

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST

Sale Interest: 46 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



PHILLIPS

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST

Sale Interest: 46 Lots

Auction & Viewing Location

15 November 2022 6pm EST
432 Park Avenue, New York, NY, United States, 10022

Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making enquiries please refer to this sale as NY010722 or 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale.

Absentee and Telephone Bids

tel +1 212 940 1228
bidsnewyork@phillips.com

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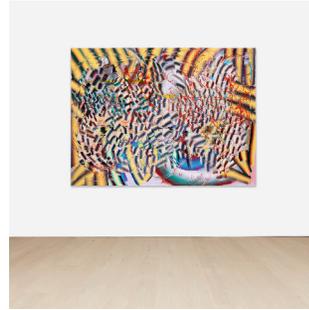
Sale Interest: 46 Lots



1
Ilana Savdie
Marimonda Desplegada
Estimate \$50,000 — 70,000



2
Danica Lundy
Miss Fist Kiss
Estimate \$80,000 — 120,000



3
Lauren Quin
Arrow
Estimate \$70,000 — 100,000



4
Avery Singer
Untitled
Estimate \$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



5
Rashid Johnson
Standing Broken Men
Estimate \$1,000,000 — 1,500,000



6
Pablo Picasso
Mousquetaire buste
Estimate \$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



7
Julie Mehretu
Tsunemasa (next to Kaija)
Estimate \$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



8
Cy Twombly
Untitled
Estimate \$35,000,000 — 45,000,000



9
René Magritte
Le météore
Estimate \$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



10
Amy Sherald
Pilgrimage of the Chameleon
Estimate \$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

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11
Loie Hollowell
Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yell...
Estimate
\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000



12
Tom Wesselmann
Mouth #14 (Marilyn)
Estimate
\$3,000,000 — 5,000,000



13
René Magritte
Le coup de grâce
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



14
Anna Weyant
Bum
Estimate
\$200,000 — 300,000



15
Mark Bradford
He Barked Just Like a Watchdog
Estimate
\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



16
Mark Grotjahn
Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.3...
Estimate
\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000



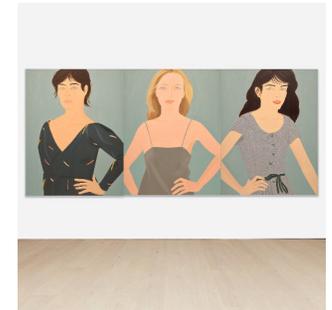
17
Marc Chagall
Le Père
Estimate
\$6,000,000 — 8,000,000



18
Marlene Dumas
Snow White in the Wrong Story
Estimate
\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000



19
María Berrío
He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



20
Alex Katz
The Grey Dress
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

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21
Yayoi Kusama
All The Eternal Love
Estimate
\$800,000 — 1,200,000



22
Alexander Calder
Plutôt jaune
Estimate
\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000



23
Amy Sberald
Madame Noire
Estimate
\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000



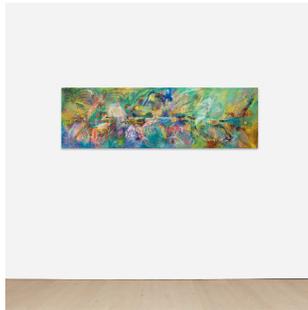
24
Jean-Michel Basquiat
To Repel Ghosts
Estimate
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000



25
Yves Klein
La Chair (ANT 71)
Estimate
\$2,500,000 — 4,000,000



26
Yayoi Kusama
Nets Blue
Estimate
\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



27
Lucy Bull
Untitled
Estimate
\$100,000 — 150,000



28
Willem de Kooning
Untitled
Estimate
\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000



29
Milton Avery
Hot Moon
Estimate
\$1,800,000 — 2,500,000



30
Amoako Bofofo
Pink Shorts
Estimate
\$400,000 — 600,000

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31
Rashid Johnson
Untitled Anxious Collage
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



32
Joan Mitchell
Cobalt
Estimate
\$3,000,000 — 4,000,000



33
Andy Warhol
Oxidation
Estimate
\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000



34
Alexander Calder
Petite croix
Estimate
\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000



35
Jonas Wood
Playroom
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000



36
Willem de Kooning
Event in a Barn
Estimate
\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000



37
Pablo Picasso
Paysage au pin
Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000



38
Mickalene Thomas
I Can't See Me Without You
Estimate
\$350,000 — 550,000



39
Balthus
La Sieste
Estimate
\$700,000 — 1,000,000



40
Andy Warhol
Nosepicker I: Why Pick on Me (T...
Estimate
\$300,000 — 500,000

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41
Andy Warhol
Living Room
Estimate
\$250,000 — 450,000



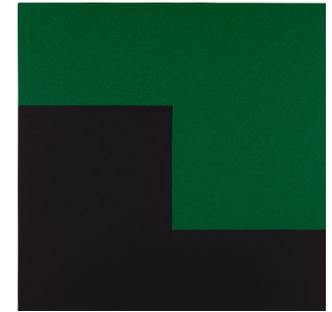
42
Robert Motherwell
Open No. 25: In Blue with Variat...
Estimate
\$900,000 — 1,200,000



43
Luc Tuymans
Absence
Estimate
\$400,000 — 600,000



44
Ernie Barnes
Slam Before the Storm
Estimate
\$300,000 — 400,000



45
Carmen Herrera
Noche Verde
Estimate
\$500,000 — 700,000



46
Anne Truitt
Autumn Dryad
Estimate
\$400,000 — 600,000

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1

Ilana Savdie

Marimonda Desplegada

signed, titled and dated "Ilana Savdie 2020
"Marimonda Desplegada"" on the reverse
oil, acrylic and pigmented beeswax on canvas
stretched over board
58 x 48 1/8 in. (147.3 x 122.2 cm)
Executed in 2020.

Estimate

\$50,000 — 70,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I can't really say I know exactly what I'm unmasking, but I know it is the deploying, displaying, unsticking of a kind of armor, something that serves to protect and/or disguise." —Ilana Savdie

Ilana Savdie's *Marimonda Desplegada*, 2020, fuses the folkloric and the grotesque in a composition inspired by the artist's upbringing in Barranquilla, the Colombian city that hosts the world's second-largest *carnaval*. The painting prominently features several fluorescent *marimonda*, Colombian jester costumes dating to the 1800s, which mock the elite with their primate-cum-elephant forms.ⁱ For Savdie, this form of protest resonates as a powerful display of resistance, and themes of power and play inform both the content and the process of creating her work.

Savdie inherits a rich tradition of using satirical devices in her paintings to critique social inequities, reminiscent of works like Philip Guston's *Gladiators*, 1940, Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Alton Pickens' *Carnival*, 1949, Museum of Modern Art, New York. The artist notes that elements in many of her works "are mocking the concepts of binaries that neatly contain anything."ⁱⁱ But her works are festive and hopeful as well, containing a "celebration of the things that leak out, that spill out, the absurdity of categorization and containment and boundaries."ⁱⁱⁱ



Alton Pickens, *Carnival*, 1949. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Estate of Alton Pickens

This is embodied by the artist's practice, which involves allowing her paint to "seep where it wants to seep and sag where it wants to sag," as part of a process that itself seeps across traditional and digital media in her use of sketching and Photoshop.^{iv} In *Marimonda Desplegada*, blue paint drips from the parasitic form in the center of the painting and the lowest *marimonda* is a translucent wash of blooming color. No forms are neatly contained, and resplendent textures can be found throughout the painting.

The artist's use of encaustic adds another level of masking and meaning to the work. Beeswax

morphs the shapes of *Marimonda Desplegada* by concealing Savdie's brushstroke under a thick, yet translucent, and wrinkly layer of wax. The effect both preserves and distorts the paint below. Savdie enjoys the contradictory visual outcomes of this material, and how it recalls human earwax. Leaning into the dual forces of attraction and repulsion, the artist creates an ambiguous space on the painted surface where, like at *carnaval*, the laws of reality are suspended.

"I like to think of the colors in my work as a perversion through abundance. I hope that they both seduce and repel, and force a kind of confrontation of that contradiction." —Ilana Savdie

While Savdie's connection to intuition and love for bright swaths of colors recalls the work of color field painter Helen Frankenthaler, her embrace of figuration and coding of color-as-queer finds a closer corollary in Doron Langberg, whose intimate scenes become fantastic with vibrant yellows, pinks, and blues, or perhaps in the liquid forms of Christina Quarles. Savdie, Langberg, and Quarles featured works together in "Queering Space," a group exhibition at Yale School of Art, in 2016.^v

Upon moving to Brooklyn and becoming more involved with queer spaces in Bushwick, the artist noticed parallels between *carnaval* and queerness. Was there really such a difference, she asked, between wearing a costume for *carnaval*, or performing in drag, or the everyday experience of "bodies performing as... whatever they're performing"?^{vi} She began to see the colors and attitudes of her *carnaval*-esque palette all around her; "There's an overlap, and I don't think it's an accident that my brain has amalgamated all of that," Savdie notes.^{vii}



[left] Doron Langberg, *Willy*, 2021. The Baltimore Museum of Art. Artwork: © Doron Langberg. Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery [right] Helen Frankenthaler, *Flirt*, 1995. Artwork: © Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Savdie's *marimonda* press, droop, and float across the plane; they "queer and reroute themselves," shedding identities like skins.^{viii} They are *marimonda desplegada*: *marimonda* on display, unfolding, spreading out. Their shifting performance embodies Savdie's commitment to "the use of the exaggerated body as a form of mockery and mockery as a form of protest" in her work.^{ix} "We can locate in [the *marimonda*] a very queer history of exaggerating the body, and taking up space beyond imposed and oppressive boundaries as forms of resistance and protest," Savdie says.^x "I'm always going to be bigger than the space allotted for me, and embracing that is liberating."^{xi}

Collector's Digest

• Savdie's work has recently been acquired by major public institutions in the United States, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Her work populates distinguished private collections worldwide.

Recent solo exhibitions include:

- [White Cube, London, *In Jest*, July 8 – September 11, 2022](#)
- [Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, *Entrañadas*, November 6, 2021 – January 29, 2022](#)
- [Deli Gallery, *Swimming in Contaminated Waters*, February 26 – April 4, 2021](#)

ⁱ Amanda Roach, "Artist of the Week: Ilana Savdie," *LVL3*, November 25, 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ilana Savdie, quoted in "In the Gallery: Ilana Savdie | White Cube," July 28, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

^{iv} Ilana Savdie, quoted in Jasmine Wahl, "'Euphoric and Grotesque': Ilana Savdie on Painting Parasites," *Interview*, December 17, 2021, [online](#).

^v "Queering Space- Exhibition," Yale School of Art, October 2016, [online](#).

^{vi} Ilana Savdie, quoted in Stephanie Eckardt, "In the Studio With Ilana Savdie, the Artist Testing the Body's Limits," *W Magazine*, July 7, 2022, [online](#).

^{vii} *Ibid.*

^{viii} Ilana Savdie, quoted in Amanda Roach, "Artist of the Week: Ilana Savdie," *LVL3*, November 25, 2020, [online](#).

^{ix} *Ibid.*

Ilana Savdie

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Ilana Savdie, quoted in Stephanie Eckardt, "In the Studio With Ilana Savdie, the Artist Testing the Body's Limits," *W Magazine*, July 7, 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York

Private Collection, United States

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

"Meet the NXTHVN Artists and Curators Creating At-Home Art Activities for Children of Essential Workers," *Guggenheim News*, June 17, 2020, online (installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2020, illustrated)

Amanda Roach, "Artist of the Week: Ilana Savdie," *LVL3*, November 25, 2020, online (illustrated; installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2020, illustrated)

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2

Danica Lundy

Miss Fist Kiss

signed and dated "D Lundy 2019" on the overlap;
further signed and dated "D Lundy 2019" on the
reverse

oil on canvas

74 7/8 x 95 1/2 in. (190.2 x 242.6 cm)

Painted in 2019.

Estimate

\$80,000 — 120,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Growing up on contact sports, I was given a window to my own anatomy through cuts, injuries, bruises, and a close proximity to fellow teammates. Painting is a physical undertaking, and inevitably, I've also come to understand it as a contact sport." —Danica Lundy

Danica Lundy's *Miss Fist Kiss*, 2019, brims with the nervous energy of an athlete's anticipation. The claustrophobic composition feels like being in the bull pen of a road race; the viewer is crowded in by bodies, the person in front of them tying back her hair, another cracking their knuckles. A pair of hands, wrapping themselves in bandages, are so close, they could be the viewer's. It is hard to see, in a sea of transparencies and overlapping limbs, where one body ends and another begins. As art critic John Yau writes, exactly "whose body has Lundy placed us in?"ⁱ

And yet, for all of the anticipation, there is a sense that the action of *Miss Fist Kiss* has already passed; the viewer has missed the first (fist) kiss. Tired bodies drink water and slump against the central wooden post. A figure to the right catches the viewer's gaze with one bright yellow eye; the other is bruised and bandaged, retreated into the shadows of other bodies. And at the back of the composition, the bright, spot-lit ring is conspicuously empty, stained with red spots, perhaps blood, peeling tape, and puffs of white, maybe chalk.



Leonardo da Vinci, *The superficial anatomy of the shoulder and neck*, c. 1510, Royal Collection Trust. Image: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Danica Lundy's body of work draws upon a long, painterly interest in the human body and perspective in art history. She has cited the Italian Renaissance as an early reference point, recalling that she first learned to draw the body by copying Renaissance sculptures from a book.ⁱⁱ Like Lundy, Renaissance masters such as Leonardo da Vinci were captivated by the human body, and how its mechanisms moved together. Lundy's figures, with half-transparent limbs and eerily pale, discolored parts, recall da Vinci's exercises in dissection; both artists are interested in the limits of the skin.

"We live in bodies we can't usually see into, so why shouldn't painting be a forum for that imaginary observation?" —Danica Lundy



Lundy also shares Renaissance artists' interest in perspective, but unlike Italian masters such as Leon Battista Alberti, she seeks to move beyond a rational, two-point, linear point of view. As she says, "Albertian perspective is just one way to organize the picture plane. It isn't necessarily an intuitive organization to show how we actually experience the world."ⁱⁱⁱ

Rather, the artist is interested in the sensations of being: how does it feel to be in a room of sweating, breathing bodies? How does it feel to look down from a set of ribs, from the tunnel vision of a hooded sweatshirt, from the underside of a toilet bowl? How does it feel to see the world from a boxer's hands, whose hands may also be your own?

Lundy plays the permeability of the body into her work, inspired by paintings such as Dana Schutz's *Sneeze*, 2002, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. The ideas of "paint as snot, paint as an explosion, paint exposing messes," all hold true for Lundy.^{iv} Her medium of choice, oil paint, lends its mucousy sheen to her meaning; she describes how her paint "moves along behind the brush like a slug..."^v

Unlike her Renaissance inspirations, who sought order and harmony in their compositions, Lundy's paintings lean into the chaos of bodily existence, moving and oozing, sweating and breathing. *Miss Fist Kiss* asks the viewer to consider, "what does it mean to inhabit something that is constantly changing, and over which you do not have complete control?"^{vi}

Collector's Digest

- After showing work in solo shows across Europe, South Africa, and Canada, Lundy had her first solo show in the United States with New York, Magenta Plains, *Three Hole Punch*, February 5 - March 10, 2022.

- *Miss Fist Kiss* is the first of Lundy's works to come to auction.

ⁱ John Yau, "A 'Boobs-Eye' View and Other Perspectives on the Body," *Hyperallergic*, March 3, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Danica Lundy, interviewed for *Artoday*, February 2, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Danica Lundy, quoted in Annabel Keenan, "Danica Lundy Paints the Drama, Chaos, and Reckless Abandon of Adolescence," *Cultured*, February 8, 2022, [online](#).

^{iv} Danica Lundy, quoted in Layla Leiman, "Painting as Contact Sport: In Conversation with Danica Lundy," *ART MAZE Mag*, February 3, 2020, [online](#).

^v *Ibid.*

^{vi} Yau.

Provenance

C+N Canepaneri, Milan

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Sugarlift, *Call Me When You Get This*, April 25, 2019

Literature

"Danica Lundy," *Artoday*, February 2, 2019, online (the present work in progress with the artist in the artist's studio illustrated)

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PROPERTY FROM A CANADIAN PRIVATE
COLLECTION

3

Lauren Quin

Arrow

signed "L Quin" on the reverse
oil on canvas
58 1/8 x 78 in. (147.6 x 198.1 cm)
Painted in 2020.

Estimate
\$70,000 — 100,000

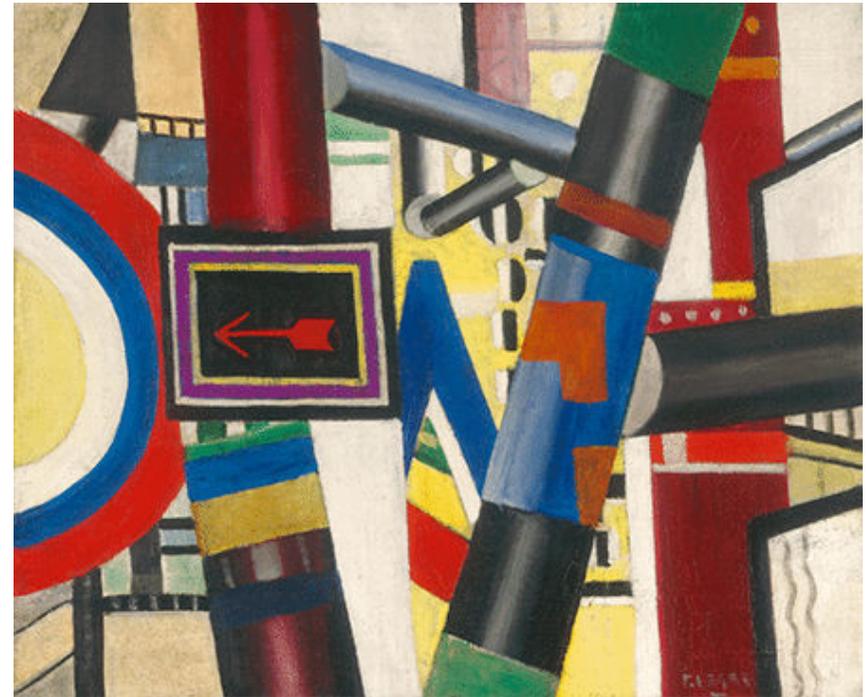
[Go to Lot](#)



In Lauren Quin’s abstract paintings, the tube is an essential visual element. *Arrow*, 2020, sees the artist building the tube into her practice; the work is a signpost on the path between her earliest and most recent paintings. It embodies a moment of transition, and transcendence, in her work.

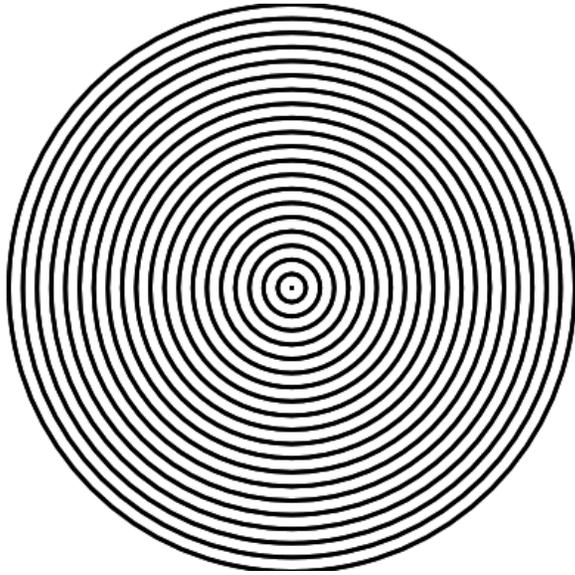
In 2017, while in residency in Skowhegan, Maine, Lauren Quin discovered the tube. She recalls the moment like an encounter with a cryptid: “I had never experienced pitch black as I did walking at night through the deep woods of Maine,” she says. “Your sense of depth is completely removed. You have to turn your flashlight off, because the light attracts bugs, and just remember that you’re on a path. I kept feeling like things were flying at me and I was being pushed through a tube.”ⁱ

Though Quin first encountered the tube in Maine, she did not “unlock” it as a mark-making tool until the end of her MFA program at Yale.ⁱⁱ Quin cites the work of Ferdinand Léger as key to unlocking the tube. Though the Cubist’s strict sense of structure was “antithetical” to Quin’s process, she felt inspired to make something with an “organizational tool,” like Léger: something like a tube.ⁱⁱⁱ



Ferdinand Léger, *The Railway Crossing (sketch)*, 1919, The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Arrow builds off the visual language of Quin’s work at Yale, and points towards her mature practice. As in earlier work, *Arrow* contains multiple, smaller elements on one canvas, in the form of identifiable layers of work. Quin begins with a base of turquoise, blue, and silver; she adds rays of yellow and black, then black and cream. The middle layer of black and cream, with counter-facing brushstrokes, give the appearance of two spirals in moiré effect, side by side. These visual elements shift before the eye when approaching the canvas, like an optical illusion settling itself out in real time.



After spreading her base colors and tubes, Quin uses a palette knife or rag dipped in turpentine to trace dissolving spirals through the gradients of color, creating a blurred visual effect. As her last step, she transfers a layer of drawings in red ink on top of her painted layers. These drawings come from her sketchbook, and their abstracted lines add new tubular routes across *Arrow*.

Quin has continued to push the visual elements she put to work in *Arrow*; in the past two years, her compositions have grown in scale, depth, and brightness of color, and her top layers of transferred drawings (often, still, in red), are increasingly intricate. *Arrow* is a site of experimentation; her openminded and playful brushstrokes layer into stylistic breakthrough. The painting records an essential moment in Quin's career, as she comes into her own visual language as an artist.

Collector's Digest

Recent and Concurrent Solo Exhibitions:

[Overland Park, Kansas, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, *My Hellmouth*, October 20, 2022 – April 23, 2023.](#)

[Shanghai, China, Pond Society, *Sagittal Fours*, September 24 – October 31, 2022.](#)

[Los Angeles, Blum & Poe, *Pulse Train Howl*, May 14 – June 25, 2022.](#)

- Quin's work has recently been acquired by major institutions, including The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, and The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, among others.

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 Lauren Quin, quoted in Janelle Zara, "Painter Lauren Quin Explores a New, Electric Type of Mark," *Cultured Magazine*, December 7, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Lauren Quin, quoted in Eckhardt.

Provenance

Friends Indeed, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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4

Avery Singer

Untitled

signed "Avery Singer 2015" on the overlap

acrylic on canvas

77 1/8 x 61 1/4 in. (195.9 x 155.6 cm)

Painted in 2015.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

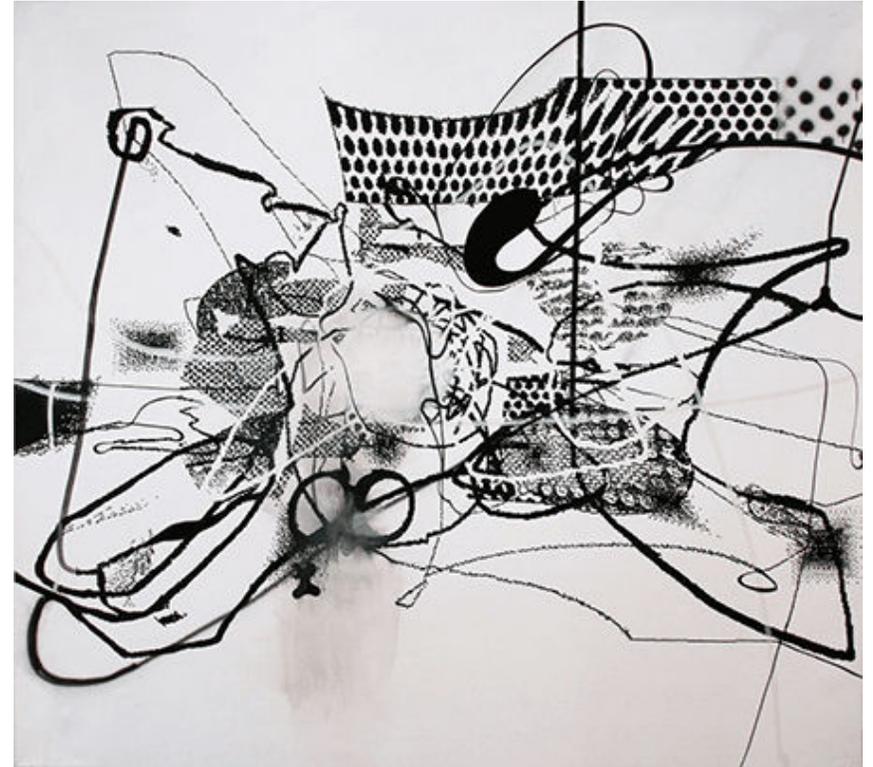
[Go to Lot](#)



"I'm trying to look forward from my own vantage point, because that seems like the most challenging and complex thing to do." —Avery Singer

Untitled, 2015, quasi-satirically engages themes of digitization, projection, and reproduction as an avatar-portrait of Avery Singer's autobiographical artist archetype. The work, which featured in the artist's first European solo show at The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, in 2016, originates from the pivotal body of work that launched the artist's career, exploring the concept of the self as an archetypical artist through depictions of blocky, computer-generated characters.

Untitled features a human bust in Singer's signature greyscale; its flat hair, folded like confetti paper, casts shadows on the face in lieu of eyes or mouth. A detail is drawn out in a magnification loupe from the right cheek, seeking an invisible blemish in a gesture that any frequent user of social media will be all too familiar with. The hyper-zoom reveals textures unseen: a perforated dermis, microscopic particles that cast long shadows, like fingers, reaching out to touch the viewer and confront them with the work's un/reality.



Albert Oehlen, *Untitled*, 2004, Private Collection. Artwork: © Albert Oehlen / 2022 Artists Rights Society, New York

Singer's use of black and white in this body of work stems from a combination of childhood experiences and rekindled inspiration. The daughter of two film projectionists (her father worked at the Museum of Modern Art), Singer spent her childhood weekends watching art films in black and white in the museum's basement viewing room. However, it took until 2009, when Singer, as an art student, saw an exhibition of Albert Oehlen's *Computer Paintings* at Skarstedt, New York, for the artist to connect film and technology to her painting practice. "I had not been interested in contemporary painting until I saw that show," she recalled. "And I realized, oh, this medium is actually really powerful, if you use it right."ⁱ

"If you're going to make an original statement in painting, you also have to address its history... All artists, but especially painters, have to deal with the issue of art in

the age of mechanical reproduction." —Avery Singer

Singer's works from this period, *Untitled* included, ask, what is the role of art (or artist?) when images can be mass-produced by computers? Reflecting on the start of her career, Singer notes, "I had not seen paintings that employ 3-D modeling software as a means for image production, so I began to experiment with that."ⁱⁱ She uses such software—the architectural mock-up tool called SketchUp was an early favorite—to build her blocky, greyscale compositions of mute, female-coded figures who "romantically inhabit" the "mystical corners" of early 20th century art history.ⁱⁱⁱ The figures' abject blankness satirizes nostalgia for an art world gone by, and her clunky computer renderings recall canonical art-historical tropes, such as the flowing hair of Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, 1485-1486, Uffizi Gallery, or the corkscrew curls of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's 17th century sculptures. More contemporary references abound, too, as Singer draws from Modernist portraiture conventions, and classic theoretical concepts of image and reproduction.



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Dora Maar*, 1937. Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
[right] Andy Warhol, *Birth of Venus (After Botticelli)*, 1984. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"Instead of treating computer graphics as a flattening tool, I thought of using them as an illusory one, as a potential way to generate an unfamiliar reality." —Avery Singer

When building compositions like *Untitled*, Singer works backwards from Internet image sources, which she then runs through her digital modeling tools, and finally translates into acrylic on

canvas.^{iv} In a way, her process is the inverse of the average person's experience of using the Internet, where one's online persona is built up, over time, from "real life" sources. For Singer, the "real life" thing, the physical painting, is the last object to come into being.

Untitled exists in a digitally-mediated space in which one can zoom into the surface of the skin, yet the basic features of the face remain stubbornly undefined. The contrast of micro-knowledge and macro-frustration in *Untitled* perhaps reflects the "process of banalization" that Singer cites as a product of modern society, specifically, in terms of hyper-monetized and hyper-online spaces, such as social media, which is the natural habitat of the 21st century artist building their career.^v

Singer engages this digital landscape in both personal and universalized terms with *Untitled*. Her computer aesthetic creates the artistic space to explore the self as archetypal artist, both intimately tied to, and completely divorced from, the self as an individualized human being.

ⁱ Avery Singer, quoted in Jason Rosenfeld, "Avery Singer with Jason Rosenfeld," The Brooklyn Rail, September 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Avery Singer, quoted in Lauren Cornell, "Hyperreal, if You Like," Flash Art, October 12, 2015, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} "Hammer Projects: Avery Singer," The Hammer Museum, October 2015, [online](#).

^v Avery Singer, quoted in [Cornell](#).

Provenance

Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *Avery Singer: Scenes*, April 23–October 2, 2016

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

5 ♦

Rashid Johnson

Standing Broken Men

ceramic tile, mirror tile, branded red oak flooring,
spray enamel, oil stick, black soap and wax
94 5/8 x 73 in. (240.3 x 185.4 cm)
Executed in 2020.

Estimate

\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"My work has always had concerns around race, struggle, grief and grievance, but also joy and excitement around the tradition and opportunities of Blackness."
—Rashid Johnson

Rashid Johnson's enigmatic portraits unmask the face of anxiety, astutely laying bare the fragility and turbulence of the human condition. Executed in 2020, *Standing Broken Men* is the culmination of more than two decades spent mining the intersections of subjectivity, abstraction, and sociopolitical precarity. An intricate mosaic of mirrored and vibrant ceramic tiles, it features Johnson's distinctive boxy, abstracted bust motif rendered in a various assortment of media—including black soap, wax, oil sticks, and red oak flooring. The work illustrates the graphic and tactile breakthroughs of his recent Broken Men series, which he began in 2018 as the continuation of two acclaimed bodies of work that featured gridded portraits on tiles: the *Anxious Men* and the *Anxious Audiences* (2015–2018). Visualizing the fragmentation of postmodern identity, *Standing Broken Men* is emblematic of a singular chapter in Johnson's career, other examples of which are held in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The notion of the face as the image behind which selfhood and interiority hide can be traced back to the very beginning of the artist's career as a young photographer in his native Chicago. Captured in the late 1990s, his straight-on portraits of homeless men of color were printed with analogue techniques that framed their subjects in brushy, agitated rectangles. As Johnson's focus shifted from reproducing individual subjects' likenesses to more abstracted visages, the internalized disquiet he had been seeking to represent came to the fore. The grids of tiles and faces in the *Anxious Men* became an ordering principle, a foil to psychological anarchy; *Standing Broken Men* disrupted this uniformity to unleash the internal turmoil that lies within. Signaling a departure from Johnson's earlier monochromatic palette, the present work evokes the full emotional range of anxiety through a kaleidoscopic array of askew shapes and shattered rectangles.



Jean Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1982. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York

The shards that comprise *Standing Broken Men* can thus be read as a metaphor for the complexity of identity—the fabrication of selfhood symbolized by the careful balance of composite elements. At first envisioning this body of work as self-portraits, Johnson soon realized the universality of his interrogation of subjectivity in the face of heightened discussion surrounding issues of race and social justice in the United States. The fractured components of *Standing Broken Men* imply a violent collision between individually- and collectively-constructed identities: the shattered mirror tile in the figure's chest brings both physical and psychological bloodshed to mind. In light of changing political conditions and attitudes, the work's multivalent depiction of the body as a site of

tension is rife with individual and cultural symbolism.

"The beginning of [the Broken Men] parallels the beginning of my thinking about how an art object is made." —Rashid Johnson

Johnson's choice of media almost always carries personal or public significance, and his frequent use of black soap, which appears in *Standing Broken Men*, is similarly dense with social connotations. Produced by combining shea nut fat and the ash of foliage, the substance is commonly used by members of the Black diaspora thanks to the widespread popularity of its homeopathic benefits in West Africa. The artist's decision to adorn the figure with stroke of such a symbolically-rich material denotes the inextricability of his sense of self from his African heritage and acts as a tangible link to his ancestry. Despite these associations, Johnson's meditation on the nature of identity is intended to resonate beyond specific cultures and customs. "When I call these works Broken Men, I didn't intend to gender or race them," he elucidated. "It was meant as a stand in for the human condition."¹



Joan Miró, *Personnage oiseaux etoile* (Figure, Bird, Star), 1978. Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Italy. Image: © Ghigo G. Roli / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

In presenting a universal account of the experience of anxiety, Johnson might have pushed the subject of *Standing Broken Men* to the point of no return. The figure has an ambiguous countenance: it is possible to interpret him as a fragile and frail inheritor of the worries of the world, or as the apprehensive bystander of contemporary society's injustices. But it is also possible to view Johnson's shattered figures in more promising terms—that the union of disparate parts into a vibrant, dynamic whole might allude to the potential for restoration, solidarity, and renewal. Evocative of the improvisational idiom of Joan Miró, the expressive gestures of vivid oil stick suggest that these figures are not just existential portraits of our times. "They also could be more

Rashid Johnson

magical,” Ian Alteveer, the curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, articulated of the Broken Men: “strange new beings on the brink of a brand-new world.”ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Rashid Johnson, quoted in Nadia Sayei, “Rashid Johnson on broken men, the black body and why Trump is bad for art,” *The Guardian*, November 25, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ian Alteveer, quoted in Hilarie M. Sheets, “In Rashid Johnson’s Mosaics, Broken Lives Pieced Together,” *The New York Times*, September 23, 2021, [online](#).

Provenance

David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTOR

6 ♦

Pablo Picasso

Mousquetaire buste

indistinctly signed "Picasso" upper left; dated

"25-26.9.68." upper right

oil on panel

36 3/8 x 14 3/8 in. (92.4 x 36.5 cm)

Painted on September 25-26, 1968.

Estimate

\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Pablo Picasso's *Mousquetaire buste*, 1968, is part of the artist's wider engagement of the 17th century French King's guard archetype from 1966 through to the 1970s. The foppish form of the curly-haired, pipe-smoking soldier was a character through which Picasso engaged with the master painters of the art historical canon, and Western myth-making in art. The features are abstracted into a cartoonish state: his eyes are lopsided, and his mustache flurried like cat whiskers. In this iteration his musketeer is a bust, the grandeur of the medium undercut by Picasso's riotous use of greens and purples.

The literary, popular, and artistic references for *Mousquetaire buste* are as wide-ranging and varied as Picasso's oeuvre itself. In 1966, when recovering from surgery, Picasso spent his time reading classic literature, particularly texts from the 17th century, including Spanish Siglo d'Oro authors such as Luis de Góngora and Lope de Vega, and the plays of William Shakespeare.

Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* (1844), a swashbuckling serial set in 17th century France, was also, purportedly, on his reading list.ⁱ



The cast on the set of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, May 3, 1961. Image: © AGIP / Bridgeman Images

Picasso probably enjoyed film versions of *The Three Musketeers* story, too; as a movie buff, he was “unlikely to have missed Bernard Borderie’s popular 1961 movie, *Vengeance of the Three Musketeers*,” which was the sixth most-watched film at the French box office that year.ⁱⁱ Beyond literature and film, though, the artist’s wife, Jaqueline, shared that the ultimate source of subject matter was deeply art historical: the musketeers “came to Pablo [Picasso] when he’d gone back to studying Rembrandt.”ⁱⁱⁱ



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch*, 1642. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Image: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Later in life, Picasso was known to have projected slides of Rembrandt van Rijn's masterpiece, *The Night Watch*, 1642, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, onto his studio walls, and concurrent with his *mousquetaire* paintings are a series of works based on Rembrandt's compositions.^{iv} Picasso's musketeers are "in a general way related to portraits by Rembrandt, even if it is not always possible to point to specific prototypes," Gert Schiff writes.^v Picasso found inspiration, too, from royal court painters, such as France's Philippe de Champaigne, and Spanish master Diego Velázquez. This generalized Baroque inspiration, free from any one artist or region, allowed Picasso to draw from a larger, mythic source: the tradition of Grand Master painters in Western art.



detail, Diego Velázquez, *Philip IV Hunting Wild Boar (La Tela Real)*, c. 1632-1637. National Gallery, London. Image: © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY

The *mousquetaire* character was a visual shorthand for the Grand Tradition of European painting, within which Picasso sought to place himself at the end of his life. Having spent the past sixty years building his career as one of the most successful and influential artists of the 20th century, Picasso, aged 86 in 1968, surely knew that his artistic legacy would outlive him. José L. Barrio Garay noted that the Spanish term for musketeer, *mosquetero*, also refers to the non-paying, standing spectators in Spanish Golden Age theaters.^{vi} Garay observed that it was "as if Picasso were now himself a spectator in his own life and oeuvre, or as if his images had acquired the volition to create their own spectacle in his art..."^{vii}



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Portrait Bust of King Louis XIV*, 1665. Palace of Versailles, Versailles. Image: © NPL - DeA Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

The bust form of Picasso's *mousquetaire* is particularly apt for the role of spectator. Without a body of its own, all the *mousquetaire buste* can do is sit on its plinth and watch the world go by. This comparison becomes particularly poignant in 1968, a watershed year for social revolutions led by young people, such as the student uprising in Paris in May, which Picasso was sympathetic to. Though Picasso would famously quip that "now that I have arrived at a great age, I might as well be twenty," he certainly knew himself to be 86, and living in Mougins, hundreds of miles from the action in Paris.

Thus, below the carnival-colored levity of *Mosquetaire buste*, there is also a sense of frustration, of a past time gone by, of being out of place. The work is ironic, in its caricature of a historical type, but also sincere, in its quotation of past masters such as Rembrandt, and in its longing to participate in the revolution from Mougins.^{viii} In short, the work participates in an artistic legacy greater than Picasso himself.

ⁱ *Picasso: Mosqueteros*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2009, p. 20.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*; "Box Office Annuel France 1961," *Box Office Story*, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jaqueline Roque [1976], quoted in Gert Schiff, *Picasso: The Last Years, 1963-1973*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1983, p. 31.

^{iv} *Picasso: Mosqueteros*, 19.

^v Gert Schiff, *Picasso: The Last Years, 1963-1973*, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1983, pp. 36-37.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, 41.

^{vii} José L. Barrio Garay [1970], quoted in Schiff, 41.

^{viii} Pablo Picasso, quoted in *Picasso: Mosqueteros*, op. cit., p. 245.

Provenance

Sala Gaspar, Barcelona
 Sotheby's, New York, November 4, 1982, lot 87A
 Lucille and Norton Simon, Los Angeles
 Private Collection (by descent from the above)
 Christie's, New York, November 1, 2011, lot 62
 Martin Lawrence Galleries, San Francisco
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Van de Weghe Fine Art, *Picasso / Basquiat*, April 29–May 30, 2012

Literature

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1967 et 1968*, vol. 27, Paris, 1973, no. 306, p. 198 (illustrated, p. 119)

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PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE COLLECTOR

7 ♦

Julie Mehretu

Tsunemasa (next to Kaija)

ink and acrylic on canvas stretched over panel

84 x 96 in. (213.4 x 243.8 cm)

Executed in 2014.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



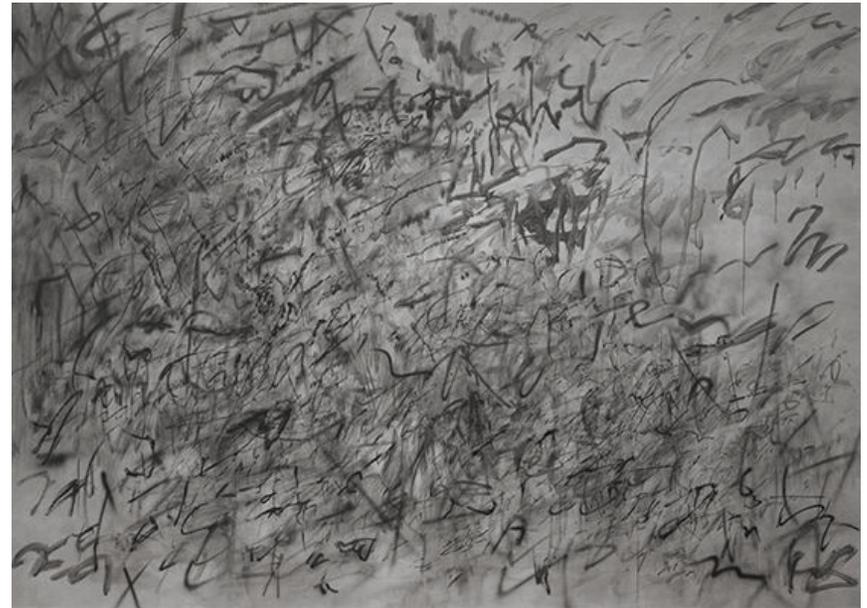
Tsunemasa, (*next to Kaija*), 2014, is a superb example from one of Julie Mehretu's most acclaimed bodies of work, a critical moment in her corpus which marked a contemplative and personal evolution from her *Mogamma* series (2012). While her previous works were abstracted, metaphorical blueprints made during the Arab Spring uprising, *Tsunemasa* is a map of interiority, executed in the wake of the deadly civil wars and failed governmental promises that followed.



Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1970. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

A lyrical symphony of mark-making, *Tsunemasa*, is an expressive topography mining the depths of psychological interiority. Staccato and diffusive gestures erupt across a variegated grey expanse of palimpsest, inhabiting a liminal space in which forms advance and recede as the viewer moves around the canvas. Its characteristic interplay between speed, line, and form shows the height of Mehretu's painterly adroitness at a pivotal juncture in her practice. Signaling a departure from her earlier colorful, hard-edge idiom, defined by its pointed architectural references to social and geopolitical tumult, *Tsunemasa* shows the artist's embrace of a more gestural, contemplative approach that echoes the evocative primacy of both cave paintings and graffiti markings. The striking calligraphic clarity provided by the use of sumi ink, redolent of Cy Twombly's "blackboard" explorations of the inner psyche, is emblematic of Mehretu's celebrated practice—which has seen her probing the potentiality of abstraction for more than two decades.

The vibrant, geometric designs that proliferated in her earlier practice metamorphosed into a softer language harmonizing individual and collective voices: palimpsest, smudges, and diffused markings punctuated by calligraphic strokes. Encompassing her famed *Invisible Sun* works, the profound vulnerability of this series has already been recognized by renowned public and private collections, with paintings housed in the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Broad, Los Angeles; the Pinault Collection; and the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul.



Julie Mehretu, *Invisible Sun (Algorithm 5, Second Letter Form)*, 2014. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Julie Mehretu



Julie Mehretu, *Invisible Sun (Algorithm 8, Fable Form)*, 2015. The Broad, Los Angeles. Artwork: © Julie Mehretu



Julie Mehretu, *Invisible Sun (Algorithm)*, 2012. The Pinault Collection, Paris. Artwork: © Julie Mehretu



Julie Mehretu, *Stelae 2 (Voodoo)*, 2016. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul. Artwork: © Julie Mehretu

"My aim is to have a picture that appears one way from a distance—almost like a cosmology, city or universe from afar—but then when you approach the work, the overall image shatters into numerous other pictures stories and events." —Julie Mehretu

Executed during the artist's tenure as the set designer for Peter Sellars's staging of Kaija Saariaho's *Only the Sound Remains*, the present work is one of two of the artist's paintings that were reproduced and enlarged as backdrops for the opera. The painting and performance, which premiered across Europe and Canada beginning in 2016, was inspired by the popular Japanese Nôh drama *Tsunemasa*. Telling the story of a prodigious lute player killed in battle whose spirit haunts his own memorial service, the narrative epitomizes the melodic structure and supernatural tropes that typify Nôh theater.



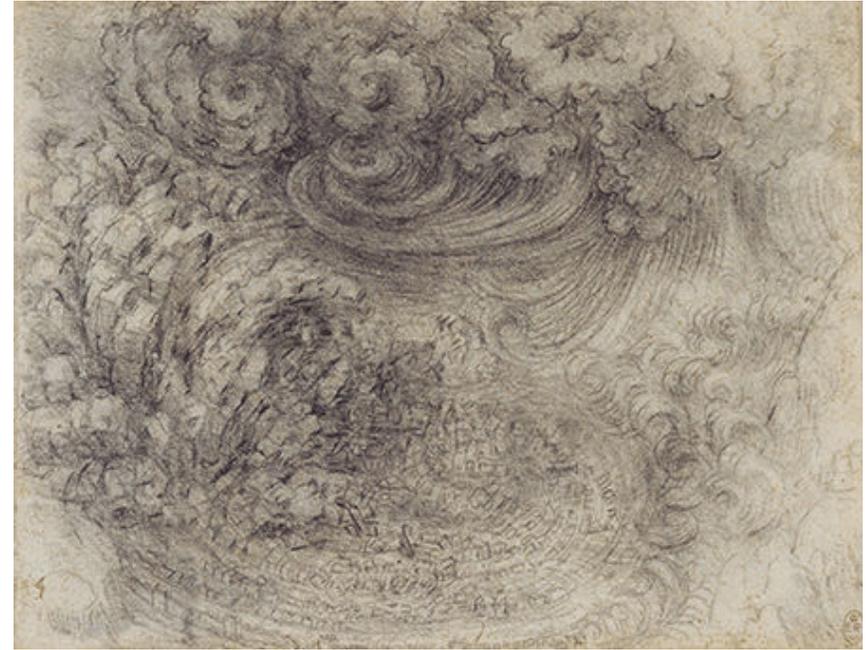
Performance of *Only the sound remains*, 2016. Artwork: © Julie Mehretu

Mehretu approached the project by matching the opera's dramatic, liminal atmosphere as opposed to explicitly representing the plot. "When Peter brought me the libretto with the two Nôhs, I read them, continued working, read them again, but I did not try to paint those Nôhs specifically," the artist explained. The present work is instead "related to [the play *Tsunemasa*] abstractly, in that I educated myself on Nôhs, studied them, their cosmic ideas of the world and their ancient, very condensed and specific form." Set on earth, the central narrative unravels in front of Mehretu's

image; “the painting itself is the liminal space, through which the spirits move between earth and the heavens, and then the heavens, the universe, the space of the ghosts, is behind the painting.” She has illuminated that, as the anchor of the performance, “*Tsunemasa* also relates to the tradition of having a tree in the background of the Japanese Nôh stage. This painting has the metaphorical aspect of being both a landscape and this other mystical space, a ceremonial space even, of the actual narrative.”ⁱ

"Julie is the painter I turn to when I want to think about how to trouble the line between abstraction and figuration, between local and global concerns, between painterly restraint and joyous abandon." —Glenn Ligon

One of the most prominent characteristics of this chapter in Mehretu’s career is the reduced palette of *Tsunemasa*, a development which art historian and writer Dagmawi Woubshet referred to as “the turn not away from color, but the turn into grey.”ⁱⁱ Inherent in this description is the recognition of grey not a single hue but a multivalent space, a liminal threshold from which flashes of black and white emerge. In its elimination of other pigments, *Tsunemasa* unlocks a barely perceptible dimension, opening the door to what Mehretu called “a different type of possibility” and “allowed for a different type of potential that with the color would be too determinate.”ⁱⁱⁱ



Leonardo da Vinci, *A Deluge*, 1517, Royal Collection Trust, London. Image: HIP / Art Resource

Coalescing her signature densely-layered approach with a refined aesthetic idiom, *Tsunemasa* is an homage to art’s ability to build and bridge worlds. The work is an image not only of darkness, but of the expansive potential of unity and healing. Reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci’s deluge drawings, the clusters of frenetic gestures—which the artist calls “characters”—are suggestive of the power of the collective. “Fundamentally,” Mehretu elucidated, *Tsunemasa* refers “to the most ancient forms of creating a painting, of mark-making, by using Sumi ink and acrylic—to invent and imagine something else from those marks.”^{iv}

ⁱ Julie Mehretu, quoted in Anna Schauder, “Only the Sound Remains: Les couleurs de nos rêves,” *Opéra national de Paris Magazine*, February 2, 2018, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Dagmawi Woubshet, “An Interview with Julie Mehretu,” *Callaloo* 37, no. 4, 2014, p. 782.

ⁱⁱⁱ Julie Mehretu, quoted in Woubshet.

^{iv} Julie Mehretu, quoted in Schauder.

Provenance

Carlier | Gebauer, Berlin

Private Collection (acquired from the above in 2014)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2019

Exhibited

Berlin, Carlier | Gebauer, *Half a Shadow*, September 20–November 1, 2014

Literature

Anna Schauder, "Only the Sound Remains: Les couleurs de nos rêves," *Opéra national de Paris Magazine*, February 2, 2018, online

Julie Mehretu, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2019, pp. 178-179
(illustrated)

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PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
COLLECTOR

8 ♦

Cy Twombly

Untitled

acrylic on canvas
127 3/4 x 192 in. (324.5 x 487.7 cm)
Painted in 2005.

Estimate

\$35,000,000 — 45,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Untitled is red.

Blood red, wine red; swoops of red paint applied wet, with a heavy brush, overloaded with pigment. The brushstrokes are thick as handprints, wide as arms, and they build into a red spiral of drip and curve that spans the distance from the ceiling to the floor. The spiral subsumes the viewer in an epic wave of color and drip, dragging them in its wake.

One of the artist's last great works, *Untitled*, 2005, forms part of Cy Twombly's repeated investigation into cyclicity as both a gesture and a theme throughout his career. This movement began with his blackboard paintings of the 1960s, circled through his drawing practice, and crystallized in the *Bacchus* series, three sets of paintings created between 2003 and 2008, when the artist was between the ages of 75 and 80. *Untitled* is the second-largest canvas in the second set of *Bacchus* works, and paintings from this series populate prestigious museum and private collections worldwide, including three works gifted by the artist to Tate, London, in 2008.



Installation view of the present work, at right, New York, Gagosian Gallery, 2005. Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

The second set of *Bacchus* paintings, dated to 2005, are known under the collective title *Bacchus Psilax Mainomenos*. Significantly, this title combines Greek (*Psilax Mainomenos*) and Roman

(*Bacchus*) names for the god. Twombly's appreciation for Greek and Roman myth was expansive and lifelong; the elision of sources in the series title is therefore an intentional choice rather than a misunderstanding, a decision to reference not just one specific myth, but the breadth of the combined Greco-Roman mythic cultural history canon. This is consistent with Twombly's approach to classical sources in general.

As Katherine Schmidt succinctly writes, "Cy Twombly's work can be understood as one vast engagement with cultural memory," the present work included.ⁱ *Untitled* references series of cycles—the cycles of classical myth, including stories of Bacchus and Homer's *Iliad*, the physical cyclicity of painting as a gesture, and the cyclical nature of Twombly's own practice. It is a masterwork, Twombly's ultimate artistic expression at the summit of his career.

"8 PICTURES PAINTED in vermilion color on the subject of BACCHUS RAGING (RAVING) (mainomenos)" —Cy Twombly

Greco-Roman Origins

The title *Bacchus Psilax Mainomenos* refers to the dual nature of Bacchus, or Dionysus, the ancient Greek and Roman god of wine, intoxication and debauchery. *Psilax*, from the ancient Doric (Greek) word, *psila*, for "wings," implies the uplifting effect of alcohol, and the feelings of joy and exuberance intoxication can bring.ⁱⁱ Meanwhile, *Mainomenos* means the "mad god" or "the raving one," and renders Bacchus as the god of all madness, and the rage and violence of alcoholism in particular.ⁱⁱⁱ *Psilax* and *Mainomenos* are two extremes that rise and fall within one ancient deity, cycling for dominance, one over the other, just as Twombly's brush turns across the surface of *Untitled*.



