongside other significant works from the period, including Albert Gleizes 1912-13 *Football Players*, Umberto Boccioni's 1913 *Dinamismo di un footballer*, and Andre Lhote's 1917 *Rugby Match*. A close friend of Delaunay's, Jean Metzinger's dynamic suite of velodrome paintings also make for a lively comparison to the *Équipe de Cardiff* series. Yet moving beyond the mechanistic representation of movement explored by Metzinger and the Italian Futurists, in *L'Équipe de Cardiff* Delaunay developed Chevreul's notion of simultaneous contrasts to actively reproduce the sensation and experience of movement within the eye of the viewer. Registering these complementary and contrasting tones and reconciling them in this manner, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* successfully recreates the energy and vitality of modern urban life, and of sport's privileged place within it.

ⁱ Guillaume Apollinaire, "Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée," in Michel Décaudin, ed., *Oeuvres Complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire*, Paris, 1966, p. 17.

ⁱⁱ Blaise Cendrars, quoted in Arthur A. Cohen, ed., *The New Art of Color: The Writings of Robert and Sonia Delaunay*, New York, 1978, p. 171.

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Delaunay, "Robert Delaunay seen by Robert Delaunay," in Arthur A. Cohen, ed., *ibid.*, p. 24.

^{iv} Gordon Hughes, *Resisting Abstraction: Robert Delaunay and Vision in the Face of Modernism*, Chicago, 2014, p. 67.

^v Robert Delaunay, "Robert Delaunay seen by Robert Delaunay," in Arthur A. Cohen, ed., *The New Art of Colour: The Writings of Robert and Sonia Delaunay*, New York, 1978, p. 27.

^{vi} Michel Eugène Chevreul, *The Laws of Contrast of Color and their Application to the Arts*, trans. John Spanton, London, 1857, pp. 10, 15.

Exhibited

Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Robert Delaunay*, May 25–September 30, 1957, no. 162, p. 90

MAM Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Robert et Sonia Delaunay*, May 14–September 8, 1985, no. 88, p. 132 (illustrated, p. 93)

Literature

Pierre Francastel and Guy Habasque, *Robert Delaunay: Du cubisme à l'art abstrait*, Paris, 1957, no. 198, pp. 282-283

Provenance

Collection Mallet-Coutrot, Paris (acquired by 1957)

Private Collection, Paris

Adler & Conkright Fine Art, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2012

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



25 ♦

Justin Caguiat

Doll 3 Eros

oil, gouache and pastel on canvas
71 1/2 x 71 1/2 in. (181.5 x 181.5 cm)
Executed in 2020.

Estimate

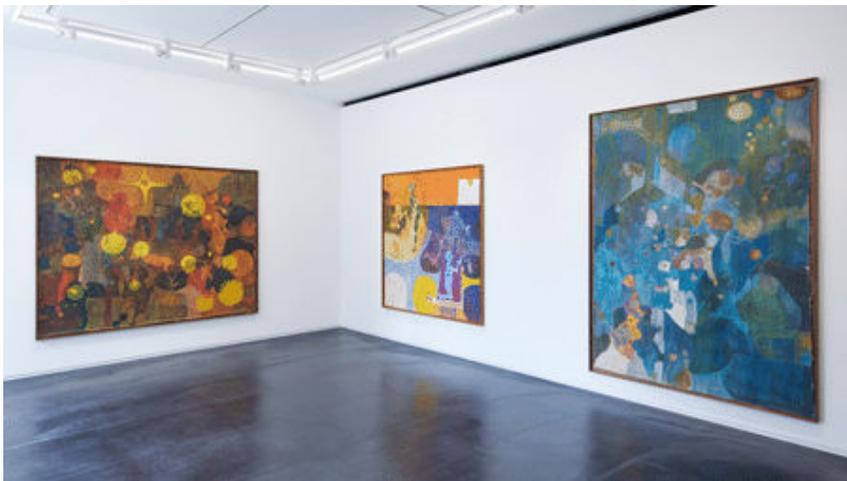
\$380,000 — 450,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"The forms and subjects phased in and out of depth. Even in dim light the painting seemed irradiated by a strobe, the picture plane a twinkling low relief." —Th. Killian Roach

Doll 3 Eros, 2020 is a quintessential example of Justin Caguiat's mystical compositions that have garnered international acclaim. Emblematic of Caguiat's fresco-like paintings that meld representational, abstract, and organic imagery into a dreamlike universe, the present work captures Sophie Ruigrok's reading of the artist's work as "a primordial soup of ancient figures...and celestial bodies."¹ Here a constellation of vignettes presenting a scene at once elusive and readily evocative of the motifs of Eros, the Greek god of love and fertility, is rendered in a rich palette and layered handling signature to Caguiat's practice. Having featured in his solo show at Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo in 2021, the present work marks the artist's auction debut. Following Greene Naftali's recent representation of the artist, Caguiat will have his first solo show with the gallery this September on the heels of his major exhibition at [The Warehouse, Dallas](#) from January to April 2022.



The present work installed at *Justin Caguiat: Doll*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, March 27 – April 24, 2021

Born in Tokyo and based in New York and Oakland, the Filipino artist is known for his numinous paintings deeply rooted in art history and memory. Spoken through his unique contemporary voice, Caguiat's painterly style has been likened to 19th century *japonisme* for its fusion of European and Japanese influences. In the present work, the flattened forms recall those seen in Japanese mosaics and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, but are rendered through a Symbolist sensibility

redolent of Odilon Redon's eccentric atmospheres and Hilma Af Klint's specific brand of esotericism. Here, Caguiat's use of aqueous grounds engender an ethereal, near-holographic aesthetic that alludes to the likes of astrological bodies. Layering pools of color across unstretched canvas, the artist allows certain colors to emerge and others recede, achieving luminosity throughout the composition and recalling a handling of medium and imagery that has an affinity with Peter Doig's late work.



[left] Odilon Redon, *The Muse on Pegasus*, ca. 1907-1910. Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Japan [right] Hilma Af Klint, *The Ten Largest, No. 2, Childhood*, 1907. Hilma Af Klint Foundation, Stockholm

Caguiat's hazy rendering of form and fragmentary treatment of the composition are key elements of his work that conjure the very nature of memory. Fusing literary references and the wells of his mind, the artist's prowess in translating abstract entities such as memories or feelings into visual representation stems from his practice as a poet. In the present work, the symbols of Eros—the figures encapsulated in womb-like forms and suggestions of a zygote—seamlessly connect with disparate imagery such as the ghostly blue figure at center through a constellational quality that reveals itself, quite literally, in every shape and form. From mysterious silhouettes lingering in the background to microscopic dots that appear throughout the composition, *Doll 3 Eros* reveals Caguiat's masterful congruence of representation and technique, familiar and elusive imagery, in creating a kaleidoscopic world of memory and imagination. As the artist's friend Th. Killian Roach

described of his work: “I saw plant propagation—cuttings, divisions, budding, grafting...a jumbled, composite form of big studio cel animation...colorist popping everything in reach...Memory is not a linear thing. It’s like looking at the stars.”ⁱⁱ



Provenance

Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Tokyo, Taka Ishii Gallery, *Justin Caguiat "Doll"*, March 27–April 24, 2021

Collector’s Digest

- Greene Naftali announced its representation of Caguiat in October 2021 on the heels of the widespread acclaim his work received at Frieze, London that year.

- Caguiat’s works have featured in exhibitions across the globe including in the United States, Switzerland, Italy, United Kingdom, and Canada.

ⁱ Sophie Ruigrok, “What To See at Condo London 2020,” *Frieze*, January 10, 2020.

ⁱⁱ Th. Killian Roach, “Preface – Justin Caguiat: ‘Doll,’” Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, 2021, press release, [online](#).

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COLLECTION

26

Andy Warhol

The Star (Greta Garbo as Mata Hari)

signed "Andy Warhol" on the overlap
acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas
60 x 60 in. (152.4 x 152.4 cm)
Executed in 1981.

Estimate
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Someone once asked me to state once and for all the most beautiful person I'd ever met. Well, the only people I can ever pick out as unequivocal beauties are from the movies." —Andy Warhol



[left] Andy Warhol, *Orange Marilyn*, 1962. Private Collection. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Andy Warhol, *Liz [Early Colored Liz]*, 1963. The Broad, Los Angeles. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Andy Warhol's *The Star* (Greta Garbo as *Mata Hari*) marks the artist's celebrated return to one of his most enduring preoccupations: celebrity and commodification. The present work extends the legacy of Warhol's earliest investigations into these concepts, defined by his now iconic images of starlets such as Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor. Closely related to the candy-colored paintings of Marilyn and Liz from the early 1960s, in the present work, Warhol once again displays his prowess with color. Emerging from a lava red background, Warhol articulates the details of *Mata Hari*'s elaborate costume and boldly offsets Garbo's luminous skin with blue eyeshadow and scarlet lips. Conceived as part of his *Myths* series in 1981, *The Star* is an iconic tribute to one of the major silver screen goddesses in the artist's Pop pantheon. Rarely seen in public, the present work has resided in the same private collection for over three decades.

"The most dangerous spy of all time, men worshipped her like a goddess, only to be betrayed by a kiss." —Tagline from Mata Hari, 1931



Greta Garbo in *Mata Hari*, 1931. Image: John Springer Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images

In *The Star*, Warhol immortalizes Greta Garbo at the peak of her celebrity in the guise of the eponymous character from the 1931 film *Mata Hari*. Based on the exotic dancer convicted as a German spy during World War I, the film became a sensation in America and Europe, cementing the legend of *Mata Hari* and the stardom of Garbo. Warhol's tribute, however, is not celebrating the infamous character the actress played but the iconicity of Garbo herself. While his female icons of the 1960s were born out of his contemporaneous preoccupations with the cult of celebrity, *The Star* derives from the theme of reinvestigation that embodies the artist's mature practice from the late 1970s until his death. Here he takes his own visual lexicon developed in the early 1960s one step further by selecting the press photo of the actress in the guise of her character as his source image. Warhol's insistent link between fame and nostalgia often generated from his appropriation

of earlier photography is abundantly present here. Indeed this publicity photo of Garbo predates the painting by nearly half a century and foreshadows her sudden retirement from acting in 1941 at the age of 35 after starring in nearly 30 films. His choice to return to the image some five decades later underlines his fascination with the endurance of iconicity.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/UdY62XIMqL4>

"Warhol's Myths reside in the funny papers, in movies and ads. And in the mirror. Warhol nurtures the nonlife, the un-death of glamour." —Carter Ratcliff

The Star forms part of Warhol's *Myths* that assembled a cast of ten nostalgic figures from childhood including Santa Claus, Mickey Mouse, Uncle Sam, Howdy Doody, and Superman. As Greg Metcalf notes, "While these mythic figures carry a range of important cultural attributes, their shared celebrity stature arises from their being heroes of commercial art. Each of these cultural icons is also a commercial icon, a 'logo,' the symbol of a corporate identity. Each is also an artistic creation from which the artist has been erased."ⁱ However, *The Star* and *The Shadow*, which sees Warhol place himself in the character of the crime-fighting hero from the 1930s radio show, are distinguished in the series: it is not the characters themselves which act as the protagonist but rather *Garbo as Mata Hari* and *Warhol as The Shadow* who are the commercial icons. In so doing he intentionally blurs the boundary between individual and symbol, artist and celebrity, hero and commodity.



Warhol at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York with his *Myths*, 1981. Image: Robert Levin, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"These frozen images are modern-day Madonnas...[they] become religious relics, and like Leonardo's La Gioconda. They are portraits of women radiating beauty. They are not photographs of public stars but... icons of our time." —Peter Brant

In many ways, Warhol had always felt he and Garbo were two sides of a single coin. Indeed the elusive Garbo was arguably the Hollywood starlet that impressed Warhol's sensibility the most. Since his youth, the artist consciously fashioned himself after Garbo, adopting her poses in photographs. While many critics attributed Warhol's evasiveness to the influence of Duchamp, Charles Lisanby, one of Warhol's closest friends of the 1960s, recalled, "I realize, knowing Andy then, that if you ask him a direct question he will not answer it...It was some kind of a mystique. Greta Garboesque kind of thing. He loved Garbo."ⁱⁱ



[left] Photograph of Andy Warhol, 1949. Image: George Klauber [right] Greta Garbo as Mata Hari, 1931. Photographed by Clarence Sinclair Bull. Image: ScreenProd / Photononstop / Alamy Stock Photo

ⁱ Greg Metcalf, "Heroes, Myth, and Cultural Icons," in *Reframing Andy Warhol: Constructing American Myths, Heroes and Cultural Icons*, exh. cat., The Art Gallery of the University of Maryland, College Park, 1998, p. 7.

ⁱⁱ Charles Lisanby, quoted in Patrick S. Smith, *Andy Warhol's Art and Films*, Ann Arbor, 1986, p. 10.

Provenance

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts Inc., New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1989

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN
COLLECTION

27 ♦

Cecily Brown

Angie

signed and dated "Cecily Brown 2005" on the reverse
oil on linen

85 x 89 in. (215.9 x 226.1 cm)

Painted in 2005.

