

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST

Sale Interest: 46 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



PHILLIPS

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST

Sale Interest: 46 Lots

Auction and Viewing

Auction 13 October 2023 3pm BST

Viewing

4 October - 13 October

Monday-Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm

Sunday 12:00pm-6:00pm

30 Berkeley Square, London, United Kingdom, W1J 6EX

Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making enquiries please refer to this sale as UK010723 or 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale.

Absentee and Telephone Bids

tel +44 20 7318 4045

bidslondon@phillips.com

20th Century & Contemporary Art Department

Rosanna Widén

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+44 20 7318 4060

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Olivia Thornton

Head of 20th Century & Contemporary Art, Europe

+44 20 7318 4099

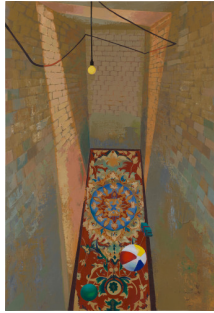
othornton@phillips.com

clientserviceslondon@phillips.com

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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Sale Interest: 46 Lots



1
Mohammed Sami
Childhood
Estimate £80,000 — 120,000



2
Stefanie Heinze
Median (Fin Fatale)
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000



3
Emma Webster
Baptism
Estimate £80,000 — 120,000



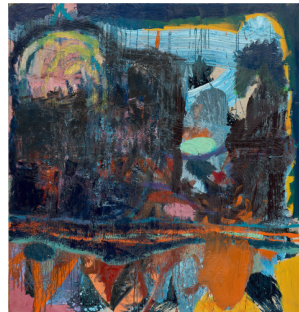
4
Christopher Hartmann
Still Looking
Estimate £20,000 — 30,000



5
Marina Perez Simão
Untitled
Estimate £70,000 — 100,000



6
Francesca Mollett
Two Thistles
Estimate £25,000 — 35,000



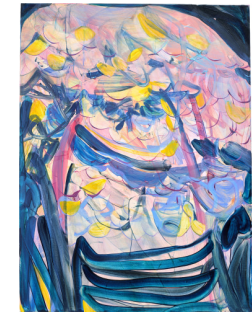
7
Pam Evelyn
Storm at Night
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000



8
Christina Quarles
Lil' Dapple Do Ya
Estimate £450,000 — 550,000



9
Michaela Yearwood-Dan
The Summit of Beauty and Love
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000



10
Jadé Fadojutimi
Beneath the Petticoat
Estimate £150,000 — 200,000

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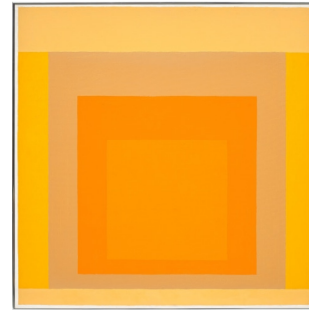
11
Hernan Bas
His Voice Would Be the Loudest ...
Estimate
£450,000 — 650,000



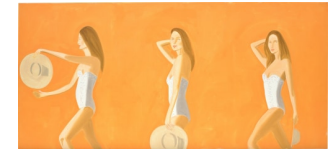
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Luc Tuymans
Rome
Estimate
£1,200,000 — 1,800,000



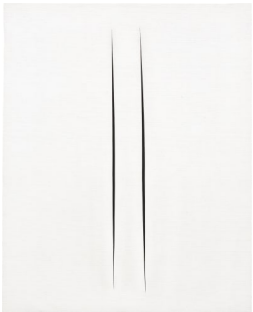
13
Beatriz Milhazes
Mares do Sul
Estimate
£600,000 — 800,000



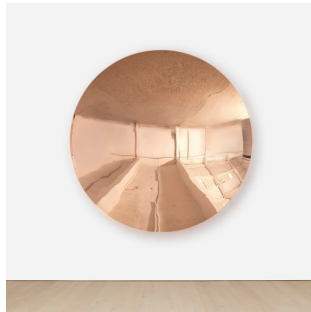
14
Josef Albers
Homage to the Square
Estimate
£200,000 — 300,000



15
Alex Katz
Ariel
Estimate
£650,000 — 850,000



16
Lucio Fontana
Concetto spaziale, Attese
Estimate
£1,400,000 — 1,800,000



17
Anish Kapoor
Untitled
Estimate
£600,000 — 800,000



18
On Kawara
OCT.20,1992
Estimate
£250,000 — 350,000



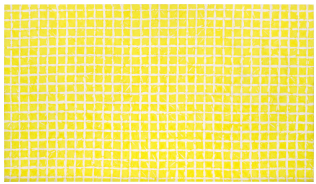
19
Günther Uecker
Ohne Titel
Estimate
£180,000 — 250,000



20
Anselm Kiefer
Das einzige Licht
Estimate
£600,000 — 800,000

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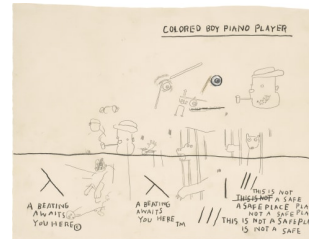
21
Simon Hantäi
Tabula
Estimate
£450,000 — 650,000



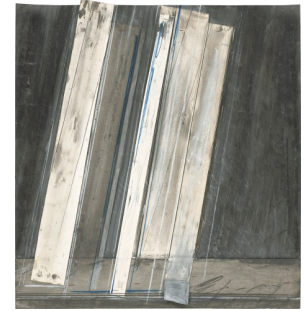
22
Carmen Herrera
Untitled
Estimate
£300,000 — 400,000



23
Andy Warhol
Diamond Dust Gem
Estimate
£250,000 — 350,000



24
Jean-Michel Basquiat
Untitled (Colored Boy Piano Pla...
Estimate
£200,000 — 300,000



25
Cy Twombly
Untitled
Estimate
£800,000 — 1,200,000



26
Henri Matisse
Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)
Estimate
£600,000 — 800,000



27
Balthus
Étude pour 'Le Peintre et son m...
Estimate
£280,000 — 400,000



28
Jean Dubuffet
Lieu rouge au château
Estimate
£700,000 — 1,000,000



29
Andy Warhol
One Dollar Bill
Estimate
£600,000 — 800,000



30
Cy Twombly
Untitled
Estimate
£150,000 — 200,000

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31
Rick Lowe
Black Wall Street Journey #11
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000



32
Banksy
Forgive Us Our Trespassing
Estimate £2,200,000 — 2,800,000



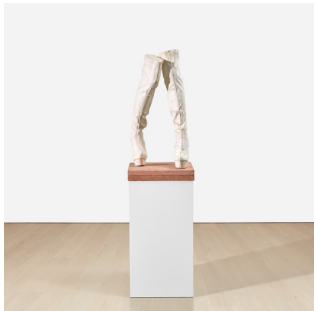
33
Daniel Richter
Schakal Reloaded
Estimate £300,000 — 500,000



34
Dana Schutz
Gravity Fanatic
Estimate £250,000 — 350,000



35
George Condo
Seated Harlequin
Estimate £750,000 — 950,000



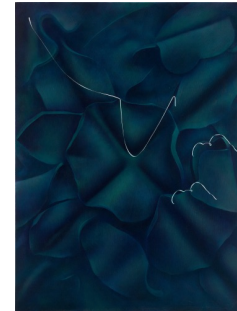
36
Sarah Lucas
Jubilee
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000



37
Damien Hirst
Five Antique Torsos
Estimate £300,000 — 500,000



38
Caroline Walker
Fragranced
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000



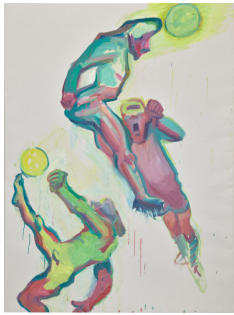
39
Louise Giovanelli
An Ex
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000



40
Issy Wood
Cries Real Tears!
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000

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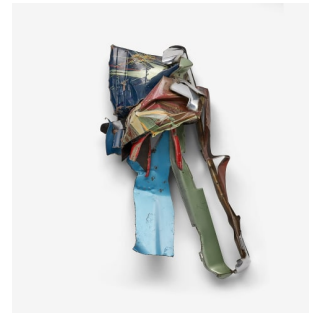
41
Maria Lassnig
Competition III
Estimate £400,000 — 600,000



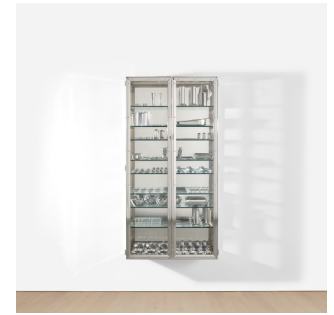
42
Alina Szapocznikow
Autoportret II
Estimate £250,000 — 350,000



43
Rudolf Stingel
Untitled
Estimate £550,000 — 750,000



44
John Chamberlain
Druid's Cluster (Swish)
Estimate £350,000 — 450,000



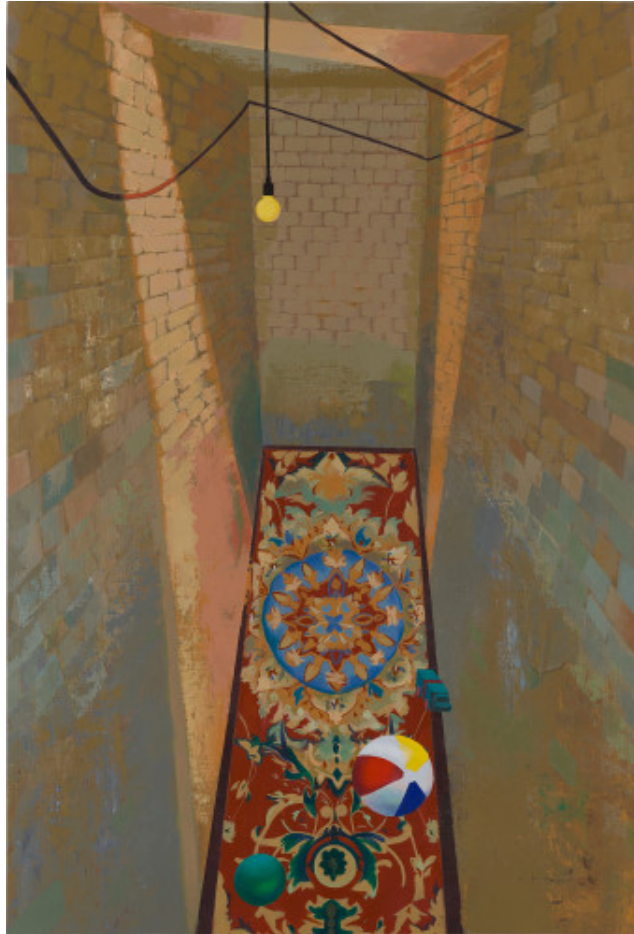
45
Damien Hirst
Fear
Estimate £300,000 — 400,000



46
Raghav Babbar
The Bath in Holy River
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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1

Mohammed Sami



Childhood

acrylic on linen

170.6 x 117 cm (67 1/8 x 46 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2018.

Estimate

£80,000 — 120,000  

[Go to Lot](#)



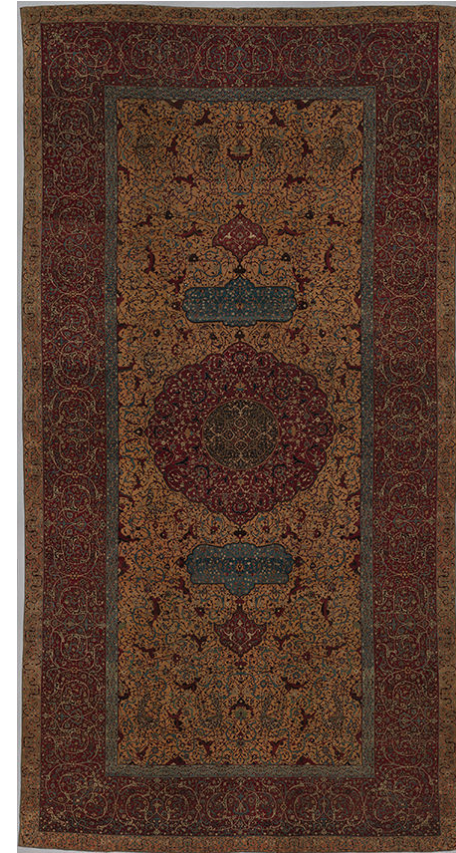
“Painting is the means by which I engage the traces of personal memory. I believe that the medium of painting has the capacity to record the ghosts of something lost, not present, and therefore become the symbolic register of the permanent.”
—Mohammed Sami

The eerie subconscious of Iraqi-born artist Mohammed Sami’s work touches at the very essence of the human experience, and yet a figure is rarely ever present. He deploys an expert understanding of light and perspective to create disquieting, psychological compositions that hint at an unnerving contextual history. Growing up in Baghdad, under the regime of Saddam Hussein, Sami bore witness to the devastating effects of both political instability and international warfare. After the commencement of the US-Iraqi war in 2003, he worked at the Ministry of Culture in Baghdad before being granted political asylum in Sweden in 2007.

As a result, his work explores the ways in which trauma manifests in our memories, particularly regarding how we remember certain times or places. Everyday objects serve as poignant sources of reminder for the artist, and his large-scale canvases are usually fraught with symbolism and motifs. Having studied at The Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, Sami completed his BFA at Ulster University, Belfast and his MFA at Goldsmiths, London, where he now lives. He has held multiple international solo exhibitions across Europe, the Middle East and the United States, and has been the subject of two major exhibitions in 2023 at Lühring Augustine, New York and Camden Art Centre, London. His work is held in prestigious collections, such as Tate, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée d’art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) Geneva; Iraqi Ministry of Culture, Baghdad; and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

“I used the same strategies Islamic miniature painting uses to flatten space and make the setting unspecific. That’s the combination: make the familiar unfamiliar.”
—Mohammed Sami

In *Childhood*, a single lightbulb casts a yellowish beam down a dingy, dead-end corridor. Conversely, a beautifully woven Persian rug covers the floor, with brightly coloured children’s toys littered across it. Sami frequently uses unusual perspectives to create compositions that are discordant with our normal perception of things, and in doing so, a subliminal uneasiness is planted within the very foundations of his pieces. In the present work, the shaft of light wraps itself round the walls and ceiling of the corridor in a jarring, angular manner, creating an almost hypnotic spiral that leads towards the imposing walled-off end. The linear perspective of the rug is incongruent with that of the surrounding walls and ceiling, exaggerated by the strange shadows created by the erratic light.



The Anhalt Medallion Carpet, c. Early 16th Century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1946, 46.128

Compositional distortion, a major motif within Sami’s work, presents a physical manifestation of anxiety, stemming from fear, loss and confusion. Whilst the disjointed viewpoint in *Childhood* may appear odd to a contemporary audience, it evokes the flattened linear perspective used by Persian artists of the 15th and 16th century. Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād’s *Yusef and Zulaikha* is regarded as a masterpiece of Islamic miniature illuminations and features a complex architectural composition. We are shown all rooms of the house at once as Zulaikha – wife of Potiphar – attempts to seduce the resistant Yusef. The myriad of stairs and corridors creates a confusing narrative space, and through a contemporary lens, the bizarre, complex architectural perspective emphasises the ensuing chaos between Yusef and Zulaikha. *Childhood* mirrors this spatial distortion, and Sami

similarly uses intricate Persian patterning to further create a bizarre misrepresentation of a familiar space.



Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād, *Yusef and Zulaikha*, 1488. Image: ARTGEN / Alamy Stock Photo

The disquieting atmosphere of the composition is heightened by the familiar and unthreatening objects on the floor - a green ball, a beach ball and a miniature truck. These are placed deliberately by Sami as a form of ‘uncertain remembering’: ‘Returning memories masquerade in light and shadow, and windows, or some everyday object. They don’t reveal themselves easily, and this is what makes them interesting’.ⁱ The Persian rug, similar to the Anhalt Medallion Carpet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, evokes memories of Sami’s upbringing in Iraq, and its rich

artistic history, which has suffered significant loss since the beginning of The Iraq War in 2003.ⁱⁱ The scattered toys, depicted with a discordant, flat perspective, are redolent of childhood innocence, and their playful colours become garish in the austere light cast by the lightbulb.

Without context, these objects represent the artist’s identity and and titular infancy; however, nothing in Sami’s work is ever meant to be viewed in isolation. Surrounded by the stark, dilapidated corridor - like the squalid conditions where prisoners of war are often held - these objects come to symbolise the loss felt by the citizens and state of Iraq, the dead-end a poignant lack of hope or future. Sami has said that he hides ‘the traumatic image behind something entirely different, like a cactus or carpet on the floor... this helps to distract you from the main subject matter, which is trauma and conflict’.ⁱⁱⁱ He spent much of his life using euphemism and allegory to hide his true political feelings and is now doing the same with his paintings. Nevertheless, the viewer is invited to unravel Sami’s true meanings. As in much of his other work, he uses materiality as a means of communicating the ephemerality of memory, as well as the desperate loss and destruction he, and other children of Iraq, have experienced firsthand.

Collector’s Digest

- Growing up in war-torn Iraq and seeking political asylum in Sweden, Mohammed Sami seeks to represent how trauma may affect our memories. His works play with light, shadow and perspective to create unsettling atmospheres, heightened by material motifs.
- Sami is represented by Luhring Augustine and Modern Art and has been the subject of two major solo exhibitions in 2023, most recently at Camden Art Centre, London.
- His work is held in prestigious collections, such as Tate in London, Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Musée d’art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) in Geneva, Iraqi Ministry of Culture in Baghdad, and Museum of Modern Art in New York.

ⁱ Mohammed Sami, quoted in Hetti Judah, ‘Mohammed Sami: ‘We can’t move forward without the power of the past’’, *Art Fund*, 14 February, 2023, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Dina Rizk Khoury, ‘Iraq’s lost Cultural Heritage’, *Perspectives on History*, vol. 41, issue 6, September, 2003, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Mohammed Sami, quoted in Elizabeth Fullerton, ‘I hide the traumatic image behind a cactus or carpet’ - the paintings of Iraqi exile Mohammed Sami’, *The Guardian*, 21 March, 2022, [online](#).

1

Mohammed Sami

Provenance

Private Collection

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



2

Stefanie Heinze

Median (Fin Fatale)

signed, titled and dated 'ST. HEINZE 2018 "MEDIAN (FIN FATALE)'" on the reverse

acrylic and oil on canvas

160.2 x 180.2 cm (63 1/8 x 70 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2018.

Estimate

£60,000 — 80,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“I want to take the stiffness out of how things look nowadays.” —Stefanie Heinze

Appearing to melt and metamorphose before our eyes, the hallucinatory, liquid forms of Berlin-based artist Stefanie Heinze merge with vivid colour to form surreal and surprising compositions. Vibrant, lively, and sharply humorous, her paintings feature a host of playful, invented characters drawn from clever combinations of body parts, animal hybrids, and organic forms, realised in glorious technicolour in the present work. Representing the rising artist’s auction debut, the large-scale *Median (Fin Fatale)* demonstrates the quick-witted word play for which Heinze is best known, playfully evoking the trope of the femme fatale and taking apart the gendered cultural construction.

A familiar trope from film and literature, the ‘femme fatale’ is typically a mysterious, sensually attractive (although often morally ambiguous) woman, exuding sexual confidence and known for seducing lovestruck men with her feminine charms. A mainstay of hardboiled pulp thrillers and Film Noir, her power over men aligns her to more historically entrenched archetypes such as the Witch or Siren, her motives and intentions often remaining deliberately ambiguous. Sharply intelligent, and with a highly stylised fast-talking, quick-witted repartee, she undermines the traditional structures of male power, instead often weaponizing her femininity to deadly ends.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKdcYnlkx8>

Barbara Stanwyck as iconic femme fatale Phyllis Dietrichson in Billy Wilder’s *Double Indemnity*, 1941.

Nevertheless, the defining physical characteristic of the femme fatale is her beauty; she remains defined by the terms of the male gaze, even as she uses this to her nefarious advantage. Although this character has been most memorably embodied on screen (and, often, in black and white), the lurid colours and eye-catching angularity used in the covers of 1930s pulp fiction crime stories also seems registered here, capturing Heinze’s deft blending of high and low culture.

Rather than a reversion to type, Heinze’s *Median (Fin Fatale)* playfully subverts all of these expectations, the humorous word play between ‘fin’ and ‘femme’ deflating and deconstructing this gendered trope, just as the body of the titular character is similarly taken apart and recombined under her painterly hand. Dominated by the sweeping arc of a fish tail, the eccentric hybrid creature rears up against a rock, the line of body arching back and culminating in talon-tipped breasts, visually recalling a memorable scene in Disney’s 1989 *Little Mermaid* as the crescendo of the protagonist’s song (which itself communicates the strength of her desire both for the Prince and for bodily metamorphosis) reaches its climax with the crashing waves breaking behind her.



Spicy Adventure Stories, November 1936

Although Heinze does not connect her work directly to any art historical movement, her paintings and drawings belong to a lineage of Surrealist abstraction that includes the work of the likes of Joan Miró, Arshile Gorky, and Neo Rauch, even as they revel in their unique rearticulation of these influences. Gorky’s fluid, biomorphic forms and bright, bold colour contrasts do certainly stand as an important touchstone, perhaps even more so given the primacy of drawing in the practices of both artists.

Often working on both sides of the paper, Heinze approaches her drawings intuitively, letting forms and compositions be guided by ‘what’s immediate, profane or just coming from the unconscious.’¹ Tearing up her drawings and recombining them in new pictorial arrangements,

Heinze deliberately 'disrupts relationships and narratives, uncovering weaknesses in their meaning.'ⁱⁱ Transferring these new, reconstructed forms to canvas Heinze embraces what she describes as 'translation errors', her practice replicating the same kind of challenge to order and dismantling of power structures that her paintings address on a thematic level.



Arshile Gorky, *Mojave*, 1941-1942, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Image: © Frank Buffetrille. All rights reserved 2023 / Bridgeman Images

Collector's Digest

- Stefanie Heinze lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the National Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo and the Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig.
- In addition to multiple group shows, Heinze's solo exhibitions include *Frail Juice*, Petzel Gallery, New York in 2020; *Ruler*, LC Queisser, Tbilisi in 2019; *Odd Glove*, Captain Petzel, Berlin in 2019; *Food for the Young (Oozing Out)*, Mary Boone Gallery in 2018; and *Genuflect Softly #1*, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London in 2017. She has also shown works in group exhibitions at international institutions such as Saatchi Gallery in

London, The Hepworth Wakefield, Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami.

- Collections include MAMCO Genève; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Marguerite Hoffman Collection, Dallas; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; and The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas.

ⁱ Stefanie Heinze, 'Stefanie Heinze Interviews Stefanie Heinze', *Paper*, 23 October, 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Pippy Houldsworth, *Stories of the Imaginary (Self-Portrait of Two Lemons)*, 2021, press release, [online](#).

Colin Lang, 'Fail Better: Collin Lang on Stefanie Heinze', *Texte zur Kunst*, 1 June, 2019, [online](#).

Provenance

Captain Petzel, Berlin

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



3

Emma Webster

Baptism

signed, titled and dated "Baptism" 2020 E. Webster

Emma Webster' on the reverse

oil on linen

170.3 x 280.5 cm (67 x 110 3/8 in.)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

£80,000 — 120,000 [†]▲

[Go to Lot](#)



“I’m trying to create a world that doesn’t exist.” —Emma Webster

One of a suite of twelve paintings presented as part of British-American artist Emma Webster’s inaugural show with Carl Kostyál in 2021, *Baptism* represents the bold and innovative new directions in which the artist is pushing the genre of landscape painting in the digital age. Lusciously executed in swirling folds of highly saturated oil on linen, the bravura painterliness and immersive scale of the work is intoxicating, Webster’s mastery of light and form pushing this undulating, open vista into strange, hallucinogenic territory. Emptied of people and signs of human civilisation, *Baptism* seems to sit somehow out of time, a surreal, disquieting atmosphere made even stranger by Webster’s troubling use of space and the suspended twilight hanging over the scene.

The World Landscape

The title chosen by Webster for her presentation of these works – *Weltlandschaft* – refers to the Western pictorial tradition of showing fantastical, panoramic landscapes rooted in the imaginary, rather than the real. Typically featuring bodies of water, elevated viewpoints, and contrasts between souring mountainscapes and rolling lowlands, this mode of landscape painting grew increasingly popular in the 16th century, exemplified in the dramatic compositions of painters such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Often illustrating Biblical or historical narratives and created during an age of exploration and colonial expansion, these majestic landscapes work symbolically to reinforce the fantasy of man’s dominion over the natural world and the creatures within it.



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt*, 1563, Courtauld Gallery, London

For the ecologically minded Webster, painting affords us the opportunity to rethink and remake our relationship to the world we inhabit as one of interconnectivity and enmeshment, evoking theatre as a powerful parallel for thinking about her approach to image-making. The complex spatial relationships activated in her compositions certainly speak to this, foreground and background passages exchanging places in unexpected ways, not unlike the *trompe l’oeil* effects used in painted stage backdrops. As the artist explains, ‘Theatre begs for immersion. [...] When we hear “director” we think about actions, or relationships with actors and plot, but the role is also about setting *conditions*. A director of space, an architect.’¹

*“Colour poses an interesting challenge. In reality, it’s reflected waves, but with sculpture, there’s tension between the painted surface and the light cast upon it.”
—Emma Webster*

This sensitivity to the construction of space is central to Webster’s practice, whose landscapes are neither depictions of naturally occurring phenomena, or scenes painted directly from her own imagination. Instead, Webster constructs her compositions in dioramas – initially by hand using spotlit figurines and countryside miniatures operating in dialogue with collaged material borrowed from canonical landscape paintings. More recently, the artist has pushed this practice even further

with her enthusiastic adoption of 3-D modelling software which allows her to create complex, three-dimensional compositions in a virtual space before projecting these simulated maquettes onto her canvases and transferring the image in paint. Introduced to these new digital technologies by Virtual Reality artist and former classmate Wyatt Roy in 2020, the present work comes from this period of intensive experimentation with cutting-edge digital tools, and the uses to which she might put them in her ongoing inquiry into the nature of the structured scene. As its title suggests, *Baptism* presents a new kind of landscape painting, sitting between the real and the virtual and affirming Webster's growing reputation as 'not a landscape painter but a painter of landscapes.'ⁱⁱ

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV1XETzOIPo>

Postcards for Places you can't Visit: Emma Webster, landscapes and VR, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami

Collector's Digest

- Recently announcing her representation by Paris-based Perrotin Gallery, Emma Webster is a graduate of Stanford University and Yale University, where she received an MFA in Painting in 2018. Her practice asks pointed questions about the construction of the image, and of our relationship to natural and virtual worlds.
- The present work was included in *Weltlandschaft*, her first solo show in London, held at Carl Kostyál Gallery in 2021. Webster has also had solo exhibitions with Perrotin, launching the gallery's new space in Gangnam Seoul with her 2022 presentation *Illuminarium*, and more recently in her 2023 *The Dolmens*.
- In 2021, Webster published *Lonescape: Green, Painting, & Mourning Reality*, a collection of musings on landscape and image-making in an increasingly digital world.

ⁱ Emma Webster, cited in Pearl Fontain, 'Emma Webster paints Ethereal Landscapes from a Virtual Reality', *Whitewall*, December 28, 2021, online.

ⁱⁱ Emily McDermott, 'Emma Webster is Reinventing Landscape Painting Using VR Technology', *ARTnews*, September 2, 2020, [online](#).

Provenance

Carl Kostyál, London
Private Collection, Europe
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Carl Kostyál, *Emma Webster: Weltlandschaft*, 11 March - 5 April 2021

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN IMPORTANT COLLECTION

4

Christopher Hartmann

Still Looking


signed and dated 'Christopher Hartmann 2021' on the overlap

oil on canvas

180 x 130 cm (70 7/8 x 51 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2021.

Estimate

£20,000 — 30,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“I’m interested in the gap between what the relationship is and what it appears to be.” —Christopher Hartmann

With its saturated, luminous tones, hyperreal precision and impossibly smooth finish, Christopher Hartmann’s *Still Looking* showcases all the technical qualities that the young, London-based artist has become known for in recent years. Featuring two, larger than life male figures whose limbs interlock as one balances on the other’s shoulders, the present work also highlights the ambiguous but highly charged narrative force that underpins Hartmann’s painting and his investigations into contemporary masculinity. Representing the artist’s auction debut, *Still Looking* was included in Hartmann’s first solo show, *Christopher Hartmann: In and Out of Touch* with Hannah Barry Gallery in London in 2021.

On Intimacy and Alienation

Finely attuned to the sensory experience of touch and the deeply affective and tactile qualities of flesh and fabric, Hartmann’s paintings are deeply concerned with relationships, the sensorial and emotional sensations of physical contact, and of the yearning of one body for another. Here, Hartmann’s careful modelling of the folds in the subject’s clothes, in contrast to the yielding firmness of flesh, is powerfully evocative of this complex desire, visually referencing the emotional force and drama of Baroque painters such as Michelangelo Merisi da *Caravaggio*



Details of the present work

Exquisitely rendered, we can almost feel the weight of the hands of the standing figure protectively cupped on the knees of the other, a gesture loaded with emotive impact that registers an immediate response in our own bodies. Touch is the fundamental tool through which we navigate our relationships to others, the world around us, and which most radically underpins the sense of being in our bodies. Although not strictly autobiographical, in its careful examination of intimacy, *Still Looking* records the deeply personal lens through which the artist has developed his pictorial language. As the artist has explained, ‘I’ve always been drawn to the human figure, and that is something that has never changed. Even though my work itself is not about me, it contains elements that are deeply personal. I want to talk about themes that are close to me and I have found the best way to communicate them is through painting.’¹

In his careful attention to detail and evident mastery of the modelling effects of light, colour, and shadow, Hartmann’s work also draws parallels with that of German interwar *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) artist Christian Schad, who forged similarly powerful relationships between the smooth polish of his execution and a more disquieting atmosphere of alienation and isolation. Painting in the wake of the First World War, Schad became well known for his depictions of contemporary society. Despite their close physical proximity, the groups in his portraits often register a cool detachment from one another, frequently looking directly out at, or indeed through us, emphasising the tensions between intimacy and emotional detachment. Achieved in part

through the smooth finish of his paintings and their heightened, almost hyperreal polish, the scale and compositional arrangement of Schad's figures also contribute to this sense of alienation, echoed too in Hartmann's larger than life-size figures and his 'new conception of bodies and their presence in space'ⁱⁱ



Christian Schad, *Count Saint-Genois of Anneaucourt*, 1927, Private Collection. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Christian Schad Stiftung Aschaffenburg/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn and DACS, London 2023

And yet, despite these art historical resonances, Hartmann's work is utterly contemporary,

reflected especially in the connections that he draws between the visual technologies of our age and the emotional consequences of late capitalism, making pointed reference to sociologist Eva Illouz's notion of the 'cold intimacies' that characterise our age. Invoking 'artificiality' and the experience of otherness as key to his own work, Hartmann's figures have a certain digital character to them that grounds his use of vibrant, oversaturated tones. Inspired by images – notably fashion editorials and their own invocation of art historical references – Hartmann begins with a compositional idea, staging photographs which he then edits through a range of digital tools to enhance and manipulate this source image. Describing his process, Hartmann explains:

"I start by painting an underlayer so that the second layer appears brighter, inspired by the brightness of the screens I'm constantly looking at. I always work from pictures on a screen. Probably because these digital images belong to a contemporary context, my colour palette is automatically influenced by it. My paintings are not about the digital itself, but my images and subjects are definitely bound to it." —Christopher Hartmann

Working in the deeply traditional medium of painting, Hartmann's approach to his compositions is nevertheless utterly contemporary, forging fascinating connections between certain technological and digital tools, and the more nebulous sensations of alienation and a yearning for connection that characterises so much of our contemporary lives.

Collector's Digest

- Born in Germany in 1993 of blended Costa Rican and German heritage, Christopher Hartmann lives and works in London.
- Signalled out as one of Bloomberg's 'New Contemporaries' in 2021, in the same year Hartmann was also the focus of solo shows at Hannah Barry Gallery in London, GNYF Gallery in Berlin, and the Nassima Landau Foundation in Tel Aviv where he went on to take up a residency in 2022, the same year as his first solo show in Japan with T&Y projects in Tokyo.
- Now represented by Blum & Poe, the artist's first show with the gallery was held in their Los Angeles gallery earlier this year, *Still Looking* represents the artist's auction debut.

ⁱ Christopher Hartmann, quoted in María Fuentes Guiote, 'Christopher Hartmann, Monumental Feeling', *Metal Magazine*, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ María Fuentes Guiote, 'Christopher Hartmann, Monumental Feeling', *Metal Magazine*, [online](#).

Christopher Hartmann

Provenance

Hannah Barry Gallery, London

Private Collection, USA

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Hannah Barry Gallery, *Christopher Hartmann - In and out of touch*, 3 June - 31 July 2021

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



5

Marina Perez Simão

Untitled

signed and dated 'MARINA PEREZ simão 6/20' on the reverse

oil on canvas

160.3 x 200.7 cm (63 1/8 x 79 in.)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

£70,000 — 100,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



“Landscape is very important for Brazilian artists. It's always there, because it's so imposing. The weather too. It will be hot and then the rain comes out of the blue. It is very dramatic in terms of colour and how it affects our behavior.” —Marina Perez Simão

Marina Perez Simão creates lucidly rendered landscapes in a dazzling array of colours. Her semi-abstracted works are composed of shimmering forms, and she uses broad, sweeping brushstrokes to create visions of idealised vistas. The Brazilian artist has become one of the most exciting young painters working today, joining a cohort of other young female artists, like Pam Evelyn and Jadé Fadojutimi in her use of gestural abstraction as a means of creating joyful, dynamic works. Represented by Pace Gallery and Mendes Wood, Simão has held international solo exhibitions in London, Paris, São Paulo and New York. Despite her newfound success, her work is held in the collections of multiple institutions such as Blenheim Palace, Woodstock; Columbus Museum of Art; Dallas Museum of Art; and K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong.

Simão was born and raised in Brazil. Moving between the rolling hills of Minas Gerais, and the vibrant urban landscape of Rio de Janeiro, she has drawn inspiration from her exposure to a mosaic of beautiful sceneries. Echoes of this upbringing can be seen throughout her canvases; in *Untitled* we are afforded a picturesque impression of green mountains and blue ocean, as if through the porthole of a ship. To the left of the canvas Simão has painted a churning column of reds, flecked with streaks of green – this red motif is recurrent in her work, and is redolent of the clay soil native to the mining region of Minas Gerais.ⁱ



Tarsila Do Amaral, *The Moon*, 1928, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Tarsila do Amaral

Simão’s signature bright palette continues the tradition of Brazilian landscape painting that lies before it. Sweeping, elliptical gestures – such as the flash of brooding violet sky – and clean line work are evocative of fellow Brazilian painter Tarsila Do Amaral. A pioneer of Latin American Modernism, Amaral’s compositions are a powerful expression of Brazilian nationalism, that uses spectacular landscapes as a prominent source of inspiration. Simão furthers the work of artists like Amaral through the abstraction of her compositions. She has abandoned the use of photographic references in favour of using her own memories and imagination, as well as influences of music and poetry. Pulsating forms dance across the large canvases, which transcend the traditional landscape genre and asks us to ‘think about the musicality of paint’.ⁱⁱ As a result, the kaleidoscope

of Simão's colour and form provides us with only suggestive hints as to what we might be seeing, drawing us in and forcing us to create our own narrative. These dreamlike visions are full of light and movement, that teeter on the cusp of recognisable landscape and metaphysical shapes.

"Marina's work attempts to open up portals of wonder in the viewer, making them imagine other universes where the limits of reality don't hold." —Diana Campbell

Moving to Paris after a period in law school, Simão completed her BFA and MFA at École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris, under the guidance of Brazilian sculptor Solange Pessoa.ⁱⁱ There she describes how she developed an 'emotional attachment' to the Louvre, spending most days gazing at millennia's worth of art history.^{vi} Elaborating upon which work of art she would choose to live alongside, Simão answered *The Exchange of the two princesses of France and Spain on the Bidasoa in Hendaye* by Peter Paul Rubens, as it was a work 'I copied about 1,000 times as a student'.^v The swirling forms of curtains, clouds and cherubs create a visionary whirlpool that 'rhymes' in the eyes of Simão.^{iv} *Untitled's* composition reflects the rhythmic elements of Ruben's work, with a dramatic circular portal, undulating folds and shocks of Baroque red and black.



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Exchange of the two princesses of France and Spain on the Bidasoa in Hendaye*, November 9, 1615, c. 1600-1625, Louvre, Paris. Image: © Photo Scala, Florence

An affinity with her homeland, Brazil, and a formal education in Paris has gifted Simão with an eclectic arsenal of inspiration that she intelligently deploys. As a viewer, we are treated to a transitory glimpse into her world, and Matheus Yehudi argues that her mind is 'a kaleidoscope, and it's only now that she has all the information she's needed'.^{vii} The result is a body of work that invites us to reconsider our collective memory of environment, and the ephemerality of colour, form, and nature.

Collector's Digest

- Marina Perez Simão creates large-scale abstracted landscapes. Growing up in the beautiful Brazilian countryside, she uses a dazzling array of colour and form to evoke dreamlike visions of almost recognisable environments.
- Represented by Pace Gallery and Mendes Wood, Simão has held international solo exhibitions in London, Paris, São Paulo and New York, with her most recent *Onda* being held at Pace Gallery, London, in September 2022.
- Her work is held in the collections of multiple institutions such as Blenheim Palace, Woodstock; Columbus Museum of Art; Dallas Museum of Art; and K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong.

ⁱ Oliver Basciano, 'Brazilian painter Marina Perez Simão's bold and beguiling worlds', *Art Basel*, 22 May, 2023, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Marina Perez Simão, quoted in Sofia Hallström, 'In the Studio with Marina Perez Simão.', *emergent magazine*, 14 September, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jennifer Piejko, 'What Is It About Brazilian Artist Marina Perez Simão's Dreamlike Landscapes That Is Making So Many Collectors Dream of Owning Them?', *Artnet*, 21 March, 2022, [online](#).

^{iv} Marina Perez Simão, quoted in Emily Steer, 'Marina Perez Simão: I Never Work When I'm Sad', *Elephant*, 5 September, 2022, [online](#).

^v Marina Perez Simão, quoted in Emily Steer, 'Marina Perez Simão: I Never Work When I'm Sad', *Elephant*, 5 September, 2022, [online](#).