Peter Paul Rubens, *Achilles Defeating Hector*, 1630-32. Musée des Beaux Arts, Pau. Image: Bridgeman-Giraudon / Art Resource, NY

For Twombly, the character of Bacchus/Dionysus and the oscillation between ecstasy and madness is a consistent entry point for his career-long engagement, in both thematic and visual terms, with the concept of cyclicity. A number of earlier works are named for the same god, including *Dithyrambus [Dionysus (of the double door)]*, 1976, Cy Twombly Foundation, wherein the doubled visual forms and title reference the dual nature (“double door”) of the god that Twombly would draw out further in the *Psilax / Mainomenos* dichotomy of his *Bacchus* series twenty-five years later.

Similarly, the *Bacchanalia* series of collages, 1977, Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection, Munich contrast the libidinous excess of bacchanal celebration (reproduced in miniature collaged prints by the Baroque artist, Nicholas Poussin), with wide, somber marks representing the hard, seasonal change of winter and autumn. As with *Untitled*, these series of drawings depend on an inherent

tension, a contrast, for their aesthetic success. The visual motif of the cycle must, by design, be stretched between two points.



Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1967. The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas. Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

"To paint involves a certain crisis, or at least a crucial moment of sensation or release; (and by crisis it should by no means be limited to a morbid state, but could just as well be one ecstatic impulse, or in the process of a painting, run a gamut of states)." —Cy Twombly

Cycle as Movement

The repetition of the mythical theme in Twombly's work, particularly, the continued invocation of Bacchus across the years, has its stylistic parallel in Twombly's signature, circular, scrawling gesture. Both god and gesture are cycling; Bacchus between *Psilax* and *Mainomenos*, Twombly between one edge of the painted surface and another. This gesture first and famously appeared in the artist's blackboard series of the 1960s, wherein the artist repeated a white, spiraling gesture in lines across a grey ground. The same gesture makes a reprise in *Untitled*, but where the blackboard paintings have a more conservative, controlled physicality to them, the red spiral of *Untitled*, and the *Bacchus* paintings at large, is much wilder.

"It's very fast, particularly the Bacchus paintings...they were all done in a couple of months...It was just very physical, it's a process. I tried to do one since then but it didn't work. It was the sensation of the moment..." —Cy Twombly

The red line of *Untitled* is rich with visceral movement as the spiral turns and drips across the canvas. It is an undeniably physical line: the hand or wrist is not enough to power such a gesture, at such an epic scale. Rather, the artist must have used his whole body to make *Untitled*, swinging the brush, which he attached to a long pole, across the canvas, paint dripping like sweat, like spit, like blood.^{iv} The whole force of the body is necessary to carry the brush across the wall. Dragging the body, dragging the brush, from top to bottom, in tan, then red, then tan again. There is a musculature underneath *Untitled*, an intensity of movement; contract and release, spin, push, pull, again, again, *Psilax, Mainomenos, Psilax, Mainomenos*.



[left] Cy Twombly, *The Shield of Achilles*, from *Fifty Days at Iliam*, 1978. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation [right] Detail of the present work

A Trojan Cycle

This physical element of the cycle as gesture is repeated in the epic poems of ancient Greco-Roman myth, such as Homer's *Iliad*. Twombly was known as an avid reader of myth and poetry, and scholar Mary Jacobus argues that his personal library was an extension of his studio.^v The series of

paintings *Fifty Days at Iliam*, 1977-78, Philadelphia Museum of Art, for example, was directly inspired by Alexander Pope's 18th century translation of the *Iliad*, and a visual parallel to the same text recurs with the *Bacchus* series.

"He smites the steeds; the rapid chariot flies; The sudden clouds of circling dust arise. Now lost is all that formidable air; The face divine, and long-descending hair, Purple the ground, and streak the sable sand; Deform'd, dishonour'd, in his native land, Given to the rage of an insulting throng, And, in his parents' sight, now dragg'd along!" —the Iliad of Homer, Book 22, translated by Alexander Pope

The circling, blood-red gesture of *Untitled* recalls one of the most violent and emotionally stirring moments of the *Iliad*, when the Greek hero, Achilles, kills the Trojan prince, Hector. In a fit of vengeful rage, Achilles ties Hector's body by the ankles to the back of his chariot and drags the corpse in circles through the desert around the walled city of Troy.^{vi} Pope's translation draws out, in graphic yet poetic terms, how Hector's body "purple[s] the ground, and streak[s] the sable sand" with blood. Not only does Twombly's red line stain the tan ground, its very facture embodies that moment at the apex of emotion, when mind separates from body and the act of acting is the driving force. Twombly enacts this on a scale of epic proportions. In so doing, *Untitled* takes its place in the canon of the grand tradition of history painting.



Jean-Simon Berthelme, *Death of a Gladiator*, 1773. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Image: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of The Ahmanson Foundation, M. 83. 169

In the *Iliad*, the death of Hector, and his brutal treatment by Achilles, is part of a cycle of violence. Achilles kills Hector because Hector killed Patroclus, Achilles' closest comrade, and Hector's death will ultimately lead to Achilles' own death in battle. Each death leads to another, and no one death can exist without the other two. The interconnectedness of these events may have appealed to Twombly, specifically in the world context in which he made his *Bacchus* series, from 2003 to 2008, when, three thousand years after the Trojan War, another war was ravaging the Middle East: the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In such a moment of increased violence, in such proximity to Twombly's studio, which was near a U.S. military base in Gaeta, on the Mediterranean, the cyclical nature of time and violence may have seemed acute.^{vii} The epic nature of Twombly's sources in ancient myth for *Untitled*, on the canvas the size of a classical history painting, encourages equally expansive interpretation.

An Epic Legacy

Roland Barthes famously connected Twombly's mark-making to the act of writing, when he argued that Twombly "retains the gesture, not the product," of written work.^{viii} In other words, Twombly's paintings invoke the *form* of writing, without describing a particular message or meaning. This gestural similarity is perhaps most obvious in the blackboard paintings, *Untitled*'s artistic ancestors, which recall the shape of cursive writing on a school blackboard. But the wide, red line of *Untitled* takes Twombly's form of writing into the 21st century. With *Untitled*, he invokes the record of history and collective memory, the human presence across an expanse of heroic scale. He pulls from decades of his own life and centuries of Western art to call on a cultural inheritance that is thousands of years old. Through abstraction, *Untitled* brings forth the emotional essence of our epic shared history—the heights and depths of human emotion, of creation and destruction—captured in the myths and legends that define the Western canon. In *Untitled*, Twombly retells them in a vernacular that is at once universally understood and unequivocally his own.



Cy Twombly, Studio Gaeta (with *Bacchus* paintings in background), 2005. Artwork: © Fondazione Nicola Del Roscio

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSy3z4hEWGg>

ⁱ Katharia Schmidt in Nicholas Cullinan, *Twombly and Poussin: Arcadian Painters*, exh. cat., Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 2011, p. 80.

ⁱⁱ Malcolm Bull, "Fire in the Water," in *Cy Twombly: Bacchus Psilax Mainomenos*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2005, p. 55.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gary D. Astrachan, "Dionysos. Mainomenos. Lysios. Performing madness and ecstasy in the practices of art, analysis, and culture," *The International Forum for Psychoanalytic*

Education, September 14, 2009, [online](#).

^{iv} "Cy Twombly," Tate Modern, [online](#).

^v Mary Jacobus, "*Painting Cy Twombly: Poetry in Print*," Princeton University Press, 2017, [online](#).

^{vi} Homer, *The Iliad* [circa 8th or 7th c., BCE], translated by Alexander Pope, 1715-1720, accessed via Project Gutenberg, October 23, 2022, [online](#).

^{vii} Mary Jacobus, "How to read a Cy Twombly," *The Art Newspaper*, November 28, 2017, [online](#).

^{viii} Roland Barthes, "Cy Twombly: Works on Paper," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard, 1991, p.160.

Provenance

Gagosian Gallery, New York

François Pinault / ARTIS, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Gagosian Gallery, *Cy Twombly: Bacchus Psilax Mainomenos*, November 2–December 24, 2005, pl. IV, pp. 24, 36 (illustrated, p. 25; installation view illustrated, p. 41; installation view of the present work in the artist's studio, Gaeta, summer 2005, illustrated, p. 56)

Literature

Heiner Bastian, ed., *Cy Twombly: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings*, 1996–2007, vol. V, Munich, 2009, no. 37, pp. 136–137 (illustrated)

Arthur C. Danto, "Scenes from an Ideal Friendship," *Artforum*, vol. 50, no. 3, November 2011, p. 215 (illustrated; titled as *Untitled V*)

Olivier Berggruen, *The Writing of Art*, London, 2015 (Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2015, installation view illustrated on the cover)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTOR

9 ♦

René Magritte

Le météore

signed "Magritte" lower left; titled "LE MÉTÉORE,"
on the reverse

oil on canvas

21 1/2 x 18 1/8 in. (54.6 x 46 cm)

Painted in 1964.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Painted in 1964, *Le météore* is the culmination of René Magritte's decades-long interrogation of the enigmatic possibilities of anthropomorphism. The play on portraiture depicts a horse whose features conform with human standards of beauty—glassy blue eyes, arched brows, and wavy, long blonde tresses. A miniature turret impossibly rests atop her head, reminiscent of a unicorn's horn. Evoking the composition and radiance of Florentine Renaissance portraits, the horse's profile is portrayed before a deep ruby curtain that divides the picture plane, behind which lies one of Magritte's familiar elongated forests. This mystifying scene is executed in the artist's iconic hard-edge idiom, an emblem of his mature style situating the viewer in a convincing dreamscape that transcends all logic and reason. Coalescing a number of Magritte's salient motifs, *Le météore* epitomizes the Surrealist master's incongruous combinations that have become hallmarks of the movement's legacy.



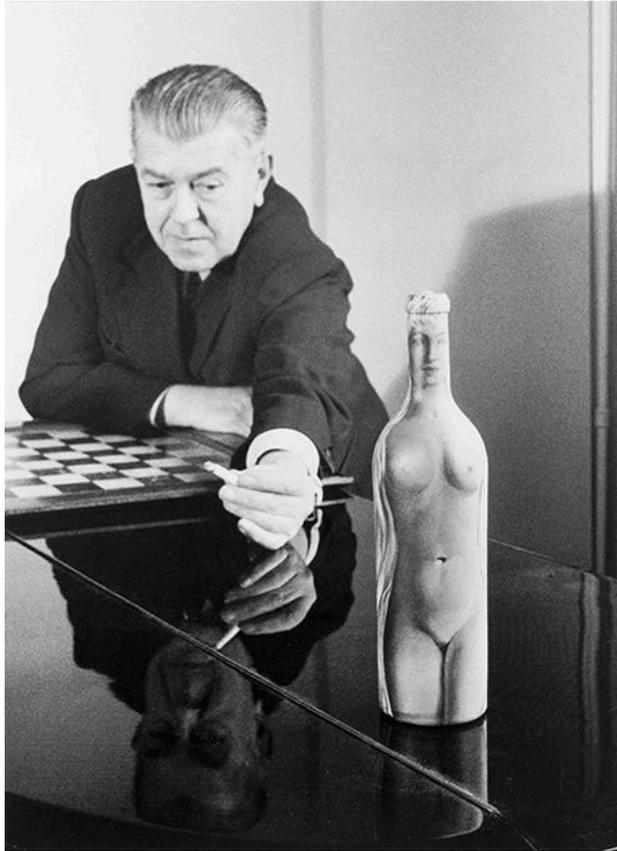
Piero della Francesca, *Diptych of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza*, c. 1465. Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Image: Bridgeman Images

Magritte employed the personified horse trope a handful of times throughout his corpus, betraying a predilection for repetition that echoed Freud's preoccupation with recurring dream elements. The subject was included in a painting with the same title from 1944 before resurfacing in *La raison pure* in 1948, which saw the addition of the ruby curtain. While the present work

epitomizes the crisp refinement Magritte is renowned for, these earlier examples—executed during his *Renoir* and *vache* periods—are rendered in feathery, impressionist brushwork. The turret first appeared in a couple paintings from the mid-1950s, including *Le cœur du monde*, 1956, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, substantiating its allusion to chess: a game whose infinite symbolic and strategical possibilities fascinated Magritte and many of the other Surrealists. Melding a rook with a knight, the final iteration of the motif was reunited with the curtain in *Le météore*, an amalgamation of several of the artist's favorite iconographic details.

"I have a very limited vocabulary: nothing but ordinary, familiar things. What is 'extraordinary' is the connection between them." —René Magritte

The horse always played a significant role in Magritte's symbolic lexicon, originally featuring in the canvas the artist considered to be his first Surrealist work—*Le jockey perdu*, 1926. A symbol of both wild escape and disoriented nightmare, what Magritte called "the problem of the horse" soon became one of his most enduring themes. According to David Sylvester, this concept posed questions about the nature of the human-animal binary that Magritte attempted to reconcile in his paintings, such as *Le météore*. "It seems a classic case of a Magritte 'problem,' with the 'problem' as hair and the solution the affinity between human tresses and an animal's mane," he inferred. "Such interchangeability of human with animal is part of the strong fairy-tale element in works of this year."ⁱ



Portrait of René Magritte. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP / Art Resource, NY

Le météore is from a larger body of work exploring different permutations of anthropomorphic creatures that began in the 1940s and preoccupied Magritte for the rest of his career. Redolent of the fantastical quality of dreams, these subjects ranged from pigs to the artist's own Pomeranian dogs. Sarah Whitfield, an expert on Magritte's work, has pointed out that paintings like *Le météore* were inspired by portrayals of hybrid animals in popular culture. "In the course of his search for 'a new poetic effectiveness which would bring us both charm and pleasure,' Magritte had the idea of painting animals with human characteristics," she elucidated. "Writing to a friend about the painting of the horse Magritte told him that the impression it made was 'fairy-like', and fairy tales in which animals dress, talk and behave like humans were, of course, the inspiration for this brief interlude of painting 'animal' portraits. Magritte's intentions were to show that the

human qualities of animals were superior to those of man."ⁱⁱ



Leonora Carrington, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1937-38. The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Estate of Leonora Carrington / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"The function of painting is to make poetry visible." —René Magritte

Magritte's dreamlike realm in *Le météore* unleashes his signature aesthetic of the uncanny sublime, so central to the philosophy of Surrealism and a consistent thread through much of postmodernism. Undermining the world's contradictions as strangely as our subconscious does was one of the movement's central tenets; anthropomorphism was one of key aesthetic devices Magritte and his peers utilized in its pursuit. Oscillating between seemingly set dichotomies—rook and knight, human and non-human, forest and theatrical set—*Le météore* exemplifies the singular imagery that has been used as a point of departure for generations of artists. When the work was first exhibited in 1971, a critic called the painting "a combination of literal and figurative

that interact to suggest the magical nature of another age.” *Le météore*, he attested, is a choice example of an instance when “the artist and the spirit of the time cross trajectories and the result is a major work of art.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Collector’s Digest



René Magritte, *Le coeur du monde*, c. 1955. Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

- Magritte’s *Le coeur du monde*, c. 1955, a small-scale (18.2 x 13.4 cm, or approx. 7 x 5 in.)

preparatory gouache on paper, shown above, realized \$2.16 million at auction this past spring.

ⁱ David Sylvester, *René Magritte, Catalogue Raisonné, Oil Paintings and Objects 1931-1948*, vol. II, London, 1993, p. 336.

ⁱⁱ Sarah Whitfield, *Magritte*, exh. cat., The South Bank Centre, London, 2002.

ⁱⁱⁱ William D. Case, "In the Galleries," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 46, no. 3, December 1971/January 1972, p. 67.

Provenance

Chaim Perelman, Brussels (acquired directly from the artist)
 Dr. Noémi Perelman Mattis and Dr. Daniel C. Mattis (by descent from the above)
 Brook Street Gallery, London
 Jan Krugier, Geneva (acquired circa 1970)
 Marci Collection Trust (acquired from the above)
 Private Collection, Geneva (acquired from the above)
 Alexander Iolas, Athens
 Private Collection (acquired circa 1995)
 Sotheby's, New York, November 4, 2014, lot 68
 Martin Lawrence Galleries, San Francisco
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Lerner-Misrachi Gallery, *Inner Spaces/Outer Limits: Myths and Myth Makers*, November 29–December 25, 1971, n.p. (illustrated on the cover)
 Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, *Dalí & Magritte*, October 11, 2019–February 16, 2020, no. 99, p. 203 (illustrated)

Literature

William D. Case, "In the Galleries," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 46, no. 3, December 1971/January 1972, p. 66 (illustrated)
 David Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte Catalogue Raisonné, III: Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes 1949-1967*, London, 1993, no. 995, p. 398 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE NORTH AMERICAN
COLLECTOR

10 o

Amy Sherald

Pilgrimage of the Chameleon

signed and dated "Amy Sherald ♥ 2016" on the reverse
oil on canvas

72 x 51 1/8 in. (183 x 129.8 cm)

Painted in 2016.

Estimate

\$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



In Amy Sherald's *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon*, 2016, a young Black man stands tall, smiling gently at the viewer. Rendered in the artist's signature grisaille palette, her figure wears a navy peacoat with a fur collar, a neat white button-down shirt, and khaki trousers, and he holds a rainbow bunch of balloons in his right hand. The balloons against a sky blue background serve as a natural symbol of uplift, implying the upward direction of the protagonist's pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage of the Chameleon challenges stereotypical ideas surrounding young Black men. The professional costume of Sherald's protagonist reminds one of respectability, the phenomenon of the late 19th and early 20th centuries wherein Black Americans felt pressure to conform to, as journalist Aysa Gray calls it, "the systemic, institutionalized centering of whiteness," which still impacts Black Americans today.ⁱ



The Stevens family outside of their home in Linn Creek, Missouri, c. 1905.

This process of assimilation via respectability involves more than just physical appearance; as social justice writer Odochi Ibe notes, a Black person may feel obligated to change the way they speak or behave to blend in, or even to protect themselves from racist violence, and this can have a negative effect on one's mental health.ⁱⁱ This process, called code-switching, is an exhausting

performance of multiple identities based on one's social, racial, and class context.ⁱⁱⁱ Amy Sherald remembers her mother telling her to "speak a certain way and act a certain way" on her first day at a predominantly white private school.^{iv} By young adulthood, Sherald had difficulty knowing who she was, "because I'd been performing my whole life."^v This lifetime of performing drew her towards painting portraits of other Black performers. While earlier works, such as *Madame Noire*, 2011, present more theatrical subjects, others, such as *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon*, show everyday performers: performers of whiteness, of respectability.

Like Sherald, the young man in *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon* is a performer. He is ready to adapt his persona, like a chameleon, to whatever social situation he finds himself in. His button down and khakis are reminiscent of a private school uniform, or everyday office attire. His hairstyle is short and unremarkable, his face fresh. By means of his style and dress, the young man in *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon* fashions a calm, non-confrontational, upwardly-mobile persona. His rainbow balloons express a sense of optimism, a hope that these measures will reap social rewards.



Bo Bartlett, *Object Permanence*, 1986. Sherald cites this work directly as the one that inspired her most as a child.^{vi} Image: Columbus State University, Bo Bartlett Center, Artwork: © 2022 Bo Bartlett / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

As a child, Sherald took a pilgrimage of her own, on a school field trip to an exhibition of Bo Bartlett's work at The Columbus Museum in her hometown of Columbus, Georgia. This childhood experience had a significant impact on the artist, which she recalls often in interviews. Seeing Bartlett's work was the first time Sherald saw a Black person in a painting of monumental scale, and this early moment of representation had a lasting effect on her desire to paint people who looked like her.

Inspired obliquely by Bartlett's realism, in combination with the lack of Black representation by other painters, Sherald learned to draw the human figure by copying photographs. Drawing from photography remains a fundamental aspect of her portraiture process. Once Sherald has chosen the model for a portrait, she takes hundreds of photos of them over the course of several hours. These photos are Sherald's version of sketching, and she builds her painted portrait from this source material.^{vii}

"[I love] the stillness of daguerreotypes, the beauty of black skin in black and white pictures, how everything came down to what the eyes were saying. And in those photographs they are all telling stories, from the youngest child to the oldest person. When I look at images from that period, in my mind, I stand simultaneously with them in their deliberate gaze, and I understand and know that I am their future self, and dream." —Amy Sherald

Pilgrimage of the Chameleon shows the influence of early photography on Sherald's artistic practice. With his greyscaled skin and timeless, simple costume, it is easy to imagine the young man in a black and white photograph, back in time.



Tintype photograph of an unknown young man, 1870s.

Sherald cites Frederick Douglass's passion for photographs of Black people as a source of thematic inspiration for works such as *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon*. Douglass, as a public figure in the late 1800s, had his photograph taken often; sitting for over 160 portraits, he was the most photographed man in the 19th century.^{viii}

Sherald explains Douglass' motivations, saying that he sat for so many portraits "to ensure the accurate portrayal of Black Americans." She continues: "he discovered that the photograph had the ability to redefine the often stereotypical image and narrative of Black Americans."^{ix} Sherald, like Douglass, believes in the power of representation to challenge racist assumptions about Black people. Her painted portraits and Douglass' photographs both present self-assured Black subjects,

whose identities are products of their own creation. With *Pilgrimage of the Chameleon*, Sherald builds the legacy of representation that she wants to see in the world.



ⁱ Aysa Gray, “The Bias of ‘Professionalism’ Standards,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, June 4, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ibe, “Playing the Game of Respectability Politics, But at What Cost?”

ⁱⁱⁱ Priscilla Frank, “‘Fairytale’ Paintings Show a Side Of Black Lives History Overlooks,” *The Huffington Post*, July 7, 2016, [online](#).

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Amy Sherald, in conversation with Russell Tovey and Robert Diament, *Talk Art* [podcast], September 27, 2022, 15:24.

^{vi} Amy Sherald, “Amy Sherald Speaks at The Columbus Museum” [video recording of lecture], September 29, 2017, [online](#).

^{vii} Amy Sherald, *Talk Art*.

^{viii} “Frederick Douglass: Agitator,” *American Writers Museum*, accessed October 13, 2022, [online](#).

^{ix} Amy Sherald, quoted in Elaine Sexton, “Making Mirrors: A Micro-Interview with Amy Sherald,” *Tulepo Quarterly*, October 14, 2016, [online](#).

Provenance

Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2016

Exhibited

Chicago, Monique Meloche Gallery, *Amy Sherald: A Wonderful Dream*, June 11–August 27, 2016, n.p. (illustrated; detail illustrated; installation view illustrated)

Literature

Priscilla Frank, “‘Fairytale’ Paintings Show A Side of Black Lives History Overlooks,” *Huffpost*, July 7, 2016, [online](#) (illustrated)

Elaine Sexton, “Making Mirrors: A Micro-Interview with Amy Sherald,” *Tupelo Quarterly*, October 14, 2016, [online](#) (illustrated)

David Morgan, “Portraitist Amy Sherald,” *CBS News*, February 18, 2018, [online](#) (illustrated)
Public Art, no. 181, October 2021 (illustrated, n.p. and on the cover)

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11 ♦

Loie Hollowell

Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow

signed, titled and dated "Loie Hollowell "Lick Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow" Loie Hollowell "Lick Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow" 2016-2019" on the reverse oil, acrylic and high-density foam on linen mounted on panel

48 x 36 x 2 1/4 in. (121.9 x 91.4 x 5.7 cm)

Painted in 2016-2019.

Estimate

\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)

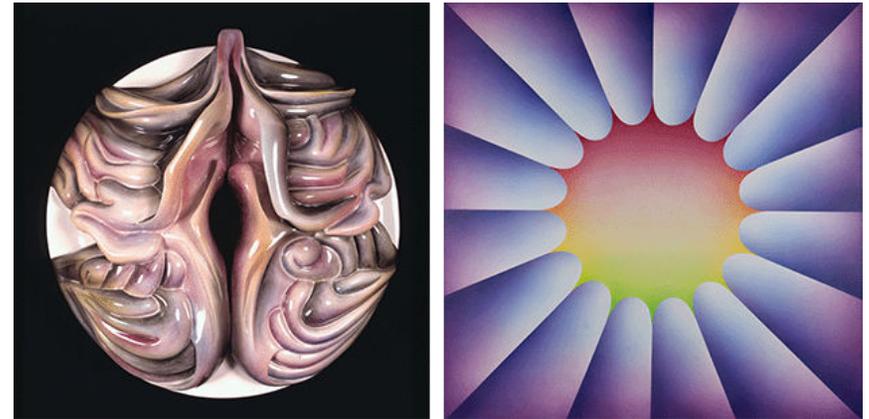


In Loie Hollowell's *Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow*, 2016-2019, undulating forms in warm purple, pale yellow, and deep blue radiate out from a central, black ridge of foam. The work surprises the viewer with its physical depth, built out of the artist's signature use of carving foam to model planes of color just above the surface of the canvas. Drawing on the transcendent yet deeply embodied practices of female artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Judy Chicago, and Agnes Pelton, Hollowell's *Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow* is a celebration of feminine sensuality in abstracted terms.



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Iris*, 1926. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Hollowell's unique, geometric aesthetic develops out of bright pastel drawings on paper, transformed at scale as subtle, curving foam shapes layered on top of canvas, creating work that lies somewhere between painting and relief sculpture. She binds the canvas and foam layers together with coats of gel medium mixed with sawdust, to create a unified, seamless surface.¹ The final step is the painting itself, applied in gradients of vivid colors that accentuate the curved surface she has made.



[left] Judy Chicago, *Georgia O'Keeffe Place Setting*, 1974-1979, Brooklyn Museum of Art. Image: © Donald Woodman. Courtesy of Judith Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Judy Chicago / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower 2*, 1973. Image: © Donald Woodman. Courtesy of Judith Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Judy Chicago / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

From a distance, the carved and painted surface of *Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow* seems ethereally smooth and unmarked, but close-looking brings forth a stucco-like surface on the raised yellow arches, and a delightful texture of crescent moon-shaped sponge prints in the edges of each gradient. The sponged texture in particular reminds the viewer of stretch marks on the skin, or the chlorophyll veins of flower petals, summoning up the combined imagery of human anatomy and natural forms of fellow female abstractionists such as O'Keeffe and Chicago.

Hollowell's use of symmetry visually organizes the sensual, autobiographical inspiration behind her compositions, providing an abstracted ground from which a multitude of associations then radiate out. *Lick, Lick in Purple, maroon-yellow*, for instance, recalls landscape, as the composition reflects itself across the blue-purple horizon line of the composition. And in the same breath, it is a rich and intimate close up of abstracted female anatomy, with folding lips of skin, mirrored mouths, not-quite-kissing, maroon and mauve spreading outward past the edges of the canvas. The innuendo of the title guides our reading, inviting the viewer to stick out their tongue, and *lick, lick* the raised

black ridge in the very center of the work.

"My work is an expression of my core sensuality. I'm a body, experiencing desire, experiencing pleasure. It is sensual and needy and dirty and expressive."—Loie Hollowell



Agnes Pelton, *Lost Music II*, 1950s, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Image: 2022 Museum Associates / LACMA. Licensed by Art Resource, NY

Diana Nawi interprets this abundance of visual cues, of “landscape, horizon, outer space, anatomy, cosmos, microscopic entities, topography, architecture, and organs,” all coalesced in one image, not as a point of confusion, but rather, as a sign of the “inherent interconnectedness” of all things.ⁱⁱ This interconnectedness lends itself to the abstract simplification of forms in *Lick, Lick in*

Purple, maroon-yellow, which can then be expanded out again into infinite meanings. It’s an expansion and contraction, fiercely vulnerable and universally understood, an undulation of emotion, in abstract terms. “I’m experiencing pleasure and pain that anyone can experience,” Hollowell says, “and that’s what I’m putting into the work.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Video: <https://youtu.be/AZUBedLZ5YE>

ⁱ Diana Nawi, *Loie Hollowell: Dominant/Recessive*, exh. cat., Pace Gallery, London, 2018, p. 7.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Loie Hollowell, quoted in “Loie Hollowell’s Transcendent Bodies,” *Art21*, April 14, 2021, video, [online](#).

Provenance

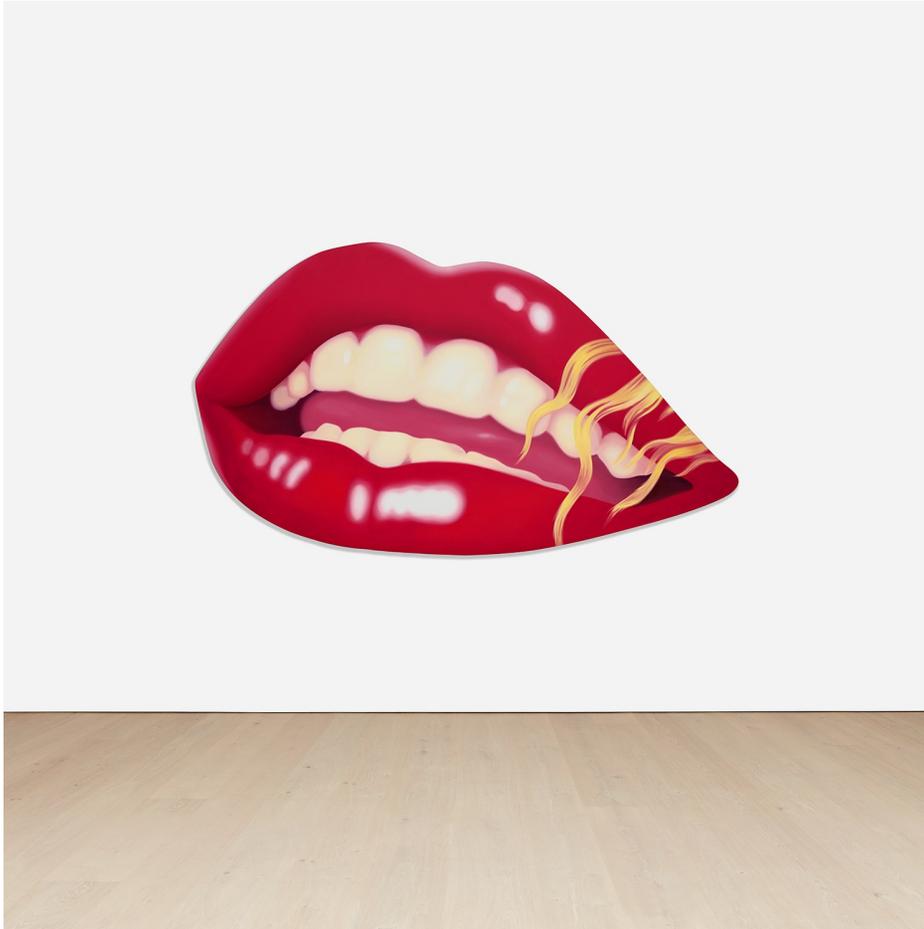
Pace Gallery, New York

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT FLORIDA
COLLECTION

12 ♦

Tom Wesselmann

Mouth #14 (Marilyn)

signed and dated "Wesselmann 67" on the overlap
oil on shaped canvas
60 x 108 in. (152.4 x 274.3 cm)
Painted in 1967.

Please note that this work will be included in the *Tom Wesselmann Digital Corpus* published by the Wildenstein Plattner Institute, and will be included in their forthcoming *Tom Wesselmann Digital Catalogue Raisonné*.

Estimate
\$3,000,000 — 5,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I find sometimes I get so excited working, especially when starting new ideas; I get so excited that I get uncomfortable. It almost feels dangerous, like I'm flirting with something dangerous." —Tom Wesselmann

Emerging to auction for the first time since its creation, the present work is an iconic iteration of Tom Wesselmann's celebrated series of *Mouth* paintings. Executed in November 1967, a watershed year for the artist, *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* is among the early pivotal works in the series that were conceived in tandem with Wesselmann's first *Smoker* paintings. Immersing the viewer into a hypnotic erotism and graphic intensity that characterizes the best of Wesselmann's works, here the mouth of Marilyn Monroe is transformed into a pair of sultry scarlet lips, her blonde strands of hair evoking sensual flames. Exhibited at Sidney Janis Gallery the year of its creation, *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* marks the apex of the Wesselmann's mid-career painterly investigations that established him at the forefront of the Pop vanguard.

Among the artist's most highly sought after works, Wesselmann's *Mouth* paintings commenced in the mid-1960s as a natural extension of his *Great American Nudes* series. Beginning with the *Great American Nudes* in 1961, Wesselmann placed youthful female nudes in vibrantly rendered settings while abstracting the figural form and, by the mid-decade, increasingly honed his focus on specific parts of the body. This gradual simplification led to his singular focus on mouths in the titular series initiated in 1965. The *Mouth* paintings eventually birthed the *Smoker* series in the year of the present work's creation, when his friend and model Peggy Sarno paused for a cigarette during a session, marking the pivotal moment when Wesselmann became fascinated with smoke as a subject. Coinciding with this legendary account, the conception of *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* may be viewed in parallel to this pivotal juncture. Created after *Mouth #11*, April 1967, Dallas Museum of Art—the first mouth with a cigarette—and in the same month as *Smoker #1 (Mouth #12)*, Museum of Modern Art—the first work to include both a cigarette and smoke—the present work signals to Wesselmann's interest in ephemeral smoke in the fiery wisps of hair that float across the lushly rendered lips.



Marilyn Monroe, 1946. Image: André de Dienes/MUUS Collection

Though Wesselmann began exploring shaped canvases in 1964 with his *Great American Nudes*, the artist advanced his investigations with the medium in the *Mouth* series. This body of work “represented a further evolution in the shaped canvas: a larger scale, closer views, and concentration on body parts,” he noted in his autobiography.ⁱ As *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* demonstrates, working on a grand scale allowed Wesselmann to enhance the sensational visual impact of his shaped canvases—now, its immersive proportions could subsume the viewer into an all-encompassing realm of the visceral and verboten. This breakthrough worked in tandem with his increasingly reductive and clarified style as “the paintings themselves took on a more sculptural format as the areas surrounding the objects were eliminated,” as Sam Hunter observed.ⁱⁱ In *Mouth*

#14 (*Marilyn*), the perpendicular movement of the waving hair over the feminine mouth both engulf and unfurl our imagination as the artist disembodies the subject by eschewing further indicators of Marilyn. It is only by Wesselmann's unique inclusion of her name in the title that we begin to recognize these lips as those of the iconic Hollywood starlet.



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe's Lips*, 1962. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Image: Licensed by DACS/Artimage, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Immediately recalling Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe's Lips*, 1962, the present work is at once an homage to Marilyn's iconic smile and an embodiment of the relationship between advertising and celebrity. Like Warhol, Wesselmann's embrace of sexual iconography and American popular culture in the pursuit of beauty made Marilyn the perfect choice for his artistic investigations. *Mouth #14 (Marilyn)* manifests the artist's unique Pop lexicon in approaching the universal icon, not through visual repetition as Warhol's iteration but through visual isolation with intense singularity. In line with the previously noted disembodiment of his subject, Wesselmann along with many of his contemporaries rejected critics' stifling views on Pop Art. "They really worship Marilyn Monroe and Coca Cola," as he once expressed. "The importance people attach to things an artist uses is irrelevant...I use a billboard picture because it is real, special representations of something, not because it is from a billboard. Advertising images excite me mainly because of what I can make from them."ⁱⁱⁱ

Mouth Paintings in Museum Collections



Mouth #7, 1966, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Tom Wesselmann / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Mouth Paintings in Museum Collections



Mouth #10, 1967, Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Tom Wesselmann / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Mouth Paintings in Museum Collections



Mouth #11, 1967, Dallas Museum of Art. Image: © Dallas Museum of Art/Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Tom Wesselmann / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Mouth Paintings in Museum Collections



Smoker 1 (Mouth 12), 1967. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/
Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Tom Wesselmann / Artists Rights
Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Slim Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1980, p. 49.

ⁱⁱ Sam Hunter, "Remembering Tom Wesselmann (1931–2004): And His Alter Ego, Slim Stealingworth," *American Art*, vol. 19, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 110.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lucy R. Lippard, *Pop Art*, London, 1966, p. 80.

Provenance

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

Maria and Conrad Janis, Los Angeles (acquired from the above in February 1968)

PaceWildenstein, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2004

Exhibited

New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, *An Exhibition: Homage to Marilyn Monroe*, December 6–30, 1967

Literature

Slim Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1980, p. 170 (illustrated)

Christin J. Mamiya, *Pop Art and Consumer Culture: American Super Market*, Austin, 1992, p. 99

Sam Hunter, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1994, no. 54, p. 127 (illustrated, p. 66)

Linda Bolton, *Art Revolutions: Pop Art*, London, 2000, p. 17 (illustrated)

Beth McGovern, "Portrait of the Artist," *Hiram*, vol. 74, no. 2, Spring 2002, p. 11 (illustrated)

Patricia Pate Havlice, *World Painting Index: Third Supplement, 1990-1999*, vol. I, Oxford, 2003, p. 1155

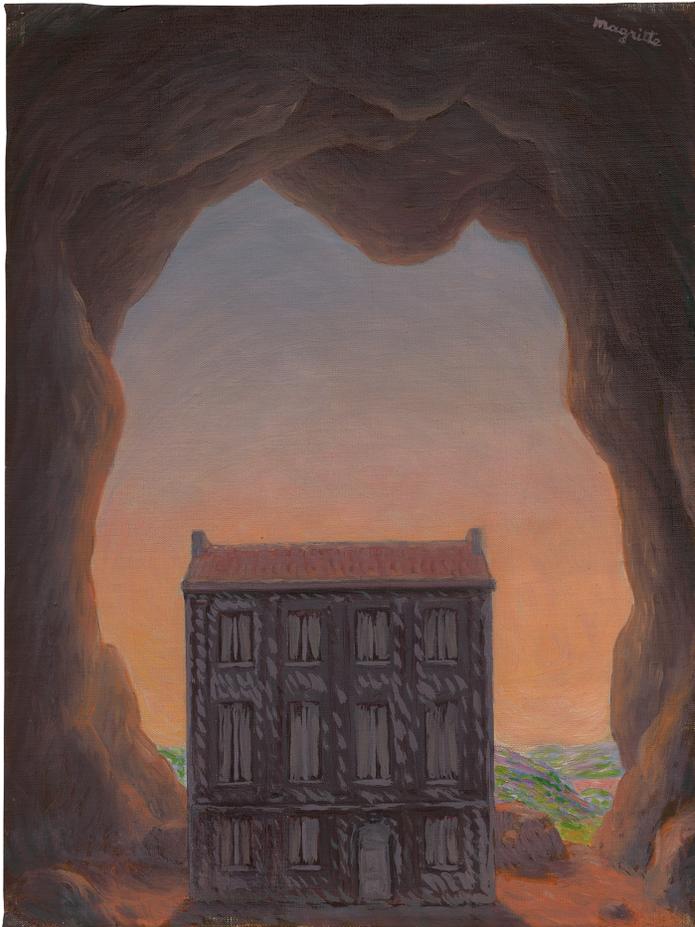
Tom Wesselmann, exh. cat., MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, 2005, p. 313 (illustrated, p. 98)

Sam Hunter, "Remembering Tom Wesselmann (1931–2004): And His Alter Ego, Slim Stealingworth," *American Art*, vol. 19, no. 2, Summer 2005, p. 110

John Wilmerding, *Tom Wesselmann: His Voice and Vision*, New York, 2008, p. 125 (illustrated, p. 126)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF MARGUERITE
CULLMAN

13

René Magritte

Le coup de grâce

signed "Magritte" upper right; titled and dated "'LE
COUP DE GRÂCE" 1947" on the reverse

oil on canvas

15 7/8 x 11 7/8 in. (40.3 x 30.2 cm)

Painted in 1947, the authenticity of this work has been
confirmed by the Comité Magritte.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)

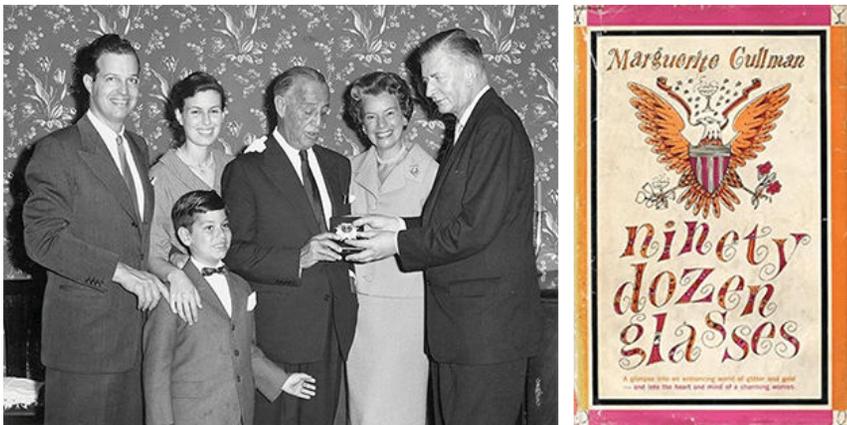


"To my surprise, I found myself fascinated with the paintings and even more fascinated with the little man who saw through strange eyes. I thought I knew how Alice must have felt in Wonderland." —Marguerite Cullman

René Magritte's charming oil, *Le coup de grâce* was acquired by Marguerite Cullman directly from the artist's living room in Brussels. Having relocated to Belgium with her husband, Howard, during his tenure as the United States Commissioner for the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels, Marguerite enjoyed a stylish and dazzling life abroad. Her letters and diaries from this period are candidly recounted in her memoir, *Ninety Dozen Glasses*, published in 1960. Described as "tart, sensitive and sophisticated" by the *New York Times*, Marguerite recalls with great candor, the people she met and "what she saw, heard and tasted" during her time in Belgium.ⁱ

In a chapter entitled "Art—Who Knows What He Likes", she shares her first visit to Magritte's home. "Mr. Magritte looked at home in his surroundings. He was short, middle-aged...he was tightly buttoned into a dark, narrow business suit. It would have been easy to picture him behind a high clerical desk", she remembers, "Because I had always imagined that a surrealist painter would fit the stereotype of the wild, mad bohemian, I could not reconcile this bland little man with the picture in my mind."ⁱⁱ

During their afternoon together, they enjoyed stilted but friendly conversations despite not sharing a common language. With clumsy French, Marguerite asked where he paints, "[Magritte] pointed to the unmarred easel and said he worked there. I asked him if he didn't get paint on the carpet. He looked puzzled: no, the paint he applied to the canvas. And he never just slapped any of it around? More confusion: no, for he had thought out in advance what he would do with it."ⁱⁱⁱ



[left] Howard Cullman receiving the Cross of Leopold, with Marguerite Cullman second on the right at the Consulate General in Belgium, 1959 [right] Cover design for Marguerite Cullman's memoir, *Ninety Dozen Glasses*, published in 1960 by Norton & Co., New York

Regardless of any awkwardness, the artist showed her the small paintings that adorned his walls as well as some canvases tucked away from sight—"He handed me a painting of a happy-looking country house bathed in the warm glow of a sunset and apparently viewed from the cool darkness of a womblike grotto".^{iv} Two days later, she returned to the artist's home and after careful consideration chose this house: "Mr. Magritte was warm and friendly; he approved of my choice, indicating that he personally thought it contained more good painting."^v

"Despite my awkward fumbling in French, we were able to communicate. Perhaps if one is discussing the subject closest to a man's heart, one can always manage a conversation." —Marguerite Cullman

From 1943-1947, Magritte began experimenting with Impressionism, in the style of Pierre-Auguste Renoir, as a response to the German Occupation of Belgium. Standing as a defiant attempt to counter the horrors, tragedy, and chaos of the era, these pictures were intended as celebrations of happiness. By 1946, André Breton had had enough of these impressionistic pictures, and Magritte decided to break with his Surrealist movement. Writing to Breton, Magritte declared: "This sense of chaos, of panic, which Surrealism hoped to foster so that everything might be called into question was achieved much more successfully by those idiots the Nazis, and then there was no getting away from it...Against widespread pessimism, I now propose a search for joy and pleasure."^{vi}

"The experiences of war have taught me that what matters in art is to express charm." —René Magritte



[left] René Magritte, *La condition humaine*, 1935, Norfolk Museums Service. Image: © Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] René Magritte, *L'incendie*, 1943, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium. Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

With his Renoiresque techniques, Magritte entered into his period of Sunlit Surrealism and his creative output was less mysterious and poetic compared to his works of the preceding two decades and viewed instead as pastiches of Impressionism. While the importance of this period is now acknowledged, at the time many were critical. In a letter to the artist, his dismayed dealer Alexander Iolas wrote saying “not to break with the mysterious, poetic quality of your former pictures, which by their compact technique were much more Magritte than those in which the Renoiresque technique and colouring struck everyone as outmoded. Outmoded is really not the work I should use...I should say rather ‘less Magritte-like’.”^{vii}

While previously only known to David Sylvester through a proof for a proposed book on Magritte by Serge Vandercam from 1950 entitled *Le Garde-Fou*, *Le coup de grâce* was accompanied by poetic lines written by Paul Colinet: “I turned in my own direction, I preserved my black depths and the light followed me.”^{viii} Created on the cusp of Magritte’s transition from the époque Renoir to Vache, the present work *Le coup de grâce* combines classic elements of his earlier works—the placing of objects in places they do not belong—but also introduces the preference for hypertrophy that the artist would develop in later decades. Framed by the entrance to a cave—a natural shelter—the juxtaposition of the house within contradicts Magritte’s belief that “the essential *raison d’être* of a house is to be a more comfortable dwelling than natural shelters.”^{ix}

"Le Coup de Grâce. The house managed to get into the cave, we don't know how, imagination gives the finishing touch. The house, looking into the darkness of the cave, plunges into the night of the unconscious, and our usual habit of looking outwards is given the coup de grâce." —René Magritte

With its subtle Impressionist landscape and the doll’s house center stage, *Le coup de grâce* allows the viewer’s imagination to unfold—*how did the house come to arrive in the cave?* The theatrical staging of *Le coup de grâce* likely appealed to Marguerite and Howard, who as long-time theater investors helped to bring a number of iconic plays, from *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific* to *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Annie Get Your Gun*, and from *Carousel* to *A Streetcar Named Desire*, to New York City’s Broadway. It also stands as a precursor to Magritte’s disquieting *L’empire des lumières* series, which are amongst the most iconic images of 20th century art.



[left] Detail of the present work. [right] René Magritte, *L’empire des lumières*, 1954, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium. Image: Banque d’Images, ADAGP / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Emily Kimbrough, “An Embassy Was Home; NINETY DOZEN GLASSES. By Marguerite Cullman. 273 pp. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. \$3.95,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 1960, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Marguerite Cullman, *Ninety Dozen Glasses*, New York, 1960, p. 209.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Richard Calcocressi, *Magritte*, Oxford, 1990, p. 24.

^{vii} Letter from Alexander Iolas to René Magritte, dated November 12, 1948 in David Sylvester, ed.,

René Magritte Catalogue Raisonné, II: Oil Paintings and Objects 1931-1948, London, 1993, p. 154-155.

^{viii} David Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte Catalogue Raisonné, III: Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes 1949-1967*, London, 1993, p. 474.

^{ix} René Magritte quoted in Kathleen Rooney and Eric Plattner, eds., *René Magritte: Selected Writings*, trans. Jo Levy, Minneapolis, 2016, p. 3.

Provenance

Marguerite and Howard Cullman, New York (acquired directly from the artist in Brussels in 1958)
Thence by descent to the present owner

Literature

Marcel Mariën, ed., "Le Garde-Fou," 1950, published in *Le Fait accompli*, no. 76, December 1972, n.p.

David Sylvester, ed., *René Magritte Catalogue Raisonné, III: Oil Paintings, Objects and Bronzes 1949-1967*, London, 1993, app. no. 124, pp. 12, 474

Kathleen Rooney and Eric Plattner, eds., *René Magritte: Selected Writings*, Minneapolis, 2016, pp. 114-115

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



14

Anna Weyant

Bum

signed and dated "Anna Weyant 2020 ♥" on the reverse

oil on linen

48 x 30 in. (121.9 x 76.2 cm)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

\$200,000 — 300,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I like to skirt it." —Anna Weyant

In this cheeky work by Anna Weyant, a woman leans over, exposing her backside to the viewer. While her upper body extends out of the painting, the bottom of her titular *bum* curves out from below a provocatively short white miniskirt. The painting's light source, shining in from the upper right, creates a *chiaroscuro* effect that further illuminates her backside, and exposes the shape of her hips underneath the front of the skirt. Sensual and surreal, Weyant brings art history and 2010s internet culture together with a dark sense of humor in *Bum*, 2020.

With its reserved color palette and smooth, rounded forms, 17th century Dutch art is a natural reference point for Weyant's oeuvre. But unlike the stereotypically straightforward and dour Dutch, Weyant's work has a sense of mystery—"a little creepiness," as she puts it—and so, a more medieval sensibility provides the tonal cue for *Bum*.¹ Hieronymus Bosch's creepy and chaotic *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1490-1500, Museo del Prado, Madrid, is a strong art historical touchpoint for Weyant's darkly humorous nudity.



Details from Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1490-1500. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Images: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY.

In Bosch's famous altarpiece triptych, naked humans indulge in silly and hedonistic pleasures in the center panel, oblivious to the suffering that awaits them in the afterlife panels in the wings. But even in hell, Bosch retains his sense of humor: his nude figures have musical notation written across their bottoms; bats and smoke spew from their behinds. The work is both repulsive and humorous, deterring and alluring at once. Weyant evokes the spirit of Bosch in *Bum*, but where Bosch represents 15th century Flanders, Weyant's renderings are distinctly contemporary.

"Tweens and being in between childhood and adulthood is definitely a period of time in my life and other people's lives that I'm totally fascinated with and hung up on. It's a traumatic, dramatic, devastating, and hilarious time that I go back to constantly."
—Anna Weyant

For anyone who, like Weyant, was a teenage girl in the early 2010s, the white miniskirt in *Bum* is instantly recognizable as a coveted Tumblr fashion staple: the American Apparel tennis skirt. American Apparel, a clothing brand popular in the 2000s and 2010s, was known for its provocative advertising, which featured young, barely-clothed women photographed in a casual, flashbulb style in bedroom settings.



American Apparel advertisement for their tennis skirt style, c. 2010s.

The combination of young models, nude bodies, and crumpled bedsheets purposefully evoked the aesthetics of amateur pornography, a connection that was not lost on critics, who expressed concern for the impact that the branding had on teenaged customers who collected and shared the company's ads on Tumblr, a social blogging website.ⁱⁱ

In 2014, an ad campaign for the very tennis skirt style Weyant evokes in *Bum* was banned for being “gratuitous and sexist.”ⁱⁱⁱ In the photos, the faceless model bends over, exposing her underwear to the viewer, while the mini skirt, ostensibly the subject of the advertisement, is barely visible, hitched up around her waist. The visual parallels to Weyant’s *Bum* are striking.



The banned American Apparel campaign image, 2014.