Estimate

\$4,500,000 — 6,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"One of the main things I would like my work to do is to reveal itself slowly, continuously and for you never to feel that you're really finished looking at something." —Cecily Brown

Weaving past and present, abstraction and figuration, Cecily Brown's *Angie* immerses the viewer into an extravagant field of fervid brushwork, manifesting the artist's virtuosity in channeling Old and Modern masters of the art historical canon through her singular painterly sensibility. Here, earthy and fleshy tones, alongside lavish hues of red, blue, and purple, all merge into a bacchanalian riot of tantalizing allusions, epitomizing the artist's words: "The paint is transformed into image, and hopefully paint and image transform themselves into a third and new thing...I want to catch something in the act of becoming something else."ⁱ



[left] Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (detail), 1500-1505. Museo del Prado, Madrid
[right] Willem de Kooning, *Untitled XIX*, 1977. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Brown's paintings can speak to us because enough of her shorthand is also ours... We also get the glimpses of history as they flow in and out, whether through direct recognition of an image or through indistinct echoes of something familiar." —James Lawrence

Drawing inspiration from the Renaissance and Baroque to Romanticism and Abstract

Expressionism, Brown's practice coalesces a host of art historical influences that materialize in *Angie*. In the present work, Brown transforms visions of the past into a contemporary kaleidoscope of painterly revels, conjuring a contemporary fusion of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* and Willem de Kooning's vigorous brushstrokes, with the lustrous palette and flurried handling of Peter Paul Rubens and Eugène Delacroix. As the artist explained, "When I'm looking at paintings from the past, they always seem to be in the present to me; they resonate. I've never felt a sense of distance from the past that some people seem to. I find it impossible and actually uninteresting to be concerned only with one's own time."ⁱⁱ



Eugène Delacroix, *Lion Hunt*, 1860-1861. Art Institute of Chicago. Image: Art Institute of Chicago, Potter Palmer Collection, 1922.404

Indeed for Brown, a "distance from the past" is only necessary in the process of *incorporating* the past into her compositions. Deeply influenced by Francis Bacon, the artist uses photographs or reproductions of paintings, rather than the actual source work, to translate referenced imagery through her own painterly language, as Bacon did for his series of *Popes*. The present work further evokes her British predecessor in the distorted, haunting forms at the center of the composition,

where the various faces rendered in profile and frontal view recall Bacon's painterly studies of his lover George Dyer. Yet Brown's fervent brushwork and tight packing of the composition blends such imagery to bury the identification of her figures into a spectacle of pigment. Here, myriad art historical allusions coalesce under her painterly hand, all of which emerge and retreat before the viewer's eyes across the psychedelic surface of paint.



Francis Bacon, *Three Studies of George Dyer*, 1969. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark. Image: © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2022. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Francis Bacon/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

"I've always thought of myself as a figurative painter... There's always been a strong element of abstraction but it's something that happens very naturally...if I paint a figure too completely, it disturbs me too much, I have to sort of break it down."
—Cecily Brown

Ultimately self-identifying as a figurative painter, Brown works at the cusp of representation and abstraction, driving her works within the liminal space between identification and visuality, paint and substance. "I'm far more interested in a moment where figuration breaks down," the artist elucidated. "I usually describe it as breaking down rather than abstract because it really is this back and forth. Some works...have far clearer graphic imagery and others really don't. It's always been important to me to have both, and some works walk the tight rope and have both within a painting."ⁱⁱⁱ Presenting at once clearly recognizable and subtle suggestions of both landscape and interiors, *Angie* ambitiously manifests this pendular relationship, particularly in the lower half of the composition where reflective pools of water and fragmented depictions of furniture and décor meet sudden orchestrations of painterly abstraction.



"I take all my cues from the paint, so it's a total back and forth between my will and the painting directing what to do next." —Cecily Brown

Showcasing Brown's bravura in engaging with the vernacular of painting itself, the present work embodies the artist's delight in working with oil paint, which she described as "sensual [because] it moves, it catches the light, it's great for skin and flesh and heft and meat. I wanted to make something that you couldn't tear your eyes away from. I like the fact that because my earlier work [from the late 1990s] was so known for having erotic contents, I actually need to give very little now and it's seen as erotic or hinting at erotic."^{iv} Indeed in *Angie*, Brown presents an orgiastic frenzy not in subject but in her very application of paint and sensuous palette. Here, she displays the result of her dialogue with the medium, which she views as a source in itself in the process of the work's creation. Immersing the viewer's eye and imagination into a visual feast, the present work at once lures us into surreal figments of known realities and a colorful exuberance of fantasized realms, richly materializing the heart of Brown's artistic investigations. "I am interested in the unfixed nature of things. I want the work to have a trapped energy so that the paint seems to vibrate in place. I want the viewing of it to approximate the experience of being in the world."^v

ⁱ Cecily Brown, quoted in Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith, "Painting Sensations," in *Cecily Brown*:

Cecily Brown

Paintings, exh. cat., Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, 2005, p. 55.

ⁱⁱ Cecily Brown, quoted in "Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman," in *Cecily Brown*, exh. cat., Gagosian, New York, 2008, p. 25.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cecily Brown, quoted in "Cecily Brown Interview: Take No Prisoners," *Louisiana Channel: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art*, November 3, 2015.

^{iv} Cecily Brown, quoted in Derek Peck, "New York Minute: Cecily Brown," *AnOther*, September 14, 2012.

^v Cecily Brown, quoted in Dore Ashton, *Cecily Brown*, New York, 2008, p. 25.

Provenance

Gagosian Gallery, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2006

Exhibited

London, Gagosian Gallery, *Cecily Brown: New Paintings*, March 31–May 27, 2006, pp. 58, 83 (illustrated, p. 59)

Literature

Cecily Brown, exh. cat., GAM - Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, October 17, 2014–February 1, 2015, p. 171 (illustrated, p. 34)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY OF AN AMERICAN COLLECTOR

28

Hans Hofmann

In Upper Regions

signed and dated "hans hofmann 63" lower right;
signed, titled, inscribed and dated "Cat #1507 in upper
regions 1963 hans hofmann" on the reverse

oil on canvas

60 x 48 in. (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

Painted in 1963.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"My aim in painting is to create pulsating, luminous and open surfaces that emanate a mystic light, determined exclusively through painterly development, and in accordance with my deepest insight into the experience of life and nature." —Hans Hofmann, 1962

Painted in 1963, *In Upper Regions* is a striking example of Hans Hofmann's late "Slab" paintings that are deemed the greatest achievements of his career. In this large-scale composition, a jewel-toned ground emerges between layers of rich dark pigment. From thick impasto to diaphanous brushwork, sweeping gestures to measured strokes, *In Upper Regions* showcases the spectacular painterly prowess he unleashed after retiring from his career as a gifted art teacher in 1958. The present work featured in Hofmann's solo exhibition at the Kootz Gallery, New York in 1964, and was later shown at the artist's major retrospective at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 1976 to 1977. Not seen for nearly two decades, *In Upper Regions* set Hofmann's world auction record at the time of its sale in New York in 2003.



Hans Hofmann in his Provincetown studio, 1963. Image: © 1991 Hans Namuth Estate, Courtesy Center for Creative Photography

"Space was never a static thing, but alive, and its life can be felt in the rhythm in which everything in a visual ensemble exists." —Hans Hofmann

The diverse body of "Slab" compositions Hofmann produced between the late 1950s until his death in 1966 comprise the artist's most recognized and highly coveted works. *In Upper Regions* is among a discrete number of "Slab" paintings created in this period that forgo the sharp rectangular forms more common to his mature oeuvre. As Paul Moorhouse discussed in the artist's catalogue raisonné, these "Slabs" without strict geometries maintain a more organic character in

their freedom of handling and sensuous engagement with color.ⁱ The present work eloquently manifests Hofmann's celebrated "push-and-pull" theory—the illusion of depth and movement created by the tension between colored forms. Without relying on austere form, here Hofmann utilizes color to function as spatial planes in themselves purely through his dynamic application, perfectly capturing his statement: "Only very great painting becomes so plastically sensitive, for the expression of the deepest in man calls for unexpected and surprising associations."ⁱⁱ

Museum Collections: Non-Geometric Abstractions, 1963



Fiat Lux, 1963. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: © Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / The Rienzi Collection / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



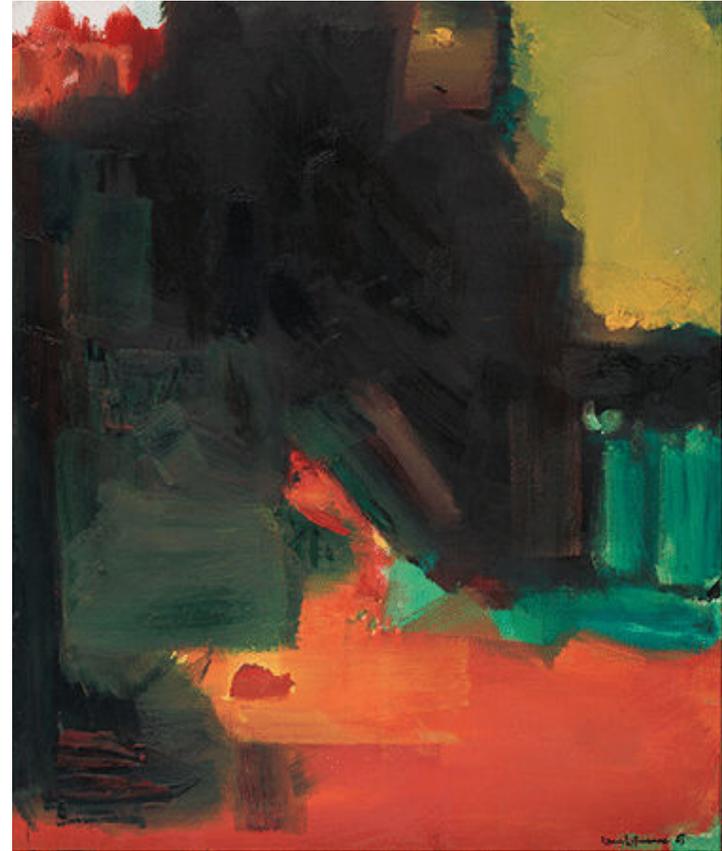
Blue Rhapsody II, 1963. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Image: © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Elie Posner / Gift of Wilma and Laurence Tisch, New York, to American Friends of the Israel Museum / Bridgeman Images Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Brown Center, 1963. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 2004.30.6, Gift of William C. Seitz and Irma S. Seitz, Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Gray Orchestration, 1963. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich. Image: bpk / Bildagentur / Pinakothek der Moderne / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Nocturnal Splendor, 1963. Berkeley Art Museum. Artwork: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In the last years of his life when the present work was conceived, Hofmann's abstractions became distinguished for their lyricism and explosive compositions. As Hofmann espoused, "When the impulses which stir us to profound emotion are integrated with the medium of expression, every interview of the soul may become art. This is contingent upon mastery of the medium."ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed Moorhouse noted of this late period that Hofmann's "elevated level of engagement with painting led inevitably to works in which Hofmann touched on even more immaterial themes connected with the passage of time, death, memory, passion, and the sublime."^{iv} As suggested by its title, *In Upper Regions* may regard the passing of his wife, Miz, in the same year of the present work's creation. "When I name a picture," the artist shared, "the title comes from the feeling the painting suggests. I work constantly toward poetic suggestion and I choose the names for my paintings accordingly."^v

"That the artist can use formal and expressive means to communicate his 'inner world' is central to an appreciation of Hofmann's late work... Through painting, ideas and feelings are given form and substance." —Paul Moorhouse



[left] Henri Matisse, *The Riverbank*, 1907. Kunstmuseum Basel. Image: Kunstmuseum Basel, Martin P. Bühler, Artwork: © 2022 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Wassily Kandinsky, *Murnau: The Garden I*, 1910. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Image: HIIP / Art Resource, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP

Recalling the chromatic scheme of Henri Matisse's *The Riverbank*, 1907 and Wassily Kandinsky's Murnau landscapes, *In Upper Regions* demonstrates the great influence of these artists on Hofmann's practice. It manifests his lifelong admiration for Matisse's Fauvist palette and rendering of space through unmodulated color, as well as his affinity with Kandinsky's notions on the spiritual possibilities of abstraction. Karen Wilkin has observed, "Many of Hofmann's most uninhibited,

'loose' abstractions, with their soft-edged patches of intense color and whiplash drawing, appear informed by Kandinsky's dynamic paintings from 1910-1914."^{vi} Conjuring the expressive handling and subjective evocations of his predecessor's *Improvisations*, the present work ultimately materializes Hofmann's paramount doctrine: "Creation is dominated by three absolutely different factors: First, nature, which works upon us by its laws; second, the artist, who creates a spiritual contact with nature and his materials; third, the medium of expression through which the artist translates his inner world."^{vii}



ⁱ Paul Moorhouse, "The Structure of Imagination: Hofmann's Late Paintings," in Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, pp. 54-61.

ⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "The Search for the Real in the Visual Arts," in Sam Hunter, ed., *Hans Hofmann*, New York, 1964, p. 41.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 46.