^{vi} Marina Perez Simão, quoted in Emily Steer, 'Marina Perez Simão: I Never Work When I'm Sad', *Elephant*, 5 September, 2022, [online](#).

^{vii} Jennifer Piejko, 'What Is It About Brazilian Artist Marina Perez Simão's Dreamlike Landscapes That Is Making So Many Collectors Dream of Owning Them?', *Artnet*, 21 March, 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

Mendes Wood DM, New York

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



6

Francesca Mollett

Two Thistles

signed and titled 'TWO THISTLES, FRANCESCA
MOLLETT' on the overlap

oil and acrylic on calico
200.3 x 150.1 cm (78 7/8 x 59 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2021.

Estimate

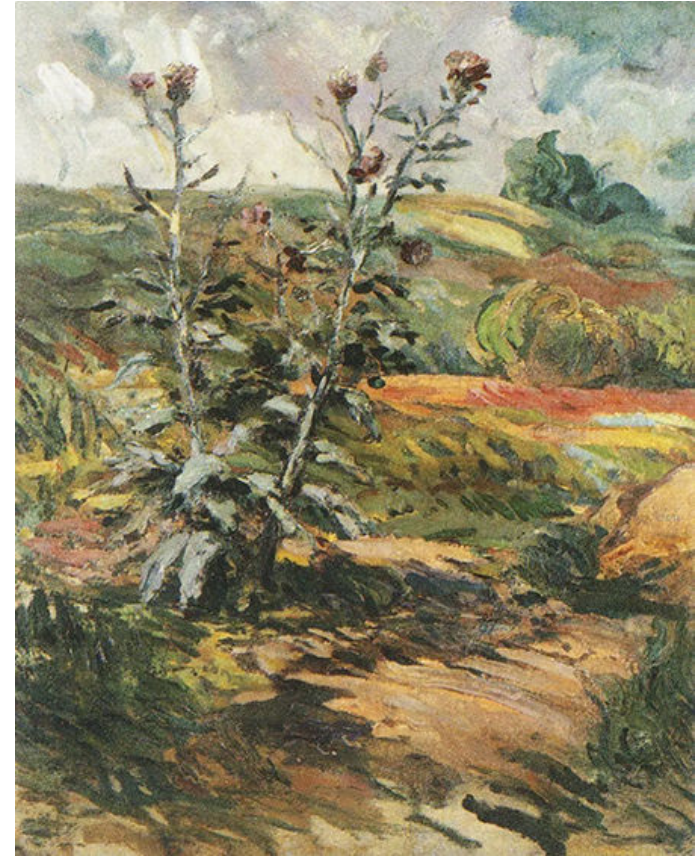
£25,000 — 35,000 ♦

[Go to Lot](#)



“Looking at Mollett’s paintings, we get the impression of a poised moment in which thought emerges from the pigment in the form of an image.” —Tom Morton

Revisiting the subject once explored by Vincent Van Gogh in his very own *Two Thistles* painting from 1888, Francesca Mollett’s oil and acrylic on calico painted in 2021 departs from the image of two thistle flowers to draw one of her celebrated abstract *interior* landscapes. Here, boundaries converge between realms: the inner and the outer, the material and the intangible, the virtual and the real, the transient and the eternal, the earthly and the ethereal exist simultaneously, making unfeasible a conventional classification of subject matter with regards to her practice. The young British artist, amongst the leading figures of a new generation of women artists reinvigorating abstract art, presents here the intimate impression of a thought moment.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Two Thistles*, 1888, Private Collection.

Light and Surface

The dense bright lilac heads of the thistle flowers emerge against the earthy and fiery landscape. Like in Van Gogh’s composition, the flowers intertwine, split, and multiply. This duality and splitting quality, evoked by the title and by the distribution of the flowers across the space, builds on Mollett’s recurrent exploration of reflections. Fascinated with the complexities of representing light on surface, the artist investigates the way light dissolves when in contact with water, air and other geological and biological elements. In her paintings, wells, tides, bodies of water and flora react to the changing weather and to the inner metamorphic qualities of water. Combining

brushstrokes of hydrous acrylic and thin oil paint with sudden impastos of textured colour, her canvases oscillate between luminosity and solidity, and between transparency and opacity. As the artist describes, 'I intend for marks to have agency, create their own edges, resist one another using oil and acrylic's friction to create tense luminous surfaces.'ⁱ

In *Two Thistles*, the ground becomes liquid, breathable, turning the surface into a fluid and malleable passage that distorts our perception of time and space. The almost tactile porosity of the landscape connects all layers at once: the deep and dark underground, the luminescent sky, and the ethereal realm of sensations. Mollett invites us through her personal portal to discover hidden connections, emotions and memories. As the artist manifests, 'each painting wants to produce its own kind of shimmer, but it then also originates from a shimmer out in the world. The shimmer is both a visual seen effect and an intangible, close to revelatory moment.'ⁱⁱ

Language and Time

"Contemporary auto-fiction and streams of consciousness from literature are formative to how I perceive daily reality." —Francesca Mollett

Literature informs Francesca Mollett's practice. Departing from fictional narratives, the artist discovers relational and emotional states that guide her artistic exploration. Often paired with poems, like Ella Duffy's *Surfacing* written on the occasion of her solo exhibition *Halves* at Grimm Gallery, her works create a complex language that can't be articulated through representation alone. Reminiscing Etel Adnan's hybrid artistic practice that melds art and writing to meditate on our relationship with nature, the young British artist embarks us on a multidimensional and multisensorial voyage, in which painting opens new possibilities within its own medium, as well as provides new keys to read the world that surrounds us, to unlock hidden layers of meaning. In both artists' practice, colour and texture become a language on their own, carrier of emotions and souvenirs.



Etel Adnan, *Arizona*, 1964-65, M+ Collection, Hong Kong. Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

Departing from a specific image, at a given place and time, like the flourishing of two thistle flowers in the wild, Mollett captures the elusiveness of a fleeting moment. A moment in which surfaces collide, boundaries dissolve, physical and spiritual bodies merge. By depicting those cathartic instances, spanning no more than a handful of seconds, they become everlasting, like Adnan's landscapes painted from memory and encapsulating different moments of the day, in all seasons. As the artist quotes, they become 'out of time and yet in time.'ⁱⁱⁱ

Collector's Digest

- Since completing her MA at the Royal College of Arts in 2020, Francesca Mollett has been the subject of several solo shows internationally, notably at Grimm Gallery in Amsterdam, at Pond Society in Shanghai, at Micki Meng in San Francisco, at Baert Gallery in Los Angeles, and at Taymour Grahne Projects and Informality Gallery in London.
- Francesca Mollett has also been included in influential group shows including *New British Abstraction* at CICA, Vancouver; *Considering Female Abstractions* at Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, and *Sabrina*, curated by Russell Tovey at Sim Smith, London.
- Her works are in the collections of renowned public and private institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; the K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong, or the Kunstmuseum, the Hague.

ⁱ Francesca Mollett, quoted in her artist statement at Royal College of Arts, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Francesca Mollett, quoted in Artnet Gallery Network, '7 Questions for British Artist Francesca Mollett on How Fireflies, Canals, and Ancient Grottoes Inspire Her Light-Filled Canvases', *Artnet News*, 1 June, 2023, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Francesca Mollett, quoted in her artist statement at Royal College of Arts, [online](#).

Provenance

Pi Artworks, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Pi Artworks, *An Ode to Orlando*, 4 - 6 February 2022

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



7

Pam Evelyn

Storm at Night

signed, titled and dated "'STORM AT NIGHT" 2021


PAM EVELYN' on the overlap

oil on linen

190 x 180 cm (74 3/4 x 70 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2021.

Estimate

£30,000 — 50,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“I see the canvas as an unbiased field where things come and go, sometimes something will stick, but the dominant character is a feeling of constant possibilities. Being totally lost in the painting is a much more interesting and uncomfortable position than knowing my next move.” —Pam Evelyn

British artist Pam Evelyn is a rising star in the contemporary art scene. Her intuitive painting style allows her to transcribe emotions and experiences across her canvases in broad, complex strokes. Embracing the expressive potential of colour, Evelyn works with a bright palette, using the paint itself to create depth and reveal new forms. The resulting works are brimming with life, reflective of the role the natural environment plays in her creative process. Evelyn’s works are highly sought after, and at only 27 years-old she has already been signed by blue-chip giant, Pace Gallery. Her first solo exhibition with them, *A Handful of Dust*, is currently on show in London until 30th September and features examples of the artist’s signature large-scaled works and mature command of colour, movement, and form.

In *Storm at Night*, a palpable tension is created through the revelation and concealment of forms and shapes. A heavy, hanging wash of black and navy evinces the titular storm; and yet we are asked to plunge into the choppy mist and look beyond the initial darkness of the canvas. Streaks of orange, turquoise and pink appear through the inky haze, creating a lively collection of colourful shapes and lines, jostling for attention. Evelyn’s dynamic use of oil sees spattering drips of paint streak down the surface, ensuring that colours infuse with one another, revealing and hiding at the same time. This technique, alongside her brazen, gestural handling of the brush, demonstrates the influence of post-war Abstract Expressionists, such as Joan Mitchell. In *Bracket*, we see a similar palette to that of *Storm at Night*, as well as the spatters of dripping oil paint. Both Mitchell and Evelyn are deeply intuitive in their painting, and the wild, expressive brushstrokes are used as a means of communicating atmosphere and emotion.



Joan Mitchell, *Bracket*, 1989, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Artwork: © Joan Mitchell Foundation

Storm at Night was created for an exhibition held at Baert Gallery, Los Angeles. Titled *Diaries of a Climate*, Evelyn, alongside fellow British female abstract artists Sarah Cunningham and Francesca Mollett, showed works she was inspired to make in the ‘climate’ of the COVID-19 lockdown. Leaving London, and making a return to her family home on the South Coast, Evelyn describes her experience of ‘solitude and an abundance of time [...] it actually turned into the most significant period of painting, becoming a refuge amongst a lot of uncertainty’.ⁱ The surreal loneliness of having too much time was an experience shared by many during lockdown, and works like *Storm at Night* were an essential way for Evelyn to channel her feelings of isolation and apprehension.

“When I work outdoors, I am witness to the harmony and disharmony of nature, the sudden changes in mood throughout a day. Similarly, my paintings can go through stages of being polite and harmonious, however, I often enjoy a disturbance in palette. When a painting becomes slightly agreeable I usually feel a need to introduce perhaps a gritty, meaty tone to interfere with the complacent.” —Pam Evelyn

Without space to paint indoors, Evelyn created a makeshift studio wall *en plein air*, where she allowed the transitory effects of light and weather to flow through her and into her work. Evelyn soon learnt to accept these natural influences and ‘allowed the nuance of the day to override my say [...] trust the paint over my own judgement’.ⁱⁱ Channelling the energy of the natural environment, Evelyn charges her works with colourful brilliance and textural dynamism. Whilst

taking inspiration from the abstractionists of the 20th century, she is seeking to define her own practice: 'the term abstraction is an unusual one, being that it's reliant on reality. I feel like sometimes abstraction can be more cutting and real. It's looking at the backbone.'ⁱⁱⁱ Evelyn transforms the reality of the environment to into a slippery, shimmering form. She manipulates oil paint to both reveal and conceal, obfuscating bright colours under a haze of dark, churning strokes that lends itself well to the title of *Storm at Night*.

Collector's Digest

- British artist Pam Evelyn is known for her intuitive painting style, featuring brightly coloured abstracted strokes that brim with life.
- Evelyn was signed to blue-chip-giant Pace Gallery in July 2023, and her first solo exhibition with them, *A Handful of Dust*, is on view in London until 30th September. She has also held solo exhibitions at Massimo De Carlo in Paris, The Approach in London and Peres Projects in Berlin.
- Her auction debut painting, *Evening Rain*, was sold in London by Phillips in 2022.

ⁱ Pam Evelyn, quoted in 'Pam Evelyn', *Wonderland.*, 17 November, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Pam Evelyn, quoted in James Ambrose, 'In the Studio with Pam Evelyn', *émergent* magazine, 15 December, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Pam Evelyn, quoted in Emily Steer, 'Pace Tapped Painter Pam Evelyn as Its Youngest Talent. She Tells Us What's Behind Her New Show of Tumultuously Beautiful Abstractions', *Artnet*, 22 September, 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

Baert Gallery, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Los Angeles, Baert Gallery, *Diaries of a Climate*, 9 March – 1 May 2021 (titled as *Night Fog*)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



8

Christina Quarles

Lil' Dapple Do Ya

signed, titled and dated 'Christina Quarles 2020 "LIL' DAPPLE DO YA"' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

141.9 x 152.4 cm (55 7/8 x 60 in.)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

£450,000 — 550,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“I found that language was a limiting way to approach multiple ways of being and thinking about identity. It was linear and an incredibly intense burden informing Westernized ways of seeing. This made me realize that painting was definitely what I wanted to do to explore these ideas.” —Christina Quarles

Created in 2020 in direct response to the sudden limitations on movement and interpersonal contact brought about by the global pandemic, Christina Quarles’ *Lil Dapple Do Ya* is a visceral and affecting psychological portrait of our desire for human intimacy, and the complex experience of being in our bodies. A tangle of limbs, hands, buttocks, and breasts, two bodies violently collide and melt into one another, the whole composition charged with a searing sensuality and eroticism further amplified by the shocks of hot pink and acid yellows that offset fleshier tones. Although her fluid treatment of paint, and elongated, soft forms visually evoke the Surrealist visions of Salvador Dalí, Quarles’ compositions are rooted in the complexities of being in her own body, rather than occupying the realm of dreams and fantasy.



Salvador Dalí, *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, 1936, The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950, 1950-134-41, Artwork: © Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation/DACS, London 2023

First presented in her 2020 solo show *I Won't Fear Tumbling or Falling / If We'll be Joined in Another World* alongside 8 other works created in the same intense and uncertain period, *Lil Dapple Do Ya* demonstrates the remarkable range of Quarles’ mark-making. Slipping seamlessly between painterly styles and techniques, we see smoother and more sculptural contour lines running up against more precise patterned planes, dreamy washes of colour suddenly interrupted by more heavily impastoed areas, the artist layering paint over itself ‘to evoke woozy double vision, offset by smears of bubble-gum-pink paint, bared buttocks, and tentacular black limbs.’¹

Under Quarles' virtuoso treatment, paint itself becomes a conceptual medium for carrying the themes of identity, intimacy, and the body that sit at the heart of her practice, the fluidity of acrylic and the ease with which she manipulates it into elastic new forms deeply expressive of the complex experience of being in our bodies. Quarles' forms are never grasped whole, or distinctly individuated in relationship to one another, but are instead caught in energetic, active states of merging, separating, 'enmeshed and vulnerable in a process of becoming and erasure.'ⁱⁱ



Detail of the present work

As the primary means through which we navigate our relationships to others, the world around us, and the sense that fundamentally grounds the sense of our own embodiment, touch is afforded a special place in Quarles' practice. Tellingly, although she often distorts or obscures the faces of her fluid, humanoid forms, hands and feet are often more fully realised. The parts of our body that we are most familiar with by sight, our hands and feet are also the primary means through which we register touch and physical sensation. Caught in snatches, Quarles' privileging of these isolated bodily parts and her emphasis on painterly texture also underscores the subtle but significant point that our experience of our own bodies is always fragmented and partial, even as we comprehend

other bodies as whole and fully contained within themselves.

The special place afforded to the relationship between physical sensation and embodiment places Quarles in a fascinating dialogue with the 'body awareness' paintings that formed the focus of Austrian artist Maria Lassnig's work across painting and film. Like Lassnig, Quarles seems fascinated by the shifting, ever-changing landscape of the self, and of painting's unique ability to capture those sensations in colour and line. As a queer, bi-racial woman who is often mis-seen as white, Quarles has a deep personal understanding of the ways in which identity is never one single, fixed entity, but can be at once multiply situated and subject to change. Although Quarles first tried to pursue these lines of enquiry through philosophy and looking specifically at questions of the multi-positionality of racial identity, she ultimately found language too limiting, turning to painting as a way of more accurately positioning the self in multiple places at once.

Always working to the scale of her own body, regardless of the size of the canvas, the claustrophobic spatial arrangement of the present work, activated in her careful use of patterned planes and more complex layering in her compositions, speaks powerfully not only to the trapped conditions of pandemic life but, more broadly, to the social and cultural limitations imposed from outside of ourselves - of what it means to be trapped in a racialised and gendered body. In her technical process, Quarles finds innovative new ways of exploring these tensions as she moves between the more intuitive, gestural mark-making at play in the early stages of a composition's execution, and the more controlled interventions that she is able to perform digitally through image-editing software. Contrasting with the more liquid forms of her soft figures, these tools allow Quarles to introduce more precise and spatially complex elements that her figures have to negotiate. Polymorphous and existing simultaneously in physical and digital space, Christina Quarles' rapidly shifting compositions show us what it is to be in our bodies in the 21st century.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUak2kTrgEw>

Christina Quarles discusses her practice ahead of her exhibition with the Museum of Contemporary Arts, Chicago, 2021

Collector's Digest

- Currently the subject of a solo show of new works with Hauser & Wirth in Menorca, Los Angeles based artist Christina Quarles has been the focus of numerous important group shows, including her presentation for Cecilia Alemani's *The Milk of Dreams* at the Central Pavilion of the 2022 La Biennale di Venezia. Her work was also represented in the 2020 *Radical Figures* held at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.
- Significantly, the artist was also honoured with a major critically acclaimed solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2021.

- Her paintings are also housed in esteemed public collections, including the Musée nationale d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Hirschhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and Tate, London.

ⁱ Daniel Culpan, 'Christina Quarles, Pilar Corrias', *Artforum*, Vol. 59, no. 4. January / February, 2021, online.

ⁱⁱ Daniel Culpan, 'Christina Quarles, Pilar Corrias', *Artforum*, Vol. 59, no. 4. January / February, 2021, online.

Provenance

Pilar Corrias, London

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Pilar Corrias, *Christina Quarles: I Won't Fear Tumbling or Falling/If We'll be Joined in Another World*, 8 October – 4 November 2020

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION

9

Michaela Yearwood-Dan

The Summit of Beauty and Love

oil on canvas

170 x 120 cm (66 7/8 x 47 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

£60,000 — 80,000 ±*

[Go to Lot](#)



“I think people like to overcomplicate the idea of Fine Art and trivialise the existence of pop culture – as if it [pop culture] isn’t freely borrowing from a multitude of intellectual cultural histories to keep itself sustained. For instance, the inclusion of gold leaf, gold paint, and glitter in some of my recent work can be seen to refer to renaissance fine art paintings but in the same vein, I float between them representing that and representing the gold costume jewellery I’ve worn for years.” —Michaela Yearwood-Dan

Bursts of swirling colour, interspersed with botanical motifs and textual references to popular culture are typical of London-based artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan. In works like *The Summit of Beauty and Love*, paint billows across canvases as she uses broad, gestural strokes to create expressive compositions that are full of vital energy. Graduating from her BFA at the University of Brighton in 2016, Yearwood-Dan decided to move away from figurative work to immerse herself in the world of textural and abstract art. Surrounded by a creative family that pursued carpentry, jewellery making, textiles and botany, Yearwood-Dan expands her fine arts practice to incorporate non-traditional subject matter as inspiration.ⁱ

As a black, queer woman, she seeks to imbue her works with an intersectional approach to identity, sex-positivity, and feminism in non-literal sense: ‘I’m not giving you any more body – more figurative body – to make comments on. Instead, I will hone my mind, my humour, and my intellect. People can take it or leave it. And people have been taking it, which is quite nice!’ⁱⁱ



[Left] François Boucher, *The Triumph of Venus*, 1740, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Image: Cecilia Heisser / Nationalmuseum [Right] Detail of the present work

The Summit of Beauty and Love was executed in 2020 for a group show exhibition at Arusha

Gallery, Edinburgh. Titled *Ancient Deities*, the show aimed to highlight the relevance of gods, goddesses and demons in contemporary art and culture. The present work is inspired by Venus, Roman goddess of love, sex, beauty and fertility – who Yearwood-Dan describes on her Instagram as ‘totes my kinda lady’.ⁱⁱⁱ This colloquial interaction with her work is what makes Yearwood-Dan such a refreshing voice in the contemporary art scene. She engages with classical academic subject matter in a manner that ‘pokes fun at the elitism within the artworld’.^{vi} Indeed, the title of the work is a lyric taken from the song *Venus*, first released by Shocking Blue in 1969 and made famous by Bananarama in 1986.

Video: <https://open.spotify.com/track/4XX1pFukQOZTYp6Hb6a6Ae>

Bananarama, *Venus*, 1986

The classical influence of Yearwood-Dan’s formal artistic training is still visible in her work. *The Summit of Beauty and Love* is a voracious fusion of blues, pinks, purples and golds, in rolling plumes that envelope the canvas. These warm washes of colour are reminiscent of Rococo works by French artists such as Jean Honoré Fragonard and François Boucher. In Boucher’s *The Triumph of Venus*, for example, we see Venus honoured in a composition filled with sumptuous dynamism – the frothy sea, curved nude bodies and swell of striped fabric – executed in a similar pastel palette.

Yearwood-Dan is not afraid to incorporate popular culture within her works. Textural inscriptions are commonplace in her canvases and can reference anything from Dizzee Rascal and internet memes to film and literary quotes.^v In the present work we see the inscription ‘it isn’t soft like the poets say it has teeth which bite and the wounds never close’ – a reference about love from *The Body* by Stephen King. Whilst the visual appearances of her canvases sing with colourful exultation, her inscriptions engender more nuanced meanings. In the case of *The Summit of Beauty and Love* we are reminded that love does not always feel like a scene from a Fragonard painting, it can be difficult and painful.

From Bananarama to Stephen King, *The Summit of Beauty and Love* is packed with references to goddesses, love and beauty. Whilst celebrating divine femininity, Yearwood-Dan is keen to remind us that women are frequently perceived based on their beauty and sexual appeal. The present work represents an investigation into the position of Venus in the contemporary world – how her legacy is now interpreted – and stands as a wonderful example of the artist’s non-figurative investigations of feminism and identity. In the artist’s own, characteristically straightforward terms: ‘Everything is feminine. The world exists because of the feminine. Stop insulting women for being who they are. We deal with enough.’^{vi}

Collector's Digest

- Michaela Yearwood-Dan has experienced remarkable success since finishing her BFA in 2016. She has held solo exhibitions in London and New York, as well as in group exhibitions at The Royal Academy of Arts, London; Gagosian, London; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art; and Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden, Morocco.
- She has completed several residencies, including at The Lee Alexander McQueen Foundation in 2019 and as a featured artist in the third annual Great Women Artists Residency at Palazzo Monti in 2021.
- Yearwood-Dan's works are held in the permanent collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, and Columbus Museum of Art.

ⁱ Laura Franchetti and Fred Shan, 'in Conversation with Michaela Yearwood-Dan', *Immediations*, no. 18, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Michaela Yearwood-Dan, quoted in Laura Franchetti and Fred Shan, 'in Conversation with Michaela Yearwood-Dan', *Immediations*, no. 18, 2021, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Michaela Yearwood-Dan, *Instagram*, 28 August, 2020, [online](#).

^{iv} Michaela Yearwood-Dan, quoted in Laura Franchetti and Fred Shan, 'in Conversation with Michaela Yearwood-Dan', *Immediations*, no. 18, 2021, [online](#).

^v Vanessa murrell, 'Michaela Yearwood-Dan', *Dateagle Art*, 24 August, 2018, [online](#).

^{vi} Michaela Yearwood-Dan, quoted in Eloise Hendy, 'Artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan on finding joy through art and reclaiming beauty', *The Glossary*, 9 March, 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

Arusha Gallery, Edinburgh

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Edinburgh, Arusha Gallery, *Ancient Deities*, 10 September – 18 October 2020

Literature

Emily Tobin, 'Artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan in her studio', *House & Garden*, 18 November 2020 (illustrated in the artist's studio; online)

Andrea Sacal, 'Ten minutes with artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan, as she launches her first US solo exhibition, 'Be Gentle with Me'', *10 Magazine*, 27 August 2021 (illustrated; online)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE UK COLLECTION

10

Jadé Fadojutimi


Beneath the Petticoat

signed, titled and dated "Beneath the Petticoat" July '18 Jadé Fadojutimi' on the reverse
oil on canvas

101.4 x 76.3 cm (39 7/8 x 30 in.)

Painted in July 2018.

Estimate

£150,000 — 200,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“While I’m painting, the harmonious unity of my senses becomes apparent. They muddle together, chitter-chattering about their newfound warmth as though it’s their first connection.” —Jadé Fadojutimi

One of Britain’s most promising and accomplished young artists, Jadé Fadojutimi creates vast and immersive compositions in vividly realised colour. Shifting rapidly between abstraction and moments of figuration, these paintings chart complex and stunningly beautiful ‘emotional landscapes’. Created in a burst of spontaneous, creative outpouring, her works thrum with a personality and vitality all of their own, their surfaces wonderfully alive like reflections caught in shifting water. Completed in 2018 and conceived as a sister piece to *Bark* - also offered concurrently as a highlight of our Day Sale - this sense of familial relationship and dialogue established between Fadojutimi’s works is especially pronounced in the present work, where the certain brilliant hues, forms, and gestural marks from the earlier composition repeat and respond like the alternating patterns of an antiphonal musical arrangement. Illuminating the astonishing maturity of her pictorial language, in placing these two works directly in dialogue with one another we might not only trace the development of her practice in fascinating ways, but also appreciate the profound consistency and focus of her creative vision.



[Left] Jadé Fadojutimi, *Bark*, 2016 [Right] Detail of the present work

The Primacy of Colour

Standing in front of her paintings, it is easy to understand the singular importance that Fadojutimi places on colour. A vehicle for emotion, iridescent hues activate her muscular sense of line, producing bold, rhythmic compositions that pulsate with dramatic intensity. Complimenting each other in tone and scale, pearlescent hues of soft pinks, deep purples and lighter blues accented with bursts of yellow are exchanged between these two canvases, building to a crescendo in *Beneath the Petticoat*. Showcasing Fadojutimi’s deepening command of the gestural mark and her harnessing of colour as a vividly expressive tool, the same gentle tones used in the calmer and more contemplative *Bark* are here activated, brought into vibrant life to ‘bloom, recede, [and] flare up in tangled tones’ across the canvas.ⁱ

Conjuring images of the billowing layers of lace and light cottons evoked by the title, the centrifugal force of the composition is energised by Fadojutimi’s confident and direct handling, the entire surface here moving with a liquid iridescence, forms emerging and shifting before our eyes. Thinning her paints with the quick-drying agent Liquin, Fadojutimi is able to move her paint quickly and lightly across the canvas, building up her composition in layers - a pictorial syntax of dramatic sweeps of colour counterpointed by wandering, calligraphic lines, and bursts of more textured concentrations of pigment that draw on a language of gestural abstraction best captured in the work of Abstract Expressionists Joan Mitchell and Lee Krasner. The latter’s bold combination of vivid colour contrasts brought together in dynamic tension in her canvas and collages feels especially resonant here, underscoring Fadojutimi’s reputation as a leading voice in contemporary abstraction.



Lee Krasner, *Vernal Yellow*, 1980, Museum Ludwig, Cologne. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2023

Working through formal, emotional, and sensorial elements in the process of their rapid execution, Fadojutimi's paintings respond intuitively to memory, music, and feeling, placing an investigation of the complexities of lived experience and an investigation of identity at the heart of her project. Drawing together expressions of these more immaterial sensations with a profound sense of her being within her immediate surroundings, Fadojutimi's compositions create their own emotional environments: as the artist herself suggests, through 'form, colour, or texture, or pattern [...] they become spaces for me to exist'.ⁱⁱ Combining inside and outside in a single image, windows are powerfully symbolic objects for Fadojutimi, providing a real-world analogue for the spatial qualities of her paintings - flat, ultimately, but capable of combining multiple images on a single plane and capturing a whole world beyond their surface. Like the experience of catching the trace of your own reflection superimposed on the scene beyond the windowpane, the artist conceptualises her paintings as 'reflections of myself and the objects I surround myself with', as well as spaces that she can escape into.ⁱⁱⁱ

Undoubtedly one of the most exciting young British artists working today, Fadojutimi's work can be found in numerous prestigious collections, including The Hepworth Wakefield, Tate, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Miami. Executed at a pivotal moment in the artist's developing practice in the year following her graduation from the Royal College of Art and the same year as *Present Your Royal Highness*, now held in Tate's permanent Collection, *Beneath the Petticoat* simultaneously illuminates the roots of Fadojutimi's visual language and points to the ever more ambitious directions that she would go on to take her work in.

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

Interview with Jadé Fadojutimi ahead of her first exhibition in a public institution, *The Numbing Vibrancy of Characters in Play* held at Peer Gallery in 2019.

Collector's Digest

- A graduate of the prestigious Slade School and the Royal College of Art in London, British artist Jadé Fadojutimi is now internationally represented by Gagosian Gallery. Most recently, Fadojutimi has been a resident at the LUMA Foundation in Arles.
- The youngest artist to be represented in the Tate Collection, with works held in other major institutional collections including the Baltimore Museum of Art and The Hepworth Wakefield, Fadojutimi has mounted significant solo exhibitions at The Institute of Contemporary Arts in Miami, The Hepworth Wakefield, and the Musée nationale d'art moderne in Paris.
- The first auction house to offer works by Fadojutimi for sale, Phillips also secured the auction record for the artist when we offered her 2017 work *Myths of Pleasure* in October 2021.

ⁱ Jennifer Higgie, 'From Life - Thoughts on the paintings of Jadé Fadojutimi', in *Jadé Fadojutimi: Jesture*, London, 2021, n.p.

ⁱⁱ Jadé Fadojutimi, quoted in 'Tate Short', 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jadé Fadojutimi, quoted in 'Tate Short', 2020, [online](#).

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN ITALIAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

11

Hernan Bas

His Voice Would Be the Loudest in the Land

signed with the artist's initials and dated 'HB 09' lower right; signed with the artist's initials and dated 'HB 09' on the reverse of both parts

acrylic, pastel and graphite on linen laid on panel, in 2 parts

(i) 183 x 121.8 cm (72 x 47 7/8 in.)

(ii) 183 x 152.5 cm (72 x 60 in.)

overall 183 x 274.6 cm (72 x 108 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2009.

Estimate

£450,000 — 650,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“I find painting to be a way of channelling magic. You can get lost in the paint, and an hour later, you step back and you can’t believe the time has passed. You’re like, ‘How did I get here?’ Getting the right colour can also feel like alchemy if you get a little obsessive over it.” —Hernan Bas

Androgynous dandies, fragmented landscapes and spiritual auras are peppered throughout the evocative paintings of Hernan Bas. Within his compositions he interweaves signals to his interests in literature, the occult and queer culture, creating works that are heaped with recurring motifs and inspirations. Born and raised in Miami, Bas spent much of his early life surrounded by the subtropical wilds of the Florida Everglades. He has described how, from an early age, the influence of his natural environment fuelled an unyielding belief in the fantastical folklore tales of werewolves, UFOs and Bigfoot. For Bas, this idea of paranormal beings has a ‘weird connection’ with his position as an openly gay man, ‘the idea of being of the other world in a bizarre way’.ⁱ The result is a body of work that denotes exquisite, androgynous men surrounded by dreamlike visions of both the interior and exterior.

Executed in 2009, *His Voice Would Be the Loudest in the Land* is a typical example of Bas’s earlier landscape work. Initially shown at a 2009 solo exhibition with Galleria Il Capricorno in Venice, it has been exhibited twice since, most recently in a large-scale retrospective of the artist’s work at Centro De Arte Contemporáneo Málaga in 2018. Bas employs a loose handling of paint to create a semi-abstracted vision of colour and motion that assaults the viewer with both its complexity and brilliance - like bright, Fauvist landscapes of the early 20th century. In recent years, Bas has shifted his focus to increasingly figurative interior scenes; however, they still retain his signature colourful marks of queer expressionism and spirituality.



Thomas Moran, *The Grand Canyon of Yellowstone*, 1893-1901, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Image: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of George D. Pratt, 1928.7.1

Vivid, gestural brushstrokes coalesce in an eruption of a vast, almost abstracted landscape. The monumental nature of this scene – craggy rock faces, distant mountains, sharp inclines and a turbulent, moonlit sky – surpasses the usual realm of landscape painting and evokes the transcendental feeling of 18th and 19th century depictions of The Sublime. A key feature of Romantic paintings, The Sublime was a term used to denote the impossibility of man against the unyielding power of nature. Expansive landscapes and turbulent seascapes by artists such as J. M. W. Turner and Caspar David Friedrich are still celebrated today for their ability to stir existential sentiments within us. Building upon the work of the European Romantics, American artists like Thomas Cole and Thomas Moran established The American Sublime in the latter half of the 19th Century. Their epic depictions of the great American canyons, rivers, and plains provided the necessary beauty and melodrama as inspiration for contemporary successors, such as Hernan Bas. Indeed, it can be argued that Bas’s deft evocations of The Sublime pioneer a New Romanticism of the 21st century.ⁱⁱ

“The drama, the hints at the paranormal, and the coded nature of anything that might be construed as gay all came to light in Romantic painting.” —Hernan Bas

In an industrialised world dominated by climate concern, where self-expression and self-identification come with fewer societal stigmas, young artists are seeking to align themselves

closely with nature and are returning to question humanity's role within it.ⁱⁱⁱ Instead of the intrepid explorers that populated the canvases of the 19th century Romanticists, Bas utilises quotidian, androgynous young men as a modern juxtaposition to the all-consuming power of the natural world. In the present work, two tiny figures are rendered almost helpless against their monumental surroundings, and Bas' signature fervent, Fauvist treatment of the paint creates a dizzying kaleidoscope of colour that feels as if it could devour them both.



[Left] Detail of the present work [Right] Detail of the present work

Inspired by the swampy wetlands of his native Florida and drawing upon the influence of 19th century Gothic and Dark Romantic writers Edgar Allen Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bas's visionary landscapes depict energetic and fragmented worlds, steeped in 'a Southern Gothic tradition that oozes from each painting'.^{vi} Juxtapositions of bright colours and lush vegetation with looming, exposed rockfaces and an eerie night-sky create a foreboding atmosphere. The figures in Bas's works are androgynous and dandified, reminiscent of characters in the Decadent writings of Oscar Wilde and Joris-Karl Huysmans – an inspiration Bas has readily admitted to.^v These young

aesthetes – separated by an intimidating, vertiginous slope – assume classically wistful poses. Apparently unaware of one another, they illicit themes of isolationism and nihilism that are frequently found in the Southern Gothic genre.

The solitary positions of Bas's subjects suffuse the work with a sense of yearning, and, in the face of such eclectic surroundings, we are confronted with darker subcurrents of pining sexual tension. This is a consistent theme throughout Bas's *oeuvre*, and Barry Schwabsky has described the effect as 'if you glimpsed Dorian Gray wandering through an over-grown field that Charles Burchfield could have dreamed up'.^{vi} Burchfield's other-worldly watercolours are imbued with an almost spiritual aura; a phantasmagorical representation of familiar environments. Similarly, the present work's lucid renderings of colour and form creates a vision that defies our terrestrial understandings and seeks to represent the vast pool of complex feelings and desire experienced by young queer people today.

Whilst the explosions of colour make works such as *His Voice Would Be the Loudest in the Land* a feast for the eyes, in the works of Hernan Bas, there is always so much more to see. References to classical literature and the occult represent an erudite fusion of both formal storytelling and cultural folklore, where both converge to inform the other. The present work depicts a collective scrapbook of inspiration with both subtlety and sophistication, and Bas's work acts as a voice for LGBTQ+ artists who wish to explore their sexuality in a subliminal way.

Collector's Digest

- One of the foremost contemporary painters working in America today, Hernan Bas is represented by blue-chip galleries Victoria Miro, Lehmann Maupin and Perrotin. Known for his vivid colour palette, gestural brushstrokes and androgynous subjects, his work reflects his interests in literature, queer culture and the occult.
- He has had numerous major solo exhibitions in Europe, The United States and Asia. The present work was exhibited in a large-scale career retrospective at Centro De Arte Contemporáneo Málaga in 2018.
- Bas's works are held in important collections and institutions like the Rubell Family Collection in Miami, the Saatchi Collection in London, Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

ⁱ Victoria Woodcock, 'Hernan Bas' universe of extraordinary ephemera', *Financial Times*, 28 November, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Barry Schwabsky, *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*, London,

2019, pp. 141-143.

ⁱⁱⁱ Max Hollein and Martina Weinhart, *Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art*, Frankfurt, 2005, p. 18.

^{iv} Evan Pricco, 'Hernan Bas: A Certain Southern Gothic', *JUXTAPOZ*, 29 March, 2021, [online](#).

^v Barry Schwabsky, *Vitamin P2: New Perspectives in Painting*, London, 2011, p. 44.

^{vi} Barry Schwabsky, *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*, London, 2019, p. 143.

Provenance

Galleria Il Capricorno, Venice

Galleria Victoria Miro, Venice

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Kunstverein Hannover, *Hernan Bas / The other side*, 18 February – 29 April 2012, pp. 42-43
(illustrated)

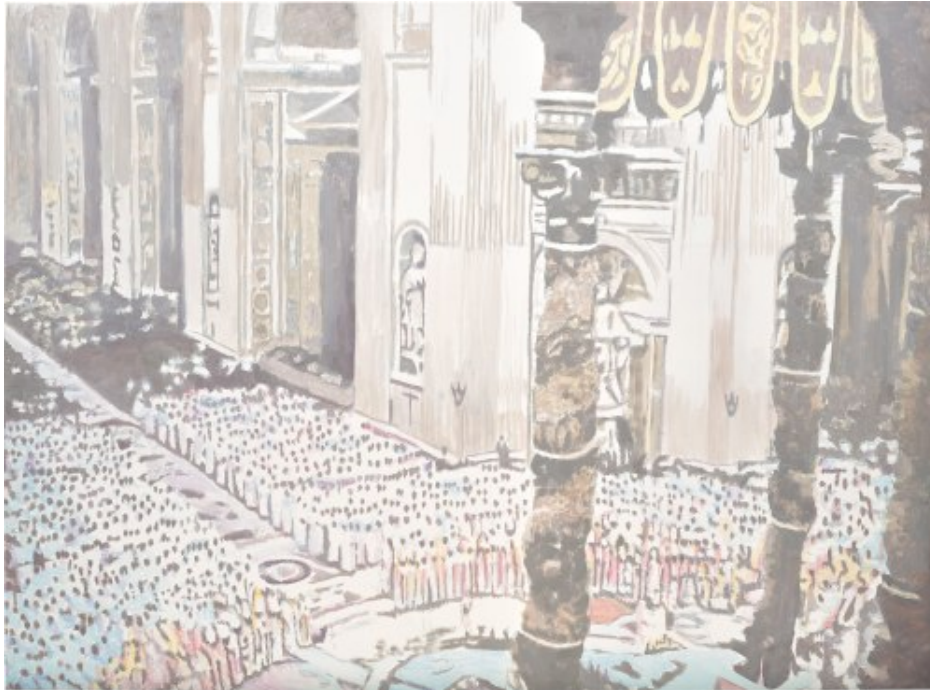
Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, *Hernan Bas: A Brief Intermission*, 21 September – 9
December 2018

Literature

Matt Price, ed., *Hernan Bas*, New York, 2014, pp. 172-173, 271 (illustrated, pp. 172-173)

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PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED EUROPEAN
COLLECTION

12 o

Luc Tuymans



Rome

signed and dated 'Luc Tuymans 007' on the reverse
oil on canvas

231.5 x 312.5 cm (91 1/8 x 123 in.)