In *Bum*, Weyant takes on the “creepiness” of American Apparel’s imagery in tandem with a respect for the “traumatic, dramatic, devastating and hilarious” teenage experience of being online.^{iv} Where American Apparel was criticized for indulging pedophilic schoolgirl fantasies with their tennis skirt ads, Weyant cites her school uniform skirt’s colors as inspiration for her signature muted color palette.^v While American Apparel had a male CEO, Weyant relates personally to being a girl and “craving the power of womanhood;” desiring the sensuality of an American Apparel ad and the “level of agency and confidence” that must come with it.^{vi}

Weyant continues to explore these themes in her burgeoning contemporary practice. As for her approach? Weyant’s response is as witty as *Bum*: “I like to skirt it.”^{vii}

Collector’s Digest

- Anna Weyant’s work has rocketed into the art market over the past year; Phillips was the first auction house to bring her work to market, [at the New York Day Sale in June of 2021](#).
- Her current solo exhibition at New York, Gagosian, “[Baby, It Ain’t Over Till It’s Over](#),” November 3–December 23, 2022, is her first with the gallery.

ⁱ Anna Weyant, interviewed by Bill Powers, “The Credible Image: An Interview of Anna Weyant on the Occasion of her Solo Exhibition *Loose Screw*,” *Autre*, March 5, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Maria Santa Poggi, “The 2014 Tumblr Girl is Back,” *Vogue*, January 2, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Louise Jack, “American Apparel’s ‘sexist’ back to school ad banned,” *Campaign US*, September 3, 2014, [online](#).

^{iv} Anna Weyant, interviewed by Sasha Bogojev, “Anna Weyant: Welcome to the Dollhouse,” *Juxtapoz*, 2020, [online](#).

^v Anna Weyant, quoted in Bogojev.

^{vi} Anna Weyant, quoted in Powers.

^{vii} Anna Weyant, quoted in Bogojev.

Provenance

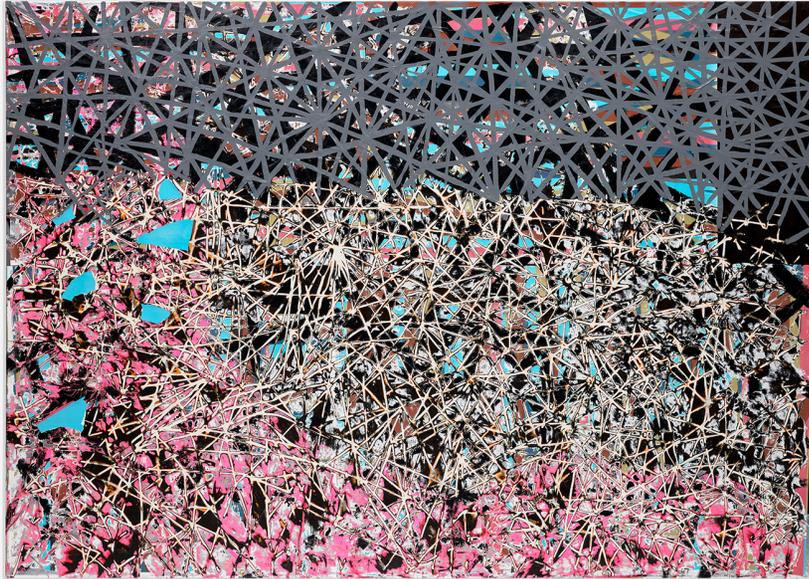
56 Henry, New York

Private Collection, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN EXCEPTIONAL PRIVATE
COLLECTION

15 ♦

Mark Bradford

He Barked Just Like a Watchdog

signed with the artist's initial, titled and dated "He
Barked Just Like a Watchdog 2011 M" on the reverse
mixed media on canvas

102 3/8 x 143 1/8 in. (260 x 363.5 cm)

Executed in 2011.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



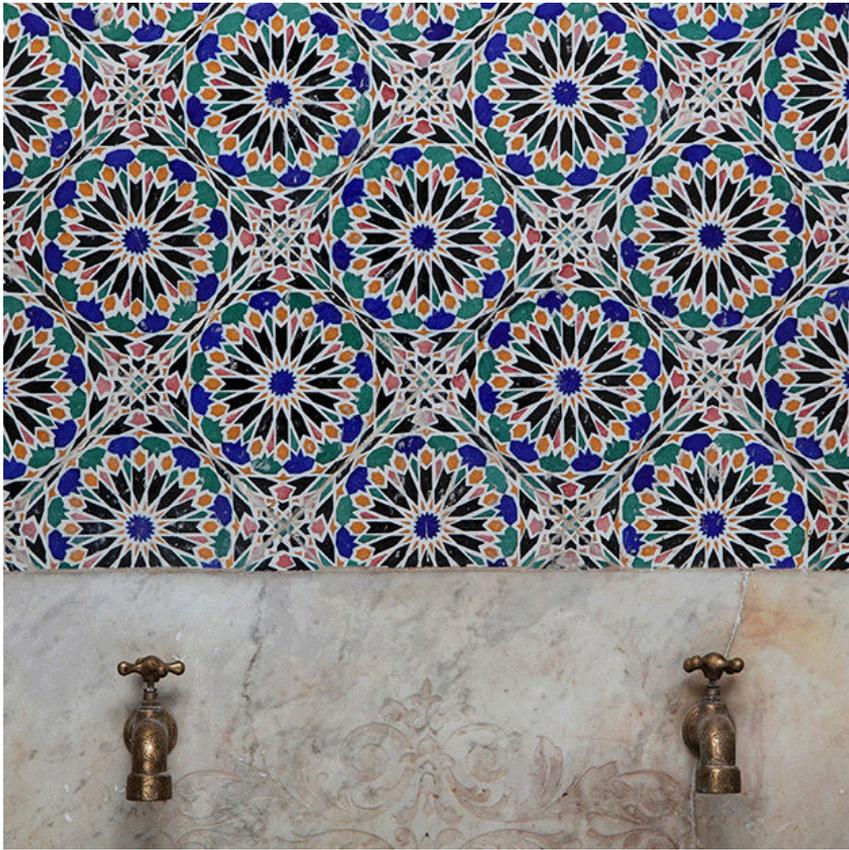
A monumental example of Mark Bradford's painterly adroitness, *He Barked Just Like a Watchdog*, 2011, is emblematic of the distinctive visual lexicon that has made the artist one of the leading voices of contemporary abstraction. Executed the year of Bradford's major mid-career traveling retrospective, the work showcases his masterful oscillation between collage and décollage. Hand-drawn black and silver lines form a striking intersect with a kaleidoscopic range of painted and collaged fluorescent and flamingo pink, tan, neon orange, and teal elements, the physicality of which has been animated by a professional sander. Unfolding in front of us with energetic rhythms and swirling colors, the interplay of textures lend the work an exquisite tactility and vigor. These composite parts, echoing of the chapters of history, evoke the uncovering of hidden stories and hint at the complexity of the experiences and cultures that construct our shared narrative.



Lee Krasner, *Desert Moon*, 1955, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Image: © 2022 Museum

Associates / LACMA. Licensed by Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The gestural style and heroic scale of the present work are immediately redolent of the hallmarks of Abstract Expressionism, a legacy of American painting with which Bradford is indelibly in conversation. However, as he has pointed out, “abstraction doesn’t belong solely to the Western canon of art.”ⁱ The all-over composition of *He Barked Just Like a Watch Dog*, inspired by a recent trip the artist had taken to Morocco, is a reflection of Bradford’s engagement with abstraction’s global history. Taken aback by the ornamentation of Islamic design, he felt compelled to experiment with incorporating intricate patterns of intersecting lines into his paintings upon his return from North Africa. This motif dynamizes the top half of the canvas and evokes the geometric precision of Moorish mosaics, the various symmetries of which suggest the divine and infinity. “Islamic art is all abstract... It’s all done through abstraction,” Bradford articulated. “I feel the same way. I’m not going to depict horror by showing horror. You’ll get to it with that abstraction... It pulsates with whatever I want.”ⁱⁱ



Tetouan in Northern Morocco. Image: Manuel Cohen / Scala, Florence / Art Resource, NY

He Barked Just Like a Watch Dog is characteristic of what the artist has coined “social abstraction”: abstract compositions “with a social or political context clinging to the edges.”ⁱⁱⁱ These frames of reference are manifested by the artist’s singular approach to the materiality of the present work, one that involved methods of both construction and deconstruction. Always searching for media beyond the confines of his studio, Bradford gathers discarded materials around his native South Central Los Angeles—a large and incredibly diverse region all too often defined by its stereotypical associations with violence, gang culture, and drug use.

These found objects, including the blue scraps of salvaged paper in *He Barked Just Like a Watch Dog*, are layered above and beneath coats of paint, abstracting their original function while

retaining their reference to the urban environment. “I may pull the raw material from a very specific place, culturally from a particular place, but then I abstract it,” he illuminated. “The painting practice will always be a painting practice but we’re living in a post-studio world, and this has to do with the relationship with things that are going on outside.”^{iv} Between cycling of meticulous collaging, he approached the surface of the present work with an electric sander to expose the palimpsest of earlier layers. Scraping, sanding, ripping, gouging: the painting is an excavation of latent or obscured identities, perhaps indexing the collective writing and erasure of social histories.

“It’s almost like a rhythm. I’m a builder and a demolisher. I put up so I can tear down... In archaeological terms, I excavate and I build at the same time.” —Mark Bradford

Though Bradford has not publicly discussed the sources behind his title for the present work, it can be speculated that it was in dialogue with the popular legends and children’s novels that his work was responding to at the time. Indeed, this title is an exact quote from Carlo Collodi’s iconic *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883): after the titular marionette was trapped trying to steal grapes from a farmer’s yard, he was tied up in a doghouse to keep watch over the chicken coop as punishment. When four trespassing weasels began to steal the chickens, Pinocchio locked them in the cage and “barked just like a watch dog” to alert the farmer, who rewarded him by setting him free.^v



The story of the character featured prominently in one of Bradford’s projects just a year before the execution of this work, reimagined as a 1970s soul singer named “Pinocchio J. P. Washington” for

his multimedia installation *Pinocchio is on Fire* (2010). This work, along with another installation executed in 2012, *Geppetto*—titled after the father figure of the fable—allude to the patriarchal structures behind Pinocchio's desire to become a "real boy." While the precarity of these notions of manhood appear to be at the heart of Bradford's preoccupation with children's tales, *He Barked Just Like a Watch Dog* offers a more enigmatic meditation on gendered bodies and social modes: fluorescent pink, layered underneath scraps of blue, is restrained by bodily webs that bring to mind networks of arteries.

"The tools of civilization, how we build and destroy ourselves, are the materials that I'm really interested in." —Mark Bradford

Bradford has spent his career rendering social issues typically understood in figurative terms—racism, homophobia, masculinity—through the language of abstraction. In doing so, he undermines the very nature of documentary by challenging himself to answer: "How does one represent that without representing it?"^{vi} Though his vigorous approach often arrives at truths with wider resonance, Bradford rarely intends to present an explicit argument. Instead, his greatest works, such as *He Barked Just Like a Watch Dog*, are incredibly personal portraits that reflect the artist's way of navigating a world rife with complexity. "I'm like a modern-day flâneur. I like to walk through the city and find details and then abstract them and make them my own. I'm not speaking for a community or trying to make a sociopolitical point," he elucidated. "At the end, it's my mapping, my subjectivity."^{vii}

ⁱ Mark Bradford, quoted in Anita Hill, "Interview: Mark Bradford: 'Everybody should have a little protection, a little cover, a little bit of a net and society should give it to us,'" *Artspace*, August 12, 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Mark Bradford, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, "What Else Can Art Do?," *The New Yorker*, June 22, 2015, [online](#).

^{iv} Mark Bradford, quoted in *Through Darkest America by Truck and Tank*, exh. cat., White Cube, London, 2013, p. 83.

^v Carlo Collodi, trans. Walter S. Cramp, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Cambridge, 1904, p. 102.

^{vi} Mark Bradford, quoted in "L.A. Laid Bare," *Dateline Australia*, June 30, 2011.

^{vii} Mark Bradford, quoted in "Market>Place," *PBS*, September 2007, [online](#).

Provenance

White Cube, London

Bert Kreuk, The Netherlands (acquired in 2011)

White Cube, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2014

Exhibited

Gemeentemuseum den Haag, *Grensverleggend — Transforming the Known: Collection Bert Kreuk*, June 8–September 29, 2013, p. 29 (illustrated, p. 28)

Literature

L.A. Laid Bare, SBS Australia, June 30, 2011, short film (installation view of the present work in progress with the artist in the artist's studio illustrated, 0:03–0:04; 3:05–3:09)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTABLISHED PRIVATE
COLLECTOR

16

Mark Grotjahn

Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)

signed with the artist's initials, numbered and dated "MPG XII 14" lower right; signed with the artist's initials and partially titled "C 12 C 12 MPG" on the turnover edge; further signed, titled, numbered and dated "UNTITLED (CIRCUS NO. 12 FACE 44.30) 2014 2014 M. Grotjahn MARK GROTJAHN #12 XII" on the overlap

oil on cardboard mounted on linen
101 1/2 x 73 5/8 in. (257.8 x 187 cm)
Painted in 2014.

Estimate

\$8,000,000 — 12,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Wildly colorful lines of oil paint slash down the center of Mark Grotjahn's *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)*, 2014, over a ground of ovoid shapes. There is a fierce velocity to the thickly impastoed marks, which fly to all corners of the composition, like the trails of airplanes, or the silk sashes of trapeze artists, perhaps. Drawing on visual cues as wide-ranging as the vaulted ceilings of Italian Renaissance paintings and the neon lights of Circus Circus casino in Las Vegas, *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)* combines the artist's painterly innovations to date with a rich legacy of traditional and modern art historical painting.

"[Grotjahn] possesses the 'historical sense,' which [Modernist writer T.S.] Eliot considered indispensable to an artist in his maturity: a consciousness of the past's multiplicity, of the spectrum of historical voices that speak through any contemporary voice." —Mark Prince

Grotjahn's *Circus* group premiered at the artist's first German solo exhibition at Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, in 2014, and its works now populate major museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Broad, Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. *Circus* combines the techniques of the artist's two earlier series, *Butterfly* and *Face*, on a larger and more theatrical scale.ⁱ

Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30) draws its geometric intensity and attention to perspective as an organizing force from *Butterfly*, and, as the title of the present work indicates, the *Circus* paintings are a subset of the *Face* series, in which the artist uses the human form as the basis of his abstraction. One can see eyes in the ovoid shapes in the top half of *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)*, and the slope of a nose in the slashing verticals. Two small, red swirls, at bottom center, suggest nostrils over a white, featherlike upper lip.

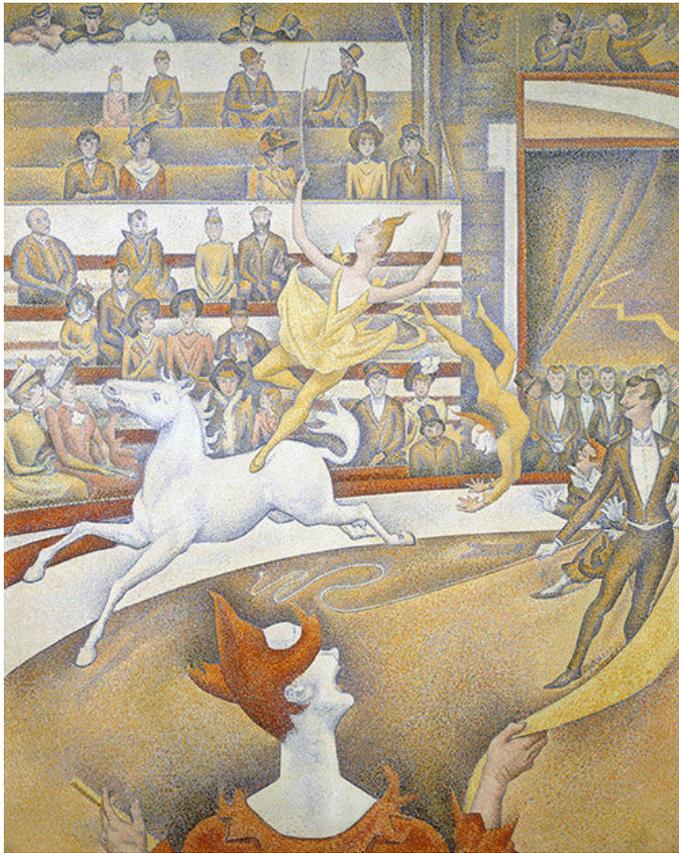
The visibility of the faces in Grotjahn's works, especially as *Face* morphs into *Circus*, grows more abstracted over time. The artist creates within an early Modernist paradigm in which abstraction and figuration are not mutually exclusive, and this tension serves as the inspiration for his work.ⁱⁱ As Mark Prince writes, "For Grotjahn, the vanishing point had become the vanishing self."ⁱⁱⁱ



[left] Bartolomeo Montagna, *Madonna Enthroned with Infant Jesus among Saints*, 1485. Museo Civico, Vicenza, Italy. Image: © Ghigo G. Roli / Art Resource, NY [right] Umberto Boccioni, *Materia*, 1912. Private collection, Milan. Image: Bridgeman-Giraudon / Art Resource, NY

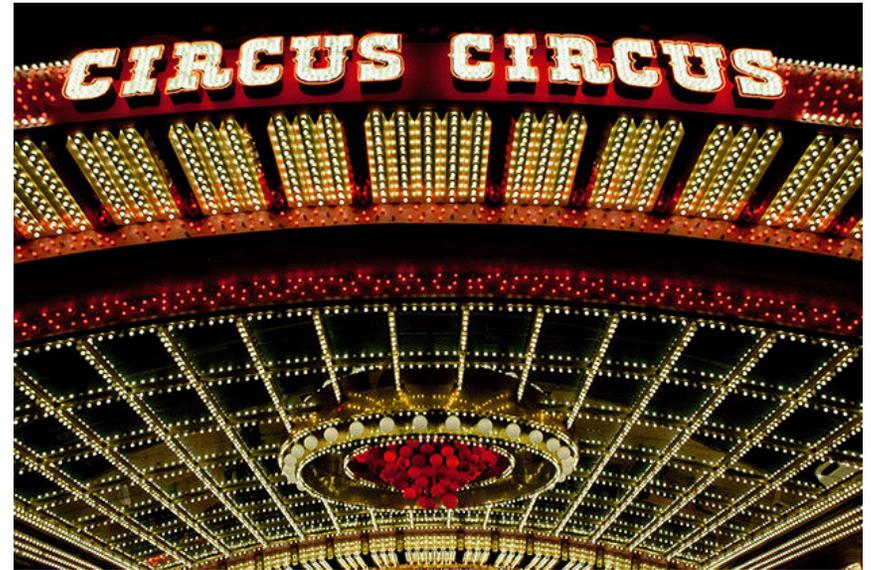
Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30) embodies the signature art-historical inspirations of Grotjahn's oeuvre. In addition to the visual similarity to the practices of Abstract Expressionists such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, the *Circus* series has a decidedly Italian bend to its referents. As with his three-tiered perspective paintings of the late 1990s, and the aforementioned *Butterfly* series, Grotjahn's *Circus* draws inspiration in a combined subversion and homage to Italian Renaissance ideals of one- and two-point perspective. *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)*, in particular, recalls the most challenging of Italian Renaissance perspectives: the four-point span of a vaulted cathedral ceiling.

The planes of perspective in *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)* pull each other at the seams, in a dynamic spread across the composition that itself references the intense, even overwhelming motion of Italian Futurist paintings of the early 20th century. The resulting web-like, swooping marks recall the draping canvas of a circus marquee, in garish, over-the-top carnival color.



Georges Seurat, *Le Cirque*, 1890-1891. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Picture Alliance/DPA / Bridgeman Images

Grotjahn cites post-Impressionist painter George Seurat's *Le Cirque*, 1890-1891, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, as the point of departure for the *Circus* series.^{iv} Indeed, the tension between dynamic foreground and static background in *Le Cirque* is reflected in the layering of ovals and slashes in *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)*, and the inherent high-brow, low-brow tension of the circus as a performance space further translates into the rest of Grotjahn's sources. In addition to his art historical referents, he cites the Las Vegas casino, Circus Circus, as the title of the Kunstverein Freiburg exhibition.



The marquee of Circus Circus casino, Las Vegas. Image: Picture Alliance/DPA / Bridgeman Images

Just as *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)* revels in an Italian Futurist and Abstract Expressionist dynamism, its bright colors contrasted against lines of black and blue remind one of how marquee lights shoot through the desert darkness of Las Vegas. The reference to hyper-consumerist Las Vegas is a further self-reference, too; Grotjahn's earliest works were a series of paintings replicating the signs of local businesses. Like Italian Renaissance altarpieces, Futurist compositions, and Seurat's *Le Cirque*, Las Vegas itself is an imagined, spectacular place; it is the unreal rainbow of untenable perspectives expressed emotively through the lines of *Untitled (Circus No. 12 Face 44.30)*. The work is a riotous combination of references to Grotjahn's own practice and art history at large. In short, it's signature Grotjahn.

ⁱ Caroline Käding, "Der Trapezkünstler/The Trapeze Artist," in *Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus*, exh. cat., Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2014, pp. 17, 20.

ⁱⁱ Roberta Smith, "Mark Grotjahn: 'Nine Faces,'" *The New York Times*, May 12, 2011, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Mark Prince, "The Divided Self: Mark Grotjahn's 'Circus' series/Das geteilte Selbst: Mark Grotjahn's 'Circus'-Serie," in *Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus*, exh. cat., Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2014, p. 24.

^{iv} Käding, 18.

Provenance

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2019

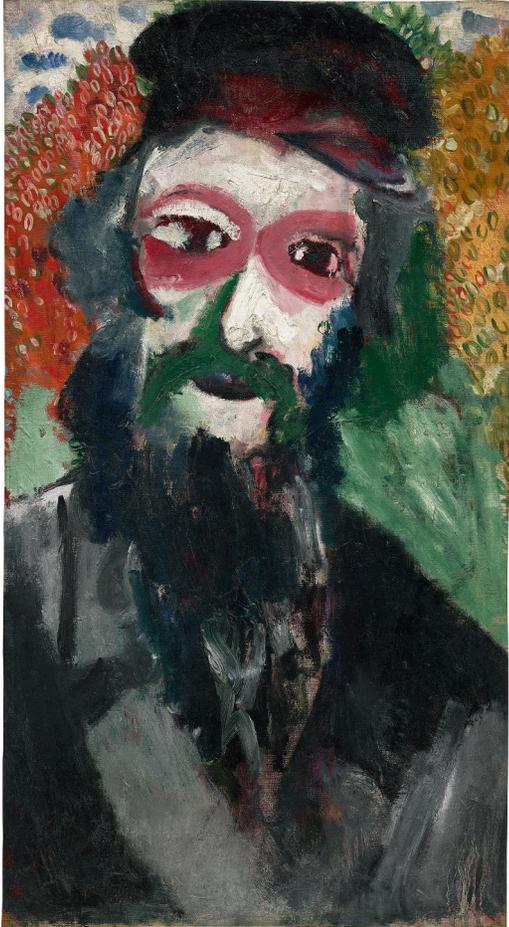
Literature

Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus, exh. cat., Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2014, pp. 52, 60 (illustrated, p. 53)

"Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus," *DISTANZ*, no. 9089, April 2015, p. 28 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF DAVID
CENDER

17 ♦

Marc Chagall

Le Père

signed and dated "Marc Chagall 1911" on the reverse by
the artist in the 1950s

oil on canvas

31 5/8 x 17 1/2 in. (80.3 x 44.5 cm)

Painted in 1911, the work is accompanied by a
certificate of authenticity issued by the Comité Marc
Chagall.

Estimate

\$6,000,000 — 8,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"When I arrived in France, I was struck by the sparkle of color, the play of light, and I found what I had been searching for blindly, that refinement of material and wild color. My customary sources have remained the same: I have not become a Parisian, but now the light shines from the outside." —Marc Chagall

Created during a transformative period in Marc Chagall's career, *Le Père* is a rare, dynamic portrait which signifies the artist's pivotal transition from art student in Saint Petersburg to one of the defining figures of European Modernism. By 1911, Chagall left his native Russia for the first time and arrived in Paris; his senses were immediately overwhelmed, and he was exhilarated by the intensity of color and light the city offered. *Le Père* encapsulates the immense effects the French capital had on Chagall and his revolutionary painting.



Marc Chagall in front of the Fontaine de l'Observatoire in Paris, c. 1911. Image: © Archives Marc and Ida Chagall, Paris

While heavily influenced by his visits to the great French museums, galleries, and salons, it was the work of Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Henri Matisse which left a lasting impression on the young artist. Although the French Fauvists had already disbanded before his arrival in Paris, many of Chagall's paintings from this developmental period are heavily influenced by the bold, vivid, and kaleidoscopic use of color favored by the wild beasts. Chagall's mastery of color would not go unnoticed and would eventually lead Pablo Picasso to boldly state: "When Matisse dies, Chagall will be the only painter left who understands what color really is."¹



[left] Portrait of the artist's parents, Zahar and Feiga-Ida Chagall. Image: © Archives Marc and Ida Chagall, Paris [right] The Chagall Family in Vitebsk, c. 1908-1909. Image: © Archives Marc and Ida Chagall, Paris

At only twenty-three years old, Chagall felt as though he had been driven to Paris by destiny. Everything about the city excited and inspired him. However, deciding to remain true to his feelings, to his homeland of Vitebsk and to his heritage, the artist later stated "The soil that nourished the roots of my art was Vitebsk. . . . My paintings are my memories."ⁱⁱ *Le Père* is an intimate portrait of the artist's father Zahar, a quiet and shy man who spent his entire life working in the same job; Chagall later recalled, "He lifted heavy barrels, and my heart used to twist like a Turkish pretzel as I watched him carrying those loads and stirring the little herrings with his frozen hands."ⁱⁱⁱ

"His father's real personality seemed overshadowed, and it was only on holy days, when he managed to escape the burden of his daily toil for a few hours, that he radiated his native kindliness and quiet affection." —Franz Meyer

During the winter of 1911-1912, Chagall moved into La Ruche, an artists' commune on the outskirts of Montparnasse. Its promise of creative freedom attracted its many famous residents including Chaim Soutine, Jacques Lipchitz, Ossip Zadkine, Alexander Archipenko, Blaise Cendrars, Fernand Léger and Amedeo Modigliani. At La Ruche, "Chagall seems to have found a startling new confidence" and the works he created between 1911-1914 "are often regarded as the most original and outstanding of his entire career."^{iv} In spite of his burgeoning success in Paris and Berlin, in 1914 Chagall left Europe intending to briefly return to Vitebsk; little did he know that the world was about to change.

In the wake of the Russian Revolution and World War I, Chagall succeeded in returning to his beloved Paris in 1923 as a renowned artist. Upon his arrival, Chagall rushed to La Ruche only to discover that the more than one hundred and fifty works which had been left behind were now

gone. Coupled with the works which had been sold unbeknownst to him in Berlin during the war, Chagall was faced with this shocking loss—almost his entire pre-war body of work had vanished without a trace; according to the artist's estate, *Le Père* was supposedly amongst the missing works. The early 1920s marked a unique period and "Chagall was in an unusual and unenviable position: that of a mature artist, famous if not yet rich, his reputation resting on an extraordinary body of work that for the most part had vanished or been dispersed. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that much of his time and energy during the 1920s was occupied in literally recreating that oeuvre."^v Unlike many of these early works which were destroyed or lost, *Le Père* miraculously survived the Great War.



Ateliers La Ruche where Marc Chagall once lived. Paris, 1955. Image: Austrian Archives/Scala/Art Resource, NY

"This is a savage picture, full of primeval force. Chagall uninhibitedly paints the objects in colors suited to the impression he wishes to convey...My Father is thus a Fauve picture, comparable to those Vlaminck painted in 1905/06 and akin to them in the vehement use of Van Gogh's intense colors." —Franz Meyer

Chagall & Portraiture

Throughout his prolific career, Chagall revitalized the inherited traditions of portrait painting. He painted dreamy and fantastical portraits of lovers, religious figures, Vitebsk's villagers, and his beloved family throughout his seven-decade career. Chagall's legacy is vital to the history of Western art and its continued expansion of the genre. Portraits of the artist's father are rare within Chagall's oeuvre. Far from the generalized symbols of lovers that dominated much of his later paintings, this early work is a remarkably personal and heartfelt depiction. "Everything about my father seemed enigma," recalled Chagall. "I was the only one to whom he was close, this man of simple heart."^{vi}



[left] Vincent van Gogh, *Portrait of Joseph Roulin*, 1889. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY [right] Maurice de Vlaminck, *André Derain*, 1906. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

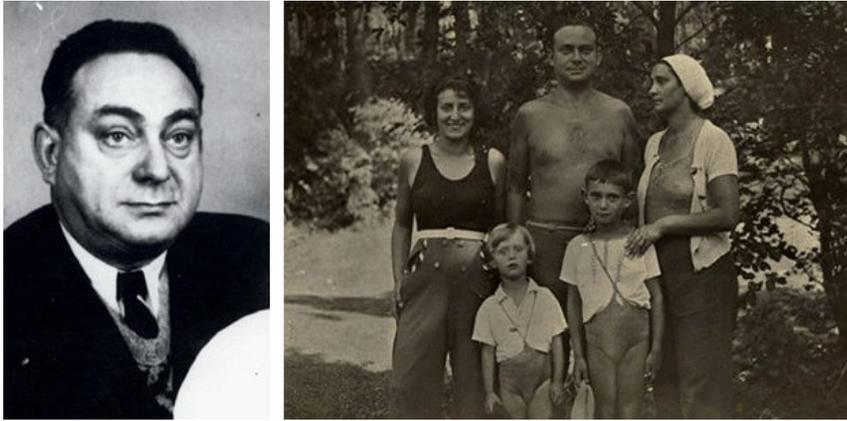
Flowers are often used not only as aesthetic motifs, but also for their secret language; an artist may use a single flower to represent a hidden meaning. In Christian art, depictions of the Annunciation almost always feature a white lily to symbolize the chastity of the Virgin Mary whereas in the 17th century Dutch still life paintings, flowers were often reminders of the fleeting nature of material wealth. The 19th century saw a renewed interest in florals when the French Realists and Impressionists embraced the motif. Paul Gauguin was riveted by the exotic motifs of the Tahitian landscape whereas Vincent van Gogh immortalized the sunflower during the 19th century. In his portrait of his friend, Joseph Roulin, van Gogh set him against a floral background, echoing the swirls of his beard.

From Gauguin and van Gogh to Maurice de Vlaminck, Sonia Delaunay and Henri Matisse botanical looms have been incorporated into their portraiture and the tradition has continued through the contemporary work of Mickalene Thomas and Kehinde Wiley, who create lively compositions where flora comes alive across the canvas, enveloping the sitter while challenging ideas of race and identity. In *Le Père*, Chagall frames his vibrant depiction of his father with dynamic floral imagery behind the figure triumphantly referring to the artist's homeland. Even as Chagall embraces the vibrant urban fabric of Paris, he admits a longing for his childhood home.

The Cender Family

The early owner of this painting, David Cender, was a prominent luthier in Łódź, Poland who created instruments of the highest class for the eminent musicians of the era as well as being a musician and music teacher in his own right. In 1939, David married Ruta Zylbersztajn and soon after their daughter Bluma was born. The Cender family lived on Zeromskiego Street, in a lively neighborhood situated close to the nearby school, cinema, bath house, hospital, and park. Prior to 1939, 34% of Łódź's 665,000 inhabitants were Jewish, and the city was a thriving center of Jewish culture.

The tradition of incorporating botanical motifs in portraiture has also endured for centuries.



[left] Portrait of David Cender. Image: Courtesy of the Cender Family [right] Members of the Cender Family in Łódź during 1936, [Back Row] Ester Cender Boniuk, David Cender (center), Sarah Cender Rosenzweig. [Front Row] Jonathan Rosenzweig and Marc Rosenzweig. Image: Courtesy of the Cender Family

In September 1939, the German occupation of Poland marked a reign of terror against Jewish and Polish citizens. By February 1940, German troops created a Jewish ghetto at the northern edge of Łódź. In the spring, David Cender and his family were forced to leave their home and move into the ghetto leaving behind numerous valuable possessions, including paintings by Marc Chagall and Jankel Adler, Cender-made violins, a Seiler piano, tools to make musical instruments, and furniture. David later recalled that he was able to witness his family home being sealed from the ghetto.

More than 164,000 Jewish people were forced to live within this area of four-square kilometers. Later David, Ruta, and Bluma were deported to Auschwitz. While David was able to survive the war, his wife, daughter, and other relatives were killed at Auschwitz. In the aftermath of the war, David returned to Łódź alone, and with deteriorating health he continued to make violins.

The BRÜG Claim

In 1958, David successfully obtained a visa and emigrated to France. The following year in March 1959, David provided a list of despoiled items for the BRÜG claim in Germany seeking compensation for his despoiled property. Included in this list was the Chagall painting *Le Père*, 1911, which he had acquired through the prominent Polish art dealer Abe Gutnajer in 1928. To strengthen David's claim, he obtained affidavits from two eyewitnesses confirming that they had seen the painting numerous times in the Cender home before the war.

In 1965, the Berlin Wiedergutmachungskammer wrote to Franz Meyer, author of Chagall's first catalogue raisonné and the artist's son-in-law, to enquire about the Cender painting. Meyer replied it was highly probable that David Cender and his witnesses' testimonies were true. In May 1962, David provided a detailed description of his painting by Chagall for his affidavit: "The image was painted with strong contrasting colors. The face was white. The dark eyes stood out from the white face which was edged by red. The thick hair that hung in curls left and right from under his hat. The heavy beard and drooping moustache were black and grey. The background was very colorful and thickly applied. I can still remember the hat was a little crooked as the visor was pointing slightly to the left."

The BRÜG Commission wrote to Marc Chagall in May 1966 asking him for any information regarding the painting and made it known that the painting had been confiscated from David Cender in 1940; both David and his eye witnesses' detailed descriptions were included. The following month, Meyer wrote to Dr. Hanns V. Krannhals who was researching Cender's BRÜG claim, stating that he believed the Cender painting to be the painting referred to as *Der Vater* in his 1961 catalogue raisonné. In his letter, Meyer also confirmed that the painting was now in Chagall's possession. One month later, David Cender died in Metz on July 9, 1966, at the age of sixty-seven.

Thirteen years after David's initial claim, the Berlin regional court concluded: "The ownership and the seizure of the Chagall painting have been proven, but the confirmation required under § 5 of the BRÜG Act, that the painting was transferred to Berlin or an unknown place in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, after the seizure, could not be made. The whereabouts of the painting are not known. There is no empirical evidence that works of art of this kind, from the incorporated eastern territories, were transferred to the area relevant under § 5 BRÜG."

Le Père: A Discovery

The precise location of *Le Père* remained unknown for more than a decade until it re-emerged publicly in a 1953 exhibition in Turin at the Museo Civico, lent then by a private collection. It was not until 1978, that the painting was credited in a catalog published on the occasion of an exhibition at the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris as belonging to Marc Chagall. This work remained in the artist's personal collection until 1985 when he died in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. In 1988, the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges-Pompidou in Paris received by donation from the Chagall estate *Le Père* along with 45 paintings and 406 drawings and gouaches. On November 9, 1998, *Le Père* was deposited into the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme in Paris, where it has been on view for twenty-four years.

In the ensuing years, the Cender family decided to continue their quest to find *Le Père*. In 2020, provenance researchers were able to locate the painting at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme in Paris for the family. Once the work was identified, a restitution claim was submitted to the Musée national d'art moderne and the French Ministry of Culture— both concluded that *Le*

Père should be returned to David Cender's heirs.

"It's the first time since the postwar period that the government is showing a legal commitment towards the restitution of pieces from public collections." —Roselyne Bachelot

A Landmark Restitution

Since 2019, the French government has been making a concerted effort to return Nazi-looted artwork, included in state collections, to their rightful owners. Between 1933-1945, more than 100,000 works of art were seized in France; while many were returned, thousands were entered into national museums or sold. The Commission for the Compensation of Victims of Spoliation (CIVS) identified 15 artworks in the national collection, including the present work. Research confirmed that the artist, unaware of its provenance, had bought the work back by 1953 and that it later entered the national collection in 1988. On January 25, 2022, the French National Assembly unanimously passed a bill approving the return of the 15 works of art; the bill was then passed by its Senate on February 15th. The Minister of Culture, Roselyne Bachelot, praised the decision saying that not restituting the works was "the denial of the humanity [of these Jewish families], their memory, their memories".^{vii}

A parliamentary bill was needed to override the principle of inalienability, which govern French museums and prohibit the transfer of ownership of objects or artifacts in museum collections. The historic passing of this bill marks the first time in more than seventy years that a government initiated the restitution of works in public collections looted during World War II or acquired through anti-Semitic persecutions.

On April 1, 2022, *Le Père* was returned to the heirs of David Cender by the Parlement français in Paris.

Coming to auction for the first time, *Le Père* is a treasured and rare example from the artist's early œuvre. Its inclusion in this landmark restitution signifies a historic moment in contemporary cultural history.

ⁱ Pablo Picasso quoted in Ted Nash, *MoMA Inside/Out: Portrait in Seven Shades: Chagall*, New York, 2010, online.

ⁱⁱ Marc Chagall quoted in Jacob Baal-Teshuva, *Marc Chagall 1887-1985*, Cologne, 1998, p. 19.

ⁱⁱⁱ Marc Chagall, *My Life*, London, 2018, p. 4.

^{iv} Monica Bohm-Duchen, *Chagall*, London, 1998, p. 65.

^v Monica Bohm-Duchen, *Chagall*, London, 1998, p. 176.

^{vi} Marc Chagall, *My Life*, London, 2018, p. 4.

^{vii} Roselyne Bachelot quoted in *ARTnews*, "France Approves Return of Nazi-looted Artworks, Including Paintings by Gustav Klimt and Marc Chagall," January 26, 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

The artist (1911-1914)

Abe Gutnajer, Warsaw (acquired by 1928)

David Cender, Łódź (acquired from the above in 1928)

(Confiscated from the home of David Cender in 1940)

Collection of Marc Chagall, Vence (acquired by 1953)

Succession Marc Chagall, Saint-Paul-de-Vence (March 28, 1985–June 5, 1988)

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (by donation from the artist's heirs in 1988; historic inv. no. AM 1988-55; inv. no D.98.09.004.MNAM)

(Deposited into the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, Paris on November 9, 1998)

Restituted to the heirs of David Cender by the Parlement français in Paris on April 1, 2022

Exhibited

Turin, Museo Civico, Palazzo Madama, *L'opera di Marc Chagall. Dipinti - guazzi - acquarelli - disegni - sculture - ceramiche - incisioni*, April–June 1953, no. 16, p. 34 (illustrated, n.p.; titled as *L'uomo barbuto*)

Hamburg, Kunstverein and Munich, Haust der Kunst (no. 30, p. 35, illustrated, n.p.; titled and dated as *Bärtiger Mann*, 1911); Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs (no. 38, p. 156, illustrated, p. 157; titled and dated as *Le Père ou l'Homme barbu*, 1910–1911), *Marc Chagall*, February 6–October 1959

Kunsthhaus Zürich, *Chagall*, May 6–July 30, 1967, no. 19, p. 21 (titled and dated as *Der Vater*, 1910–1911)

Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museums, *Marc Chagall. Werke aus sechs Jahrzehnten*, September 2–October 31, 1967, no. 15, p. 25 (illustrated, pl. 11; titled and dated as *Der Vater*, 1910–1911)

Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, *La Ruche et Montparnasse (1902–1930)*, December 22, 1978–April 1, 1979, no. 19 (illustrated, n.p.; titled as *Le Père ou l'Homme barbu*)

Paris, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Marc Chagall. Œuvres reçues en dation*, March 30–June 5, 1988, no. 7 (dated as 1910–1911)

New Delhi, National Gallery of Modern Art, *Exhibition for the Festival of France in India. Birth and Life of Modernity*, February 6–March 5, 1989, p. 70 (illustrated)

Buenos Aires, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, *Marc Chagall. 112 obras de la dación*, June 23–August 13, 1989, no. 5, p. 31 (titled as *El Padre*)

Sapporo, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art; Tokyo, Setagaya Art Museum; Kobe, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, *Les Chagall de Chagall*, September 30, 1989–February 12, 1990, no. 9, pp. 37, 190 (illustrated, p. 37)

Humblebæk, Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, *Chagall. "La Dation" – arven efter Marc Chagall*, March 24–June 5, 1990, no. 6, p. 89 (illustrated, p. 20; titled as *Faderen (Den skæggede mand)*)

Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, *Marc Chagall. Die russischen Jahre 1906–1922*, June 16–September 8, 1991, no. 17, p. 388 (illustrated, n.p.; titled as *Vater*)

Mexico City, Centro Cultural Arte Contemporáneo, *Chagall en nuestro siglo*, October 1991–January 1992, no. 6, pp. 17, 58, 475 (illustrated, p. 59; titled and dated as *El padre*, 1910)

Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Marc Chagall. Les années russes, 1907–1922*, April 13–September 17, 1995, no. 26, p. 264 (illustrated, p. 56; dated as 1910–1911)

Kunstmuseum Bern (no. 28, p. 52, illustrated, p. 53); New York, Jewish Museum; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Marc Chagall 1907–1917*, December 16, 1995–January 5, 1997

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; Nagaoka, Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art; Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art, *Marc Chagall*, April 20–December 15, 2002, no. 10, p. 135 (illustrated, p. 48)

Jüdische Museum Frankfurt; Berlin, Stiftung Brandenburger Tor, *Chagall und Deutschland*, February 1–August 1, 2004, no. 17, taf. 19, p. 185 (illustrated, n.p.; titled as *Der Vater*)

Jüdisches Museum Wien, *Chagall*, January 10–March 20, 2006

Tokyo University Art Museum; Fukuoka Art Museum, *Chagall et l'avant-garde russe. Collections du Centre Pompidou*, July 3, 2010–January 10, 2011; then travelled as Musée de Grenoble; Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, *Chagall et l'avant-garde russe*, March 5, 2011–January 15, 2012, no. 5, pp. 33, 211

(illustrated, p. 34)

Louvre Abu Dhabi, *Rendezvous in Paris: Picasso, Chagall, Modigliani & Co. (1900–1939)*, September 18–December 7, 2019, no. 24, p. 178 (illustrated, p. 85; titled as *The Father*)

Paris, Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, *Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine...Paris pour école, 1905–1940*, April 2–August 23, 2020, p. 261 (illustrated, p. 59)

Literature

Lionello Venturi, *Chagall. Étude biographique et critique*, Geneva, 1956, pp. 29, 119 (illustrated, p. 28)

Lucien Goldmann, "Sur la peinture de Chagall, réflexions d'un sociologue," *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations. 15^e année*, no. 4, 1960, p. 675 (titled and dated as *L'homme barbu*, 1910–1911)

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall Life and Work*, New York, 1964, pp. 100, 740 (illustrated, p. 103; titled and dated as *Father*, 1910–1911)

Jean-Paul Crespelle, *Chagall. L'amour, le rêve et la vie*, Paris, 1969, p. 33 (illustrated)

Horst Keller, *Marc Chagall. Leben und Werk*, Cologne, 1974, no. 7, pp. 32, 34, 145 (illustrated, p. 33; titled as *Bärtiger Mann*)

Jeanine Warnod, *La Ruche & Montparnasse*, Paris, 1978, p. 152 (illustrated; dated as 1910–1911)

Werner Schmalenbach and Charles Sorlier, *Marc Chagall de Draeger*, Paris, 1979, p. 33 (illustrated, p. 32)

Alexandre Kamenski, *Chagall. Période russe et soviétique. 1907–1922*, Paris, 1988, p. 82 (illustrated; titled and dated as *Le Père ou l'Homme barbu*, 1910–1911)

Alexandre Kamensky, *Chagall. The Russian Years 1907–1922*, New York, 1989, p. 82 (illustrated; titled and dated as *Father* or *The Bearded Man*, 1910–1911)

Jacob Baal-Teshuva, ed., *Chagall: A Retrospective*, New York, 1995, p. 36 (illustrated; titled as *Father*)

Daniel Marchesseau, *Chagall Ivre d'images*, Paris, 1995, p. 168 (illustrated, p. 15; dated as 1910–1911)

Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall*, Paris, 1995, no. A 20, pp. 55–56, 340 (illustrated, n.p.; dated as 1910–1911)

Pierre Schneider, *Chagall à travers le siècle*, Paris, 1995, pp. 19, 27 (illustrated, p. 18; titled and dated as *Le Père (ou Vieil Homme barbu)*, 1910)

Marc Chagall. Bonjour, la patrie!, exh. cat., State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 2005, p. 82 (illustrated, p. 80; titled and dated as *Father*, 1910–1911)

Benjamin Harshav, *Marc Chagall and the Lost Jewish World. The Nature of Chagall's Art and Iconography*, New York, 2006, no. 5, pp. 64, 254 (illustrated, p. 23; titled and dated as *Father*, 1910)

Jackie Wullschlager, *Chagall. Love and Exile*, London, 2008, pp. 21–22 (titled as *Portrait of My Father*)

Fage Éditions, ed., *Marc Chagall*, Lyon, 2016, p. 12 (illustrated, p. 13; titled as *L'Homme barbu ou Le Père*, 1911)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

18

Marlene Dumas

Snow White in the Wrong Story

signed and dated "M Dumas. '88" on the reverse;
further signed, titled and dated "M. Dumas. Snow
White in the Wrong Story. 1988." on the stretcher
oil on canvas

39 3/8 x 118 1/8 in. (100 x 300 cm)

Painted in 1988.

Estimate

\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Dominic van den Boogerd on Marlene Dumas' *Snow White in the Wrong Story*

Dominic van den Boogerd is a Dutch art critic based in Amsterdam. His collected essays on painting, Great Temptations, were published by Roma (Amsterdam) in 2018. He contributed to several books and catalogues on Marlene Dumas, including Marlene Dumas (Phaidon, London 1999), MD (Muhka, Antwerp; Camden Arts Center, London; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Hovikodden, 1999-2000), Marlene Dumas: Suspect (Skira, Milan 2003), and Marlene Dumas: The Image as Burden (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London); Fondazione Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, 2014-2015).

No happily-ever-after this time. Snow White has ended up in a morgue. She is resting on a raised bed or sepulcher. She is not dead. Almost fully naked, she covers her breasts with her hands in a frail attempt to protect her sexual integrity. Being undressed makes her vulnerable; to be naked is to be without disguise. The prince who is supposed to kiss her is nowhere to be seen. She is being displayed in a glass case, subject to our scrutiny, but she doesn't return our gaze. Skittishly, she looks away, as if she is trying to find her way out of here. As the title indicates, Snow White is in the wrong story.

Snow White in the Wrong Story is an exceptionally strong painting by Marlene Dumas, one of the most celebrated painters of our time. The work premiered in the exhibition *Waiting for Meaning* in 1988, presented first in the Kunsthalle zu Kiel, in Kiel, Germany and later that year in Galerie Paul Andriess, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This was a rather gloomy exhibition of horizontally stretched paintings, populated by naked or barely clad bodies, some of them possibly corpses. In this thematically coherent group of works, Marlene Dumas, feeling that the nude had become a worn-out subject in art and advertising, puts the genre of the reclining nude to the test. More precisely: the presupposed passivity of the female figure and the concept of universal beauty underlying this theme.

"Sois belle et tais-toi," he told her; 'Be beautiful and shut up.'"

—Karel Appel

The connection between woman, inactivity and beauty is not new. It is expressed in a remark by painter Karel Appel to television journalist Sonja Barend when he grew tired of her questions during an interview: "*Sois belle et tais-toi*," he told her; "Be beautiful and shut up." Whether or not Appel was deliberately echoing the title of a 1959 song by French crooner Serge Gainsbourg I do not know, but the peculiar mixture of compliment and insult remains all the same.

The intertwining of femininity, numbness, and beauty is central to *Snow White*, the well-known

fairy tale by German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The story, often understood as a warning against the dangers of vanity, supplied the plot for the first feature-length animation film produced by Walt Disney Studio. As art historian Rosemary Erpf notes, "Disney's Snow White character created a standard for female beauty when she came to the screen in the 1930s. Her whiteness, innocence, and passivity—she had to ask a mirror if she was fair and wait for a prince to wake her up—conformed to social codes that kept women in their place and affirmed whiteness as the highest standard of beauty."ⁱ



Marlene Dumas, *Losing (her Meaning)*, 1988. Artwork: © Marlene Dumas.

In the late 1980s, Marlene Dumas made several paintings featuring Snow White or Snow Whiteish characters. All of these, with exception of the present work, are now part of respected museum collections: *Snow White and the Broken Arm*, Kunstmuseum, The Hague, *The Guilt of the Privileged*, Museum of Art Arnhem, and *Snow White and the Next Generation*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, all from 1988 and *The Ritual*, Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg, which was painted between 1988 and 1991. The central character in these works has often been written about as referring autobiographically to the artist's ethnicity and her specific experience of privilege and whiteness in South Africa, where Dumas grew up during the apartheid era. However, the lanky, dark-haired figure bears hardly any resemblance to the artist. She is first and foremost

an emblem, the embodiment of an idea. The notion at stake is skin color. Dumas does not see whiteness as “the fairest” of them all, but as “a dangerous and desperate ideology when used as a political category.”ⁱⁱ

In an interview in 1985, Dumas talks about her confusion when she discovered that being a white person in South Africa linked her to oppression. “I personally don’t see myself as a real oppressor, but I am a part of the oppression nevertheless... [i]t can never really be resolved. You have an individual feeling about yourself, but if you then see yourself as a part of something else you can reach an entirely different conclusion about yourself. The one is no more, or less, truthful than the other.”ⁱⁱⁱ For Dumas, the dubiousness of being ‘the fairest in the land’ complicates the self-image in unresolvable ways. It’s like being “in the wrong story.”



Marlene Dumas, *Waiting (for Meaning)*, 1988. Artwork: © Marlene Dumas.

Fairytale characters like the mermaid and the toad, and emblematic figures of naked girls personifying abstract notions such as liberty or chastity feature frequently in Dumas’s work from the 1970s and 1980s. The images invite a metaphorical or allegorical reading. Speculating on the meaning of *Snow White in the Wrong Story*, Dutch art critic Ernst van Alphen suggests that Snow White is in the forbidden room of Bluebeard’s castle, submitted to the voyeurism of the male gaze

(the “pornographic view,” as he calls it). Being displayed causes her demise, he writes; the painting “critiques the museum as peepshow.” If woman exemplifies pure beauty as Renaissance master Raphael once believed, it is only “on the condition of being cut up”—hence the two severed heads next to Snow White.^{iv} Van Alphen’s interpretation is provoking. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that Snow White, rather than migrating from one fairytale to another, seeks to escape from interpretation altogether. Two smaller seminal works in the aforementioned exhibition, *Waiting (for Meaning)* and *Losing (Her Meaning)*, both from 1988, hint at the arbitrariness of attributing meaning to images.

“There is a crisis with regard to Representation. They are looking for meaning as if it was a thing. As if it was a girl, required to take her panties off as if she would want to do so, as soon as the true interpreter comes along. As if there is something to take off.” —Marlene Dumas

A special role in the painting is designated to the little character seen on the back and positioned in front of the scene. It could be one of the seven dwarves mentioned in the fairytale; it could just as well be a young boy acting as stage manager. By opening the front curtain, he adds a sense of drama to the scene and turns it into a spectacle. His action transforms the morgue into a puppet theatre, so to speak, disclosing the tragedy of the unhappily framed nude.