^{iv} Paul Moorhouse, "The Structure of Imagination: Hofmann's Late Paintings," in Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume I*, Surrey, 2014, p. 61.

^v Hans Hofmann, quoted in Katherine Kuh, "Hans Hofmann," in *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists*, New York, 1962, p. 119.

^{vi} Karen Wilkin, "Becoming Hans Hofmann," *Art & Antiques Magazine*, May 2013, [online](#).

^{vii} Hans Hofmann, "Painting and Culture," in Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., eds., *Search for the Real: And Other Essays*, Andover, MA, 1967, p. 55.

Provenance

Kootz Gallery, New York (acquired by 1964)

David N. Marks and Adele Marks, New York (acquired from the above in 1964)

Sotheby's, New York, November 12, 2003, lot 16

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Kootz Gallery, *Hans Hofmann: Paintings, 1963*, February 18–March 7, 1964, n.p. (illustrated)

Washington D.C., The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, *Hans Hofmann: A Retrospective Exhibition*, October 14, 1976–April 3, 1977, no. 64, p. 96 (illustrated)

Literature

Thomas Neumann, "Reviews and previews," *ARTnews*, March 1964, vol. 63, no. 1, p. 8 (illustrated)

Clement Greenberg, "America Takes the Lead 1945-1965," *Art in America*, August-September 1965, p. 116 (illustrated)

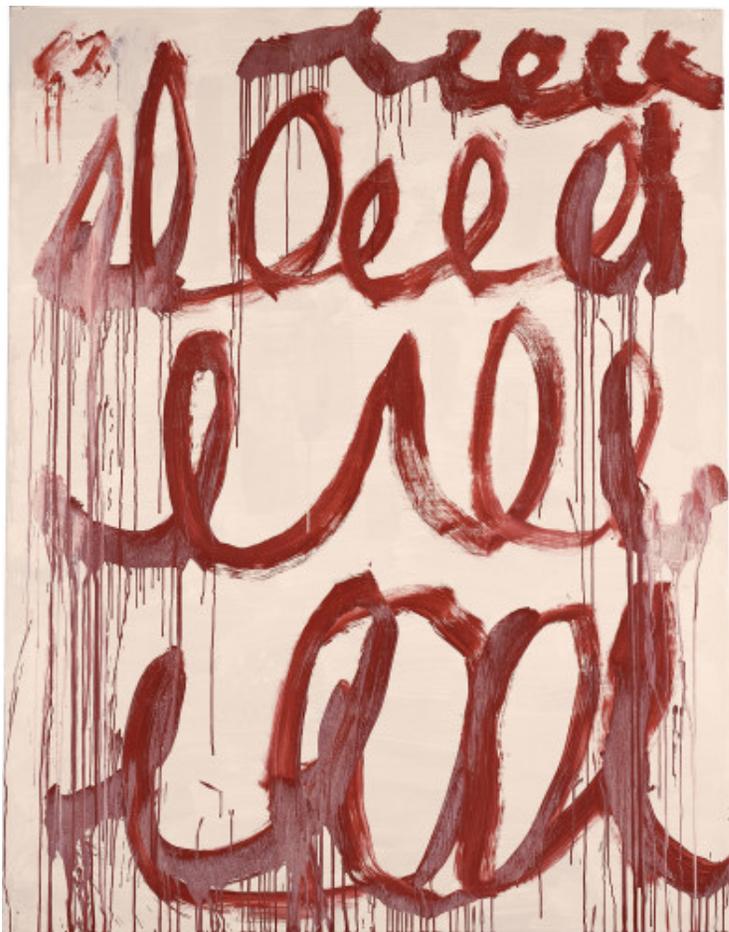
The Editors of *Art in America*, ed., *The Artist in America*, New York, 1967, p. 219 (illustrated)

Irving Sandler, "Hans Hofmann: The Pedagogical Master," *Art in America*, May-June 1973, vol. 61, no. 3, p. 48 (illustrated)

Suzi Villiger, ed., *Hans Hofmann: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume III: Catalogue Entries 1952-1965*, Farnham, 2014, no. P1490, p. 408 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



29

Cy Twombly

Untitled

signed with the artist's initials "CT" upper left

acrylic on canvas

84 7/8 x 66 in. (215.6 x 167.6 cm)

Painted in 2006.

Estimate

\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"The line is the feeling, from a soft thing, a dreamy thing, to something hard, something arid, something lonely, something ending, something beginning. It's like I'm experiencing the thing and I have to be at that state because I'm also going."

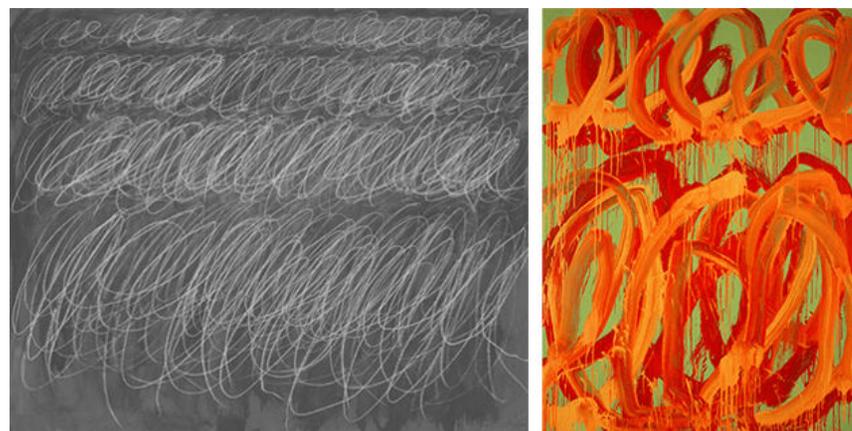
—Cy Twombly



Cy Twombly's studio in Lexington, 2006. Image: © Sally Mann, Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

Fluctuating between the lyrical and tempestuous, emotive and mysterious, Cy Twombly's *Untitled* is a *tour de force* of the artist's late oeuvre. Belonging to an exclusive series of six eponymous paintings completed in the autumn of 2006 in his hometown of Lexington, Virginia, the present composition is among Twombly's final great paintings that coalesced his various explorations throughout the trajectory of the artist's career with unprecedented prowess: his signature lasso loops on a monochrome background, his fascination with myth and history, and his concerns with ideas of writing and language that served as key conceptual foundations of his oeuvre. Here, billowing red loops of paint are scrawled on an off-white ground, radiating with a raw intensity which is enhanced by the visceral drips oozing down the canvas. Presenting a palimpsest of Twombly's celebrated painterly practice, *Untitled* captures "Twombly's gestures [as] a creative

act in which he captured the physical impulses of a subject that fascinated him, while at the same time revealing his own inner world."ⁱ



[left] Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1970. Private Collection. Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation [right] Cy Twombly, *Camino Real (IV)*, 2010. The Broad, Los Angeles. Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

Returning to the looping motif established in his pivotal *Blackboard* paintings of the late 1960s, Twombly's *Untitled* series of 2006 belongs to his late cycle of Dionysian paintings created between 2005 and 2008, situating itself alongside his celebrated and closely related *Bacchus* works. In the series comprising the present work, each composition shares a vertical format and similar grandiose scale measuring roughly 7 by 5 feet. Featuring two to four rows of coiled pseudo-script, these works marked an ambitious development from the *Blackboards* in Twombly's expansion of scale, the wider looping forms, and flowing red lines of acrylic that advanced from the artist's earlier use of white-wax crayon. As Nela Pavlouskova observed, the body of *Untitled* works from 2006 is distinctive from the other Dionysian paintings as a notable precursor to the compositional framework and explosive chromaticism of the artist's *Camino Real* series of 2010-2011 that would comprise his final artistic offering.ⁱⁱ Here, the densely layered loops swell and break off in a kind of ecstatic dance, the sinuous forms at once rhythmically fluid and calligraphically expressive. "Twombly has made frequent use of the 'O'-shape that is such a striking feature of *Untitled*," Katharina Schmidt noted of the present work, an element that harks back to paintings such as his famous *Olympia*, 1957.ⁱⁱⁱ



[left] Umberto Boccioni, *States of Mind: The Goodbyes (Stati d'animo, gli addii)*, 1911. Museo del Novecento, Milan. Image: © Alinari Archives / Mauro Magliani / Art Resource, NY [right] Jackson Pollock, *Watery Paths*, 1947. Galleria nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome. Image: White Images/ Scala/ Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Dionysus, it emerges, is a double movement. His madness is a circle of fire, an unbroken circuit of excess, each attempt at containment spilling into the next [in Twombly's work]." —Malcolm Bull

In *Untitled*, Twombly's dialogue with his earlier work is further established in the painting's Dionysian spirit. Like his Bacchus paintings, the present work alludes to the artist's career-long fascination with Dionysus, the Greek god of winemaking, religious ecstasy, and ritual madness—a subject he particularly explored through the 1970s and 1980s both obliquely and directly such as in *Fifty Days of Iliam*, 1978, Philadelphia Museum of Art and a 1981 triptych *Bacchus*, among others. In the present work, Twombly captures a riotous Bacchanalian energy in the rise and fall of the dynamic trochoidal curves and expressionist drips, the red vermilion paint at once evocative of wine and blood as well as Homer's legendary epithet of the "wine-dark sea, an allusion frequently cited in his oeuvre."^{iv} Embodying the artist's famous declaration that "to paint involves a certain crisis, or at least a crucial moment of sensation or release...one ecstatic impulse," here the increasing enlargement of the painterly skeins from the top to bottom of the composition manifest a sense of gradual build up to a rapturous explosion that materializes in the oozing pigment like a descending firework.^v



Nicholas Poussin, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, 1635-1636. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

"For myself the past is the source (for all art is vitally contemporary)." —Cy Twombly

In *Untitled*, the twists and swirls evoke the whirlpools of Leonardo da Vinci's *Deluge* drawings, a deeply rooted influence in Twombly's practice since the 1960s when the artist first became preoccupied with the Italian master's studies of water. Leonardo's investigations of translating water and air into line finds echoes in Twombly's singular language of abstraction, as the undulating loops here recall the sensation of rolling waters of the sea—again bringing to mind the allusion to Homer—set against the "open air" suggested by the cream-colored monochrome background. As Henri Bastian described of works such as *Untitled* and the *Bacchus* paintings, "'Oceanic' would be one of the words for this emotive, circular, frame-filling movement without a center. Dissonant and harmonic, deforming and real, but also beyond the pure bond of comprehensible 'beauty.'"^{vi}



Leonardo da Vinci, *A Deluge*, ca. 1517-1518. Royal Collection Trust, London

"[For Twombly] words become lines expressive of feeling, lines become tones, tones become tensions, white becomes resolution. All this happens with the flowing naturalness of handwriting...[it] seems to us both primeval and innovative, like memory itself and its energies." —Harald Szeemann

Further inspired by Leonardo's notebooks, Twombly found the resonance of a kind of cryptic poetry in the Old Master's scrawls as did Joseph Beuys before him, which became deeply imbedded into his own painterly sensibility. Indeed for Twombly, the idea of handwriting that pervaded his line-based compositions also played in tandem with the written word in which he found such inspiration—i.e., myths, poems, histories—allowing him to suggest multilayered narratives in his paintings. As he expressed in a 2007 interview, "I never really separated painting and literature."^{vii} Along with its light ground and the organization of four cursive-like forms in rows, the present work's vertical format recalls a page of text, while Twombly's inclusion of his initials at the top left corner introduces the artist as "author." By not just revisiting but reworking his handwriting device at the end of his painterly career, the present work testifies to Twombly's

unrelenting pursuit of chasing new ideas and modes of communication in conveying meaning. Here, the presentation of his iconic visual lexicon encourages us to "read" the symbols as if to attempt decoding his ciphered language, despite its legibility and intelligibility rendered impossible through Twombly's exclusion of context. Embodying an emphatic celebration of the artist's prolific career, *Untitled* comes full circle to Twombly's now-established axiom from 1957. "Each line now is the actual experience with its own innate history. It does not illustrate, it is the sensation of its own realization...a synthesis of feeling, intellect, etc., occurring without separation in the impulse of action."^{viii}



ⁱ Nela Pavlouskova, *Cy Twombly Late Paintings 2003-2011*, trans. David H. Wilson, London, 2015, p. 51.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

ⁱⁱⁱ Katharina Schmidt, "A Look at Recent Paintings by Cy Twombly," trans. Michael Foster, in *Cy Twombly*, exh. cat., Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, Zurich, 2007, n.p.

^{iv} Nicholas Cullinan and Nicholas Serota, "'Ecstatic Impulses': Cy Twombly's *Untitled (Bacchus)*, 2006-08," *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 152, no. 1290, September 2010, p. 615.

^v Cy Twombly, quoted in "Documenti di una nuova figurazione: Toti Scialoja, Gastone Novelli, Pierre Alechinsky, Achille Perilli, Cy Twombly," *L'Esperienza moderna*, no. 2, August-September 1957, p. 52.

^{vi} Heiner Bastian, ed., *Cy Twombly: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Volume V, 1996-2007*, Munich, 2009, p. 46.

^{vii} Cy Twombly, quoted in Nicholas Serota, "History Behind the Thought" [2007], in *Cy Twombly: Cycles and Seasons*, exh. cat., Tate, London, 2008, p. 45.