Painted in 2007.

Estimate

£1,200,000 — 1,800,000  

[Go to Lot](#)



“I thought I had made something original, and then discovered that it was impossible. The idea of the original faded away and after a short crisis that gave me a new idea: all you can do is make an authentic forgery. I wanted the paintings to look old from the start, which is important because they are about memory” —Luc Tuymans

One of nine works belonging to Belgian artist Luc Tuymans’s *Les Revenants* series, *Rome* explores the haunting power of images and their afterlife, giving form to the artist’s ongoing inquiry into the relationship between illusion and reality, seeing and believing, and the forms and functions of visual culture. Followed first by *Forever: The Management of Magic*, which centred on the Disney industry, and *Against the Day* which looked critically at reality television, *Les Revenants* was the first in a trilogy of series which dealt directly with the image as an instrument of power. Working from found and second-hand imagery, the series includes paintings of film stills (*Exorcist*; *The Valley*) and press shots of historic events (*The Deal*) in order to explore Tuymans long-standing interest in the history of the Jesuit Order, its influence on Europe’s socio-political landscape, and the persistence of religious power in society. Coming to auction for the first time, this important work has been on continuous long-term loan first to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and then the Kunstmuseum in The Hague.



Giovanni Paolo Panini, *The Interior of St Peter's, Rome, 1750*, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit. Image: Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Mrs. Edgar R. Thom, 56.43

Captured from an elevated angle, sharply cropped, and executed in washes of pale pastel hues that evoke the faded quality of old photographs and film stills, *Rome* presents us with a cinematic snapshot of the interior of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. The largest painting of the series, the scale of the composition lends itself to the monumentality of the scene, the thronging congregation dwarfed by the sheer size and majesty of the building and of the occasion, bearing witness to the elevation of Belgian Archbishop Danneels to the rank of Cardinal. Aside from the specifics of the historical moment pictured here, the architectural heft of the basilica - its walls flanked by enormous and beautifully carved sculptures, and twisted columns thrusting heavenward like billowing columns of smoke - speaks powerfully to the theatrical nature of religious ceremony, the vast weight of Catholic tradition, and the reverence that these spaces still inspire.

As the title suggests, the impressive Basilica stands in a metonymic relationship to both the Catholic Church and to Rome itself, the larger city within which the bureaucratic engine of the Vatican is nestled. So embedded is the meaning of these messages that even the ghostly evocation of the building, here rendered in Tuymans' characteristically muted palette, summons a network of associations to do with the structure of the Catholic Church and its systems of power – and, most importantly, the role of images in disseminating its more abstract ideas.

Reimagining the Image

“It was hard to get the values right, to decide how far the contrasts could go, how I could sharpen the blur and paint all those colours into each other while giving them that light-emitting power in their stratification.” —Luc Tuymans

Working from found and second-hand images that he photographs, manipulates, and then translates into paint, Tuymans calls into question the imagined relationship between the photographic image and truth, following the principle ‘that images are unreliable, that they can offer us no more than a fragment of reality and that our own memories, personal or collective, mislead us.’ⁱ Painting directly onto the still-wet white ground of his canvases, Tuymans pushes his compositions to the point of dissolution, the bleached and blurred qualities of his paintings the result of flurries of small, narrow brushstrokes. Speaking directly about *Rome*, Hans Theys elaborates on Tuymans' process: ‘The painting was made swiftly. It is extremely effective. It shows the power of the image as something leprous, something tattered, something perishable which at the same time can be magical. The work was based on a home-made print of a digitally compressed image, with the result that the coloration is reminiscent of illustrations in old textbooks. The reality has the air of a disintegrating cardboard theatre or thousands of scattered, tiny patches of light.’ⁱⁱ



Gerhard Richter, *Stadtbild, Madrid*, 1973, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (long-term loan from a private collection). Image/Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0210)

In their mediation of second-hand images and interrogation into the relationship between history and its representation, visual technologies and power, Tuymans work follows similar lines of inquiry to those taken by Gerhard Richter in his innovative Photo Paintings. Like Richter, Tuymans cleaved to painting during a time when conceptual art had declared the medium dead, finding in it the only medium appropriate for an investigation into the questions of power, memory, and visual representation.

First shown together at Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp in the 2007 exhibition of the same name, works from the series have been included in some of Tuymans' most significant subsequent exhibitions, including his first major American retrospective in 2009, and his 2019-2020 Palazzo Grassi

presentation. Only three works from the series have appeared at auction, with others being held in the esteemed Pinault Collection and *Three Moons* resides in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2G1c9mWBRqE>

Luc Tuymans | Studio Visit | Tate Shorts, 2012

Collector's Digest

- The present work is one of the nine that Tuymans executed in 2007 as part of his *Les Revenants* series. Only three of the works have appeared at auction before, others being held in the esteemed Pinault Collection and *Three Moons* resides in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich.
- Most recently the subject of an exhibition of new works with David Zwirner Gallery in New York, Tuymans has exhibited widely, with major institutional exhibitions at National Portrait Gallery, London; Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and most recently at Palazzo Grassi, Venice in 2019.
- Coming to auction for the first time, *Rome* was first exhibited with the full *Les Revenants* series at Zeno X, Antwerp, in 2007 and has been on continuous long-term loan first to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and then the Kunstmuseum in The Hague, since.
- Examples of Tuymans work can be found in major international institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, among others.

ⁱ Cristina Ruiz, 'Luc Tuymans: "People are becoming more and more stupid, insanelly stupid"', *The Art Newspaper*, 27 March 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Hans Theys, 'On Old Ghosts and Things that Don't Pass By', *Hans Theys*, 17 April, 2007, [online](#).

Exhibited

Antwerp, Zeno X Gallery, *Luc Tuymans - Les Revenants*, 25 April – 2 June 2007
 Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum (on loan 2007-2010)
 The Hague, Kunstmuseum Den Haag (on loan 2012-2023)
 The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *Luc Tuymans: Grafisch werk 1989-2012*, 16 February – 2 June 2013

Literature

Eric Rinckhout, 'Tuymans schildert de macht der jezuïeten', *De Morgen*, 21 April 2007
 Jan Van Hove, 'The Jesuit pranks of Luc Tuymans', *De Standaard*, 25 April 2007
 Wim Daneels, 'The Jesuit pranks of Luc Tuymans', *Het Nieuwsblad*, 25 April 2007
 Hans Theys, 'On Old Ghosts and Things that Don't Pass By', *H Art*, May 2007
 Dorine Esser, 'Ik slaag er niet in iets vrolijks te schilderen', *Isel*, May-June 2007, pp. 19, 29 (illustrated)
 Jeroen Laureyns, 'Geschilderde geruchten', *Knack*, 6 June 2007
 Michele Robecchi, 'Luc Tuymans', *Flash Art*, October 2007, pp. 130-132
 Jan Koenot, 'De macht van den jezuïeten en de onmacht van beelden: Trugblik op Luc Tuymans' serie 'Les Revenants', *Streven*, November 2007, p. 870
 Norio Sugawara, *Luc Tuymans: Beyond Schwarzheide*, Tokyo, 2007, p. 8 (illustrated)
 Pablo Sigg and Tommy Simoens, eds., *Luc Tuymans: Is It Safe?*, London, 2010, pp. 75, 215 (illustrated, p. 75)
 Frank Demaegd, ed., *Luc Tuymans, Zeno X Gallery: 25 Years of Collaboration*, Antwerp, 2016, pp. 125, 269 (illustrated)
 Luc Tuymans, Gottfried Boehm, T.J. Clark and Hans M. De Wolf, *The Image Revisited*, Belgium, 2018, p. 139
 Eva Meyer-Hermann, ed., *Luc Tuymans: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume 3: 2007-2018*, New York, 2019, no. LTP 387, pp. 14-15 (illustrated, p. 15)

Provenance

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN COLLECTOR

13

Beatriz Milhazes

Mares do Sul


signed, titled and dated 'B. Milhazes "Mares do Sul" 2001' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

178.5 x 197.3 cm (70 1/4 x 77 5/8 in.)

Painted in 2001.

Estimate

£600,000 — 800,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“Think about the ocean: it has a visuality which is not simply rational. It has to do with the order of Nature. It’s both sensible and structured, and that’s what I try to show in my work.” —Beatriz Milhazes

With her vibrant and rhythmic abstract paintings constructed with collage-like layers of paint, Beatriz Milhazes’ work explores place, memory and cross-cultural identity. In *Mares do Sul*, the titular work from her first major solo exhibition at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, the Brazilian artist pulls elements from nature, architectural forms, geometry, folklore and religion to create a dynamic canvas that captures joyful and energetic contradictions. By building such dense layers of colour and form, Milhazes wants to show us her Brazil - a Brazil which combines 16th century traditional imagery and cultural clichés with European modernism. Leaning into Western assumptions with some irony, the artist is ‘playing with what the world thinks of as her culture—she’s giving us what we expect, but she’s made it up’.ⁱ

In *Mares do Sul*, carnivalesque flowers and delicate baroque arabesques burst in vibrant hues of red, yellow, pink, gold and blue. A central fragment of a circle contains stylised waves, crashing into the intricately layered motifs, which are largely contained in segments of deep purple and blue. On the left of the canvas, vertical oscillations of ochre and gold push against Milhazes’ cascading landscape, at once framing and activating its pulsing energy. This dynamic composition not only evokes the crashing waves of Copacabana, but also acknowledges Roberto Burle Marx’s iconic patterned pavements that line the beachfront of Milhazes’ home, Rio de Janeiro.



Copacabana sidewalk, Rio de Janeiro, designed by Roberto Burle Marx. Image: © Michel Viard/Horizon Features. All rights reserved 2023 / Bridgeman Images

Beginning her career in the early 1980s, Milhazes joined a progressive group of Brazilian artists named after their inaugural 1984 group show, *Como Vai Você, Geração 80?* (*How are you, generation 80?*). Rejecting the conceptual and minimalist aesthetics of the 1970s, *Geração 80* favoured a more energetic expression of painting. Milhazes combined this energetic shift with influences such as the earlier Anthropophagia movement, which encouraged artists to assimilate, rather than reject, certain European colonial influences found in Brazil. Both visually and thematically, the present work is reminiscent of the smooth, rounded modernist forms of Tarsila do Amaral, a leading figure of Anthropophagia. Both artists focused on rendering subjects and themes native to Brazil through a lens of western modernism and abstraction.



Tarsila do Amaral, *Postcard*, 1929, Private collection, Rio de Janeiro. Artwork: © Tarsila do Amaral

Building upon the principle of collage, inspired in part by her encounter with Henri Matisse's cut outs on a trip to Paris, Milhazes adopts a unique painting process that borders on printmaking. In 1989, she developed her 'monotransfer' technique where acrylic paint is applied to smooth plastic sheets and transferred wet to her canvases. Once dry (sometimes taking up to ten hours in the humidity of Rio) the plastic is peeled away, leaving a smooth layer of paint with the appearance of a transfer print. Depending on how many layers of paint are used in this process, fraying can occur, something that Milhazes assures us is deliberate, allowing her to condense multiple motifs of varying intensity into one superimposed image. These plastic sheets are then kept and reused, allowing Milhazes to continually layer ready-made motifs onto other compositions, while occasionally adding new elements that allows her to build upon her existing visual language. Within this context, her art making goes beyond collage-making in the tangible sense and is taken into the realm of the abstract – her practice is also a collage.

Mathematical dreams

Milhazes has often referred to her works as 'mathematical dreams', combining concentric disks, lines and motif with contrasting segments of colour in a painstakingly thought out process.ⁱⁱ These canvases, often pushed to their compositional limits, offer a powerful connection to nature. As the artist explains:

*"Coming back to my circles, they're not only about geometry, about optical movements, they're connected to Nature: the breath and speed of the forests, flowers, leaves, animal shapes, the power of the waves, water, oceans, the Earth's rotation, the Sun, the Moon, day, night, sky, light."*ⁱⁱⁱ —Beatriz Milhazes

Within the present work, looping arabesques, lace and disks come together in overlapping circular forms, reminiscent of the Orphism of Sonia and Robert Delaunay. Meanwhile, striating vertical and diagonal lines, recalling Bridget Riley's kinetic art of the 1960s create multiple focal points and optical depth. The kaleidoscopic surface formed by the marriage of these techniques upon her canvases create a body of work that teeters on the edge of deliberate and accidental, order and chaos. As Paulo Herkenoff concludes on *Mares do Sul*, 'Vertical waves are the phantasms of a world turned upside down. This is Beatriz Milhazes's Baroque atlas.'^{iv}



Robert Delaunay, *Rythme No 1*, decoration for the Salon des Tuileries, 1938, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France. Image: Universal History Archive/UIG / Bridgeman Images

Collectors Digest

- The artist has just completed a large solo UK show at the Turner Contemporary Museum, with an exhibition spanning the entirety of her career from 1980s to present day.
- Following the *Mares do Sul* show in 2002, Beatriz Milhazes represented Brazil in the 2003 Venice Biennale
- Her work is part of prestigious international collections such as The Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Pérez Art Museum Miami, the Banco Itaú, and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

ⁱ Jane Cohan, quoted in 'Landscape Artist Roberto Burle Marx's Lasting Influence' *Wall Street Journal Magazine*, 28 April, 2016, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Beatriz Milhazes, quoted 'Every work I create is a mathematical dream' – an interview with Beatriz Milhazes, *Apollo Magazine*, 24 April, 2018, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Beatriz Milhazes, quoted in 'Beatriz Milhazes in Conversation with Polly Apfelbaum' *Pace Gallery*, 23 September, 2022, [online](#).

^{iv} Paulo Herkenhoff, "Beatriz Milhazes-the Brazilian Trove", exh. cat., *Beatriz Milhazes: Mares do Sul*, Rio de Janeiro, 2002, p. 150.

Provenance

Pedro Cera, Lisbon

Private Collection, Lisbon

Thence by descent to the present owners

Exhibited

Rio de Janeiro, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, *Beatriz Milhazes: Mares do Sul*, 29 October 2002 – 26 January 2003, pp. 76-77, n.p. (illustrated, front cover, p. 77)

Bignan, Domaine de Kerguéhennec, *Beatriz Milhazes: Avenida Brasil*, 5 October – 7 December 2003, pp. 88, 133 (illustrated, p. 88)

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno; Madrid, Centro de Arte Tomás y Valiente, *ON PAINTING [prácticas pictóricas actuales... más allá de la pintura o más acá]*, 1 March – 25 October 2013, pp. 129, 257 (illustrated, p. 129)

Lisbon, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado, *Não sei se posso desejar-lhe um feliz ano novo. Obras da coleção Mário Teixeira da Silva*, 14 April – 28 August 2022

Literature

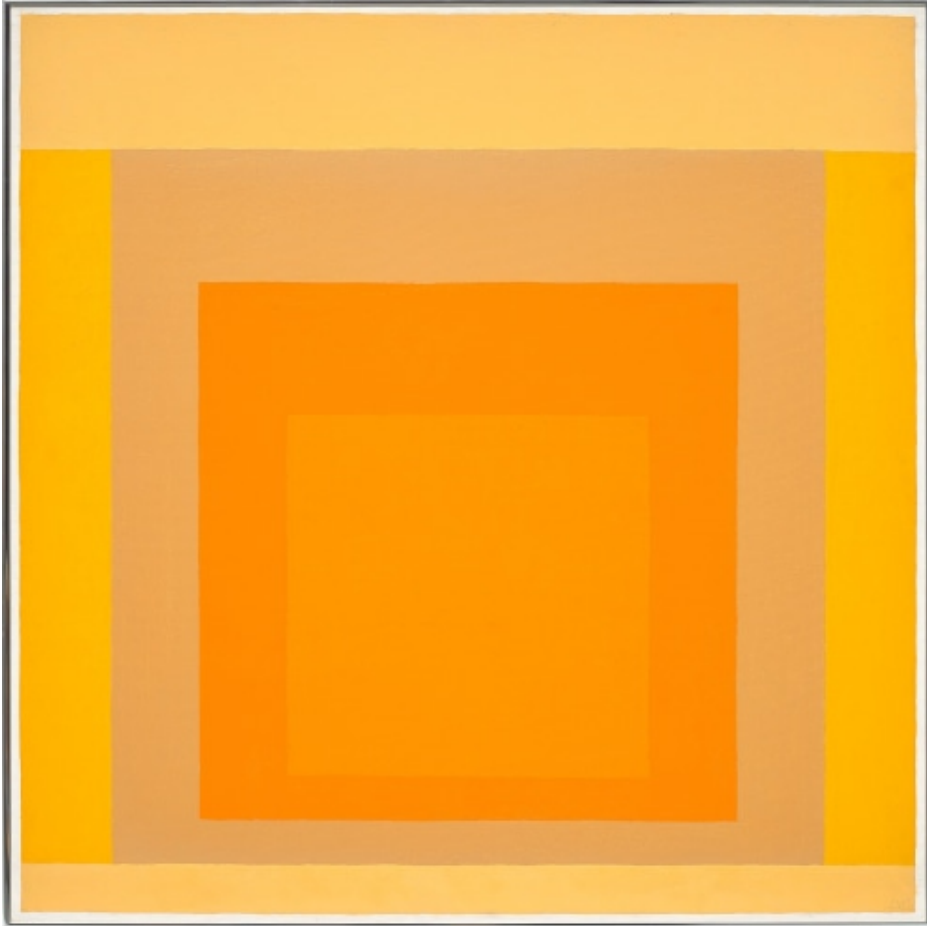
Beatriz Milhazes: Avenida Paulista, exh. cat., Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2021, no. 87, pp. 116-117 (illustrated, p. 116)

Paulo Herkenhoff, *Beatriz Milhazes*, Rio de Janeiro, 2006, pp. 149, 163 (illustrated, p. 163)

Hans Werner Holzwarth, ed., *Beatriz Milhazes*, Cologne, 2021, p. 210 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



14

Josef Albers

Homage to the Square

incised with the artist's monogram and date 'A 62'
lower right; inscribed on the reverse
oil on Masonite
76.2 x 76.2 cm (30 x 30 in.)
Painted in 1962.

This work will be included in the Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings by Josef Albers currently being prepared by the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation under number 1976.1.712.

Estimate

£200,000 — 300,000 †

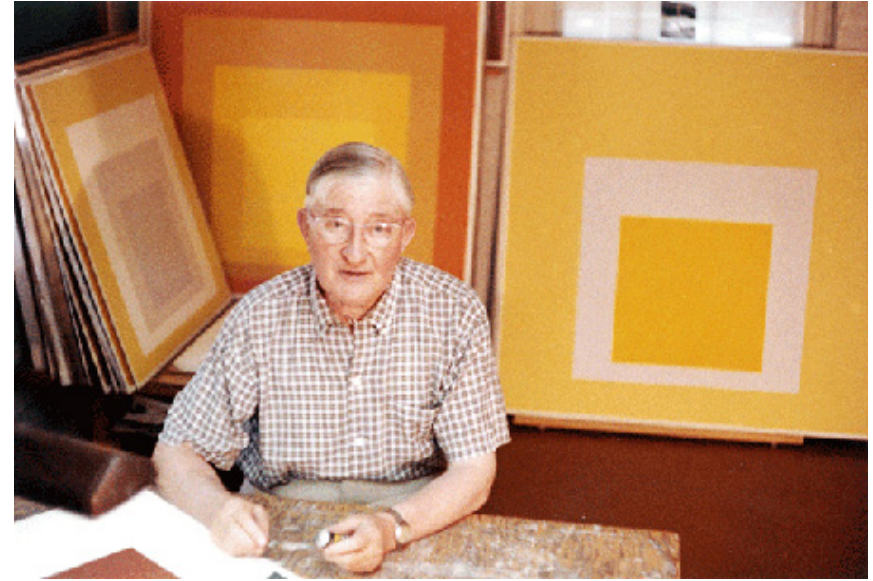
[Go to Lot](#)



“...colour, as the most relative medium in art, has innumerable faces or appearances. To study them in their respective interactions, in their interdependence, will enrich our 'seeing,' our world—and ourselves.” —Josef Albers

In his most iconic and immediately recognisable series, *Homage to the Square*, Josef Albers secured his reputation as an early pioneer of abstract minimalism, and one of the leading colour theorists of his generation. Nesting squares of differently hued colour one inside the other in a geometric arrangement, Albers developed a format for investigating colour relationships, varying tones and chromatic intensity to explore different optical and psychological effects. Combining both the so-called ‘factual’ and ‘actual’ aspects of colour – which is to say both the fixed aspects of isolated colour and its more fluid and relative experience of colour in context – the rigid geometry of the *Homage* amplified interactions between rhythm and space, moving beyond the material reality of the artwork and complicating our understanding of the relationships between artist, artwork, and audience.

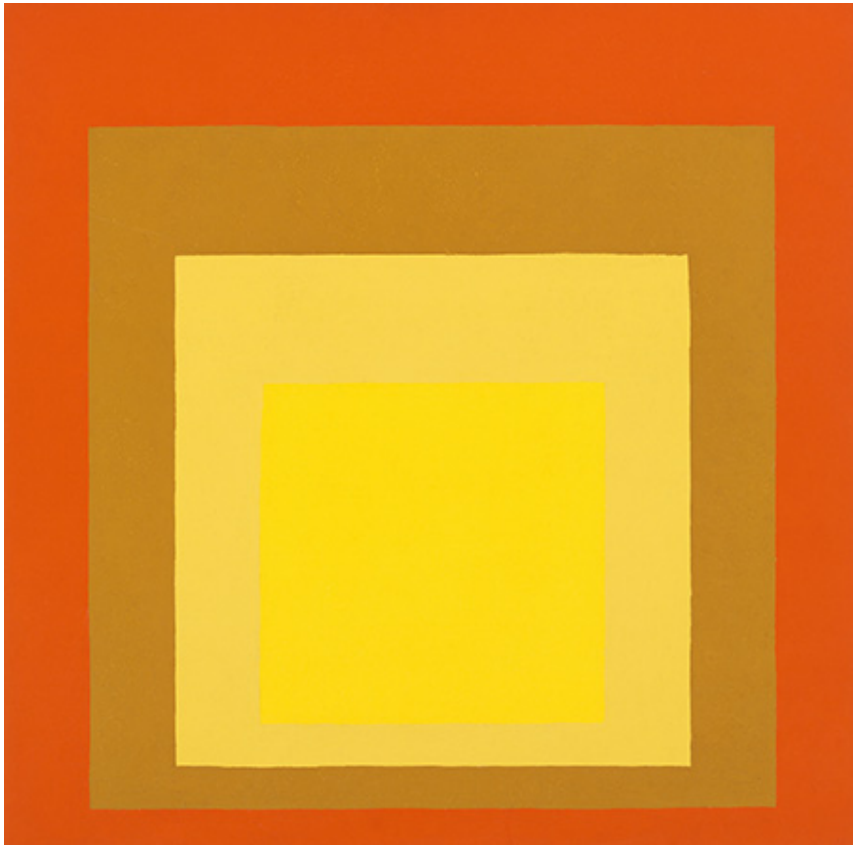
Coming to auction for the first time, the present work is an exceptionally rare example from this iconic series, one of only 74 paintings in which Albers altered the restrictions of the superimposed square format in order to more fully explore the visual sensations produced by certain chromatic relationships. Executed in luminous bands of yellow, gold and ochre tones, the present work emphasises the fundamentally explorative and investigative nature of the series, and of Albers’ deeply sensitive approach to colour and abstraction.



Josef Albers at his studio in 1960. Image: © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / DACS 2023

Living in Squares

Albers started working on this series in 1950 and would continue until his death, producing approximately 2,200 *Homage to the Square* paintings during this time. Within this vast body of work, the mathematically determined format typically involved the presentation of several, superimposed squares which appear to sit or float one on top of the other. Rendered in unmixed oil paint, squeezed directly from the tube and expertly applied to the reverse of a Masonite board with a palette knife, Albers effectively avoided the ‘expressive’ brushstroke and minimised the presence of the artist’s hand in the work. And yet, these smooth, flat planes of colour are anything but static, appearing instead to move forward or recede depending on the manner in which they interact with the surrounding hues. As the artist described, ‘Seeing several of these paintings next to each other makes it obvious that each painting is an instrumentation in its own. This means that they are all of different palettes, and, therefore, so to speak, of different climates. Choice of the colours used, as well as their order, is aimed at an interaction.’¹ Dropping the central square down to the lower edge of the composition, Albers further activated the interactions between the bands of colour, encouraging the eye to register a simultaneous movement outward from the centre and upward from the lower edge.



Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square*, 1956-62, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / gift of Anni Albers and the Josef Albers Foundation, Inc. / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / DACS 2023

In 1957, Albers began experimenting with the limitations of his square format, adjusting the more strictly delineated geometry which generated consistent, uninterrupted bands of colour. Exceedingly rare and important works, these adapted pieces emphasise the extent to which Albers conceptualised the *Homage* series not simply of artworks in their own right, but as an instrument for exploring what, for Albers, was the defining aspect of painting itself – ‘colour acting’.ⁱⁱ Instead of the typical uninterrupted outer margin here, Albers interposed a lighter band of pale yellow at the upper and lower edge, where to the left and right edges, truncated bands of golden amber react against the tawny margin of the smaller square. The overall effect is compositionally and

optically more complex, the warmer golden and saffron tones of the central squares appearing to project outwards towards the viewer, its progress unexpectedly interrupted by the framing device of the contrasting outer margins. Furthermore, while Albers would typically render his squares on a white ground to amplify their colour contracts, in this example the artist goes even further in his experiments, exploring ideas of transparency and spatial effects by painting the central square directly over the deep saffron tones of the square beneath it.

Colour Theory and The Bauhaus School

Producing a more intense visual sensation in its viewers, this 1962 work represents the culmination of Albers’ career-long fascination with the active qualities of colour, capturing the scope and ambition of his project as both an artist and educator. As a European émigré travelling to America to escape persecution during the turbulent years of the Second World War, Albers was one of a group of artists and intellectuals who brought early 20th century European modernism to the United States, energising and expanding the conversations that a new generation of artists were starting. As an esteemed faculty member of the Black Mountain College and Yale University, Albers’ influence in this respect was hugely significant, with figures such Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and Eva Hesse counted amongst his students.

“In visual perception a colour is almost never seen as it really is – as it physically is. This fact makes colour the most relative medium in art. In order to use colour effectively it is necessary to recognise that colour deceives continually. To this end, the beginning is not a study of colour systems.” —Josef Albers

Although Albers started the *Homage* series in 1950 – the year that he and his wife the artist Anni Albers relocated to New Haven – the conceptual roots of the series reach right back to his earliest experiments with the visual and psychological effects of colour and light, and to his introduction to colour theory as a student at the newly opened Bauhaus school in Weimar in 1920. Founded by the architect Walter Gropius on the desire for a radical rethinking of the traditional divisions between the so-called ‘fine’ and ‘applied’ arts, the school levelled perceived hierarchies between painting and design, with the study of colour making up an important and integral part of the teaching program, forming the basis of the foundation course or *Vorkurs* led by Johannes Itten. Bearing close similarities to the principles of Albers’ *Homage* and their importance as pedagogical tools, Itten would instruct students in the principles of colour theory with the use of a ‘colour star’ that he created in 1921 in a reinterpretation of more traditional colour wheels. Flattening the sphere to enable students to more completely grasp the relationships between primary, secondary, and tertiary colours and the principles of their combinations on a single plane, Itten’s colour star demonstrated the expansive possibilities of ‘the kingdom of colours’ which, as he theorised, ‘has

within its multidimensional possibilities [...] Each individual colour is a universe in itself.ⁱⁱⁱ

The first student to be offered a place on the faculty, Albers continued to develop these ideas as both an artist and teacher, first in Europe and later in the United States. Albers' minimal and systematic approach would go on to influence a generation of artists working in the 1960s such as Donald Judd and Frank Stella, whose own concentric squares diverge from Albers in conceptual terms, while emphasising the shape's symmetrical and graphically simple qualities which proved to be so fundamental to the development of abstraction. Similarly, while Mark Rothko's emotionally charged canvases turn to colour's more expressive and affective qualities, they nevertheless record the influence of Albers' more systematic approach to colour contrasts, and the bridge that his work forged between the currents of an early 20th century European avant-garde with mid-century American modernism.



Mark Rothko, Red, Orange, Orange on Red, 1962, Saint Louis Museum of Art, Missouri. Image: © Saint Louis Art Museum / Funds given by the Shoenberg Foundation, Inc. / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko / DACS 2023

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3xpTtn7zo8>

Josef Albers: The Magic of Colour | David Zwirner

Collector's Digest

- Between 1950 and his death in 1976, Josef Albers created some 2,200 works related to

his *Hommage to the Square* series. Immediately recognisable, works from this series are held in major collections all around the world and were first featured in a major touring exhibition organised by The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1964, which travelled to 22 venues in the United States and Latin America.

- One of 74 works within the series, the present work pushes against the geometric restrictions that govern the series in a more radical fashion.
- In 1971, Albers became the first living artist to be honoured with a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2016, representation of The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation passed to David Zwirner Gallery, followed by a series of global exhibitions (Zwirner; Guggenheim) and record prices for the artist at auction (over 2 million GBP in 2017).

ⁱ Josef Albers, quoted in *Josef Albers*, exh. cat., The Mayor Gallery, London, 1989, p. 31.

ⁱⁱ Josef Albers, in *Josef Albers: Formulation Articulation*, London, 2006, p. 29.

ⁱⁱⁱ Johannes Itten, *The Art of Colour*, New York, 1961, p. 117.

Provenance

Estate of the Artist

Josef Albers Foundation, Bethany

Galerie Denise René, Paris

Private collection, Japan

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Madrid, Galería Theo, *Josef Albers: Obras 1955-1973*, November - December 1987, no. 15, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE GERMAN COLLECTION

15

Alex Katz

Ariel

signed and dated 'Alex Katz 16 Alex Katz 16' on the overlap
oil on canvas

165 x 351 cm (64 7/8 x 138 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2016.

Estimate

£650,000 — 850,000 ₺



[Go to Lot](#)



“For Katz the image, and his TV, billboard or movie close-up discovery, provided a way of both isolating and abstracting each separate feature, as if it were an arc, a rhomboid, an ellipse, within the psychological unity which the audience imparts to a recognisable form.” —Frank O’Hara

Recalling the scale, format and graphic immediacy of towering billboards featuring the smiling faces of beautiful young women advertising everything from consumer products to Hollywood movies, *Ariel* is a bright and bold example of Alex Katz’s radical take on realism which has, over the course of the last eight decades, redefined the vocabulary of contemporary portraiture. Like Katz’s portraits of his wife and primary muse Ada, the subject here is at once highly individuated and universal, a technique which has enabled the artist to anchor the idealised elegance and mysterious impassivity of his unique visual style, granting an emotional depth to his fascination with surface and the fleeting moment.

Movement and Muybridge

Set against a sizzling ground of saturated tangerine tones, the titular *Ariel* appears in white bathing suit and sunhat, Katz deftly capturing the languorous summer heat and laid-back glamour of the East Coast and its photogenic inhabitants. Carefree, she passes in front of us, catching our eye as she goes. Borrowing at once from the visual language of film and the statuesque, static quality of horizontal frieze reliefs, the painting is a study in motion, the subject shown in three, sequential poses as if caught in a series of snapshots as she moves through the frame, swinging her sunhat out in front of her.

Paradoxically magnifying the sense of kinetic energy and movement by localising it in a series of static, sequential images, *Ariel* visually recalls the radical photographic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge, whose 1887 *Animal Locomotion* introduced entirely new ways of thinking about photography, movement, and the concept of time. Amassing over 100,000 images of animals and humans moving and engaged in a variety of tasks, these pioneering studies of motion presented huge innovations in the fields of both photography and science, paving the way for cinema and more complex conceptualisations of our experience of time and perception.



Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Opening a Parasol*, 1883-86, printed 1887, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, 1938, 38.82.1

Now in his 96th year, ideas around movement and, more specifically, dance have preoccupied Katz throughout his long career. During the 1960s, the artist started working with the choreographer Paul Taylor, a rich and rewarding collaboration which evolved over 20 years and saw Katz produce innovative sets and costumes which experimented with scale, framing mechanisms, and the same flat lighting that would come to define his painting. At the same time, Katz developed a body of work based on the dancers he was working with, their own focus on the primacy of movement and gesture encouraging the artist to work towards capturing that same immediacy in painting.

“I had seen Paul dance for the first time shortly before we met with Edwin [Denby] and thought his choreography was one of the most surprising things I had seen as an artist. Paul’s dancing seemed to be a real break with that of the previous generation: no expression, no content, no form, as he said, and with great technique and intelligence.” —Alex Katz

A student at New York's Cooper Union during the 1940s, Katz was immersed in the culture of American Modernism, befriending a community of dancers, theatre types, and poets of the so-called New York School, and yet the artist found himself out of step with the gestural dynamism of a then-ascendent Abstract Expressionism. Similarly, while his fluid sense of line, crisp, flattened forms, and smooth, unblemished surfaces anticipated Pop Art's heightened graphic sensibility in many ways, their fascination with commodity culture and consumerism was not shared by Katz, whose painterly themes chimed more closely with those of an earlier generation of artists.

While undoubtably a painter of urbane, contemporary life, his preference for intimate subjects of the everyday – including family, friends, and the various leisure pursuits they enjoy – aligns him thematically if not stylistically to Impressionism's focus on the fleeting moment. Fascinated by the body in motion, Edgar Degas' almost obsessive rendering of ballerinas offers an especially resonant reference here, Katz's own combinations of bodily gesture and the radical, close-cropping techniques learned from film and advertising recalling the French Impressionist's own interest in emergent photographic technologies and his tendency to employ unexpected perspectives, setting his figures at a sharp angle to the picture plane.



Edgar Degas, *Blue Dancers*, c. 1899, Pushkin Museum, Moscow. Image: Bridgeman Images

Executed in 2016, the year after The Metropolitan Museum in New York mounted an exhibition dedicated to works by the artist in their collection, *Ariel* sits in close relation to Katz's slightly later *Coca-Cola Girls* series, adopting the same graphic sensibility, sequence of balletic gestures, and richly nostalgic atmosphere as we see in the present work. Highly characteristic of Katz's iconic visual style in its use of bold blocks of colour and clean contours, *Ariel* also captures something more essential about the mechanics of looking, the desire activated in spectatorship, and the nature of portraiture itself. Slowing down this fleeting moment and separating it into its constituent parts, Katz dissects the sudden flash of self-awareness as Ariel becomes aware of herself being looked at, giving weight to critic Donal Kuspit's claim that 'Katz's portraits are true to the way we experience others [...] convey[ing] the tension between the determinate outer

appearance and the indeterminate inner reality of someone known only from the outside.ⁱ

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mU4N3bY4-1s&t=124s>

Colby College, drawing connections between Katz's painting and choreography in *Alex Katz Theatre and Dance* | 'Finding inspiration from Alex Katz's *Pas de Deux* Paintings'

Collector's Digest

- Most recently honoured with a major career retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Alex Katz has been painting for over 80 years, during which time he has been the focus of over 200 solo exhibitions all over the world.
- His work is found in the most prestigious public collections The Museum of Modern Art in New York, Musée de l'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, and the Tate Gallery, London.

ⁱ Donald Kuspit, *Alex Katz Night Paintings*, New York, 1991, p. 8.

Provenance

Studio Alex Katz, New York

Lococo Fine Art Foundation, Saint Louis

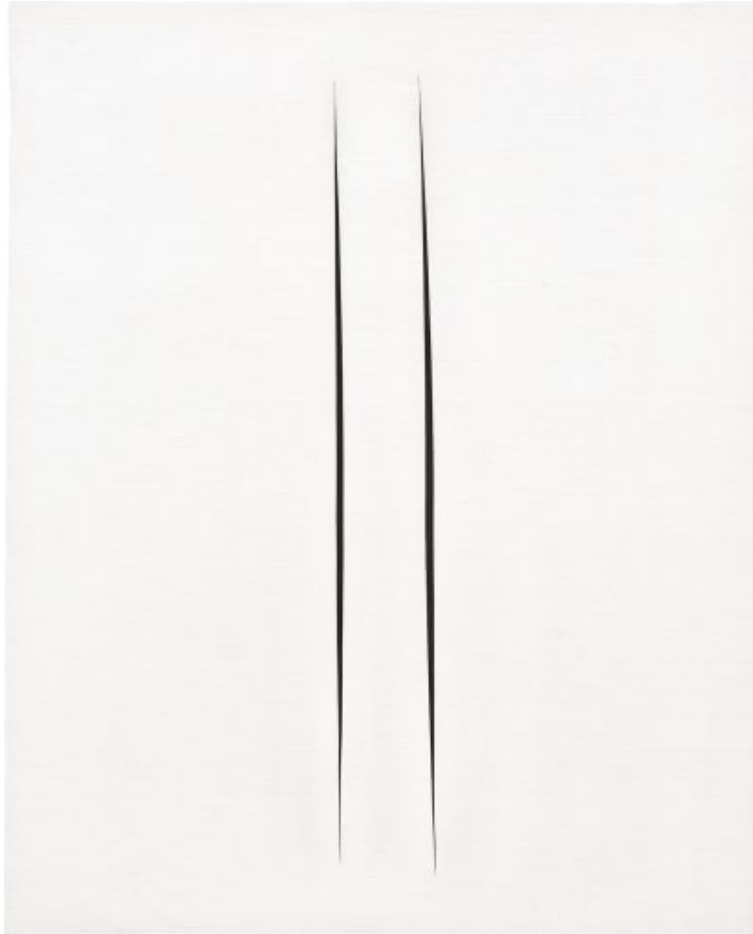
Private Collection, Germany

Exhibited

Hamburg, Barlach Halle K, *Alex Katz: Black and White*, 19 January - 20 February 2018

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE EUROPEAN COLLECTOR

16

Lucio Fontana

Concetto spaziale, Attese


signed, titled and inscribed 'l. Fontana "Concetto spaziale" ATTESE io cinguetto, tu cinguetti, egli cinguetta, tu cinguetti?' on the reverse

waterpaint on canvas

81 x 65 cm (31 7/8 x 25 5/8 in.)