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica*, 1626-1628, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Image: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY

The history of painting includes several examples of odd little fellows offering splendid views on female nudity. One example is Peter Paul Rubens' *The Hermit and the Sleeping Angelica*, 1626-1628, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The picture is based on the once popular story of Orlando Furioso, who is madly in love with a beautiful Saracen girl named Angelica. An old hermit with magical powers abducts Angelica to his cave where he puts her in deep sleep, removes her clothes and gazes at her. Paintings like these inspired art historians to articulate the distinction between the naked and the nude:

"To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. (The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object.) Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. To be naked is to be without disguises. [...] Nudity is a form of dress." —John Berger

A painting is not a rebus that can be solved. On the contrary. A truly accomplished painting raises questions, not answers, as it reaches beyond the intentions of its maker and the expectations of its viewers. Imagination is a wild thing, creativity an anarchistic impulse difficult to tame. To know where a work started, what source material and intentions initiated the creative process, does not mean you know what the painting has become. *Snow White in the Wrong Story* has been reworked time and again. The canvas appears as a construction site where the build-up of the composition has been constantly interrupted by new ideas and second thoughts. Several parts are hardly touched upon. Others, such as Snow White's face, have been overpainted more than once. The stark contrasts and harsh features make her countenance look like a wooden mask, not unlike Pablo Picasso's haunting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R.)*, 1907, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In the history of painting, the number of female artists who have painted nude women is close to zero. When Marlene Dumas set out to paint her *Snow White*, she radically changed the parameters established by her male predecessors: she replaced nudity by nakedness. That is why Dumas' intense painting does not seduce but confronts us. Here, the depiction of a woman's body is far from erotic. Being white, being a woman, being naked and gazed at - it is uncomfortable and complicated and weighs you down like a heavy burden. And making paintings, searching for meaning, and longing for salvation all adds to the confusion. These moral, political (and pictorial) dilemmas lie at the heart of the art of Marlene Dumas. Only great paintings such as *Snow White in the Wrong Story* succeed in bringing these dilemmas to the limelight, raw and unresolved. Just like a fairytale, Dumas' masterpiece is amusing, and compelling, yet unsettling at the same time.

ⁱ Rosemary Erpf, *Painting in the 1980s: Reimagining the medium*, Intellect/The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2022, pp. 244-245.

ⁱⁱ Marlene Dumas and Yvette Rosenberg (ed.), "Marlene Dumas: Open-End," Visitors' guide, Palazzo Grassi/Pinault Collection, Venice, 2022, p.25.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dumas in an interview with Anna Tilroe, 1985, quoted in Marja Bosma, "Marlene Dumas: Talking to Strangers," *Dutch Heights*, no. 3, September 1990, p.14.

^{iv} Ernst van Alphen, "Facing Defacement. 'Models' and Marlene Dumas' intervention in Western Art," in *Marlene Dumas. MODELS*, Oktagon/Salzburger Kunstverein; Portikus, Frankfurt; NGBK, Berlin, 1995-1996, pp.67-75.

Provenance

Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1988

Exhibited

- Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Christian Albrechts Universitat; Amsterdam, Galerie Paul Andriessse, *Marlene Dumas: Waiting (for meaning)*, August 10–November 19, 1988, p. 30 (illustrated, p. 31)
- Frankfurter Kunstverein; Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, *Prospect 89: Eine internationale Ausstellung aktueller Kunst*, March 21–May 21, 1989, p. 217 (illustrated, p. 61)
- Kunsthalle Bern, *Marlene Dumas: The Question of Human Pink*, July 7–August 20, 1989, p. 51 (illustrated, p. 40)
- Eindhoven, Van Abbemuseum; Philadelphia, Institute of Contemporary Art, *Marlene Dumas: Miss Interpreted*, March 15, 1992–January 16, 1994, pp. 15, 80, 115 (Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, p. 53)
- The Arts Club of Chicago; Toronto, Art Gallery of York University, *Marlene Dumas*, February 1–May 15, 1994, n.p.
- Malmö Konsthall; Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, *Marlene Dumas – Francis Bacon: The Particularity of Being Human*, March 18–October 1, 1995, p. 178 (illustrated, pp. 114–115)
- Barcelona, Fundació Joan Miró, *La realitat i el desig*, September 22–November 7, 1999, no. 7, p. 30 (illustrated, p. 35)
- Enkhuizen, Zuiderzeemuseum, *Mijn Kunst: verzamelaars delen hun passie*, June 5–November 2, 2008
- Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, 2012–2022 (on extended loan)
- Maastricht, Bonnefanten Hedge House, *Far from the Maddening Crowd*, April 25–July 14, 2013 (illustrated in the exhibition pamphlet, p. 3)
- Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, *Beating around the bush: Episode #4*, November 7, 2014–February 8, 2015
- Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, *Collectieopstelling hedendaagse kunst*, July 1–September 4, 2016
- Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, *Illusion and Revelation*, December 24, 2016–November 24, 2017
- Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, *Skin*, April 13, 2021–January 23, 2022

Literature

- IJsbrand van Veelen, "Tussen beeld en taal," *Het Parool*, November 4, 1988, p. 15
- Paul Groot, "Marlene Dumas," *Artforum*, vol. 27, no. 7, March 1989, p. 149
- Ulrich Bischoff, "Marlene Dumas: The question of human pink," *Das Kunstwerk*, vol. 42, December 1989, p. 63 (titled as *Schneewittchen in the wrong story*)
- Ella Reitsma, "'Als je geen keuzes maakt, faal je ook nooit. Je kunt altijd zeggen dat het ding niet af is.' Beeld en betekenis in de kunst van Marlene Dumas," *Vrij Nederland* (Color Supplement), February 24, 1990, p. 22 (Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, p. 21)
- Christa Murken-Altrogge, "Die Freiheit, sich malend sichtbar zu machen," *Kunst und Antiquitäten*, no. 11, November 1990, pp. 54–55 (illustrated)
- Vitus B. Dröscher, "Das grosse Gähnen," *DU*, no. 12, December 1990, pp. 66–67 (illustrated)
- Axel Hinrich Murken and Christa Murken-Altrogge, *Von der Avantgarde bis zur Postmoderne: Die Malerei des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1991, fig. 252, p. 332 (illustrated, pp. 330–331)
- Ingrid Schaffner, "Snow White in the Wrong Story: Paintings and Drawings by Marlene Dumas," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 65, no. 7, March 1991, pp. 3, 59–60
- Paul Kempers, "Marlene Dumas: Miss Interpreted," *Jonas*, vol. 33, no. 16, April 1992, p. 9
- Bianca Stigter, "Ik teken mezelf als een waggelend dik blondje: Marlene Dumas over alle mogelijke betekenissen van het beeld," *NRC Handelsblad* (Cultureel Supplement), March 20, 1992, p. 3
- Ed Wingen, "Dumas zet Sneeuwvitje in het verkeerde sprookje: Na het Van Abbemuseum naar de Documenta," *De Telegraaf*, April 3, 1992, p. 19
- Max Borka, "Marlene Dumas in het Van Abbemuseum: Een kwestie van opruimen," *De Morgen*, April 10, 1992, p. 9
- Walter Barten, "Het slechte huwelijk van kunst en leven: 'Miss Interpreted' met werk van Marlene Dumas" *Het Financieele Dagblad*, April 25, 1992, n.p.
- Bert Bauwelinck, "Wolfijzers voor psycho-analisten: Marlene Dumas in het Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven," *Gazet van Antwerpen*, April 30, 1992, n.p.
- Marlene Dumas*, exh. cat., Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, 1993, p. 114 (Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, p. 41)
- Marina Warner and Anna Tilroe, *Parkett: The Parkett Series with Contemporary Artists*, no. 38, December 1993, pp. 92, 98 (Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, pp. 80–81)
- Clifford Terry, "People, Places and Things," *The Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1994, Section 13, p. 6
- Mandy Morrison, "Missing Persons," *The Chicago Reader*, vol. 23, no. 20, February 24, 1994, online
- Marlene Dumas: Models*, exh. cat., Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, 1995, pp. 63, 74
- Elly Stegeman, "Aan de nachtzijde: Een project van Marlene Dumas voor Het Hooghuys," *Metropolis M*, no. 2, April 1995, p. 27
- Ulrich Bischoff, "Auf der Suche nach Schönheit," *Kritisches Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1996, p. 7
- Jonathan Turner, "Mistaken Identity," *Tableau*, vol. 20, no. 2, November 1997, p. 120
- Wounds*, exh. cat., Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1998, p. 126

- Catherine Flohic, "Marlene Dumas," *Ninety Magazine*, no. 32, 1999, p. 19 (illustrated)
- Dominic van den Boogerd, Barbara Bloom and Mariucia Casadio, *Marlene Dumas*, New York, 1999, pp. 55, 125 (Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, p. 54)
- Brenda Atkinson and Candice Breitz, eds., *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary South African Art*, Johannesburg, 1999, n.p.
- Jostein Gripsrud, ed., *Aesthetic Theory, Art and Popular Culture*, no. 8, Kristiansand, 1999, fig. 4, pp. 37, 53, 56 (illustrated, p. 60)
- Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, eds., *Contemporary Women Artists*, Detroit, 1999, p. 179
- Inge Korneck, Georgia Illetschko and Lutz Musner, eds. *The Contemporary Study of Culture*, Vienna, 1999, fig. 4, p. 174 (illustrated, p. 175)
- Christina Lammer, *Schneewittchen: über den Mythos kalter Schönheit, ein Eiskristallbuch*, Tübingen, 1999, pp. 131, 161 (illustrated, p. 127)
- Adéle Nel, "Die kleur van vers en verf: Antjie Krog in gesprek met Marlene Dumas," *Literator*, vol. 22, no. 3, November 2001, p. 25
- Rosemarie Buikema and Maaïke Meijer, eds., *Kunsten in beweging, 1980-2000. Cultuur en migratie in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 72
- Ernst van Alphen, *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*, Chicago, 2005, fig. 59, pp. 157, 207 (illustrated, p. 156)
- Ilaria Bonacossa, *Marlene Dumas*, Milan, 2006, p. 31 (illustrated, p. 30)
- Freda Dröes, "Art at the Edge: The Painter Marlene Dumas," *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology*, vol. 14, no. 3, May 1, 2006, p. 392
- Marlene Dumas: Broken White*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2007, p. 138 (illustrated, p. 48)
- Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave*, exh. cat., The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2008, pp. 63, 153
- Wido Smeets, "Wat je al niet ziet op een heldere dag," *Zout Magazine*, October 10, 2012, p. 11 (illustrated)
- Marlene Dumas: The Image as Burden*, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2014, p. 186 (illustrated, p. 51; Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 1988, installation view illustrated, p. 50)
- Marlene Dumas, *Sweet Nothings: Notes and Text*, New York, 2015, p. 67
- Marlene Dumas, Andrea Büttner and Jennifer Higgie, "To show or not to show," *Tate Etc.*, no. 33, April 2, 2015, online
- Laurent Wolf, "Méfions-nous des contes de fees," *Le Temps*, August 12, 2015, online
- Rosemary Erpf, *Painting in the 1980s: Reimagining the Medium*, Chicago, 2022, p. 242

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



19

María Berrío

He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not

signed, titled and dated ""he loves me, he loves me not" Enero 4.2015. Maria Berrío" on the reverse
mixed media collage on canvas
72 1/8 x 72 1/8 in. (183.3 x 183.3 cm)
Executed in 2015.

Estimate

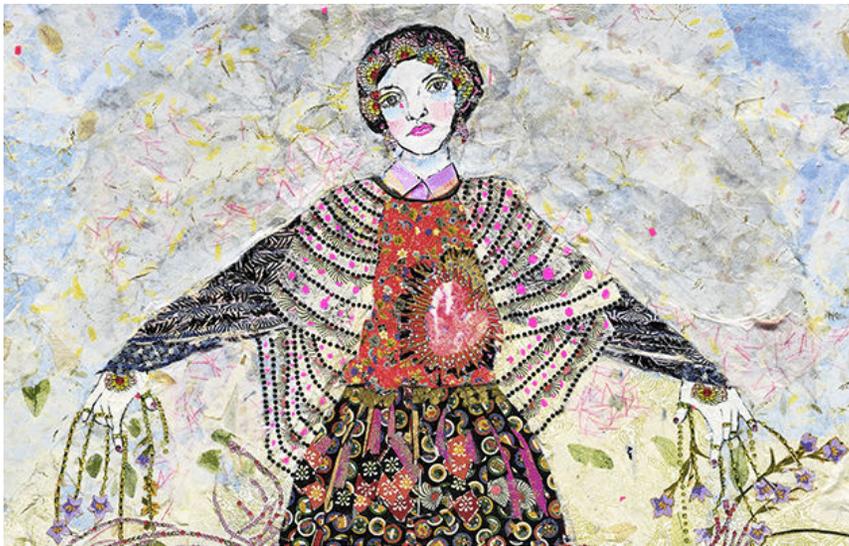
\$500,000 — 700,000

[Go to Lot](#)



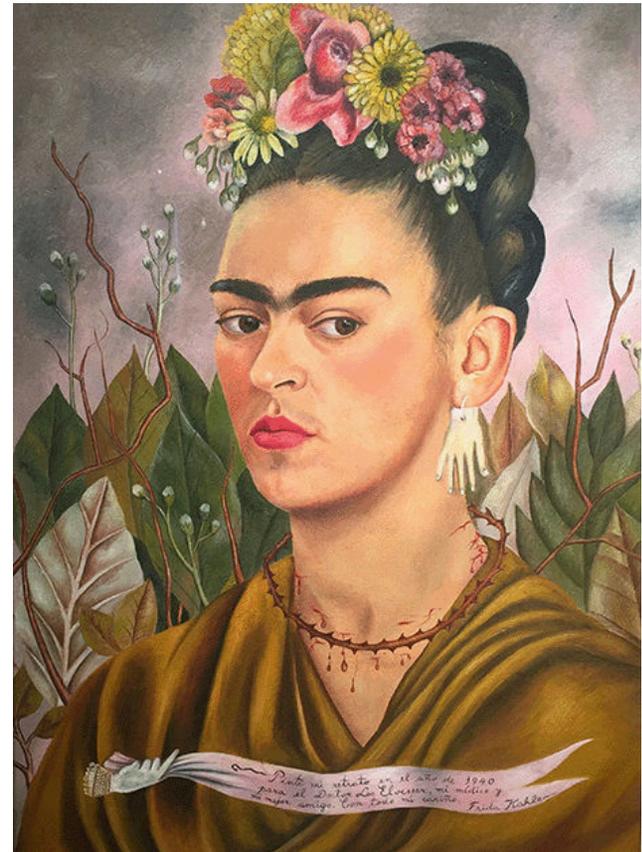
Titled after the childhood game “He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not,” María Berrío’s eponymous collage brims with the magical realism and visual dynamism which have come to define the Colombia-born artist’s celebrated oeuvre. Executed in 2015, the present work features three women seemingly floating atop flower stems, set in a richly layered utopian vista. Confronting the viewer directly with their gazes, Berrío’s women are imbued with an indisputable power and poise, reclaiming strength through their femininity.

“The women who inhabit my paintings are embodied ideals of femininity. The ghostly pallor of their skin suggests an otherworldliness; they appear to be more spirit than flesh. These are the women I want to be: strong, vulnerable, compassionate, courageous, and in harmony with themselves and nature.” —María Berrío



The artist further empowers her figures with ornate clothing and jewelry, noting “The costumes are a way for me to bring these idealized images of women into reality... Some of the garments in my collages are invented, some are garments I actually own. Everything you see is something I would wear in real life.”ⁱ In *He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not*, Berrío’s women are clad in richly patterned dresses, flowery headpieces and opulent jewelry. Berrío physically adorns her figures with rhinestones which abundantly flow from the central figure’s hands and dress, perhaps a reference to the jewelry worn by women from different Indigenous societies to protect against evil spirits. Their Frida Kahlo-like headpieces are halo-esque, further elevating the figures to an otherworldly status. Rather than a symbol of fragility vis-à-vis femininity, her women are

ultimately made stronger through their attire, which serves both as armor and as a reason to celebrate beauty and womanhood.



Frida Kahlo, *Self Portrait, Dedicated to Dr Eloesser*, 1940, Private Collection. Image: © Fine Art Images / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Berrío’s idyllic landscapes are informed by her upbringing in Colombia. While she grew up during a time of political and social unrest in Bogotá, her family would often escape the city on the weekends to their country farm. She explains, “Out in nature, I was able to play freely and let my imagination roam. The nature scenes in my collages are inspired by those experiences.”ⁱⁱ In the

present work, the deity-like figures occupy rolling hills set against a mountain range and blue sky. The foreground is rich with foliage, and the women are both decorated with and physically floating atop flowers. It is in this paradisaical depiction of nature that we witness the artist's escape from the political tumult that permeated her native country.



[left] Detail of the present work [right] John William Godward, *He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not*, 1896, Private Collection. Image: Artefact / Alamy Stock Photo

He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not is titled for the folklorish game little girls play to find out if the object of their affection returns the sentiment. As the game goes, one player utters the words "He loves me; He loves me not," while picking one petal off a flower for each phrase. The phrase they

speak upon picking off the final petal supposedly represents the truth as to whether their beloved loves them or not. In the present work, the figure at left holds a flower in her hands, ready to pluck a petal. Perhaps yearning for requited love, her vulnerability is on display. Yet Berrío does not consider this a weakness—rather, vulnerability and strength co-exist for her women.

"It is the artist's job to take humble materials and make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. I do this, not by hiding the physical properties of the materials, but by reveling in them as I transform them. The paintings are a fusion of fantasy, memory, dream, and reality." —María Berrío

In each of her collages, Berrío painstakingly sources papers from across the globe—Nepal, India, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Mexico, and Brazil—to weave together the rich history of these diverse nations. As in *He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not*, her collages are a physical fusion of materials, traditions, and cultures, which she then overlays with watercolors, acrylic, and in the case of the present work, hundreds of rhinestones. The result a richly layered surface that leans on the materiality of its very creation to amplify the narrative, history, and story at play. "The work is thus informed by every bit of material layered in it, and by every place the materials hail from," Berrío explains. "This process of fusing cultural production from a wide range of places is inherent to the form and, more importantly, to the meaning."ⁱⁱⁱ

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 Amanda Quinn Olivar, ed., "María Berrío," *Curator*, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ 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](#).

Provenance

Praxis International Art, New York

Private Collection, Los Angeles

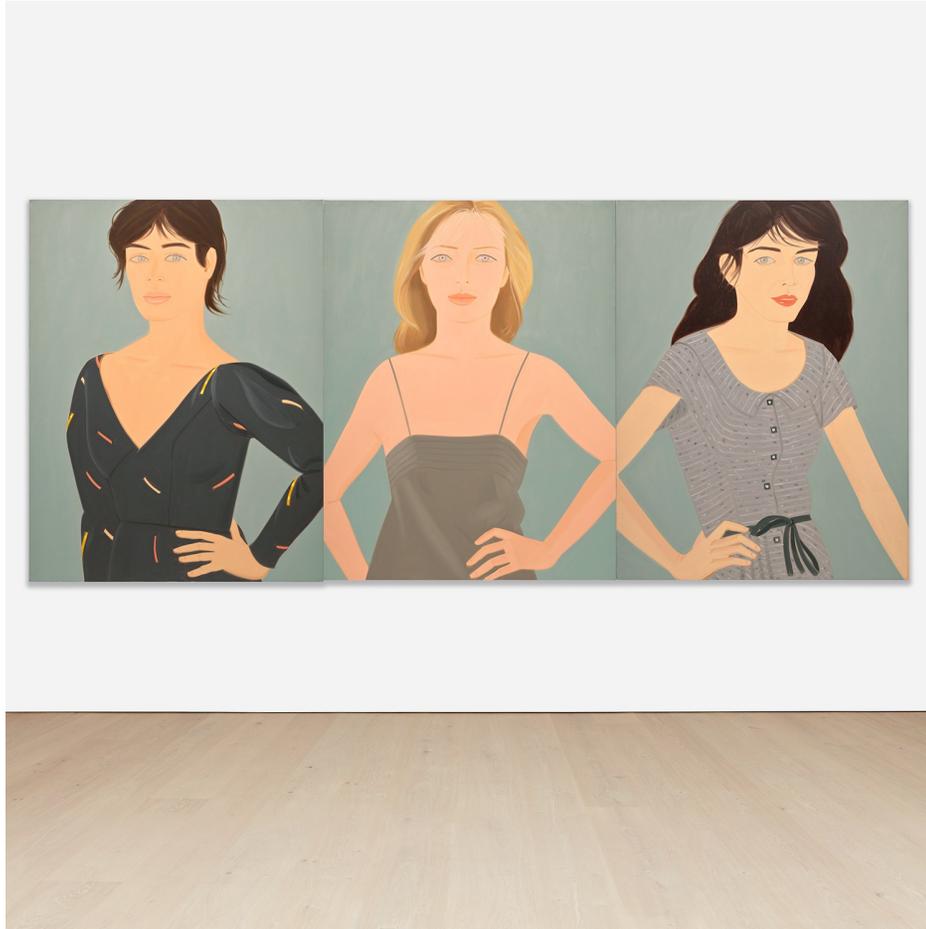
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

Kristen Osborne-Bartucca, "Top Ten Pieces at the LA Art Show," *Artillery Magazine*, January 15, 2015, [online](#) (installation view illustrated)

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20

Alex Katz

The Grey Dress

oil on canvas, triptych
each 78 x 60 1/8 in. (198.1 x 152.4 cm)
overall 78 x 180 3/8 in. (198.1 x 458.2 cm)
Painted in 1982.

Estimate
\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

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"Part of what I'm about is seeing how I can paint the same thing differently, instead of the different things the same way." —Alex Katz

A monumental triptych created at the height of Alex Katz's career, *The Grey Dress*, 1982 is emblematic of the artist's singular painterly practice that transforms his figural subjects into timeless visual icons. Here, the artist brings together three women, each modeling a gray dress, who fashionably pose at different angles with their hands on their hips and look directly at the viewer. Painted in 1982, the present work marks the pivotal moment in Katz's career when he began actively exploring a multi-panel format for his large-scale canvases—prefiguring his heroically scaled *Pas de Deux*, 1983, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine and *Summer Triptych*, 1985, Private Collection. One of the artist's largest works to come to auction to date, *The Grey Dress* ambitiously captures Katz's fascination with surface and appearance in both subject and painting, embodying the heart of Katz's practice: "The subject is style – line, color, how the whole thing is put together. Ultimately, content is not important. The style is what is important."ⁱ



Alex Katz, *The Black Dress*, 1960, Museum Brandhorst, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Museum Brandhorst / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Alex Katz / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Embodying the apex of the artist's mature practice, *The Grey Dress* fuses Katz's painterly investigations of the 1960s and 1970s that led to his widespread recognition in the 1980s, marked by the artist's first institutional survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1986. The present work at once recalls and advances Katz's iconic painting *The Black Dress*, 1960—which reflected his first explorations of including multiple perspectives as a substitute for suggesting three-dimensionality without eschewing the flatness of form—by incorporating various figures from his oeuvre and employing a triptych format. Here, the central figure is taken from a maquette of a woman named Anastasia for his major *Harlem Station* mural commissioned by the Chicago Transit Authority and completed in 1984. The left figure, known as Laura, is likely Laura Halzack, the prima ballerina of the Paul Taylor Dance Company with whom Katz collaborated in the 1960s

during his well-known partnership with Paul Taylor in designing costumes and sets.



[left] Raphael, *The Three Graces*, 1504-1505, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [right] Pablo Picasso, *The Three Dancers*, 1925. Tate, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"They are at once actors and real people whose inner lives shine through no matter what their positioning...Katz is obviously orchestrating something that is coherent aesthetically to him when he joins canvases together...They seem to form a whole that is larger than the sum of the parts." —Ann Beattie

Indeed it was this collaboration that sparked Katz's interest in the representation of motion, a signature theme in the artist's work. Calling to mind stop-motion photography and the Cubists' fusion of multiple perspectives in simultaneous view, the present work reveals Katz's unique painterly language of individually depicting each figure's pose as separate and motionless, while coalescing the overall composition with remarkable coherence through the triptych format. By conceiving *The Grey Dress* as a triptych, the artist not only uses a historical compositional device typically deployed to suggest narrative or a sequence, but further conjures the traditional art historical trope of the three graces. Situating itself within the lineage of 20th century Modernist revivals of Renaissance painting as did the work of Pablo Picasso and Francis Bacon, among others, the present work captures how "I put the stills together like a Renaissance painter would to get motion," in Katz's words. "[My work] relates to historic painting. I'm a traditional painter."ⁱⁱ



Richard Prince, *Untitled (three women with their heads cast down)*, 1980, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Richard Prince. Courtesy of the artist

"I can't think of anything more exciting than the surface of things." —Alex Katz

As Ann Beattie observed of the present work, "What is obviously presented to us for judgment, three different gray dresses, makes us think about gray dresses and even about the women who model them, because we have a frame of reference for this: the models do not necessarily have to relate; surfaces rather than psychology are the modus operandi."ⁱⁱⁱ For Katz, the concern with surfaces is at once literal and metaphorical—both the painterly surface and the surface of our appearances at a given moment or what we project to the world. It is through this sensibility that Katz, as a rising artist in the 1950s, forged his own visual lexicon, departing from the nonrepresentational, passionate gestures of the Abstract Expressionists. And notwithstanding the many connections to made his Pop contemporary Andy Warhol, Katz did not look to American icons as his figures, but rather transformed figures from his immediate circle into American icons—and thus perhaps inadvertently produced timeless imagery despite "want[ing] to paint the now...the immediate present, as he expressed, "and that's what consciousness is."^{iv}

Through the signature cool detachment of his figures embodied in their expressionless countenances, here Katz invites viewers not into the psychology of his subjects but rather into our own subjective minds by presenting choices of style and taste with fashion. In Beattie's words, "In a case where the gray dress exists in his mind as gray dresses, we are offered a lineup of three possibilities... Which one do we choose? Which woman do we relate to? We are always window-shopping; we are all actors to the extent that we consider potential images and identities for ourselves."^v

ⁱ Alex Katz, quoted in Anna McNay, "Alex Katz: 'Ultimately, content is not important. The style is what is important,'" *Studio International*, October 23, 2017.

ⁱⁱ Alex Katz, quoted in Rob Pruitt, "Alex Katz," *Interview Magazine*, May 3, 2016, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ann Beattie, *Alex Katz*, New York, 1987, p. 52.

^{iv} Alex Katz, quoted in "Alex Katz," Thaddeus Ropac, artist page.

∇ Ann Beattie, *Alex Katz*, New York, 1987, p. 52.

Provenance

Marlborough Gallery Inc., New York
 Benjamin Mangel Gallery, Philadelphia (acquired from the above in January 1984)
 Private Collection, Philadelphia
 Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, New York
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2006

Exhibited

New York, Marlborough Gallery Inc., *Alex Katz: Recent Paintings*, March 5–April 2, 1983, no. 10, p. 3 (illustrated, pp. 24–25; detail illustrated on the front cover)
 Philadelphia, Benjamin Mangel Gallery, *Alex Katz*, April 6–April 30, 1984

Literature

Milton Esterow, ed., *ARTnews*, March 1983, vol. 82, no. 3, p. 16 (illustrated)
 Alexandra Anderson, "Editor's Choice: Selected Gallery Previews," *Portfolio*, March/April 1983, vol. V, no. 2, p. 24 (illustrated)
 Victoria Donohoe, "Art: A Look at the Highly Styled Realism of Alex Katz," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 7, 1984, p. 4-D
 Ann Beattie, *Alex Katz*, New York, 1987, pl. 15, pp. 7, 51 (illustrated, pp. 60–62; collection credit erroneously listed)
 Patricia Pate Havlice, *World Painting Index: Second Supplement, 1980–1989*, vol. I, Metuchen, 1995, p. 538
 Daniel Morris, *Remarkable Modernisms: Contemporary American Authors on Modern Art*, Amherst, 2002, pp. 99, 111
 Shinichi Fukui, *Modern Japanese Painting Techniques*, trans. Wendy Uchimura, Tokyo, 2022, p. 93

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

21 ♦

Yayoi Kusama

All The Eternal Love

signed, titled and dated "永遠の愛たち ALL THE ETERNAL LOVE 2014 YAYOI KUSAMA" on the reverse
acrylic on canvas

76 3/8 x 76 3/8 in. (194 x 194 cm)

Painted in 2014, this work is accompanied by a registration card issued by Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

Estimate

\$800,000 — 1,200,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Yayoi Kusama's *All the Eternal Love*, 2014, is an outstanding work from the artist's ongoing series, *My Eternal Soul* (2009–the present). The squared canvas features an orange acrylic background covered in vibrant, amoeba-like sacs of repetitive visual motifs, including eyeballs, squiggles, loose *Infinity Net*-like patterns, and human faces. The sacs border each other, but do not overlap; their teeth overlap like gears. A black line crawls around the border like a millipede, licked with flaming, red eyes. Created and exhibited at the height of the artist's career, *All the Eternal Love* records an artist at her fullest expression, in pursuit of self-obliteration through the expansion of form.



The artist in front of the present work, at left, in her studio, 2014. Image: Ogata

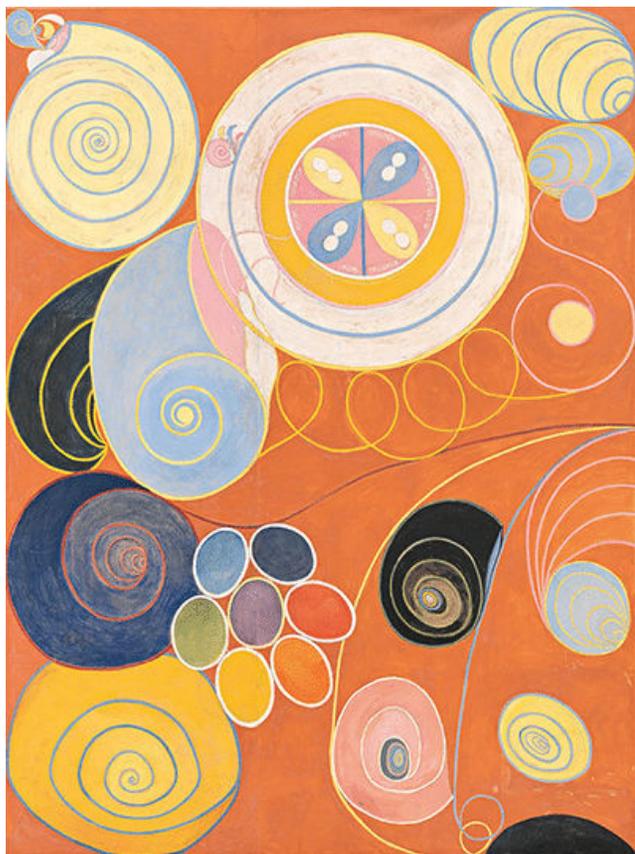
All the Eternal Love appeared in the artist's second solo show at David Zwirner Gallery, New York, *Yayoi Kusama: Give Me Love*, 2015. The exhibition attracted crowds of visitors, who lined up for hours to see the artist's *My Eternal Soul* paintings, silver-chrome pumpkin sculptures, and her seminal 2002 participatory work, *The Obliteration Room*.ⁱ *The Art Newspaper* declared Kusama the most popular artist in the world in 2014, the same year the artist executed *All the Eternal Love*. As 2014's "poster girl for the globalization of contemporary art," Kusama's retrospective attracted over two million visitors in Latin America alone, not to mention record attendance at the

concurrent retrospective travelling in Asia, and the David Zwirner exhibition in New York.ⁱⁱ

"As a master of her various media, Kusama savvily shifts between such universally joyful content and more introspective or personal subject matter. These late paintings are confidently executed, animated by mature mark-making and a regard for the entire topography of her oeuvre." —Catherine Taft

All the Eternal Love brings together visual motifs from across the artist's career. The all-over orange background, covered (or, one might say, obliterated) by a mass of repeated shapes follows the same basic formal structure that unites her work, from the *Infinity Nets* of the late 1950s, to 2002's *Obliteration Room*. Kusama's core visual elements, such as dots and nets, make their appearances in *All the Eternal Love*, but these elements shift and mutate across the canvas. Dots become eyeballs and ellipses; nets unravel into squiggles. *All the Eternal Love* is one in a series of "fluid, highly instinctual, and improvisatory works, which communicate a clear and active sense of [the artist] pushing out in every direction and making discoveries as she goes."ⁱⁱⁱ

Kusama's mutation of her own motifs can be seen as an expansion of her concept of self-obliteration. Historically, self-obliteration factors into Kusama's work in two forms: first, through her decades-long fascination with infinity, and the inherently futile nature of her pursuit of it; second, through the obsessive, at times self-destructive nature of her practice. Kusama has described working herself past the point of exhaustion; working herself into a state of delirium; it is well-known that the artist has voluntarily lived in a psychiatric facility for the past forty-five years. This punishing pace is part and parcel of the artist's practice; how can she reach infinity without self-obliteration? Kusama must lose herself in the work; it is the nature of things, eternal and infinite.



Hilma af Klimt, *Group IV, The Ten Largest, No. 3, Youth*, 1907. Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

The artist created *All the Eternal Love* at the age of 85, and studio photos reveal her process at this advanced stage of her practice. The artist sits at a large table, with the square canvas before her. She covers as much of the painted surface as she can reach with her bright, mutating motifs, before she rotates the canvas, bringing another expanse of the infinite within arm's length. Looking at the surface of *All the Eternal Love*, one can imagine the sectioning of the work. The small, green face, facing her, turns, becomes a series of faces in profile, turns, a small, red face, turns. Each 194 x 194 cm canvas takes just one day to complete.

"I am now at an age that I never imagined I would reach. I think my time, that is

the time remaining before I pass away, won't be long. Then, what shall I leave to posterity? I have to do my very best..." —Yayoi Kusama

Kusama made the above remark in the year 2000, at the age of 71. The sentiment holds true with *All the Eternal Love*, fourteen years later. The artist stays committed to doing her "very best," repeating and redefining her visual language across the hundred-plus canvases that comprise *My Eternal Soul*. Jörg Heiser describes the earnest pace of the artist's late work as "acting against death; turning the very awareness of death into a source of energy."^{iv} He cites the philosopher Martin Heidegger's concept of "being-towards-death," the idea that the self can only come into itself, that life can only ever really be lived, if one is aware of the ultimate finitude of things; or, alternately, in the case of Kusama, if one pulls infinite meaning from the knowledge that all life, eventually, ends.^v

The titles of the *My Eternal Soul* series are flush with a rapid earnestness of meaning, a raw and vulnerable desire to communicate as much of her eternal soul within the concurrent brevity and infinity of time left to her. With each canvas, with each day's work, Kusama gives another piece of herself to posterity: *My Heart*, *My Life*, *All the Eternal Love*.

ⁱ Courtney Iseman, "Yayoi Kusama Wants You To Help Create Her Latest Artwork," *i-D*, November 5, 2015, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Javier Pes and Emily Sharpe, "Visitor Figures 2014: The World Goes Dotty Over Yayoi Kusama," *The Art Newspaper*, April 1, 2015, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Akita Tatehata, "New Paintings," in *Kusama*, Louise Neri, ed., New York, 2012, p. 240.

^{iv} Jörg Heiser, "Kusama's Late Work," in *Yayoi Kusama: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Stephanie Rosenthal, ed., Gropius Bau, Munich, 2021, p. 297.

^v *Ibid.*, 298.

Provenance

David Zwirner, New York
Private Collection, New York (acquired by 2015)
David Zwirner, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2019

Exhibited

New York, David Zwirner, *Yayoi Kusama: Give Me Love*, May 9–June 13, 2015, pp. 32, 114 (illustrated, p. 33; installation view illustrated, p. 25)

Literature

M Felix, "Yayoi Kusama at David Zwirner," *Widewalls*, May 8, 2015, online (detail illustrated; installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2014, illustrated)

Anna Russell, "Inside Yayoi Kusama's New Exhibit, 'Give Me Love,'" *The Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 2015, online (installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2014, illustrated)

Courtney Iseman, "Yayoi Kusama Wants You to Help Create Her Latest Artwork," *I-D Magazine*, May 11, 2015, online (illustrated; installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2014, illustrated)

Susan McCormac, "Yayoi Kusama: New Paintings, New Pumpkins, and The Obliteration Room," *JapanCulture NYC*, May 14, 2015, online (David Zwirner, New York, 2015, installation view illustrated)

Maisie Skidmore, "The inimitable Yayoi Kusama is back with a new exhibition, Give Me Love," *It's Nice That*, May 15, 2015, online (illustrated)

Reena Devi, "Yayoi Kusama's Art and Life Blurs Lines Between Fantasy and Reality," *CoBo Social*, November 10, 2020, online (illustrated; installation view of the present work with the artist in the artist's studio, 2014, illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTOR

22 ♦

Alexander Calder

Plutôt jaune

signed with the artist's monogram and date "CA 65" on the outermost yellow element
sheet metal, wire and paint
28 1/2 x 46 x 32 1/2 in. (72.4 x 116.8 x 82.6 cm)
Executed in 1965, this work is registered in the archives of the Calder Foundation, New York, under application number A14002.

Estimate

\$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)

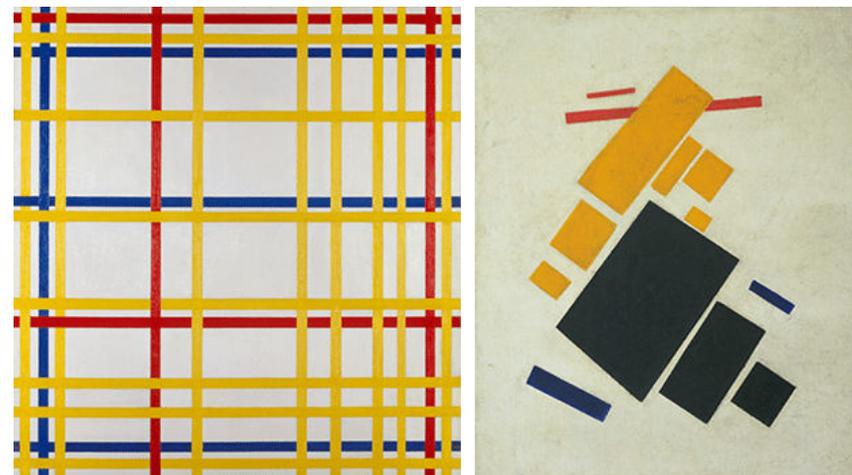


A perennially shifting arabesque in space, *Plutôt jaune* exemplifies the motion, dynamism, and ephemerality that composed Alexander Calder's revolutionary contributions to modernist sculpture. Changes in air currents or viewers' movements propel the elegant gyration of seven biomorphic elements painted in bold primary hues—"mostly yellow," as the title describes in French. Perhaps a nod to the artist's earlier years spent living and working in Paris, *Plutôt jaune* was executed in 1965 amid major celebrations of his career on both sides of the Atlantic. A version of Calder's monumental retrospective, which was billed as "the largest assemblage ever presented of the works of a living artist" when it had originally been staged in 1964 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, had just travelled to the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. Created during an ebullient moment of acclaim in the two art hubs that had informed Calder's approach, *Plutôt jaune* is a mature example of the exquisite union of poetry and physics that epitomized the artist's iconic hanging "mobiles."

Despite its seemingly whimsical and weightless character, *Plutôt jaune* is a remarkably precise and cleverly arranged construction: the pieces of sheet metal, suspended only by a thin wire, are held in a precarious balance by air currents and forces of gravity. These kinetic achievements suggest Calder's beginnings in math and science, which saw the mechanical engineering graduate work as a draughtsman and hydraulic designer for New York Edison. Indeed, once transfixed by the artist's 1934 sculpture *A Universe*, Albert Einstein once expressed, "I wish I had thought of that."

"Just as one can compose colors, or forms, so one can compose motions."—Alexander Calder

Formidable figures in two disciplines that may appear entirely disparate, Calder and Einstein similarly explored abstract conceptualizations of the cosmos during the 20th century—visions which are palpable in *Plutôt jaune's* evocation of ethereal planets hovering in a solar system. "The lyricism of [the mobiles] has everything to do with Calder's genius for turning to art's advantage an investigation of the nature of the world generally believed to be the purview of physics, a way of seeing inaugurated not by artists but by the primary texts of Euclid and Isaac Newton," according to art critic Jed Perl. "Calder, although not a scientist in any traditional sense, was moved by a desire, common among early 20th century thinkers, to see the poetry of everyday life as shaped by heretofore invisible principles and laws."



[left] Piet Mondrian, *New York City*, 1942. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [right] Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: Airplane Flying*, 1915. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

The effervescent dynamism that animates *Plutôt jaune* can be traced back to the prancing sword-swallowers, lions, and trapeze-artists of his elaborate performance-diorama titled *Cirque Calder*, 1926-1931, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. During the same time that the artist initially incorporated movement into his works, he was introduced to the potentiality of abstraction during a fabled visit he took to the studio of Piet Mondrian in 1930. "It was a very exciting room," Calder recalled. "Light came in from the left and from the right, and on the solid wall between the windows there were experimental stunts with colored rectangles of cardboard... I suggested to Mondrian that perhaps it would be fun to make these rectangles oscillate."ⁱⁱⁱ Calder credited this formative experience with the launch of abstraction in his own work; moving beyond Mondrian's painterly kineticism, he began experimenting with setting his biomorphic forms in motion. One day in 1931, when Marcel Duchamp toured Calder's studio to see his latest work, the Dadaist dubbed an early iteration of his motive sculptures a "mobile." The epithet stuck, and thus was the birth of an internationally-recognized hallmark of Calder's oeuvre, one that is firmly entrenched in the lexicon of modern art history.

[Their] marvelous swan-like nobility make Calder's mobiles strange creatures, midway between matter and life... His mobiles are at once lyrical inventions, technical, almost mathematical combinations and the tangible symbol of Nature."—Jean-Paul Sartre

Highlighting the rhythm of the universe, Calder liberated sculpture from the constraints of inertia and the pedestal. *Plutôt jaune* manifests the artist's pioneering approach as a pronounced visual statement, foregrounding the liveliest color of his palette on a larger scale than his earlier sculptures allowed. Despite its aesthetic boldness, it is—like Calder's other mobiles—a lyrical reverie of the natural world, emulating the effect of crashing waves or wind blowing through a tree. "A general destiny of movement is sketched for them, and then they are left to work it out for themselves," Jean-Paul Sartre poeticized of these iconic structures. "A mobile is... like the sea, and casts a spell like it: forever rebeginning, forever new."^{iv}

ⁱ Albert Einstein, quoted in Stephanie Barron, "Time, Space, and Moving Forms: Alexander Calder—Beyond the Beautiful," in *Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic*, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2013, p. 10.

ⁱⁱ Jed Perl, "Sensibility and Science," in *Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic*, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2013, p. 41.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alexander Calder, *Calder: An Autobiography with Pictures*, New York, 1966, p. 113.

^{iv} Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Mobiles of Calder," *Alexander Calder*, New York, 1947.

Provenance

Galerie Maeght, Paris

Odette Valabregue Wurzbürger, Cleveland (acquired from the above)

Sotheby's, New York, November 12, 2008, lot 144

Private Collection, San Francisco (acquired at the above sale)

Sotheby's, New York, May 15, 2013, lot 127

Private Collection, New York (acquired at the above sale)

Martin Lawrence Galleries, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2017

Exhibited

San Francisco, Weinstein Gallery, *Surrealism: New Worlds*, December 10, 2011–January 28, 2012, p. 22 (illustrated, p. 23)

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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE EUROPEAN
COLLECTION

23

Amy Sberald

Madame Noire

signed and dated "Amy Sberald 2011 Amy Sberald" on
the reverse

oil on canvas

54 3/8 x 43 1/4 in. (138 x 109.7 cm)

Painted in 2011.

Estimate

\$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



In Amy Sherald's 2011 portrait, *Madame Noire*, a Black woman in a blonde wig stares imperiously down at the viewer. Dressed in the costume of the "droogs" from Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film, *A Clockwork Orange*, Sherald's model subverts hegemonic narratives of class, sexuality, and respectability for Black women.



Alex DeLarge in his iconic "droogs" costume. Film still from *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971, dir. Stanley Kubrick, costume design by Milena Canonero. Image: Pictorial Press / Alamy Stock Photo

Madame Noire is an early example of the key stylistic elements that make up Sherald's oeuvre of portraiture. Her model, likely sourced on the streets of Baltimore, stands against a mottled red background, with subtle variation in texture built up in the method of her mentor, Grace Hartigan, a lengthy process in which she drips paint and turpentine on the canvas and lets the pigment "do what it do."ⁱ The model's skin is rendered in grisaille, using the artist's signature combination of black and Naples yellow. Though she originally used this color combination for her model's skin due to an aesthetic preference, her greyscale filter for Black skin has become the symbolic hallmark of her work. "Even if I painted them purple, they'd still be Black people," she has said.ⁱⁱ By sidestepping realistic rendering of skin tones, Sherald can move her work past surface-level perceptions of racial difference, into a wider conversation of racial representation and what it means, culturally, to be Black.

"When I first began to paint these portraits, I was really interested in portraying a more fantastical narrative, so costuming was a way for me to engage the idea of creating an alternate narrative extricated from the dominant historical narrative. Creating archetypes break away from this and allow for a space of reimagining."
—Amy Sherald

The costumes of Sherald's models are just as significant as their greyscaled skintones. In *Madame Noire*, the model is dressed like the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*, Alex DeLarge, and his gang of miscreants, the droogs. As Elena Lazic writes for the British Film Institute, Milena Canonero's costume design for this film is an "eerily timeless" engagement with the film's themes of class, money, and power. The bowler hat, wooden cane, and cricket codpiece are symbolic of an elite lifestyle, but on the working-class body of DeLarge, these accessories become "a mockery of the fair play, elegance, and integrity of the class they are associated with."ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, DeLarge's upper-class accessories become weapons, as he uses his cane to attack people in the film, and the sexually provocative codpiece functions as a form of armor.

By dressing her model in this costume, Sherald encourages her viewer to seek out similar subversions of class and sexuality in *Madame Noire*. The title of the work provides three overlapping courses of interpretation. *Madame Noire* could be a reference to Black lifestyle media brand, *MadameNoire*; to Madam C.J. Walker, the first female self-made millionaire; or, perhaps, to historical Black sex workers, particularly, brothel owners, or madams.





[top] Detail of the present work [bottom] Film still from *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971. Image: Pictorial Press / Alamy Stock Photo

Most directly, *MadameNoire* is also the name of a digital Black lifestyle magazine founded in 2010, the year before Sherald made the present work, that brands itself as a “daily source of news and inspiration for smart, stylish Black women.”^{iv} *MadameNoire* both empowers Black women and subverts racist stereotypes by asserting that they are smart and stylish. Yet at the same time, the magazine’s word choices of “smart” and “stylish” recall the pervasiveness of respectability politics in the Black community.

Respectability is a term historians use to describe how Black people (and specifically, Black women) have distanced themselves from racist stereotypes since the late 1800s to gain acceptance in wider society.^v As social justice writer Odochi Ibe explains, the pursuit of respectability comes in many forms; some efforts, such as increasing literacy or access to employment, generally improve one’s quality of life, while others, such as conforming one’s appearance to white beauty standards, can be a source of stress. While respectability can be empowering for some, it can be disempowering for others, as it limits what Blackness is, and how one can be Black.^{vi}



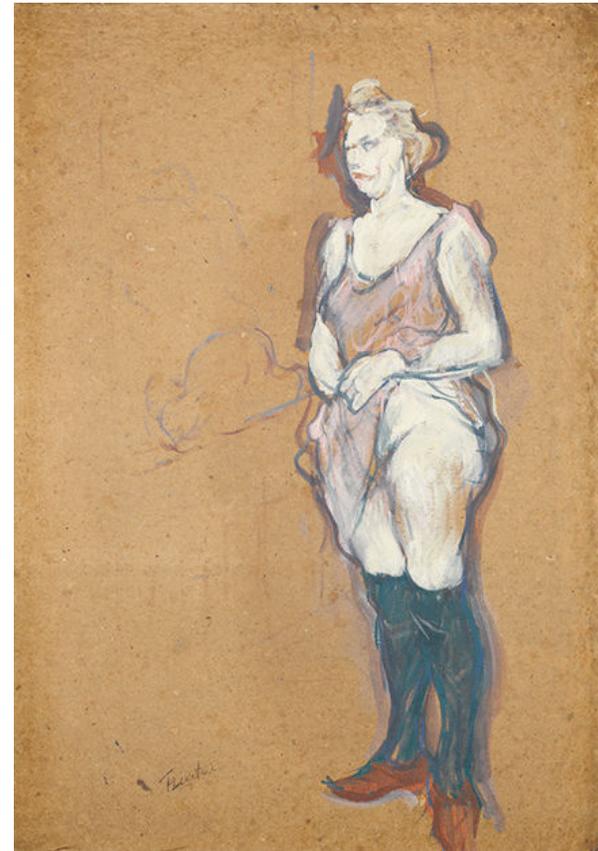
Madame C.J. Walker, c. 1914. Image: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; gift of A'Leia Bundles/Walker Family, Artwork: Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

A classic success story for respectability comes in the life of Madam C.J. Walker, a Black businesswoman and philanthropist who was the first self-made female millionaire in the United States. In the 1910s, Walker made her fortune in cosmetics and haircare products marketed towards Black women. In addition to supplying products that filled a need that the white beauty industry ignored, Walker provided jobs and training for hundreds of thousands of young Black women through the Walker Beauty School.

At a time when empowering, respectful work was hard to come by, Madam C.J. Walker's business had a real impact on the everyday lives of the women she employed. Through work with Madam C.J. Walker, young Black women could define their identities on their own terms, and refashion a narrative of Black womanhood beyond stereotypes. Sherald does the same in her work, using costumes and props to call our racial presumptions into question, and offer alternative histories.

"Why can't I make up my own characters and paint the people I want to see in the world? I'm depicting the many people who existed in history but whose presence was never documented." —Amy Sherald

Just as *Madame Noire* invokes Madam C.J. Walker, she also invokes another kind of madam: a brothel owner. Her bowler hat and cane doubly reference *A Clockwork Orange* and the stereotypical outfit of a pimp; the codpiece provocatively draws the eye towards her pelvis. Sex work, while not considered "respectable," has historically been another path for women, especially women of color, to take agency over their own lives and become financially independent.



Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, *Femme de maison blonde* [*Blonde sex worker*], 1894, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

While Madam C.J. Walker made her fortune in cosmetics and haircare, madam Vina Fields made hers as a brothel owner. Active from the 1870s to the 1910s, Vina Fields began her career with eight workers and a servant; she was the only Black madam in Chicago with a servant, which was an early sign of her success.^{vii} By the height of her career, she directed sixty workers and was one of the wealthiest Black people in Chicago.^{viii} Like Madam C.J. Walker, she used her fortune to care for her family and to help other Black women provide for their loved ones as well.

The character of *Madame Noire* crosses and recrosses the line between respectable and illicit Black

femininity. She is both real and fantastic, a symbolically rich example of Sherald's signature portrait style. *Madame Noire* "embodies the depth and weight of black history, along with an aesthetic of re-imagination or self-fashioning of that history."^{ix}

ⁱ Amy Sherald, quoted in Marlisa Sanders, "Amy Sherald, A Second Life," *The International Review of African American Art*, 2013, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Amy Sherald, in conversation with Russell Tovey and Robert Diament, *Talk Art* [podcast], September 27, 2022, 27:18.