^{viii} Cy Twombly, "Documenti di una nuova figurazione: Toti Scialoja, Gastone Novelli, Pierre Alechinsky, Achille Perilli, Cy Twombly," *L'Esperienza moderna*, no. 2, August-September 1957, p. 32.

Provenance

Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, Zurich

Private Collection, United States

Phillips de Pury & Company, New York, November 7, 2011, lot 20

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Phillips, London, October 14, 2015, lot 20

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Zurich, Thomas Ammann Fine Art AG, *Cy Twombly*, June 1-September 28, 2007, no. IV, n.p.

(illustrated; installation view illustrated)

New York, Mnuchin Gallery, *REDS*, April 27-June 9, 2018

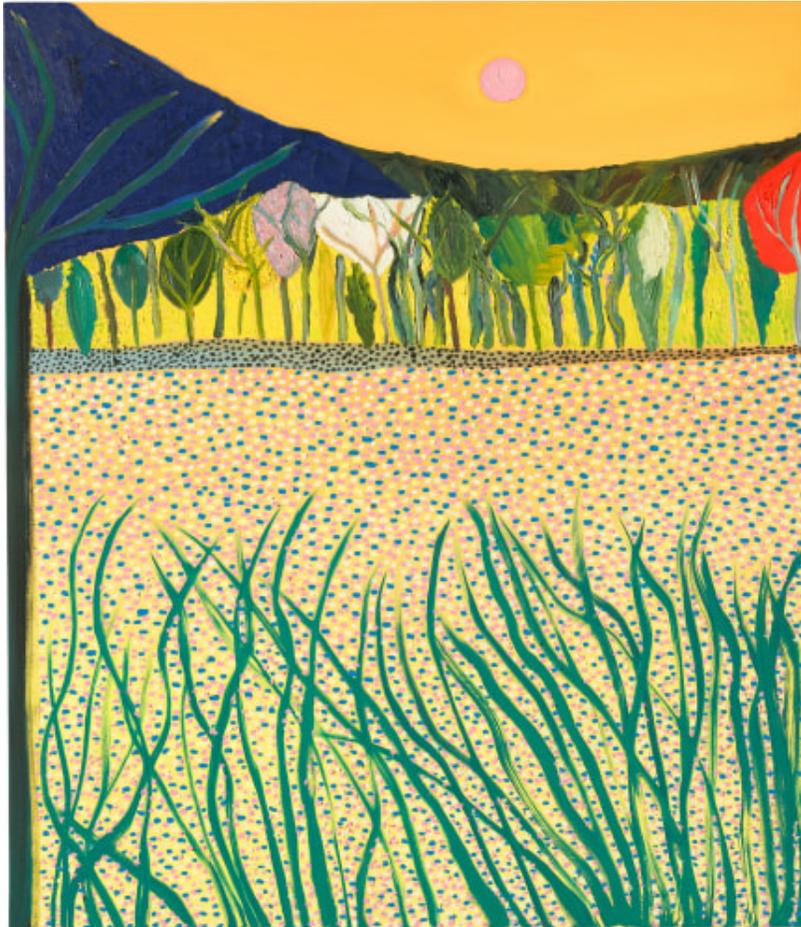
Literature

Heiner Bastian, ed., *Cy Twombly: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Volume V, 1996-2007*, Munich, 2009, no. 46, p. 149 (illustrated, p. 150)

Nela Pavlouskova, *Cy Twombly: Late Paintings 2003-2011*, New York, 2015, p. 54 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



30

Matthew Wong

Day 1

signed, titled and dated "DAY 1 壬二〇一八" on the reverse

oil on canvas

70 x 60 in. (177.8 x 152.4 cm)

Painted in 2018.

Estimate

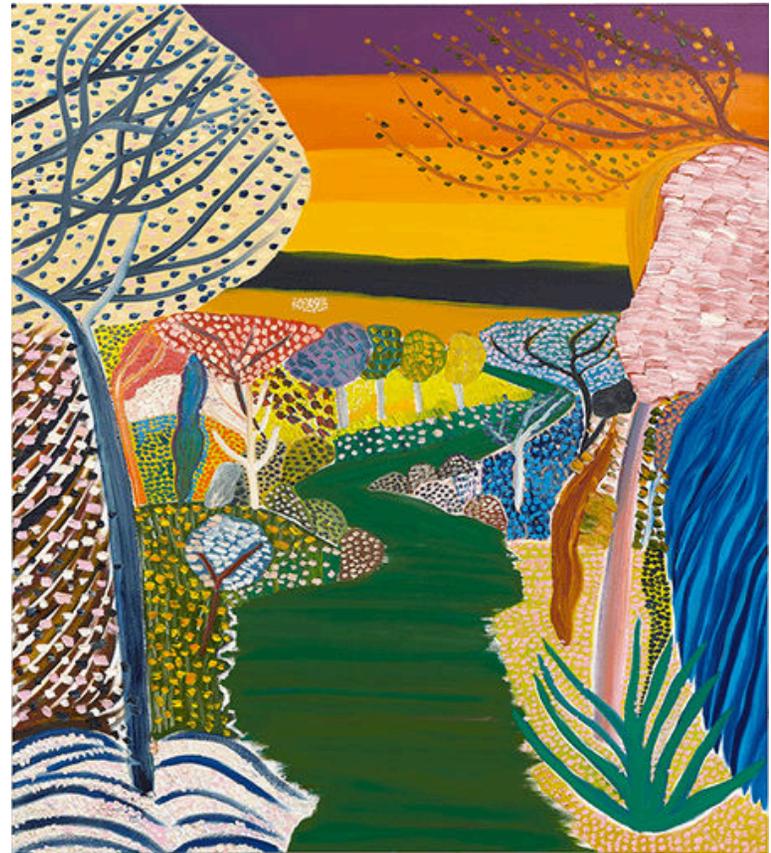
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I'll often have quick flashes of imagery appear in and out of my thoughts, they could be shaped or triggered by something I saw or heard out in the world, an artwork I have seen...Going by intuition and my emotions I will then head to the studio and set out to elaborate in paint these vague glimpses I get." —Matthew Wong

Painted in 2018, *Day 1* is a striking example of Matthew Wong's highly coveted landscapes rendered in monumental scale. Indeed, the present work bears resemblance to the artist's current world record, *River at Dusk*, also from 2018, both in grandeur and also with its unique perspective, high horizon line and rich amber palette. In the present work, long grasses guide the viewer into an expansive, jewel-like field that gives way to a grove along a riverbank, all set below a mystic daytime sky. Encapsulating the "mental database of art I have seen or impressions from day to day life," in Wong's words, *Day 1* evokes a fusion of the artist's influences and lived environments—namely Edmonton, Alberta, where he spent the last three years of his all-too-brief career.¹ Marking the first of eight paintings from his *Day By Night* series, the present work featured at Massimo De Carlo, Hong Kong in 2019, the artist's first solo exhibition in China.



Matthew Wong, *River at Dusk*, 2018. Sold Phillips, Hong Kong, December 2020 for \$4,871,441. Artwork: © 2022 Matthew Wong Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Living a fairly reclusive life and finding the most stimulation and enjoyment from matters of the mind...it's inevitable that the solitary nature of this pattern seeps into and informs my work." —Matthew Wong

After living in the United States and Hong Kong between 2007 and 2016, the Toronto-born artist returned to Canada and settled in Edmonton, where he worked in solitude and prolifically painted the works for which he is now celebrated. It was "a city where he knew no one...For those three years, periods of intense productivity in Edmonton were reclusive lulls in his frenetic and

supercharged march through the art world,” Winnie Wong observed.ⁱⁱ Between 2017 and 2019, the artist presented glimpses of Edmonton in his paintings, including *Day 1*. In this case, the foregrounded field recalls the grasslands of the Canadian Prairies, whilst the upper half of the composition conjures Edmonton’s tree-lined river valley, which “Wong would have gone up and down, crossing the North Saskatchewan River, every early morning on his way to his studio.”ⁱⁱⁱ Here the artist’s elicitation of the natural world around him echo the Canadian landscapes of Group of Seven painters as Emily Carr, as well as the work of his cited influence Marsden Hartley, who similarly found painterly subjects in his home region of Maine when he returned there late in life.



Marsden Hartley, *Mount Katahdin, Autumn, No. 1*, 1939-1940. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, New York

"I'd like to think of my art practice as an open-ended dialogue between myself and other painters, both living and dead." —Matthew Wong

Transforming Edmonton’s landscape into a vista of his mind, the present work showcases Wong’s abounding painterly imagination as he uses the exterior world to explore the subconscious—a

hallmark of the artist’s practice. As Lauren DiGiulio observed, “Wong worked at the intersection of inner psychology and exterior expression, troubling any simple explanations for the tension between them. He constructed paradoxical spaces that, rendered in landscapes and domestic scenes, go deep into the psyche while looking outward to the fields of Western and [Eastern] painting.”^{iv} Channeling his great influences from both canons, the richly speckled field in *Day 1* evokes the Pointillism of Georges Seurat and Paul Signac as well as the hallucinatory nets of Yayoi Kusama, while the foregrounded grasses recall the calligraphic strokes of traditional Chinese landscape painting. By intuitively painting the dots over the dominating plant forms in certain areas, Wong flattens the compositional perspective as if to collapse space into the singular plane of the mind, ultimately materializing his “existential meditation on the act of painting.”^v



[left] Georges Seurat, *La Luzerne, Saint-Denis*, 1884-1885. National Galleries Scotland, Edinburgh. Image: © National Galleries of Scotland, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [right] Vincent van Gogh, *Olive Trees*, 1889. Minneapolis Institute of Art. Image: Minneapolis Institute of Art, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund

"Wong can be considered a kind of nouveau Nabi... Like his forebears, he synthesizes stylized representations, bright colors, and mystical themes to create rich, evocative scenes. His works, despite their ebullient palette, are frequently tinged with a melancholic yearning." —Eric Sutphin

For the series comprising the present work, Wong painted four pairs of day and night scenes, starting with the former and recalibrating his palette for the latter. By exploring the changing effects of light through color between *Day 1* and its counterpart *Night 1*, the artist evokes the *Poplars* of Claude Monet and the olive groves of Vincent van Gogh, his most cited influence. Refracting throughout the composition, the colors of Wong’s daytime light conjure the evocative hues of Symbolism, whilst the blue seeping in at left reflects the melancholic sensibility that culminated in his series of *Blue* paintings from 2017 to 2019. As he expressed in the year of the

work's creation, "I do believe that there is inherent loneliness or melancholy to much of contemporary life, and on a broader level I feel my work speaks to this quality in addition to being a reflection of my thoughts, fascinations, and impulses."^{vi}



The present work and *Night 1* installed at *Day By Night*, Massimo De Carlo, Hong Kong, January 10 – March 16, 2019. Image: Winnie Yeung, Courtesy Massimo de Carlo, Artwork: © 2022 Matthew Wong Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Collector's Digest

Upcoming Institutional Show

Dallas Museum of Art, *Matthew Wong: The Realm of Appearances*, October 16, 2022 – February 5, 2023

- Wong's works reside in notable public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Dallas Museum of Art, Estée Lauder Collection, New York, and the Aishti Foundation, Beirut.

- Continuing the momentum around the artist's acclaim, the Dallas Museum of Art will host

Wong's first museum retrospective in the United States on the heels of the painter's institutional debut, *Matthew Wong: Blue View*, which took place at the Art Gallery of Ontario from August 2021 to April 2022.

ⁱ Matthew Wong, quoted in Maria Vogel, "Matthew Wong Reflects on the Melancholy of Life," *Art of Choice*, November 15, 2018, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Winnie Wong, "Genius from Nowhere: Postcards from Matthew Wong," in *Postcards*, exh. cat., Karma, New York, 2020, p. 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Lauren DiGiulio, "See You on the Other Side: Matthew Wong's Vistas of the Mind," *Momus*, April 1, 2021, [online](#).

^v Matthew Wong, quoted in Elaine Wong, "They Are Artists: Matthew Wong," *Altermodernists*, October 29, 2014, [online](#).

^{vi} Matthew Wong, quoted in Maria Vogel, "Matthew Wong Reflects on the Melancholy of Life," *Art of Choice*, November 15, 2018, [online](#).

Provenance

MASSIMODECARLO, Hong Kong

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Hong Kong, MASSIMODECARLO, *Day by Night*, January 10–March 16, 2019

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A NORTHEAST COLLECTION

31

Jonas Wood

Clipping E2

signed with the artist's initials, titled and dated
"CLIPPING E2 JBRW 2013" on the reverse

oil and acrylic on canvas
102 x 63 in. (259.1 x 160 cm)
Painted in 2013.

Estimate

\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"These plant paintings are exploring shape and repetition in the same way as Alexander Calder—through suspension in space... The plant paintings are refined, simplified forms of just shape and color with only a touch of representation." —Jonas Wood

Oscillating between figuration and abstraction, Jonas Wood's *Clipping E2* is a stellar example of the artist's paintings of foliage. Depicting a monumental plant floating in space, the present work belongs to Wood's series of 10 "Clippings" paintings commissioned by the Lever House, New York in 2013. Imbued with art historical references, Wood's plant forms recall Henri Matisse's famous cut-outs, while the cascading red leaves reflect the artist's direct incorporation of Alexander Calder's mobiles into his imagery. Exemplifying the stark coloring and blockish, stylized forms that are hallmarks of Wood's oeuvre, the present work featured in the artist's first major museum survey at the Dallas Museum of Art in 2019.