Executed in 1964-1965, this work is registered in the archives of the Lucio Fontana Foundation under number 3406/1.

Estimate

£1,400,000 — 1,800,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“My cuts are above all a philosophical statement, an act of faith in the infinite, an affirmation of spirituality. When I sit down to contemplate one of my cuts, I sense all at once an enlargement of the spirit, I feel like a man freed from the shackles of matter, a man at one with the immensity of the present and of the future.” —Lucio Fontana

The pristine white expanse of its painted surface dramatically interrupted by two centrally positioned and precise vertical slashes, Lucio Fontana’s *Concetto spaziale, Attese* is an arresting example of the 20th century master’s most iconic series of works. The supreme embodiment of his Spatialist project, in his ‘cuts’ or *Tagli*, Fontana radically disrupted centuries of pictorial tradition, pushing beyond the two-dimensional surface of the picture plane into a fourth-dimension uniting space, time, colour, and movement. At once delicate and bursting with a concentrated, violent energy, the two perfectly balanced incisions record the confidence and mastery of the artist, capturing the rhythmic dance of his hand as it moved precisely across the surface of the canvas.



Ugo Mulas, *Lucio Fontana*, 1964. Image: © Ugo Mulas Heirs. All rights reserved

Executed in 1964-65, *Concetto spaziale, Attese* represents the mature expression of Fontana’s radical aesthetic that evolved from the staccato perforations of his *Buchi* to the elegant precision of the *Tagli* works, first introduced towards the end of 1958. These tentative, early slashes quickly resolved into the precise, clean cuts that we see here, the fleeting action of a moment suspended in time captured in the work’s compositional rhythms and alluded to more indirectly in the ‘waiting’ of the title. Backing the canvas with black gauze to create the appearance of a deep void beyond, Fontana realised the ambitions laid out in his *First Spatialist Manifesto* from 1947 to ‘unchain art from matter, to unchain the sense of the eternal from the preoccupation with the immortal’, moving decisively beyond the monochromatic and two-dimensional surface of the canvas into the infinite and ever-expanding space beyond the confines of the picture plane.ⁱ

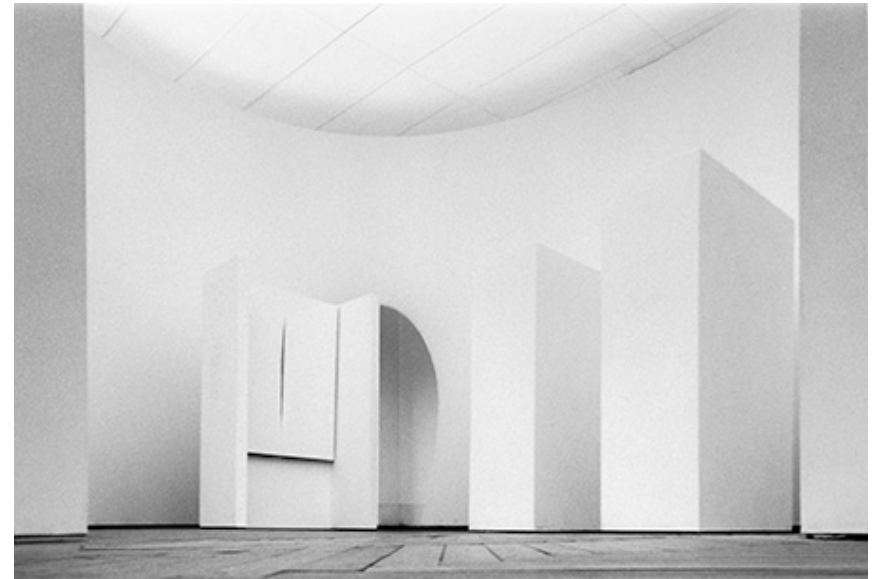
“I do not want to make a painting; I want to open up space, create a new dimension, tie in the cosmos, as it endlessly expands beyond the confining plane of the picture.”
—Lucio Fontana

This fascination with the philosophical and technological implications of rapid advancements in scientific thought through the early decades of the 20th century aligned Fontana with the avant-garde ZERO movement, whose artists shared in the same utopian enthusiasm at the dawn of the Space Age. Just ten years before the execution of the present work, Sputnik had been launched into space, film and television was deeply preoccupied with images of space exploration and imagining the worlds that could exist beyond our own, and by 1969 the televised Apollo 11 space flight would successfully send humans to the moon, allowing us to see the Earth from space for the first time. Just as these rapid technological advances opened up radically new ways of comprehending the universe and our place within it, Fontana’s lacerated canvases pushed art into the unknown, breaking the boundaries between the picture’s surface and the infinite, expanding space beyond it.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTQuRHmvFGs&t=1s>

ZERO: Radical Art of the ‘50s and ‘60s, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *ZERO – LET US EXPLORE THE STARS*, 2015

Fontana had trained initially as a sculptor, and through his *Concetto spaziale* he dissolved boundaries between painting, sculpture, and architecture; a practice that reached its full expression in the spatial environment that Fontana created for the 33rd La Biennale di Venezia in 1966, just one year after the execution of the present work. In an installation that earned him the Grand Prize for Painting, Fontana presented an entire room of white *Tagli*, coming even closer to realising his vision for a new art for the post war world as his structurally pure, white *Tagli* ‘giving the spectator an impression of spatial calm, of cosmic rigour, of serenity in infinity.’ⁱⁱⁱ Although Fontana experimented with a range of colours, including his iconic red canvases, the artist would describe white as the ‘purest, least complicated, most understandable colour’.ⁱⁱⁱ Structurally pure and striking a poetic balance between light and dark, the painted surface and the infinite void, it was with these white *Tagli* that Fontana pushed his spatial philosophy into sublime new territory in the final years of his life.



Ugo Mulas, *Sala di Lucio Fontana*, XXXIII Biennale d'Arte, Venice, 1966. Image: © Ugo Mulas Heirs. All rights reserved

Now widely recognised as one of the most innovative and radical artists of the post war period, the first major international retrospective of Fontana’s work was hosted by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1977, with subsequent retrospectives staged at some of the most prestigious institutions across the world, including the Musée national d’Art moderne - Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1987; Kunsthalle Frankfurt in 1996; and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice in 2006. Amongst his most highly celebrated works and representing the apotheosis of his aesthetic investigations, examples of his white *Concetto spaziale* are held in major public and private collections, including The Metropolitan Museum in New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam amongst others.

Collector’s Digest

- Fascinated by surface and the dimensionality of objects, Lucio Fontana’s iconic slashed and punctured canvases rank amongst the most immediately recognisable in 20th century art.

Lucio Fontana

- His innovative approaches to the picture surface and the creative act would have far reaching effects across multiple disciplines including painting, sculpture, and performance art, and would radically influence the *arte povera* movement.
- Highly prized, Fontana's white *tagli* were revered by the artist as the purest expression of his 'Spatialist' aesthetic and celebrated in 1966 with his ground-breaking all-white installation *Ambiente Spaziale* at La Biennale di Venezia.

ⁱ 'First Spatialist Manifesto', 1947, in Enrico Crispolti et al. (eds.), *Lucio Fontana*, Milan, 1998, pp. 117-118.

ⁱⁱ Enrico Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana, Catalogue Raisonné des Peintures et Environnements Spatiaux*, vol. I, Brussels 1974, p.38.

ⁱⁱⁱ Enrico Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana, Catalogue Raisonné des Peintures et Environnements Spatiaux*, vol. I, Brussels 1974, p. 137.

Provenance

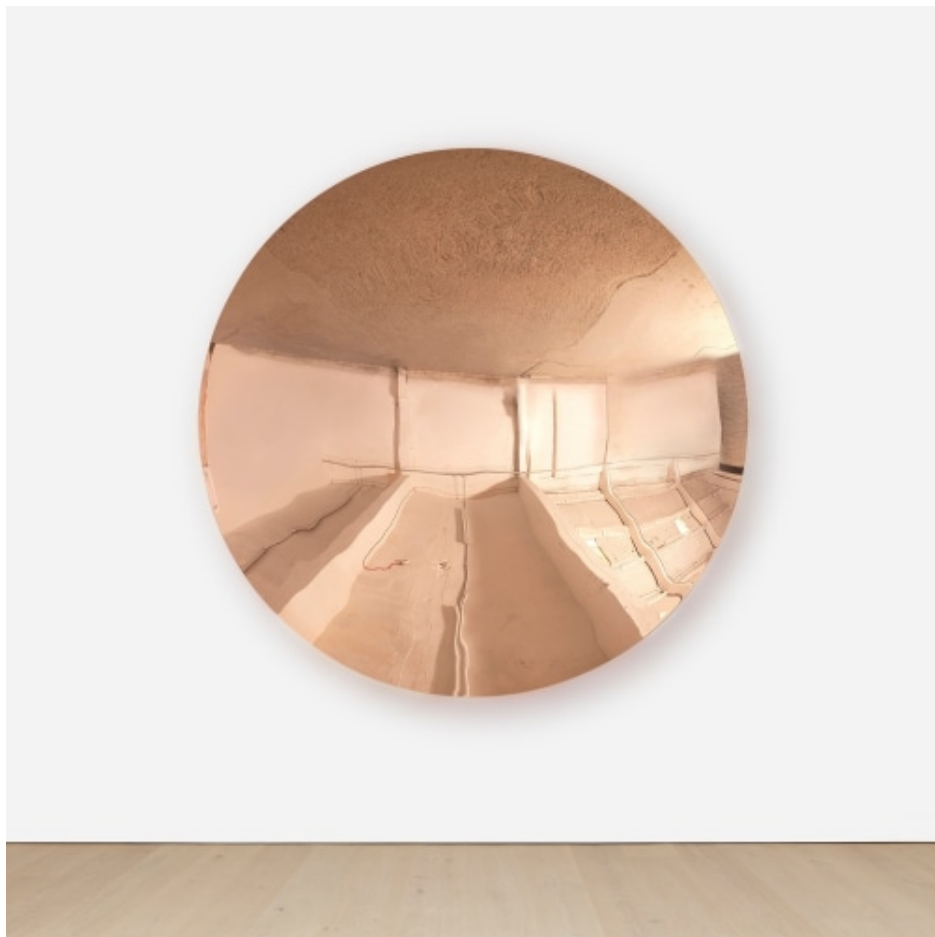
Galleria dell'Ariete, Milan

Private Collection, Italy

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2008

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE AMERICAN COLLECTION

17

Anish Kapoor

Untitled

signed and dated 'Anish Kapoor 2012' on the reverse
copper alloy and lacquer

160 x 160 x 28 cm (62 7/8 x 62 7/8 x 11 in.)

Executed in 2012.

Estimate

£600,000 — 800,000

[Go to Lot](#)



“To make new art you have to make a new space.” —Anish Kapoor

Shimmering with a warm iridescence and radiating light from its concave copper surface, *Untitled*, from 2012, is an immersive example of British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor’s celebrated series of wall-mounted mirrored sculptures. Supremely elegant in its execution, seen from a distance the copper disc appears to float suspended before us, its gently undulating surface shifting like the rising sun.

Radically destabilising boundaries between inside and out, our physical bodies and their reflected image, approaching this rippling copper pool we, like Ovid’s Narcissus, find ourselves drawn further into its liquid depths, mesmerised by the inverted, shifting world beyond the surface. Animated in this manner, the concave surface of *Untitled* recasts the world as a stage, with the body and the self reimagined as more fluid entities within it. As Kapoor lyrically describes, the ‘interesting thing about a polished surface to me is that when it is really perfect enough something happens – it literally ceases to be physical; it levitates; it does something else, especially on concave surfaces.’¹ Slipping between our physical reality and the one we find reflected in the distorting, surface of the bronze, we cease to be purely physical, in Kapoor’s terms.



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Narcissus*, c. 1597-99, Palazzo Barberini, Gallerie Nazionali Barberini Corsini, Rome. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Shifting Worlds

One of the most significant and influential sculptors of his generation, Kapoor was born in Mumbai before relocating to London in the 1970s, where he has lived and work since. Kapoor’s innovative practice has seen him work across a variety of materials including raw pigment, earth, polystyrene, concrete, and felt, pushing his work into ever-more poetic territory since his earliest investigations into the possibilities of metallic and reflective surfaces generated his first mirror-polished objects in the mid-90s. Collapsing the spatial organisation of our landscape, Kapoor’s eponymous series of

Sky Mirrors are especially striking in this respect, generating an illusory depth and sense of perpetual movement within their concave forms. As Stephanie Dieckvoss has described, while ‘earlier works meditated on themes of the void, emptiness and the abyss, these sculptures engage viewers directly, literally turning our view of the world on its head’.ⁱⁱ

Starting compelling conversations around our experience of space, the contemporary sublime, and the nature of reality and perception that has come to define a central aspect of the Turner Prize-winning artist’s practice, Kapoor’s adoption of the concave form would prove decisive in this ‘new spatial adventure’ that he found himself off upon.ⁱⁱⁱ As the artist describes, ‘suddenly this was not just a camouflaged object; it seemed to be a space full of mirror just like the previous works had been a space full of darkness [...] a different order or object from a mirrored exterior.’^{vi}

Bronze and the Morphology of Form

“Bronze is the mirror of form, wine of the heart.” —Aeschylus

Fascinated by the spatial qualities of these objects, Kapoor lyrically describes the manner in which ‘it seemed it was not a mirrored object but an object full of mirroredness [...] a whole new spatial adventure.’^v Bronze especially lent itself to this task, as the supple elegance of Constantin Brancusi’s highly polished convex forms and series of heads had powerfully demonstrated a century earlier. Coupling this polished perfection with a concave surface Kapoor quickly discovered precisely the morphological potential that he was pursuing, with beguiling results.



Constantin Brancusi, *Le nouveau né (The Newborn)*, ca. 1923, Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris. Image: © NPL - DeA Picture Library / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

A testament to its central importance in Kapoor’s oeuvre, as well as in 20th century sculptural practice more broadly, *Untitled* was included in the innovative 2012 exhibition *Bronze*, held at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Highlighting the centrality and versatility of the material, the exhibition positioned bronze as ‘a universal artistic medium [...] a material that has been used by almost every sculptor of note.’^{iv} Presented alongside exquisite examples of ancient statuary, Renaissance masterpieces and modern masterpieces by the likes of Constantin Brancusi and Henri Matisse, *Untitled* was one of very few contemporary examples included. Indeed, as the most recently executed work included in the show, *Untitled* not only positions Kapoor’s as inheritor to a deep and vitally important art historical tradition, but emphasises his radically innovative approach to the medium.

Collector’s Digest

- The subject of extensive solo exhibitions and with examples of his work housed in preeminent collections worldwide, Anish Kapoor is the first British artist to be

honoured with a major, dual-gallery exhibition at the Gallerie dell'Accademia and Palazzo Manfrin in Venice, running alongside the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in 2022.

- In 1990 Kapoor was selected to represent the United Kingdom at La Biennale di Venezia, where he was awarded the prestigious 'Premio 2000' international jury award. After winning the Turner Prize the following year, Kapoor was also awarded the Praemium Imperiale in 2011. Returning to Venice in 2022, Kapoor staged an ambitious exhibition of works at the Galleria dell'Accademia which ran alongside La Biennale di Venezia.
- With similar works now held in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, amongst others, Kapoor's mirrored sculptures have become almost synonymous with the artist's practice.
- Most recently, Kapoor has opened an exhibition of recent works at the Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden, Wuppertal.

ⁱ Anish Kapoor, cited in 'Mythologies in the Making: Anish Kapoor in Conversation with Nicholas Baume', *Anish Kapoor: Past, Present, Future*, exh. cat., Boston, Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2008, p. 52.

ⁱⁱ Stephanie Dieckvoss, in *Anish Kapoor: Turning the World Upside Down in Kensington Gardens*, exh. cat., London, Serpentine Gallery, 2010, p. 74.

ⁱⁱⁱ Anish Kapoor, cited in 'Mythologies in the Making: Anish Kapoor in Conversation with Nicholas Baume', *Anish Kapoor: Past, Present, Future*, exh. cat., Boston, Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2008, p. 52.

^{vi} Anish Kapoor, cited in Hossein Amirsadeghi and Maryam Homayoun Eisler, eds., *Sanctuary: Britain's Artists and their Studios*, London, 2011, p. 436.

^v Anish Kapoor, cited in 'Mythologies in the Making: Anish Kapoor in Conversation with Nicholas Baume', *Anish Kapoor: Past, Present, Future*, exh. cat., Boston, Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2008, p. 52.

^{vi} Michael Prodger, 'Bronze beauties: sculpture at the Royal Academy', *The Guardian*, 7 September, 2012, [online](#).

Provenance

Private Collection, Europe (acquired directly from the artist)
Sotheby's, New York, 14 May 2014, lot 60
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Bronze*, 15 September – 9 December 2012, no. 157, pp. 252-253, 280 (illustrated, pp. 252, 280)
Berlin, Martin-Gropius-Bau, *Kapoor in Berlin*, 18 May – 24 November 2013, p. 197 (illustrated)



18

On Kawara

OCT.20,1992

signed 'On Kawara' on the reverse
Liquitex on canvas and handmade cardboard box with
newspaper clipping from The New York Times
25.8 x 33.3 cm (10 1/8 x 13 1/8 in.)
Executed in 1992.

Estimate

£250,000 — 350,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“Though Kawara may have tried to erase his hand by making the Date Paintings so exact, I do think the concept of the artist’s hand was important to him—maybe not in the traditional way we think about it in terms of gesture and brushstrokes, but he did do everything by hand. He lettered his paintings by hand, he stamped his postcards by hand; even after the advent of computers, he still used typewriters. The making of the object and the material object, I believe, were important to him, so if not the artist’s hand, per se, perhaps it was about the artist’s participation—or presence—for Kawara.” —Anne Wheeler

Video: https://youtu.be/wXjiWD7jOfM?si=da7Z_oRjqAZExFga

On Kawara: Date Paintings, 2015

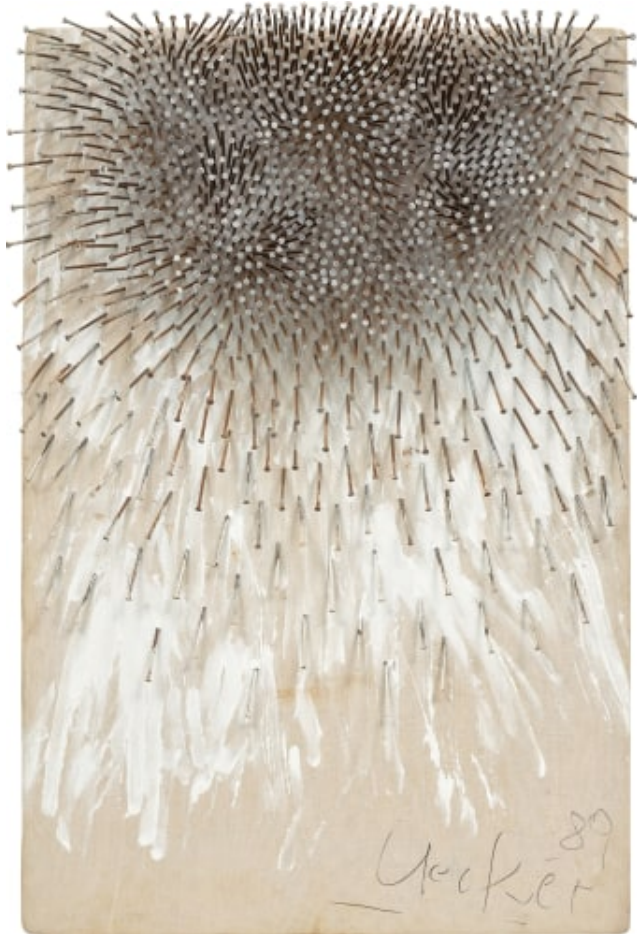
Provenance

Micheline Szwajcer Gallery, Antwerp

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



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19

Günther Uecker

Ohne Titel

signed and dated 'Uecker 89' lower right; signed,
inscribed and dated 'Uecker 89 Gestiftet am 2.9.1989
für Aktion Kinderherzherzlinik' on the reverse
nails and oil on canvas laid on panel
92 x 61 x 7.3 cm (36 1/4 x 24 x 2 7/8 in.)
Executed in 1989.

Estimate

£180,000 — 250,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“My objects are spatial realities, zones of light. I use mechanical means in order to overcome the subjective gesture, to objectify it, and to create the situation of freedom.” —Günther Uecker

German artist Günther Uecker is best known for non-traditional materials, such as nails, in his work. By hammering these man-made, industrial objects directly into the canvas, he radically broke with the confines of the two-dimensional picture plane, irreversibly merging the practices of painting and sculpture. To Uecker, who had grown up during the Great Depression, lived through World War II, and then found himself split by the unmovable concrete of the Berlin Wall, the nail offered a new means to explore identity and collective experience. As ‘the ideal object with which to model light and shadow’, it offered a poetic way to confront the dualities of creation and destruction, order and chaos, which characterised 20th century geopolitics.ⁱ

United by their shared experience of Germany during World War II, Uecker joined fellow countrymen Heinz Mack and Otto Piene in their recently established ZERO Group in 1961 – a movement championing new forms of art more closely aligned with the ethos of the modern age. Rejecting the more prevalent *art informel* style of the 1950s and 1960s, which the group believed to be corrupted by the very same culture that had led to war, ZERO sought a clean slate for visual art, and focused on light, technology, and a departure from the flat picture plan – all qualities inherent to Uecker’s practice.

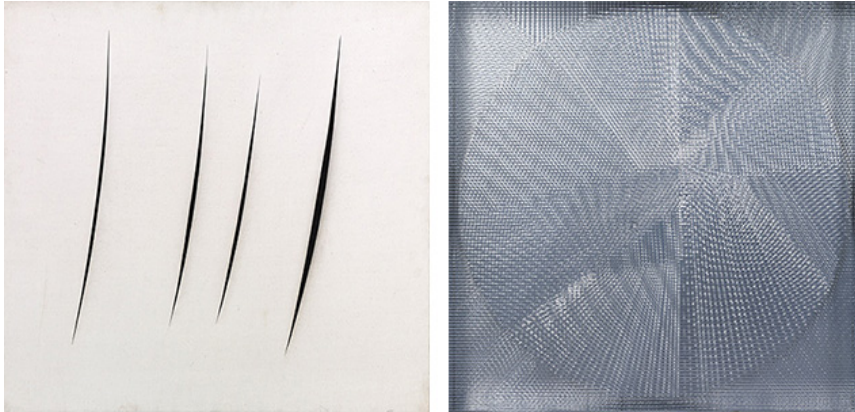


Walter Mori, People at the German Pavilion of the 35th Venice Biennale, with sculpture by Günther Uecker and Heinz Mack, 1970. Image: Mondadori Portfolio / Bridgeman Images

Created in 1989, *Ohne Titel* demonstrates the visual philosophy of the ZERO movement whilst showcasing core aspects of Uecker’s personal practice at the height of his career, notably the mediative practice of hammering in alignment with the philosophies of Buddhism and Taoism. Tightly arranged towards the top of the canvas and transitioning into a looser formation as the eye traverses the surface, the hammered nails create a dramatic interplay between blank canvas, object, and shadow. In contrast to his more clinical early works which were concerned with geometrical regimentation, the more organic arrangement seen here correlates to the introduction of more kinetic elements into Uecker’s practice during the 1960s at the height of his involvement with the ZERO group.

However, in the more gestural markings of white paint we can also track the more performative elements that would come to define his work after the movement's dissolution in the mid-60s. More expressive, these marks highlight a reincorporation of painterly concerns into his more mechanically sculpted gesture. As the dense arrangement of nails becomes looser and more sparse, Uecker's brushstrokes become thicker and more prevalent, culminating in a spectacular exchange between the free nature of human action and the rigidity of man-made technology.

Multilayered too in its meaning, the relief meditates between abstraction and figuration, offering multiple interpretations. Perhaps the close-up of a flower, grass blowing in the wind, or scattered debris from a recently dropped bomb, *Ohne Titel* is a prime example of Uecker's phenomenological approach to art and how an art form can tap into the subconscious.



[Left] Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale #2*, 1960, Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Image: Buffalo AKG Art Museum/Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Lucio Fontana/SIAE/DACS, London 2023
[Right] Heinz Mack, *Silver Dynamo*, 1964, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © DACS 2023

Uecker's work draws on an illuminating dialogue with other artists working in the ZERO movement. The use of metal to manipulate light alludes to the work of Heinz Mack, whilst Uecker's breaching of the flat picture plane recalls Lucio Fontana's lacerated canvases. There are more painterly art historical traditions evoked too, the contrast of light and dark recalling the chiaroscuro effects used to such dramatic effect in the work of Renaissance and Baroque artists. Deeply rooted in Christian iconography, Uecker's incorporation of nails carries a weight of cultural and art historical significance, while also touching on the artist's own childhood memories of nailing planks of wood, barricading the windows of his family home during the bombardments of World War II. Turning the flat surface of the canvas into a tactile, animated, and multidimensional surface, Uecker's reliefs challenge our understanding of the limitations of perception, time, and

space, blending art, philosophy, and history in these deeply human works.

Collector's Digest

- The subject of major retrospectives at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1983; Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich, 1990; and the Staatliches Museum Schwerin; among others, Günther Uecker participated in Documenta in 1964, 1968, and 1977 and represented Germany at the 35th Biennale di Venezia in 1970.
- Thanks to a recent revival of interest in the ZERO movement, Uecker's work has also been included in major group retrospectives, most notably, *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s-60s* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 2015 – a landmark show which marked the group's first significant museum survey in the United States.
- In 2000, he designed the Reflection and Prayer Room for the Reichstag Building in Berlin.
- Comparative works to *Ohne Titel* can be found in permanent collections such as the Art Institute of Chicago and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

ⁱ Günther Uecker, quoted in Alexander Tolnay, ed., *Günther Uecker Twenty Chapters*, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2006, p. 72.

Provenance

Private Collection, Spain
Ketterer Kunst, Munich, 13 June 2015, lot 861
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



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20

Anselm Kiefer

Das einzige Licht

titled 'Das einzige Licht' upper left
oil, emulsion, acrylic, charcoal, lead boat, branches,
chairs and plaster on canvas, in 3 parts
330 x 570 cm (129 7/8 x 224 3/8 in.)
Executed in 2006.

Estimate

£600,000 — 800,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



“Paul Celan’s language comes from so far away, from another world with which we have not yet been confronted, it comes to us like that of an alien. we find it hard to understand. we grasp a fragment here and there. we cling to it without ever being able to capture the whole of it. I have humbly tried, for sixty years. from now on, I will write this language down on canvas, an undertaking that is like a rite.”

—Anselm Kiefer

Monumental in its scale, intense materiality, and the historical trauma that it grapples with, Anselm Kiefer’s *Das einzige Licht* is a powerful and poetic example of the artist’s examination of German identity, his reinvention of its landscape tradition, and of the innovative literary and philosophical dimensions of his practice. Traced by the runic lines of broken branches, a vast, snow-covered field stretches out before us, topped by a high horizon line and narrow strip of leaden grey sky. In the foreground, a large sleigh construction laden with branches sits silently, any signs of the people who had gathered the material long gone. Created first from photographs that the artist took of landscape surrounding Salzburg, the vast, sculptural painting belongs to a cycle of works dedicated to the Romanian Jewish poet Paul Celan, whose writings – in German – dealt directly and profoundly with his experiences of the Holocaust and the death of both of his parents in concentration camps during the war.

The Only Light

“Die Lampen des Schreckens sind hell, auch im Sturm.” —Paul Celan

Born in the closing months of the Second World War, Kiefer came of age in its long shadow. Growing up near the French border, the Holocaust was a taboo subject, so difficult to wrestle with that it was never spoken of. Kiefer first discovered Celan’s poetry as a teenager, deeply affected by the harrowing ‘Todesfuge’ (Death Fuge) and its expression of the collective horrors endured in the death camps. Structured through patterns of repetition, recombination, and refrain the poem mirrors Kiefer’s own practice in significant ways, anchoring an oeuvre that is ‘neither linear nor progressive in its development, but cyclical and reflective.’¹ Although these cyclical patterns relate more broadly to the artist’s reading of myth and his view of history and life, these perspectives have all been profoundly shaped by Kiefer’s early encounter with Celan, and there is no other figure to whom the artist more frequently returns to, or who occupies a place of more singular importance in his practice.



Detail of the present work

Belonging to a larger cycle of works on the theme of the poet, and the deep connections between history, landscape, and trauma that his writing also draws on, *Das einzige Licht* offers an apocalyptic vision that conjures the evocative ‘Schwarze Milch der Frühe’ (Black milk of dawn) that had left such a profound impression on the young Kiefer when he first read *Todesfuge*. The title of the work, emblazoned across the sky, is a reference to Celan’s poem of the same name, where themes of home, dwelling, loss and memory dominate. Fragments from the poem scar the surface of the deeply textured ground, notably referring to the lines:

*Dein Haus ritt die finestere Welle, doch barg es ein Rosengeschlecht;
als Arche verließ es die Straße, so wardst du gerettet ins Unheil*

*Your house rode the dark wave, but it harbored a family of roses;
If it left the road as an ark, you would have been saved from disaster*

These charged lines run through the piece on both literal and metaphorical levels, the roughly ploughed and broken landscape bearing the wounds of the disaster evoked by Celan’s words. Historically an agricultural nation, Kiefer draws on the deep connections between German cultural identity and the land, well represented by a long tradition of landscape painting that reached its most sublime expression in the contexts of German Romanticism and the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich.

In its rejection of the rapidly industrialising forces of modernity and the emergence of new urban centres, these paintings idealised Germany’s rural past, reinforcing the close bonds forged

between German culture and the land that would be coopted by the Third Reich as the 'embodiment of the German vison.' As curator Kathleen Soriano details, the nationalist 'cult of German land – *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) – echoed Hitler's belief that "true Germans" came from the soil, from those who worked the land' and Nazi propaganda counterpointed ideas of urban degeneration with a bucolic, rural ideal as an important tool in the promotion of their nationalist ideology.ⁱⁱ



Casper David Friedrich, *Hünengrab im Schnee*, 1807, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden

For Kiefer, the landscape still resonates with this complex history, at once drawing on Freidreich's foregrounding of it as a provocation for existential reflection, and using it as a means of bearing witness to the traumas and violence committed in its name. Woven through these works in the fragments of text, the visualisation of certain crystalline poetic images, and in the rhythmic interplay of its pictorial elements that replicate the structure of verse, Celan's poetry and their record of the atrocities of the Second World War enables Kiefer to more fully confront the violence of Germany's past, and to explore what might emerge from these ruins.

In keeping with the broader philosophical and mythic cycles of eternal recurrence - rebirth and

renewal – Celan's presence in Kiefer's painting structures Kiefer's painterly project in profoundly meaningful ways. Since first turning to the as an explicit source and inspiration in 1980 – where he established the tactile and evocative materials of branches, lead, and ash that reappear here – the poet's themes formed the cycle of works to which the 2006 *Das einzige Licht* belongs, first shown with Thaddeus Ropac in the same year and then taking over the nave of the Grand Palais in Paris for his *Monumenta* presentation in 2007. Making numerous other appearances in between, fifteen years after his first showed the *Monumenta* series at the Grand Palais in Paris, Kiefer would return again to this rich resource, presenting *Pour Paul Celan* in the same space. Most recently, his 2022 Thaddeus Ropac exhibition broadened this scope to a wider group of poets, bringing the word and the image together in landscapes saturated with memory. A meditative reflection on the history of landscape painting and of the role that landscape – both real and imagined – continues to play in the German psyche and cultural memory, *Das einzige Licht* sits at the intersection of the past and the future, the spiritual and the terrestrial, death and rebirth. It is landscape that for Kiefer is 'deployed as the quiet witness to historical change, the vast impartial canvas upon which history is successively painted – and painted over.'

Video: <https://ropac.net/video/245-anselm-kiefer-hommage-a-un-poete/>

Anselm Kiefer, *Hommage à un poète*, Paris Pantin, 2022

Collector's Digest

- A deeply intellectual artist, Anselm Kiefer's references and sources of inspiration span philosophy, poetry, theology and science. Here, the artist draws on his long relationship with the poetry of Paul Celan, finding ways to move beyond language in the comprehending cultural trauma.
- The subject of major international retrospectives at prestigious institutions including the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, in 2023, the artist installed his monumental works in the Palazzo Ducale in Venice alongside La Biennale di Venezia in 2021.
- Most recently showing works at White Cube in London centred James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, paintings related to Paul Celan have been included in his recent 2021 presentation at the Grand Palais Éphémère in Paris, and at Thaddeus Ropac's Pantin Gallery in 2022.

ⁱ Kathleen Soriano, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Anselm Kiefer*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014, p. 21.

ii Kathleen Soriano, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Anselm Kiefer*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014, p. 21.

Provenance

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris and Salzburg
Private Collection
Sotheby's, London, 17 October 2008, lot 62
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

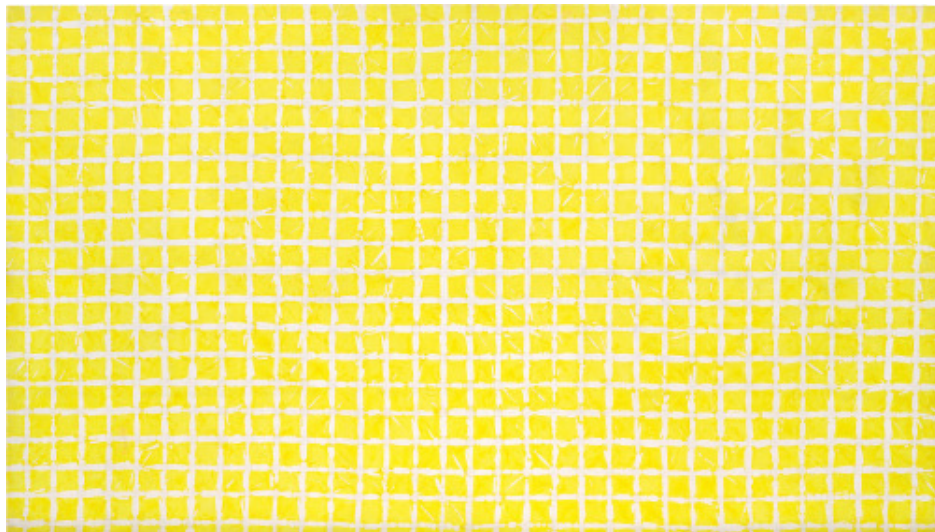
Paris, Galerie Thaddeus Ropac and Yvon Lambert, *Anselm Kiefer: Für Paul Celan*, 21 October – 29 November 2006

Literature

Andréa Lauterwein, *Anselm Kiefer et La Poésie de Paul Celan*, Paris, 2006, no. 128, pp. 228, 230-231 (illustrated, front and back cover, pp. 230-231; dated 2005)
Andréa Lauterwein, *Anselm Kiefer, Paul Celan: Myth, Mourning and Memory*, London, 2007, no. 128, pp. 228, 230-231 (illustrated, front and back cover, pp. 230-231; dated 2005)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



21

Simon Hantaï


Tabula

acrylic on canvas

262.5 x 461 cm (103 3/8 x 181 1/2 in.)

Painted in 1976.

Estimate

£450,000 — 650,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“Folding comes from nothing. You simply have to place yourself in the position of someone who has not seen anything; to place yourself inside the canvas. You can fill the folded canvas without knowing where the edges are. You no longer know where it stops. You can even (...) paint with your eyes closed.” —Simon Hantaï

Coming to auction for the first time, *Tabula* is an exquisite example of the artist’s iconic series of the same name. Executed on a vast scale, this 1976 work captures the rhythmic qualities and all-over harmonies that best characterises the series; its squares of dazzling yellow vibrating against the white ground, creating a gridded format which attempts to contain the bristling energy of the composition. A major figure in painterly abstraction, whose innovative technical and conceptual experiments redefined the terms of both minimal and abstract painting in the 1960s and 70s, Simon Hantaï was undoubtedly a pioneer, and yet his painterly roots were deeply embedded in the legacies of the early 20th century avant-garde.



Simon Hantaï in his studio. Image: © Édouard Boubat / DACS, London 2023, Artwork: © Archives Simon Hantaï / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

Paris in 1948. Staying in the city long after his visa was revoked, Hantaï would eventually acquire French citizenship, going on to represent his adopted country at La Biennale di Venezia in 1982, just months before he withdrew from public life.

Finding his feet as an artist in a new city, it wasn’t long before Hantaï became familiar with the circle of Surrealist artists and writers gravitating around André Breton - who was so taken by the young artist that he even provided the essay for his first exhibition catalogue. Experimenting with a variety of different painterly techniques, Hantaï quickly moved beyond the early figurative canvases of his student days, although the sensitivity to colour and the early influence of Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse would form the basis of his first forays into abstraction. With the Surrealists, Hantaï was exposed to Breton’s desire to liberate the mind from the limitations of reason and restrictive expectations of bourgeois society, becoming especially interested in the concept of automatism, whereby the conscious mind was suppressed during the process of artmaking in order to encourage the more intuitive workings of the unconscious to come to the fore.

American Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock was similarly taken with the compositional possibilities of automatism, letting paint drip and splatter in unplanned striations as he moved around canvas laid out on the floor. Pioneering the concept of action painting in this way, Pollock radically repositioned the artist in, rather than apart from the work, placing a new emphasis on process and the physicality of painting itself. Seeing Pollock’s work for the first time in 1955 proved decisive, forcing a break between Hantaï and Breton, who refused to acknowledge action painting as a mode of automatism, and allowing the artist to move beyond Surrealist principles and the dominant modes of European painting.