ⁱⁱⁱ Elena Lazic, "A Clockwork Orange and Fashion: Why The Droogs Never Go Out of Style," *The British Film Institute*, April 2, 2019, [online](#).

^{iv} MadameNoire, "About MadameNoire," accessed October 6, 2022, [online](#).

^v Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*, Harvard University Press, 1993, [online](#).

^{vi} Odochi Ibe, "Playing the Game of Respectability Politics, But At What Cost?" *verywellmind*, February 15, 2022, [online](#).

^{vii} Cynthia M. Blair, *I've Got To Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*, University of Chicago Press, 2010.

^{viii} *Ibid.*

^{ix} Amy Sherald, quoted in Elaine Sexton, "Making Mirrors: A Micro-Interview with Amy Sherald," *Tulepo Quarterly*, October 14, 2016, [online](#).

Provenance

Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2016

Exhibited

Sag Harbor, Richard Demato Fine Arts, *Amy Sherald*, May 28, 2011
Stockton, LH Horton Jr Gallery, San Joaquin Delta College, *Themes of Black Identity In America*, February 27–March 21, 2014
Baltimore, Creative Alliance at The Patterson, *The Red Fantastic*, January 30–February 21, 2015
Charlottesville, Second Street Gallery, *Off the Chain: American Art Unfettered*, May 1–May 30, 2015

Literature

"Amy Sherald," *Poets and Artists*, no. 27, Fall 2011, n.p. (illustrated)
Marlisa Sanders, "Amy Sherald, A Second Life," *The International Review of African American Art*, 2013, online (illustrated; installation view with the artist in the artist's studio illustrated)
Hycide Magazine, The Artist Issue [Redux], January 2013 (illustrated on the cover)
Jack Livingston, "Creative Alliance's 2015 Resident Artist Group Exhibition: *The Red Fantastic*," *BmoreArt*, February 7, 2015, online (illustrated)
Juxtapositions, Maryland Institute College of Art, December 2015, p. 7 (illustrated on the cover)
Elaine Sexton, "Making Mirrors: A Micro-Interview with Amy Sherald," *Tulepo Quarterly*, October 14, 2016, online (illustrated)

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PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
COLLECTION

24 ♦

Jean-Michel Basquiat

To Repel Ghosts

signed, titled and dated "TO REPEL GHOSTS Jean MB
85" on the reverse

acrylic, oil, oilstick and Xerox collage on wood
83 3/4 x 35 3/4 x 12 1/2 in. (212.7 x 90.8 x 31.8 cm)
Executed in 1985.

Estimate

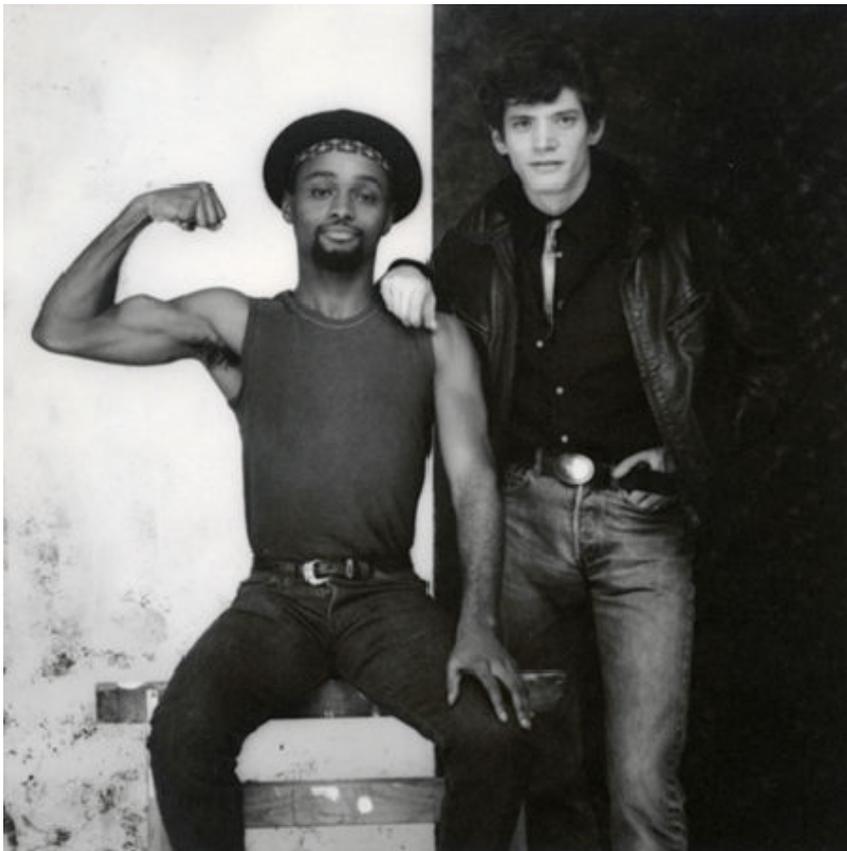
\$7,000,000 — 10,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/hxnTZAN9Ufk>

Brimming with the tactility and vigor that is characteristic of Jean-Michel Basquiat's best work, *To Repel Ghosts*, 1985, exemplifies the central themes that preoccupied the artist at the apex of his career. The monumental work, measuring seven feet tall, is a nearly double-life-sized portrait of Basquiat's friend and fellow artist, Jack Walls. Well known in 1980s downtown circles as Robert Mapplethorpe's muse and romantic partner, Walls is rendered in Basquiat's distinctive visual idiom—unmistakable by the gestural swaths of black, white, and yellow pigment—against a surface of affixed wooden boards.



Jack Walls and Robert Mapplethorpe, 1982.

Basquiat's penchant for incorporating doors and other found media into his practice first led him to experiment with timber slats for his 1984 masterwork *Flexible*, which employed the fencing that surrounded his Los Angeles studio. Exceedingly pleased with the resulting aesthetic effect, Basquiat soon returned to the idiosyncratic material, which he purchased from a Soho lumber yard to comprise the support of more than 17 paintings in the mid 1980s. Epitomizing his guiding principle to—quite literally—bring the urban environment into his studio, this major work from 1985 nods to Basquiat's past as a street artist while anticipating the hallmarks of his mature style.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Flexible*, 1984. Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artestar, New York

Sitting for a Painter

Recalling the ineffable experience of sitting for one of the greatest visionaries of the 20th century, Walls detailed the night in Basquiat's legendary home and studio on Great Jones Street. The two had become fast friends after Mapplethorpe introduced them in the West Village in the spring, and one evening while they were out together, Basquiat asked Walls to come by to paint his portrait. A few days later, the two found themselves preparing to get to work on *To Repel Ghosts* while sheltering from a threatening blizzard outside. "It started out this way," Walls remembered. "He asked me to remove my shoes and socks, standing with my bare foot propped up on one of his splinter laden wooden milk crates." For a prop, Basquiat picked up a broomstick—"hold this," he instructed—and placed it in his model's hands.

"I remember Jean-Michel standing, paint brush in his right hand, left hand on his hip, in front of the tall vacant slats of wood assembled together in front of him, where the portrait he started to paint of me began to take shape with lightening quickness," Walls reminisced. "There stood I, stick in my hands acting as muse. I watched Jean-Michel as he began to paint the double life sized portrait of me that night." Though Walls was an experienced model for Mapplethorpe and other artists, he noticed he was uncharacteristically apprehensive that evening, at first posing a little uneasily. "Nervously? Yes. I was intimidated by Jean-Michel's voodoo. Most downtown artists were awed by him in those days. He was a star even then... Not even a star, but a comet. The radiant child."¹

An Artist on the Rise

Indeed, *To Repel Ghosts* was executed at the height of Basquiat's fame: firmly established as downtown New York's resident superstar, his friendly rapport with Andy Warhol—already regarded as the indisputable icon of American post-war art—had evolved into a deeply collaborative professional relationship. Basquiat's status as a fully-fledged art world celebrity was cemented by a cover story in *The New York Times Magazine* published soon after the execution of the present work. Detailing his meteoric rise to international recognition, the article painted a portrait of him as a young but prodigiously talented maverick. Standing triumphantly in a sharp suit and fedora, he meets the camera's gaze while flanked by two paintings in his studio that showcase his singular practice—one of which was the then-unfinished *To Repel Ghosts*.



The artist standing before the present work in progress. Image: © Lizzie Himmel, Artwork: © Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Licensed by Artstar, New York

To Repel Ghosts

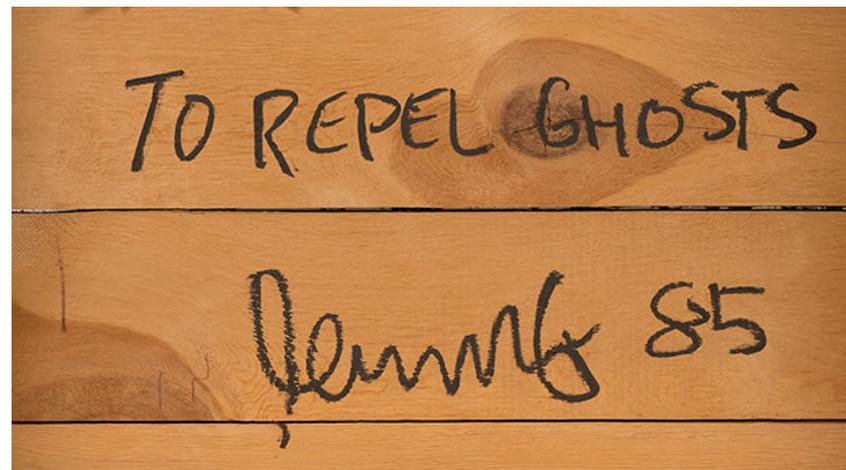
"The work of Jean-Michel Basquiat opens up opportunities to experience paintings and drawings in a new dimension. The overwhelming collection of references that we find on these surfaces—across geographies, chronologies, and histories—forces us to move differently as art historians." —Jordana Saggese

Its title a gesture to colonialist understandings of voodoo practices, *To Repel Ghosts* reflects

Basquiat's engagement with his Afro-Caribbean heritage in the wake of his overnight success within a predominantly white art world. The artist began incorporating the expression into a handful of his works after his dealer Bruno Bischofberger introduced him to a Swiss ambassador who had lived across Africa for many years, Claudio Caratsch. Bischofberger recalled that one night when the two were at Caratsch's house, the diplomat told Basquiat, "You know, in Africa art is made in a different way. Here it is art for art's sake, and in Africa art is only made in order to do something with it, 'to repel ghosts,' for instance." Already familiar with West African belief systems, Basquiat was "amused that the ambassador, a studied ethnographer, was telling him about things he already knew."ⁱⁱⁱ The conversation led Basquiat to identify an affinity between his position within the diaspora and occult readings of African sculpture, manifested by visual tropes which would resurface throughout the rest of his oeuvre.

To Repel Ghosts was executed just a couple months after Basquiat first met Robert Farris Thompson, whose seminal book *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (1983) propelled the artist's preoccupation with the legacy of the continent's visual culture. The scholar devoted an entire chapter of the text, which Basquiat left open in his studio, to Yoruba culture and religion and its impact on Caribbean voodoo and Santería—a subject that the artist felt an especially personal resonance with as the child of a Haitian father and Puerto Rican mother. Conspicuous evocations to the imagery discussed by Thompson are visible in *To Repel Ghosts*: specifically in the figure's distinctive almond-shaped eyes and broomstick, which could be redolent of an Ogboni or Haitian staff. Represented wearing a cross necklace while clutching the pole, Walls is specifically reminiscent of Santería's syncretism of Yoruba religious concepts and Catholicism.

In 1986, after Basquiat expressed an interest in exhibiting his work in Africa, Caratsch and Bischofberger helped him secure a show at the French Cultural Center in the Ivory Coast. Including *To Repel Ghosts*, the show was an important milestone in Basquiat's career, symbolizing a postcolonial reunion of Africa and the diasporic tradition.



Detail of the title, written on the verso of the present work by the artist.

In Dialogue with the Masters

Though Basquiat's working method was frequently mythologized as swift and improvisational, the present work serves as a reminder that his approach was considerably more meticulous than he implied. The artist began *To Repel Ghosts* on the winter night that Walls visited his studio, but it was far from finished in a single session. The *New York Times Magazine* photograph reveals that several of the work's ostensibly impulsive elements—the swathes of black and white paint, the palimpsest of the subject's lower body, the contouring of his torso, and the Xerox collage—were added later, during Basquiat's extensive editing process. The painter's ability to coalesce the impulsivity of gesture with assiduous compositional harmony is emblematic of the finest aspects of Basquiat's approach at his prime.



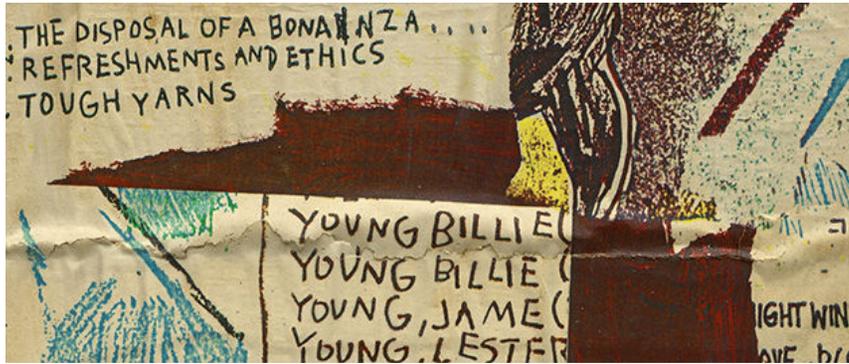
Robert Rauschenberg, *Winter Pool*, 1959. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The artist began to utilize Xerox photocopies in his work extensively in 1983, an example of which is visible in the lower left quadrant of *To Repel Ghosts*. Echoing both Warhol's penchant for seriality and Robert Rauschenberg's revolutionary collaged surfaces, this form of color printing allowed Basquiat to mine the conceptual complexities at the fore of postmodern discourse. It also provided the opportunity to "recycle" ideas and motifs—specifically text—from previous paintings into new contexts. Resulting in a tactility comprised of layers of wood, oil stick, and paper, this technique embodied the spirit that had been central to Basquiat's approach since his days as the street artist SAMO©. According to the art historian Richard Marshall, the incorporation of Xerox underscored

"his impulse signature to combine a number of materials, elements, and subjects from made, found, constructed, and collaged artifacts [that] were elemental to his works... The result was an aesthetic microcosm of the physical and visual reality of contemporary existence."ⁱⁱⁱ

"The Black person is the protagonist in most of my paintings." —Jean-Michel Basquiat

The drawing that Basquiat Xerox-ed for *To Repel Ghosts* was photocopied at least once more by the artist in 1985 to affix to a collaged wooden box. Though it is unclear why the amalgamation of enigmatic references so appealed to Basquiat, they provide an insightful look into the influences that propelled the artist's all-too-brief career. The top of the sheet lists three chapters from *Life on the Mississippi*, the 1883 memoir of one of Basquiat's favorite writers, Mark Twain; the center contains a series of names of jazz musicians, including saxophonist and "Young Billie" (most likely referring to Billie Holiday); the bottom half includes an inventory of animal species and mass-produced commodities, such as a Pepsi and Camel cigarettes.



These references may contextualize him as in dialogue with both important historical figures and popular culture, but his revolutionary body of work had no predecessors. “Rather than directly influencing him,” Marshall pointed out, “Warhol and Rauschenberg, like other artists that Basquiat looked to, gave him a kind of art historical permission for his own endeavors.”^{iv} Masterfully recapitulating the conceptual, material, and visual tenets that underpinned his corpus, *To Repel Ghosts* typifies the extraordinary vision that has earned Basquiat a vital role in the 20th century canon.

ⁱ Jack Walls, “Jean-Michel & Me,” *Jack Walls*, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Bruno Bischofberger quoting Claudio Caratsch, quoted in Jordana Moore Saggese, *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Reader: Writings, Interviews, and Critical Responses*, 2021, p. 168.

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Marshall, “Repelling Ghosts,” *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1992, pp. 18-21.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Provenance

Bruno Bischofberger Gallery, Zurich and Mary Boone Gallery, New York
 Hans Sonnenberg, Rotterdam (acquired by 1986)
 Vrej Baghoomian, Inc., New York
 Annina Nosei Gallery, New York (acquired from the above)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1992

Exhibited

Salzburg, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Bilder 1984-1986*, July 27–August 31, 1986, p. 18 (illustrated, p. 19 and on the exhibition pamphlet)

Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Centre Culturel Français, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, October 10–November 7, 1986

Rotterdam, Galerie Delta, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: To Repel Ghosts*, 1986 (illustrated on the exhibition poster)

New York, Vrej Baghoomian Inc., *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, October 21–November 25, 1989, no. 28, n.p. (illustrated)

Fondazione La Triennale di Milano, *The Jean-Michel Basquiat Show*, September 19, 2006–January 28, 2007, no. 146, p. 42 (illustrated, pp. 40, 282; installation view of the present work in progress with the artist in the artist's studio, New York, 1985, illustrated, p. 41)

Monza, Arengario e Serrone della Villa Reale, *Gli anni 80: Il trionfo della pittura. Da Schifano a Basquiat*, October 17, 2009–February 14, 2010, p. 113 (illustrated)

Literature

Cathleen McGuigan, “New Art, New Money: The Marketing of an American Artist,” *The New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1985, p. 20 (installation view of the present work in progress with the artist in the artist's studio, New York, 1985, illustrated)

Richard D. Marshall and Jean-Louis Prat, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, vol. II, Paris, 1996, no. 4, p. 139 (illustrated, p. 138)

Phoebe Hoban, “To Repel Ghosts,” in *Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art*, New York, 1998, p. 133
Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, exh. cat., Galerie Delta, Rotterdam, 1999 (Galerie Delta, Rotterdam, 1986, installation view illustrated on the back cover)

Richard D. Marshall and Jean-Louis Prat, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, vol. II, Paris, 2000, no. 4, p. 227 (illustrated, p. 226)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT GERMAN
COLLECTION

25

Yves Klein

La Chair (ANT 71)

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "ANT 71 Yves Klein,
14, rue Campagne Première Paris 14ème titre "La
CHAIR" 1960" on the stretcher
dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper laid on
canvas

42 1/2 x 29 1/2 in. (108 x 75 cm)

Executed in 1960, this work is registered in the Yves
Klein Archives under the number ANT 71.

Estimate

\$2,500,000 — 4,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/5fNh29o7Aoo>

Transfiguring performance into gesture and corporeality into intangibility, *La Chair (ANT 71)* is an exquisite example from Yves Klein's groundbreaking *Anthropométries* series. The work—rendered in his signature International Klein Blue (IKB) medium—captures the immaterial memory of a writhing abdomen and thighs, an impassioned and carnal impact embodied by its title, which translates in English to “the flesh.” Executed in his legendary studio on 14 rue Campagne-Première, Paris, where he staged several of his elaborate *Anthropométries* performances, the present work is from a unique subset within the series. While others represent largely static impressions of models, this small dynamic grouping including *La Chair (ANT 71)* appear as bodily imprints leaping off the surfaces—rare images of motion that emulate the passion and vivacity of the original events. They showcase Klein's revolutionary spirit at the moment when he began his acclaimed *Anthropométries* in 1960, one of the pivotal developments in avant-garde painting.



Yves Klein realizing an *Anthropométrie* in his studio, 14, rue Campagne-Première, Paris, 1960. Image: Shunk-Kender © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.R.20), Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

the launch of the *Anthropométries*, it saw the successful patenting of his IKB formula as well as the publication of the *Nouveau Réalisme* manifesto by critic Pierre Restany, which formalized the group and declared its aims to “abolish the abusive distance created between general objective contingency and individual expressive urgency.”ⁱ A striking manifestation of Klein's approach to this end—a radical union of painting and performance—*La Chair (ANT 71)* is a tour de force executed at the height of his all-too-brief but revolutionary eight-year career.

"My pictures represent poetic events, or rather, they are immobile, silent, and static witness to the very essence of movement and life in freedom, which is the flame of poetry in the pictorial moment" —Yves Klein

The development and patenting of Klein's signature IKB hue has become a mythologized moment in the second half of the 20th century, an inflection point in the existential and conceptual crises faced by painters in the post-war era. The story goes that as a teenager in his native Nice in 1947, the young artist—bewitched by the deep cerulean atmosphere that always seems to envelop the French Mediterranean—fantasized that he wrote his name across the sky, declaring it his “greatest and most beautiful work.”ⁱⁱ

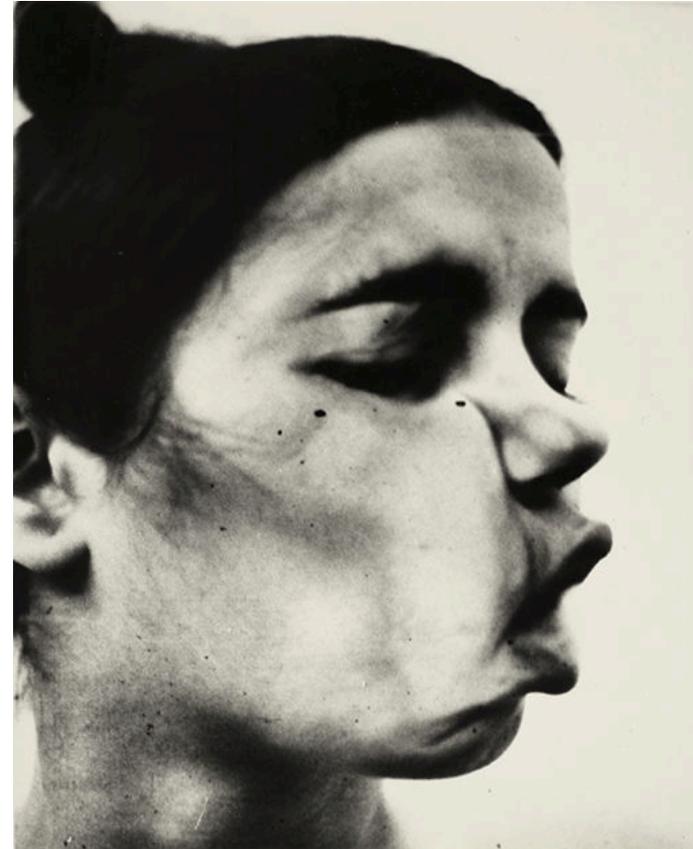
Indeed, 1960 was no doubt the prime of his oeuvre: in addition to a slew of gallery exhibitions and



Giotto, *The Prophet Malachi*, detail of the Scrovegni Chapel ceiling, ca. 1305. Image: © Alinari Archives / Mauro Magliani / Art Resource, NY

His monochromatic paintings were inaugurated soon after in a range of hues, but it was not until 1956 that he returned to the color that had captivated him since his youth. He began experimenting with a polymer binder to stabilize and preserve the texture and appearance of ultramarine pigment: notoriously difficult to work with, the tone can easily lose its incandescence, dulling and darkening when mixed with linseed oil. Klein's erudite innovations using a specific synthetic resin were a breakthrough. With the help of a Parisian art supply store owner, Édouard Adam, the artist arrived at an otherworldly medium that evoked the divine lapis lazuli robes of the Madonna, the formal vibrancy of Henri Matisse's *Blue Nudes*, and the sublimity of Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel ceiling frescoes. "Blue has no dimensions, it is beyond dimensions, whereas the

other colors are not..." Klein elucidated. "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."ⁱⁱⁱ



Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints - Face)*, 1972, Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey. Image: Princeton University Art Museum / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co., New York / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

This allure of his newly unlocked hue consumed him, and when Klein unveiled his first paintings using his medium in 1957, his iconic "blue period" began. He spent the next three years trying out

diverse materials—including sea sponges and paint rollers—in pursuit of a metaphysical effect within an international art scene that was still firmly engaged with abstraction, but beginning to flirt with conceptualism. Growing restless with the tactility of his media, which was still reminiscent of a physicality he sought to transcend, he began to take greater risks in 1960. He filed his patent for IKB that year, itself a thought experiment in “owning” the immaterial that foreshadowed the future trademarking of colors by Anish Kapoor, Stuart Semple, and even Tiffany & Co. With the color officially “his,” Klein then looked to extend the fleeting nature of performance to his painting.

"One day, I understood that my hands, the tools by which I manipulated color, were no longer sufficient. I needed to paint monochrome canvases with the models themselves." —Yves Klein

It was during this critical moment that his work truly took its stride. Casting his former tools aside, he upended the conventional artist-model relationship by using nude women as “living paintbrushes” in a series of performances. Klein applied the IKB pigment to their bodies directly before meticulously directing their position and movement, ephemeral traces of which would be left on large sheets of paper—which the artist referred to as the “ashes” of his art. Present at the first performance, which took place at the rue Campagne-Première studio, Restany recalled the indelible moment of witnessing the first bodies imprint themselves. “The marks thus left on the paper represented the central part of the body, breasts, abdomen, and thighs, in the manner of an anthropomorphic sign. I could not help exclaiming: ‘These are the anthropométries of the blue period!’”, in reference to the study of human body measurements. Restany continues, “Yves, who had been waiting for just this, jumped up in triumph. He had his title: *Anthropometries*.”^{iv}

La Chair (ANT 71) epitomizes what Klein had been striving for—it encapsulates what he found so enchanting about the expanses of the ether, its intangibility despite its omnipresence. His mastery of this domain is exemplified by the work’s title: only Klein could represent something as material as flesh by rendering the transient immateriality of its memory. Newly enamored with his future wife, the artist Rotraut, and deeply engaged with Zen philosophy, it is no surprise that he was transfixed by the divine’s inability to be touched or held. Though his life was cut short by his untimely death only two years later, his formidable legacy lives on in the glimpses we have of his distinctive spiritual approach. It is this that permeates *La Chair (ANT 71)*, whose union of mortality and the celestial is redolent of the ambitions outlined in the *Nouveau Réalisme* manifesto. “If man succeeds in reintegrating himself in to the real,” it reads, “he identifies the real with his own transcendence, which is emotion, sentiment, and finally, poetry.”^v

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=60&v=gGLv2GIR9sQ&feature=youtu.be>

Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, 1996, p. 306.

ⁱⁱ Yves Klein, quoted in Hannah Weitemeier, *Klein*, Cologne, 2001, p. 8.

ⁱⁱⁱ Yves Klein, “The Evolution of Art towards the Immaterial,” *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., Gimpel Fils, London, 1973, n.p.

^{iv} Pierre Restany, *Yves Klein*, New York, 1982, p. 110.

^v Pierre Restany, “The Nouveaux Réalistes Declaration of Intention,” trans. Martha Nichols, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley, 1996, p. 307.

Provenance

Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris (by 1969)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1973

Exhibited

Krefeld, Museum Haus Lange, *Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer*, January 14–February 26, 1961, no. 22, n.p.

Paris, Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, *Yves Klein 1928-1962*, January 19–March 2, 1969, p. 66

Literature

Paul Wember, *Yves Klein*, Cologne, 1969, p. 107 (illustrated)

Thomas Kellein, *Sputnik-Schock und Mondlandung: Künstlerische Großprojekte von Yves Klein zu Christo*, Stuttgart, 1989, p. 123

Yves Klein, exh. cat., Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2004, fig. 4, p. 158 (illustrated)

ⁱ Pierre Restany, “The Nouveaux Réalistes Declaration of Intention,” trans. Martha Nichols, ed.

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY OF A NORTHEAST PRIVATE COLLECTOR

26

Yayoi Kusama

Nets Blue

signed, titled and dated "KUSAMA 1960 NETS BLUE"
on the reverse

oil on board

20 1/4 x 16 5/8 in. (51.4 x 42.2 cm)

Painted in 1960, this work is accompanied by a
registration card issued by Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

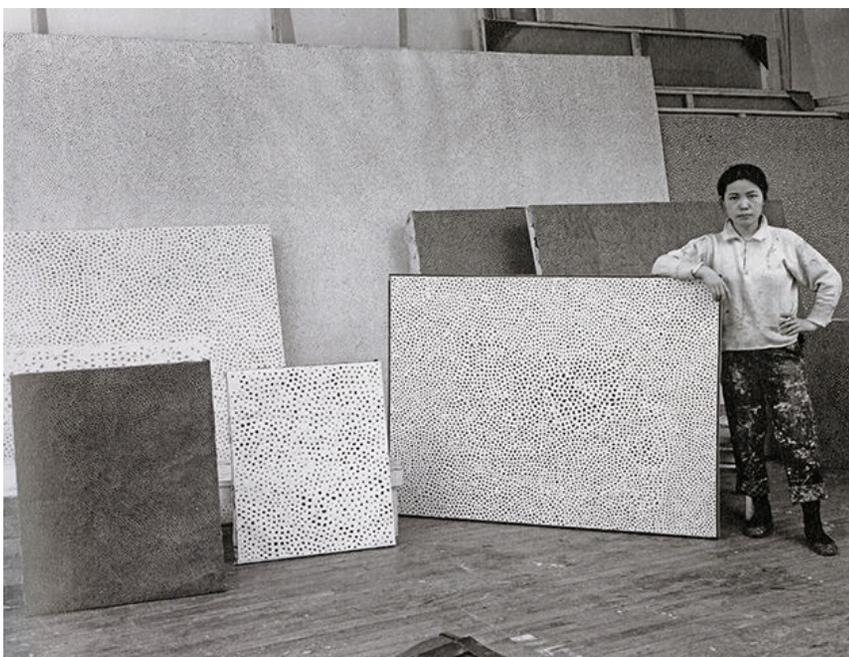
Estimate

\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Yayoi Kusama's *Nets Blue*, 1960, is a striking, aquatic work from the artist's signature *Infinity Nets* series. The artist paints a spiraling mesh of u-shaped, cerulean brushstrokes that completely envelop the black ground. The mesh is not uniform in direction or texture; it seems to whorl, clockwise, like a hurricane, with ridges of excess oil paint like rough waves on the surface. *Nets Blue* stands as brightly colorful net among Kusama's early monochrome works, and her use of blue is also outstanding; the artist rarely painted any nets in blue until the 1980s-1990s. Grounded in the direct theory and influences of her initial Nets period from 1958-1962, *Nets Blue's* blue-on-black vibrancy presages the colorful world of art that Kusama would build over the next six decades.

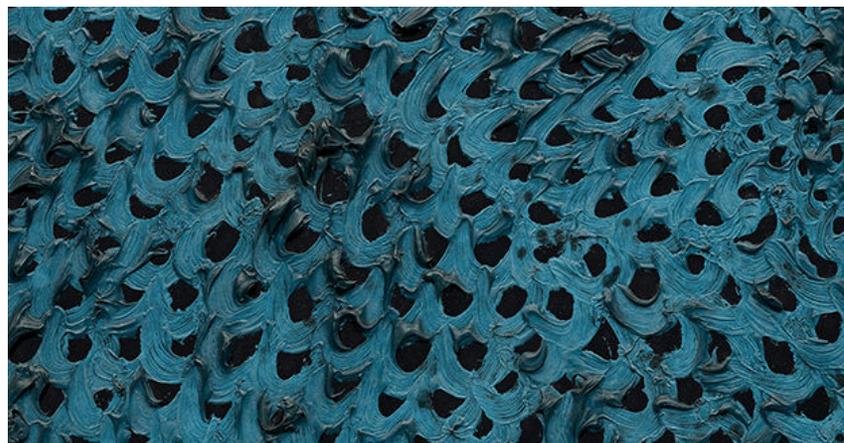


Yayoi Kusama with her *Infinity Nets* in her New York studio, c. 1960. Artwork: © YAYOI KUSAMA

The infinity net is one of the essential visual and theoretical concepts in Kusama's art practice. Constructed from repeated u-shaped brushstrokes, the net pattern expands from portions of canvases, such as *A Flower with Nets*, 1952-c. 1963, collection of the artist, to fill entire rooms, as at her 1961 exhibition at the Stephen Radich Gallery, where her *Infinity Nets*, thirty feet in length, covered the gallery's walls, edge-to-edge and floor-to-ceiling, in a wallpaper of Kusama's aesthetic fingerprints.ⁱ In early nets, such as *Nets Blue*, the artist leans into the hand-drawn quality of her

brushstrokes; the mesh of the net varies in size and texture, from thin loops to tactile areas of impasto. There is variation within the repetition, an artist's hand at the center of the net.

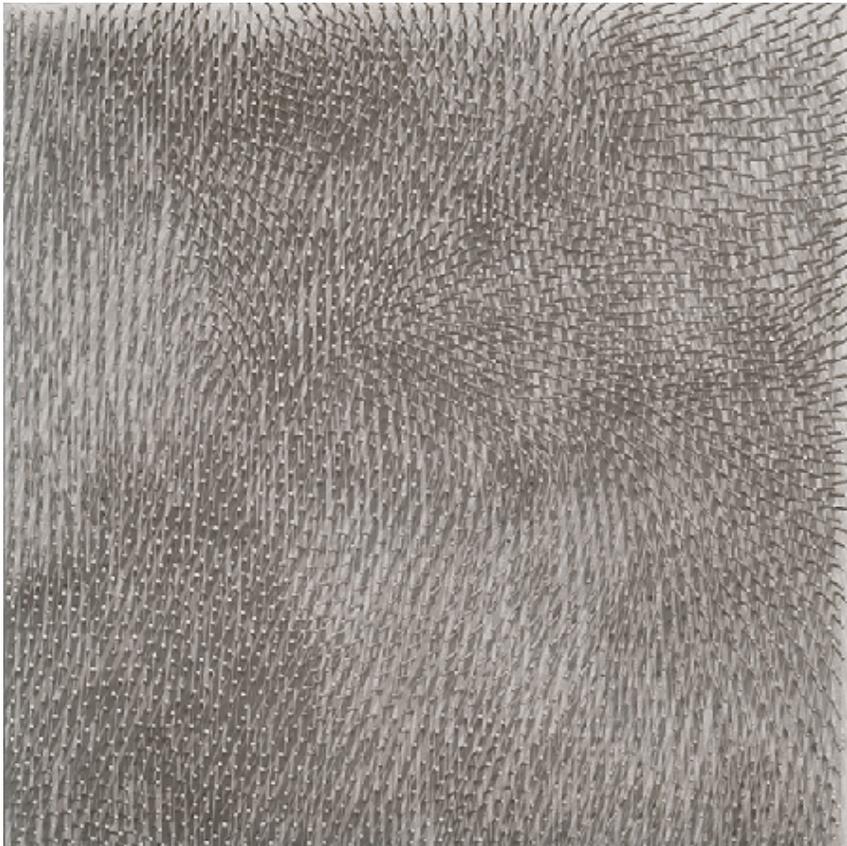
Conceptually, the infinite net embodies an inherent contradiction: how can one put a net around infinity? Or, inversely, how can a net span infinitely? To encircle or extend infinitely is, by definition, an infinite task, and it is one that Kusama takes up, voraciously, initially from 1958-1962, and revisits again later in her career, in the form of the infinity net motif. Reflecting back on these early *Nets* paintings, Kusama recalls working on her canvases for forty or fifty hours at a time, feeling "as if I were driving on the highways or carried on an (endless) conveyor belt... to my death... like continuing to drink thousands of cups of coffee or eating thousands of feet of macaroni."ⁱⁱ In other words, weaving an infinity net felt like moving, making, being, consuming, infinitely, both with and against her own will. The infinity net was life itself.



Kusama's source of inspiration for the infinity nets came from a major change in her life: in 1957, she flew from Japan to the United States for the first time. She cites the view of ocean waves from the airplane as the visual origin of her nets.ⁱⁱⁱ With *Nets Blue*, the blue-on-black color combination deepens the connection to Kusama's inspiration. One can imagine looking out the window of an airplane, perhaps at night, and seeing an infinite abyss of blue-tinged-black below.

Another source of inspiration may have come across the ocean, in the form of the European avant-garde. Kusama's works were more readily accepted in Europe than the United States in the 1960s, and the year 1960 marked the beginning of her relationship with artists in the German Group Zero, among others.^{iv} Like Kusama, these artists were interested in repetitive visual motifs, and their

pursuit of abstraction was motivated by theoretical conceptions of infinity, and infinity as a means of self-obliteration. With these guidelines Group Zero sought to create work that was “anti-metaphoric, non-relational, and empty of any reference except to itself.”^v For them, infinite self-obliteration meant removing the artist’s hand entirely. Kusama preferred to lose the hand in the waves.



Günther Uecker, *White Field*, 1964. Tate Modern, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Kusama has claimed outsider status throughout her career: “I had no special relationship with Zero. All I did was do what I liked,” she said, forty years later.^{vi} Her work resists definition within

any distinct art movement, and yet, it is not without reference to any outside source. Whether that source is the natural world, such as the ocean, or other artists, such as the European avant-garde, Kusama’s renderings of infinity do not exist in a vacuum.

“Today, it is banal to speak of how completely our surroundings are networked,” art historian Antje von Graevenitz writes, “[b]ut in the 1960s, the concept was wholly new, and Kusama’s focus was not technology but a principle of existence.”^{vii} The infinite nets of *Nets Blue* prophesize the unifying lines of the artist’s most recent manifestoes, her litanies of love and human connection, written fifty-five years later: “As long as I live, through the brightness of eternal life and death, to the end of the eternity, I want to keep struggling with indestructible aspirations to reach where peace and humanity end up...”^{viii}

ⁱ Laura Hoptman, “Infinity Nets,” in *Kusama*, edited by Louise Neri, 2012, p. 62.

ⁱⁱ Yayoi Kusama, quoted in *ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Antje von Graevenitz, “Kusama’s Key Concepts of Infinity Nets and Self-Obliteration: Unequal Correspondences in Europe in the 1960s,” in *Yayoi Kusama: A Retrospective*, edited by Stephanie Rosenthal, Munich, 2021, p. 69.

^{iv} von Graevenitz, p. 69; Laura Hoptman, “Yayoi Kusama: A Reckoning,” in *Yayoi Kusama*, edited by Laura Hoptman, Akira Tatehata, and Udo Kultermann, London, 2000, p. 43.

^v Survey p. 43.

^{vi} Yayoi Kusama, interviewed by Akira Tatehata, in *Yayoi Kusama*, 2000, p. 10.

^{vii} von Graevenitz, p. 72.

^{viii} Yayoi Kusama, “WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL WILLING FOR ETERNAL LIFE,” 2015.

Provenance

Private Collection, Pennsylvania

Robert Miller Gallery, New York

Private Collection (acquired from the above in 2008)

Christie’s, Hong Kong, May 27, 2017, lot 1

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED
CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION

27

Lucy Bull

Untitled

signed with the artist's initials and dated "LB 2019" on
the reverse

oil on linen

22 x 72 in. (55.9 x 182.9 cm)

Painted in 2019.

Estimate

\$100,000 — 150,000

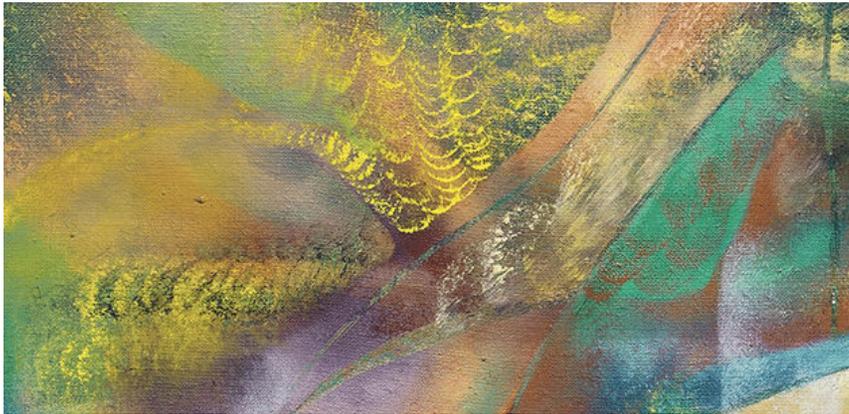
[Go to Lot](#)



With *Untitled*, 2019, Lucy Bull draws her viewer into an emotional state through a combination of optics and time. The young, yet established Los Angeles painter plays in the contrasts and complements of color theory with vivid, acidic colors. Yellow and turquoise spiral against each other, while salmon pink stands out against its complement, cerulean, in a moment of “static buzz.”^{vi} The overall effect encourages the viewer into extended contemplation: with Bull’s work, the longer you look, the more you see.

“Film is probably what inspires me most. It’s my biggest hobby. It’s also my favorite thinking space. I love going to the movies and being in a crowd of strangers with the lights out, surrounded by color... Afterwards, I always have so many ideas—usually intangible sensations that I want to explore.” —Lucy Bull

In *Untitled*, the horizontal canvas, similar in shape to a wide-screen film in theaters, provides space for the viewer to look closely. A subtle band of yellow paint bordered in black runs through the center of the composition like a horizon line at eye-level, grounding the viewer as they run through kaleidoscopic spirals of bright turquoise, pink, white, acid green, cerulean, and glittering bronze. Bull’s colors and brushstrokes turn in on themselves, over and over, back and forth, extending time within the space of the canvas. Bull refers to this effect as a sort of “timed release”; just as the action of a film plays out over time, so do the visual effects of *Untitled*.ⁱⁱ “Time is everything,” Bull says. “I’ve always been jealous of filmmakers, who expect no one will leave the theater. When I’m painting, I’m always thinking about creating the same kind of psychic space that a movie does...”ⁱⁱⁱ



The shifting, swirling layers of shining oil paint reward an emotional, rather than analytical, response. “Every interpretation is valid,” Bull says, and though she compares her work to Rorschach tests, she discourages viewers from trying to assign a specific emotion or feeling to

each of her works.^{iv} Instead, she is interested in “channeling the ambiguous or the unknown... [i]t’s most exciting when [the paintings] stir a multitude of associations.”^v



Max Ernst, *Halleluiah*, 1948. The Art Institute of Chicago, Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In this way, she calls on a legacy of Surrealist artists, such as Max Ernst, who let the processes of the unconscious mind guide their artistic practice. Surrealist painters let the paint, brush, and gesture lead the way, with as little conscious intervention as possible. Bull relates to this sentiment, strongly, citing Ernst’s experience of “being a spectator to the making of his own work”

as akin to her painting process.^{vi}

With compositions like *Untitled*, the viewer is “invited to feel [their] way through an experience.”^{vii} To feel one’s way through an artwork involves getting a little “lost in the sauce,” as Bull puts it, but that’s part of her creative process, too.^{viii} “They’re finished when I get lost,” she says, “when I lose track of how I made them.”^{ix}

Collector’s Digest

- Phillips holds the world record for Bull’s work at auction; her painting 8:50, 2019, achieved nearly eight times the high estimate, [realizing nearly 1.5 million USD in June of 2022](#).
- Her work resides in numerous institutional collections, including MAMCO Geneva, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, among others.

Recent Solo and Group Exhibitions

New York, David Kordansky Gallery, *Piper*, September 10 – October 15, 2022 (solo).

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Art Inspired by Music: Interscope Reimagined*, January 30 – February 13, 2022.

Shanghai, Pond Society, *Lucy & Fengyi*, January 8 – February 10, 2022.

ⁱ Lucy Bull, quoted in John Garcia, “Getting Lost in the Brushstrokes: Lucy Bull Interviewed by John Garcia,” *BOMB Magazine*, April 26, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lucy Bull, quoted in Kat Herriman, “Artist Lucy Bull Invites Others Into Her Cosmos,” *Cultured Magazine*, 2020, [online](#).

^{iv} Lucy Bull, quoted in Stephanie Eckhardt, “In the Studio with Lucy Bull, the Painter Bringing Back Abstraction,” *W Magazine*, April 2, 2021, [online](#).

^v Lucy Bull, quoted in Claudia Ross, “On Being Addicted to Your Work,” *The Creative Independent*, September 26, 2022, [online](#).

^{vi} Lucy Bull, quoted in Garcia.

^{vii} Lucy Bull, quoted in Herriman, *Cultured Magazine*.

^{viii} Lucy Bull, quoted in Eckhardt.

^{ix} Lucy Bull, quoted in Kat Herriman, “Artist Lucy Bull Brings Her Color Vision to David Kordansky Gallery,” *L’Officiel*. October 18, 2021, [online](#).

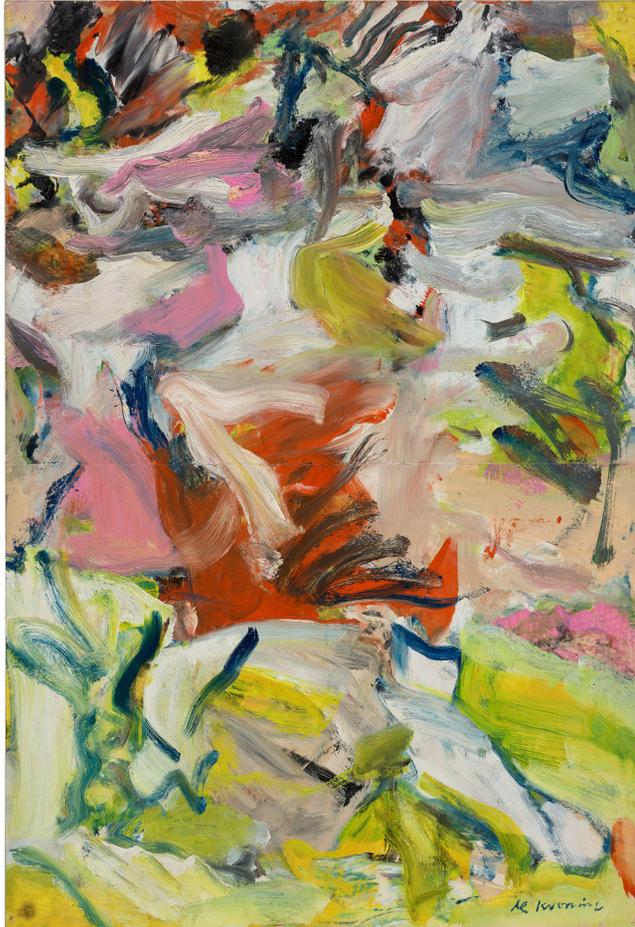
Provenance

Smart Objects, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF ARLENE R. GURA

28

Willem de Kooning

Untitled

signed "de Kooning" lower right
oil on paper, in 2 parts, laid on canvas
60 1/2 x 41 1/4 in. (153.7 x 104.8 cm)
Painted circa 1977.

Estimate

\$4,000,000 — 6,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/zEjZb54ZbHM>

The offering of *Untitled*, circa 1977, is a rediscovery of one of Willem de Kooning's most significant paintings on paper from one of his most celebrated periods, the late 1970s. At 60 x 40 inches, it's of a scale and quality that is on par with his greatest achievements painted directly on canvas. The work comes from the estate of Arlene Gura, a fine arts teacher, collector, and abstract expressionist painter herself, who worked as a docent at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In *Untitled*, the artist's painterly adroitness is on full display: visceral strokes dominate the entirety of the composition, an improvisational yet harmonious flurry of physicality and lyricism. The painting was notably featured in one of the most important documentaries on de Kooning, by the well-known documentary filmmaker, Erwin Leiser.



Willem de Kooning carrying the present work in his studio, c. 1977. Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Leiser was born in Berlin and fled from Germany to Sweden at the age of 15 during Hitler's rise to power. He made over 50 films, and is best known for his documentary *Mein Kampf*, 1960, a history

of Germany under Hitler, which was a box office hit and heralded as the most "effective summation of the Nazi era as recorded on film."¹ Leiser also made a number of documentaries on artists, including the Nobel Prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer and three documentaries on de Kooning, which remains the definitive filmed resource on the artist. Throughout the films, de Kooning speaks directly about his life, career and way of painting.



The present work (boxed in red at far left), in progress, in the artist's studio c. 1977. Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Untitled is featured throughout the film, *Willem de Kooning and the Unexpected*, at one point showing the artist moving it around in his studio. The work is shown tacked to a board and still in progress, revealing the artist's working method for making his fully realized paintings on paper. Indeed, his meticulous editing process involved arranging his works in progress around him to examine and adjust their compositions in dialogue with each other. Though de Kooning's paintings are often read as instinctual and spontaneous, the footage of his studio in the film, which captured *Untitled* before the artist finalized its palette, betrays the extent of his scrupulous reworking.

The majority of de Kooning's paintings on paper are not larger than 30 x 40 inches, but he sometimes used larger sheets, or combined two sheets, to create a larger composition. To make

Untitled he stacked two sheets of paper horizontally, creating a 60 x 40 inch arena that approximates one of his most favored canvas sizes, 59 x 55 inches. After painting the sheets to a certain point, they were then mounted onto a canvas where he continued painting until it was finished.



The artist working in his studio, with the present work in the background, c. 1977. Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Executed circa 1977, *Untitled* belongs to a fruitful chapter at a high point in the artist's career, indexed by his renewed commitment to painting after devoting significant efforts to sculpture and lithography in the first half of the decade. The result, according to esteemed curator and art historian Diane Waldman, was "an astonishing body of work" produced between 1975 and 1977, "which is prolific, versatile, extraordinarily high in quality and in many ways different from the canvases that preceded them."ⁱⁱ The paintings created in the midst of de Kooning's rapturous return to his most iconic medium are among his most renowned, both critically and in the marketplace.

Channeling the tremendous velocity and ineffable rhythms of roiling waves breaking onto the shore, the present work is evocative of the North Atlantic coast that informed the palette and atmosphere of de Kooning's work in the mid-1970s. The artist had relocated to Springs on Long Island's East End permanently in 1963, leaving behind the intensity of New York City for a personally-designed spacious studio on the bucolic shoreside. It was not until over a decade later, however, that his environment would conspicuously imprint itself on his artistic idiom. "When I moved into this house," de Kooning recalled in 1976, "everything seemed self-evident. The space, the light, the trees—I just accepted it without thinking about it much. Now I look around with new eyes. I think it's all a kind of miracle."ⁱⁱⁱ Moving away from the frenetic urban energy behind his paintings from the 1960s—the quintessentially New York City expression of abstraction—he began to embrace a more pastoral mode of representation. Following in the footsteps of Claude Monet at Giverny and Paul Cézanne with Mont Sainte-Victoire, de Kooning began to allow the spirit of natural world that surrounded him to pervade his work.