The present work installed at *Jonas Wood*, Dallas Museum of Art, March 24, 2019 – July 14, 2019. Image: © Chad Redmon / Dallas Museum of Art, Artwork: © Jonas Wood

"I wanted it to feel like this plant was so much larger than a person that it would

sort of engulf the viewer." —Jonas Wood

Best known for his alluring depictions of interiors with potted flora and people that populate his daily life, Wood began painting plants soon after receiving his MFA in the early 2000s "as a means to paint from life."ⁱ For the series comprising the present work, Wood returned to and extracted the plants from his own previous paintings—in this case, *Blue Crate with Still Life*, 2012, Private Collection—and enlarged them on a grand scale. "I'm presenting these forms in the same way that I would represent something like a pot on a table with a plant in it...The table is gone and the floor plane is completely erased," the artist explained. "I am removing them from a painting and making them independent."ⁱⁱ Revealing his mature painterly concerns on the formalist power of his work, the artist's decontextualization of his plant subject in *Clipping E2* strips any sense of place or narrative, advancing his investigations on color and form by deconstructing and distilling his prior imagery.



Alexander Calder, *The Watusi*, 1950. Städel Museum, Frankfurt. Image: bpk / Bildagentur / Städel Museum, Frankfurt / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Calder, Monet, Vuillard, Bonnard, van Gogh, Stuart Davis, and Hockney have all been very real influences to me. When I was a young child, my family would speak about these artists as examples of greatness in painting. I guess even then I took them seriously because these are the artists I ended up fashioning my studio practice after." —Jonas Wood

Reviving the conventional genre of still-life through a contemporary lens, the artist's depictions of plants transform reality through the filters of his personal memory and reverence for his art

historical forebears which, for Wood, were inextricably entwined. Coming from a family of collectors, the artist was introduced to the work of canonical modern masters early in life, which would have a profound influence on his painterly practice. In *Clipping E2*, Wood materializes his aim to explore "shape and repetition in the same way as Alexander Calder—through suspension in space" in his direct nod to the sculptor's work.ⁱⁱⁱ Fascinated by Calder's abstraction of forms, Wood also found particular inspiration in Henri Matisse and David Hockney, evinced in the artist's dimensional graphic style. Here the flat, isolated botanical form recalls Matisse's late cut-outs, while the chromatic planes of the leaves evoke Hockney's treatment of plants. By referencing the artistic language of his predecessors, *Clipping E2* coalesces a rich history of painterly tradition through Wood's singular contemporary voice.



David Hockney, *Green and Blue Plant*, 1987. Private Collection. Artwork: © David Hockney

The apt title of the series reflects Wood's process of working from clippings, in addition to photographs, to create this body of work. "It goes back to my source material. I look through a lot of plant books, and one of the things that you see in plant books and flower books are clippings," the artist shared. "Sometimes I stretch and distort things, but most of the time I cut and paste until I'm happy."^{iv} Once he creates his initial collage, Wood then draws up preliminary sketches of the composition until he arrives at the image he will eventually paint. The artist's analogue technique of collaging paper clippings to inspire the present composition is thus further evocative of

Matisse's cut-outs in its very creation. Yet unlike the French master's use of pre-painted paper as the end result, Wood approaches collage as an intermediary step to reach the final stage of painting. As *Clipping E2* demonstrates, his layered process ultimately leads to a painterly richness and play with texture that is emphasized by the contrast with the negative space, at once revealing his mark and visualizing the nature of decontextualization in the collage process itself. The complexities Wood presents in the relationships between representation and creation, the visual and conceptual, in the present work are wonderfully captured in Roberta Smith's words. "Jonas Wood's painting continues to mature impressively, gaining pictorial and psychological weight...They achieve this with a dour yet lavish palette, tactile but implacably workmanlike surfaces and a subtly perturbed sense of space in which seemingly flattened planes and shapes undergo shifts in tone and angle that continually declare their constructed, considered, carefully wrought artifice."^v

ⁱ Jonas Wood, quoted in Amanda Law, "Hammer Museum: Q&A with Jonas Wood," February 16, 2010.

ⁱⁱ Jonas Wood, quoted in "Jonas Wood: *Clippings*," Lever House Art Collection, New York, press release, 2013, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Jonas Wood, quoted in *Jonas Wood Paintings and Drawings*, exh. cat., David Kordansky Gallery, 2014, p. 7.

^v Roberta Smith, "Paintings by Jonas Wood," *The New York Times*, March 17, 2011, [online](#).

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Lever House, *Jonas Wood: Clippings*, September 27, 2013–January 4, 2014
 Dallas Museum of Art, *Jonas Wood*, March 24–July 14, 2019, pp. 64, 106 (illustrated, p. 65)

Literature

Jonas Wood, *Clippings*, New York, 2017, no. 22, n.p. (illustrated)
 Judith H. Dobrzynski, "'Jonas Wood' Review: Interiors Gone Wild," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 2019, [online](#)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



32

Rafa Macarrón

La Perrera

signed with the artist's initials and dated "Rm 18" lower right

mixed media on canvas

89 x 55 1/4 in. (226.1 x 140.3 cm)

Executed in 2018.

Estimate

\$80,000 — 120,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Everything is centered around the wonder and amazement that can be found within daily life...I am interested in all of my characters being unique and alive. They each have their own souls." —Rafa Macarrón

Executed in 2018, Rafa Macarrón's *La Perrera* is a luminous example of the artist's dreamscapes that have bolstered him to international acclaim. Oscillating between reality and imagination, this large-scale composition showcases the striking chromaticism and uncanny characters for which the rising Madrid-born artist is best known. Here, his iconic hybrid-dog figures appear to float alongside ladders in a celestial realm of neon hues, embodying his propensity for transforming the everyday into monumental transcendence.



[left] Francisco Goya, *The Drowning Dog*, 1820-1823. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Image: Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY [right] Jean Dubuffet, *Six Fish and Bird*, 1943. Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Image: Tel Aviv Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Drawing inspiration from such canonical masters as Pablo Picasso, Jean Dubuffet, and Francisco Goya, Macarrón's compositions channel the unbound visual expression of Surrealism and the childlike imagery of Art Brut. "I have a very direct relationship with Spanish painting, I have practically grown up in the Prado Museum...[and] Goya's black paintings have always moved me," he recently explained. "[My characters] are born from a fantastic, surreal, and expressionist figuration. I consider them hybrid characters that are closely related to my admiration for Dubuffet, [Manuel] Bonifacio, and Alfonso Fraile."¹ In *La Perrera*, Macarrón conjures a remarkable fusion of his noted influences—namely Goya's *The Drowning Dog* and Dubuffet's *Six Fish and Bird*—as well as his Spanish predecessor Joan Miró, whose symbolic ladders function as dreams of escape.



Joan Miró, *Dog Barking at the Moon*, 1926. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Macarrón devoted himself to his painterly practice in 2006, finding liberation as a self-taught artist to directly apply his personal experiences and unique sensibility onto the canvas. Recalling his formative visit to the Musée Picasso as a child, he expressed in a recent interview, "When I entered one of the rooms I asked for a notebook and colored pencils. I spent the whole morning trying to understand what was in front of me."ⁱⁱ Though nodding to his Modernist forerunner as critics have frequently observed, Macarrón's compositions are inventions of his own practice. "I have always liked to transgress reality and invent like-cosmic spaces that relate to the characters," he revealed. "My painting has expressionist features for the immediacy, the stroke is direct, even though I do a lot of sketch work and previous study."ⁱⁱⁱ For Macarrón, the heart of his process and creations lies in the unhindered freedom of expression, which manifests in his dazzling use of color to build his dreamlike atmospheres. In *La Perrera*, Macarrón elevates contemporary life into mystic worlds crafted from his spirited imagination.

Collector's Digest

- Macarrón's work has been exhibited around the world and the subject of two major exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Center of Malaga and the Fundación La Nave Salinas in Ibiza in 2021. On the heels of these achievements, Macarrón continues to cement his place on the global art scene with his first solo show at Nino Mier, Los Angeles earlier this year.

- *La Perrera* comes to auction following Macarrón's recent Phillips Evening Sale debut this past March in London, when *Balcones* achieved £126,000 (\$167,843).

ⁱ Rafa Macarrón, quoted in Rom Levy, "Artist Interview: Rafa Macarrón," *Street Art News*, October 26, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

Provenance

Private Collection, Madrid (acquired directly from the artist)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF BARRY BLINDERMAN

33

David Wojnarowicz

Fuck You Faggot Fucker

signed, inscribed and dated "WOJNAROWICZ NYC 1984" on the reverse

collage, acrylic and four black-and-white photographs on Masonite

48 1/4 x 48 1/8 in. (122.6 x 122.2 cm)

Executed in 1984.

Estimate

\$800,000 — 1,200,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Carlo McCormick on David Wojnarowicz's *Fuck You Faggot Fucker*

Carlo McCormick is a New-York based art critic and curator who has authored numerous catalogues and artist monographs. He was a friend and collaborator of David Wojnarowicz.



The artist with the present work at his 1990 retrospective in Normal, Illinois. Image: © Anna Maria Watkin

We leave it to the marketplace to assess the value of art, but regarding the evolution of this work by David Wojnarowicz, what it meant to be an artist in 1984, and the ways art would go forward in the increasingly contested cultural landscape that would follow, *Fuck You Faggot Fucker* is of immeasurable historical significance. A portrait of love and desire in a socio-political paradigm of hate and fear, here Wojnarowicz articulates his abiding artistic concerns for the survival and struggle of the socially marginalized as a narrative of liberation sung against the shackles of oppression. It is timeless as all great art can be, but that it is so timely still is a sad testimony that still rings with the artist's clarion critique of the cultural and political conditions that allow for the dehumanization of "other."

"Transition is always a relief. Destination means death to me. If I could figure out a way to remain forever in transition, in the disconnected and unfamiliar, I could remain in a state of perpetual freedom." —David Wojnarowicz

Acquired directly from a solo exhibition Wojnarowicz mounted in 1984 at Civilian Warfare, the first gallery to offer the artist sustained representation, *Fuck You Faggot Fucker* (hereafter abbreviated to *FYFF*) remains a landmark in the artist's oeuvre. It was featured in his major posthumous 2018-2019 survey *History Keeps Me Awake at Night* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg City, and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid). As disquieting and incendiary today as it was 38 years ago, in no small part for its confrontational title, this major painting counterpoises the utopian networks of community forged in the abiding abandonment that characterized New York City after the fiscal crisis a decade earlier against the prevailing forces of misunderstanding and violence that directly threatened the practical and idealistic dimensions of these alternate, ad hoc and temporal societies. Full of life, it presages a sense of doom, inherent if not immanent, an embrace and tenderness cast adrift from the body politic in a psychologically isolating miasma of inky waters. It proffers the homoerotic as limned by the homophobic.

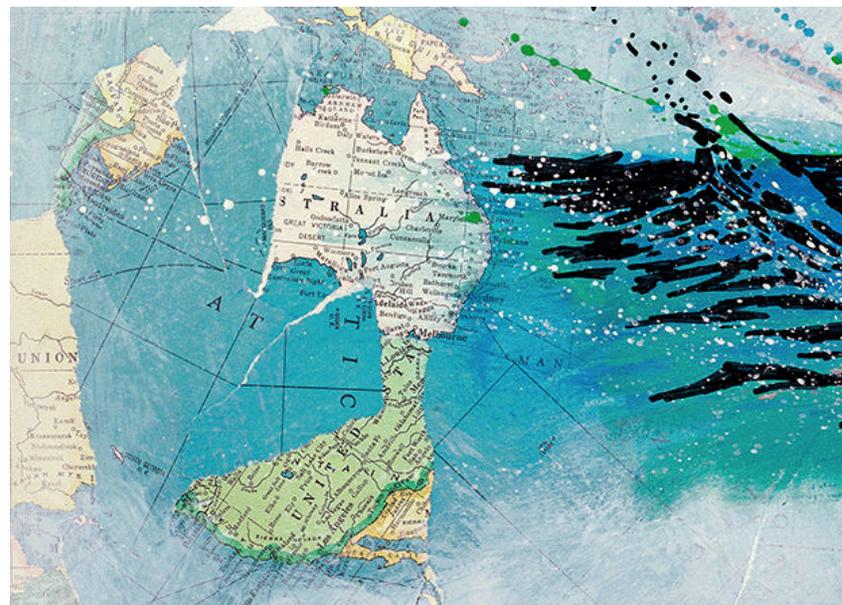


Taking its disturbing title from the inscription on a crude homophobic cartoon Wojnarowicz found, the unmistakable implication in this context is the constant threat that young homosexual men faced from the deranged predatory violence of fag-bashing, or what would only after a shamefully long time be properly called hate crime. Not merely adopting this abuse as a caption for this anonymous drama however, the artist actually includes the original cartoon into the collage composition of the work itself, allowing it as a found object within the fabric of his own imagistic tapestry.