Born in Hungary in 1922, Hantaï studied at the School of Fine Art in Budapest before relocating to



Hans Namuth, Jackson Pollock in action. Image: © 1991 Hans Namuth Estate, Courtesy Center for Creative Photography

Focusing more closely on the physical nature of the canvas, Hantai began working on the ground on a monumental scale. Going further than Pollock in his investigations into the materiality of the canvas and his understanding that it could be worked and manipulated by the artist before the application of paint, in 1960 the artist invented his *pliage* or ‘folding’ method – a major innovation that would profoundly shape the way he conceptualised painting and would go on to define the rest of his career over several distinct bodies of work. Folding or knotting the canvas, applying paint, and then unfolding it to reveal distinctive, unplanned interactions of colour and negative space, Hantai’s automatism pushed beyond notions of the unconscious mind of the artist, but tapped into the incipient energy and force of the canvas itself, especially when activated through

colour.

“With pliage, it is the problem of modernity [in] painting that is being addressed; for me, [the] two extremes of contemporary modern painting [are], on the one hand, the decentered space of Pollock, and on the other, Matisse’s paper cutouts, in which drawing is totally absorbed by colour [...] I was thinking that I needed to see how Matisse’s colour could be introduced into the random space of Pollock and what would happen when it was.”—Simon Hantai

Starting with his *Mariales* series in 1960, Hantai began to apply this technique, finding in it ways of approaching the major formal developments that preoccupied the early 20th century avant-garde including the sense of pictorial space and perception developed by Cubism, the structural harmonies of Paul Cezanne’s architectonic treatment of form, and the play of colour, pattern, and ground found in Matisse’s cutouts. Working on his *Études* series in the late 1960s, the relationship between his *pliage* experiments and Matisse’s collaged compositions was brought into high relief as the dialogue between form and ground began to come increasingly to the fore. Originally intended as a maquette for a ceramic mural, the bold colour contrasts, immersive scale, and more unusual regularity of its all-over patterning make Matisse’s 1953 *Grande decoration aux masques* especially relevant to a discussion of the present work, and to the pictorial tensions at play across the *Tabula* series more broadly, Hantai quickly realising that ‘the relation and interaction between the gouache cutouts that Matisse began to produce in the 1940s and their white grounds [...] ensured both the purity and the intensity of their colour.’¹



Henri Matisse, *Grande decoration aux masques*, 1953, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, Artwork: © Succession H. Matisse / DACS 2023

His most extensive and exhaustive body of work, the *Tabulas* occupied the artist for a decade between 1973 and 1982, these works now ranking amongst the defining examples of his oeuvre. A

stunning and immersive example from this important series, the present work was executed in 1976, a moment of culmination and maturation in his practice and the same year as the first major retrospective of his work was mounted at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou. His defining and most important series, the *Tabula* works have been exhibited extensively, awarded special attention in the recent blockbuster *Simon Hantai: The Centenary Exhibition* mounted by the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris in 2022. Showing a group of large, yellow *Tabulas* together, the exhibition foregrounded the immersive effect of the artist's innovative technique, and the spiritual resonances achieved by his yellow works in particular.

Rendered in a regulated lattice format that recalls the colour grids of Gerhard Richter as much as it looks back to the stunning decorative details of Bonnard's paintings of his partner Marthe bathing, the bright yellow seems to pulse against the white ground beneath, gently activating the entire composition. Indeed, it is this contrast between paint and ground which gives the yellow its depth and intensity. Deeply rhythmic, the present work speaks powerfully to Hantai's careful observation of colour and its effects, and of his abiding interest in the material reality of the canvas and the physical act of painting itself.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCXeNcNJRg4&list=TLGGWImCB7xtByoyMTA5MjAyMw>

Simon Hantai: The Centenary Exhibition, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, 2022

Collector's Digest

- One of the most significant artists working in the second half of the 20th century, Simon Hantai continued a tradition of avant-garde experiment, radically redefining the terms of abstraction and minimalism through his radically innovative *Pliage* technique.
- Following his first major retrospective at the Musée national d'art moderne Centre Pompidou in 1976 - the same year as the current work's execution - the artist has been honoured with several solo exhibitions at prestigious institutions worldwide, including The Clark Art Institute, Massachusetts, the Ludwig Museum, Budapest and two major retrospectives in Paris, one at the Musée national d'art moderne Centre Pompidou in 2013 and more recently, the 2022 centenary exhibition hosted by the Fondation Louis Vuitton.

ⁱ Anne Baldessari, 'Simon Hantai: Les Blancs de la Couleur, La Couleur du Blanc', *Gagosian Quarterly*, Spring 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris
Private Collection, Europe
Guttklein Fine Art, Paris
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

Paris, Guttklein Fine Art, *De la Peinture [1960-1980]*, 17 November 2016 – 3 February 2017, no. 7, n.p. (illustrated)
Paris, Guttklein Fine Art, *Neutre(s)*, 6 September – 6 October 2018

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



22

Carmen Herrera

Untitled

signed and dated 'Carmen Herrera. 2013.' on the stretcher

acrylic on canvas

106.7 x 182.9 cm (42 x 72 in.)

Estimate

£300,000 — 400,000 †

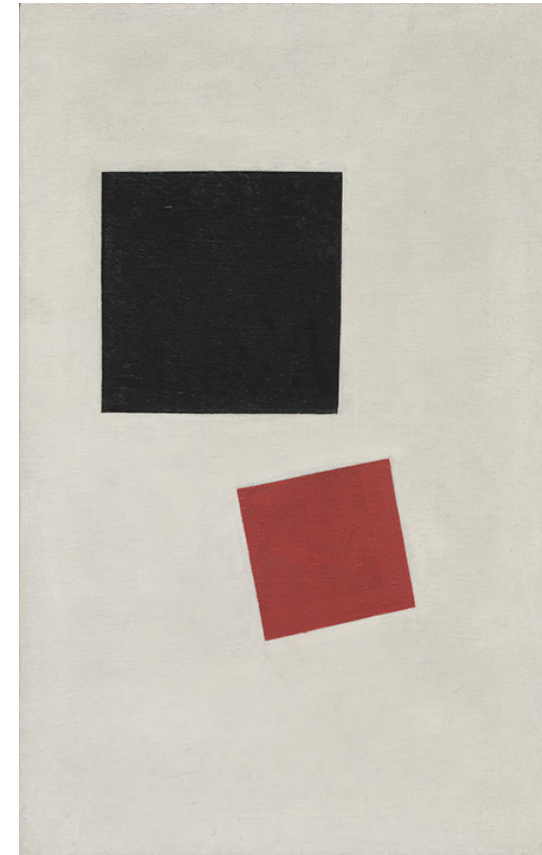
[Go to Lot](#)



“I like things very simple. I never saw a straight line I did not like! My visual language is based on the idea of contrasts and on the juxtaposition of shapes.”
—Carmen Herrera

Untitled is an arresting interplay between two forms, in striking contrasts of red and black. The asymmetrical composition and distinctive choice of colours are indicative of Cuban-born American artist Carmen Herrera. Whilst her oeuvre has largely transcended 20th and 21st century artistic trends, it is closely aligned with Minimalism, Colour Field and Op Art. With a career spanning over 8 decades, Herrera’s art only gained international acclaim in her later years – she sold her first work of art aged 89 – after a solo exhibition at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham in 2009.ⁱ Since then, she has held major exhibitions at Lisson Gallery, London and New York; Museum of Fine Arts Houston; Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserlautern; and Museo del Barrio, New York. She was the subject of a large-scale retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 2016, and her work is held at other international institutions such as Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (K20), Düsseldorf.

Herrera’s canvases feature dichromatic and geometrically abstracted works of supreme sophistication. Her shapes are carefully constructed, demonstrative of an authoritative appreciation of structure and form. This is of no surprise, after a disruptive childhood education between Paris and a politically unstable Cuba, she spent a year training as an architect at La Universidad de La Habana in 1938. Reflecting upon this experience, Herrera has revealed that ‘an extraordinary world opened up to me that never closed: the world of straight lines, which has interested me until this very day’.ⁱⁱ Indeed, the influence of Bauhaus and Modernist architecture can be seen in her Constructivist approach to painting. Herrera’s compositions are distilled to a state of angular simplicity, whilst clean lines and bright, opaque colours serve to heighten this effect.



Kazimir Malevich, *Painterly realism of Boy with a Knapsack - Color Masses in the Fourth Dimension*, 1915, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Living in Paris with her husband from 1948-1953, Herrera was invited to exhibit her work at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, where she encountered the likes of fellow abstract artists Ellsworth Kelly and Theo van Doesburg. During this period Herrera began to develop her style – which had formerly focused on large-scale black-and-white canvases – into the signature hard-edge work she is known for. Whilst in Paris Herrera encountered many burgeoning artistic styles, but drew upon the structured, geometric works of Russian Suprematism by artists such as Kazimir Malevich.

“I am Cuban and feel very Cuban, but I didn’t start my days feeling as a Cuban

woman who was going to make a picture. I am a painter who is going to paint a picture.” —Carmen Herrera

Herrera left Paris to settle permanently in New York, where she grew close with Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Leon Polk Smith. These associations with important figures of the abstract movement would prove to be influential to the development of her delineated work. She has been retrospectively compared to the hard-edged minimalism of Ellsworth Kelly, yet Herrera struggled for decades to gain the sort of recognition seen by her male counterparts. Whilst her art was never concerned with representations of identity, as a Cuban woman living and working in the United States, she was subject to a vast amount of racial and gendered discrimination throughout the 20th century. It is only in recent years, with the growing retrospective focus on historic female artists, that Herrera’s work has been awarded the attention it deserves.



Barnett Newman, *Adam*, 1951-52, Tate Modern, London. Image: © Tate, Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2023

Decades of consistent artistic output has produced an impressive *oeuvre* of colourful, spatially adept works. In *Untitled*, we are confronted with the bold contrast between the jostling forms of red and black. Herrera’s use of asymmetry and colour-theory creates a dialogue that begins to blur the lines of the one-dimensional and three-dimensional. She carefully chooses her palette to create engaging lines and shapes that, despite their individual monochromatic appearance, create depth and the illusion of space when paired together. To further this, Herrera always makes sure to paint the edges of her canvas, transforming the flat plane of the surface into one that is more sculptural.

Whilst Herrera has stated that ‘colour is the essence of my painting’, she ‘never sought to imbue her palette with symbolic meaning’.ⁱⁱⁱ Instead, colour is used as a means of exploring her spatial constructions; a work such as *Untitled*, would traditionally have a myriad of interpretations ascribed to its combination of red and black. In Barnett Newman’s *Adam* (1951-52), for example, we see a similar construction of forms using dark brown and vibrant red. However, the title indicates that inspiration is drawn from the Story of Creation; the interplay between deep brown and cardinal red may be seen as representative of earth and blood. Comparatively, works such as *Untitled* are concerned with geometric exploration and interlocking dialogues between colour and form.

A life spent diligently painting and mastering her craft is the cornerstone of Carmen Herrera’s extraordinary career. Despite her late recognition, she lived to see her work celebrated in some of the world’s foremost artistic institutions alongside her postwar abstractionist peers. She is now considered one of the most important figures of Cuban art, Minimalism and Geometric Abstraction, and works such as *Untitled* are exemplary of her ruthless adherence to colour, structure and form.

Collector’s Digest

- Carmen Herrera experienced artistic fame later in her career. Having sold her first work aged 89, she painted everyday up until her death last year aged 106.
- Following a significant 2005 survey exhibition at Miami Art Central, Herrera’s first European presentation was hosted by the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, England in 2009, before traveling to Museum Pfalzgalerie, Kaiserslautern, Germany. More recently, Herrera was the subject of a major career retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 2016 at the age of 101.
- Examples of Herrera’s work can be found in major international institutions including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (K20), Düsseldorf.

ⁱ Kerri Lee Alexander, ‘Carmen Herrera’, *National Women’s History Museum*, 2019, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Julia Velasquez, trans., ‘El Color de la parábola : 32 Artistas Cubanos; Entrevistas de Gustavos Valdés’, quoted in Dana Miller, *Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight*, New York, 2016, p. 15.

ⁱⁱⁱ Carmen Herrera quoted in Carmen Juliá, ‘Colour Plane’, *Carmen Herrera*, Manchester, 2009, p. 20. Flavia Frigeri, *Carmen Herrera: Colour Me In*, London, 2020, p. 8.

Provenance

Lisson Gallery, London

Private Collection, Geneva

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED AMERICAN
COLLECTOR

23

Andy Warhol

Diamond Dust Gem

stamped by the Estate of Andy Warhol and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., New York, and numbered 'PA72.033' on the overlap
synthetic polymer, silkscreen ink and diamond dust on canvas

127 x 199 cm (50 x 78 3/8 in.)

Executed in 1979.

Estimate

£250,000 — 350,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“It would be very glamorous to be reincarnated as a great big ring on Liz Taylor’s finger.” —Andy Warhol

Executed in 1979, *Diamond Dust Gem* exemplifies the allure of luxury, materialism, and conspicuous consumption captured in Andy Warhol’s silkscreened images of iconic celebrities, everyday commodity items, and dollar bills that launched a Pop Art revolution. Playing with the ephemerality of beauty and the illusion of glamour, the gem is not immediately legible, shimmering into view only as it catches the light, the evocative ‘diamond dust’ silkscreened directly onto a monochromatic gold background. Visually abstract, the work nevertheless communicates these ideas with remarkable immediacy.

Diamonds are Forever

Born to Austro-Hungarian immigrant parents and raised in the industrial centre of Pittsburgh, Warhol’s relationship to wealth and American commodity culture was complex. Indelibly connected to the birth of the so-called ‘American Century’, Warhol’s rise to fame first as a commercial illustrator and then as an artist and Pop Art impresario centred on the fetishisation of commodity items, his early fantastical drawings of women’s shoes demonstrating the same blend of desire and aspiration that was furthered in *Diamond Dust Gem*.



Andy Warhol making a painting at The Factory, 1964. Photograph by Uglo Mulas. Image: © Ugo Mulas Heirs. All rights reserved, Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

While fashion and glamour would be consistent themes throughout Warhol’s career, by the late 1970s, these associations were especially pronounced, with Warhol having moved on from the epoch-defining ‘youthquake’ scene that orbited around The Factory in the 1960s to the world of celebrities and socialites that frequented Studio 54. Outrageous and extravagant, evenings at the infamous nightclub have become legend, a heady mix of disco and drag where Bianca Jagger might arrive on the back of a white horse, or the likes of Liza Minnelli, Yves Saint Laurent, Jackie Onassis, and Elizabeth Taylor could be counted on the guest list.

An icon from this hedonistic era, the present work captures this spirit of decadent excess, Warhol ‘who had been in the vanguard of the New York club scene since the early 1960s, once again reflect[ing] the times he was living in through his paintings.’¹ With the rise of a more affluent, aspirational middle-class, it wasn’t only the New York glitterati who could acquire the hitherto unobtainable trappings of luxury, as a De Beers commercial from 1979 featuring the tagline ‘give her a diamond, it’s forever’ succinctly captures.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=lGe0DAg3-4M> 3:09

De Beers, "Diamon Collection '80" (Commercial, 1979)

The image of the gem featured in the present work was in fact borrowed from an edition of screenprints that Warhol completed in 1978 in which he presented a selection of precious stones in a vibrant range of colours. Introduced to diamond dust by the printer Rupert Jasen Smith, in 1979, Warhol initially found the product too chalky, settling instead on a special blend of inexpensive powdered glass which provided the shimmering surface qualities that he was searching for. Having found the perfect material, Warhol immediately returned to the *Gems* series, adding this so-called diamond dust to his screenprints to create the stunningly textured surfaces that seem to both embody and project the decadence and glamour of the late 1970s.

The subject is loaded with religious symbolism that would not have been lost on Warhol who was a regular churchgoer and raised a Byzantine Catholic by his Eastern European parents. The shimmering texture of the work's surface gives the illusion of a priceless and uniquely precious object and yet, in keeping with the artist's long-standing interest in the mass-produced commodity, this image of wealth and beauty is in fact an illusion - a 'Glamour' in the original sense of the word. Achieving the appearance of luxury by co-opting a mass-produced, commercial product, Warhol effectively elevated the subject of the work to the realm of a religious relic while also centralising wealth itself.

While the 1978 *Gems* pieces were straightforwardly legible, as the means of this apotheosis, the pioneering addition of diamond dust in the present work allows Warhol to move closer to enigmatic abstraction achieved in his critically acclaimed *Diamond Dust Shadows* series. Celebrated with an exhibition with Gagosian Gallery in New York in 2000, these paintings 'hover as the shadow of life's edge', pushing Warhol closer, in Julian Schnabel's estimation, than any other artist to 'this radicality of gesture and self-denial.'ⁱⁱ In his use of diamond dust, as in so many other aspects of his practice Warhol was a pioneer, one whose influence was far-reaching. Following in Warhol's footsteps, notable artists such as British provocateur Damien Hirst and Russell Young have continued to develop this legacy, adding a sense of three-dimensional depth and allure to their work, while also mobilising important critiques about the fetishisation of celebrity and the pursuit of wealth and fame in the face of our own mortality.

ⁱ *Andy Warhol Diamond Dust Shoe Paintings*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 1999, p. 9.

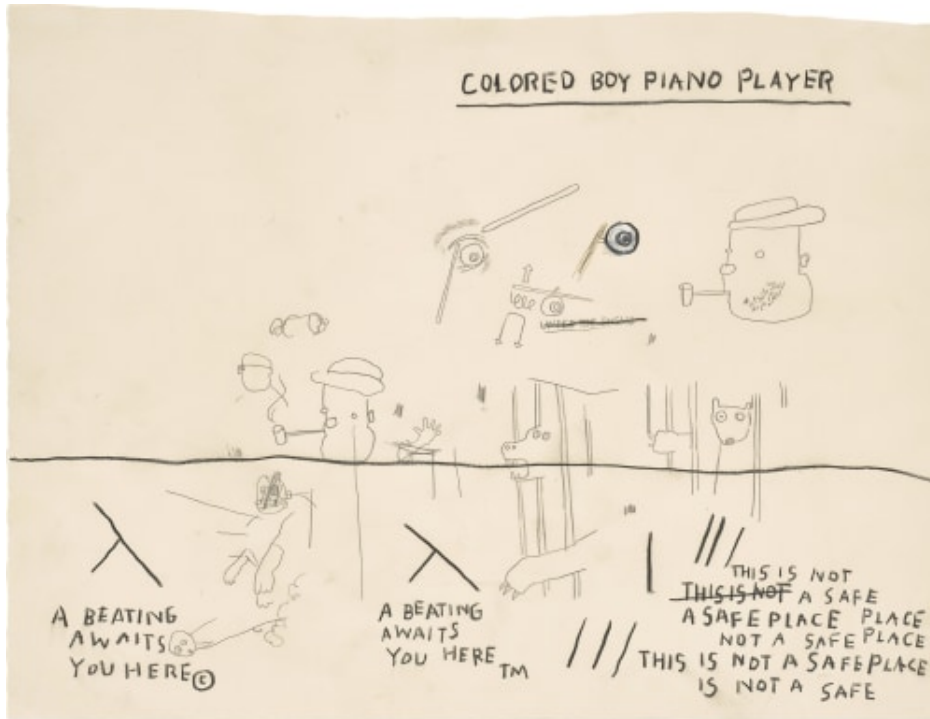
ⁱⁱ Julian Schnabel, 'Shadow Paintings' in *Andy Warhol: Shadow Paintings*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 1989.

Provenance

The Estate of Andy Warhol and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York
 Galerie Bruno Bischofberger, Zurich
 Private Collection, Switzerland
 Sotheby's, London, 8 February 2007, lot 413
 Private Collection
 Christie's, New York, 14 May 2009, lot 159
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



24

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Untitled (Colored Boy Piano Player)

signed and dated 'Jean-Michel Basquiat 87' on the reverse

graphite and oilstick on paper
43.8 x 56.5 cm (17 1/4 x 22 1/4 in.)

Executed in 1987.

Estimate

£200,000 — 300,000

[Go to Lot](#)



“I get my facts from books, stuff on atomizers, the blues, ethyl alcohol, geese in Egyptian glyphs, [...] I don't take credit for my facts. The facts exist without me.”
—Jean -Michel Basquiat

Jean-Michel Basquiat came of age in New York in the 1970s, when hip-hop culture and street art were booming, and collaborative, underground communities of artists, filmmakers, and musicians moved easily between studios, streets, and clubs, transforming the lower east side into a vibrant and dynamic art scene. On the one hand, this was a time of wildly inventive and unrestricted creativity, remembered now for its legendary nightlife, statement fashions, and the enormous impact that a pioneering group of artists and musicians would have on generations to come. On the other, it was also a time of economic stagnation, high unemployment and rising crime rates, where strikes, riots, and police corruption were everyday occurrences and where a young Black male from Brooklyn would quickly grasp the gap between inclusion and separation, wealth and poverty, and the everyday realities of institutionalised racism.

Words and Symbols

Street art and hip-hop both found powerfully expressive ways to criticise and challenge these power structures, using language to speak for communities most routinely silenced within these systems. Working with his childhood friend, the graffiti artist Al Diaz, Basquiat created an enigmatic and politically charged mode of graffiti, tagging walls and sidewalks with the SAMO© insignia in a very literal mode of concrete poetry that ‘tapped into the zeitgeist, bringing the satirical bite of the Beat writers into a new age.’ⁱ The immediacy of graffiti, its ability to carry meaning, and the endlessly inventive combinations of text, image, and symbol that it presented was central in shaping Basquiat’s distinctive visual language, expressed most directly in his drawings.

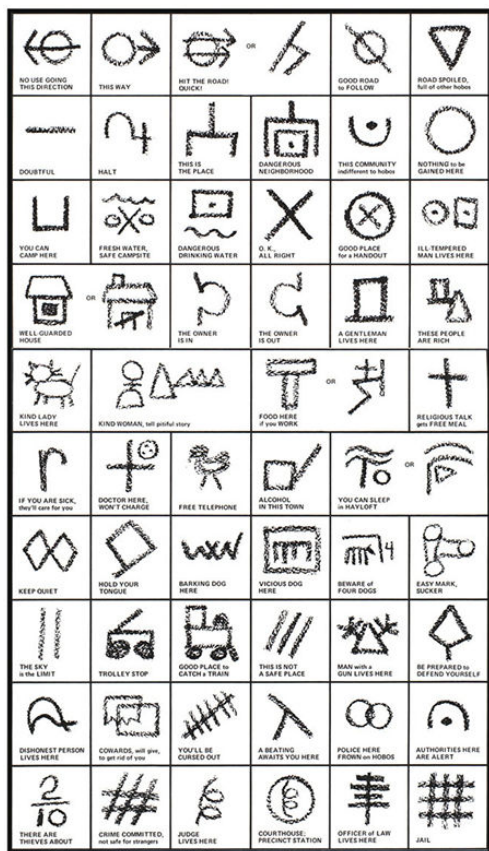
Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUVJZLOogdA>

Basquiat, Painting Live Street Graffiti

As his mother would recall, Basquiat drew from an early age, always carrying a notebook with him and allowing ‘impressions, thoughts, memories, associations, fantasies, and observations formulating in his mind to simply pass through him, making their way onto a sheet of paper.’ⁱⁱ Immediate and intuitive, his approach to drawing as a mode of ‘channelling’ information – cultural history, politics, snatches of literary and art history, mythology, and music – was established early on and confirmed these works on paper as a distinct and hugely significant part of his practice that can be read independently of his paintings, even while it obviously informed them. In its pictographic arrangements and lively combination of image, symbol, and text, *Untitled (Colored Boy Piano Player)* exemplifies this ‘channelling’ practice as the artist ‘ate up every image,

every word, every bit of data that appeared in front of him and he processed it all into a bebop cubist pop art cartoon gospel that synthesised the whole overload we lived under into something that made an astonishing new sense.’ⁱⁱⁱ

Proud of his self-taught credentials, Basquiat devoured books, from *Gray's Anatomy* to *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, The Bible to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, writing these references and the processes of thinking them through into his densely citational paintings and drawings. In the present work, the repetition of certain symbols and phrases refers directly to Basquiat’s close reading of Henry Dreyfus’ 1972 semiotic study *Symbol Sourcebook: An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols*. A compendium of the graphic language of symbols, that includes the more familiar visible language of street signage and instructional codes designed to be immediately legible, regardless of the viewer’s language or level of literacy (a child recognises the danger of a skull and cross bones sign on an everyday domestic cleaning fluid), to more esoteric symbolic systems.



'Hobo Signs', from Henry Dreyfuss, *Symbol Sourcebook: An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols*, 1972

Reproduced in a faint, chalky line to most accurately represent the way that the symbols would appear scrawled on rough wood or concrete surfaces, Deryfus' 'Hobo Signs' were a source of great inspiration for Basquiat, both in their graphic, drawn immediacy, and in social contexts in which they operated. Cryptic pictograms, these symbols were a sophisticated and coded mode of communication shared between itinerant travellers or 'hobos' as a means of sharing important information about the places where the marks were left all across Depression-era America. As in more monumental pieces such *Pegasus*, created in the same year as the present work, Basquiat's selection of more sinister icons in *Untitled (Colored Boy Piano Player)* speaks to his interest in the profound difficulties of navigating a cruel and dangerous world for those living on the fringes of

society, and the strategies that these communities invented in order to survive.

Reading the image from left to right, the graphic, comic strip style of the drawing takes on new significance, the repetitions of the symbols for 'A beating awaits you here' and 'this is not a safe place' visually replicating the itinerant wanderings of these individuals and reinforcing the relentless dangers that they faced on their travels. Combining image and text, Basquiat communicates this with striking directness, culminating in the rapid and running-on scrawled repetition of 'this is not a safe place' in the far left of the composition. In typical fashion, Basquiat's social commentary here also invokes law keepers as dangerous figures, the coiled spring icon and circled symbols traditionally used to warn travellers of the proximity of judges and courthouses.

In bringing this coded visual language into his practice, Basquiat honours this sophisticated mode of visual communication, and the powerful ways in which it allowed the most unseen and ignored members of society to forge their own communities and remain visible to one another. Closely connected to Basquiat's reference to the nomadic Blemyan tribe in the eastern Sahara in his inclusion of 'Dumaris' in a number of significant compositions, we might also read these pictograms as Basquiat's 'affirmation of his own nomadic journey', his dedication to choosing his own path, connecting and communicating with fellow travellers along the way.^{iv}

Testament to the central importance of drawing and works on paper to the 'radiant child's' prodigious output, the first posthumous exhibition to be mounted of Basquiat's work was of his drawings, held at the Robert Miller Gallery in 1990. Executed in 1987 and included in the exhibition *Jean Michel Basquiat: Paintings and Drawings, 1980-1988*, mounted to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of the artist's death, *Untitled (Colored Boy Piano Player)* highlights how central the interplay of word, image, and symbol was to Basquiat's unique visual language, from his earliest SAMO© epigrams to his latest works on paper and canvas.

Collector's Digest

- Jean-Michel Basquiat was widely exhibited, even at a very young age, participating in a staggering 44 personal exhibitions between 1981 and his death in 1988. Most recently in London, the artist was honoured with a major retrospective *Basquiat: Boom For Real*, held at the Barbican Art Gallery in 2017.
- Basquiat is one of the most sought-out after artists in the world today and holds the auction record for an American artist; furthermore, 7 of the artist's top 10 prices at auction have all been achieved in the past 4 years, illustrating the significant demand in the market for the artist's work.
- The artist is represented in several prominent museum collections all over the world. He also starred in "Downtown 81," a verité movie that was written by Glenn O'Brien,

Jean-Michel Basquiat

shot by Edo Bertoglio, and produced by Maripol in 1981, but not released until 2000.

ⁱ Elanor Nairne, 'Samo©', in *Basquiat: Boom for Real*, exh. cat., Barbican Art Gallery, London, 2017, p. 29.

ⁱⁱ Fred Hoffman, *Jean-Michel Basquiat Drawing: Works from the Schorr Family Collection*, exh. cat., Aquavella Galleries, New York, 2014, p. 33.

ⁱⁱⁱ Elanor Nairne, 'Encyclopaedia', in *Boom for Real*, exh. cat., Barbican Art Gallery, London, 2017, p. 189.

^{iv} Fred Hoffman, *Jean-Michel Basquiat Drawing: Works from the Schorr Family Collection*, exh. cat., Aquavella Galleries, New York, 2014, p. 49.

Provenance

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg

Galerie Sollertis, Toulouse

Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles

Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles

Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York

Briggs Robinson Gallery, New York

Phillips, New York, 16 November 2007, lot 193

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

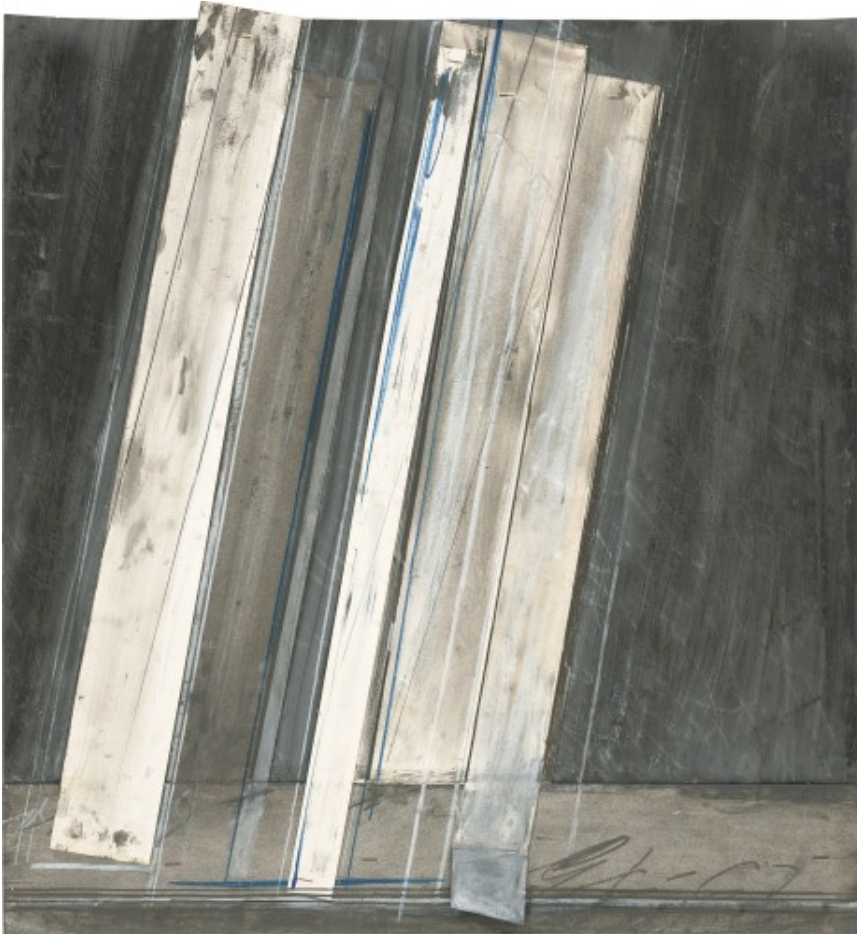
Exhibited

Los Angeles, Gagosian Gallery, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Paintings & Drawings, 1980-1988*, 12

February - 14 March 1998, no. 52, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

25

Cy Twombly

Untitled

signed with the artist's initials 'CT CT' lower right;
signed and dated 'Cy Twombly 1973' on the reverse
paper, tape, staples, oil, wax crayon and pencil on
paper

75.7 x 69.5 cm (29 3/4 x 27 3/8 in.)

Executed in 1973.

Estimate

£800,000 — 1,200,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“Generally speaking my art has evolved out of the interest in symbols abstracted, but never the less humanistic; formal as most arts are in their archaic and classic stages, and a deeply aesthetic sense of eroded or ancient surfaces of time.” —Cy Twombly

Possessing something of the impassive monumentality and smooth surfaces of granite, ‘impenitent Abstract Expressionist’ Cy Twombly’s collages from the 1970s combine restrained and elegant geometries with the more muted palette adopted by the artist in the pivotal Blackboard paintings that preoccupied him between 1966 and 1971. Strikingly three dimensional, the alternating striations of chalky whites and slate greys lend this untitled 1973 collage a rhythmic vitality and refined simplicity that connects it to the looping calligraphic lines of the Blackboard paintings even as it moves Twombly into more conventionally Minimalist territory.

Closely related to Twombly’s series *Gladings (Love’s Infinite Causes)*, the present work belongs to a smaller suite of five collages – including one very closely related composition currently held in the permanent collection of The Broad in Los Angeles. All executed on a larger scale and adopting the same tight, diagonal arrangement of forms in a darker hue palette, these collages sharply counterpoint the gestural exuberance and dominant pink and white tones of his large-scale paintings from the 1960s, aligning the artist for a brief moment with the abstract minimalism developed by Richard Diebenkorn across his *Ocean Park* series.



Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park No. 79*, 1975, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and with funds contributed by private donors, 1977, 1977-28-1, Artwork: © Richard Diebenkorn Foundation

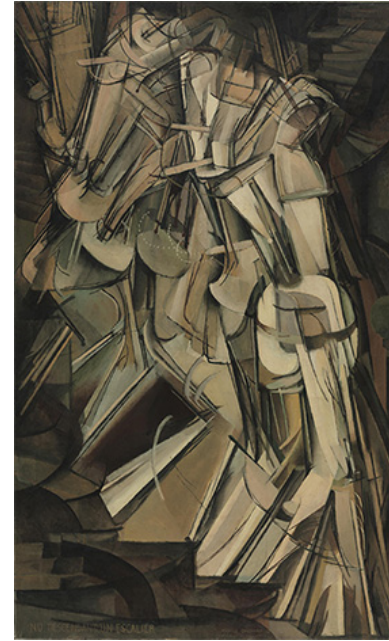
Executed in 1973 as Twombly was garnering significant critical and institutional recognition, the present work is composed of three major elements: a horizontal strip of paper featuring Twombly’s looping signature, a large square sheet, and longer strips of painted paper and transparent adhesive tape that connect the two in their diagonal arrangement. Long, raking lines of blue and white crayon cover the whole work, uniting these disparate elements into a harmonious whole. Recalling his brief experimentation with chalked canvases in the 1950s, during this period Twombly returned again to these darker grounds, debuting three such paintings as part of an exhibition mounted in Turin in the early months of 1967. As renowned Twombly scholar Kirk Varnedoe

describes, ‘Just as those earlier pictures had represented a cooling shift away from painterly and erotic energies, these new canvases were lean and unemotional, in contrast to the Baroque colour and violence of the work of the early 1960s.’ⁱⁱ

Nevertheless, the present work also records important lines of continuation from these earlier paintings, notably in its demonstration of the depth and complexity of Twombly’s philosophical and aesthetic interest in temporality. While the scarred and graffiti-etched surfaces of his *Baroque Paintings* speak powerfully to the artist’s fascination for a kind of deep vertical or ‘geological’ time, built up over millennia and recorded in the strata of rocks or modes of ancient mark-making, these more rational, geometric arrangements recall an early 20th century avant-garde interest in capturing the unfolding of time in pictorial space through the visual representation of dynamic, sequential movement, one that was crystallised in the painterly language of Italian Futurists Giacomo Balla and Umberto Boccioni.

“Twombly seems [...] to have responded more intuitively to the way the Futurists dispersed forms into linear sequences and made analytic rigour collide with onrushing flux.” —Kirk Varnedoe

In its muted palette and fracturing of form into sharply delineated planes, the present work especially recalls Marcel Duchamp’s pivotal *Nu descendant un escalier*, establishing an important link between these collages and a legacy of European avant-garde experiment that extends beyond Futurism into the experiments of Analytical Cubism and the visual language of cinema. Although quite distinct from Dada’s embrace of chance and accident, Twombly’s arrangement of paper strips here also evokes something of Kurt Schwitters’ *Merz* collages, their richly layered surfaces and fragments of text compared by art historian Roger Cardinal as ‘those rubbish pits that transmit a narrative of daily life to archaeologists concerned with the material culture of a lost society.’ⁱⁱⁱ



[Left] Marcel Duchamp, *Nu descendant un escalier no. 2 (Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2)*, 1912, The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and with funds contributed by private donors, 1977, 1977-28-1, Artwork: © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023 [Right] Kurt Schwitters, *Zeichnung A2, Hansao*, 1918, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

During the late 1960s and early 1970s when Twombly was working on these collages, the artist was also moving between the Italy that he had made his home and the America where he had been born, enjoying a period of significant critical and institutional recognition. Spending longer stretches in New York working in studios in the Bowery and on Canal Street during the 1960s, we might perhaps find traces of the gridded city and its towering glass and metal skyscrapers at work in the geometric arrangement of forms here. Most pressingly, these years were also dominated by the Space Race and the proliferation of discussion around space-time, mathematical precision, and careful calculation that attended it, echoed too in the cool Minimalism of Michael Fried and Donald Judd that dominated the New York art scene during this period.

Sublime in its formal simplicity, this untitled collage encapsulates Twombly’s synthesis of Minimalism’s mid-century rationality with earlier avant-garde investigations into visual representations of our experience of space and time. Even with his most diagrammatic and

geometrically rigid compositions, the sense of flowing energy is palpable, exceeding its own boundaries in every direction.

Collector's Digest

- Educated in the 1950s at Black Mountain College under Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell, Cy Twombly is one of the most innovative and influential artists of the postwar generation. Known for his expressive and gestural line work, the artist utilises a mixture of imagery, text and abstraction to create his own unique artistic language. Painting until his death in 2011, Twombly's work has been the subject of several major retrospectives. Initially at the Milwaukee Art Museum in 1968, more recently these have been held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York between 1994-1995; Tate Modern, London in 2008; and The Centre Pompidou, Paris between 2016-2017.

ⁱ Simon Schama, 'Cy Twombly', *Cy Twombly: Fifty Years of Works on Paper*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2003, p. 16.

ⁱⁱ Kirk Varnedoe, *Cy Twombly: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., New York, 1990, p. 40.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roger Cardinal, 'Collecting and Collage-Making: The Case of Kurt Schwitters', in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting*, London, 1994, pp. 84-85.

Provenance

Lucio Amelio, Naples

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

Nicola Del Roscio, *Cy Twombly, Drawings, Cat. Rais. Vol. 6 1972-1979*, Munich, 2016, no. 56, p. 64 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTION

26

Henri Matisse

Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)


incised with the artist's initials and number 'H.M 5' and stamped with the foundry mark 'C. VALSUANI CIRE PERDUE' on the base

bronze with brown patina

43 x 32.3 x 23.5 cm (16 7/8 x 12 3/4 x 9 1/4 in.)

Conceived in 1909-1910 and cast in 1952, this work is number 5 from an edition of 10.