Claude Monet, *Waterlilies: Green Reflections* (close-up), ca. 1914-1918. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris
Image: © RMN Grand-Palais / Art Resource, NY

In an interview with Harold Rosenberg, de Kooning elucidated the influence of his environs of the distinctive palette that he employed in *Untitled*. "When I came here I made the color of sand—a big pot of paint that was the color of sand," referring to the flesh tone especially prevalent in the center right of the composition. "And the grey-green grass, the beach grass, and the ocean was all

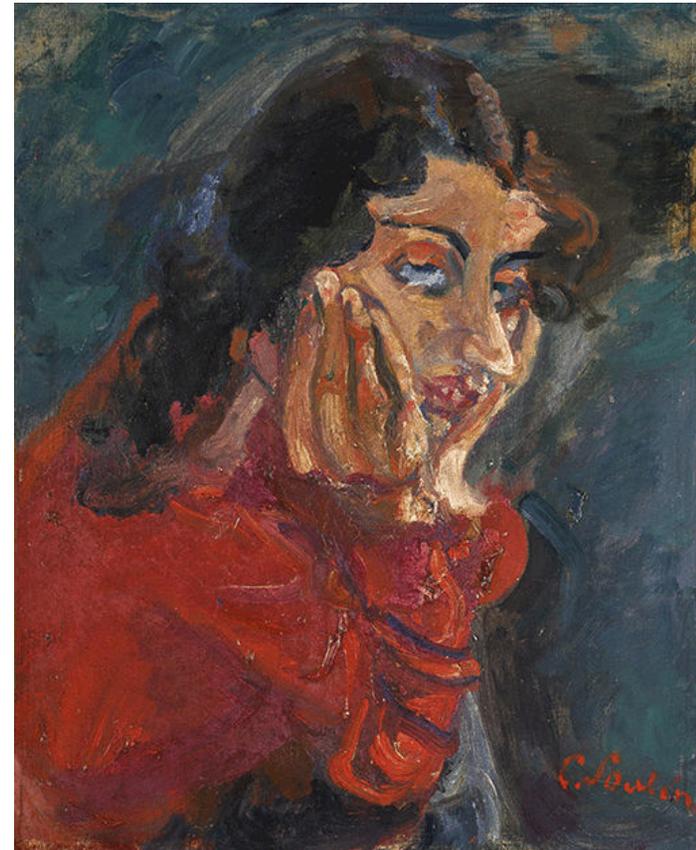
kind of steely grey most of the time. When the light hits the ocean there is kind of a grey light on the water... Indescribable tones, almost. I started working with them and insisted that they would give me the kind of light I wanted. One was lighting up the grass. That became that kind of green," which is scattered throughout the surface of the present work. "One was lighting up the water. That became that grey. Then I got a few more colors, because someone might be there, or a rowboat, or something happening. I did very well with that. I got into painting in the atmosphere I wanted to be in. It was like the reflection of light."^{iv}

"There is something about being in touch with the sea that makes me feel good. That's where most of my paintings come from." —Willem de Kooning

While the composition of *Untitled* is redolent of the dynamics of the land and sea, its scarlet tones metamorphose into flesh-like pinks and contours that hint at human presence. Indeed, the female form, one of de Kooning's most enduring motifs, is also alluded to, albeit in an abstracted way that integrates the figure with the surroundings.

The artist still had this subject at the forefront of his mind during the mid-to-late 1970s, manifestations of which range from ostensibly pure abstraction to the immediately recognizable woman portrayed in another example at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (*Untitled*, 1976). The sensuality of his facture also suggests the influence of Chaim Soutine, whom he admired for his ability to infuse the pliability of oil paint with the voluptuous sense of flesh.

"I've always been crazy about Soutine—all of his paintings. Maybe it's the lushness of the paint... There's a kind of transfiguration, a certain fleshiness, in his work." —Willem de Kooning



Chaim Soutine, *La femme accoudée (Gerda Groth)*, ca 1937. Private Collection. Image: HIIP / Art Resource, NY

Much like the Impressionists, De Kooning's ability to expertly utilize the luminosity of his medium to convey sensory experience is indicative of the complexities of his technique. His desired texture called for a far more viscous consistency than what came out of a tube, leading him to blend his pigment with water, kerosene, and safflower oil or mayonnaise. Strictly working with only natural light, he forwent expensive materials in his pursuit of a greater tactility: house-painters' brushes, a palette knife, and even his own fingers arrived at an entirely original surface. He would then press paper (or newspaper) onto the work before the paint had dried, lifting it to produce his signature stucco-like effect which is visible across areas of *Untitled*. In some areas of *Untitled*, you can see the ghosts of the newspaper ink transferred onto the painted surface, an effect that artist

embraced for many decades.

Coalescing the two primary genres that typified his approach—landscape paintings and depictions of the female body—*Untitled* is emblematic of de Kooning’s revolutionary approach. His translation of these traditionally figural modes through the language of Abstract Expressionism foregrounded the potentiality of paint itself, marking his return to an alchemical medium able to give form to myriad momentary visual flashes and experiences. Finding freedom in this new chapter, he painted in *Untitled* all the possibilities of artistic representation in the post-war era. “Color may or may not suggest a figure, the grass or the sky; freed from depiction, liberated from shape and contour it has a...random quality...But like everything else he has touched, it is far from random, but is subject to his masterful control,” Waldman expounded. “In these recent works de Kooning reveals a new dimension in his oeuvre and reaffirms his central position in American art. Exuberant, free and innovatory, they are a great late flowering of his painting.”^v

ⁱ Vincent Canby, “The Screen: ‘Following the Fuhrer’,” *The New York Times*, January 15, 1986, Section C, p. 17

ⁱⁱ Diane Waldman, *Willem de Kooning in East Hampton*, exh. cat., The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, p. 26.

ⁱⁱⁱ Willem de Kooning, quoted in Marla Prather, *Willem de Kooning: Paintings*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1994, p. 197.

^{iv} Willem de Kooning, quoted in Harold Rosenberg, “Interview with Willem de Kooning,” *Art News*, vol. 71, no. 5, September 1972, p. 56.

^v Diane Waldman, *Willem de Kooning in East Hampton*, exh. cat., The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, p. 27.

Literature

Willem de Kooning in East Hampton, exh. cat., The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978, p. 152 (the present work in progress in the artist’s studio illustrated)

Robert Hughes, “Landscapes and the Bodies of Women,” *Horizon*, vol. 21, no. 2, February 1978, p. 19 (the present work in progress in the artist’s studio illustrated)

Erwin Leiser, *Willem de Kooning and the Unexpected (Willem de Kooning und das Unerwartete)*, Zurich, 1979, film (the artist holding the present work in progress, 14:35-14:37; the present work in progress with the artist in the artist’s studio, 12:56, 13:03, 14:37-14:50, 14:56-14:58, 42:30-42:31, 45:23-45:29)

Provenance

Private Dealer, New York City (acquired directly from the artist)

Arlene R. Gura, Boston (acquired from the above in 1988)

Thence by descent to the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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29 ♦

Milton Avery

Hot Moon

signed and dated "Milton Avery 1958" lower left;
signed, titled and dated "'HOT MOON" by Milton
Avery 1958" on the reverse
oil on canvas
54 x 66 1/8 in. (137.3 x 167.8 cm)
Painted in 1958.

Estimate

\$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Painted in 1958, *Hot Moon* belongs to a universally renowned body of work that Milton Avery executed in the last decade of his life. A brilliant orange moon, hovering against an auburn sky, casts an iridescent reflection upon the expanse of magenta ocean below. Taking its place in the art historical genealogy of landscape and seascape painting, the composition was inspired by the deeply imaginative and productive summers that Avery spent in Provincetown with his wife, Sally, between 1957 and 1961. Rendered with short flecks that evoke pointillist techniques, but with the expressive power of the Abstract Expressionist painters who were dominating the art scene in the 1950s, the gestural treatment of this Cape Cod vista indexes a pivotal moment in the artist's oeuvre that saw him turn to the expressive potential of color and form. Its formal singularity is emblematic of Avery's extraordinary practice which was celebrated earlier this year by a major international traveling retrospective organized by the Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Claude Monet, *San Giorgio Maggiore at Dusk*, 1908-1912. National Museum Cardiff. Image: National Museums & Galleries of Wales / Bridgeman Images

Hot Moon epitomizes the intuitive sensitivity to color and balance that characterized the most refined chapter of Avery's corpus. Developed soon after Avery joined Paul Rosenberg at his esteemed gallery in New York, his mature aesthetic emerged in pared-down compositions with subtle chromatic variations that were encouraged by the dealer. This radical departure abandoned traditional perspective, graphic detailing, and other conventional modes of picture-making for flat

planes of modulated hues that harmonized within a shallow pictorial field. "I like to seize the one sharp instant in nature, to imprison it by means of ordered shapes and space relationships," the artist elucidated. "To this end I eliminate and simplify, leaving apparently nothing but color and pattern. I am not seeking pure abstraction; rather the purity and essence of the idea—expressed in its simplest form."¹ The evolution of Avery's visual idiom located his mature style between Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism, positioning him as the unique bridge between two of modernism's most defining movements.

"I do not use linear perspective but achieve depth by color—the function of one color with another. I strip the design to the essentials; the facts do not interest me as much as the essence of nature." — Milton Avery

In fact, during the late '50s summers in Provincetown which saw the creation of *Hot Moon*, Avery was simultaneously becoming reacquainted with two of his oldest artist-friends: Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb. The present work, with its vivid forms teetering on the brink of abstraction, no doubt betrays Avery's influence on the New York School. Introducing the younger generation of artists to the "sublime" power of color, his ingenious ability to evoke atmosphere and depth through sonorous tonal contrasts can be traced throughout American abstraction. Rothko expounded in a commemorative text on Avery's pioneering oeuvre: "There have been several others in our generation who have celebrated the world around them, but none with that inevitability where the poetry penetrated every pore of the canvas to the very last touch of the brush. For Avery was a great poet-inventor who had invented sonorities never seen nor heard before. From these we have learned much and will learn more for a long time to come."² This relationship was reciprocal, and Sally Avery has theorized that her husband's employment of larger canvases during this period—of which *Hot Moon* is one of the biggest—is a result of his rich artistic exchange with Rothko.



[left] Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, 1954. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Image: Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 1988 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
 [right] Adolph Gottlieb, *Cadmium Red above Black*, 1959, Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Image: Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation/Licensed by Artists Rights Society

"There is a lyric intensity in the landscape and seascape paintings of Avery's last period that is unlike anything else in the art of our time. As in the late paintings of Cézanne and Matisse, many of these pictures are characterized by an inspired concision, as if the painter were attempting to summarize and quintessentialize everything that he knew and felt and wanted to see realized in painting." — Robert Hobbs

Lyrical yet gestural manifestations of Avery's innovative approach, *Hot Moon* and the artist's other late seascapes have long been acclaimed by scholars and critics. When the present work was exhibited in Provincetown the year of its execution, *TIME Magazine* called it an "end-of-the-summer spurt [that] made a glowing show."³ In 1965, the *Washington Post* proclaimed it a "masterpiece by any standard"¹¹; Hilton Kramer said it was a remarkable representation of his "late landscapes, every one of which is highly individual conception and which, taken together, are an accomplishment equaled by few painters in the last 20 years."²² Despite the glowing praise of this body of work, Avery's contributions at first seemed eclipsed by the height of Abstract

Expressionism. Sixty years later, as the artist's role is more accurately carved into modern art history, he is regarded as the singular American colorist who heralded a new era of painting. "We shall be a long time, I think, coming to terms with Avery's achievement. Lately, he has been unjustly overshadowed by some of the American painters he himself so profoundly influenced," Kramer lamented in 1970. "But such misconceptions pass, and when they do, we shall recognize this amazing painter as a true master."³³

¹ Milton Avery, quoted in Robert Hobbs, *Milton Avery: The Late Paintings*, New York, 2001, p. 53.

² Mark Rothko, quoted in Adelyn Dohme Breeskin, *Milton Avery*, Washington, D.C., 1969, n.p.

³ "Art: Seaside Painting," *TIME Magazine*, September 15, 1958, p. 72.

¹¹ Elisabeth Stevens, "Don't Miss Virginia Artists '65," *The Washington Post*, May 23, 1965, p. G7.

²² Hilton Kramer, "Milton Avery: 'A Confidence of Vision,'" *The New York Times*, January 4, 1970, p. D-25.

³³ Ibid

Provenance

Dr. Paul Larivière, Montreal (acquired by 1960)
 Morton Bender, Washington, D. C. (acquired in the early 1980s)
 Private Collection, New York (acquired from the above in 2000)
 Private Collection, Dallas (acquired from the above in 2013)
 Private Collection, Virginia (acquired from the above in 2014)
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Provincetown, HCE Gallery, *Milton Avery*, August 1–12, 1958

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, *Collection du Docteur Paul Larivière*, November 12–December 31, 1960, no. 4, n.p.

Washington, D.C., Phillips Collection; Macon, Mercer University; Bloomington, Indiana University; Fredericksburg, Mary Washington College, University of Virginia; East Lansing, Michigan State University; Cedar Rapids, Coe College; San Antonio, Witte Memorial Museum; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; Madison Art Center; Utica, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, *Milton Avery: Paintings, 1941-1963*, May 17, 1965–December 11, 1966, no. 17, n.p.

Washington, D.C., National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution; New York, The Brooklyn Museum; The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, *Milton Avery*, December 12, 1969–May 31, 1970, no. 93, n.p. (illustrated)

New York, Mnuchin Gallery, *The Joy of Color*, November 1–December 15, 2018, pp. 32, 85 (installation view illustrated, p. 33; detail illustrated, pp. 34-35)

Literature

"Art: Seaside Painting," *TIME Magazine*, September 15, 1958, p. 72

Evan H. Turner, "Un collectionneur présente sa collection," *Vie des Arts*, no. 20, Fall 1960, p. 38

Hilton Kramer, *Milton Avery: Paintings, 1930-1960*, New York, 1962, pl. III, p. 25 (illustrated, p. 35)

Edwin Mullins, "Developments in Style—XV: Milton Avery," *London Magazine*, vol. 4, no. 10, January 1, 1965, p. 36

Elisabeth Stevens, "Don't Miss Virginia Artists '65," *The Washington Post*, May 23, 1965, p. G7

Hilton Kramer, "Milton Avery: 'A Confidence of Vision,'" *The New York Times*, January 4, 1970, p. D-25

Hilton Kramer, *The Age of the Avant-Garde: An Art Chronicle of 1956-1972*, New York, 1973, p. 318

Patricia Pate Havlice, *World Painting Index*, vol. I, Metuchen, 1977, p. 122

Bonnie Lee Grad, *Milton Avery*, Royal Oak, 1981, p. 18

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE
COLLECTION

30

Amoako Bofo

Pink Shorts

signed, inscribed and dated "AMOAKO M BOAFO 2019
KING" lower right

oil on canvas

80 7/8 x 74 in. (205.4 x 188 cm)

Painted in 2019.

Estimate

\$400,000 — 600,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I take inspiration from many painters, mostly those who use simple imagery in a momentous way, referring to light and tone at the forefront of their practice."
—Amoako Bofo*

Legs open, arms crossed, the subject of Amoako Bofo's *Pink Shorts*, 2019, gazes languidly from a plane of pinks. The flat, monochrome surfaces that comprise his shirt, shorts, and the background of the work contrast with the textural paint that makes up his figure. Bofo's brushwork and the intensity of his portraits such as this one—along with a shared history of habitation in Vienna—draw comparisons between his work and that of Austrian painter Egon Schiele's. However, Bofo focuses exclusively on painting members of the African and African diaspora community, noting that he prefers to paint people with a connection to himself. "It so happens the people, like myself, from these communities are not recognized and are looked down on. These are the people with beautiful stories of their struggles to share, and hence they are the people I mostly paint."ⁱ



Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait with Raised Bare Shoulder*, 1912, Leopold Museum, Vienna. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY

Born and raised in Accra, Ghana, where he studied at the Ghanatta College of Art and Design, in 2014 Bofo moved to Vienna to pursue an MFA at the Academy of Fine Arts. While there, he faced frequent rejection from galleries refusing to show African painters and subsequently sought to create paintings that combatted the stereotypes he was facing as a Black man with limited opportunities abroad. "Maybe I should just show them how I want to be seen," the artist said in an interview for his debut museum solo exhibition *Amoako Bofo: Soul of Black Folks*, which took place at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in the summer of 2022.ⁱⁱ

Pink Shorts is one such portrait that, with minimal rendering, shows a man positioned in the comfort of his own space, as if seated in conversation with a friend. The swirling, unblended strokes that make up his skin are painted with Bofo's fingers rather than a brush and embrace spontaneity. "The lack of control I have with using my fingers is organic... I love that this seemingly simple motion can generate such an intense energy and create almost sculptural figures," explains the artist.ⁱⁱⁱ The direct nature of Bofo's contact with the painting only further encourages the intimacy of this work. Relying on his intuition in determining his use of color, Bofo considers his relationship with color similar to a poet's with words or a musician's with sound.^{iv} This is reflected in his seamless integration of patches of blue and gray into his subject's skin, and the effortless flow of multiple contrasting shades of pink throughout the painting.

"The primary idea of my practice is representation, documenting, celebrating and showing new ways to approach Blackness." —Amoako Bofo

Bofo is a rising star among a generation of Black painters dedicated to celebrating Blackness in their work. With his vibrant use of color and large-scale figuration, he joins a pantheon of trailblazers such as Kerry James Marshall, Kehinde Wiley, and Amy Sherald. More than just an inspirational force, Wiley has championed Bofo's works and owns several of his paintings. After finding Bofo on Instagram in 2018, Wiley purchased one of his paintings and brought the Ghanaian artist to the attention of his galleries. In 2019, the same year the present work was painted, he participated in an artist residency at the newly opened Rubell Museum, Miami. His rise has been meteoric, and paintings by Bofo have recently entered the permanent collections of The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, among many other prestigious institutions.

ⁱ Amoako Bofo, quoted in Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, "Amoako Bofo by Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński," *Bomb Magazine*, August 26, 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Amoako Bofo, quoted at 17:55 in Larry Ossei-Mensah, "In Conversation," Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, May 25, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Amoako Bofo, quoted in Dean Kissick, "Figurative Painter Amoako Bofo on his Stratospheric Rise," *GQ*, January 29, 2021, [online](#).

^{iv} Amoako Bofo, quoted in Victoria L. Valentine, "Culture Talk: Amoako Bofo's First Exhibition at Roberts Projects in Los Angeles Centers Black Subjectivity," *Culture Type*, February 15, 2019, [online](#).

Provenance

Robert Projects, Los Angeles
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

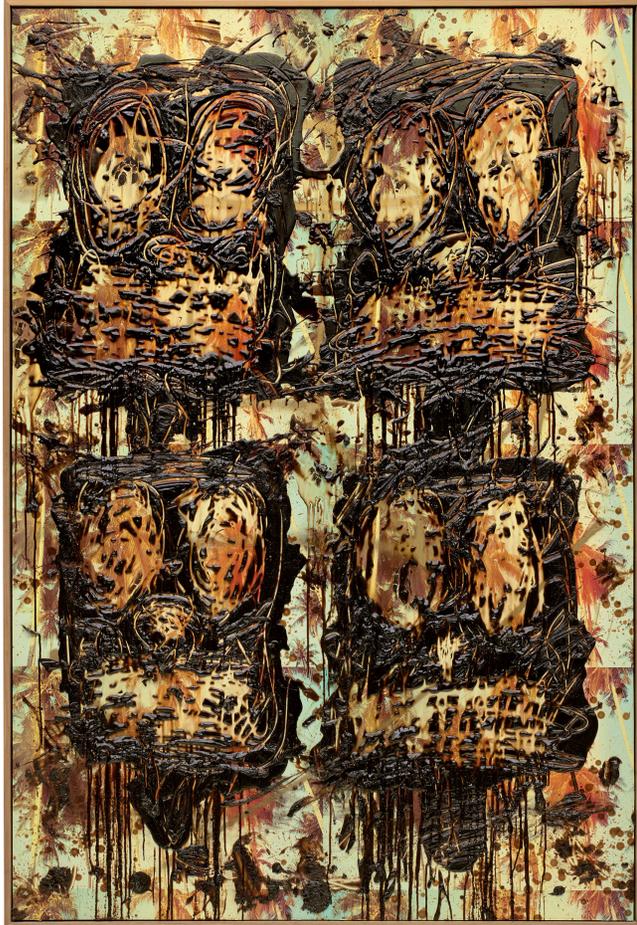
San Francisco, Museum of the African Diaspora, *Amoako Bofo: Soul of Black Folks*, October 20, 2021–February 27, 2022

Literature

Osei Bonsu, Rachel Cargle, Mutombo Da Poet and Aja Monet, *Amoako Bofo*, Culver City, 2022 (illustrated, forthcoming)

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PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED
CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION

31

Rashid Johnson

Untitled Anxious Collage

black soap, wax and vinyl on panel, in artist's frame
73 1/4 x 50 1/2 in. (186.1 x 128.3 cm)
Executed in 2017.

Estimate

\$500,000 — 700,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"My work has always had concerns around race, struggle, grief and grievance, but also joy and excitement around the tradition and opportunities of Blackness."
—Rashid Johnson

Executed in 2017, Rashid Johnson's *Untitled Anxious Collage* is a striking example of the artist's acclaimed practice that examines themes of identity, anxiety, and escape. Here, four monumental faces, composed of Johnson's signature use of black soap and wax, are rendered with a gestural energy that counters the tropical idyll of the background. Scraping and smearing, scribbling and slashing, the artist at once conjures the *art brut* aesthetic of Jean Dubuffet, the charged portraits of Jean-Michel Basquiat, and the immediacy of Jackson Pollock's action paintings in *Untitled Anxious Collage*—expanding on the painterly vocabulary of his predecessors into a unique vernacular entirely his own.



[left] Jean Dubuffet, *D'Hôtel Shaded with Apricot (D'Hôtel Nuancé d'abricot)*, 1947. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris [right] Jackson Pollock, *Number 3, Tiger*, 1949. Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

"While making those scrawled faces and seeing myself reflected in them, I saw them as incredibly anxious characters. The idea of anxiety and the idea of a world that's not giving us as many answers as we have questions is something that I'm definitely negotiating in this body of work." —Rashid Johnson

Emerging from the artist's seminal *Anxious Men* series which debuted at the Drawing Center, New York in 2015, the present work is distinguished by its vinyl backdrop of palm tree imagery, a departure from the tile support standard to this extensive body of work. In 2016, these single-figure portraits proliferated into images of crowds that the artist termed *Anxious Audiences* in reaction to the heightening political and racial tensions. The artist's trademark combination of black soap and wax—linked to homeopathic traditions in African Diasporic cultures—promotes gestural mark-making and necessitates a temporal urgency that is mirrored in the expressions of his subjects. "[It] is very much about the anxiety of movement...You're dealing with a material that has to be negotiated in a short period of time," the artist explained.ⁱ "It has evolved into an honest negotiation and appreciation of these materials and how they affect the poetry of my story."ⁱⁱ



David Hammons' *Higher Goals* installed in Cadman Plaza Park, Brooklyn, 1986. Image: Pinkney Herbert and Jennifer Secor, Courtesy of the Public Art Fund, Artwork: © David Hammons

"I remember thinking that if you could actually live in a place with palm trees, if you

could get away from the city and the cold, that meant you'd definitely made it."
—Rashid Johnson

In *Untitled Anxious Collage*, the apprehensive faces are set against imagery of palm trees, which for Johnson symbolizes daydreams of triumph and manhood. By incorporating the tropical vinyl wallpaper, the present work materializes the dynamic tension between gesture and stillness, frenzy and tranquility, and presages Johnson's employment of palm tree imagery in his later *Escape Collages* conceived in 2016. "Escapism is something that was an underlying condition of what was happening in my work," the artist expressed. "I really wanted to create a body of work that spoke to the agency of the black character. In order to do that, I started to produce more of an escapist strategy in the way that the work was coming to life."ⁱⁱⁱ In *Untitled Anxious Collage*, the palm trees at once recall the aspirational spirit of *Higher Goals* by David Hammons—who is a noted influence on Johnson's practice—and evoke a sense of nostalgia or yearning with their sepia coloration. As elements of the background emerge through the gaping eyes and mouths, the idea of escapism appears to pervade the minds of the rendered figures, yet the implications of Johnson's "escapist strategy" are ultimately enriching. "There's often a negative connotation to the word 'escapism,' as if you're not dealing with the realities of our times," in the artist's words. "But I see it as very optimistic. And I think that kind of optimism becomes infectious."^{iv}

ⁱ Rashid Johnson, quoted in Dylan Kerr, "My Body of Art - Rashid Johnson on the hidden depths in Jackson Pollock's Full Fathom Five," *Phaidon*, 2015, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Sebastian Smee, "A Vital Voice of His Generation: Rashid Johnson is Blowing Open the Idea of Africanness," *The Washington Post*, July 3, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Dan Weiskopf, "At Home in Abstraction: Interview with Rashid Johnson," *Burnaway Magazine*, June 20, 2013, [online](#).

^{iv} Ibid.

Provenance

Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles

Private Collection, USA (acquired from the above in 2018)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE
COLLECTION

32

Joan Mitchell

Cobalt

signed "Joan Mitchell" lower right
oil on canvas

102 3/8 x 78 7/8 in. (260 x 200.3 cm)

Painted in 1981.

Estimate

\$3,000,000 — 4,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Joan Mitchell's *Cobalt*, 1981, is an understated yet powerful composition. The painting anchors on an ellipse of cobalt blue, surrounded by two distinct areas of cobalt violet marks. The upper area, cut with white, grows thick with impasto like an eggshell over the cobalt ellipse. This upper violet drips over the ellipse, into the lower section of more diagonal marks, streaked through with black charcoal tallies.

Painted as her older sister underwent treatment for stomach cancer, *Cobalt* brings together the themes that would center Mitchell's practice in the final decade of her life: a renewed urgency and simplification of mark-making; the use of personal memory as a starting point for wider compositions; and the practice of painting as a means of processing emotions, particularly towards ageing and loss.

"Sal—I'm saying—all I can do is painting and I'm doing it also because you are sick—hard to explain—because it is all I can do." —Joan Mitchell

In the early 1980s, Mitchell experienced a series of personal hardships that forced her to consider her life and career to date. Her partner of twenty years, Jean-Paul Riopelle, left her in 1979, and several longtime companions passed away, including her psychoanalyst, Edrita Fried (1981), her favorite dog, Iva, and her older sister, Sally (1982). These abrupt confrontations with life's brevity and change led to a period of renewed energy for the artist, which resulted in a further paring down of the visual elements in her already abstract compositions, as well as a strengthened reliance on her forceful, physical use of brushstroke.

One can see this refinement at work in *Cobalt*'s limited color palette: a blue and violet derived from the same mineral, cobalt, plus black, white, and a spare mark of yellow. Mitchell contains each color within one area of the canvas, and distinguishes each by brushstroke. The cobalt blue ellipse consists of wavelike, overlapping marks; the upper, whiter violet is made of swooping "U" shapes, and the lower, blacker violet forms sharp diagonals, drawn from the bottom of the canvas up past the ellipse.



Throughout her career, Mitchell drew upon her personal emotions and remembered landscapes to create her compositions. As an Abstract Expressionist, she used gesture to communicate feeling in a way that a wider audience could understand, and though she claimed "paintings aren't about the person who makes them," it is hard not to read an autobiographical significance into *Cobalt*.ⁱ

The painting is named *Cobalt* for its cobalt violet hues, according to Mitchell, but it is also related to her sister's medical treatments.ⁱⁱ In the early 1960s, their ailing mother, Marion, received cobalt radiation treatment for cancer, so her sister's diagnosis likely brought up the old association for Mitchell. Though estranged, in late 1981, Mitchell flew from her home in Vêtheuil, France to Santa Barbara, California to spend three weeks with Sally. The visit reconciled the sisters, to an extent, and when Mitchell returned to France to paint, her sister was her source of inspiration.

For Mitchell, painting became a way—perhaps the only way—to understand and express the difficult emotions around her sister's diagnosis. Her pattern of inspiration and expression in *Cobalt* mirrors her typical method of finding inspiration from landscape. Mitchell begins with a feeling and a memory, and transposes the two into paint on canvas. In this way, the work is no longer just about herself, and her feelings; *Cobalt* is about the sensation of *feeling*, of feelings, abstracted.

She performs the same feat with *Pour ses Malinois*, 1981, private collection, and *Chez ma sœur*, 1981-1982, two more works produced during Sally's cancer treatment. The first painting is named for the Malinois dogs that Sally trained; the second title makes direct reference to Mitchell's reconciliatory visit to Santa Barbara.



Joan Mitchell, *Pour ses Malinois*, 1981, Private Collection. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell

In the midst of this period of personal sorrow, Mitchell achieved a great honor: in 1982, she had her first exhibition at a major French museum. With *Joan Mitchell, Choix de Peintures, 1970-1982*, Mitchell became the first female American artist to have a solo show at Le Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris since the 19th century artist Mary Cassatt, and *Cobalt* was amongst the works exhibited. *Pour ses Malinois* and *Chez ma sœur* also joined the ranks of recent paintings on display, a third of which had never been shown before. Among the typical invocations of Monet and Abstract Expressionism, one reviewer asked if Mitchell was “*la dernière héritière de la grand tradition*,” the ultimate heir to the grand manner of painting.ⁱⁱⁱ The show opened June 24, 1982; her art historical legacy, all but certain. A month later, Sally passed away.

When working with the curators of her show in Paris, Mitchell said that painting is “the opposite of death, it permits one to survive, it also permits one to live.”^{iv} This statement rings true on multiple levels. In the case of *Cobalt*, the painting is the opposite of death in that it is a space where Mitchell’s sister and mother live on in memory. The act of painting *Cobalt* helped Mitchell “survive” her grief, process it, and continue to “live.” And as a painting from the last decade of Mitchell’s own life, *Cobalt* embodies the legacy of her final years, and the stylistic simplification, emotional honesty, and introspection that defined them.



Lee Krasner, *Cobalt Night*, 1962, The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

ⁱ Joan Mitchell, quoted in Marcia Tucker, *Joan Mitchell*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974, p. 6.

ⁱⁱ Judith E. Bernstock, *Joan Mitchell*, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1988, 181.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pierre Schneider, quoted in Katy Siegel, “La Vie en rose,” in *Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat., San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Yale University, New Haven, 2022, p. 297.

^{iv} Joan Mitchell, quoted in Patricia Albers, *Joan Mitchell: Lady Painter*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2011, p. 369.

Provenance

Estate of the Artist

Robert Miller Gallery, New York (acquired in 1996)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1996

Exhibited

Musee d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, *Joan Mitchell: Choix de peintures, 1970-1982*, June 24–September 6, 1982, n.p. (illustrated)

New York, Xavier Fourcade, Inc., *Joan Mitchell: New Paintings*, February 19–March 26, 1983

La Jolla, Thomas Babeor Gallery, *Group Exhibition*, June 12–September 12, 1987

Jouy-en-Josas, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, *Azur*, May 28–September 12, 1993, pp. 130, 271 (illustrated, p. 131)

Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Joan Mitchell, oeuvres de 1951 à 1982*, June 24–September 26, 1994, pp. 121, 141 (illustrated, p. 69)

Seoul, Gallery Won, *Joan Mitchell*, April 22–May 11, 1997, n.p. (illustrated)

Literature

Judith E. Bernstock, *Joan Mitchell*, New York, 1988, pp. 7, 165, 181 (illustrated, p. 183)

Catherine Flohic and Jean-Luc Chalumeau, eds., "Joan Mitchell: Il faut sentir quelque chose, on ne peut expliquer...", *Eighty Magazine*, no. 23, May/June 1988, pl. 3, p. 11 (illustrated)

Michel Waldberg, *Joan Mitchell*, Paris, 1992, p. 343 (illustrated, p. 171)

Bill Scott, "In the Eye of the Tiger," *Art in America*, vol. 83, no. 3, March 1995, p. 74

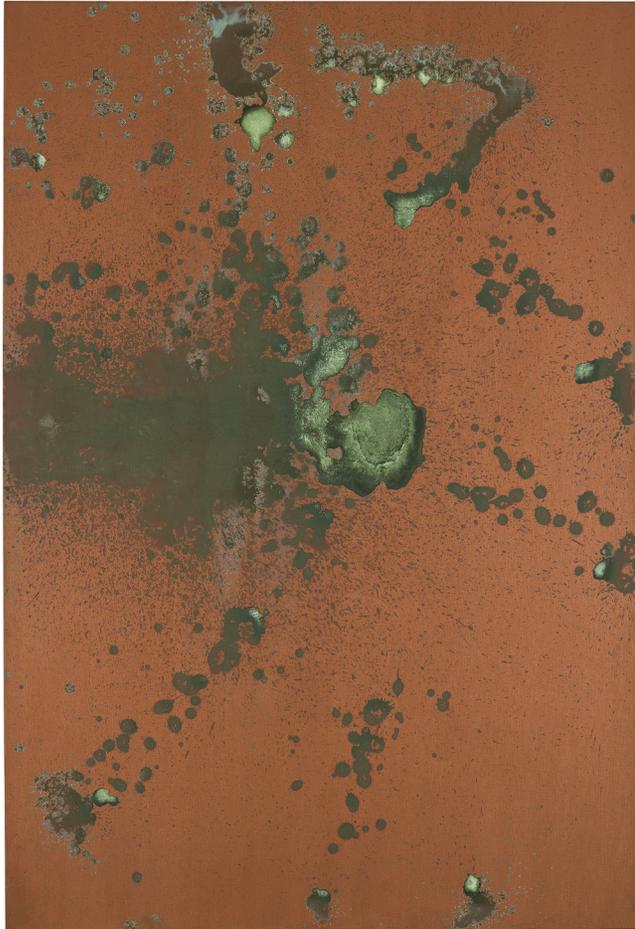
Klaus Kertess, *Joan Mitchell*, New York, 1997, p. 182

The Paintings of Joan Mitchell, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2002, p. 58

Patricia Albers, *Joan Mitchell, Lady Painter: A Life*, New York, 2011, p. 480

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN
COLLECTOR

33 ♦

Andy Warhol

Oxidation

urine and copper paint on linen
76 x 52 1/4 in. (193 x 132.7 cm)
Executed in 1977-1978.

Estimate

\$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Seeing the Oxidation paintings for the first time at documenta 7, 1982...lavishly installed by Rudi Fuchs in a grand room, gave me one of the rare, and increasingly impossible experiences that one searches for in exhibitions: to be utterly stunned by an unknown work by an unknown artist..." —Benjamin Buchloh

The alluringly lustrous expanse of Andy Warhol's *Oxidation*, 1977-1978 belies the base material that forms its creation. Presented on a heroic scale akin to the sublime canvases of the Abstract Expressionist movement that dominated the art landscape during his formative years at Carnegie Tech, Warhol conceived just twelve paintings in this scale, with examples held in the permanent collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Formerly held in the prestigious Froehlich Collection, the present work was one of three *Oxidation* paintings exhibited at *documenta 7*, Kassel in 1982. Only shown three times in his lifetime, the *Oxidations'* inclusion in *documenta 7* anointed their status as a radical contribution to the canon of abstraction.

"And then these nice older women were asking me how I'd done them and I didn't have the heart to tell them what they really were because their noses were right up against them. And it was so crowded." —Andy Warhol

When Warhol made his triumphant return to painting in 1972 after swearing off the medium at his 1965 exhibition of *Flowers* at Sonnabend Gallery, Paris, he was an artist altered. By the time Warhol embarked on *Oxidation*, he was an internationally renowned artist whose radical contribution to contemporary art had been solidified some 15 years prior. This, coupled with his brush with death in 1968, has left his painterly pursuits from this period to be read with a degree of macabre. In the case of the *Oxidations*—and the closely related *Piss* and *Cum* paintings—however, it is the bodily and the visceral that takes center stage.

Extending from his investigations on primed canvas, the *Oxidations* are distinct from the *Piss* paintings for their metallic ground of either copper or gold-colored paint from which an alchemical transformation would occur when in contact with the acidic properties of the "medium." The corrosion of the surface, especially in the copper paintings like the present one, produces a proliferation of shades from dark green, to blue green and black that have a textural depth and luminosity. Their luxe metallic backgrounds reverberate in the annals of Warhol's practice: from his gold-leaf work of the 1950s, to his silkscreens of *Marilyn*, *Liz*, *Jackie*, and *Elvis*, to his *Death and Disaster* paintings. Manifested in this context, the metallic quality continues to play on often incongruous notions of desirability, the sacral, and the machine.



Yves Klein, *Untitled (fire-color painting)*, 1962. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

These works are singular in Warhol's practice as one of the few times in his prolific career that he deviated from a photographic antecedent. It would not be until the *Rorschach* paintings in 1984 that he would set aside the medium again. However, like a Polaroid developing before our eyes, oxidation is a transformative process that, once set into motion, is autonomous. It is unsurprising then, that the critical reception of these paintings found their greatest resonance in Europe when they echo the performative acts of creation through desecration conceived by artists such as Alberto Burri and Yves Klein. As with the fire and combustion practices of these European forebears, Warhol's *Oxidations* are absent of any signature mark or painterly gesture, relying

instead on voiding or pouring to incite the chemical reaction on the metallic ground. This element of chance memorialized in his earliest silkscreens of the 1960s then still forms a basis of these investigations of his late practice. It is curious to note that his scatological interests were first explored around 1961 [no. 3928] in parallel with his engagement with silkscreen.

"For Warhol, the Oxidation Paintings, were simply once again motifs that connected high and low culture—action painting and the world of the baths and their golden showers—along the vector of notoriety or fame." —Rosalind E. Krauss

The *Oxidation* paintings have often been read as a reaction to Jackson Pollock—his “drips” a subversion of Pollock’s “heroic” compositions heralded by critics like Clement Greenberg as the pinnacle of artistic creation.ⁱ Of course a biographical reading could see these paintings as having the last word on Abstract Expressionism – a movement that asserted dominance over the art world at a time when Warhol was finding his place within it. Pollock was hailed by *Life* magazine as the greatest living artist in America in the summer of 1949, just when Warhol moved to New York after graduating from art school. But there is more at play in Warhol’s *Oxidations* than a simple reaction.



Jackson Pollock, *One: Number 31*, 1950. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

As with Pollock, gesture is a crucial component of creating a successful *Oxidation* composition. “They had technique, too,” Warhol espoused, “If I asked someone to do an *Oxidation* painting, and they just wouldn’t think about it, it would just be a mess.”ⁱⁱ Both worked on a horizontal

orientation; and just as Abstract Expressionism was perceived to be successfully inhabited by the male artist, the *Oxidations* were a distinctly male endeavor, too. When studio assistant Ronnie Cutrone would bring women to the studio, Warhol would say, “Oh my God, she doesn’t have a brushstroke, Ronnie.”ⁱⁱⁱ As in Abstract Expressionism, a “brushstroke” is critical.



Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917 (replica 1964). Tate Gallery, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Marcel Duchamp / 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The *Oxidation* paintings also bring high abstraction into conversation with New York’s queer culture of the 1970s, through Warhol’s subversive use of male anatomy in both his paintings and personal life. Some of the “painters” involved in the *Oxidation* paintings were men recruited from local gay bathhouses, and their marks upon the copper-primed surface are, in a way, inherently queer.^{iv}

The *Oxidation* paintings effectively turned Warhol's studio into a toilet, recalling one of the most infamous sculptures of the 20th century: Marcel Duchamp's readymade *Fountain* of 1917. How fitting, then, that in "painting" *Oxidation* paintings with the body, Warhol and his collaborators use a substance that needs no modification; as Bruce Hainley once wrote, "piss is paint readymade."^v

ⁱ Neil Printz, ed., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné: Paintings 1976-1978*, Vol. 5B, New York, 2018, p. 113.

ⁱⁱ Andy Warhol, quoted in, Kenneth Goldsmith, *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews*, New York, 2004, p. 327.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ronnie Cutrone, quoted in Benjamin Liu and John O'Connor, *Unseen Warhol*, New York, 1996, p. 68.

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v Bruce Hainley, *Andy Warhol: Piss & Sex Paintings and Drawings*, New York, 2002, p. 6.

Provenance

Larry Gagosian Gallery, New York

The Froehlich Collection, Stuttgart (acquired from the above in 1987)

Christie's, New York, May 13, 2008, lot 25 [illustrated in the inverse orientation]

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Kassel, *documenta 7*, June 19–September 29, 1982

New York, Larry Gagosian Gallery, *Andy Warhol: Oxidation Paintings 1978*, November 7–December 24, 1986 (installed in the inverse orientation)

London, Tate Gallery; Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart; *The Froehlich Foundation: German and American Art from Beuys to Warhol*, May 20–November 24, 1996, no. 300, p. 281 (illustrated)

London, Tate Gallery, May 5–September 20, 1998 (on loan)

Riehen/Basel, Fondation Beyeler, *Andy Warhol: Series and Singles*, September 17–December 31, 2000, no. 97, pp. 15, 198 (illustrated, p. 177)

Düsseldorf, Museum Kunst Palast; Vaduz, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein; Stockholm, Liljevalchs Konsthall; Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, *Andy Warhol: The Late Work*, February 14, 2004–May 8, 2005, pp. 56, 153 (illustrated, p. 57)

Cologne, Museum Ludwig, *The Eighth Square: Gender, Life, and Desire in the Arts since 1960*, August 19–November 12, 2006, p. 292 (illustrated, p. 137)

New York, Skarstedt Gallery, *Klein/Warhol: Fire/Oxidation*, May 8–June 21, 2014, p. 46 (illustrated in the inverse orientation, pp. 47, 72; installation view of the present work in the inverse orientation illustrated, pp. 82, 87)

Literature

Andy Warhol: Diamond Dust Shadow Paintings, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2000, fig. 1, p. 5 (illustrated, p. 6)

Jill Gasparina and Benjamin Thorel, "Andy Warhol Dossier," *Art 21*, no. 2, March/April 2005, p. 14 (illustrated)

Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age*, Princeton, 2012, fig. 3.23, p. 135 (illustrated, p. 138)

Warhol/Basquiat, exh. cat., Bank Austria Kunstforum, Vienna, 2013, fig. 8, p. 16 (illustrated, p. 17)

Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, *Pissing Figures 1280–2014*, New York, 2017, fig. 136, p. 103 (illustrated in the inverse orientation, p. 176)

Neil Printz and Sally King-Nero, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné: Paintings, 1976-1978*, vol. 05B, no. 3956, pp. 165, 176 (illustrated, p. 166)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT FLORIDA
COLLECTION

34 ♦

Alexander Calder

Petite croix

signed with the artist's monogram and date "68 CA" on
the orange element

sheet metal, rod, wire and paint

91 x 92 x 69 in. (231.1 x 233.7 x 175.3 cm)

Executed in 1968, this work is registered in the
archives of the Calder Foundation, New York, under
application number A09022.

Estimate

\$3,500,000 — 4,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"I've always been delighted by the way things are hooked together. It's just like a diagram of force. I love the mechanics of the thing—and the vast space—and the spotlight." —Alexander Calder

Petite croix is a standing mobile that is emblematic of Alexander Calder's mature period. Discs of sheet metal painted in bright, solid colors connect and intersect one another in a matrix of hooked wire arms, topped off with a cross of three white discs that move unpredictably in the ambient air. Created in 1968, *Petite croix* is one of the largest standing mobiles from Calder's personal practice, and it is about three times larger than similar works that have come to market. The sculpture was last shown in 1969, after which legendary New York collector and gallerist Allan Stone owned the work for over four decades.

This standing mobile forms one of Calder's signature sculptural shapes, which grounds his floating, cantilevered, colored discs into place with a sturdy, foot-like base. This sense of grounding, and connection between a sculpture and its physical surroundings became more important to Calder later in his career, from the mid-1950s onward, as he was commissioned to build large-scale sculptures in public and private outdoor settings around the world. The monumental commissions enlarged the scale of his artistic practice as a whole, and *Petite croix*, which extends eight feet across, is no exception. "It is true I've more or less retired from the smaller mobiles," Calder said in 1960. "The engineering on the big objects is important; they're mostly designed for a particular spot, and they have to fit properly and either support themselves properly or hang from the ceiling properly."ⁱ



Alexander Calder with *Quatre lances*, 1964, at Établissements Biéumont, Tours, France, 1967. Image: Tony Vaccaro, Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

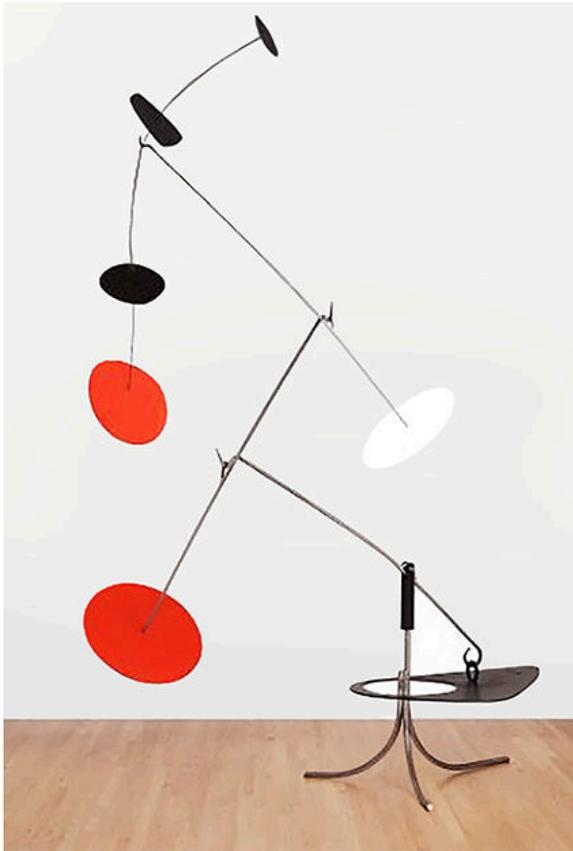
Petite croix reflects the growing popularity for monumental sculpture in the late 1960s among art critics, urban planners, and public audiences. In a sense, *Petite croix* embodies the cultural zeitgeist of American sculpture in 1968; that year's Whitney Biennial, which featured Calder, among other artists, focused on new developments monumental and outdoor sculpture. Calder was highly sought after globally to create sculptures for public spaces and corporate parks alike. These commissions allowed him to push the limits of scale in his work, as with *El Sol Rojo (The Red Sun)*, designed for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, which stands eighty feet tall.

"There's been an agrandissement in my work." —Alexander Calder

Calder described this time in his career as one of *agrandissement*: an enlargement from one form to another. That does not mean that his monumental works are direct copies of smaller, extant sculptures—Calder made models, or *maquettes*, for that portion of his artistic process. Rather, for Calder, the act of *agrandissement* is an enlargement or expansion of themes, of core artistic values, including balance, counter-balance, movement, and intuition. In this sense, works like *Petite croix* are the seeds of Calder's mature legacy, and the inspiration for his grand public sculptures, many of which still activate cultural spaces today. *Petite croix* is thus a rare opportunity

for private engagement with Calder's most public period.

The meteoric expansion of Calder's career in the late 1960s, from *Petite croix* to his monumental works, took place against the backdrop of a nation captivated by the Space Race. Robert Osborn imagines Calder's career as a "circus rig of his own, flinging him end over end into space—his natural possessed element."ⁱⁱ



Alexander Calder, *Trois noirs sur un rouge*, 1968, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas. Artwork: © 2022 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The shape of the pierced circle on the pedestal of *Petite croix*, also seen in *Trois noirs sur un rouge*,

1968, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, expresses voids and volumes. Multidimensional space was a long-term source of artistic inspiration for Calder; in a 1951 statement, he said "The underlying sense of form in my work has been the system of the Universe, or part thereof... the idea of detached bodies floating in space, of different sizes and densities, perhaps of different colors and temperatures, and surrounded and interlarded with wisps of gaseous condition, and some at rest, while others move in peculiar manners, seems to me the ideal source of form."^[iii] He recalled fond memories of the planetarium, drawing a parallel between the energy of the planets and the movement of the metal discs in his sculptures.

"More or less as the earth is a sphere, but also has some miles of gas about it, volcanoes upon it, and the moon making circles around it... a disc of metal is rather a dull object without this sense of something emanating from it." —Alexander Calder

Calder considered the kinetic element of his sculptures, meaning, their ability to move, an essential part of his work. "Just as one can compose colors, or forms, one can compose motions," he said.^{iv} Standing mobiles like *Petite croix* presented an opportunity to "compose motions" across multiple dimensions—some elements bob up and down, while others sway side to side, engaging the unseen forces of nature. This three-dimensionality, this multiplicity of kinetic possibilities and interactions, provide those "miles of gas," in Calder's terms. The potential for, and action of, movement gives Calder's flat discs of metal their meaning; they expand from discs into celestial bodies.



Detail of the present work

Calder kept up his passion for space and motion through the end of his life. His 1967 print, *Crossroads*, was reproduced as a poster for the opening of the National Air and Space Museum, Washington DC, in July 1976. Calder was a master designer of color, form, and motion, at all scales, from *Crossroads* to *Petite croix*.

ⁱ Alexander Calder, quoted in Marla Prather, *Alexander Calder: 1898-1976*, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1998, p. 279.

ⁱⁱ Robert Obsorn, "Calder's International Monuments," *Art in America*, Mar-Apr 1969, p. 49.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alexander Calder, "What Abstract Art Means to Me," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, no. 18, vol. 3, 1951, p. 8.

^{iv} Alexander Calder, quoted in Prather, p. 329.

Provenance

Galerie Maeght, Paris

Gimpel Weitzenhoffer Ltd., New York (acquired from the above in 1969)

Allan Stone, New York (acquired from the above in 1969)

The Collection of Allan Stone, Vol. I, Sotheby's, New York, May 9, 2011, lot 24

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Maeght, *Calder: FLÈCHES*, October 10–November 1968, no. 9, p. 25 (illustrated, p. 24)

London, Gimpel Fils, *Alexander Calder: Standing Mobiles, 1968*, February 18–March 15, 1969, n.p. (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED NEW YORK COLLECTION

35

Jonas Wood

Playroom

signed with the artist's initials, titled and dated "PLAYROOM JBRW 2012" on the reverse

oil and acrylic on canvas

78 x 98 1/8 in. (198.1 x 249.2 cm)

Painted in 2012.

Estimate

\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

[Go to Lot](#)

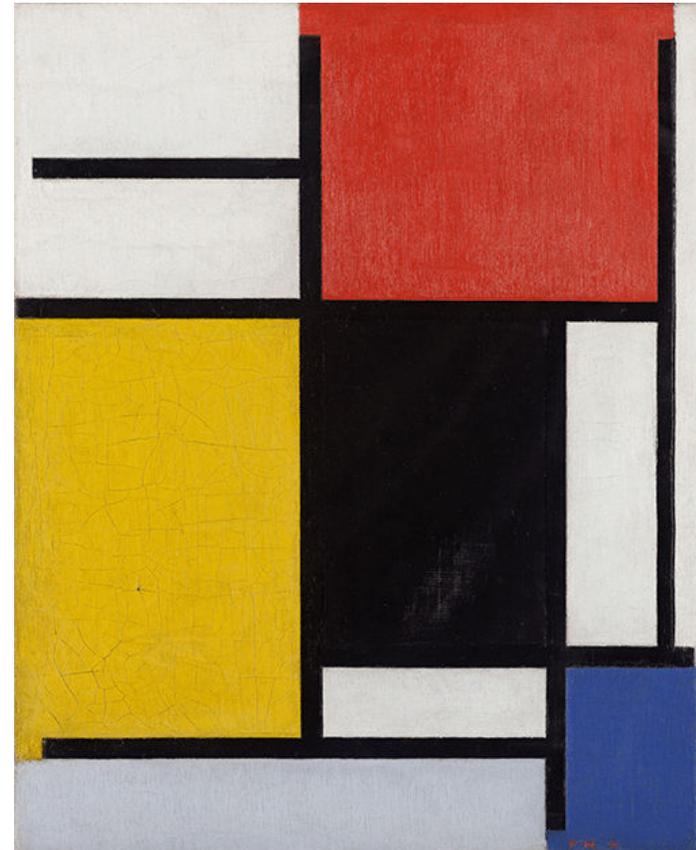


"Of all the possible things I could paint, the thing that interests me is something that I can get close enough to in order to paint it honestly. The painters whose work means the most to me—that's what they were painting. It was their loved ones or the stuff that was in their house. It was always this hyperpersonal thing to me." —Jonas Wood

A playful rendering of the artist's daughter at home, *Playroom*, 2012, is the perfect embodiment of Jonas Wood's intimate portraits and domestic interiors that have come to define his hallmark style. A snapshot in the life of the artist, the present work depicts Wood's daughter, Momo, sitting comfortably on blue-and-black interlocking playmats, holding an orange. She stares out at the viewer with the inquisitive gaze of a child, flanked by a bouncy-ball and larger-than-life, colorful toy blocks. In typical Wood fashion, the layered scene is rendered in flat planes of color that distorts the elements and, in turn, invites new layers of meaning.