Collage, a visual strategy of incorporation and disruption that is frequently manifest in the art of

Wojnarowicz, works here in a dual function; on the one hand as a kind of evidence, or witness, that his scavenging of the disused and derelict could uncover, and on the other as a mode of inversion through appropriation whereby disenfranchised communities sought to reposition the dominant language of their oppressors into a public vernacular of pride. Positioned at a crucial moment when the coded behaviors and expressions of homosexuality briefly gave way to a new queer identity that, in many ways inspired by the provocations of Punk, emerged from closeted innuendo into an aggressive style of defiance, it is as if the old school of West Village gay hegemonies were collapsing under the rage and rebellion of an East Village secession in which Wojnarowicz would become one of its most identifiable proponents.

Considering the wide array of different elements Wojnarowicz includes in his imagistic maelstrom— with painted passages of dreamlike expanse and erasure, photographs and varying found elements including maps—there is much in the way he structures his storytelling that remarks on the then first rising tendencies of Postmodernism. In this manner Wojnarowicz is not wholly dissimilar to many of his generation who chose to eschew the modernist imperative of radical invention, or novelty, in favor of assembling preexisting signs towards a more disjunctive and idiosyncratic reading. David however was no more interested in the critical distance and inquiries of Postmodernism than he was in the ironies and pictorial collisions of Pop Art, which his work was similarly (and wrongly) compared with at the time. He clearly understood history—philosophically as well as viscerally—to be a doubtful inheritance, a disorienting and ultimately afflictive cultural construct that undermined individuality and subjugated autonomy. The stories he chooses to tell then—and *FYFF* is contiguous in its explorations of the margins with the monologues that make up his seminal book *The Waterfront Journals* (written between 1978-1980 and published in 1996)—act as an intervention against the dominant narrative by articulating the voices and lives systematically silenced, untold, ignored or discounted by history writ large.



Essential to *FYFF*, as it is to all of Wojnarowicz's creative output as a writer, filmmaker and visual artist, is the urgent imperative of the highly personal, a way of investing his own interiority into the bigger story, to make his deftly sociological perspective explicitly personal. The artist's hand reimagines the world through the power of magical thinking, assaulting the factuality of maps, which he would cut-up and collage in many of his most significant works, and inserting himself in ways both anecdotal and metaphorical into his depiction of the world at large. Fascinated by maps, the itinerant wanderer perpetually dreaming of distant lands and foreign encounters, Wojnarowicz was distrustful and resentful towards them—in particular the political maps he uses here which after all ignore the topography of the land or the many lives that inhabit it in favor of demarcating governmental dominion—shredding their authority and subverting their semiotics as entirely devoid of representing or understanding the unruly presence of everyday experience, humanity or individuality contained therein. So too, the two photographs he suspends around the central motif of the kissing figures (one of which is serially reproduced in three corners of the painting) emphasize the personal stakes involved for him.



Both of the photos included in this irrational landscape of the senses were shot in an abandoned school (PS 164) in the East Village and featured friends who he had collaborated with on his now legendary *Rimbaud in New York* series (1978-1979). One is replicated three times, picturing his old high school friend John Hall (also the subject of Wojnarowicz's searing *Genet Masturbating* motif) along with Wojnarowicz himself, both nude and given to hostage-like abandon befitting the abjection of their surroundings—in this case, the abandoned Christodora settlement house on Avenue B in the East Village. The other, shot along the Hudson piers, features Brian Butterick, a former lover, longtime muse and fellow bandmate in the experimental rock group *3 Teens Kill 4*, as a spear-skewered St. Sebastian. To merely note the strong personal content of these images belies the larger project of Wojnarowicz's art, where the decaying ruins of a post-industrial city become the allegorical and physical spaces of self-exploration, and where the autobiographical and mythic are mutually enfolded in one another to relate a new anatomy within the social body where alienation and loneliness converge upon the possibilities of community. Created in the twilight of a soon vanished world where urban renewal would eradicate these lives on the edge just as AIDS (to which the artist would himself succumb in just eight years) metastasized from a worrisome anomaly into a full-fledged plague, *Fuck You Faggot Fucker* talks to us today as the testimony of a creative vitality and communal resistance in the face of a pathological indifference and neglect.

Provenance

Civilian Warfare Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1984

Exhibited

New York, Civilian Warfare Gallery, *David Wojnarowicz*, May 5–June 3, 1984

Lewisburg, Center Gallery, Bucknell University; Wilkes-Barre, Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes College, *Contemporary Perspectives 1984*, October 5, 1984–January 6, 1985, n.p. (illustrated)

Normal, University Galleries, Illinois State University; Santa Monica Museum; New York, Exit Art; Philadelphia, Temple Gallery & Tyler Gallery, *David Wojnarowicz: Tongues of Flame*, January 23, 1990–March 2, 1991, p. 126 (illustrated, p. 29)

New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art, *Fever: The Art of David Wojnarowicz*, January 21–June 20, 1999, no. 16, pp. 16, 137 (illustrated, p. 17)

New York, Martos Gallery, *Hard Love*, January 21–March 5, 2016

New York, Whitney Museum of American Art (pl. 79, pp. 107, 149, 197, 365; illustrated, pp. 84, 196);

Mudam Luxembourg - Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, *David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night*, July 13, 2018–February 9, 2020; then travelled as Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (pl. 65, pp. 73, 147, 246; illustrated, pp. 146), *David Wojnarowicz: La historia me quita el sueño*, May 29–September 30, 2019

Literature

- Lucy R. Lippard, "Passenger on the Shadows," *Aperture*, no. 137, Fall 1994, pp. 18, 22 (illustrated, p. 19)
- Robert McRuer, *The Queer Renaissance: Contemporary American Literature and the Reinvention of Lesbian and Gay Identities*, New York, 1997, p. 27
- Cindy Patton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, eds., *Queer Diasporas*, Durham, 2000 (detail illustrated on the front cover)
- Giancarlo Ambrosino, ed., *David Wojnarowicz: A definitive history of five or six years on the lower east side*, Los Angeles, 2006, p. 165 (illustrated)
- Catalina Florina Florescu, *Transacting Sites of the Liminal Bodily Spaces*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011, pp. 125, 126
- Hua Hsu, "Exit Art, 1982-2012," *The Paris Review*, April 12, 2012, online (University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal, 1990-1991, installation view with the artist illustrated)
- Cynthia Carr, *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Middletown, 2012, p. 251
- Cynthia Carr, *Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz*, New York, 2014, p. 257
- Melissa Harris, ed., *David Wojnarowicz: Brush Fires in the Social Landscape*, New York, 2015, pp. 12-13 (illustrated)
- Margaret Morrison, "'Some Things Are Better Left Unsaid': The 'Dignity of Queer Shame'," *Mosaic*, vol. 48, no. 1, March 2015, p. 28
- Zachary Small, "A Torch Song for David Wojnarowicz, Who Powerfully Documented the AIDS Crisis," *Hyperallergic*, July 13, 2018, online (installation view illustrated)
- Maximiliano Durón, "David Wojnarowicz's Art Continues to Resonate, But a New Documentary About Him Fails to Impress," *ARTnews*, November 11, 2020, online (illustrated)
- Eileen G'Sell, "A David Wojnarowicz Documentary Honors the Gritty, Glorious Chaos of His Life," *Hyperallergic*, November 14, 2020, online (illustrated)
- Cassie Packard, "David Wojnarowicz Brings Us Closer to his Real Persona," *Frieze*, November 26, 2020, online (illustrated)
- James Kleinmann, "DOC NYC 2020 Film Review: Wojnarowicz: F**k You F*ggot F**ker ★★★★★," *The Queer Review*, November 27, 2020, online (illustrated)
- Andrew Strombeck, *DIY on the Lower East Side: Books, Buildings, and Art After the 1975 Fiscal Crisis*, Albany, 2020, p. 51 (illustrated)
- Douglas Greenwood, "A new documentary cuts through the chaos of David Wojnarowicz," *i-D Magazine*, March 18, 2021, online (illustrated)
- Glenn Kenny, "'Wojnarowicz' Review: A Revolutionary Provocateur," *The New York Times*, March 18, 2021, online (illustrated)
- Shana Nys Dambrot, "A New David Wojnarowicz Documentary Does Not Hold Back," *The Village Voice*, March 25, 2021, online (illustrated)
- Noor Brara and Christine Ajudua, "Here Are 17 of the Best Americana-Themed Looks at the 2021 Met Gala Next to the Great Works of Art That (Probably) Inspired Them," *Artnet News*, September 14, 2021, online (illustrated)
- Emily Garside, "Art, Fashion & Activism - Dr Emily Garside on Dan Levy's Wojnarowicz-inspired 2021 Met Gala look," *The Queer Review*, September 15, 2021, online (illustrated)

- Chris McKim, *Wojnarowicz: F**k You F*ggot F**ker*, Kino Lorber, New York, 2021 (illustrated, 37 minutes, 1 hour, 3 minutes; detail illustrated, 1 hour, 43 minutes; University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal, 1990-1991, installation view with the artist illustrated, 37 minutes)
- Oliver Lovesey, *Popular Music Autobiography: The Revolution in Life-Writing by 1960s Musicians and Their Descendants*, New York, 2022, pp. 152, 255



34

Dondi White

Rebel Rocking the Blind Light

titled ""REBEL ROCKING THE" BLIND LIGHT....."
lower center; signed, titled and dated ""★ Dondi
White" 1983. © Rebel RockinG... Rebel Rocking..." on
the reverse

acrylic and spray paint on canvas
63 7/8 x 48 1/8 in. (162.2 x 122.2 cm)
Executed in 1983.

Estimate
\$100,000 — 150,000

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"Dondi is such a legend. You can mention his name to any graffiti artist in any country and they will know the contributions he's made. When Zephyr introduced me to him, I was shocked at how down to earth he was. That short interaction bounces around my head till this day." —Brian Donnelly (a.k.a. KAWS)

Executed at the pinnacle of Dondi White's career in 1983, the present work is a *tour de force* of his now-storied practice that led to his standing as one of the first graffiti artists to transition from the streets into the international art world. At once atmospheric and architectonic, lyrical and controlled, *Rebel Rocking the Blind Light* depicts the New York cityscape through the artist's singular painterly sensibility. Here, Dondi's signature stick figure is positioned within a bold contour recalling the path of a subway line, which merges to form a spray can elusive of a grand skyscraper. Embodying Dondi's "obsessive graphic formalism and elaborate iconography that was at once profoundly personal yet ambitiously allegorical," the present work arrives to the public for the first time since it was bequeathed by the artist to the current owner's late wife, who was a dear friend of Dondi until his tragic passing in 1998.ⁱ



Dondi White at the Venue, London, 1982. Image: David Corio/Redferns/Getty Images

"I do consider myself a painter. I've always said that because I learned how to paint before I learned how to draw." —Dondi White

Rebel Rocking the Blind Light reflects the culmination of Dondi's prolific career between the mid-1970s to 1980s. Lauded for his stylistic innovations and technical precision, the Brooklyn-born graffiti artist began painting subway cars with the crew TOP (The Odd Partners) in 1978 before forming his own crew CIA (Crazy Inside Artists) the following year. By the turn of the decade, Dondi cemented his reputation as a one of the most influential street artists of his generation by departing from complex aesthetic of "wild-style" graffiti in favor a more simplified yet dynamic style that would allow the public to comprehend his work. This shift led to the clear lettering, explosive use of color, and stick-figure characters for which he became renowned. In 1980, Dondi joined the Esses Studio project established by art patron Sam Esses, who paved the way for graffiti artists to bring their art from the street into the studio. It was at this time that Dondi began painting on canvas and became associated with Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Futura through their collective association with the Fun Gallery in East Village—notably exhibiting with them at the seminal *New York/New Wave* exhibition at MoMA PS1 in 1981.

For Dondi, translating his aerosol works onto canvas was natural. Indeed the present work showcases the artist's commanding painterly handling, displaying dynamic juxtapositions between tightly contained forms and oozing pigment giving way to Abstract Expressionist-like drips. Here, his use of enamel spray paint imbues the composition with a shimmering glow particularly evident in the rendered spray can form, forging a striking relationship between materiality and visibility.