Estimate

£600,000 — 800,000 

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“Rodin apart, it could be said that the most significant contributions to the evolution of modern sculpture before the advent of cubism were made by two painters – Degas and Matisse.” —Herbert Read

With its confident, serpentine sense of line and remarkably plastic treatment of form, Henri Matisse’s *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)* is a powerful example of the painter’s skill and strength as a sculptor, a medium which allowed him to grapple with both tradition and innovation as he continued to push his practice in new directions. First modelled in 1909-1910, and later cast in an edition of ten in 1952, the present work evolved from an earlier series of smaller sculptural pieces that Matisse had started working on in 1908, including *Petit nu accroupi avec bras* and *Nu accroupi*, a version of which is now held in the Musée Matisse in Nice. During this most radical and revolutionary phase of the artist’s career, he alternated between painting and sculpture as a way of exploring ‘problems of form and movement which he found difficult to solve in the two-dimensional medium of painting.’ⁱ



Edward Steichen, Portrait of Henri Matisse with 'La Serpentine', 1909. Image: Courtesy of the RISD Museum, Providence, RI, Artwork: © Estate of Edward Steichen. Artists' Right Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2023

Matisse, Sculpture, and the Body

More complex and sensitively rendered than the earlier sculptural works, *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)* highlights the central role of the body in Matisse’s sculptural experiments, and the ways in which this would go on to inform the treatment of form and space in his painting after this point. Importantly, as the curators of the 2007 exhibition *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* stressed, before 1908, ‘Matisse had almost exclusively represented the human form either standing or reclining’,

radically adapting this stance with the commencement of this sequence of works featuring a seated or crouched female nude, her knees and arms bent and held in a more dramatic, cantilevered tension.ⁱⁱ In this more dynamic arrangement, Matisse was able to more fully explore the interplay of rhythm and movement, the exaggerated twist of the spine endowing the figure with a profoundly muscular and vital energy.

Working on a larger scale than he had with the earlier, hand-held works Matisse was also able to correct 'the development that caused the first series of crouching torsos to fold progressively in on themselves.' The remarkable openness of the figure here not only introduces new and more complex contortions into the artist's repertoire - allowing him to escape the limitations of mass and volume in favour of a flowing, arabesque line - but lays essential foundations for the elasticity that he would achieve in his later sculptural nudes. It is in *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)* especially that we find evidence of Matisse's guidance to his students that 'arms are like rolls of clay, but forearms are also like ropes because torsion can be placed on them.'ⁱⁱⁱ Importantly, while the earlier, smaller pieces were modelled from photographs, employing a much vaguer treatment of the face, head, and other distinguishing features, *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)* was modelled from life, the Russian artist Olga Markusovna Meerson 'the only woman reckless enough to pose nude for Matisse in the years before the First World War.'^{vi}

Artist and Model

"[Olga Meerson] is purely an artist, and could never live at peace except through her art." —Henri Matisse

A young, ambitious, and prodigiously talented art student nicknamed 'Mlle Russia' by Gertrude Stein, Olga Meerson first met Matisse in 1908, the same year that she presented a selection of bold and confidently executed paintings at the official Paris Salon.^v Of Russian Jewish ancestry, Meerson was described as a striking beauty with thick auburn hair and an indomitable personality. Having been a member of Wassily Kandinsky's Phalanx Class alongside artists such as Gabriele Münter, Meerson travelled to France, arriving in Paris in time to witness firsthand the scandalised reactions to the infamous first presentation of Fauve paintings at the 1905 *Salon des Indépendents*.

Convincing the older master of her commitment to innovative modern modes of painting, she veered away from the more predictable path of society portraiture and academic painting that had been open to her, taking up a position as his pupil the same year. Hans Purrmann described the rigmarole of these classes, where Matisse 'would strip each work down to its bare essence, examine what was left for any trace of individual expression, and then devote himself to clarifying and strengthening this residuum.'^{vi} Despite the emotional intensity of these sessions and her own

nagging sense of self-doubt, Meerson's painting seemed to thrive during this period, producing some of the most remarkable and shocking works presented in the 1911 *Salon des Indépendents* as her style became more immediate and expressive, whilst retaining the early facility for colour, composition, and pattern that had first caught Matisse's attention. A particular champion of her portraiture, Matisse underscored Meerson's 'ability to catch a likeness, a rich feeling for colour and a generous sense of design' - qualities clearly demonstrated in her 1911 portrait of the older painter.^{vii} Matisse was famously reluctant to sit for his own portrait, and yet here she captures him in a disarmingly intimate and unguarded manner, stretched out across a chequered textile ground, his head propped on his hand as he reads the book rested in front of him.



Olga Meerson, *Henri Matisse*, 1911, Private Collection. Image: The History Collection / Alamy Stock Photo

Close to both Matisse and his wife, Meerson was a frequent visitor to his home and studio at Issy-Les-Moulineaux during this time, even holidaying with the couple at Collioure in the summer of 1911. During this period of intense creative exchange, both artists painted portraits of each other, Matisse's *Olga Meerson*, now held in the collection of The Museum of Fine Arts Boston a particularly striking record of this fruitful period. Although the precise nature of their relationship remains ambiguous, the intensity of her feelings for Matisse seems clear; the summer was not only productive and happy, but proved to be decisive for both, with Matisse going on to paint some of his most iconic early works during this period, including his suite of *Studio* paintings which proudly

feature some of the sculptural pieces that were preoccupying the artist during this time.

As Matisse's biographer, Hilary Spurling has described, Meerson 'personified the pride, courage and resilience that he responded to all his life at the deepest instinctual level in his female models', qualities that reverberate across both the painted portrait and the present work.^{viii} However, while both present the sitter with clarity and a powerful sense of self-possession, the rigidity of Meerson's pose in the portrait - carriage erect, long neck extended and her hands clasped firmly in her lap - gives way to a much more fluid and relaxed sense of line and sensual corporeality in *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)*. This more languid and sensual treatment of the body would go on to inform Matisse's treatment of the nude going forward, reappearing in his late, great innovation of the paper cutouts in the crouched pose of his iconic *Nu bleu* series, tellingly embarked on in the early years of the 1950s, just as the artist returned to these earlier sculptural experiments to arrange their casting. Restlessly inventive, Matisse turned to the body and sculptural representation to further his most radical experiments in the treatment of form, as much in the early stages of his career as at its very end, giving weight to his assertion that 'All things have their decided physical character [...] In addition to the sensations one derives from a drawing, a sculpture must invite us to handle it as an object; just so the sculptor must feel, in making it, the particular demands for volume and mass. The smaller the bit of sculpture, the more the essentials of form must exist.'^{ix}



[Left] Henri Matisse, *Olga Meerson*, 1911, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession H. Matisse / DACS 2023 [Right] Henri Matisse, *Blue Nude IV*, 1952, Musée Matisse, Nice. Image: © François Fernandez / Musée Matisse, Artwork: © Succession H. Matisse / DACS 2023

Collector's Digest

- An undisputed Master of Modern Art, Henri Matisse is best known for his paintings and works on paper, including his celebrated cutouts which formed the basis of a major retrospective at London's Tate Modern in 2014. Turning to sculpture to explore problems relating to form and movement, Matisse's works in this medium are of supreme importance, not only in relation to his oeuvre, but to development of modern art itself.
- The present work is one of a numbered edition of 10, with other examples now held in some of the most prestigious institutional and private collections worldwide, with one example held in the Kunsthaus Zurich. Versions of *Grand Nu accroupi (Olga)* have been included in major Matisse exhibitions internationally.

ⁱ Herbert Read, *Modern Sculpture: A Concise History*, London, 1964, p. 31.

ⁱⁱ Heather MacDonald, Jed Morse, Oliver Shell, 'Seated and Crouching Nudes', in *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor*, exh. cat., The Baltimore Museum of Art, 2007, p. 180.

ⁱⁱⁱ Henri Matisse, quoted in Herbert Read, *Modern Sculpture: A Concise History*, London, 1964, p. 42.

^{iv} Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 75.

^v Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 16.

^{vi} Hans Purmann, quoted in Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 23.

^{vii} Henri Matisse, quoted in Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 16.

^{viii} Henri Matisse, quoted in Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 19.

^{ix} Henri Matisse Lecture, recorded by Sarah Stein and quoted in Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse, 1909-1954*, London, 2006, p. 42.

Provenance

Pelle Börjesson, Gothenburg
 Lee V. Eastman, New York (acquired by 1984)
 Christie's, New York, 1 November 2005, lot 34
 Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)
 Christie's, New York, 9 May 2007, lot 48
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, *Henri Matisse: Tableaux du Maroc et Sculpture*, 14 – 19 April 1913, no. 15, n.p. (another example exhibited)
 Paris, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, *Exposition de la collection particulière de M. Paul Guillaume*, May – June 1929 (another example exhibited)
 New York, Brummer Gallery, *Sculpture by Henri Matisse*, 5 January – 7 February 1931, no. 23, n.p. (another example exhibited)
 Kunsthalle Basel, *Henri Matisse*, 9 August – 15 September 1931, no. 115, p. 21 (another example exhibited)
 New York, Buchholz Gallery (no. 21); Arts Club of Chicago (no. 17), *Sculptures by Painters*, 31 October 1939 – 27 January 1940 (another example exhibited)
 Richmond, The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.*, 16 January – 11 May 1941, no. 118, pp. 71-72, n.p. (another example illustrated and exhibited, n.p.)
 Lucerne, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Henri Matisse*, 9 July – 2 October 1949, no. 288, p. 49 (another example exhibited)
 Kunsthaus Zürich, *Europäische Kunst 13.-20. Jahrhundert aus Zürcher Sammlungen*, 6 June – 13 August 1950, no. 31 (another example exhibited)
 Paris, Maison de la Pensée, *Henri Matisse – Chapelle, Peintures, Dessins, Sculptures*, 5 July – 24 September 1950, no. 93, p. 24 (another example exhibited)
 Kunstmuseum Winterthur, *Die Plastiksammlung Werner Bär*, 16 September – 11 November 1951, no. 64, p. 13 (another example exhibited)
 Knokke-Heist, Grande Salle des Expositions de « La Réserve », *Matisse*, 12 July – 31 August 1952, no. 35, p. 33 (another example exhibited)
 London, The Tate Gallery, *An exhibition of the sculpture of Matisse and 3 paintings with studies*, 9 January – 22 February 1953, no. 27 (another example exhibited)
 New York, Curt Valentin Gallery, *The Sculpture of Henri Matisse*, 10 – 28 February 1953, no. 19, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
 Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, *Henri Matisse: Skulpturer, Malerier, Farveklip*, 6 November – 6 December 1953, no. 26, pp. 15, 27 (illustrated, p. 27)
 Rotterdam, Museum Boymans, *Matisse, Bronzen, Tekeningen, Schilderijen, Schetsen*, 16 April – 8 June 1954, no. 26, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)
 Ottawa, The National Gallery of Canada, *Matisse: Sculptures, Paintings, Drawings*, 1954, no. 26, n.p. (another example exhibited)
 The Museum of Fine Arts of Houston, *Matisse: Sculptures, Paintings and Drawings*, 18 September – 16 October 1955, no. 26 (another example exhibited)
 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, *Matisse: Bronzes and Drawings*, 1 – 30 November 1955, no. 26 (another example exhibited)
 Kunsthaus Zürich, *Skulpturen von Malern von Daumier bis Picasso*, 26 October – 30 November 1956, no. 76, p. 13 (another example exhibited)
 New York, World House Galleries, *The Struggle for New Form*, 22 January – 23 February 1957, no. 51, n.p. (another example exhibited)

- Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, *Henri Matisse: Apollon*, 4 – 23 September 1957, no. 27 (another example exhibited)
- New York, Fine Arts Associates, *Sculpture 1880 – 1957*, 10 December 1957 – 11 January 1958, no. 42, n.p., p. 67 (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Liège, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Apollon, Collection Theodor Ahrenberg*, 3 May – 31 July 1958, no. 152 (another example exhibited)
- London, Hanover Gallery, *Giacometti, Marini, Matisse, Moore*, 24 June – 13 September 1958, no. 32, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- New York, Fine Arts Associates, *Paintings, Watercolours, Sculpture*, Summer – Autumn 1958, no. 54 (another example exhibited)
- New York, Fine Arts Associates, *Henri Matisse: Sculpture, Drawings*, 25 November – 20 December 1958, no. 13, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- New York, Fine Arts Associates, *Summer-Fall 1959*, Summer – Autumn 1959, no. 111 (another example exhibited)
- The Detroit Institute of Arts; Milwaukee Art Center; Minneapolis, Walker Art Center; Kansas City, William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art; The Museum of Fine Arts of Houston; Los Angeles County Museum; San Francisco, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center; The Art Gallery of Toronto, *Sculpture in Our Time, Collected by Joseph H. Hirshorn*, 5 May 1959 – 31 October 1960, no. 159, pp. 70, 74 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 74)
- Kunsthhaus Zürich, *Henri Matisse: Das plastische Werk*, 14 July – 12 August 1959, no. 41, p. 18 (another example exhibited and illustrated)
- Kunsthhaus Zürich, *Zwei Zürcher Sammlungen. Werner Bär, Plastik, Kurt Sponagel, Graphik*, 19 August – 19 September 1959, no. 75, p. 19 (another example exhibited)
- Kunstmuseum Bern, *Plastiksammlung Werner Bär*, 26 September – 15 November 1959, no. 75, p. 19 (another example exhibited)
- Gothenburg, Konsthallen, *Henri Matisse: Ur Theodor Ahrenbergs Samling*, 16 March – 10 April 1960, no. 190, p. 17 (another example exhibited)
- New York, Knoedler Gallery, *The Colin Collection: Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings and Sculpture*, 12 April – 14 May 1960, no. 113, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, *Henri Matisse*, 11 July – 15 September 1961, no. 132, p. 31 (another example exhibited)
- New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Modern Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection*, 3 October 1962 – 6 January 1963, no. 296, pp. 81, 222 (another exhibited and illustrated, p. 81)
- The Hague, Haags Gemeentemuseum, *Verzameling Bär, Zürich, Beelhouwwerken en Tekeningen*, 20 October – 21 November 1965, no. 69, p. 14 (another example exhibited)
- University of California, Los Angeles; The Art Institute of Chicago; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, *Henri Matisse Retrospective*, 5 January – 26 June 1966, no. 115, pp. 131, 194 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 131)
- New Hampshire, Hopkins Centre Art Galleries, Dartmouth College, *Sculpture in Our Century: Selections from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection*, 25 May – 9 July 1967, no. 37, p. 29 (another example exhibited and illustrated)
- Saint-Paul de Vence, Fondation Maeght, *À la rencontre de Matisse*, July – September 1969, no. 100, p. 45, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Paris, Grand Palais, *Henri Matisse: Exposition du Centenaire*, April – September 1970, no. 237, pp. 100, 283 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 283)
- New York, The Museum of Modern Art; Minneapolis, Walker Art Centre; Berkeley, University Art Museum, University of California, *The Sculpture of Matisse*, 24 February – 29 October 1972, no. 41, pp. 20-21, 52 (illustrated, p. 21)
- Nice, Musée Matisse, *Henri Matisse: Sculptures*, 29 July – 29 September 1974, no. 38, pp. 12, 30 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 30)
- New York, Robert Elkon Gallery, *Twentieth Century Masters*, 5 October – 7 November 1974, no. 28, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Paris, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, *Henri Matisse: Dessins et sculpture*, 29 May – 7 September 1975, no. 203, pp. 218-219 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 219)
- New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Matisse in the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art*, 25 October 1978 – 30 January 1979, no. 42, p. 189 (illustrated)
- Tokyo, The Ueno Royal Museum; Osaka, The National Museum of Art; The Hakone Open-Air Museum; Kamakura, The Museum of Modern Art; Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art, *Sculpture by Master Painters*, 21 April – 21 October 1979, no. 23, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Basel, Wenkenpark Riehen, *Skulptur im 20. Jahrhundert*, 10 May – 14 September 1980, p. 46 (another example exhibited and illustrated)
- Tokyo, The National Museum of Modern Art; Kyoto, The National Museum of Modern Art, *Matisse*, 20 March – 19 July 1981, no. 100, pp. 131, 223-224 (another example exhibited and illustrated, pp. 131, 224)
- Edinburgh, City Art Centre; London, Hayward Gallery; Leeds City Art Gallery, *The Sculpture and Drawings of Henri Matisse*, 3 August 1984 – 24 March 1985, no. 43, n.p. and p. 147 (another example illustrated, n.p.)
- New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Henri Matisse: A Retrospective*, 24 September 1992 – 12 January 1993, no. 140, pp. 214, 478 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 214)
- Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Henri Matisse 1904-1917*, 25 February – 21 June 1993, no. 87, pp. 292-293 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 293)
- Shiga, The Museum of Modern Art; Tokyo, Odakyu Museum; Iwaki City Art Museum; Takamatsu City Museum of Art, *The Human Figure Interpreted: Modern Sculpture from the Hirshhorn Museum*, 1 July – 10 December 1995, no. 24, pp. 72, 127 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 72)
- New York, C&M Arts, *Henri Matisse: Sculpture*, 23 September – 12 December 1998, no. 13, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated, n.p.)
- Valencia, Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, *Henri Matisse*, 21 October 2003 – 11 January 2004, pp. 57, 182-183, 272 (another example exhibited and illustrated, pp. 57, 182-183)
- Düsseldorf, K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (no. 55, pp. 144, 371 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 144)); Basel, Fondation Beyeler (no. 31, pp. 68, 189 (another example

exhibited and illustrated, p. 68)), *Henri Matisse: Figure, Color, Space*, 29 October 2005 – 9 July 2006
 Dallas Museum of Art and Nasher Sculpture Center; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Baltimore Museum of Art, *Matisse: painter as sculptor*, 21 January 2007 – 3 February 2008, no. 67, pp. 183, 271 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 183)
 Duisburg, LehmbrockMuseum, *Kneeling Woman, 100 Years: Wilhelm Lehmbrock with Matisse, Brancusi, Debussy, Archipenko, Rodin, Nijinsky in Paris 1911*, 24 September 2011 – 22 January 2012, p. 235 (another example exhibited)
 New York, Eykyn Maclean, *Matisse and the Model*, 28 October – 10 December 2011, no. 4, pp. 10-11, 77 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 11)
 Vienna, Albertina, *Matisse and the Fauves*, 20 September 2013 – 12 January 2014, no. 137, pp. 202, 323 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 202)
 Kunsthaus Zürich; Nice, Musée Matisse, *Matisse: Métamorphoses*, 30 August 2019 – 6 May 2020, no. 23, pp. 16, 48-49, 213 (Brummer Gallery, New York, 1931 installation view illustrated, p. 16; another exhibited and illustrated, p. 49)

Literature

Waldemar George, *La Grande Peinture Contemporaine à la collection Paul Guillaume*, Paris, 1926, pp. 170, 188 (another example illustrated, p. 170)
 Carl Einstein, *Die Kunst des 20 Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1926, no. 196, n.p., p. 559 (another example illustrated, n.p.)
 Albert Sarraut, *Variations sur la Peinture Contemporaine*, Paris, 1929 (Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, 1929, installation view, another example illustrated, n.p.)
 Paris, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, *Exposition de la collection particulière de M. Paul Guillaume*, May – June 1929
 Anthony Bertram, *The World's Masters: Henri Matisse*, London and New York, 1930, no. XII, n.p. (another example illustrated, n.p.)
 Herbert Maryon, *Modern Sculpture: Its Methods and Ideals*, London, 1933, no. 218, p. 162, n.p. (another example illustrated, n.p.)
 'Painters as Sculptors', *The New York Times*, 5 November 1939 (another example illustrated)
 Sonya Rudikoff, 'New York Letter', *Art International*, vol. 6, November 1962, p. 62
 Herbert Read, *A Concise History of Modern Sculpture*, London, 1964, no. 29, pp. 36, 298 (another example illustrated, p. 36)
 Werner Bär, Nelly Bär, René Werhli, *Sammlung Werner und Nelly Bär*, Weinfelden, 1965, pp. 159, 254 (another example illustrated, p. 159)
 Albert E. Elsen, 'The Sculpture of Matisse, Part II: Old Problems and New Possibilities', *Artforum*, October, 1968, pp. 27, 28 (illustrated, p. 27)
 William Tucker, 'Four sculptors part 3: Matisse', *Studio International*, September, 1970, p. 87
 Jane Clapp, *Sculpture Index*, New Jersey, 1970, vol. 1, p. 603
 Felix Andreas Baumann, Dagmar Hnikova, eds., *Der Skulpturensaal Werner Bär im Kunsthaus Zürich*, Zurich, 1970, pp 6, 83-84, 85 (installation view illustrated, p. 6; another example illustrated, p. 84)
 Mario Luzi, Massimo Carrà, *L'opera di Matisse: dalla rivolta 'fauve' all'intimismo, 1904-1928*, Milan, 1971, no. S 7, pp. 108-109, 113 (illustrated, p. 108)
 Albert E. Elsen, *The Sculpture of Henri Matisse*, New York, 1972, nos. 123, 130, pp. 96-99, 102-103, n.p. (another example illustrated, p. 98; another example illustrated, p. 102)
 Abram Lerner, ed. *The Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden*, New York, 1974, no. 206, pp. 158-159, 721 (another example illustrated, p. 158)
 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Matisse: His Art and His Public*, London, 1975, pp. 138, 588
 Jack Flam, *Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869-1918*, New York, 1986, no. 315, pp. 315, 318 (illustrated, p. 318)
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 Hayden Herrera, *Matisse: A Portrait*, New York, 1993, p. 86
 Guy-Patrice, Michel Dauberville, *Matisse*, vol. 2, Paris, 1995, no. 796, pp. 1415, 1445, 1457 (another example illustrated, p. 1415)
 Claude Duthuit, *Henri Matisse: Catalogue Raisonné de l'Oeuvre Sculpté*, Paris, 1997, no. 49, pp.

134-137, 389 (illustrated, pp. 134-135, 137)

John Klein, *Matisse Portraits*, New Haven and London, 2001, pp. 239, 241 (illustrated, p. 241)

Yve-Alain Bois, *Matisse and Picasso*, Paris, 2001, no. 38, pp. 54-55, 58, 266 (illustrated, p. 55)

Hilary Spurling, *Matisse the Master, A Life of Henry Matisse: Volume Two, 1909-1954*, London, 2005, p. 65, 85, 510 (illustrated, p. 65)

Christian Klemm, Franziska Lentzsch, eds., *Kunsthaus Zürich: Gesamtkatalog der Gemälde und Skulpturen*, Zürich, 2007, p. 599 (another example illustrated)

Carrie Pilto, ed., *Living with Matisse, Picasso and Christo: Theodor Ahrenberg and His Collections*, London, 2018, no. 20, pp. 83, 358 (another example illustrated, p. 83)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



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COLLECTION

27

Balthus


Étude pour 'Le Peintre et son modèle'

signed with the artist's monogram 'Bs' lower right
pencil on paper

70 x 100 cm (27 1/2 x 39 3/8 in.)

Executed in 1977.

Estimate

£280,000 — 400,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“Personality cults by contemporary painters infuriate me. One must seek the opposite, fade away more every day, and find exactingness only in the act of painting, and always forget oneself.” —Balthus

Serene and quietly still, *Étude pour ‘Le Peintre et son modèle’* captures the poignant ephemerality of the passing moment. So absorbed in her book and comfortable in herself that her body seems to hold this awkward pose effortlessly, the young model of this delicately executed study seems at complete peace, if only for a moment. In the fully realised composition - the commanding *Le Peintre et son modèle*, now held as a masterwork in the collection of the Musée nationale d’Art moderne, Centre Pompidou - this narrative element is drawn out as the painter of the title stands to draw back the curtains. We can almost feel the imminent change in atmosphere as the room floods with light, breaking the girl’s reverie as her eyes adjust, her pose shifting. On the cusp of adulthood herself, the model embodies this sense of the fragile beauty and transience of these passing moments.



Balthus, *Le Peintre et son modèle*, 1977, Musée nationale d’Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.
Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

Owing a debt to Balthus’ exposure to theatre set design by his father, and his own foray into these commissions in Paris the 1930s, *Le Peintre et son modèle*, registers the somewhat disquieting atmosphere typical of the artist’s compositions, its various narrative components arranged like a stage set. In this exquisite study however, Balthus seems more preoccupied with trying to capture the troublesome passage between adolescence and adulthood itself. Provoking a flash of recognition in the viewer, Balthus elicits a powerful tenderness towards our own youthful innocence, those fading moments as we shed our childhood selves and step, tentatively into the adult world for the first time. Recalling these lost versions of ourselves for the briefest of instants, we understand the drive to cherish and protect these precious moments, what the artist articulated more directly as, ‘the sweet and innocent mind, something not yet realised [...] [that]

must be preserved at all costs'.ⁱ

In their quieter approach, the drawings help to recontextualise the strange atmosphere of the painting, more completely capturing that 'tremulous, disquieting emotion' which is 'one of the hardest to translate into words because, even while it can be instinctively grasped and understood, it remains utterly mysterious to our rational selves.'ⁱⁱ Identifying a profound tension between the visible surface and the hidden depths below, Balthus' drawings reach towards something more psychological than physical, as Michelina – an earlier, favourite model would emphasise:

“He tries to find in you things that he can depict, aspects of you that are not simply physical. He tries to transcribe what you are; and so everything depends on the model, if she can reveal herself to the artist, who then draws what he wants to bring out [...] For me [his pictures] show someone managing to capture an important moment of passage – that from childhood to adulthood.” —Michelina

One of two detailed studies for *Le Peintre et son modèle* – the present work being the more complete and finely finished – Balthus started working on these drawings almost as soon as he arrived in Rossinière. This was a moment of significant change for the older artist who had passed the previous sixteen years as the Director of the Académie de France at the Villa Medici in Rome. As Isobelle Monod-Fontaine has suggested, although one of the first works completed in Switzerland upon his arrival there in 1977, *Le Peintre et son modèle* remains strongly 'Italian' in feel. Trying to return this lost time, Balthus recreates on canvas the old studio with its familiar clutter, the young Swiss neighbour who is the model here even adopting the porcelain skin and flattened features of the Piero della Francesca's fair-haired figures, some of the most emblematic images of the Renaissance. A keen observer of the Italian master's treatment of pictorial structure, in the model's exaggerated pose and the rhythmic exchange between vertical and diagonal elements, Balthus achieves a delicately balanced symmetry, one that is even more rigorously applied in *Étude pour 'Le Peintre et son modèle'*.

Intuitively finding a perfect point of equilibrium, the young girl leans her weight forward onto casually folded arms which, counterbalanced against her outstretched legs, lend the composition the dramatic diagonal line of her body as an organising principle. A favourite pose of the artist's, it first appeared in his 1933-1934 drawings for *Wuthering Heights* and has gone on to feature in some of his most striking works, including the 1937 *Les Enfants Blanchard*, now held at the Musée Picasso in Paris, and *Patience*, once part of legendary dealer Pierre Matisse's collection and now forming part of The Art Institute of Chicago's permanent Collection.



Balthus, *Les enfants Blanchard*, 1937, Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: © Photo Josse / © Fonds Balthus / Harumi Klossowska de Rola / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

Reinterpreted by artists across the centuries, the trope of the male artist at work painting his model is a perennial mainstay in the Western art historical canon, making prominent appearances in the work of Jan Vermeer, Pablo Picasso, and a host of more contemporary artists. Turning to this subject at such a late stage in his career, it seems as though Balthus is reinforcing his identity as an artist, although as 21st century viewers we are also asked to consider the complex power set of power relations that exists between the young model and older painter as it is staged here. In his sensitive drawings Balthus was at his most self-reflective, with *Étude pour 'Le Peintre et son modèle'* especially capturing the 'look that studies the look, the artist's eye observing what the artist's eye is envisaging'ⁱⁱⁱ In a further, touching reference to the life he had left behind in Italy, and to the more self-reflective aspects of this composition, the book that the model appears so

absorbed in is the same portfolio of images that sisters Katia and Michelina would often look through as he painted them, and one that reappears across a selection of Balthus' most famous paintings.



Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*, c. 1666-1668, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Balthus was only thirteen when he published his first set of drawings, encouraged by his mother's lover the Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke and under the guidance of novelist and playwright André Gide. During his time at the Villa Medici, drawing once again occupied a central position in the artist's practice, his appointment as Director having left him little time for the more painstaking execution of his works on canvas, finding new delight in the discipline. In this late

drawing, the exceptional draughtsmanship recognised so early on and now ranked amongst the 'highest peaks of the great French tradition' is immediately obvious, the elegant handling of the work in terms of both its compositional arrangement and execution marking it out as a work of remarkable beauty.^{iv}

Coming to auction with exceptional provenance, having remained in the possession of the illustrious Flammarion family since the 1980s, *Étude pour 'Le Peintre et son modèle'* brings art and literature – the stuff of beauty, of life, and of quiet contemplation – together, reminding us that, for Balthus, the 'drawing's caress seeks to rediscover a childlike grace that vanishes so quickly, leaving us with an inconsolable memory. The challenge is to track down the sweetness so that graphite on paper can recreate the fresh oval of a face, a shape close to angel's faces.'^v

Collector's Digest

- Executed in 1977, the same year as a rare and significant retrospective of the artist's paintings and drawings was presented at Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, the study demonstrates Balthus' remarkable skill as a draughtsman, and the key themes that occupied him throughout his life.
- Following his first major institutional exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, exhibitions of his work have been held at important institutions worldwide and examples of his work can be found in the permanent collections of the Tate, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Musée nationale d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Art Institute of Chicago. The present work is one of two detailed studies for the painting *Le peintre et son modèle*, held in the Musée nationale d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou.
- The present work is coming to auction from the esteemed Flammarion family, who have retained ownership of the work since the 1980s.

ⁱ Balthus, *Vanished Splendours: A Memoir*, New York, 2001, p. 65.

ⁱⁱ Giovanni Carandente, *Balthus: Drawings and Watercolours*, London, 1983, p. 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ Claude Roy, *Balthus*, New York, 1996, p. 140.

^{iv} Giovanni Carandente, *Balthus: Drawings and Watercolours*, London, 1983, p. 7.

^v Balthus, *Vanished Splendours, A Memoir*, New York, 2002, p. 65.

Balthus

Provenance

Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris

Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne

Thomas Ammann Fine Art, Zurich

Odyssea Gallery, New York

B.C. Holland Fine Art, Chicago

Drouot, Paris, 16 December 1988, lot 183

Mr. and Mrs. Henri Flammarion, Paris

Collection de Monsieur et Madame Henri Flammarion, Christie's, Paris, 21 October 2003, lot 79

Private Collection, Paris (acquired at the above sale)

Thence by descent to the present owner

Exhibited

Paris, Galerie Claude Bernard, *Balthus: Dessins*, 5 December 1978 – 27 January 1979

Bern, Kunstmuseum, *Balthus: Zeichnungen*, 18 June – 4 September 1994, no. 79, p. 106 (illustrated)

Literature

Jean Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1978, no. XII, n.p. (illustrated, n.p., titled as Jeune femme agenouillée)

Jean Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1982, pp. 117, 155 (illustrated, p. 117; titled as Jeune fille agenouillée)

Jean Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990, no. XII, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.; titled as Jeune femme agenouillée)

Jean Leymarie, *Balthus*, Geneva, 1990, pp. 110, 159 (illustrated, p. 110)

Claude Roy, *Balthus*, Paris, 1996, p. 226 (illustrated)

Jean Clair and Virginie Monnier, *Balthus: Catalogue Raisonné of the Complete Works*, Paris, 1999, no. D 1373, p. 378 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN IMPORTANT FRENCH COLLECTION

28

Jean Dubuffet

Lieu rouge au château

signed and dated 'J. D. 75' upper right; inscribed and titled 'T 45 Lieu rouge au château' on the reverse
acrylic on paper laid on canvas
102 x 134 cm (40 1/8 x 52 3/4 in.)
Executed on 5 July 1975.

Estimate

£700,000 — 1,000,000 £

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“One must not confuse what the eyes apprehend with what happens when the mind takes it in. In any single instant the eyes see only a side facing them, they converge on a small field. The mind totalizes; it recapitulates all the fields; it makes them dance together. It transforms them too, it reworks them in its own guise [...] Perhaps we live in a world invented by ourselves.” —Jean Dubuffet

With its flattened forms, animated, energetic sense of line, and bold, bright palette, *Lieu rouge au châteaux* captures the spirit and verve of French postwar artist Jean Dubuffet’s distinct visual language, and the persistence of certain themes and motifs throughout his career. Executed in the summer of 1975, the work belongs to the celebrated *Lieux abrégés* series, a body of work from the phenomenally productive later years of Dubuffet’s life where the boundaries between abstraction and figuration, urban space and the terrain of the mind became increasingly porous and equivalent. Returning to key questions related to space, the city, and our relationship to it that preoccupied Dubuffet at the very outset of his career, *Lieu rouge au château* also offers an illuminating insight into the ways in which the artist’s depiction of urban characters developed over the decades, and of the fundamental role of Paris in shaping his unique vision.

Places and People, Abridged

With its joyous blend of electric blues, rich gold accents, and deeper magenta tones, *Lieu rouge au château* exemplifies the shift towards strong colour and simplified imagery that best defines the artist’s late work. Wildly inventive and radically experimental from the outset, this last decade of Dubuffet’s career was, as Christine Burger has suggested, ‘exceptionally productive, with groups of work succeeding one another at regular intervals.’ⁱ Translating to ‘abridged places’, the *Lieux abrégés* series is one of an interconnected suite of works including the later *Partitions*, *Psychosites*, and *Sites aléatoires* pieces through which Dubuffet honed this new, simplified but visually complex language with confidence and immediacy, exploring the idea of the city as a series of interconnected ‘zones’ where physical space is deeply interpenetrated with our internal psychic landscape.



Jean Dubuffet, *Theatre de Memoire: La Mésentente*, 1978, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation/Art Resource, NY/ Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

While much of Dubuffet’s earlier work demonstrated a keen interest in texture, surface, and material, employing non-traditional elements such as sand, gravel, mud, and glass in his compositions, in thematic terms, it was the city of Paris itself that emerged as the artist’s primary subject in these early years. In works such as *Mur aux inscriptions* and *Grand Paysage noir* Dubuffet married these two painterly concerns, the city’s material reality with its graffitied walls and scumbled surfaces like living documents, ‘their dense scars and inscriptions bearing witness to the past and present lives of the city.’ⁱⁱ Where these early works are deeply anchored in the physical reality of Paris itself, these later cycles explore more psychological terrain, slipping seamlessly between abstraction and figuration as they expand upon Dubuffet’s early appreciation of the modern city as a site of special psychological intensity. Although darker palettes and rigorously worked surfaces tend to dominate these earlier works, examples of Dubuffet’s pivotal *Marionnettes de la ville et de la campagne* series (*Métro gouaches*) from this early period anticipate the role that vibrant colour, a more schematic sense of line, and simplified figures would play in shaping his vision of urban life.



Left: Jean Dubuffet, *Grand Paysage noir*, 1946, Tate Collection, London Right: Jean Dubuffet, *Métro*, 1943, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Image: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Philippe Migeat, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

After an extended period spent away from the city in the French countryside during which time the figure disappeared almost entirely from his canvases, Dubuffet returned to a rapidly modernising Paris in 1961, shifting gears stylistically as he began to work on his pivotal *Paris Cirque* series. In this and the important, interconnected cycles of work that followed, the city remained of central importance, Dubuffet's early interest in the spontaneity of scrawled, graffiti forms returning as drawing took a more prominent role, re-energised by the introduction of strong chromatic contrasts in bold, primary shades. Inspired by the autonomic processes of doodling, Dubuffet's *L'Hourloup* series used line and a restricted palette to capture a more spontaneous sense of movement and energy.

A pivotal body of work, Dubuffet started working on the *Lieux abrégés* series immediately after his *L'Hourloup* experiments, producing 150 pieces that anticipated the more psychological treatment of urban life that his work would take in the complex *Théâtres de mémoire* paintings. Increasingly, the artist's desire to 'represent things as we think them rather than as we see them' led him further into abstraction, radical flattening pictorial space and reducing his 'sites' to a series of endless, repeating forms which replace geographic specificity with a sense of the city as a series of interconnected physical and invisible networks.

These more turbulent psychological landscapes also anticipate the last, great pictorial experiments

developed across the artist's final *Mires* and *Non-lieux* series. First exhibited in the French Pavilion of XLI La Biennale di Venezia in 1984, just one year before Dubuffet's death, monumental works such as *Le cours des choses* are closely related to the present work, developing the simplified but vividly rich palette, and more complete dissolution of both pictorial space and the figure that we see Dubuffet experimenting with here.

Collector's Digest

- With recent major retrospectives held at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel in 2016 and the Barbican Centre, London in 2021, Jean Dubuffet's work continues to attract significant critical attention and remains foundational to art-historical discussions of Post-War and contemporary art.
- Examples of his work reside in major institutions around the world including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Modern in London, and the Musée National d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou in Paris.
- Developing the concept of *Art Brut* in the 1940s, Dubuffet turned to the production of those operating outside of the narrow definitions of the *Beaux Arts* tradition including work made by prisoners, children, so-called 'primitive' artists, and the mentally ill in his search for a richer, more expressive model for artmaking. Radically decentring certain dominant art-historical narratives, Dubuffet pioneered more contemporary approaches to both the production and discussion of painting in the West.

ⁱ Christine Burger, in Raphael Bouvier, *Jean Dubuffet: Metamorphoses of Landscape*, Basel, 2016, p. 194.

ⁱⁱ Eleanor Nairne, 'Matter and Memory', in *Brutal Beauty* exh. cat., London, 2021, p. 11.

Provenance

Fondation Jean Dubuffet, Périgny-sur-Yerres
 Private Collection, Paris (transfer by exchange from the above in 1998)
 Dürfeldt - Collectors of Fine Art, Kirchhain
 Private Collection, Switzerland
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2017

Exhibited

Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *J. Dubuffet: parachiffres, mondanités et autres peintures de 1975*, 23 January - 23 February 1976, no. 79, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

Turin, Palazzo della Promotrice delle Belle Arti al Valentino, *La Fiat invita all'incontro con Jean Dubuffet*, 16 June - 15 July 1978, p. 104

Berlin, Akademie der Künste; Vienna, Museum moderner Kunst, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts;

Cologne, Joseph-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, *Dubuffet: Retrospektive*, 7 September 1980 - 29 March 1981, no. 325, pp. 270, 393 (illustrated)

Tokyo, The Seibu Museum of Art; Osaka, The National Museum of Art, *Exposition Jean Dubuffet*, 2 January - 28 March 1982, no. 38, p. 63 (illustrated)

Saint-Paul de Vence, Fondation Maeght, *Jean Dubuffet. Rétrospective: Peintures, Sculptures, Dessins*, 6 July - 6 October 1985, no. 66, pp. 140, 182 (illustrated, p. 140)

Vence, Château de Villeneuve, *Chambres pour Dubuffet*, 1 July - 30 October 1995, no. 73, pp. 112, 141 (illustrated, p. 112)

Literature

Max Loreau, ed., *catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet, fascicule XXX: Parachiffres, Mondanités, Lieux abrégés*, Paris, 1980, no. 180, pp. 81, 136, 138 (illustrated, p. 81)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

29

Andy Warhol

One Dollar Bill

signed and dated 'Andy WARHOL 62 Andy Warhol
1962' on the reverse

pencil on paper

61 x 45.7 cm (24 x 17 7/8 in.)