"My paintings aren't freestyle—they're more like constructing a building. You want to have a good foundation. I make a lot of drawings of paintings before I make them into paintings." —Jonas Wood

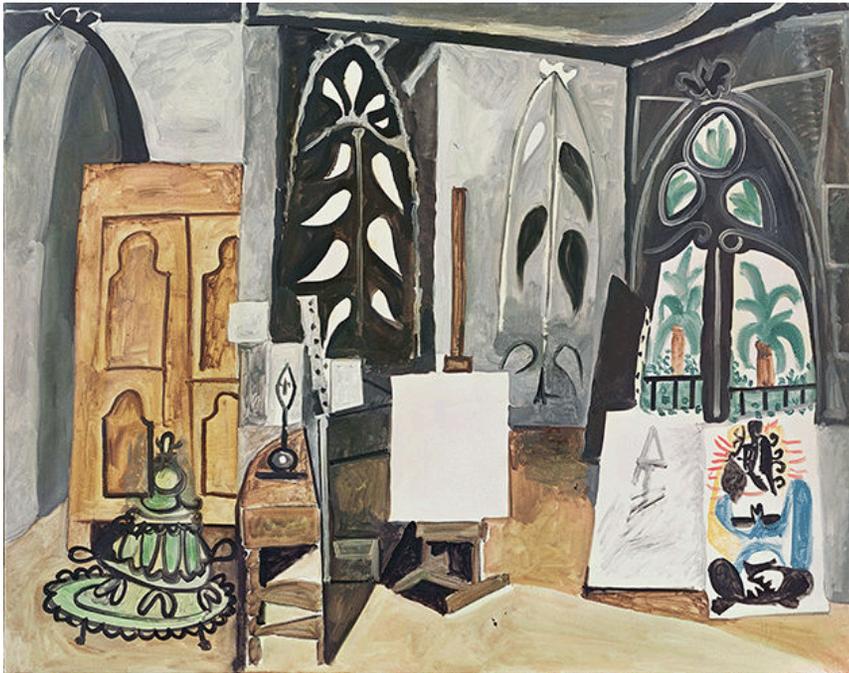
Wood describes the laborious process of making his paintings as "constructing a building."ⁱ His practice begins with photographs—taken either by himself or others—selecting imagery from different sources and collaging them into his desired composition. After several rounds of drawing, he begins his paintings with abstract blocks of color on canvas. From here, he builds up the composition with decorative marks, lines and patterns that interplay with negative space, ultimately collapsing planes and dimension to create an immediacy of the image.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with red, yellow, black, blue and grey*, 1921, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Image: Bridgeman Images

Wood's interest in depicting the familiar in unfamiliar ways has always been at the forefront of his quasi-abstract compositions. In the present work, Wood eschews perspectives and reduces objects to their most basic shapes, testing the limits of figuration in abstract terms. "One could say that all of my paintings are made of circles, squares, and triangles," he remarks.ⁱⁱ Indeed, in *Playroom*, the objects and interior setting can be reduced to the shapes that comprise them: sets of squares and rectangles make up the doors, flat blocks of colors compose the toy blocks, and a small black rectangle with a square and circle suggests an iPod resting in a speaker. The component of the work that is perhaps rendered with the most care and precision is Momo, with her flushed cheeks, red lips, and inquisitive eyes, revealing the artist's deep familial affection.

At upper right, a curious division reveals itself, suggesting an alternative rendering of the double doors and the corner of the room from a different angle beneath the layer. Such an assemblage of perspectives—a nod to Cubism—gives the work an ever-so-slightly disorienting atmosphere hinting at the world from a child’s eyes, made of bits and pieces of visual and episodic memories that do not necessarily form a cohesive narrative. In *Playroom*, Wood invites us to witness the world from his daughter’s perspective.



Pablo Picasso, *L'Atelier de la Californie*, 1956. Musée national Picasso, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Growing up surrounded by his grandfather’s art collection, Wood was exposed at an early age to artists such as Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, and Henri Matisse, among others. Wood often pays direct or indirect homage to the artists he admires, both in his formal techniques and by incorporating these artist’s works within his own compositions. He recalls one painting he made that “shows a Matisse print that my parents had,” and a whole series that depicts pots—a direct reference to the ceramic practice of his wife, Shio Kusaka, with whom he shares a studio.ⁱⁱⁱ In *Playroom*, Wood references his own painting from 2009, *Shadow Collage*, which he claims was

inspired by Calder’s sculptures. By depicting his own painting-within-a-painting, he is perhaps declaring his place within the cannon of art history.

ⁱ Jonas Wood, quoted in “Interview with Corrina Peipon,” [2010], in *Jonas Wood*, London, 2019, p. 142.

ⁱⁱ Jonas Wood, quoted in “Jonas Wood & Corrina Peipon in conversation,” *Hammer Projects: Jonas Wood*, exh. cat., Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2010, p. 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ Jonas Wood, quoted in “Mark Grotjahn in conversation with Jonas Wood,” *Jonas Wood*, London, 2019, p. 53.

Provenance

Anton Kern Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2012

Literature

Jonas Wood: Portraits, exh. cat., Anton Kern Gallery, New York, 2016, no. 44, p. 88 (illustrated, p. 44)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN EXCEPTIONAL PRIVATE
COLLECTION

36 ♦

Willem de Kooning

Event in a Barn

signed "de Kooning" lower right
oil, enamel and paper collage on paper laid on board
24 3/4 x 33 in. (62.9 x 83.8 cm)
Executed in 1947.

Estimate
\$2,500,000 — 3,500,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"The body of [de Kooning's] earlier work represents a level of excellence and achievement that is unparalleled in post-war American painting."—Allan Stone

Willem de Kooning's *Event in a Barn*, 1947, is a shining example of the artist's aesthetic excellence in the late 1940s. This painting marks a crucial point in de Kooning's development when he managed to synthesize Cubist aesthetics with his own expressive painting style. *Event in a Barn* is filled with gesture and color: rounded pink shapes, thick swathes of yellow-hued green, and glimpses of white. Allan Stone, legendary art dealer and previous owner of *Event in a Barn* from 1965, called this moment in de Kooning's career the "liquefaction of cubism;" the melting down and recombination of art ideas from the past to create a new modern style.ⁱ

Event in a Barn, alongside works such as *Pink Angels*, c. 1945, Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, and *Judgment Day*, 1946, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, function as an essential prelude to de Kooning's series of black and white abstractions, which formed the center of his first solo show, at Egan Gallery in 1948. This show, in turn, garnered him the approval of influential critic Clement Greenberg, and launched de Kooning's career as a leading Abstract Expressionist.



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Figure*, 1927, Musée National Picasso, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Willem de Kooning, *Pink Angels*, 1945, Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS),

New York

While de Kooning's pinks and greens perhaps find their inspiration in Pablo Picasso's portraits of Dora Maar in the 1930s, the geometric black lines of *Event in a Barn* nod to Picasso's work of the 1920s and 1930s, as seen in *Figure*, 1927, Musée National Picasso, and de Kooning's own sense of line and draftsmanship, as in *Pink Angels*. With its clearer visual parallel to the "fantastic anatomy" of Picasso's work, *Pink Angels* provides an intermediate example of the abstraction de Kooning reaches with *Event in a Barn*.ⁱⁱ In both paintings, de Kooning sources his abstract shapes from his own drawings of women, which he cut apart, rearranged, and transposed past the point of recognition. In a painting rich with layers, these collaged drawing elements are the ultimate base, a stylistic and physical foundation on which de Kooning builds his abstraction.

In the 1940s, painters in the New York School, including de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, and Arshile Gorky, worked in the artistic shadow of Picasso. Picasso's fame and aesthetic innovations had a major impact on contemporary painting styles, and the younger New York artists struggled to balance his inspiration with their own methods. Some artists, such as Pollock and Kline, leaned into abstract gestures to break with Picasso. De Kooning, in contrast, sought to combine Picasso's Cubism with abstract mark-making to create his own, unique style.



de Kooning in his studio with Elaine de Kooning, c. 1949. Image: Walter Auerbach, Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Using the work of Picasso as his starting point, de Kooning pushed past fragmentation, past figuration, to a point where few recognizable forms could be seen in his paintings. His skilled brushstroke led him towards more fluid, dynamic compositions. *Event in a Barn* exemplifies the result of this work: the canvas stands as a record of the act, or event, of painting. Even the title of the work references the act.

De Kooning worked quickly, with a thick and expressive brushstroke. He built up layers of paint, scraped them away, and painted over them; the older layers show through the gaps in the new. Following the black lines, the viewer can see where de Kooning turned his brush on its thin side, where he pressed it flat and wide. *Event in a Barn* is also an early example of de Kooning's incorporation of paint drips, chance incidents of the painting process, to add depth and layers to his compositions. Gestures like these gave Abstract Expressionism the nickname "action painting,"

as each painting records the act of painting.

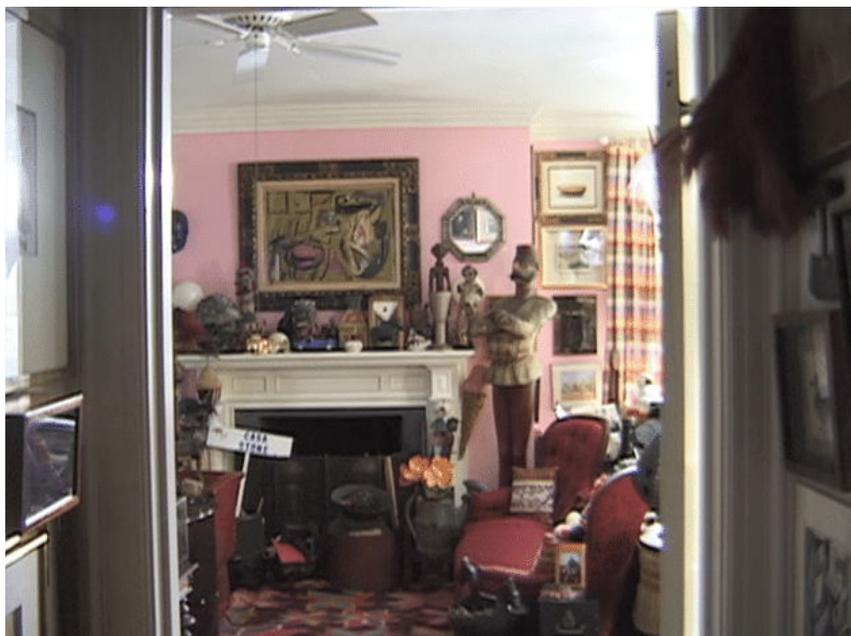


"[De Kooning's] subject seems to be the crucial intensity of the creative process itself."
—Renée Arb

Willem de Kooning and Allan Stone

In addition to finding wider career success in the late 1940s, de Kooning had a particular impact on a high school student named Allan Stone. Stone saw de Kooning's work for the first time in 1948, at an Abstract Expressionist exhibition in Andover, Massachusetts. The young Stone was "totally captivated by de Kooning, Gorky, Kline... Pollock. Experiencing their work was probably the closest thing to a religious experience I ever had!"ⁱⁱⁱ

Inspired by this 1948 show, Allan Stone grew up to become a legendary Manhattan art dealer and collector. Best known for selling the work of Abstract Expressionist artists, Stone played an essential role in cementing the movement's place in art history. In 1954, six years after the exhibition in Andover, Stone bought his first artwork: de Kooning's study for *Pink Angels* (1945).^{iv}



Event in a Barn over the mantle in Stone's home, c. 2006. Image: Floating Stone Productions, Artwork: © 2022 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

De Kooning remained a recurring presence at key events in Stone's life. De Kooning's wife, the artist Elaine de Kooning, encouraged Stone to open his first gallery in 1960, and whenever the gallery moved to a new space (1962 and 1994), Stone celebrated the occasion with a de Kooning show (*Barnett Newman/de Kooning* and *Liquefying Cubism*, respectively). De Kooning's work from the 1940s set the "aesthetic standard by which we try to run the gallery," Stone said in 1994.^v For Stone, there was no higher standard for post-war American art than de Kooning. In a collection of thousands of objects, *Event in a Barn* took pride of place; Stone hung it over the mantelpiece in his home.^{vi} Willem de Kooning was one of Stone's greatest inspirations, from childhood through to the end of his life.

ⁱ Allan Stone, *Liquefying Cubism*, New York, 1994, p. iii.

ⁱⁱ Alfred H. Barr, Jr., quoted in Michael Fitzgerald, *Picasso and American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2006, p. 191.

ⁱⁱⁱ Allan Stone, quoted in *The Collection of Allan Stone, vol. 1*, Sotheby's, New York, p. 11.

^{iv} *The Collector*, 2006, dir. Olympia Stone, at 21:57.

^v Stone, *Liquefying Cubism*, p. ii.

^{vi} As seen in *The Collector*, at 59:00.

Provenance

Lawrence J. Heller, Maryland (acquired by 1953)

E. V. Thaw & Co., Inc., New York

Allan Stone, New York (acquired from the above in 1965)

The Collection of Allan Stone, Vol. 1, Sotheby's, New York, May 9, 2011, lot 11

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Washington, D.C., Workshop Art Center Gallery, *Retrospective (de Kooning 1935-53)*, June 14–July 3, 1953, no. 12

Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art (no. 17); Baltimore Museum of Art, *Contemporary Paintings in the Collection of Lawrence J. Heller*, February 19–November 1, 1954, no. 6, n.p.

Houston, University of St. Thomas Art Department, *Six Painters: Mondrian, Guston, Kline, de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko*, February 23–April 2, 1967, no. 37, p. 50 (illustrated)

Detroit, The J. L. Hudson Gallery, *Willem de Kooning: Three Decades of Painting*, March 19–April 13, 1968, n.p.

New York, Allan Stone Gallery, *Willem de Kooning: Liquefying Cubism*, October 27, 1994–January 22, 1995, pl. 24, p. 67 (illustrated, p. 33)

New York, Whitney Museum of American Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, *Picasso and American Art*, September 28, 2006–September 9, 2007, pl. 116, pp. 217, 219, 385 (illustrated, p. 218)

Literature

Sally Yard, *Willem de Kooning: The First Twenty-Six Years in New York*, New York, 1986, fig. 186, pp. XV, 163–164 (illustrated, p. 414)

Willem de Kooning: Slipping Glimpses, 1920s to 1960s, exh. cat., Allan Stone Gallery, New York, 2006, p. 8 (Allan Stone Gallery, New York, 1995, installation view illustrated)

José Lebrero Stals, ed., *La energía visible: Jackson Pollock. Una antología*, Madrid, 2016, p. 62

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTOR

37 ♦

Pablo Picasso

Paysage au pin

signed "Picasso" lower left; dated "15 juin 53" on the reverse

oil on canvas

15 x 21 3/4 in. (38.1 x 55.2 cm)

Painted on June 15, 1953.

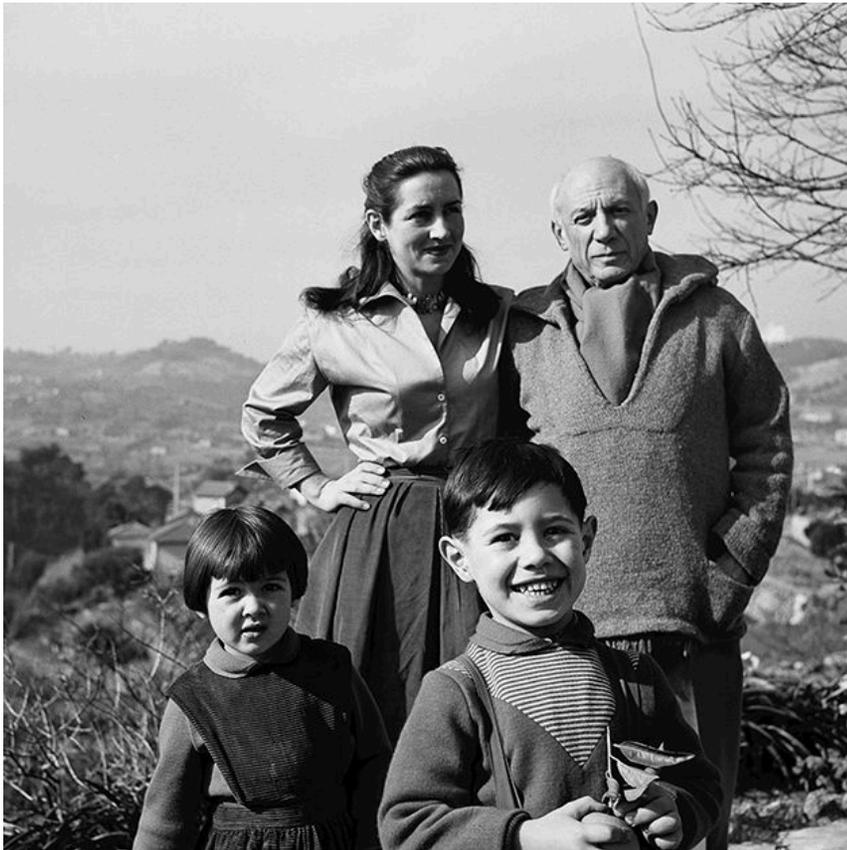
Estimate

\$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Pablo Picasso's *Paysage au pin*, 1953, is one of thirteen landscape (*paysage*) paintings executed by the artist over a period of several weeks from June 10–July 1, 1953. Termed the *Transformateur* series, the comprising works all depict the same view from the artist's home at Villa la Galloise in Vallauris, in the South of France. Picasso moved to the villa in 1948, where he enjoyed a calm, domestic period of life with Françoise Gilot and their two children. The feeling of being settled in place with a family inspired Picasso to paint his immediate environs.



Pablo Picasso, Françoise Gilot, Claude Picasso and Paloma Picasso in the garden of La Galloise, Vallauris 1953. Image: Edward Quinn, © edwardquinn.com

electric transformer, and the present work's titular *pin* tree. The neutral, consistent presence of these three in each work allows Picasso's formal expression to take center stage. With each work, Picasso takes on a new stylistic challenge; the *Transformateur* paintings serve as an index of the artist's skill set, and a deconstruction of Picasso's innovative Cubist mindset itself.

Works from the Transformateur series in museum collections



Paysage à Vallauris [Pin et palmier], June 10, 1953, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Three distinct visual elements occur across each painting in the *Transformateur* series: a house, an

Works from the Transformateur series in museum collections



Paysage à Vallauris, June 14, 1953, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Works from the Transformateur series in museum collections



Jardins à Vallauris, June 15, 1953. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Dated June 15, 1953, *Paysage au Pin* falls in the first third of the series by date. The three works directly preceding or sharing its date are all in prestigious museum collections. Focusing on the pine tree, in the first work, *Paysage de Vallauris [Pin et palmier]*, June 10, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the simplified tree trunk unfolds naturally into bright, summery green pine needles. But four days later, in *Paysage à Vallauris*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the trunk shrinks to a wizened black line; the pine needles are dark and sharp, like a cluster of holly. The next day, it is winter for the pine tree in *Jardin à Vallauris*, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, with its grey trunk and sticklike branches, no green needles in sight. And yet, in the present work, it is summer again, with three round, bright green shapes signifying the top of the tree. A shift from brush-led expression to geometric representation is complete.

"This change [over the course of the Transformateur works] shows just how uninterested he is in producing a series as such, and how persistently he exploits everything a subject has to offer to his inventiveness." —Klaus Gallwitz

The Cubism at play here is a deconstructed cubism; a cubism in slow motion. One can imagine layering *Paysage au pin* and its series mates on top of each other, each perspective angling into a cohesive, Cubist whole. Picasso's continued interest in Cubist principles, nearly fifty years after the movement's inception, reveals just how centrally aligned the movement's tenants were with the artist's personal practice.



Paul Cézanne, *Paysage au toit rouge ou Le Pin à l'Estaque*, 1875-1876. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.
Image: Bridgeman Images

With *Paysage au pin* and its companions, Picasso invokes a long history of innovation in painting inspired by the French landscape, especially over the course of the 19th century. The stylistic shift from *Paysage à Vallauris [Pin et palmier]* to *Paysage du pin* echoes the genre's evolution from Théodore Rousseau and the realist Fontainebleau group, for example, to the expressive landscapes of Claude Monet and Paul Cézanne. Speaking of his landscapes, Picasso said, "my trees are myself."¹ With *Paysage au pin*, Picasso places himself, and his distinct way of seeing, within this artistic legacy of landscape.

Pablo Picasso

ⁱ Pablo Picasso, quoted in John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, 1907-1917, The Painter of Modern Life*, vol. II, New York, 1996, p. 93.

Provenance

Galerie Simon, Paris

Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris (acquired in 1953)

Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

Christie's, London, June 30, 1967, lot 96

Richard Feigen Gallery, Chicago (acquired at the above sale)

Stephen Hahn Gallery, New York

Henry and Elizabeth Blazy, Cleveland (acquired from the above on January 2, 1968)

Christie's, New York, May 14, 1999, lot 698

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Martin Lawrence Galleries, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Curt Valentin Gallery, *Pablo Picasso, 1950-1953*, November 24–December 19, 1953, no. 19, n.p. (illustrated; titled as *Landscape with Pine Tree*)

Cleveland Museum of Art (on extended loan, 1977–1999)

Seoul, Opera Gallery, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, March 28–April 28, 2013, p. 14 (illustrated, p. 15)

Monaco, Opera Gallery, *Highlights: The Monaco Masters Show*, July 5–August 31, 2013 (detail illustrated, p. 8; illustrated, p. 9); then travelled as Singapore, Opera Gallery, *20th Anniversary*, April 25–May 11, 2014 (p. 18, illustrated, p. 19); then travelled as Hong Kong, Opera Gallery, *Modern Masterpieces (Celebrating a Decade: Timepieces)*, November 13–December 4, 2014, p. 32 (detail illustrated; illustrated, p. 33)

Literature

Laure Galvaire, "Les Cours des ventes - Picasso: le peintre vivant le plus cher," *Connaissance des arts*, no. 190, December 1967, fig. 5, p. 139 (illustrated)

Klaus Gallwitz, *Picasso Laureatus: Son œuvre depuis 1945*, Geneva, 1971, no. 69, p. 66 (illustrated, p. 67)

Klaus Gallwitz, *Picasso Laureatus: Sein malerisches Werk seit 1945*, Luzern, 1971, no. 69, p. 66 (illustrated, p. 67)

Klaus Gallwitz, *Picasso at 90: The Late Work*, New York, 1971, p. 66 (illustrated, p. 67; titled as *Landscape with Pine*)

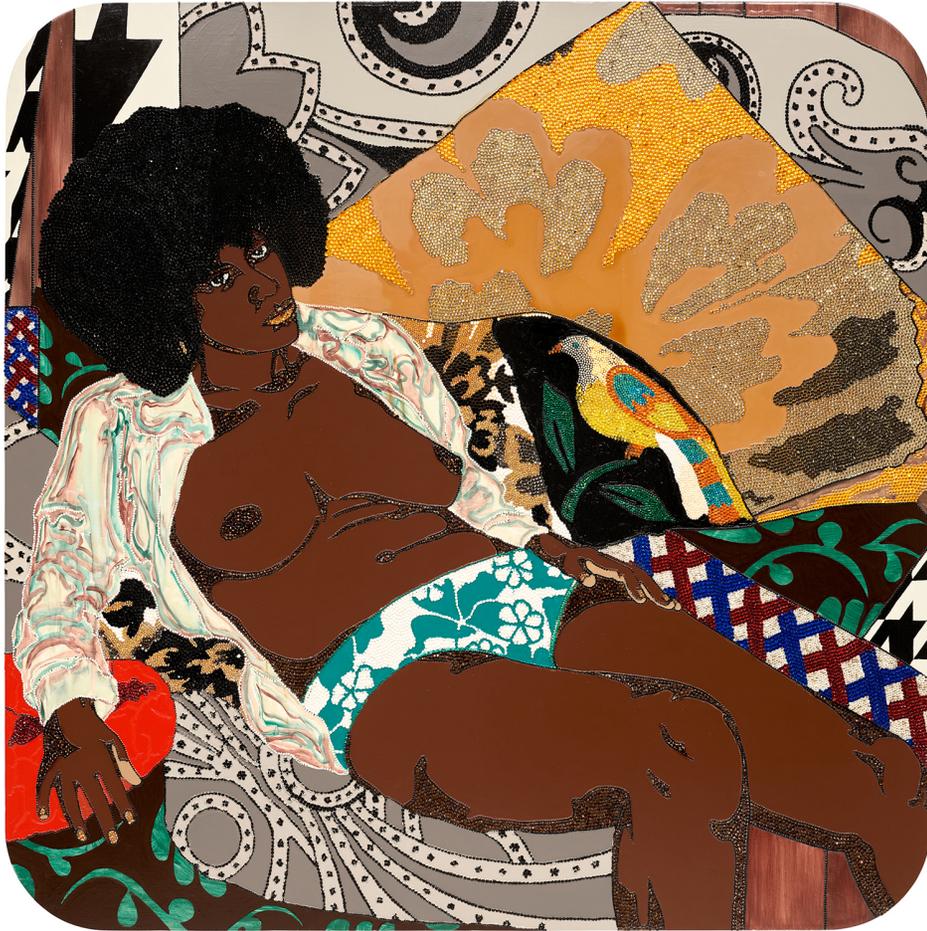
Cleveland Museum of Art, "Annual Report for 1977," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 65, no. 6, June 1978, p. 189

Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1946 à 1953*, vol. 15, Paris, 1983, no. 280, p. 167 (illustrated, p. 154)

Klaus Gallwitz, *Picasso: The Heroic Years*, New York, 1985, p. 66 (illustrated, p. 67; titled as *Landscape with Pine*)

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38

Mickalene Thomas

I Can't See Me Without You

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "'I CAN'T SEE ME WITHOUT YOU," 2007 (COLLAGE SERIES) M. Thomas"
on the reverse
rhinestones, acrylic and enamel on wood panel
72 x 72 in. (183 x 183 cm)
Executed in 2007.

Estimate
\$350,000 — 550,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"The person who has that authority of the gaze is always the sitter. I think the sitter's the most powerful person who resides in that space of how they're going to deliver the gaze." —Mickalene Thomas

The nude sitter of Mickalene Thomas's 2006 work, *I Can't See Me Without You*, gazes out directly at the viewer. Her expression is both confrontational and seductive; she sees you seeing her, lips pressed together, the tilt of her head invites you to keep looking. She lounges at ease in a riotous ground of floral, collaged patterns. Rhinestones embellish her breasts, thighs, and the folds of her stomach. This is Maya, the artist's friend, ex-girlfriend, and muse.

The present work gave a version of its title to a major exhibition of Thomas' work in 2018 at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. The show, *I Can't See You Without Me*, was curated in collaboration with the artist around the theme of models, with each section of the exhibition dedicated to one of the artist's inspirations: her mother, the artist herself, her current partner, Racquel, and her ex-girlfriend, Maya. For Thomas, her relationship with her models is an interpersonal one, built on mutual trust and exchange, and she needs this trust in order to create such monumental, yet intimate, paintings. Her work could not exist without the collaboration of her models; in other words, Thomas might say, *I can't see me without you*.



Domenico Campagnola, *Venus Reclining in a Landscape*, 1517, The National Gallery, Washington D.C.
Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Rosenwald Collection, 1943.3.2700

Thomas's interpersonal intimacy with her models creates the emotional ground upon which she builds her subversive oeuvre. The large scale of her paintings on panel, including *I Can't See Me Without You*, present larger-than-life-size nude figures that intentionally quote the Western art historical tradition of female nudes painted by male artists. The uneven gaze of such painted relationships, where the (presumed male) viewer is looking at a nude female, who does not see or return his gaze, has long been criticized by feminist art historians, such as Laura Mulvey.ⁱ While, for a historical male painter, a female muse is a passive, pretty object, for Thomas, the word muse "has a verbal and active form that signifies what she does with that inspiration: become immersed in thought, contemplate, and...shift canons as well as create them anew."ⁱⁱ



[left] Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, Musée du Louvre. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY [right] Mickalene Thomas, *Mama Bush III: One of a Kind Two*, 2009. Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

As a queer, Black woman, painting monumental nudes of other queer and Black women, Thomas not only challenges and undercuts the male gaze of art history, but she also constructs her own world of mutual respect and radical love for Black, queer bodies. Thomas, in the mid-2000s in particular, turns her attention to the nude figure of the *odalisque*, a type of courtesan who worked in a Turkish harem and was the favored subject of the exoticizing, sexualizing gaze of 19th century male painters.



Pam Grier, c. 1970s. Image: Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

"Thomas's reclining nudes and their interior stagings are acts of world making—the origins of a universe—through the oeuvre of a Black female artist and centered on Black women's erotic exchanges, fantasies, and performative identification."
—Nicole R. Fleetwood

In addition to quoting historical nudes, Maya in *I Can't See Me Without You*, with her afro and gold earrings, recalls 1970s Black American sex symbols such as actress Pam Grier. As the star of a series of successful Blaxploitation action films in the early 1970s, Grier redefined popular beauty and sexuality in unapologetically Black terms, just as Thomas's nudes, Black, and queer, and

covered in rhinestones, take up space in contemporary art history.

I Can't See Me Without You embodies, in both title and composition, the mutual work necessary to Thomas's world-building. The work's lasting relevance, sixteen years after its making, marks the continued significance, and cultural urgency, of Thomas's creative work.

ⁱ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3, 1975.

ⁱⁱ Kellie Jones, "Sensorium," in *Mickalene Thomas*, New York; London, 2021, p. 118.

Provenance

Luggage Store Gallery, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

San Francisco, Luggage Store Gallery, *My Love is a 187*, February 9–March 24, 2007

Columbus, Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me*, September 14–December 30, 2018, p. 121 (illustrated, p. 79; titled and dated as *I Can't See You Without Me*, 2006)

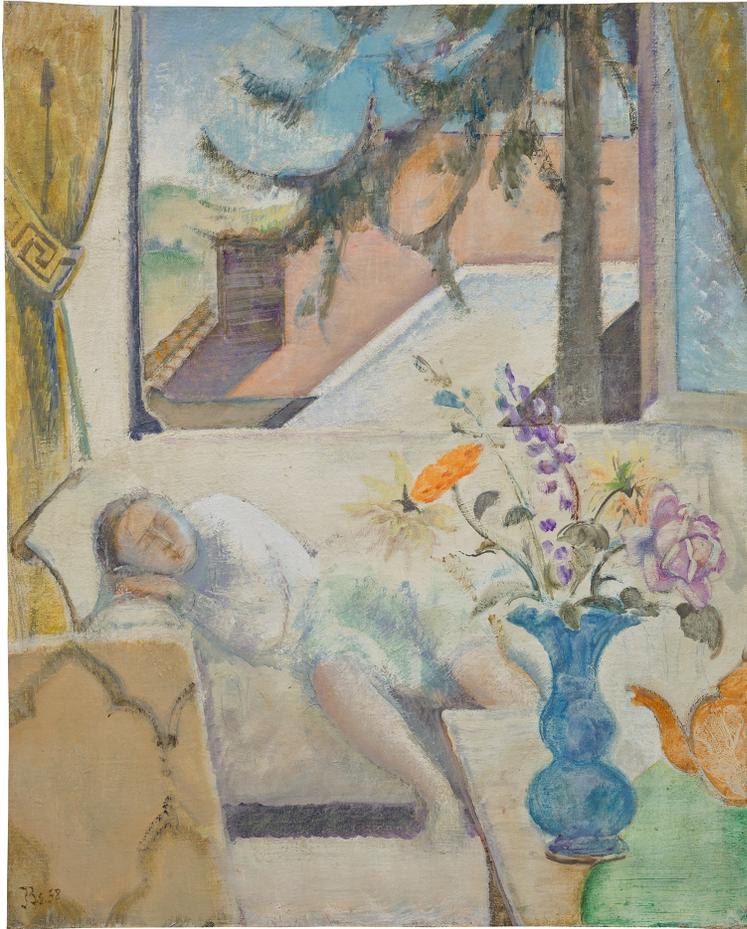
Literature

Doll Artist Randi Channel, Mickalene Thomas Art at the Wex, PBS: Broad & High, October 11, 2018, short film (Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, 2018, installation view and detail illustrated, 10:56-11:04, 11:38-11:42)

Roxane Gay and Kellie Jones, *Mickalene Thomas*, London, 2021, pp. 35, 266 (The Luggage Store, San Francisco, 2007, installation view illustrated)

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PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN
COLLECTION

39

Balthus

La Sieste

signed with the artist's monogram and dated "Bs. 58"
lower left

oil on canvas

31 7/8 x 25 3/4 in. (81 x 65.4 cm)

Painted in 1958.

Estimate

\$700,000 — 1,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



In 1953, Balthus discovered the isolated Château de Chassy in the Morvan, a mountainous region in France and relocated there as a means to escape the chaos of post-war Paris. He filled the three-story house with ornate objects, fantastical decorations and antique furniture which also served as recurring props in his paintings from this period; he would even trade paintings in exchange for pieces to fill his château. Balthus' penchant for exquisite objects would lead his mother to tell a friend that her son lived at Chassy "dressed like a workman, yet in surroundings fit for a prince."ⁱ

A year after Balthus settled in the Morvan, Frédérique Tison, his brother Pierre's teenage stepdaughter arrived at Chassy. Her arrival marked a pivotal moment as she became Balthus' primary model in the ensuing years. Standing as a turning point in Balthus' art due to his financial security, the Chassy pictures are "impressive, much larger in scale and full of light and luminous colour...Formal concerns, decorative and surface effects, now take priority over the psychological undercurrents that characterize the artist's earlier works, especially those created in the stark, haunting studio in Paris."ⁱⁱ

"Nothing but a delicate flower threatens to disturb Frédérique as she lies dreaming on the sofa." —Sabine Rewald

One of eleven paintings executed between 1953-1961 depicting the female dreamer, *La Sieste*, 1958 features the teenage Frédérique reclining over the side of a sofa, asleep and framed by the window behind her portraying the Chassy landscape on a summer's day. The delicate afternoon light illuminates the room where Frédérique dreams away the day. At Chassy the walls of Balthus' studio depicted "the traces of his experiments in casein tempera, most notably the face of Frédérique, charmingly full and round as Quattrocento angel".ⁱⁱⁱ Many years later after traveling to Rome with Balthus while he was the director of the French Academy in the Villa Medici, Frédérique "began to realise that her true home was Chassy" and returned to "what could have been turned into Sleeping Beauty's castle, slumbering in nostalgia for a bygone age"; she instead chose to fill it with a "cheerful vitality" after Balthus left.^{iv} By this point, Frédérique, an artist in her own right, carved out her own creative space in the house by transforming the rooms into her studio and showcasing art created by her contemporaries as well as her own sculptures, drawings and tapestries.

A significant art historical trope, *the dreamer* has fascinated everyone from philosophers and artists to poets and psychoanalysts. For centuries artists especially have sought to depict the dreamer and the places the human mind frequents while we sleep. From nightmares to fantastical places, the way dreams and the dreamer have been depicted is ever evolving.



Sandro Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, c. 1485, National Gallery, London. Image: Bridgeman Images

Often depicted during the Italian Renaissance through sensual scenes from Greek mythology, dreaming came to be a spiritual experience. Under the patronage of the Medici, the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino conceived the notion of *vacatio animae*, "the theory that during sleep the soul temporarily vacates the body and becomes free of earthly bonds". Even Sandro Botticelli was enticed by the act of dreaming and used sleep to portray love and vulnerability in his depiction of Venus beside Mars as he sleeps, defenseless. "While the theme of dreams gave license for the depiction of pagan and sensual scenes, artists were regularly called upon to represent two biblical dreams: the story of Jacob's Ladder and Joseph's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dream... Italian artists seem to have taken little interest in depicting nightmares until exposed to the works of Bosch and other northern painters."^v The 16th century depiction of *The Vision of Tundale*, "shows not only a hallucinatory Boschian panorama but also...the sleeping sinner Tundale himself experiencing the nightmare."^{vi}

"[Artists] have intense fascination with mythology, dreams, religious themes, the parallel between sleep and death, reward, abandonment of conscious control, healing, a depiction of innocence and serenity, and the erotic." —Dr. Meir Kryger



[left] Follower of Hieronymus Bosch, *The Vision of Tundale*, c. 1485, Denver Art Museum. Image: Album/Alamy Stock Photo [right] Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, Detroit Institute of Arts. Image: Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Smokler and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman

One of art history's most famous images of a dream, Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* from 1781 depicts not only the sleeping woman but also the subject of her nightmare—the frightening incubus sitting atop her chest. After its first exhibition in 1872 at the Royal Academy of Art in London, critics were both horrified and fascinated by the hauntingly erotic nightmarish scene before them. Later in the 20th century, the Surrealists “used dreams to attack the European culture they hated”.^{vii} “Thus the dream finds itself reduced to a mere parenthesis” said André Breton “as is the night.”^{viii} Salvador Dalí, the movement's most notorious portrayer of dreams “is a good example of someone who didn't portray his dreams” but rather “he modelled his paintings on dreams.”^{ix}



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Woman with Yellow Hair*, 1931, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: Superstock / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Salvador Dalí, *Dream caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate a Second before Waking up*, 1944, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In 1932, Pablo Picasso created a revered series of astonishingly intimate paintings depicting his lover Marie-Thérèse Walter as a reclining odalisque. Like Balthus' *La Sieste*, these paintings are intimate depictions filled with light depicting the tenderness that overcomes a sleeping soul. They follow in the tradition of their Renaissance predecessors who painted sleeping souls resting in broad daylight since “half a millennium ago the night was almost universally believed to be a dangerous time, when the night air itself was poisonous, with thieves and brigands abroad, and witches and incubi going about their nefarious business.”^x With its luminous light and delicate composition “nothing but a delicate flower threatens to disturb Frédérique as she lies dreaming on the sofa” in *La Sieste*.^{xi}

ⁱ Baladine Klossowska quoted in Sabine Rewald, *Balthus. Cats and Girls*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2013, p. 41

ⁱⁱ Sabine Rewald, *Balthus. Cats and Girls*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2013, pp. 42-43

ⁱⁱⁱ Jean Clair, “The Lure of Chassy: A Legacy of Balthus in the Morvan Hills of France,” *Architectural Digest*, October 1984, p. 187.

Balthus

^{iv} Jean Clair, "The Lure of Chassy: A Legacy of Balthus in the Morvan Hills of France," *Architectural Digest*, October 1984, p. 187.

^v Roderick Conway Morris, "Dreams and the Renaissance", *The New York Times*, July 26, 2013, [online](#).

^{vi} Roderick Conway Morris, "Dreams and the Renaissance", *The New York Times*, July 26, 2013, [online](#).

^{vii} Drake Baer, "How the Surrealists Harnessed Their Dreams and Made the World Way Weirder", *The Cut*, October 14, 2016, [online](#).

^{viii} André Breton quoted in Drake Baer, "How the Surrealists Harnessed Their Dreams and Made the World Way Weirder", *The Cut*, October 14, 2016, [online](#).

^{ix} Willard Bohn quoted in Drake Baer, "How the Surrealists Harnessed Their Dreams and Made the World Way Weirder", *The Cut*, October 14, 2016, [online](#).

^x Roderick Conway Morris, "Dreams and the Renaissance", *The New York Times*, July 26, 2013, [online](#).

^{xi} Sabine Rewald, *Balthus. Cats and Girls*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2013, p. 43

Provenance

Galerie Henriette Gomès, Paris

Private Collection, Paris (acquired from the above in 1991)

Hôtel Drouot, Paris, March 16, 2018, lot 27

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Henriette Gomès, *Balthus*, June 1966

Paris, Galerie Henriette Gomès, *Balthus*, November 1983–January 1984

Musée de la Ville de Kyoto, *Balthus*, June 17–July 22, 1984, no. 23, p. 104 (illustrated, p. 69)

Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Balthus: Un atelier dans le Morvan, 1953–1961*, June 12–September 27, 1999, no. 40, pp. 93–94 (illustrated, p. 95)

Literature

Balthus, exh. cat., Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, 1983, no. 189, p. 371 (illustrated)

Jean Clair, "The Lure of Chassy: A Legacy of Balthus in the Morvan Hills of France," *Architectural Digest*, October 1984, p. 187 (titled as *The Siesta*)

Sarah Kofman, *Mélancolie de l'art*, Paris, 1985, p. 89

Jean Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990, p. 138 (illustrated)

Claude Roy, *Balthus*, Paris, 1996, p. 180 (illustrated)

Jean Clair and Virginie Monnier, *Balthus: Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre complet*, Paris, 1999, pl. P287, p. 181 (illustrated, p. 180)

Denis Picard, "Dijon: Balthus," *Connaissance des arts*, vol. 563, July/August 1999, fig. 3, p. 12 (illustrated)

Anne Doridou-Heim, "Une invitation à la sieste signée Balthus," *La Gazette Drouot*, March 22, 2018, online (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM THE PAUL AND ANNA WARHOLA
ESTATE

40

Andy Warhol

*Nosepicker I: Why Pick on Me (The Broad Gave Me My
Face But I Can Pick My Own Nose)*

signed with the artist's initials "a.w." on the reverse
tempera and ink on Masonite
30 1/8 x 25 in. (76.5 x 63.5 cm)
Executed in 1948.

Estimate

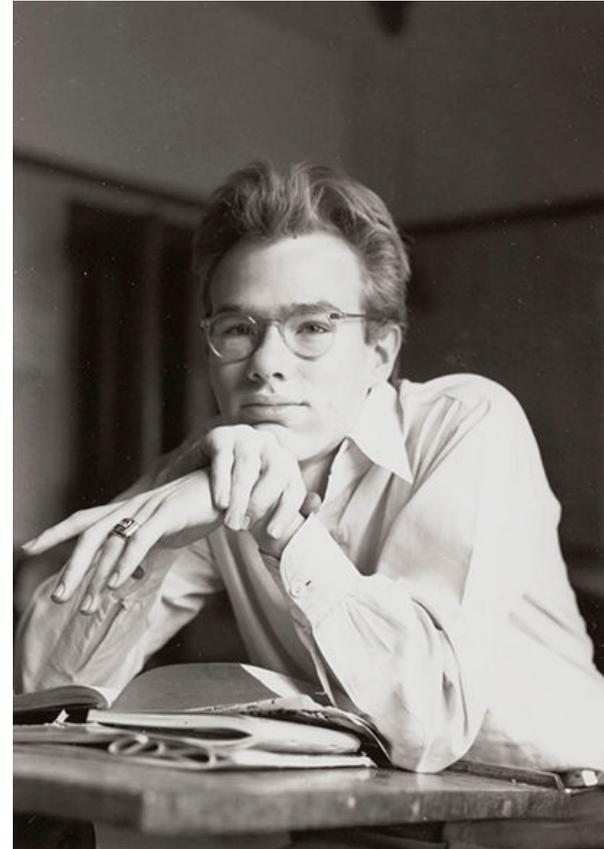
\$300,000 — 500,000

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"I always say, before there was the soup can, there was the Nosepicker I." —James Warhola

As a 20-year-old art student at the end of 1948, Andy Warhol created his first masterpiece. Widely exhibited and contextualized as his first self-portrait, *Nosepicker I: Why Pick on Me (The Broad Gave Me My Face But I Can Pick My Own Nose)*, crudely renders the artist then still known as Andrew Warhola—immediately identifiable by his distinctive blonde hair and bulbous red nose—with a finger jammed up his nostril in a gesture that is at once repulsive and absorbing, playful and intimate. A rare example of a painting by Warhol's hand, it perhaps evokes the expressive rawness of Jean Dubuffet more than the silkscreened aesthetic of Warhol's later persona. However, *Nosepicker I's* interrogation of reproduction, self-image, and so-called "good" taste epitomize the Warholian themes that already underpinned his revolutionary approach. Indicative of the iconoclastic genius that was to come, this incredible relic of one of the 20th history's greatest visionaries has remained in the artist's family until now.



Andy Warhol as a student at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1947. Image: Philip Pearlstein Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

According to James Warhola, his nephew, the subject was likely inspired by Warhol's brother's children. "As my father told the story, the little kids were always picking their noses, and my uncle got very perturbed about it," Warhola recalled. "When he'd see my father, he'd say, 'Can't they stop?'"ⁱ Unsettled by this memory, Warhol employed the image of a young boy, finger crudely thrust up his nostril, in at least three works—a preliminary drawing and two subsequent paintings—during a particularly formative period in his early artistic development.

A senior majoring in "pictorial design" at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Warhol had begun to develop a close and heavily influential rapport with one of his instructors, Sam Rosenberg. With a

keen interest in direct observation—he was renowned for his Pittsburgh street scenes—Rosenberg introduced Warhol and his classmates to an “intuitive” method of painting, privileging Ben Shahn and Paul Klee as innovators of a unique and liberated pictorial language.

These 20th century masters soon became two of Warhol’s most enduring influences; specifically, he was invested in the fluid and expressive contours they used to define images that were at once amusing yet sincere.

“I paint pictures of myself to remind myself that I’m still around.” —Andy Warhol



[left] Paul Klee, *Senecio (Baldgreis)*, 1922, Kunstmuseum Basel. Image: HIP / Art Resource, NY [right] Jean Dubuffet, *Léautaud, sorcier peau-rouge (Léautaud, the red-skinned sorcerer)*, 1946, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Following in the spirit of Klee’s pithy maxim—“a dot is a line that went for a walk”—he began executing humor-inflected paintings and drawings that traced his development of a new technique: “blotted-line” transferring. This idiosyncratic process, a version of monotype printing, became Warhol’s first aesthetic trademark and originally stemmed from financial necessity. The youngest child of a working-class immigrant family in Pittsburgh, the artist was obliged to work with the least expensive drawing paper, which caused the ink to run and smear unpredictably. But where others saw difficulty, Warhol saw opportunity: a means of slyly incorporating a form of printmaking into his practice that would echo the distinctive broken contours that Shahn manually produced. “How does he do it?” Ingrid Schaffner, the senior curator at the Institute of

Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, elucidated his process. “Make a drawing in pencil. Go over it in ink, and while the ink is still drying, press down with another piece of paper. Voila: The blotted impression you lift up is the new original.”ⁱⁱ

As an early iteration of this new technique, *Nosepicker I* is one of Warhol’s first works in which the act of reproduction figures as an element of the medium itself. Betraying his predilection for seriality, the blotted lines that outline the subject and adorn the decorative background presaged a career later preoccupied with a form of more mechanical repetition: silkscreen printing. This postmodern interrogation of the multiple would also manifest itself in Warhol’s propensity to return to his own image time and time again in an iconic body of self-portraits. Beginning with *Nosepicker I* and spanning almost four decades, these traced his evolution from Andrew Warhola to rising ‘60s art world star, and then to one of the greatest figures of the 20th century.



Andy Warhol, Photobooth *Self-Portrait*, c. 1963, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 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

Soon after completing the work, he gave it a tongue-in-cheek title, *The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose* (occasionally alternatively referred to as the more polite *The Lord Gave Me My Face...*). He then sent his daring submission to the 39th Annual Exhibition of the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh in January 1949, where it greatly impressed one of the jurors: George Grosz, the prominent proponent of Berlin Dada and the New Objectivity movement, who had by then settled in America. However, Grosz and the second juror, who found it unforgivably repulsive, were deadlocked; in the end, it was refused inclusion on the grounds of its supposedly “offensive” subject matter.

"You know, people want to see you. Your looks are responsible for a certain part of your fame—they feed the imagination." —Andy Warhol

Undeterred and remaining confident in his first masterwork, Warhol resubmitted it—cleverly retitled *Why Pick on Me* in a subtle nod to the earlier rejection, intentional or not—to an exclusive summer group exhibition at the Arts and Crafts Center a few months later. Attracting much local attention for its audacious irreverence and formal inventiveness, *Nosepicker I* enjoyed, as art historian Dieter Koeplin reminisced, “a fine *succès de scandale*, largely because the stir it had caused had now become public knowledge.”ⁱⁱⁱ

This story of *Nosepicker I*'s reception is a fitting metaphor for Warhol's career, which saw him indefatigably pushing up against the walls of what was possible during his time. Relegated to the ranks of others who were turned away from academic salons for work that was considered too transgressive—Gustave Courbet, Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, Vincent van Gogh—Warhol was often ostracized from the mainstream art world for his engagement with commercial or “low” culture. In the end, these rejections only galvanized his success; his critics failed to realize that his main *métier* was the spectacle itself.



Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait*, 1986, Tate Modern, London. Image: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The art historian Edward Powers linguistically deconstructed the different forms of “picking” at play in Warhol’s original title, *The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose*. Warhol can “pick” his nose with his finger, he elucidated, as he does in the present work, but he can also “pick” (as in, choose) his own nose, as he did almost a decade later when he pursued rhinoplasty to surgically alter his greatest cosmetic insecurity.^{iv} But in the same spirit he could also “pick” his own life, including one radically different from the stifling conventions of post-war routine—like the turbulent life of fame and glamour his later subjects picked. “His early painting of a nose picker was his first flamboyant self-depiction—here, as an ungainly, single-minded boy giving himself a

little pleasure and relief, as if no one were watching, or as if a boy picking his nose were the most natural, riveting, and erotic sight in the world,” Wayne Koestenbaum expressed in his landmark biography of the artist. “So began Warhol’s career: he strove to frame solitary bodies picking themselves, redirecting their anatomies with a broad’s showy flair.”^v

ⁱ Shirley McMarlin, “Andy Warhol’s family plans to auction 10 art school paintings,” *Tribune-Review*, August 9, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Ingrid Schaffner, quoted in Gary Comenas, “Andy Warhol: From Nowhere to Up There,” *Warholstars* [blog], p. 10.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dieter Koeplin, quoted in Gary Comenas, “Andy Warhol: From Nowhere to Up There,” *Warholstars* [blog], p. 10.

^{vi} Edward D. Powers, “‘All Things That I Didn’t Want to Change Anyway’: Andy Warhol and the Sociology of Difference,” *American Art*, vol. 26, no. 1, Spring 2012, pp. 56-58.

^v Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, New York, 2001, p. 32.