"Dondi's life and art are now the stuff of myth, retold in the oral histories of a

subculture and circulated in the documentary traces of a rapidly receding past... it will be the art itself upon which rests the final measure of Dondi White's lasting legacy. —Carlo McCormick

In the year of the present work's creation, Dondi, then 22 years old, established himself as the first graffiti artist to have a solo show in the Netherlands and Germany. Marked by his pivotal solo exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam in October 1983, the artist's swift rise within the commercial and institutional art world was in many ways the result of the important shifts that occurred in his painterly style between his first explorations on canvas and his arrival at *Rebel Rocking the Blind Light*. While his technical approach became more controlled, Dondi's compositions pried more deeply into expressing his inner world. As Carlo McCormick observed, "While his public art gesture tamed and framed wild-style brute into a painterly poetics, it was the studio work where representation was steeped in hermetic contemplation... From his signature 'stick men' to his similarly inscrutable silhouettes, the alienated anonymity of Dondi's city-sleeked everyman stood as haunted surrogate for a psychologically rich spectrum of disturbingly dark yet deeply humanist emotions."ⁱⁱ This conceptual development in Dondi's practice of looking inward materialized into the more atmospheric quality of his work and his deliberate choice to allow parts of the blank canvas to play a role in the composition. In *Rebel Rocking the Blind Light*, Dondi masterfully mediates the hues of blue fazing in and out across the painterly surface, capturing Alfred Nemecek's observation of the present work as "remembrances of the underground."ⁱⁱⁱ In the artist's words, "I do things because I have them inside and I need to release them. And when I release them, they come from the heart and soul."^{iv}



ⁱ Carlo McCormick, "Foreword: Graffiti A.D. (After Dondi)," in Zephyr and Michael White, *Dondi White, Style Master General: The Life of Graffiti Artist Dondi White*, New York, 2001, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alfred Nemecek, "Wer fürchtet sich vor einer neuen Mode?," *Art: Das Kunstmagazin*, February 1984, no. 2, p. 54.

^{iv} Dondi White, quoted in Zephyr and Michael White, *Dondi White, Style Master General: The Life of Graffiti Artist Dondi White*, New York, 2001, p. 112.

Provenance

Private Collection, New York (bequeathed by the artist)
Thence by descent to the present owner in 2014

Literature

Alfred Nemecek, "Wer fürchtet sich vor einer neuen Mode?," *Art: Das Kunstmagazin*, February 1984, no. 2, pp. 54-55 (illustrated; dimensions erroneously listed as 142 x 102 cm)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
COLLECTION

35

Lauren Quin

Second Palm Third Stem

signed "LQuin" on the reverse
oil on canvas
72 x 72 in. (182.9 x 182.9 cm)
Painted in 2020.

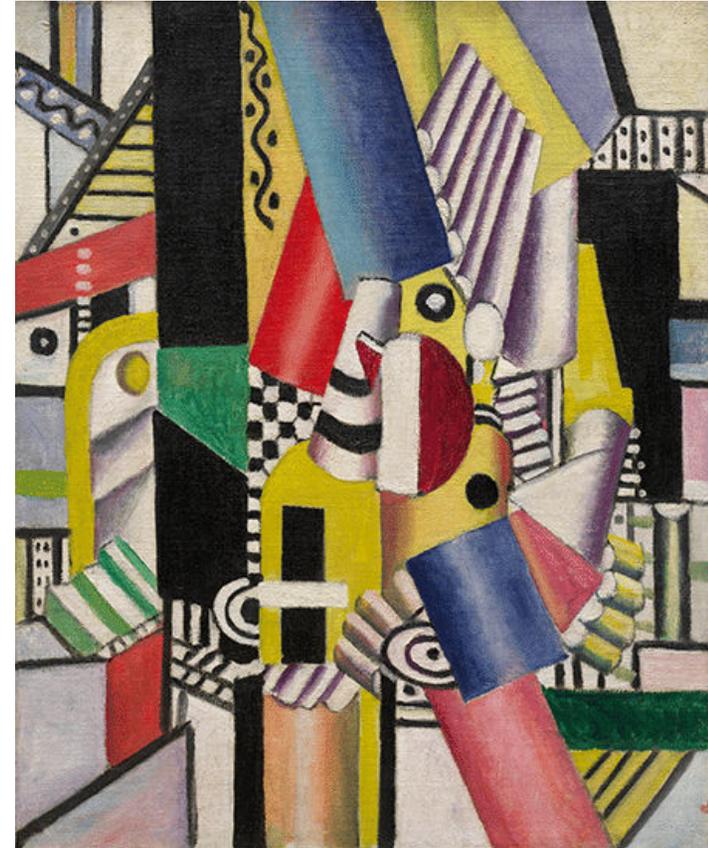
Estimate
\$40,000 — 60,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"There's just so much detail that fizzles out when you're seeing a photo of [the painting]. I wanted to make something that couldn't really be encapsulated by an image." —Lauren Quin

Teeming with chromatic and compositional force, Lauren Quin's *Second Palm Third Stem*, 2020, reverbs before the viewer's eyes. The work presents bold tubular forms overlaid with complex line drawings in a hyper-saturated palette of pinks, oranges, and mint-green hues. Since her first solo shows last summer at Loyal Gallery, Stockholm and Friends Indeed, San Francisco at the age of 28, Quin's works have been acquired by institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and the X Museum, Beijing, testifying to her remarkably rapid ascension on the international art scene.



Fernand Léger, *The Stove (Le poêle)*, 1918. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

"I looked at Léger's paintings as antithetical to mine in the way that they were organized, and I wanted to make something with that organizational tool." —Lauren Quin

Following her graduation from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015, Quin developed her striking visual lexicon during her 2017 residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine and her MFA at the Yale School of Art, which she earned in 2019. "I had never experienced pitch black as I did walking at night through the deep woods of Maine during my

residency there. Your sense of depth is completely removed,” she recalled. “I kept feeling like things were flying at me and I was being pushed through a tube.”^{vi} Aiming to materialize this sensation in her compositions, Quin eventually found her device in the volumetric tube during her MFA, after encountering the work of Fernand Léger. Now a primary feature of her acclaimed compositions, Quin’s tubular forms in *Second Palm Third Stem* take the viewer on a visual rollercoaster, guiding the eye through a psychedelic field. “It’s like the painting falls off the edges, and I keep moving into the center. That’s how I know that a painting is finished—when I reach that point where you feel everything is flying at you and you’re just moving through it.”^{vii}



Albert Oehlen, *U.D.O. 14*, 2001-2005. Galería Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid. Image: Album / Art Resource, New York, Artwork: © Albert Oehlen / Artists Rights Society, New York

The intricate surface of *Second Palm Third Stem* is the result of Quin’s highly complex process. The artist begins her paintings by rendering the large tunneling forms, superimposing them with line drawings, often of biological motifs which emphasize the arterial connotations of her tubes. Once the material layers are built, Quin carves into the surface with tools ranging from her fingers to a spoon or butter knife. Finalizing the composition with a monotype technique, she presses the canvas against ink-covered glass. The finished painting exudes a rippling effect that she aptly likens to a moiré pattern, as the tension engendered by the overlapping imagery creates an arresting visual reverberation which emanates from the canvas.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Black Lines*, 1913. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/New York, NY/USA, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP

While the gradient effect and synthetic-like hues of the present work evoke a digital aesthetic reminiscent of Albert Oehlen's computer paintings, *Second Palm Third Stem* reveals Quin's insistence on an allusion to nature that conjures the likes of Christina Quarles' surreal bodies. The present work's title and corporeal motifs suggest a nod to the organic realm, just as her analogue methods ultimately assert the painterliness of her compositions. It is in this way that Quin creates her own dialogue with the medium of painting, drawing from and subverting the influence of an increasingly digital world through her own sensibility. "And in our changing world," as Cooper Johnson expressed, "Quin's vision of biologically-imbibed and digitally-conscious abstraction gives hope for what painting can offer."ⁱⁱⁱ

Collector's Digest

- Lauren Quin made her auction debut with Phillips in London this March, when [Airsickness](#) achieved £441,000 (\$587,451), soaring over 14 times the low estimate.

ⁱ Lauren Quin, quoted in Stephanie Eckhardt, "In the Studio With Lauren Quin, the Painter Doing Abstraction Her Own Way," *W Magazine*, July 8, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cooper Johnson, "Lauren Quin 'Clutches,'" *Artillery Magazine*, August 19, 2020, [online](#).

Provenance

Harkawik, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



PROPERTY FROM AN EAST COAST PRIVATE
COLLECTION

36 ♦

Andy Warhol

Three works: (i-iii) Campbell's Tomato Juice Box
each stamped by the Estate of Andy Warhol and
respectively numbered "[SC 12.003, SC 12.004, SC
12.005]" on the underside
silkscreen ink and house paint on plywood
(i, iii) 10 x 19 x 9 1/2 in. (25.4 x 48.3 x 24.1 cm)
(ii) 10 x 19 x 9 3/8 in. (25.4 x 48.3 x 23.8 cm)
Executed in 1964.

Estimate
\$700,000 — 900,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"What made Andy's boxes art, while their real-life counterparts were simply utilitarian containers, with no claim to the status of art at all? The question, 'What is art?' had been part of philosophy since the time of Plato. But Andy forced us to rethink the question in an entirely new way." —Arthur Danto

Emerging from Andy Warhol's first important enterprise at the Factory, the present set of three Campbell's Tomato Juice boxes belongs to the artist's early box sculptures that came to define Pop art. Between March and April of 1964, Warhol executed about 100 iterations of his *Campbell's Tomato Juice Box*, replicating the cardboard packaging used to ship the consumer staple that became Warhol's most iconic subject. At once facsimile and original, the present sculptures situate themselves between Marcel Duchamp's readymades and the hand-crafted qualities of Jasper Johns' sculptural ale cans. Alongside six other branded box sculptures he produced, the *Campbell's Tomato Juice Box* series was presented at the artist's groundbreaking exhibition at the Stable Gallery, New York in April that year.



Jasper Johns, *Ale Cans*, 1960. Museum Ludwig, Cologne. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The seeds of Warhol's box sculptures were laid in early 1962 when he created a three-dimensional version of his serial Campbell's Soup Can paintings. In November 1963, after Warhol expressed to John Weber from Dawn Gallery the possibility of advancing his soup can sculptures into sculptures of their packaging in which they arrive at supermarkets, Weber exclaimed, "Your idea of making cardboard boxes is sensational!"ⁱ Over the course of the next five months, Warhol produced seven series of Campbell's Tomato Juice, Heinz Tomato Ketchup, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Del Monte Peaches, Mott's Apple Sauce, and two types of Brillo packaging in anticipation of his Stable Gallery exhibition. Upon the show's opening, eager visitors lined up outside as attendees wriggled their way through the small rooms packed with Warhol's boxes. As critic Lawrence Campbell described of the show, "Andy Warhol is the most extreme of the Pop artists, and his shows are invariably more interesting as ideas...There was a curious effect on the gallery; it became the storage room of an A&P. And the A&P became an art gallery—one found oneself avoiding the cartons as though they had suddenly become valuable."ⁱⁱ



Warhol's *Campbell's Tomato Juice Box* sculptures at the Stable gallery opening in New York, 1964.

Image: © Ken Heyman, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Paintings are too hard. The things I want to show are mechanical. Machines have less problems. I'd like to be a machine, wouldn't you?" —Andy Warhol

The box sculptures marked the first major series produced at the artist's revolutionary studio, the Factory on East 47th Street in Manhattan which he had just set up earlier that year. Georg Frei and Neil Printz noted in the artist's catalogue raisonné that the rows of boxes "suggest[ed] an assembly line. Indeed, considering the quantity of their works, their typology as package, and the mode of their production, the box sculptures...seem to provide the probable context in which Warhol's studio first came to be known as The Factory."ⁱⁱⁱ A perfect embodiment of this observation, the present set of three boxes reflects how Warhol's fascination with factory-produced objects resulted in the conception of his Silver Factory, where his artistic process of producing dozens at a time in an assembly line mirrored the mass manufacturing of consumer goods. As Warhol's assistant Gerard Malanga recalled, "Andy was fascinated by the shelves of foodstuffs in supermarkets and the repetitive, machine-like effect they created."^{iv}



Andy Warhol stands amid his *Campbell's Tomato Juice Box* installation at the Stable Gallery, New York, 1964. Image: Fred W. McDarrah/MUUS Collection via Getty Images, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

As hand-crafted facsimiles, Warhol's box sculptures are both exact copies of their real-life counterparts and products of his own creation. Unlike Duchamp's readymades, Warhol's boxes were not objects found, but built. As the artist found cardboard unfeasible to work with, he hired carpenters to build plywood boxes that maintained the exact specifications of the actual cardboard packaging. Laying out stretches of brown paper on the studio floor, Warhol and Malanga then painted the backgrounds—in this case, yellow—and silkscreened the sides of the wooden boxes. Completing at least two sides a day and ultimately over a hundred sculptures within a month's time, the speed of their screening process gave way to painterly drips and splatters, Duchampian

chance slippages in the “manufacturing” process. In Arthur Danto’s words, “For Warhol these mistakes were part of the process. So he never edited anything out. And these two qualities—unedited but mechanically reproduced—became part of the Warhol aesthetic, whatever the medium he might work in.”^v



ⁱ John Weber, quoted in Georg Frei and Neil Printz, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Sculptures, 1964-1969*, vol. 2A, New York, 2004, p. 53.

ⁱⁱ Lawrence Campbell, “Andy Warhol,” *Art News*, vol. 63, no. 4 (Summer 1964), p. 16.

ⁱⁱⁱ Georg Frei and Neil Printz, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Sculptures, 1964-1969*, vol. 2A, New York, 2004, p. 54.

^{iv} Gerard Malanga, *Archiving Warhol: Writings and Photographs*, New York, 2002, p. 94.

^v Arthur Danto, *Andy Warhol*, New Haven, 2009, p. 60.