Executed in 1962.

Estimate

£600,000 — 800,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“...is there something that means more to you than money? Would not money be a subject for pictures that everyone would immediately understand: bank notes or soup cans or something similar?” —Muriel Latow

Arresting in its stark simplicity, *One Dollar Bill* distills one of American Pop artist Andy Warhol's most iconic motifs and persistent obsessions into a rare hand-drawn work of remarkable economy. Finding himself at a pivotal moment in his career, in the early 1960s Warhol was establishing the visual themes that would go on to define his oeuvre, and tellingly the 'bumper crop of drawings' that he produced in 1962 include 'his most finished and prized Pop drawings of soup cans, dollar bills, movie stars, and paint-by-numbers pictures.'ⁱ Succinct and direct, the dollar drawings produced over this year are amongst his most highly prized works. With this highly familiar subject, Warhol was nevertheless able to create a range of strikingly novel and memorable compositions, often adopting enlarging or cropping techniques in these drawings of rolls of dollars, flattened single notes, or scattered piles of one- and two-dollar bills.

Executed with Warhol's characteristically witty, wayward line, *One Dollar Bill* features three rectangular sheets, only one of which meticulously depicts the currency's familiar iconography while the other two are left blank. Casually arranged, in the rendering of these loose, slightly crumpled bills, Warhol plays with exaggerated contrasts between light and shadow, creating more complex *trompe l'oeil* effects which animate the whole composition, as well as playfully hinting at Warhol's own preference for messy wads of bills stuffed in pockets and bags as opposed to clean, crisp currency. Drawing on his experiences working as a commercial illustrator and anticipating the major themes and graphic simplicity that he would go on to explore across his paintings and silkscreens, in the image of a single dollar bill Warhol condenses a complex web of associations related to wealth, power, and the burgeoning consumer culture taking shape in mid 20th century America. Rich in its iconographic potential, the dollar bill at once represents greed and deprivation, wealth and poverty. A powerful symbol of American entrepreneurial spirit, it also encapsulates the democratising force of money underpinning specifically 20th century notions of the 'self-made man'; really for the first time, the economic circumstances of one's birth did not determine the trajectory that one's life could take, something Warhol himself knew very well.



Andy Warhol, seated in his 1342 Lexington Avenue studio, April 1962. Photo by Alfred Statler. Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

Warhol was candid about his fetishisation of money, an especially loaded issue for the son of Austro-Hungarian immigrants born in industrial Pittsburgh in 1928, just one year before the Wall Street Crash devastated the US economy and ushered in ten years of deep economic depression. The Second World War too saw extensive wartime rationing, which was just beginning to ease when Warhol found himself in New York in 1949 following his graduation from the Carnegie Institute of Technology that year. In place of deprivation and limitation Warhol found a novel abundance and prosperity promised by this brave new world of rapid technological and social change, facilitated by the massive advances in manufacturing that supported expanding appetites for consumer consumption. While everyday objects were proliferating, a new golden age of film, fashion, and music also established a set of secular icons at its helm, the likeness of figures such as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Elizabeth Taylor as mass-produced and widely circulated as more conventional commodities.

Within this rapidly shifting landscape, advertising and graphic design rose to new prominence as companies sought to create striking, unique visual identities to set their products apart from their competitors and appeal directly to consumers. A highly skilled draughtsman, Warhol quickly established himself as a commercial artist, his 'witty, versatile line, which with its slightly satiric quality subtly mocks the good taste it sells' emerging as his primary calling card.ⁱⁱ

Tellingly, in his commercial work Warhol remained committed to the hand-drawn line, adopting more mechanical means of production when he eventually decided to turn to painting. Executed in 1962, the present drawing belongs to a truly pivotal period in the artist's career, marking the year he decided to leave behind commercial illustration and to commit to the reinvention of himself as an artist. Fascinated by the familiar objects of everyday consumption, Warhol's iconic paintings of *Campbell's Soup Tins* were first presented in the artist's inaugural solo exhibition of the same year, although it was with the depiction of the dollar bill that Warhol would ultimately found his reputation as the undisputed King of Pop Art.

"I started [silkscreening] when I was printing money. I had to draw it, and it came out looking too much like a drawing, so I thought wouldn't it be a great idea to have it printed. Somebody said you could just put it on silkscreens." —Andy Warhol

A pure expression of commodity culture, it is perhaps unsurprising that Warhol depicted the dollar in his first screen print experiments between March and April 1962. As the story goes, Warhol was first inspired to create images of currency after a conversation with his friend, the gallerist Muriel Latow, a strikingly new subject for painting that demanded a similarly radical mode of production. Poised between his commercial drawings and the silkscreened images that would go on to forge his legacy, *One Dollar Bill* is closely related to Warhol's earliest paintings, executed with the use of a projector which allowed the artist to trace a photographic projection directly onto the canvas.

Taken by Warhol's close friend Edward Wallowitch, this series of photographs featured the paper currency in a variety of arrangements which Warhol would then crop and rotate as he developed his final composition. The present triangular arrangement of three sheets - only one of which is presented as the titular dollar bill - is directly related to Warhol's vast painting *One dollar Bill (Silver Certificate)*, which achieved a staggering result of well over £20,000,000 when it was last sold at auction in 2015.



[Left] Page from *Scene*, April 1963 [Right] Edward Wallowitch, source photograph for *One Dollar Bill*. Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

A matter of necessity as much as aesthetic choice, while Warhol would use photographs as the basis for his later silkscreens, he found that printers were reluctant to produce silkscreens of money from photographs, for obvious reasons. Tibor Press did however present the option of silkscreening the image from a drawing, positioning these works at the very foundations of Warhol's silk-screening practice. Working from Wallowitch's photographs, Warhol produced the suite of still life drawings to which the present work belongs, generating a concentrated and fascinating body of work in a medium that he did not return to for another decade. Borrowing the reproductive techniques that he had honed as a commercial illustrator - including his signatory 'blotted line, rubber stamps, stencils, and the use of an opaque projector, which allowed endless adjustments of an image's size' - these drawings also prepared the technical and conceptual ground from which Warhol would radically extend into his most iconic serialised and mechanically produced silkscreens.ⁱⁱⁱ



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962, Tate Collection, London. Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

More than any other period of Warhol's career, the early 1960s have proven to be an ongoing source of fascination for critics and collectors alike. While we tend to think of this triumphant period as defined by the bold, bright colour contrasts of Marilyn Monroe's serially repeated likeness, or condensed in the silkscreened image of a soup can, *One Dollar Bill* emphasises the iconographic importance of the paper currency to Warhol's project more broadly, and the centrality of drawing in allowing him to realise it. As Donna de Salvo has suggested, it was in the early 1960s that 'Warhol's negation of American culture grew both more expansive and more precisely focused, and he also came to understand and address the relationships among traditional art mediums, such as painting and sculpture, and commercial processes and media.'^{vi} Ranging from these intimate, hand-drawn studies to the large-scale and depersonalised compositions of gridded and multiplied dollar bills, these images remain some of the most powerful and immediate of his oeuvre, capturing the essence of American and the American dream itself.

Collector's Digest

- The defining artist of post-war American Pop Art, Andy Warhol's work is immediately

recognisable and remains highly desirable.

- Executed in 1962, *One Dollar Bill* comes from the 'bumper crop of drawings' Warhol produced at this time - including soup cans, dollar bills, movie stars and paint by number pictures - that would come to define his oeuvre.
- The subject of major international exhibitions at Tate Modern, London; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou, Paris, Warhol's work is also held in the permanent collections of the most important institutions worldwide.

ⁱ Judith Goldman, 'Warhol's Line', *Andy Warhol drawings & Related Works: 1951-1986*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2003, p. 6.

ⁱⁱ Judith Goldman, 'Warhol's Line', *Andy Warhol drawings & Related Works: 1951-1986*, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2003, p. 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Donna de Salvo, 'Andy Warhol: I Work Seven Days a Week', in *Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2018, p. 22.

^{vi} Donna de Salvo, 'Andy Warhol: I Work Seven Days a Week', in *Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*, exh. cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2018, p. 22.

Provenance

Gallery Yves Arman, New York

Private Collection

Sotheby's, New York, 27 February 1981, lot 46

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTION

30

Cy Twombly

Untitled

signed, inscribed and dated 'Cy Twombly Captiva Mar 74 D.104' on the reverse
paper collage, wax crayon, pencil and tape on paper
75 x 106 cm (29 1/2 x 41 3/4 in.)
Executed in March 1974.

Estimate

£150,000 — 200,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



"I want very much to finish my study of the Mediterranean [...] and to Egypt with Karnak, Luxor and Thebes. I have infinite longing to see and feel these ancient wonders (my work thirsts for their contact) [...] The opportunity to continue my search will be of the most profound importance to my work." —Cy Twombly

In the works of American artist Cy Twombly, the divisions between past and present are obscured. Known for his idiosyncratic and dynamic mark making, his works on canvas and paper are some of the most recognisable and influential of the postwar generation. Twombly's exuberant use of gesture often culminates in works that explode with a palpable creative energy, as is evident in the present untitled work. Executed in 1974, a hugely productive decade during which the artist created some of his most exciting and enduring paintings, the present work on paper is a wonderful example of Twombly's signature asemic line work and well-documented interest in classical literary and art historical culture. A pioneering force in postwar abstraction, examples of his work can be found worldwide in major institutions such as Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and The Louvre, Paris.

In 1952, accompanied by friend and fellow Black Mountain College student Robert Rauschenberg, Twombly embarked upon a Grand Tour of the Mediterranean, with particular focus on Italian history, art and culture. This would serve to be the most influential factor in the young artist's creative development, and he soon after moved to Rome permanently. Twombly and Rauschenberg would continue to remain close friends, the present work belonging to a group created on Captiva Island off the coast of mainland Florida where Rauschenberg resided from 1968 until his death 40 years later. Testament to this close personal and working relationship, the work was also shown in a joint exhibition of the two artists held at the infamous dealer Leo Castelli's New York gallery the year that it was executed.

Captivated by the surrounding ancient heritage and confronted with a diasporic connection to Southern Europe, Twombly began to immerse himself in the texts of Ancient Rome and Greece. The sloping inscription of 'SESOSTRIS II' is a reference to the second of three successive Egyptian Pharaohs of the 12th dynasty, all named Sesostris. Twombly likely became aware of this Pharaonic name through his reading of Ancient Greek historian Herodotus' *The Histories*, which briefly documents the legacy of Sestrosis II and the life of Sesostris III. Sesostris is a narrative figure Twombly has returned to more than once, the most recent being a major exhibition with Gagosian Gallery in 2000 entitled 'The Coronation of Sesostris'. Twombly has revealed that he 'loved the sound and look of Sesostris as a name', demonstrating the tactile way in which he adapts and interprets source material.ⁱ



[Left] Detail of the present work [Right] Lotus Flower Inlay, c. 1353-1336 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926, 26.7.967

Smudges, scratches, scribbles and scrawls: Twombly charges the surface with his typical energetic line work here, culminating in a fusion of graphic mark making and a careful consideration of compositional elements. As well as in the inscription of 'SESOSTRIS II', the work is Pharaonic in its pyramidal form, referencing the ancient structures Twombly would have seen whilst visiting Egypt in 1962. Framing the work in triangular formation we see a repeated motif of the Egyptian lotus flower. Utilised by Twombly in an almost hieroglyphical manner, this familiar motif recurs across many of his works. A common flower found in Ancient Egypt, the lotus' petals closed at night and reopened with the rising of the sun. For this reason, it was considered a symbolic representation of rebirth and rejuvenation. The affinity that Twombly showed for this form also, perhaps, includes a coded reference to the 'W' forms in his own name.ⁱⁱ Assimilating his relationship with both the visual and linguistic, the lotus represents the artist's manipulation and reinterpretation of established symbols to assume his own visual language.

"One is dazzled by these quiet repetitions, as if one were seeing nothing but the tracing of a hieroglyph, itself a tracing from an arche-mold." —David Shapiro

Torn fragments of paper and puckered sellotape give the work textural dynamism. Twombly has deliberately distressed and smudged the surface to give the viewer the impression of historical ageing, like that which is seen in the weathered relics of the pyramids. The artist was known for his

large collection of Greek and Roman antiquities – many of which were damaged and fragmented – demonstrating his interest in how time contributes to the collective history of ancient objects, and certainly providing inspiration for how he chose to portray historical subject matter.ⁱⁱⁱ In the somewhat dichotomous juxtaposition of Twombly's 20th century artistic style and the 2,000-year-old original source, he acknowledges the enormous gulf between what was and what is. There is a long history of reinterpreting classical texts and imagery; however, Twombly does so in a manner that highlights the extensive artistic and linguistic developments since their creation, allowing the artist to contemplate nature and the effect of time's passing in these works.



Sandro Botticelli, *The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1475, Galleria Degli Uffizi, Florence. Image: Scala, Florence - courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo

The construction and symbolism of the present work also draws on depictions of biblical and mythological stories from the Italian Renaissance. In Sandro Botticelli's *The Adoration of the Magi* (c. 1475), we see Christ, Mary and onlookers surrounded by the crumbling decay of once-monumental classical architecture. The 15th-century dress of the figures in the lower left corner of

the work serves as an anachronistic contrast to the biblical scene, whilst the motif of a peacock – a popular symbol of rebirth – and the pyramidal construction is echoed in the present work. Twombly advances the longstanding tradition of adapting classical sources for a contemporary audience. Renaissance artists such as Botticelli studied the works of ancient writers – Ovid, Homer and Virgil – before realising their interpretation of the texts in paint. We can see Twombly's sincere reverence for this art-historical tradition and his belief that 'Modern Art isn't dislocated, but something with roots, tradition and continuity'; *Untitled* is a retelling of a 2,000-year-old historical text, as *The Adoration of the Magi* is a retelling of a biblical event.^{iv}

Much of Twombly's work is rooted in the idea of communicating the 'continuum of unchanged human experience' through his contemporary interpretation of ancient history and myth.^v The contrast of old and new shows numerous similarities as well as differences, and Twombly employs the use of classical references such as Herodotus' account of the life of Sesostris as a palimpsest for his narrative retelling. The solid facts of history do not concern him; he seeks to represent an amalgamation of classical history, human emotion and gestural energy in a manner that transcends the traditional methods of linguistic and artistic storytelling.

Collector's Digest

- Educated in the 1950s at Black Mountain College under Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell, Cy Twombly is one of the most innovative and influential artists of the postwar generation. Known for his expressive and gestural line work, the artist utilises a mixture of imagery, text and abstraction to create his own unique artistic language.
- Painting until his death in 2011, Twombly's work has been the subject of several major retrospectives. Initially at the Milwaukee Art Museum in 1968, more recently these have been held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York between 1994-1995; Tate Modern, London in 2008; and The Centre Pompidou, Paris between 2016-2017.
- In 2023 The Museum of Fine Arts Boston and J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, held a large-scale exhibition called *Making the Past Present: Cy Twombly*. An analysis of the classical themes in Twombly's work, alongside artefacts he owned, as well as the Museum of Fine Arts Boston's own collection highlighted the importance of ancient imagery, texts and archaeology in his creative process.

ⁱ David Shapiro, *Cy Twombly: The Coronation of Sesostris*, New York, 2000, p. 9.

ⁱⁱ Christine Kondoleon and Kate Nesin, eds., *Cy Twombly: Making Past Present*, Boston, 2020, p. 16.

iii Christine Kondoleon and Kate Nesin, eds., *Cy Twombly: Making Past Present*, Boston, 2020, p. 18.

iv Cy Twombly quoted in Kirk Varnedoe, *Cy Twombly: A Retrospective*, New York, 1994, p. 56.

v Judith E. Bernstock, 'Classical Mythology in Twentieth-Century Art: An Overview of a Humanistic Approach', *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 14, no. 27, 1993, p. 156.

Provenance

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
 Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
 Robert A. Rowan, Pasadena
 Private Collection, New York
 Sotheby's, New York, 16 May 2001, lot 143
 James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles
 Curt Marcus Gallery, New York
 Private Collection, Europe
 Christie's, London, 21 June 2007, lot 390
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Leo Castelli Gallery, *Works of Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly*, 4 - 25 May 1974
 Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, *Schrift. Zeichen. Geste. Carlfriedrich Claus im Kontext von Klee bis Pollock*, 24 July - 9 October 2005, pp. 345, 506 (illustrated, p. 345)

Literature

Yvon Lambert, *Catalogue raisonné des oeuvres sur papier de Cy Twombly*, 1973-1976, vol. VI, Milan, 1979, no. 95, p. 107 (illustrated)
 Nicola Del Roscio, *Cy Twombly, Drawings, Cat. Rais. Vol. 6 1972-1979*, Munich, 2016, no. 119, p. 111 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PARTIAL PROCEEDS SOLD TO BENEFIT VITAL VOICES
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31

Rick Lowe

Black Wall Street Journey #11

signed and dated 'Rick Lowe 2021' on the reverse
acrylic and paper collage on canvas
182.9 x 182.9 cm (72 x 72 in.)
Executed in 2021.

Estimate

£60,000 — 80,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



“The long-term goal of the work that I do, whether it’s in Houston or any of the other projects that I’ve worked on, is to try to empower people in their communities, or whatever social context that they’re in, that they too are creative... and can exercise their power as creative practitioners within their own neighbourhoods.” —Rick Lowe

Provenance

Gagosian, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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32 ♦

Banksy

Forgive Us Our Trespassing

signed and dated 'Banksy 11' on the reverse
spray paint and domestic gloss on plywood
244 x 122 cm (96 1/8 x 48 in.)

Executed in 2011, this work is accompanied by a
certificate of authenticity issued by Pest Control.

Estimate

£2,200,000 — 2,800,000 †♦

[Go to Lot](#)



“The greatest crimes in the world are not committed by people breaking the rules but by people following the rules. It’s people who follow orders that drop bombs and massacre villages.” —Banksy

Emphasising the blend of linguistic dexterity and sharp social commentary that the anonymous street artist Banksy has become best known for over the years, *Forgive Us Our Trespassing* playfully evokes the Christian petition to ‘Forgive us our trespasses’, upending its meaning through the subtle substitution of one word for another.

Executed on a large scale and featuring a young child kneeling in prayer before a monumental Gothic stained-glass window with his head bowed towards his hands, the composition draws on the familiar iconography of devotional images, only to undercut this set of visual cues with the addition of contemporary urban clothing and the tools of the graffiti artist’s trade by the child’s side. His hoodie pulled up over a baseball cap, the child’s ‘trespassing’ here points to the fundamental action of graffiti and street art as a breaking of boundaries - both the physical boundaries of private property that is tagged in the process, and the questioning of societal rules that it often provokes.

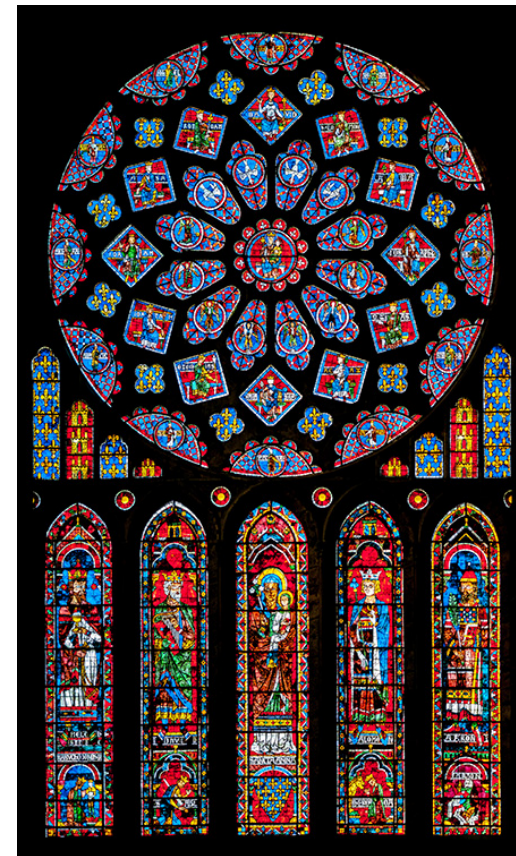


[Left] Joshua Reynolds, *The Little Samuel in Prayer*, 1777, Musée Fabre, Montpellier. Image: © Photo Josse / Bridgeman Images [Right] Detail of the present work

Those in Glass Houses

With its own long and often overlooked history stretching back to the Middle Ages, stained glass represents a fascinating aspect of our shared visual culture, and the role of images in

communicating culturally important messages. Used almost exclusively in the decoration of churches and religious buildings before the 19th century, stained glass proved to be a versatile and valuable material, aiding devotional contemplation in muting the outside world, controlling the flow of light, and illustrating key scenes from the Bible, the lives of the saints or as a means of honouring local guilds and other patrons. Alongside illuminated manuscripts, stained glass represents the only major form of pictorial art to have survived the centuries and emphasises the hugely important role played by visual narratives in communicating important messages embedded in texts that were otherwise illegible to the masses. Given the religious significance of light itself, the effects of the gently shifting and brilliantly coloured patterns filtered through the glass was easily wedded to the ceremonial reverence of the space and its contemplative purpose, a testament to the skill of the artisans who worked on these stunning projects.



The north rose window of the Chartres Cathedral, Chartres. Image: PtrQs

Echoing the shape of Gothic Rose windows, the colourful panels that fill the vaulting frame of *Forgive Us Our Trespassing* are not the biblical scenes that typically animate stained glass windows, but the looping scrawls and tags of the graffiti artist. Creating his own visual narrative of the history of street art, we can even discern familiar tags including Jean-Michel Basquiat's iconic skull and crown, and graffiti artist Amok's recognisable insignia. Kneeling in prayer before this alternative altar, the young child in the foreground pays homage to the icons of the past, perhaps even contributing to their legacies. Just as the work of medieval artisans gives us a window into the world in which they were created, Banksy seems to suggest here that the graffiti artist occupies an equivalent position, providing an important social commentary on our own times one for which, perhaps, they deserve to be forgiven.

An iconic Banksy image, the figure of the kneeling boy first appeared in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2010 and was used in the same year as one of the key images in the promotion of the artist's film, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. Coming to auction for the first time, the present work is one of only two compositions to feature the same pictorial elements, the first having achieved one of the highest prices at auction for the artist when it was sold in 2020. The smaller of the two, the present work was exhibited at Palazzo Cipola, Rome in 2016 and has been on long-term loan to the esteemed MOCO Museum in Barcelona, a testament to its significance, both within the context of Banksy's practice, and in the broader landscape of contemporary art.

“Some people become cops because they want to make the world a better place. Some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better-looking place.”
—Banksy

Embodying innocence, hope, and an almost impossible to regain freedom of self-expression, the child is a recurring motif in Banksy's work, familiar from his most iconic and immediately recognisable images. Drawing on this universal trope, the child is the perfect cipher for Banksy's antiestablishment message, dramatically juxtaposing individual innocence with institutional corruption, income inequality with corporate greed and pointedly underscoring the uneven distribution of wealth and resources and the devastating human and generational impact of capitalist, neo-imperial economic ideologies played out on a global stage. Frequently referenced as the nation's favourite artwork, *Girl with Balloon* is perhaps the most immediately obvious example of the multiple associations attached to the image of childhood while other works deal more directly with issues such as economic equality (*Very Little Helps*); the human cost of military force (*Bomb Hugger*, *Napalm*); government failure (*Nola*); and the social structures that foreshorten childhood, curbing imagination and play (*No Ball Games*, *Jack and Jill*).

In this context, the idea that a child could commit a sin (or a crime) in the act of being creative

recasts graffiti and street art in quite a different light, Banksy proving highly adept at invoking certain assumptions, vocabulary, and beliefs in order to turn a mirror onto the hypocrisies and inequalities in our society. An image of the street artist as a child, *Forgive Us Our Trespassing* emphasises the creativity and expressive freedom that graffiti represents, and the essential role that it plays in contemporary visual culture.

Collector's Digest

- Emerging from a generation of urban counterculture centred in Bristol in the late 1980s and 90s, Banksy is one of the leading and most provocative street artists of his generation. His stencils are amongst the most instantly recognisable and defining images of contemporary British art, contributing to Banksy being voted the nation's favourite artist in 2019.
- One of only two examples to feature the motif of the praying child kneeling in front of a large Gothic window, *Forgive Us Our Trespassing* is coming to auction from the prestigious MOCO Museum in Barcelona. The image of the youthful and contrite street artist first appeared in Salt Lake City in 2010 before being printed on posters and distributed as a promotional tool for the Oscar-nominated documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop* and in London Bridge station in the same year.
- A powerful image that communicates its message directly and clearly, *Forgive Us Our Trespassing* is one of several images where Banksy evokes the innocence of the child. Ranking amongst his most immediately recognisable images, these works have also consistently achieved the highest prices for the artist at auction.

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

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33

Daniel Richter

Schakal Reloaded

signed and dated 'Daniel Richter 2009' on the reverse
oil and spray paint on burlap
200.5 x 301 cm (78 7/8 x 118 1/2 in.)
Executed in 2009.

Estimate

£300,000 — 500,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“I find artworks, especially paintings, most interesting when they seek to convey something to the viewer that is not entirely translatable through language, or even reason. When art fulfils its promise, it expands something within us and it offers some kind of truth – whatever construction that may be.” —Daniel Richter

Boldly expressive in its psychedelic combinations of colour and flattening of form, *Schakal Reloaded* is a charged example of Daniel Richter’s restlessly inventive and politically engaged oeuvre. One of Germany’s most significant contemporary artists, Richter exploded onto the art scene in the 1990s with his ornamental and fluorescent abstractions closely aligned to the aesthetics and energy of street art. Following a period designing sleeves for Punk records, Richter worked as a studio assistant for Albert Oehlen, an experience he credits with helping him to ‘think about painting in painting terms.’ⁱ

Politically-charged and responsive to contemporary global events, Richter’s turn to a more figurative mode in the early 2000s radically redefined his art practice, and identified the artist as a pioneer in early 21st century redefinitions of history painting and figurative art. Executed in 2009, *Schakal Reloaded* addresses the key geopolitical issue of the era, the deteriorating situation in the Middle East taking centre stage as ‘images and stories from the endless asymmetrical war in Afghanistan recur [...] like strangely distorted echoes.’ⁱⁱ Drawing on the strained, dissolving forms and pervasive anxiety at work in Edvard Munch’s Symbolist canvases, Richter developed a compelling pictorial language balancing tensions between the animated surface and darker themes of these politically reactive works, *Schakal Reloaded* presenting ‘a formulation of my thoughts and my sentiments and my feelings about the world.’ⁱⁱⁱ



Edvard Munch, *The Smoke of the Train*, 1900, Munch-museet, Oslo. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Theme For A Jackal

Set in a fairy tale mountain landscape of bright colours and snow-capped trees, at first glance the impressively-scaled painting seems to be illustrating a parable or folk tale of sorts, the titular jackal to the left of the work materialising out of the landscape like a vision or premonition in front of the alarmed group gathered to the left of the composition. Two men drop to the ground in a gesture of supplication or prayer, while another turns his body away, hands over his ears.

“The idea of animals that run amok already worried me as a child and I also found it convincing as a metaphor on existence.”^{iv} —Daniel Richter

Typically representative of worldly cunning, inventiveness, and indifference to the plight of others, anthropomorphised as tricksters and even associated with Kali, goddess of death and destruction

in Hindu iconography, the jackal is, in itself, a potent symbol. However, contextualised alongside figures wearing traditional Pashtun turbans, the jackal adopts a far more unsettling reality. The common name of the destructive Armoured Wheeled Vehicles developed in the United Kingdom and deployed to Helmand Province in 2008, the 'Jackal' is fitted with range of weapons and was built to meet the specific needs of the British Army in the region where 'tracking down the hideouts of the Muslim partisans in the mountainous border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan' was a daily task of the occupying forces.^v



Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *Execution of the Defenders of Madrid, 3rd May, 1808, 1814*, Prado, Madrid. Image: Bridgeman Images

Working from the deluge of photographic media that now floods our daily lives, in these works, Richter takes on the tradition of history painting for the 21st century, a tradition that has 'always concerned itself both with the depiction of events and the evocation of larger historical forces – revolution, insurrection, imperial adventures.'^{vi} Using media-disseminated imagery, Richter not only addresses the unfolding historical moment, but the popular reception of the political message as it is manipulated by the press. Reproducing the sense of confusion that can arise as we sift

through this constantly accumulating content, Richter's paintings attempt 'to produce an allegory, an image, to get clarity about something that is more like a mood'.^{vii}

Blending the richly saturated, and strangely dream-like qualities of Edvard Munch and Peter Doig's canvases with a commitment to gritty socio-political reality, *Schakal Reloaded* highlights the bold move made by Richter against prevailing artistic currents established by the generation of 'Neue Wilde' painters. Fusing a visual language of early 20th century symbolism with the political dimensions of certain pre-war German expressionist painting, Richter instead treats his subjects with a poetic sensitivity, conjuring 'a fantastical realism, a proliferation of voices, effects, languages and clichés through his bold, bright canvases.'^{viii} Rather than addressing a singular event, *Schakal Reloaded* conveys the charged and hallucinatory atmosphere of one moment among many, foregrounding the contradictions and complexities of our unfolding political present and proposing new languages through which to make sense of it.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvQblobSh_E

Daniel Richter discusses his work ahead of the opening of *Lonely Old Slogans* at Camden Art Centre in 2017

Collector's Digest

- German artist Daniel Richter attended Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg and worked as an assistant to Albert Oehlen. Since the early 2000s he has produced large-scale oil paintings that bring together contemporary mass-media images with closely-observed figurative scenes. Shifting styles and subjects, he often creates work in dialogue with 19th and 20th century painters like James Ensor and Edvard Munch.
- Richter has held solo exhibition in museums worldwide, including at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt in 2014, and a major mid-career retrospective *Lonely Old Slogans* which opened at the Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk in 2016 before travelling to the 21er Haus in Vienna and the Camden Arts Centre in London the following year. He was also represented in the major survey of contemporary painting *Radical Figures: Painting in the New Millennium*, hosted by the Whitechapel Gallery in 2020, and held a large-scale solo exhibition titled *Limbo* alongside the 2022 59th Biennale di Venezia at the Scuola Grande di San Fantin. In October, Richter will open a solo exhibition of new works with Thaddaeus Ropac in London.
- Examples of Richter's work are held in major public collections including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, and the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou in Paris.

ⁱ Daniel Richter, quoted in 'Interview with Daniel Richter: Vienna, June 2009', in *Daniel Richter*, exh. cat., Essl, 2009, p. 22.

ⁱⁱ Kito Nedo, *Daniel Richter 10001 Nacht*, exh. cat., Hannover, 2011, p. 46.

ⁱⁱⁱ Daniel Richter, quoted in 'Interview with Daniel Richter: Vienna, June 2009', in *Daniel Richter*, exh. cat., Essl, 2009, p. 29.

^{iv} Daniel Richter, quoted in 'Interview with Daniel Richter: Vienna, June 2009', in *Daniel Richter*, exh. cat., Essl, 2009, p. 29.

^v Veit Görner, 'foreword', *Daniel Richter 10001 Nacht*, exh. cat., Hannover, 2011.

^{vi} Daniel Baird, *The Brooklyn Rail*, June, 2004, [online](#).

^{vii} Daniel Richter, quoted in 'Interview with Daniel Richter: Vienna, June 2009', in *Daniel Richter*, exh. cat., Essl, 2009, p. 9.

^{viii} Celia White, 'Daniel Richter: Lonely Old Slogans', *Studio International*, 8 September, 2017, [online](#).

Provenance

Galerie CFA, Berlin

Galerie Haas, Zurich

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

Daniel Richter: Imitators Be There, exh. cat., Galerie Haas, Zurich, 2009, pp. 42-43 (illustrated in the artist's studio)

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34

Dana Schutz

Gravity Fanatic

signed and dated 'Dana Schutz 2005' on the reverse
oil on canvas

185.4 x 200.7 cm (72 7/8 x 79 in.)

Painted in 2005.

Estimate

£250,000 — 350,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



“I wanted to be painting subjects that did not exist or could not be painted from observation or photographed...to make something that felt like it had some kind of consequence.”—Dana Schutz

Dana Schutz’s large-scale compositions feature subjects embroiled in absurd scenarios. In *Gravity Fanatic*, a woman has used tape and small weights to secure both herself and a variety of miscellaneous objects surrounding her to the ground. In the artist’s typical style, anatomy is elongated and distorted; legs seem impossibly crossed, fingers are bent at alarming angles and the skin of her face is being grotesquely stretched ‘like chewing gum’.ⁱ Schutz creates charged, exciting works - energetic brushstrokes and a thick application of paint give them a visceral impact that heighten the bodily, raw subject matter.

“Every painting has its own DNA – it has hints of previous works, but it ends up being its own thing.”—Dana Schutz

Schutz frequently plays with perspective and proportion in her work; ‘I want my subjects and paintings to feel like they have space in front of the picture plane, that’s a specific interaction with the viewer’.ⁱⁱ A visceral exchange between subject and viewer is something Schutz achieves with ease: In her *Face Eater* series, we are rendered helpless as we watch crazed, abstracted faces attempt to devour themselves - cropped closely to amplify the horror. The warped depiction of anatomy in *Gravity Fanatic*’s which occupies most of the canvas, exaggerated with angular streaks of white tape and tiny objects, make us feel as if we are both looking down and up at the looming figure. Whilst Schutz’s compositions are often bizarre and busy, she demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of pictorial logic to provide structure within her work - the crossed arms and legs and angular lines of her body acts a central point of focus amid a complex narrative.



After William Hogarth, *Frontispiece to Clubbe’s Physiognomy (or the Weighing House)*, circa 19th Century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Sarah Lazarus, 1891, 91.1.31

A sardonic humour runs throughout Schutz’s corpus. In *Gravity Fanatic*, we are confronted with a subject, obsessed with the idea and effect of gravity, so much so that she secures herself and possessions to the floor. The arrangement of Schutz’s figures as a driving force of her narratives are both ‘entertaining and political’; an egalitarian means of parodying anyone and everyone.ⁱⁱⁱ In many of her other works, Schutz calls upon an amalgamation of political, cultural and art historical references to inform her narratives. *Men’s Retreat* (2005) depicts a Lord-of-the-Flies-style outing of George Bush’s cabinet in jungle reminiscent of a Henri Rousseau painting; a wry, farcical composition that could have been taken straight from a contemporary satirical magazine like *Private Eye*.

Through these nods to current affairs, along with her dark, comedic pictorial style, Schutz assumes

the role of a modern-day cartoonist. Satirical magazines such as *Punch* experienced their Golden Age during the 18th and 19th century, and rose to prominence for eye-catching, absurdist cartoons, bringing cynical humour to subjects that were largely more serious. Accomplished painters, such as William Hogarth, also moonlighted as cartoonists. The *Weighing House* is an 18th century satirical engraving by Hogarth, which also uses gravity as a reference point, ridiculing the theory of Physiognomy – the practice of judging one’s character based upon physical attributes. Schutz’s art contributes to the continuing practice of questioning and reimagining mainstream media and news – a practice particularly important in an Internet age, that demonstrates her flair for critical thinking. Whilst she borrows from art history and current media, the result of Schutz’s bizarre compositions is not so straightforward; she creates a new canon for her subjects, mirroring the way events in the media are warped and mythologized on the internet.^{iv}



Salvador Dalí, *Daddy Longlegs of the Evening - Hope!*, 1940, Salvador Dalí Museum, Florida.
Artwork: Artwork: © Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation/DACS, London 2023

Nevertheless, Schutz’s dark humour and bizarre narratives belie real and relatable expressions of

human emotion. A common thread in historical and more recent interpretation of Surrealism, Schutz’s subjects are often representative of a darker side of human nature – in this case, obsession. The light-hearted titular use of *Fanatic* is incongruent with what appears to be a woman with a disturbing compulsion to keep herself grounded, mutilating her own body in the process. The exaggeration and distortion of Schutz’s subjects recalls Salvador Dalí’s contorted, molten imagery. In *Daddy Longlegs of the Evening - Hope!* bodies, instruments and landscape appear grotesquely stretched and distorted. Works like this were painted by Dalí as a way of visualising the horror and destruction of Europe through the rise of fascist regimes. Whilst some of the themes and emotions in Schutz’s compositions are imagined by the artist, they are manifested in a similar fashion.

Schutz’s figures attain an almost sculptural quality; flesh is rendered loose and malleable, as if made of clay. This portrayal of something as universal as human skin, in a way that is completely unnatural, carves out an immediate undertone of eerie abnormality. The emotional stakes of Schutz’s works become heightened, as relatable anxieties are transformed into nightmarish imagery. Jörg Heiser argues that in the case of *Gravity Fanatic*, Schutz ‘translates these sculptural questions into neurosis’; the hidden anxieties of Schutz’s subjects manifest themselves in freakish deformations of the human body.^v Schutz visualises emotion in the physicality of her compositions, with eye-boggling bodies, thick impasto and bright palettes contributing to their all-encompassing nature.

Collector’s Digest

- Dana Schutz is an American painter known for her striking works that combine abstraction and figuration to tell abnormal narratives.
- Since the completion of her MFA at Columbia University in 2002, Schutz has experienced remarkable success, having held frequent solo exhibitions in galleries and institutions across the world. She is represented by renowned contemporary galleries such as David Zwirner and Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin.
- She has been the subject of several career retrospectives, most recently this year at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk. Her work is held in the collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Saatchi Gallery, London; and Museo d’arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, among others.

ⁱ Katrin Wittneven, ‘Welcome to Neverland’, trans. Catherine Schelbert, *Parkett*, no. 75, 2005, p. 35.

ⁱⁱ Benjamin Bruneau, 'The Compressed Violence of Dana Schutz', *MOMUS*, 19 October, 2015, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Susanne Figner, 'Notes on the Grotesque Body', in Veit Görner, Susanne Figner, Susanne Hudson, *Dana Schutz: Demo*, 2014, Cologne, p. 20.