Provenance

Bequeathed by the artist to the present owners circa 1950

Exhibited

Pittsburgh, Arts and Crafts Center, *Carnegie Institute Senior Show*, June 1949
 New York, Grey Art Gallery & Study Center, New York University; Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Museum of Art; Philadelphia, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, “*Success is a job in New York...”: The Early Art and Business of Andy Warhol*, March 14–November 26, 1989, no. 3, p. 75 (dated 1946)
 Paris, Galeries Nationales d’Exposition du Grand Palais, *Warhol: Le grand monde d’Andy Warhol*, March 16–July 13, 2009, no. 1, pp. 70-71 (illustrated, p. 68)
 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, February 3, 2010–April 1, 2019 (on extended loan)
 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, *Andy Warhol: The College Years*, August 6, 2010–January 2, 2011
 Pittsburgh, The Warhol Museum, *Andy Warhol / Ai Weiwei*, June 4–September 11, 2016
 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, *My Perfect, Imperfect Body*, October 21, 2016–January 22, 2017, p. 11, 13, 73 (illustrated, p. 41)
 Cologne, Museum Ludwig, *Andy Warhol Now*, December 12, 2020–June 13, 2021 (pp. 47, 212, illustrated, p. 72); then travelled as Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, *Andy Warhol*, July 21–October 24, 2021 (pp. 47, 210, illustrated, p. 72); then travelled as Aspen Art Museum, *Andy Warhol: Lifetimes*, December 3, 2021–March 27, 2022

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- José María Faerna, ed., *Warhol*, New York, 1997, p. 7
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- Raymond M. Herbenick, *Andy Warhol's Religious and Ethnic Roots: The Carpatho-Rusyn Influence on His Art*, Lewiston, 1997, pp. 38-39, 57, 86, 89
- Andy Warhol: Drawings, 1942-1987*, exh. cat., Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, 1998, p. 20
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- Kelly M. Cresap, *Pop Trickster Fool: Warhol Performs Naivete*, Urbana, 2004, pp. 46, 120
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- Joseph D. Ketner II, *Andy Warhol*, London, 2013, p. 15
- Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *The Pop Revolution: The People Who Radically Transformed the World*, London, 2013, p. 97
- Andy Warhol: 15 Minutes Eternal*, exh. cat., Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2014, fig. 9, p. 271 (illustrated, p. 265)
- KZ - KAMPF - KUNST. Boris Lurie: NO!Art, exh. cat., Kölner NSDokumentationszentrum, Cologne, 2014, pp. 111, 113
- Philip Pearlstein, "Watching Warhola Become Warhol," *ARTnews*, vol. 113, no. 4, April 2014, p. 77
- Cristina Rouvalis, "Andy Warhol, Revealed," *Carnegie Magazine*, Summer 2014, p. 15
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John Martin Tilley, "We Need to Talk About Andy," *office*, May 9, 2019, online

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Stefan Trinks, "Der unbekannte Andy Warhol," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, March 10, 2021, online (illustrated)

Anthony E. Grudin, *Like a Little Dog: Andy Warhol's Queer Ecologies*, Oakland, 2022, fig. 7, p. 25 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM THE PAUL AND ANNA WARHOLA
ESTATE

41

Andy Warhol

Living Room

tempera, watercolor, ink, graphite and collage on
paper

15 x 19 3/4 in. (38.1 x 50.2 cm)

Executed in 1948, this work is accompanied by the
artist's original course assignment text affixed to the
reverse.

Estimate

\$250,000 — 450,000

[Go to Lot](#)





The present work photographed in the Warhola family living room. Image: Courtesy of the Warhola family

In 1948, Andy Warhol was still Andrew Warhola: the son of Carpatho-Rusyn emigrants, Pittsburgh native, ardent Byzantine Catholic, child of the Depression, and 21-year-old art school student. He was also a resident of 3252 Dawson Street, where he had been raised with his two brothers, Paul and John, by his working-class parents, Andrej and Julia, and which was his home until he moved to New York in 1949. The \$3,200 two-bedroom house was modest, but nonetheless it provided luxuries that before then had been unknown to the Warholas, including a furnace and bathroom with cold and hot running water.

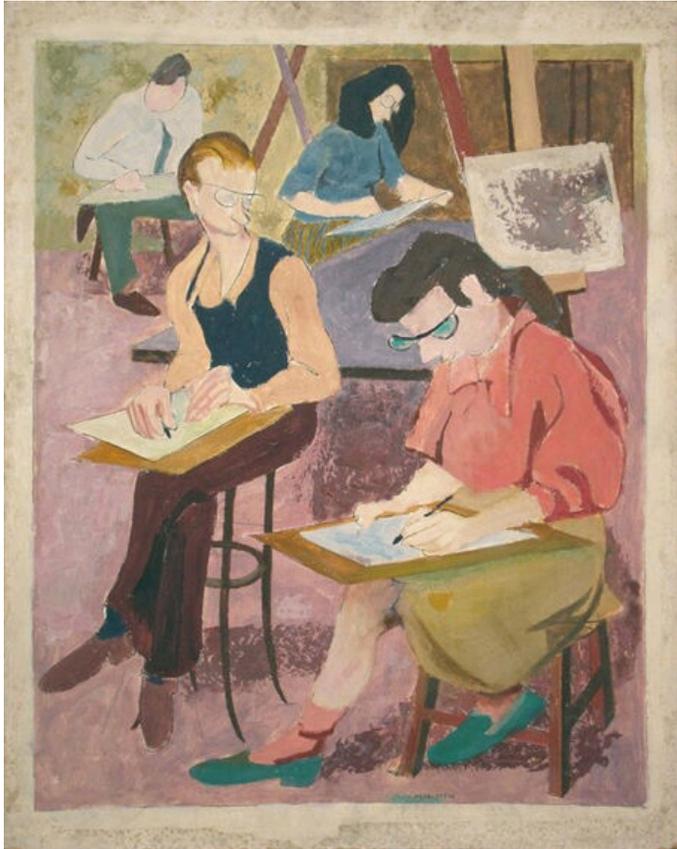
It was this Andrew Warhola that captured his family residence in a prodigious watercolor for a university assignment—an incredible relic of one of the most iconic figures of modern art history. Expertly manipulating the textural versatility of the medium to articulate varying shades of red, *Living Room* depicts the worn and beloved heart of the Warhola residence, adorned with the family's shabby maroon sofa and armchair, wooden rocking chair, and brick fireplace that Andrej built. Redolent of the exquisitely not-quite-resolved interiors of Pierre Bonnard, Warhol's expressive submission immediately stood out against those of his classmates—especially Philip Pearlstein's, which is now held in The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh—that were characterized

by a more academic and observation-driven approach. The work, which has remained in the Warhola family until now, is a rare painted example of the 20th century master's hand, executed before he transitioned to his silkscreen technique and machine aesthetic.



Pierre Bonnard, *The Dressing Room*, 1914. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

A major in “pictorial design” at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Warhol spent his junior year consumed by Professor Robert Lepper’s required Individual and Social Analysis course. The spring semester of the class was dedicated to the so-called “Oakland Project,” a half-anthropological, half-visual study of the titular Pittsburgh neighborhood that lay beyond the university’s campus. “Professor Lepper conceived of it as more complex than our simply going into the thoroughfares as artist-reporters, recording everything in sight,” Bennard Perlman, Warhol’s classmate, recalled. “We were to become sociologists and anthropologists [ourselves].”¹



Philip Pearlstein, *Art Class*, 1946–1947, Collection of the Artist. Artwork: © Philip Pearlstein / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. (Left: Andy Warhol; right: Eleanor Simon)

"Andy did marvelous drawings [in 1948]... Everyone else would be very complicated, but he would just make it so simple, as it was. Everybody was surprised." —Philip Pearlstein

One exercise called for the students—or, as Lepper called them, “pictorial anthropologists”—to visualize a living room for an imaginary Oakland family and elucidate in a supplemental written component how the depicted belongings denoted the unseen characters’ status and traits. Having lived in the working-class neighborhood for almost 15 years, the artist cleverly bent the rules and

covertly rendered the Warhola residence for a multigenerational household of six. The family he envisioned bore a thinly veiled resemblance to his own: a European matriarch whose husband is deceased, just like Warhol’s father, lives with her American-born daughter (Warhol did have a sister, but she died at only a few weeks old). The daughter’s truck driver husband, as well as their three children—Warhol also had two siblings—round out the household.

The artist’s explanatory essay, typed by Warhol and still affixed to the reverse of the present work, attributes the “foreign” taste of the living room, expressed in the tattered Oriental carpet and lace doilies, to the immigrant mother’s upbringing overseas. The small children are responsible for the mess, manifested by disheveled rugs and wrinkled newspaper; they “play and eat in the living room” and “climb and jump on the furniture.” In a sense, Warhol handed himself a more difficult task than was assigned: to understand not only what his family home and belongings said about himself, but also what they might say about their other owners in a parallel universe. Lepper had meant to demonstrate to his students the ostensible objectivity of social science, but *Living Room* subtly undermined this premise, betraying that many interpretations can be true at once.

The work thus reveals as much about Warhol’s life and childhood as it does that of its hypothetical inhabitants. A focal point of the picture is the tabletop wooden radio in the back right corner of the room—the Warhola family’s first and only radio, spontaneously purchased by Andrej in an uncharacteristic moment of indulgence. This radio was one of Warhol’s first introductions to media and culture: when he was bedridden with St. Vitus’ Dance as a child, he listened along to various programs, including his favorite, *The Shadow*, a serial detective show whose eponymous character was an enduring figure of the American pulp era. By the 1940s, according to Warhol biographer Victor Bockris, the same radio “had become the family hearth, particularly with the war bulletins and voices of Hitler, Churchill, and Edward R. Murrow coming every night from Europe.”ⁱⁱ

"Living Room is a startlingly condensed, rich, incredibly well-observed and precociously complicated and bewitching picture that pulls us into its world... it's an almost indispensable document of where he came from." —Jerry Saltz

The other focal point of the composition is the crucifix above the mantle, a memento of his father’s death with an evocative impact that is underscored by its intentional inclusion amidst the elimination of much of the Warhola décor. “He left out Mother’s holy pictures,” Paul recalled, “but he put in the cross from Dad’s funeral, on the fireplace where we always kept it.”ⁱⁱⁱ On one hand, the crucifix in *Living Room* signifies the artist’s religious upbringing, which would resurface in his later appropriation of Christian artworks such as *The Last Supper*. But for Warhol, as epitomized by the macabre image of Jesus on the cross, religion and death were inextricably linked—two sides of the same coin. When their father passed in 1942, his body was laid out in the living room for three days for mourning, as was customary in the Byzantine Catholic Church. The potential encounter with Andrej’s corpse terrified Warhol, who—then only 13 years old—hid under his bed and refused to emerge from his room until he was given permission to stay with extended family until the

funeral. This traumatizing experience was the impetus of the artist's crippling fear of death, one that would haunt him for the rest of his life and come frighteningly close to fruition when he was shot by radical feminist Valerie Solanas in 1968.



Vincent van Gogh, *The Bedroom*, 1889, The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.417

Likening *Living Room* to Vincent van Gogh's *The Bedroom* (1888), critic Jerry Saltz acclaimed the work's intimate portrayal of the private space where Warhol's spent his childhood, calling it an "indispensable document of where he came from." It is not only an account of his formative years, however, but a harbinger of what was to come. Highlighted in countless museum exhibitions, such as the recent retrospective *Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Living Room* is a seminal example of Warhol's signature negotiation of illusion and reality. The false narrative he playfully constructed for a place of deep personal significance to him presages his later unraveling of the glittering face of celebrity and stardom and the turbulent truth that lay behind it. One of the central tenets of his revolutionary approach, which was just becoming visible in *Living Room*, it was this same interrogation of identity that

bridged Andy Warhol the icon and Andrew Warhola the person.

i Bennard Perlman, "The Education of Andy Warhol," in *The Andy Warhol Museum: The Inaugural Publication*, ed. Callie Angell et al., New York, 1994, p. 161-163.

ii Victor Bockris, *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol*, New York, 1989, p. 33.

iii Paul Warhola, quoted in Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*, New York, 2014, p. 26.

iv Jerry Saltz, "Andy Warhol in Eight Works," *Vulture*, November 8, 2018, [online](#)

Provenance

Bequeathed by the artist to the present owners circa 1950

Exhibited

Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein (no. 17, p. 221, illustrated, p. 65; dated circa 1945); Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle; Bremen, Kunsthalle; Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus; Berlin, Haus am Waldsee; Vienna, Museum Moderner Kunst; Lucerne, Kunstmuseum, *Andy Warhol: Das zeichnerische Werk 1942-1975*, February 19, 1976–March 6, 1977 New York, Grey Art Gallery & Study Center; Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Museum of Art; Philadelphia, Institute of Contemporary Art, "*Success is a job in New York...*": *The Early Art and Business of Andy Warhol*, March 14–November 26, 1989, fig. 27A, no. 1, pp. 28, 75 (illustrated, p. 27; dated circa 1945); then travelled as Jouy-en-Josas, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, *Andy Warhol System: Pub - Pop - Rock, Success is a Job in New York*, June 14–September 8, 1990 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, *Robert Lepper: Artists and Teacher*, August 23, 2002–January 12, 2003 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, February 3, 2010–April 1, 2019 (on extended loan) Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, *Andy Warhol: The College Years*, August 6, 2010–January 2, 2011 Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, *Pearlstein | Warhol | Cantor: From Pittsburgh to New York*, May 30–September 6, 2015, p. 59 (illustrated, p. 32); then travelled as New York, Betty Cuninghame Gallery, *Pearlstein | Warhol | Cantor: From Carnegie Tech to New York*, December 3, 2015–March 5, 2016 Stockbridge, The Norman Rockwell Museum, *Inventing America: Rockwell + Warhol*, June 10–October 29, 2017, p. 83 (illustrated, p. 7) New York, Whitney Museum of American Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Art Institute of Chicago, *Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again*, November 12, 2018–January 26, 2020, pp. 17, 110, 386 (illustrated, p. 111) Brooklyn Museum, *Andy Warhol: Revelation*, November 19, 2021–June 19, 2022

Literature

- Rainer Crone, *Andy Warhol: A Picture Show by the Artist*, New York, 1987, no. 17, p. 268 (illustrated, p. 39; dated circa 1945)
- David Bourdon, *Warhol*, New York, 1989, pl. 7, p. 18 (illustrated, p. 19)
- Callie Angell, *The Andy Warhol Museum*, Pittsburgh, 1994, p. 162 (illustrated)
- Roberta Smith, "The New Warhol Museum: A Shrine for an Iconoclast," *The New York Times*, May 26, 1994, p. C18
- Van M. Cagle, *Reconstructing Pop/Subculture: Art, Rock, and Andy Warhol*, Thousand Oaks, 1995, p. 64 (dated 1946-1947)
- Reva Wolf, "Introduction: A Radio and a Crucifix," *Religion and the Arts*, vol. 1, no. 1, Fall 1996, fig. 1, pp. 11, 13 (illustrated, p. 10)
- Raymond M. Herbenick, *Andy Warhol's Religious and Ethnic Roots: The Carpatho-Rusyn Influence on His Art*, Lewiston, 1997, pp. 18, 31
- Jane Daggett Dillenberger, *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol*, New York, 1998, fig. 5, p. 19 (illustrated)
- Susan Goldman Rubin, *Andy Warhol: Pop Art Painter*, New York, 2006, pp. 10-11 (illustrated)
- Michael J. Golec, *The Brillo Box Archive: Aesthetics, Design, and Art*, Hanover, 2008, pp. 92, 94-95
- Matt Wrbcian and GERALYN Huxley, *Andy Warhol Treasures*, London, 2009, p. 8 (illustrated)
- Kurt Shaw, "'College Years' shows Warhol's early work," *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, November 17, 2010, online
- Rudo Prekop and Michal Cihlář, *Andy Warhol and Czechoslovakia*, Řevnice, 2011, p. 62 (illustrated)
- Andy Warhol: 15 Minutes Eternal*, exh. cat., Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2014, fig. 8, p. 267 (illustrated, p. 265; dated 1946-1947)
- Barbara Klein, "Before They Were Famous," *Carnegie Magazine*, Summer 2015, online (illustrated)
- Ed Breslin, "Pearlstein, Warhol, Cantor: From Carnegie Tech to New York," *The Brooklyn Rail*, February 2016, online
- Catherine D. Ansporn, "The Secret Life of Andy Warhol," *Paper City Magazine*, August 6, 2016, online (illustrated; dated circa 1946-1947)
- Bertrand Rougé, "Warhol, Duchamp, le geste ironique de l'art et le design comme rien. In-différence, inframince et leftover dans *Fountain* et les *Boîtes Brillo*," *Figures de l'art*, no. 34, November 2017, p. 227 (illustrated, p. 226)
- Katherine Atkins and Kelly Kivland, eds., *Artists on Andy Warhol: Robert Buck, Glenn Ligon, Jorge Pardo, Kara Walker, James Welling*, New York, 2018, p. 43 (illustrated)
- Tim Teeman, "The Whitney Museum's Andy Warhol Show Is More Than His Greatest Hits," *The Daily Beast*, November 7, 2018, online
- Jerry Saltz, "This Too Is Andy Warhol, Shunned and Swooned Over: The Story of an American Revolutionary in Eight Works," *Vulture*, November 8, 2018, online (illustrated)
- Jill Spalding, "Warhol: From A to B and Back Again," *studio international*, November 14, 2018, online (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2018, installation view illustrated)
- Ariella Budick, "Andy Warhol: social critic, branding wizard," *Financial Times*, November 16, 2018, online (illustrated)
- Murray Whyte, "Andy Warhol, beyond the limelight," *The Boston Globe*, December 2, 2018, p. N7
- Kristin Nord, "Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again," *Antiques And The Arts Weekly*, January 22, 2019, online
- Stephen Metcalf, "Warhol's Bleak Prophecy," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2019, online
- "Why Andy Warhol retrospective has special resonance in the Instagram age," *PBS News Hour*, February 20, 2019, online (illustrated, 1:37-1:41)
- Steve Johnson, "You know less about Andy Warhol than you think," *The Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 2019, Section 4, p. 8
- Benjamin Secher, "'Ma, Ma, let's say our prayers...'," *The Daily Telegraph*, March 7, 2020, p. 4
- Anthea Gerrie, "Review: Warhol at the Tate," *Design Curial*, July 16, 2020, online
- Andy Warhol*, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2020, fig. 3, p. 15 (illustrated, p. 12)
- Andy Warhol...From the Beginning and Back*, exh. cat., BWA SOKÓŁ Gallery of Contemporary Art, Nowy Sącz, 2021, p. 22 (illustrated)
- Kame Hame, "The Brooklyn Museum Examines Andy Warhol's Catholic Faith," *Widewalls*, December 6, 2021, online (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM AN EXCEPTIONAL PRIVATE
COLLECTION

42 ♦

Robert Motherwell

Open No. 25: In Blue with Variations

signed with the artist's initials and dated "RM 68"
lower right

acrylic and charcoal on canvas
68 1/8 x 81 in. (173 x 205.7 cm)

Painted in 1968.

Estimate

\$900,000 — 1,200,000

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Characterized by its careful, deliberate application of color, *Open No. 25: In Blue with Variations*, 1968, epitomizes the raw, evocative power encapsulated in Robert Motherwell's acclaimed *Open* series. In these *Opens*—which predominantly engaged the artist between 1967 and 1974—the artist transmitted his expressive faculties through a compositional structure typified by its sublime economy of form. This visual clarity is embodied in the present work in the three-sided “U” shape, contoured by straight black and deep green lines, in the upper center of the painterly expanse: a motif which resurfaced, in different manifestations, throughout Motherwell's oeuvre. While many of the *Open* works depict this articulation against a monochromatic background, the present work features a two-tone blue surface that is punctuated by a white horizontal line, further complicating the picture's spatial indeterminacy. In their coalescence of the subjective gesture of Abstract Expressionism and the geometric formalism of Minimalism, Motherwell's *Opens* are some of the most emotionally rich of his oeuvre, and a number of them are included in preeminent international collections, such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



The present work installed at left in the exhibition *Robert Motherwell: “Open” Series, 1967-1969* at Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York, May 13, 1969. Artwork: © 2022 Dedalus Foundation, Inc./Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society, New York

The genesis of the *Open* series was in Motherwell's studio in 1967, when his curiosity was piqued by the resulting shapes of the back of a small painting leaned against the recto of a painted one. After outlining the smaller canvas in charcoal on the larger one, the artist inverted the ensuing compositions so that the rectangle was placed at the top of the surface; thus, according to Motherwell, “the series began as a ‘door’” but was “ultimately reversed into a ‘window.’”ⁱ Struck by the metaphorical possibilities of the “window,” and the relationship it evokes between the internality of emotions and the externality of the senses, the artist continued the *Open* series for almost two decades, until the early 1980s.

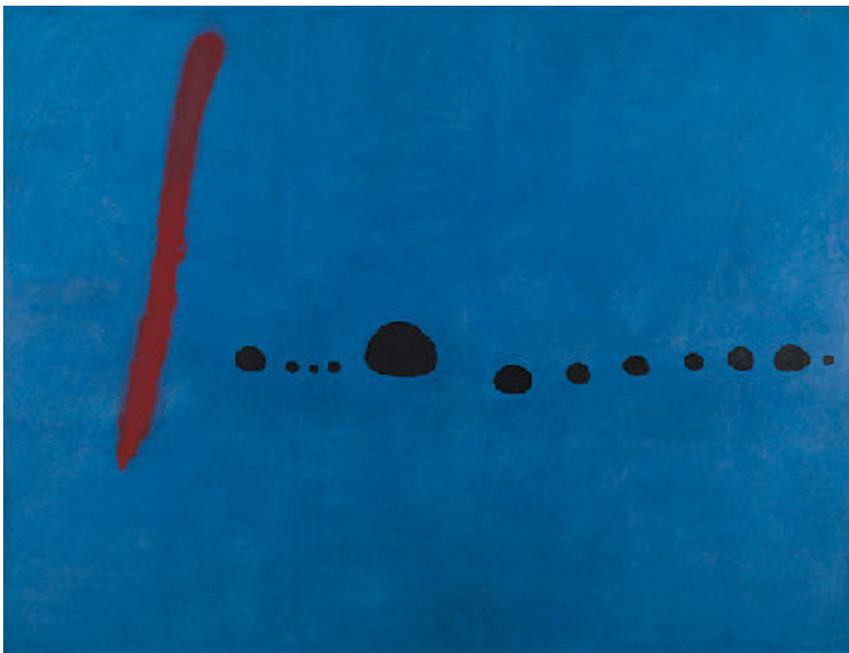
“We have only to look at the force of one of the Opens...to feel the complexity of observation the painter requires of himself and the viewer.” —Mary Ann Caws

Motherwell was initially unaware that the series had brought his career full circle: after more than a year of producing *Opens*, the artist rediscovered a painting from almost thirty years earlier—*Spanish Picture with Window*, 1941, Museum Art Museum of Fort Worth—in which he had depicted a remarkably similar “window” in the upper left hand corner of a field of color. Motherwell subsequently quipped, “There is no escape from one's individuality!”ⁱⁱ

The notion of an open-ended application of color was also likely prompted by Motherwell's deep admiration of Rafael Alberti's 1948 poem cycle *A la pintura*, whose poetic invocations of color profoundly affected the artist. During the creation of *Open No. 25*, Motherwell had recently embarked on a four-year-long project, which would last until 1972, juxtaposing Alberti's poems with his *Open* prints in his eponymous artist's book. Of the six colors to which Alberti dedicated odes, three comprise Motherwell's chosen palette for the present work—blue, the most prominent shade in *A la pintura*, as well as black and white. “Mainly, I use each color as simply symbolic:...blue for the sky and sea,” the artist elucidating, assigning metaphorical referents to the colors he employed. “I guess that black and white, which I use most often, tend to be the protagonists.”ⁱⁱⁱ

“Blue was; and then painted itself into Time. How many blues make a Mediterranean?” —Rafael Alberti

Moreover, the subtle interplay between the line and the symbolic faculty of cerulean, charcoal, and white evokes Joan Miró's investigation into the graphic power of signs against intense, saturated fields of color. “Miró was the great painter of the generation after Picasso,” Motherwell espoused. “With those incomparably original, emptyish pictures, there was nobody close to him. His art had to do with improvisation, spontaneity, daring juxtaposition, imagery that was metaphorical, not literal. Abstract Expressionism had certain parallel aspirations...”^{iv}



Joan Miró, *Bleu II*, March 4, 1961. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: © CNAC/MNAM, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2022 Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Executed during a time when Minimalism had superseded Abstract Expressionism as the dominant force in the New York art world, *Open No. 25* is demonstrative of an aesthetic convergence in Motherwell's oeuvre. While this union betrays the artist's awareness and openness to contemporaneous artistic trends, despite being a pioneer of the New York School, the work is a manifestation of far more than an exercise in reducing painting to its essence. *Open No. 25* manifests Motherwell's investigation of painting's ability to simultaneously engage art history and explore philosophical inquiries. "In the end I realize that whatever 'meaning' that picture has is just the accumulated 'meaning' of ten thousand brush strokes, each one being decided as it was painted...as the accumulation of hundreds of decisions with the brush," the artist himself elucidated. "But when you steadily work at something over a period of time, your whole being must emerge."^v

ⁱ Robert Motherwell, "Statement of the Open Series" [1969], in Dore Ashton, ed., *The Writings of Robert Motherwell*, Berkeley, 2007, p. 244.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Motherwell, quoted in *An Exhibition of the Work of Robert Motherwell*, exh. cat., Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, 1963, n.p.

^{iv} Robert Motherwell, quoted in "Pulling Together the Bits and Pieces of Motherwell's Classic Modernism," *Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 1985, [online](#).

^v Robert Motherwell, quoted in *Robert Motherwell*, exh. cat., Albright-Knox Gallery, New York, Buffalo, 1983, p. 12.

Provenance

Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, Inc., New York
Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner Hempel, California (acquired from the above in 1969)
Gagosian Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1991

Exhibited

New York, Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, *Robert Motherwell: "Open" Series, 1967-1969*, May 13-June 7, 1969

Literature

Robert Motherwell, "Open No. 25," *Art Now: New York*, vol. 1, no. 5, May 1969, n.p. (illustrated)
"ART NOW: Color Slide & Lecture series," *Artforum*, vol. X, no. 2, October 1971, p. 94
Colin Naylor and Genesis P-Orridge, eds., *Contemporary Artists*, New York, 1977, p. 666
Jack Flam, Katy Rogers and Tim Clifford, eds., *Robert Motherwell Paintings and Collages: A Catalogue Raisonné, 1941-1991*, vol. II, New Haven, 2012, no. P421, p. 236 (illustrated)

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43

Luc Tuymans

Absence

signed, dedicated and dated "Luc Tuymans 2001 FOR .N.Y." on the reverse

oil on canvas

47 1/4 x 54 1/8 in. (120 x 137.5 cm)

Painted in 2001.

Estimate

\$400,000 — 600,000

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A pale grey chair sits alone on a white ground in Luc Tuymans' *Absence*, 2001. There is a faint, horseshoe-shaped impression in the back of the chair, signaling where someone, now absent, may have been. The motif of the empty chair recurs throughout art history, taken up by artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, and David Hockney, as both symbol of absence and of the artist's own presence. This enigmatic work, consistent with the artist's minimal, realist style, dates to a period of critical and political acclaim for the artist's paintings, circa 2000-2002. Sold in 2001 to benefit victims of 9/11, *Absence's* hauntingly spare composition is all the more poignant.



[left] Pablo Picasso, *Le Hibou sur la chaise*, 1947. Image: © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York [right] Vincent Van Gogh, *Van Gogh's Chair*, 1888. National Gallery, London. Image: © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY

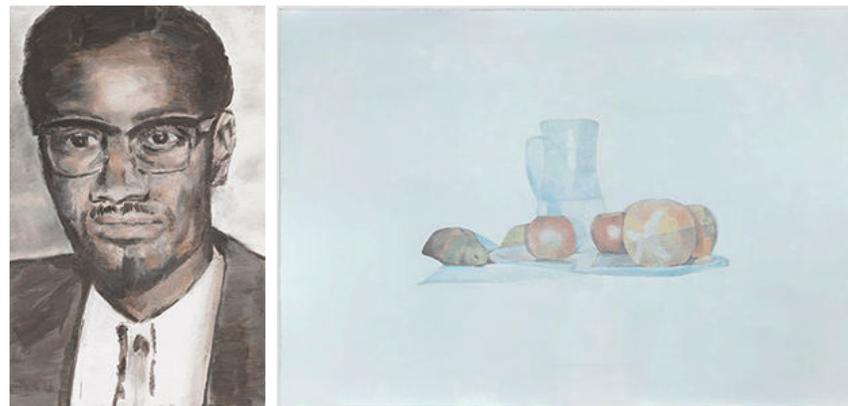
"I am not into aesthetics; I am into meaning and necessity... It's about anonymous elements, something that is not owned by anybody in particular. It's a collective thing, it's precise, it may look banal at first but it isn't." —Luc Tuymans

In *Absence*, Tuymans' restrained use of paint creates a chair that is more symbolic than representational. "I am not a material painter," the artist has said, meaning, "I don't use a lot of paint," and yet the subtle surfaces that result from his restrained hand have symbolic meaning, too.ⁱ The physical reality of the chair in *Absence* is not so important as the titular concept it symbolizes; the muted, perhaps fading, form could suggest that even the chair itself is becoming

absent. This sense of distance between the viewer and painted object is an essential result of Tuymans' artistry, recalling an out-of-focus photograph, or a fading memory. In this way, his paintings, though grounded in realism, become abstracted from reality.

Tuymans' work draws on collective themes, such as memory, longing, and fear. These muted moments of stillness, blurred in paint, encourage a form of morose introspection in the viewer; Tuymans calls this gloominess "a sort of second skin" on the surface of the painting.ⁱⁱ One could see it as a thematic layer of paint, enshrouding the canvas in emotional resonance.

Hans Rudolf Reust writes that quiet paintings such as *Absence* function as "active empty space[s]" in Tuymans' oeuvre, which throw into relief the sharp political meaning of adjacent works.ⁱⁱⁱ In this context, *Absence's* position between two of Tuymans' most poignant paintings becomes essential.



[left] Luc Tuymans, *Lumumba*, 2000. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artwork: © Luc Tuymans [right] Tuymans, *Untitled (Still Life)*, 2002. On loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Artwork: © Luc Tuymans

Representing the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2001, Tuymans shocked and provoked attendees with a group of paintings, including *Lumumba*, 2000, Museum of Modern Art, New York, that directly addressed the legacy of Belgian colonial violence in the Congo.^{iv} Many expected that his submission for documenta 11 in 2002 would address the recent events of 9/11 in the same manner, so the seemingly banal *Untitled (Still Life)*, 2002, on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, came as a surprise. Tuymans, however, who witnessed the events of 9/11 firsthand, defended the work by saying, "I thought it was impossible to do something with the event at that time. That's not how painting works."^v Instead, he sought to react with "a sort of anti-picture."^{vi}

Absence, then, can be seen both as the sort of “active empty space” Reust describes between *Lumumba* and *Untitled (Still Life)*, and also as a stylistic and symbolic prelude to the latter on its own. In an overwhelming news cycle of graphic images of human suffering, *Absence* offered a quieter way to process the trauma of 9/11. Rather than focusing on sensational imagery, or becoming overly sentimental, Tuymans’ “anti-picture” gives symbolic image to an emotional state—of memorial, of grief, of absence.

ⁱ Luc Tuymans, interviewed by Juan Vincent Aliaga [1996], *Luc Tuymans*, London; New York, 2003, p. 26.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hans Rudolf Reust, “Update,” in *Luc Tuymans*, p. 152.

^{iv} Lisa Liebmann, “Best of 2001: Top Tens,” *ArtForum*, December 2001, p. 96.

^v Luc Tuymans, quoted in Ben Eastham, “A Necessary Realism: Interview with Luc Tuymans”, *Apollo*, August 8, 2015, online.

^{vi} Luc Tuymans, quoted in exhibition guide to Luc Tuymans, Tate Modern, London, 2004, p. 8.

Provenance

David Zwirner, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2001

Exhibited

New York, David Zwirner, *I ♥ NY - A Benefit*, October 19–November 3, 2001

Literature

Artforum (Best of 2001: A Special Issue), vol. 40, no. 4, December 2001, p. 3 (illustrated on the cover)

Eva Meyer-Hermann, ed., *Luc Tuymans: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, 1995–2006*, vol. 2, New York, 2018, no. LTP 314, p. 278 (illustrated, p. 279)

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PROPERTY OF RICHARD ROUNDTREE

44

Ernie Barnes

Slam Before the Storm

signed "ERNIE BARNES" lower right; stamped with the artist's copyright stamp on the reverse
acrylic on canvas, in artist's frame
48 3/8 x 24 5/8 in. (122.9 x 62.5 cm)
Painted in 1979.

Please note, *Slam Before the Storm* is included in the upcoming Ernie Barnes Catalogue Raisonné by the artist's estate. We wish to thank the Ernie Barnes Estate for their kind assistance with this work.

Estimate

\$300,000 — 400,000

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Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/k62F7B0RJmw>

Introducing the Collector: Richard Roundtree



Richard Roundtree as Shaft, 1970. Image: Moviestore Collection Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Ernie Barnes' *Slam Before the Storm* comes from Richard Roundtree, the iconic actor best known for his role as John Shaft in the *Shaft* movie franchise. His breakout performance in the first *Shaft* film—a 1971 classic that defined the "Blaxploitation" genre—earned him a Golden Globe nomination.

Roundtree was born in 1942 in New Rochelle, New York, and began his career as a model, having been discovered by Eunice W. Johnson, of the Johnson Publishing Company, which published *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. Over his five decades as an actor, he has appeared in some 160 film and television projects—sharing the screen with actors including Clint Eastwood, Peter O'Toole, Laurence Olivier, Samuel L. Jackson, and Brad Pitt—and received numerous awards, such as an MTV Lifetime Achievement Award, a Peabody Award, and a Black Theater Alliance Lifetime Achievement Award.

Roundtree was familiar with Barnes' football career in the 1960s and learned of his artistic practice when Sammy Davis Jr. and Charlton Heston purchased his works. He discovered that Barnes lived just four blocks away from him in Los Angeles and walked to his home to meet with him. He purchased the two fantastic Barnes paintings that Phillips is offering this season directly from the artist in 1981, and they have been in his possession ever since.

"In the Black community, the athlete was respected as the finest embodiment of one's African heritage. There were those convinced that the only way to heaven was with a football or a basketball." —Ernie Barnes

Slam Before the Storm is a glorious example of the neo-Mannerist sports-themed tableaux that serve as the backbone of Ernie Barnes' body of work. The painting turns a neighborhood basketball game into a transcendent display of athletic prowess performed by figures whose elongated proportions enhance the almost balletic quality of the action.

The image's dynamic style is characteristic of Barnes' compositions. The artist—who died in 2009 and whose work has seen a surge of curatorial and collector interest in recent years—was a professional football player from 1960 to 1965, before devoting himself to art full-time. He noted that "being an athlete helped me to formulate an analysis of movement, and movement is what I wanted to capture on canvas more than anything else. I can't stand a static canvas."¹

"Slam before the Storm provides the viewer with more than a snapshot of Black leisure, rather, it forces the viewer to experience Black male bonding. The basketball court was the Black male country club." —Clinée Hedsbeth, Phillips, Chicago-Midwest, Former Director of Curatorial Services, DuSable Museum of African American Art History

The action in Barnes' works ranges from lively and exuberant (as in his famous *Sugar Shack*, 1976, which depicts the scene inside a Black dance hall) to violent and ruthless, with these qualities often combining in his sports paintings—a reflection, perhaps, of his conflicted feelings about athletics. Although playing football had offered Barnes a path to worldly success from his humble beginnings in a Black area of segregated Durham, North Carolina, known as the Bottoms, he resented the

game's brutality and the way it kept him from pursuing his artistic calling.

"[Barnes] grew up to be not only a college and professional gridiron star, but one of the nation's best sports artists whose canvases capture the strength, terror, tragedy and humor of life in the athletic arena." —Louie Robinson



[left] Parmigianino, *Madonna with the Long Neck*, 1534–1540, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Image: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY [right] Rembrandt, *The Ascension of Christ*, 1636, Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Image: bpk Bildagentur/Alte Pinakothek / Art Resource, NY

This ambivalence provided the great artistic tension in Barnes' work. *Slam Before the Storm*, with its backdrop of brooding skies and its intricate layout of contorting figures, has all the drama of Mannerist and Baroque religious paintings. The game takes place in a dusty, desolate landscape, and the ball, positioned at the brightest point in the sky, reads as either a haloed icon or an earthly object blocking the light. One of the players holds an impossibly effortless stance midair that suggests the ascension of Christ. Indeed, he seems disengaged from the game, his right hand shooting up to the heavens. With such paintings, which redress the lack of Black representation in Western art history by recasting canonical imagery with Black protagonists, Barnes serves as a precursor to Contemporary artists such as Kerry James Marshall and Kehinde Wiley.



Charles White, *Harvest Talk*, 1953, The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © The Charles White Archives

Coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, Barnes did not identify with the abstract styles that prevailed in the art world at the time. In his 1995 autobiography, *From Pads to Palette*, he wrote that he found such work to be “cold” and described an artistic awakening he had when looking at a portfolio of Charles White’s drawings in a Harlem bookstore in 1960.² He explained that this was the first time he encountered artwork “reflecting Black lifestyle” and that he believed that “this was what art should be about; expressing the confidence, the pride and hopes of people committed to the struggle for human dignity.”³ It was a noble view, and one that places Barnes in an important artistic lineage that continues to flourish today, when painters including Marshall, Henry Taylor, Jordan Casteel, and Amy Sberald have reinvigorated figurative traditions to produce powerful expressions of Black experience.

¹ Ernie Barnes, interviewed by Dave Price, “Here’s the Story,” *TV Land*, n.d., [online](#).

² Ernie Barnes, *From Pads to Palette* (Waco, TX: WRS Publishing, 1995), 30.

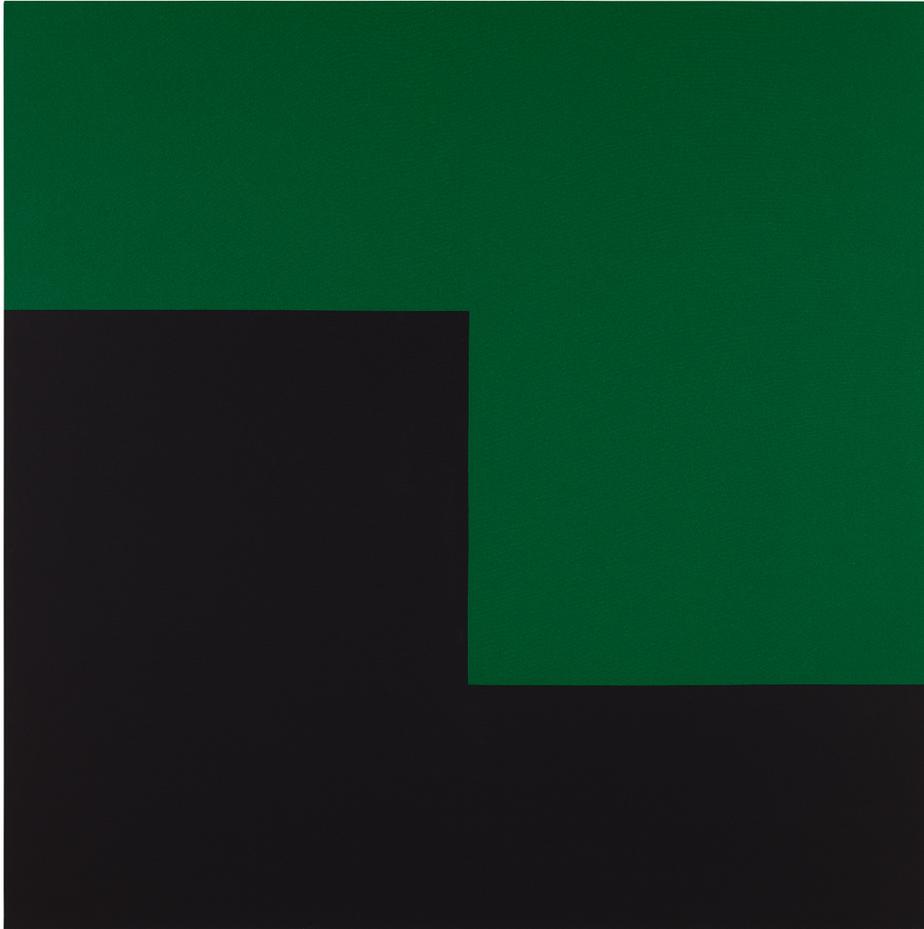
³ *Ibid.*

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner in 1981

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE
AMERICAN COLLECTION

45

Carmen Herrera

Noche Verde

signed, titled and dated "'noche verde" Carmen
Herrera.- 20-16. Carmen Herrera. 20-16.-" on the
stretcher

acrylic on canvas

60 x 60 in. (152.4 x 152.4 cm)

Painted in 2016.

Estimate

\$500,000 — 700,000

[Go to Lot](#)



Possessing an assertive quietude, *Noche Verde* embodies the late artist Carmen Herrera's quest for "the simplest of pictorial solutions" throughout her career.¹ She received long-overdue institutional accolade after working in obscurity for nearly seven decades, with a major survey show that opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2016. The present work, painted the same year as the survey, exemplifies her commitment to phrasing and rephrasing the subtle dynamics between and within form and color, as well as the schematic possibilities afforded by the utmost economy of means.

The dichromatic composition commands a gravitational pull at the junction of black and green, as two L-shaped forms—seemingly identical at first glance—interlock to form a perfect square. The green form, ever so slightly larger than the black, weighs down on the black form which in turn resists upwards against its counterpart. The crisp line separating the shapes engenders an optical illusion whereby the green passage immediately adjacent to the black appears brighter than the rest of the hue. The canvas exudes tension and instability as the viewer's eye wanders, restlessly searching for a point of focus to no avail.

"My quest is for the simplest of pictorial resolutions." —Carmen Herrera

A strong proponent of the structural and compositional significance of color, Herrera emphasizes the sensory intensity of chromatic choices in her works such as *Noche Verde*, endeavoring to find pairings in which each color can withstand the pressure of the other and neither the hues nor values clash. This would not be the first time that Herrera employed the iconic pairing of black and green, which can also be found in the works of her peers, such as Ellsworth Kelly. In works such as *Wednesday*, 1978, *Black and Green*, 1975, and *Diptych*, 1978, Herrera juxtaposes slightly brighter shades of evergreen against black, exploring tilted angles within the rectangular compositional frames. *Noche Verde* is not only a tribute to this earlier period, but is also a departure from the explicit instability into an even more subtle and sophisticated sense of internal dynamism and contemplative energy.



Carmen Herrera, *Wednesday*, 1978, Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern. Artwork: © Carmen Herrera. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery.



Carmen Herrera, *Black and Green*, 1975. Artwork: © Carmen Herrera. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery.



Carmen Herrera, *Diptych*, 1978, El Museo del Barrio. Artwork: © Carmen Herrera. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery.

As shown in *Noche Verde*, Herrera's inquisitive attitude and analytic approach towards image-making is reflected in her exercise of deliberation and calibration of color and form. This is underscored by her meticulous methodology, where she would begin each composition by making several preparatory drawings on translucent vellum paper with rulers and pencils. As the artist professed in an interview, "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."ⁱⁱ Indeed, Herrera's penchant for linearity and orthogonality was fostered long ago when she trained as an architect at the Universidad de La Havana in 1938. The formal and logical clarity of technical drafting made a lasting impression on the artist and had a distinctive influence on the facture of her most iconic paintings, such the present work, where a proclivity for strict linearity is emphasized.

Herrera's geometric, hard-edge, and abstract style also owes much to her years in Paris (1948-1954) when the artist exhibited at the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, during which she "simplified her work, abandoning frames and simply emphasizing structure, limiting her palette, and giving preeminence to rhythm."ⁱⁱⁱ After her return to New York, Herrera continued to create radically geometric and diagrammatic abstractions despite the predominance of action paintings in the 1960s New York art scene. Her experience living, studying, and creating on both sides of the Atlantic, combined with her upbringing and education in Havana, provided her with a sense of transcultural fluidity that transcends any schools or "isms." A culmination of the artist's decades-long preoccupation with abstraction and form, *Noche Verde* captures the artist's fundamental contribution to the history of Minimalism, executed at the age of 101.



The artist at work in her studio, c. 2015. Artwork: © Carmen Herrera. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery.
Photography by Jason Schmidt

Provenance

Lisson Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2017

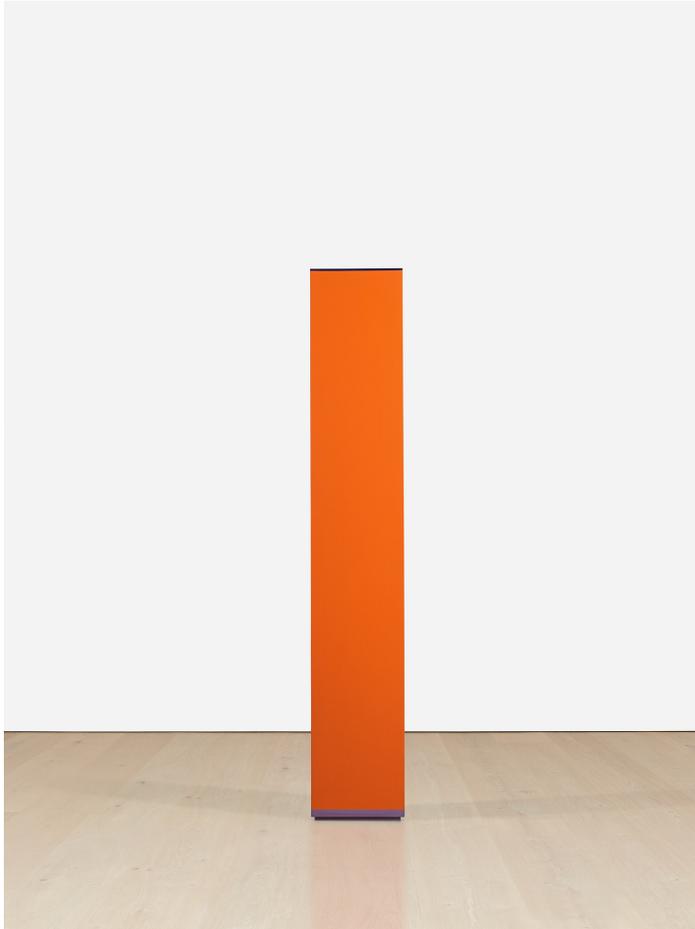
ⁱ "Carmen Herrera | Artists," *Lisson Gallery*, accessed October 6, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Dana Miller, "Carmen Herrera: Sometimes I Win," in Miller et al., *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, Whitney Museum of American Art, 2016, p. 22.

ⁱⁱⁱ Serge Lemoine, "Paris est une fête," in Miller et al., p. 64.

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

New York Auction / 15 November 2022 / 6pm EST



PROPERTY FROM A PROMINENT AMERICAN
COLLECTION

46

Anne Truitt

Autumn Dryad

signed and dated "Truitt 9 Feb '75" on the underside
acrylic on wood
76 3/4 x 13 x 8 in. (194.9 x 33 x 20.3 cm)
Executed in 1975.

Estimate

\$400,000 — 600,000

[Go to Lot](#)



"Truitt's basic idiom, the upright wall or column transformed into an utterly nonfunctional presence, a physical object whose every aspect (its color, dimensions, surface, depth, front, back, and sides) is designed to produce a quandary as to the nature of its presence as an experiential thing." —Anne M. Wagner

In Anne Truitt's seminal *Dryads* from 1971-1975, the artist confronts us with four seemingly monochromatic pillars made of painted wood. Each is named for a season—black for winter, pink for spring, green for summer and orange for autumn—together symbolizing the cyclical nature of our year, ranging from coolest to warmest in hue.

One of the last in the series made in 1975, *Autumn Dryad* is, like its sister works, reminiscent of a tree standing in nature, at once intimidating and inviting. Upon closer inspection, the autumnal colors of deep orange and dark mauve morph into seemingly different hues as one's eyes move from top to bottom, emphasizing the illusion of solid color and its ability to "disturb the boundaries between image and object, thing and event."ⁱ Simultaneously employing a Minimalist form and a daring palette, Truitt's *Autumn Dryad* reflects the artist's deep connection to color and nature's elements. The *Dryad* series truly embodies Truitt's sculptural practice at its peak, through their interrogation of a three-dimensional form's ability to express a deeper meaning than what meets the eye.



A colorful minimalist

Suggesting a departure from the industrial traditions of Minimalism and its leading male artists such as Donald Judd and Carl Andre, *Autumn Dryad* is made not of steel or aluminum, but of wood and acrylic paint. Through her methodical process, Truitt explored the notions of interiority and form by painting, sanding, and repainting layers of acrylic onto her wooden surfaces to achieve their unique sheen and hue. This technique and choice of materials along with her use of vivid, primary colors distinguished her from her contemporaries and reflected her effort to evoke human emotions. Opting for seasonal colors of saturated orange and rich purple, the two tones seem to blend into one another at their juncture points, creating an endless stream of varying intensities. Through light and shadow, the *Dryad* recreates the feeling of being in nature, reflecting the light of the interior space it inhabits in the same way our eyes adjust to the changing time of day. Truitt's sculptures expertly use color to transform "the constancy of structure so very strikingly that it seems to offer a primer on what hue can do." The result emphasizes and elevates the abstract nature of both the pillar and the natural world it represents.ⁱⁱ



Anne Truitt's four *Dryads* exhibited at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. in 2009–2010. Image: © www.annetruitt.org/The Bridgeman Art Library, Artwork: © Estate of Anne Truitt/The Bridgeman Art Library

"... by virtue of their titles, the Dryads invite us to see the pillar's volume... as a concentration or intensification of Nature... They are a tree. The simplicity of the upright cedes to the changing seasons of the imagined forest, and an all-too-human romance with the 'magic of nature' stands waiting in the wings." —Anne Wagner

Standing alone like a tree in the woods, *Autumn Dryad* is like "a body in which nature and woman are one."ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, the word "dryad" refers to a female figure in Greek mythology who inhabits a concentrated form of nature, typically a tree. By referencing this in the series' title, Truitt connects the works to a distinctly feminine view of the world. In the artist's celebrated 2009-2010 retrospective at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., *Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection*, all four *Dryads* were exhibited together alongside two other pillars. The installation of the works in conversation with one another reflects their ties through color and form while also highlighting their seasonal differences. Evading the categories of painting and sculpture, the *Dryads* at once form a cohesive set, while simultaneously allowing each pillar to stand out through its distinct, seasonal color variations.

Collector's Digest

- Of the four seasonal *Dryads*, two are in museum collections: *Summer Dryad*, 1971, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C., and *Winter Dryad*, 1973, The Boca Raton Museum of Art. *Spring Dryad*, 1975, was part of Phillips' Modern and Contemporary Day Sale, June 2021.

ⁱ Anne M. Wagner, "Disarming Time," *Artforum*, January 2010, p. 155.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

Provenance

André Emmerich Gallery, New York
C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1992

Exhibited

New York, André Emmerich Gallery, *Anne Truitt: Recent Work*, April 12–May 15, 1975
Charlottesville, University of Virginia Art Museum, *Anne Truitt: Sculpture and Painting*, October 17–November 19, 1976, no. 4, p. 13
Purchase, State University of New York, Neuberger Museum, *Anne Truitt: Eight Sculptures*, July 6–November 2, 1986
New York, André Emmerich Gallery, *Anne Truitt: Sculpture, 1961-1991*, May 15–June 28, 1991, n.p. (illustrated)
Baltimore Museum of Art, *Anne Truitt: A Life in Art*, February 5–April 19, 1992
Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, *Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection*, October 8, 2009–January 3, 2010, pl. 25, p. 168 (illustrated, p. 89)

Literature

Brooks Adams, "Solid Color," *Art in America*, October 1991, p. 113 (illustrated on the cover)
Anne M. Wagner, "Disarming Time: The Art of Anne Truitt," *Artforum*, January 2010, p. 155 (illustrated, p. 154)