Provenance

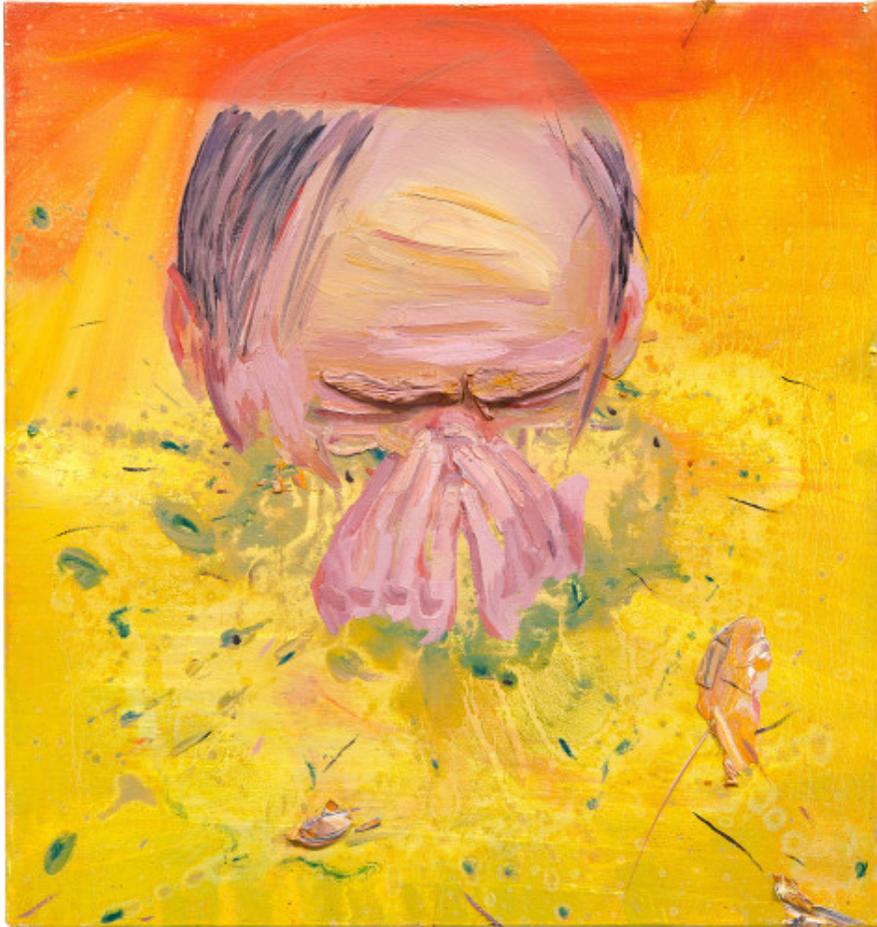
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., New York
 Gagosian Gallery, New York (sold via Christie's Private Sale)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

Georg Frei and Neil Printz, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings and Sculptures, 1964-1969*, Vol. 2A, New York, 2004, nos. 862-864, pp. 53-55, 57, 95 (another example illustrated, p. 92; installation views of other examples illustrated, pp. 66, 67, 93)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 18 May 2022 / 7pm EDT



37

Dana Schutz

Sneeze 2

signed and dated "Dana Schutz 2002" on the reverse
oil on canvas

19 3/4 x 18 5/8 in. (50.2 x 47.3 cm)

Painted in 2002.

Estimate

\$80,000 — 120,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I was interested in painting these sneezes as a kind of mini-event. I wanted to paint what it actually felt like to sneeze, rather than what it looked like to sneeze...A very small explosion coming out of [the] face." —Dana Schutz

Embodying the fantastical absurdity that defines Dana Schutz's oeuvre, *Sneeze 2* belongs to the artist's early eponymous series that launched her career. Capturing her subject in the fleeting moment of sneezing, the present work is a kind of anti-portrait, immortalizing her figure on canvas in an undignified, yet undeniably human moment. Showcasing the artist's dynamic brushwork, gestural strokes and splatters of yellow, green, and blue pigment appear to ricochet out of the canvas through their rich impasto to render an explosion of torrential discharge. Transforming the mundane into the incendiary, *Sneeze 2* exemplifies the artist's unique painterly sensibility of reimagining the ordinary through the grotesque.

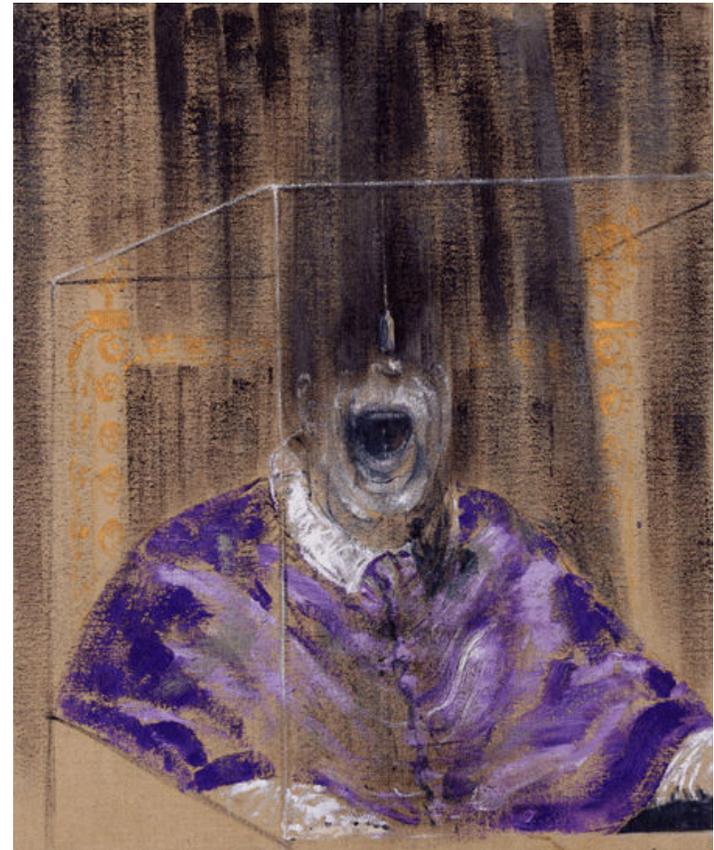


Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, *Character Bust*, 1770-1783. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

"I knew that I wanted to be painting subjects that did not exist or could not be painted from observation," in her words. "I wanted to visualize the subject, like it was a thing that I wanted to see pictured, so that was a reason to paint it." —Dana Schutz

Eschewing direct observation or the use of photographic sources, Schutz amalgamates memory, imagination, and humor in conceiving her imagery, an approach that began early on in her career with works such as *Sneeze 2*. Painted in 2002, the year of the artist's graduation from Columbia University's MFA program, the present work is one of three *Sneeze* paintings created between

2001 and 2002, one of which is in the permanent collection of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. The other was first purchased by artist Erik Parker—whose eccentric abstractions Schutz deeply admires—at her two-person show at Zach Feuer Gallery, New York the following year. “It felt like a breakthrough,” the artist explained of the success with her *Sneeze* paintings. “I had a sense of clarity and purpose, even if it was just an invented one.”ⁱ This set Schutz on the course of her now highly acclaimed practice that envisions unconventional subject matters of daily life. As she once expressed, she would “rather paint the wrinkle on a man’s forehead than the opening of the Olympics.”ⁱⁱ On her fascination with the sneezing subject, the artist explained, “A sneeze is difficult to observe, so it felt like that was maybe the only way that you could paint it, through a way of trying to imagine how that could work...Painting, in a way, is a kind of compressed narrative which can happen just with gesture itself; there is a speed to it, there is a moment, and it is a kind of frozen moment.”ⁱⁱⁱ

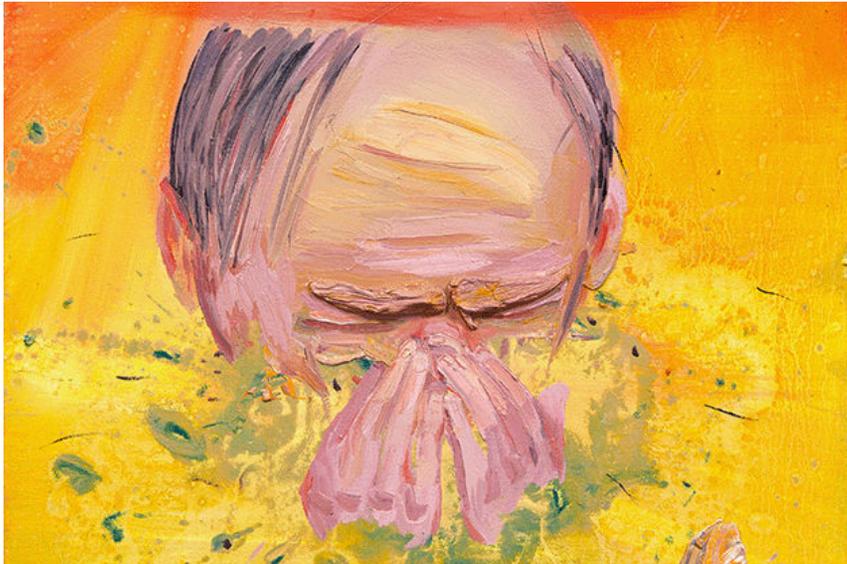


Francis Bacon, *Head IV*, 1949. Hayward Gallery, London. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Francis Bacon/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

"I want the palette to operate in a more subjective manner. I think of color in a bodily or physical way and tend to make decisions about it when I am visualizing what I am about to paint. If I make a painting of a sick man, I want the color to describe how sick he is and in what way he is sick." —Dana Schutz

Characterized by a high-key palette and gestural brushwork, Schutz’s works convey her exploration on the possibilities of expressive color through figuration. For Schutz, materiality and representation go hand in hand—and ultimately become one. “I respond to [the] slippage between material and the image. But when I am really into a painting, I stop thinking that I am using paint

to represent things,” she elucidated. “The paint becomes grass or snot or skin or whatever. I also like the thought of painting as a descriptive or poetic action, like painting as an adjective or an adverb.”^{iv} In *Sneeze 2*, the color and viscosity of mucous and paint play in this semiotic slippage as Schutz’s painterly process further echoes the reactive bodily functions in the act of sneezing. Here, the artist situates herself in the tradition of the grotesque as seen in Francis Bacon’s portraits, while conjuring the great influence of Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh on her palette.



By capturing the wincing reaction of the sneezing man, the present work reflects Schutz’s abiding interest in the way we express emotion. With the figure’s scrunched forehead—suggested by the various colored streaks of paint that masterfully engage with the effects of light—and his tightly shut eyes, Schutz “wanted [the] head to kind of feel almost flattened in this kind of explosion.”^v In doing so, she emphasizes not the *appearance* but the *feeling* of the action, a quality paramount to the artist’s work. In the present work, Schutz further captures this in the semi-translucent layer of red pigment over the figure’s forehead, evoking the boiling tension of an oncoming sneeze that detonates on the canvas. It is this aspect of Schutz’s painterly language—the ability to imbue her subjects with a distressed psychological weight—that characterizes her best work. “Schutz’s paintings are the product of a kind of ‘what if-ness’—someone caught in mid-sneeze, a group of middle-aged men on a sensitivity retreat...decidedly unnarcissistic images of humanity,” in David Salle’s words. “They have the look of feelings made external. They give a sense of the great freedom of mind at the core of painting, the exhilaration of it [in Schutz’s work].”^{vi}

- ⁱ Calvin Tomkins, “Why Dana Schutz Painted Emmett Till,” *The New Yorker*, April 3, 2017, [online](#).
ⁱⁱ Sue Scott, “Dana Schutz: The Elephant in the Living Room,” in Eleanor Heartney et al., *After the Revolution: Women Who Transformed Contemporary Art*, Munich, 2007, p. 298.
ⁱⁱⁱ Dana Schutz, quoted in “*Sneeze*,” Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, exhibition website, 2015-2016, [online](#).
^{iv} Dana Schutz, quoted in “Holly Coulis and Dana Schutz,” Zach Feuer Gallery, New York, press release, 2002.
^v Dana Schutz, quoted in “*Sneeze*,” Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, exhibition website, 2015-2016, [online](#).
^{vi} David Salle, “Dana Schutz,” *Artforum*, vol. 50, no. 4, December 2011, p. 247.

Provenance

LFL Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Honolulu, The Contemporary Museum; Chicago Cultural Center; Winnipeg Art Gallery; Regina, MacKenzie Art Gallery; Salina Art Center, *Situation Comedy: Humor in Recent Art*, September 9, 2005–April 22, 2007, no. 30, pp. 43, 67 (illustrated, p. 42; erroneously dated as 2001)

Literature

Amy Karlinsky, “‘Situation Comedy: Humour in Recent Art,’ June 10 – Sept 10, 2006, Winnipeg Art Gallery,” *Galleries West*, April 30, 2006, online (illustrated; erroneously dated as 2001)
 Eleanor Heartney, Helaine Posner, Nancy Princenthal and Sue Scott, *After the Revolution: Women Who Transformed Contemporary Art*, Munich, 2007, p. 300 (illustrated, p. 301; erroneously dated as 2001)