^{iv} Mei Chin, 'Dana Schutz by Mei Chin', *BOMB*, 1 April, 2006, [online](#).

^v Jörg Heiser, 'BLINNG BLING, GRRR GRRR: POP AND PAINTING EAT THEMSELVES', in Raphaela Platow, Katy Siegel and Jörg Heiser, *Dana Schutz: Paintings 2002-2005*, p. 81.

Provenance

Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin

Private Collection

Christie's, New York, 13 November 2008, lot 368

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

Berlin, Contemporary Fine Arts, *Dana Schutz: Teeth Dreams and Other Supposed Truths*, 2 September - 1 October 2005, no. 7, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

Waltham, The Rose Art Museum, *Dana Schutz: Paintings 2002-2005*, 19 January - 9 April 2006, pp. 74-75 (illustrated, p. 75)

Stockholm, Moderna Museet, *Eclipse: Art in a Dark Age*, 31 May - 24 August 2008, no. 2, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

New York, Neuberger Museum of Art; Miami Art Museum; Denver Art Museum, *Dana Schutz: If the Face Had Wheels*, 25 September 2011 - 13 January 2013, pp. 52, 119 (illustrated p. 52)

Literature

Bice Curiger, ed, *The Parkett Series with Contemporary Artists*, no. 75, Zurich, 2005, p. 51 (illustrated)

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



35

George Condo

Seated Harlequin

signed and dated 'Condo 07' on the reverse
oil on canvas

134 x 117 cm (52 3/4 x 46 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2007.

Estimate

£750,000 — 950,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



“I believe that painting needs to transform in order for it to become interesting for each and every generation, but I think of it more in terms of being liberated by history. Liberated by what has come before.”—George Condo

Wearing only black, thigh-high stockings and a sheer negligee, edged in knotted whorls of blue lace, George Condo’s *Seated Harlequin* meets our gaze with disarming directness, her provocative pose and grotesquely twisted features marking her out as a memorable addition to Condo’s cast of wildly inventive characters who reside within ‘a ribald world of crazed, comic engagement, theatrical logic, and a furious indifference to conventional niceties.’ⁱ Borrowing from the art historical traditions of the seated nude and the tragi-comic figure of the Harlequin, the artist plays very directly with questions of performance and spectacle here, and of the absurdity and violence involved in the confrontation between viewer and subject as multiple, conflicting states of human consciousness collide.



Detail of the present work

Psychological Cubism

Over the course of his forty-year career, Condo has made profound and lasting contributions to the genre of portraiture, voraciously absorbing a vast range of art historical and pop culture references that roam from the pictorial lessons of Old Masters Francisco Goya, Diego Vélasquez, and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, to cartoons and comic strips, pin up girls and playboy bunnies via the

radical experimentalism of Pablo Picasso and Willem de Kooning. This devouring, digestive approach to visual culture was announced at the very outset of Condo’s career with his breakthrough group of ‘fake old master’ canvases which the artist described as ‘an artificial, simulated American view of what European painting looked like’.ⁱⁱ Already playing with the contradictions and tensions between seen and unseen forces, and of their convergence in a single image, Condo’s irreverent fusion of recognisably human and grotesquely exaggerated, cartoon-like features would continue to push against the boundaries of what figurative painting can visually represent, and the psychological depths which it is able to explore.ⁱⁱⁱ

*“Picasso painted a violin from four different perspectives at one moment. I do the same with psychological states. Four of them can occur simultaneously. Like glimpsing a bus with one passenger howling over a joke they’re hearing down the phone, someone else asleep, someone else crying – I’ll put them all in one face.”
—George Condo*

In the late 1990s, Condo crystallised this visual vocabulary with the introduction of his ‘antipodal beings’, an invented species whose overly modelled faces not only explored more painterly questions related to form and volume but, in their vividly expressive features, invested the genre with a new psychological charge. Often taking on the menial roles of butler, maid, chauffeur, or janitor, this strange cast of characters allowed Condo to visually expose the tensions between the composed face a subject might have to present to the world, and the more complex internal feelings shifting beneath the surface. Often set within, sparse, empty environments, the violently contorted features of these figures swing between abjection, pathos and absurdity, conjuring dehumanised subjects who nevertheless seem ‘acutely aware of their own predicament [...] disenfranchised characters helplessly resisting their own alienation.’^{iv}



[Left] Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galard de Brassac de Béarn*, 1851-1853, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.611 Right: Pablo Picasso, *Harlequin*, 1915, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Provocatively posed on the edge of a chair, her clothes accentuating her nakedness and exposing rather than concealing her, Condo's *Seated Harlequin* is at once confrontational and passive, violent and vulnerable, these conflicting states all combined in a vivid expression of Condo's brand of psychological cubism. Sitting upright, looking out at us with her hands crossed, the arrangement of her body here visually recalls Ingres' well-known portraits, the vivid blue of her negligee, boldly contrasted to the rich, golden ground and dancing squares of orange and yellow behind her brining to mind his iconic *Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galard de Brassac de Béarn*, displayed at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Stripped of the more gentele elements of her dress and rich surroundings, Condo's *Seated Harlequin* exposes and dramatizes the underlying dynamics of Ingres' presentation of a woman who – to paraphrase John Berger – watches herself be looked at.

A theme that Picasso would return to again and again, the seated woman is an extreme manifestation of this, and it is perhaps no surprise that Condo has referenced the Spanish painter's 1932 *Woman in a Red Armchair* as an image that resonates deeply with him. Borrowing the bright red nails and sharp angularity of Picasso's iconic portraits of Dora Maar, the face of the *Seated*

Harlequin is fractured into a typically Condoesque mask, with bulbous nose, jagged overbite, and one bulging eye that contradicts the more typically feminine rendering of the other. Where Picasso fractured the picture plane to combine multiple viewpoints in a single image – notably in his own Cubist Harlequin pictures – Condo applies this pictorial logic in the construction of his arresting psychological portraits. Charged with the same shocking brutality as Picasso's infamous *Demaiselles d'Avignon*, the characters animating these portraits are at once seductive and repulsive, embodying 'a position that is simultaneously frightening and appealing.' As Ralph Rugoff has emphasised, the power of these portraits comes not simply from the range of conflicting psychological states combined in a single face, but of the way in which 'they solicit different kinds of looks from the viewer, how they often look back at us with eyes that don't match or don't even seem to belong to the same face.'^v

Making notable appearances in the works of Jean-Antoine Watteau, Paul Cézanne, and Picasso, the harlequin has its own art historical lineage, allowing Condo to blend his investigations into the art of the past with his characteristic flair for the theatrical and darkly slapstick comedy. A character who combines the extremes of comedy and tragedy in a single entity, the harlequin is perhaps the supreme embodiment of Condo's artistic project, speaking directly to the artist's fascination for simultaneous, conflicting, psychological states. Presented to us nude, starkly lit and posed on a chair for our close contemplation, the *Seated Harlequin* captures the objectification involved in this performance, and of the titular character's own recognition of herself as an object – like painting itself – to be looked at.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcHQVViOD7Y>

George Condo | *Mental States* | Hayward Gallery, 2011

Collector's Diest

- A major figure of late 20th and 21st century painting, the influence of George Condo's unique approach to figuration and the tradition of portraiture can be felt in the work of a diverse range of contemporary artists including Nicole Eisenman and Dana Schutz.
- Since his major international travelling mid-career survey *Mental States* in 2011, Condo has continued to exhibit widely, representing the United States at the 2013 and 2019 International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia.
- Now represented by Hauser & Wirth, his paintings are held in important international collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., amongst others.

ⁱ Jennifer Higgie, 'Time's Fool', *Frieze*, 5 May, 2007, [online](#).

George Condo

ⁱⁱ George Condo, quoted in Ralph Rugoff, George Condo, *Existential Portraits: Sculpture, Drawings, Paintings 2005/2006*, New York, 2006, p. 8.

ⁱⁱⁱ George Condo, quoted in Ralph Rugoff, 'The Mental States of America', in *George Condo: Mental States* exh. cat., New Museum, New York, 2011, p. 12.

^{iv} Ralph Rugoff, 'The Mental States of America', in *George Condo: Mental States*, exh. cat., New Museum, New York, 2011, p. 18.

^v Ralph Rugoff, *George Condo: Existential Portraits: Sculpture, Drawings, Paintings 2005/2006*, exh.cat., Luhring Augustine, New York, 2006, pp. 8-9.

Provenance

Andrea Caratsch, Zurich

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2007

Exhibited

Paris, Musée Maillol, *George Condo: The Lost Civilization*, 17 April - 17 August 2009, pp. 123, 163 (illustrated, p. 123)

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36

Sarah Lucas

Jubilee

plaster, steel rods, concrete slabs and MDF plinth
boots 81 x 41 x 38.8 cm (31 7/8 x 16 1/8 x 15 1/4 in.)
slabs each 3.6 x 45 x 45 cm (1 3/8 x 17 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.)
plinth 85 x 43.4 x 43.4 cm (33 1/2 x 17 1/8 x 17 1/8 in.)
overall 173.2 x 45 x 45 cm (68 1/4 x 17 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.)
Executed in 2013.

Estimate

£100,000 — 150,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“Humour is about negotiating the contradictions thrown up by convention. To a certain extent humour and seriousness are interchangeable. Otherwise it wouldn’t be funny. Or devastating.” —Sarah Lucas

Playful and provocative, the sculptural work of British artist Sarah Lucas engages directly with questions of gender, power, and the body, challenging certain assumptions upheld by the male gaze, and querying the role that sex plays in shaping British cultural identity. With characteristic wit, *Jubilee* brings these aspects of her practice together, the concrete cast of two thigh-high platform boots combining formal simplicity with a wry, Surrealist humour. Typically associated with sex work and fetish-wear, the boots are erotically charged objects - ones which not only stand in for the body but draw on a wide range of connections related to eroticism, performance, sex, and gender. Although at first glance we might assume that the boots belong to a woman, as Lucas explains, with their larger shoe size, these are shoes specifically designed for use by men, glamour footwear used in the performance of femininity. Poking fun at the reductive nature of our assumptions around gender and sexuality, *Jubilee* is ‘both ridiculous and triumphant, a paralysed, knock-kneed abjection of a pole-dancer’s kinky boots, supple fetish object turned sagging, phallic sculpture’, subtly calling attention to the performative nature of gender itself.¹

Kinky Boots and Surrealist Legacies

This tension between the familiar and the absurd, and of the way in which everyday objects operate as proxy for the body highlights Lucas’ close dialogue with Surrealism and its legacies. Evoking the body that occupies them through an uncanny play between absence and presence, for René Magritte shoes emphasised the disorientating slippage between inside and outside, human and nonhuman and spoke poetically to the ‘treachery of images’ that so preoccupied him. A riposte to the earth-bound ruddiness of Vincent Van Gogh’s peasant shoes, Magritte’s *Le modèle rouge* refuses the clear distinction of object and subject, combining the two together in an image whose disturbing power lies in this conflation and in the confrontation with our own bodies as object.



[Left] René Magritte, *Le modèle rouge*, 1935, Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023 [Right] Salvador Dalí, *Surrealist Object Functioning Symbolically*, 1931-73, The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois. Image: © Art Institute of Chicago / Through prior gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation/DACS, London 2023

Shoes also held a special fascination for Spanish Surrealist Salvador Dalí as a supreme example of what he termed ‘objects with a symbolic function’. Putting forward a definition of this in 1931, Dalí explained: ‘these objects, which lend themselves to a minimum of mechanical functioning, are based on the fantasies and representations that can arise from the performance of subconscious acts’, echoed in Lucas’ own transformation of everyday objects into ambiguous and absurd new relationships.

First coming to prominence in the early 1990s as a leading figure of the group of ‘Young British Artists’ championed by Charles Saatchi and capturing the rebellious energy of a generation alongside the likes of Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin, Lucas was involved in some of the most defining exhibitions of the era including the 1988 *Freeze* and 1997 *Sensation*. Tate Britain in London have just opened a major retrospective of the artist’s work, including examples from across her thirty-year career. Executed in 2013, *Jubilee* belongs to a series of works with the same title in varying scales that the artist first began working on in 2012, although concrete shoes have been a recurring feature of her sculptural work since her 2003 *Unknown Solider*. One of five *Jubilee* sculptures in this scale made between 2013 and 2014, the present work is one of only two to have been made in plaster.

Speaking eloquently about her use of this particular material, and the casting methods that she

used in these works Lucas explains: ‘That’s another thing I like about that method, it is a little bit haphazard, and you do end up with these very fat seams, but I like that. [...] I think it makes it a stronger sculpture having all those things; it makes it more palpable, and does give you those lines to follow [...] There is a lot of reality and literalness as a process of taking an image from somebody that way and in the time it takes to do it, which has to be quite fast because the materials you’re using are going off quite fast.’ⁱⁱ Examples of *Jubilee* have been included in all of Lucas’ major retrospectives to date, including her 2012 *SITUATION Absolute Man Beach Rubble* held at Whitechapel Art Gallery in 2012, and her first significant institutional show in the United States, *Sarah Lucas: Au Natural*, which featured a towering example of the work standing at 7 ft tall.

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

Sarah Lucas in conversation with Don Brown, film by Julian Simmons, La Biennale di Venezia, 2015

Collector’s Digest

- Sarah Lucas first rose to prominence as part of the YBA scene centred in London in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since her inclusion in early, iconic exhibitions such as *Freeze* and *Sensation*, she has gone on to have major retrospectives all over the world, representing Britain at the 2015 Venice Biennale. The artist is currently being honoured with a mid-career survey show at Tate Britain in London.
- One of five *Jubilee* sculptures in this scale made between 2013 and 2014, the present work is one of only two to have been made in plaster.

ⁱ J.J. Charlesworth, ‘Sarah Lucas: Rose Bush’, *ArtReview*, 5 November, 2012, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Sarah Lucas in conversation with Don Brown, filmed by Julian Simmons at the 56th La Biennale di Venezia, [online](#).

Provenance

Sadie Coles HQ, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2013

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PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE AMERICAN
COLLECTION

37

Damien Hirst

Five Antique Torsos

incised with the artist's signature, stamped with the foundry and Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable stamps, inscribed, numbered and dated 'TM6-2 Damien Hirst 2/3 MMXI' on the reverse of the central torso

bronze and Basalt, aluminium and steel plinth
left to right:

42.4 x 17.7 x 12.6 cm (16 3/4 x 6 7/8 x 4 7/8 in.)

46.3 x 19 x 14.8 cm (18 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 5 7/8 in.)

56.6 x 19 x 13.5 cm (22 1/4 x 7 1/2 x 5 3/8 in.)

44.4 x 19 x 14.4 cm (17 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 5 5/8 in.)

45.4 x 16.6 x 13.2 cm (17 7/8 x 6 1/2 x 5 1/4 in.)

plinth 75.2 x 133.4 x 43.5 cm (29 5/8 x 52 1/2 x 17 1/8 in.)

overall 131.8 x 133.4 x 43.5 cm (51 7/8 x 52 1/2 x 17 1/8 in.)

Executed in 2011, this work is number 2 from an edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs.

Estimate

£300,000 — 500,000 \pounds

[Go to Lot](#)



“It is literally impossible to be a woman. You are so beautiful and so smart and it kills me that you don’t think you’re good enough [...] And if all of that is also true for a doll representing a woman, then I don’t even know.”—Gloria, Barbie

Featuring five bronze female torsos of varying dimensions set on a basalt base, *Five Antique Torsos* initially presents itself as a piece of classical statuary, a beautifully preserved relic from another world, another time, intruding into ours like a distant echo. However, upon closer inspection, these ‘relics’ of idealised female beauty are not from such a distant past after all and may be in fact more familiar to us than we might at first assume. Characterised by slim, tapered waists, accentuated hips, and high breasts, the clean lines and smooth silhouette of the *Five Antique Torsos* – although stylistically close to the vernacular of ancient Egyptian statuary – in fact captures the changing silhouette of the iconic Barbie doll, charting her evolution across five decades from her earliest appearance in the late 1950s through to the 1990s. An icon of contemporary pop culture, the subtle but significant changes to the size of her waist and roundness of her hips charts the shifting attitudes towards idealised beauty standards across the decades, emphasising the extent to which these cultural ideals are played out on and through the female body. From left to right, the torsos recreate the changing Barbie silhouette from the 1970s, 1950s, 1990s, 1960s, and 1980s, all almost as impossible to attain as the iconic high arch of her feet, which make an important appearance in feminist filmmaker Greta Gerwig’s recent blockbuster movie.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ubmPxIx00u4>

For the Barrie let’s use caption: ‘Barbie Dolls over the Decades’

A History of Collecting

Playing very self-consciously with ideas of truth, authenticity, and narrative, the work belongs to provocative British artist Damien Hirst’s elaborate and complex mediation on the nature of art, authenticity, and the history of collecting presented in the staggering 2017 exhibition *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*. Hugely ambitious in its scope, the exhibition told the fabricated story of a legendary ancient shipwreck, recently discovered of the coast of east Africa and excavated by Hirst and his team and representing one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of recent times. A story of monumental hubris, ‘The Unbelievable’ was said to be transporting the collection of freed slave Cif Amotan II to a dedicated temple to the sun before it met its untimely end, its precious cargo hidden below the watery surface for over two millennia, gradually becoming encrusted with corals and crustaceans.



Hydra and Kali discovered by four divers, photograph by Christoph Gerigk. Image/Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS / Artimage 2023

An avid collector himself, throughout his career Hirst has demonstrated a deep interest in the aesthetics of display and the agendas informing collecting practices. Hirst’s cabinets speak directly to a history of museum display, specifically the forms and functions of the *Wunderkammer* or ‘curiosity cabinet’ whose function was to impose order onto a chaotic world through careful categorisation and as such were ‘central to conceptions of knowledge and how its results were to be displayed [...] so that they inhabited the same physical and conceptual space.’ⁱ A decade in the making and taking over two of Venice’s most prestigious contemporary art galleries, *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* developed these themes on an epic scale, bringing together nearly 200 objects and carefully staged photographic material that played very deliberately with anxieties around authenticity, documentation, and reproduction.

Making an oblique reference to the 19th century mania for collecting, conserving, and reproducing classical artefacts that generated impressive collections such as those boasted by the Victoria & Albert and British Museums, multiples were cast so that ‘Each work exists as three different versions: a coral-coated version from the depths, an allegedly restored version and a modern museum reproduction.’ⁱⁱ Collapsing mythology, history, and fiction the objects themselves offer a promiscuous blending of ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman references alongside more contemporary pop culture icons including Mickey Mouse, Barbie, and a sculptural portrait of Hirst

himself as the ancient collector whose name – of course – is an anagram of ‘I am fiction’. That the Barbie doll is mass-produced and globally circulated, while rare historical examples are still highly sought after by collectors surely piqued Hirst’s interest here.



Five Antique Torsos in Surrealist Exhibition. Image: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2023

Suggesting that the ancients favoured modes of seriality over our own contemporary fetishisation of the original or unique, Hirst creates a narrative that places his own practice in direct dialogue with these objects, confusing distinctions between past and present, originality and the reproduction, authenticity and forgery. Further complicating these questions, the exhibition guide wove threads of this fabricated narrative with real historical information, explaining that: ‘In the early twentieth century, copies of the nudes circulated amongst the Surrealists and are shown here at the ‘International Surrealist Exhibition’ (London, 1936)’. Their popularity derived primarily from the sculptor’s reductive treatment of the female body, and the torso’s resemblance to mannequins. As eroticised, pre-existing objects, the sculptures proved ideal receptacles for the Surrealist interest in the self-conscious nature of art production.’ Including a doctored photograph of one of the casts alongside the version of the present work included in the exhibition, Hirst creates a

fabricated lineage for the sculpture, inserting it into one of the most important art historical events of the early 20th century.

Just as Surrealism asked us to move beyond observable reality in a more nuanced interrogation of the nature of perception itself, Hirst asks us to confront the ‘beliefs, ideas, conditions and institutions which shape the common basis of human experience’. Confronting too the brevity of human life, and our attempts to guarantee a degree of permanence in the objects we collect around us, *Five Antique Torsos* represents what critic Jonathan Jones has described as the very best of Hirst, restoring ‘the arrogant, exciting, hilarious, mind-boggling imagination that made him such a thrilling artist in the 1990s.’ⁱⁱⁱ

Video: <https://youtu.be/hwfjymPx8kM?si=DhK9qUUaJQjXEuLZ>

Damien Hirst discusses *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*

Collector’s Digest

- Coming to prominence in the late 1980s as part of the group identified by collector and gallerist Charles Saatchi as a generation of ‘Young British Artists’, Damien Hirst is best known for his boundary-pushing sculptures of animals submerged in formaldehyde, and his sustained investigation of seriality, repetition, death and belief.
- Ambitious and audacious, *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* belongs to a colourful history of Hirst’s ambitious exhibitions, including his 1992 site-specific installation *Pharmacy* and the inclusion of live butterflies in his first solo exhibition *In and Out of Love*.

ⁱ Brian Dillion, ‘Ugly Feelings’, Damien Hirst, London, 2012, p.23.

ⁱⁱ Joe Lloyd, ‘Damien Hirst: Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable’, *Studio International*, 11 August, 2017, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jonathan Jones, ‘Damien Hirst: Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable review – a Titanic Return’, *The Guardian*, 6 April, 2017, [online](#).

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

Exhibited

Venice, Punta della Dogana, *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable. Damien Hirst*, 9 April – 3 December 2017, pp. 47, 320 (another example exhibited and illustrated)

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Caroline Walker

Fragranced


signed, titled and dated 'FRAGRANCED 2019 Caroline Walker' on the reverse

oil on linen

230 x 185 cm (90 1/2 x 72 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2019.

Estimate

£100,000 — 150,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“There is definitely a strong sense of voyeurism in my work... I don't want the paintings to feel like pictures of something that's happening somewhere else. I want you to feel like you're involved or implicated in what's going on.” —Caroline Walker

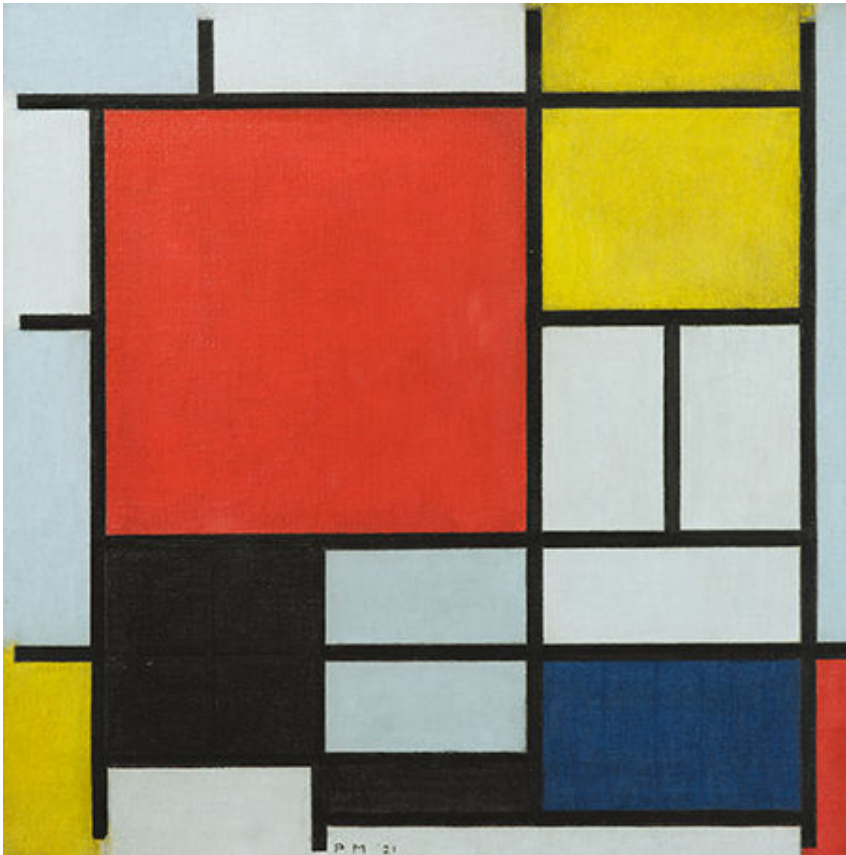
Caroline Walker's large-scale, enigmatic canvases invite us into private interiors. The Scottish-born artist has gained critical acclaim for her sensitive portrayals of the modern-day woman, and her painterly realism and command for composition create balanced works that make close and careful reference to the Western canon of art history. As a viewer, we are often afforded the position of voyeur; in *Fragranced*, we peer through a window to see a woman at work in a perfumery. Exhibited in a major 2021 institutional show *Windows*, at Kunstmuseum Den Haag (K21), the work is representative of her more recent tendency to highlight the everyday experience of the working woman, which has included shopworkers, bakers, nail artists and cleaners. Walker is one of the most sought-after contemporary painters today, and since her first institutional show at Pitzhanger Manor Gallery in 2013 she has held numerous others at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Fitzrovia Chapel, London; MAC, Birmingham; Nottingham Castle; KM21, The Hague; and K11, Shanghai. Her work is held in the collections of Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague; Arts Council England; National Museum Wales, Cardiff; and Longlati Foundation, China.

Perspective is carefully considered in Walker's compositions. We are at once invited to partake in the scene before us, yet physical and architectural barriers, most frequently windows, prevent us from ever truly being involved. The woman depicted in *Fragrance* is alone in the shop, and we are permitted to trespass upon a moment of quiet, solitary work. This feeling of intrusion is a major motif within Walker's oeuvre, and as a result her works are permeated with a tension that reflects the clandestine nature of our position as voyeur. 'It probably stems from being nosy' Walker has stated, 'being delighted when I'm walking around in the evening and can see into houses'.ⁱ



Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*, 1942, Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY/ Scala, Florence

Much like Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, Walker uses a juxtaposition of the warm interior and cool exterior - with the window acting as a physical barrier - to afford us an unobtainable glimpse into the scene before us. Her large-scale canvases and painterly brushstrokes give works such as *Fragranced* a soft-focus appearance, and she evokes dreamlike worlds that blur the lines between reality and fantasy: 'there's a sense that you could almost step into the scene'.ⁱⁱ Whilst works like Hopper's may be considered to contribute to the 'male-gaze' of female depiction in art, Walker's position as a woman adds a nuanced layer of meaning and understanding. We are challenged to reconsider both our position as a viewer, and the subjects we are engaging with.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Gray and Blue*, 1921, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague. Image: © Kunstmuseum den Haag / Bridgeman Images

Walker's extensive art historical knowledge can be seen throughout her pictorial landscapes, usually including the likes of French Impressionist and Modernist masters Edgar Degas or Édouard Manet, or Dutch genre-painters Frans Hals and Pieter de Hooch. Nevertheless, Benno Tempel argues that Walker's referential intelligence stretches to include the world of abstract art. In his essay accompanying the 2021 *Windows* exhibition catalogue, Tempel views the paned-windows featured in *Fragranced* as evocative of the grid-like structures of Piet Mondrian's neo-plasticist works of the early 20th century.ⁱⁱⁱ Certainly, the thick black squares of the windowpanes are reminiscent of the lattices created in works such as *Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Gray and Blue*. Moreover, a similar use of reds, yellows, blues and blacks in *Fragranced's*

palette provides a further 'playful and ingenious nod to this work'.^{iv}

With exceptional presence, *Fragranced* represents a wonderful example of many themes Walker explores within her works: women, the working environment, and a nuanced reflection of art history. We are asked to reconsider women's position within the wider Western art historical canon, alongside our own self-conscious feelings of intrusion. Her quiet, illusory depictions of women often provoke more questions than answers, and the small narrative snapshots we are gifted stay with us long after we have stopped looking.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9tfgn5x384>

Caroline Walker discussing the window as compositional device ahead of her exhibition with the Kunstmuseum Den Haag in 2021.

Collector's Digest

- Since graduating from her MA with the Royal College of Art in 2009, Scottish artist Caroline Walker has been the subject of several solo exhibitions internationally, including *Janet* at Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh in 2020, *Women's Work* at the Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham in 2021, and her most recent exhibition at K11 in Shanghai in November 2022.
- Walker's artwork is highly sought after, and *Threshold* achieved an auction record of £927,100 at Phillips' London Evening Sale, on 2nd March 2023.
- Walker's works are included in a number of prominent public collections, including the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, The UK Government Art Collection, London, and Kunstmuseum in The Hague.

ⁱ Caroline Walker, quoted in Chloë Ashby, 'The Eyes of Caroline Walker: "It's Different When it's a Woman Looking at a Woman"', *Elephant*, 13 May, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Caroline Walker, quoted in Emily Spicer, 'Caroline Walker: "Who we perceive to be the maker of an image affects how we consume it"', *studio international*, 10 April, 2017, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Benno Tempel, 'A Day in the Life', in *Caroline Walker: Windows*, pp. 6-7.

^{iv} Benno Tempel, 'A Day in the Life', in *Caroline Walker: Windows*, p. 7.

Provenance

Grimm Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

The Hague, KM21, *Caroline Walker: Windows*, 28 August - 28 November 2021, pp. 7, 42-43, n.p.
(illustrated, p. 43)

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39

Louise Giovanelli

An Ex

signed and dated 'Louise Giovanelli '20' on the reverse
oil on canvas

210 x 160 cm (82 5/8 x 62 7/8 in.)

Painted in 2020.

Estimate

£60,000 — 80,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



“I’m always striving for narrative ambiguity in my work. It’s important not to give too much away, as then the painting becomes an illustration rather than a painting - there’s an important difference, and when that happens it loses power. Paintings that captivate me are ones where there are gaps in knowing. For me, ambiguity is what sustains a painting and makes it endure.”—Louise Giovanelli

British-born artist Louise Giovanelli creates opulent, tactile images of transitory moments. Whether a fleeting gesture – a hand holding a glass of wine, bodies dancing, eyelids closing – or a focus on everyday materials – hair, fabric, foliage – her compositions are seductively rendered in dazzling light and luminous oil. Living in London and Manchester, and completing her MFA in Frankfurt, Giovanelli takes her inspiration from a wide variety of subject matter, from Northern Renaissance Old Masters to *Absolutely Fabulous*’ Patsy Stone.

Regardless of the original source, Giovanelli’s hyper-focused compositions and lucid application of paint turn the ordinary into the profound, creating vivid works that encourage us to take notice of the smaller details around us. In *An Ex*, we are confronted with a dark image of thick folds, from an indistinct foliage, demonstrating the artist’s deft command of light and tone. Across the canvas we see deep furrows, cutting into the vegetation and creating an ‘X’ shape, which provides both a structurally sound composition and an amusingly literal relationship with the title of the piece. Represented by White Cube and GRIMM Gallery, Giovanelli has held solo exhibitions in London, Amsterdam, Rome and New York. Her work is held in the collections of Tate, London; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; the National Museum of Oslo, Norway; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; The Hort Family Collection, New York; and The Contemporary Art Foundation, Tokyo.



Georgia O’Keeffe, *Jimson Weed*, 1936-1937, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. Image: © Indianapolis Museum of Art / Gift of Eli Lilly and Company / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Georgia O’Keeffe Museum/DACS, London

Despite her use of such a traditional medium as oil, Giovanelli’s work reflects an avant-garde freshness. She manipulates and distorts perspective, often by rotating and cropping images on her phone, in a way that isolates traditional subject matter – curtains, folds of fabric, hair or plants.¹ This detachment of subject from context allows us to really consider material physicality: its texture and how it reflects and refracts light. These close-cropped compositions, especially in *An Ex*’s vegetative subject matter, are evocative of pioneering 20th-century artist Georgia O’Keeffe. In works like *Jimson Weed*, O’Keeffe, represents flowers in hyper-focused compositions, removing them from their usual contexts and creating sumptuously rendered forms that verge on abstraction. The same can be seen in *An Ex*’s sensual depiction of plant-like forms, hinting at a subject, but refusing to ever reveal itself fully to the viewer.

Giovanelli creates the effect of spatial depth within her work by interrupting the surface and

composition of her canvases. In some paintings, like those of curtains, this may take the form of a semi-opaque glaze, whereas in *An Ex*, this is several thin, white lines scrawled across the canvas. This form of mark making takes the form of ‘glitches’ in an otherwise perfected composition. Aside from highlighting pictorial space, these interruptions in Giovanelli’s methodically painted works create a dialogue between aestheticism and temporality; whilst her near-symmetry is punctuated, these gestural ‘glitches’ also create an ephemeral moment, as if we have ‘just missed or about to perceive an action taking place’.ⁱⁱ

“If you’re a painter, you really have to understand where your medium has come from, you have to understand history. Just to use the act of painting, to make a mark, is to hold all of that baggage of history with you.” —Louise Giovanelli

Living in Frankfurt whilst completing her MFA, Giovanelli began to immerse herself in the world of the Northern Renaissance, stating that it was ‘the first period of influence that I was really struck by... [I] was always fascinated with how they created those textures’.ⁱⁱⁱ Artists such as Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden’s beautifully rendered details captured her imagination: ‘contorted fingers, fingers in books, or the bottoms of dresses with tiny, tiny feet’.^{vi} In acutely replicating these details, Giovanelli began to adopt the technique used by master oil painters of the Renaissance era – a process of applying very light layers and allowing them plenty of time to dry.



Jan Van Eyck, *Annunciation Diptych*, c. 1433-1435, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.
Image: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza/Scala, Florence

It is the patience that comes with such delicate applications of oil that suffuses Giovanelli’s works with such luminosity. She creates depth within forms, the many layers of paint culminating in a velveteen appearance of inherent painterly luxury. Whilst she is known for her brilliant, phosphorescent use of colour, *An Ex* is a masterclass in creating beautifully rendered realism with a limited palette. The effect of this is not dissimilar to the technique adopted by Renaissance masters – such as van Eyck – of *grisailles*: paintings executed using a monochromatic palette of neutral greys. Without the distraction of other colours, the artist is forced to focus on sound composition and expert use of light and shadow. The *Annunciation Diptych* is one such example, and the influence of the way van Eyck executes sumptuous, undulating folds in his gowns can be seen in the lascivious ruffles of *An Ex*’s dark vegetation.

Giovanelli’s mastery of oil paint positions this medium at the forefront of contemporary art, drawing a lineage with Old Masters with her dichotomous mix of old and new, abstract and figurative. Nevertheless, her works are anything but antiquated. A clever manipulation of perspective and interaction with spatial planes provides a distinctly contemporary, digital feel to a

medium that has been used for centuries.

Collector's Digest

- Louise Giovanelli is a British-born artist known for her lucid, hyper focused oil paintings. Represented by White Cube and GRIMM Gallery, she has recently held solo exhibitions from February to June this year in New York and Manchester, respectively.
- Her work is held in the collections of Tate, London; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; the National Museum of Oslo, Norway; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; The Hort Family Collection, New York; and The Contemporary Art Foundation, Tokyo.
- It has recently been announced that Giovanelli will be the recipient of a solo exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield in 2024.

ⁱ Louise Giovanelli, quoted in Lara Johnson-Wheeler, 'Louise Giovanelli, the Artist Fusing Old Masters and Digital Imagery', *AnOther Magazine*, 11 July, 2022, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Louise Giovanelli, quoted in 'Deliberate Repetition: A Conversation with Louise Giovanelli', *JUXTAPOZ*, 27 November, 2020, [online](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Louise Giovanelli, quoted in Lara Johnson-Wheeler, 'Louise Giovanelli, the Artist Fusing Old Masters and Digital Imagery', *AnOther Magazine*, 11 July, 2022, [online](#).

^{iv} Louise Giovanelli, quoted in Louis Wise, 'Louise Giovanelli: the painter mixing the Old Masters with Mariah Carey', *Financial Times*, 10 June, 2022, [online](#).

Provenance

Grimm Gallery

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Grimm Gallery, *Louise Giovanelli: Aerial Silk*, 6 March – 25 April 2020

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



40

Issy Wood

Cries Real Tears!

oil on velvet

180 x 145.5 (70 7/8 x 57 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2019.

Estimate

£100,000 — 150,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



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

Disquieting surrealism surrounds the everyday objects depicted in the art of Issy Wood. A continuation of her most popular series, the present work – a close-cropped view of a black leather puffer jacket – is dark and cerebral, finished with a lustre that renders it almost tactile. The multi-disciplinary artist uses painting, writing and music as the outlet of her creative energies, and *Cries Real Tears!* is synonymously named after her 5-song EP, released in 2020. The brutalist nature of this large-scale work is offset with a vertical streak of maroon, blue and swirling whites to the far right of the canvas; a method frequently used by the artist that explores the idea of juxtaposing the real with the imagined. After her paintings were discovered by Vanessa Carlos on the artist’s Tumblr page, she was immediately signed to her gallery, Carlos/Ishikawa in 2017. Since then, Wood has held numerous solo exhibitions with them, as well as partaking in group exhibitions with LGDR, New York; Maureen Paley, Hove; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; and Thaddeus Ropac, London.



Man Ray, *L'Enigme d'Isidore Ducasse*, 1920, remade 1972, Tate Modern, London. Image: © Tate, Artwork: © Man Ray Trust/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

Wood’s works are distinguished by an almost hazy appearance, which stems from her unorthodox choice of support. The oil paint of *Cries Real Tears!* has been applied to velvet, creating an interesting dichotomy between the hard-edged composition and soft, sumptuous surface texture. Wood has explained that this is ‘a joke with myself about painting, alluding to painting a fabric on a different fabric; what it’s like to render leather on velvet [...] it has an uncanniness to it’.ⁱ In the close-cropped composition of her coat series, she creates another sartorial link between the coat and a suit of armour. Wood makes many allusions to her consideration of a coat as a piece of armour in both the titles of her works – a black jacket titled *Over Armour* – and in interviews: ‘a kind of defence – or a shell or second skin, depending on what you want to protect yourself from’.ⁱⁱ The isolated view of shiny black leather is not unlike the austere head-on shots of breast-plate armour shown on museum websites, and Wood effectively uses intelligent composition to remove her subjects from their usual environments, before warping our perception of them.



Breastplate, German or Austrian, c. 1475-85. Image: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

Critic and writer Barry Schwabsky has described Wood's work as a kind of 'perverted realism'.ⁱⁱⁱ Everyday objects, in this case a coat, are isolated and estranged, and the hyper-zoomed view with which we are afforded creates a surreal and disconcerting atmosphere. This distorted presentation of familiar objects aligns Wood's art with the Surrealist movement of the early 20th century. Dadaist and Surrealist artists like Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp pioneered a new form of sculpture through their use of 'found' everyday objects. Removed from their traditional environment, viewers are asked to reconsider familiar items in new – and often bizarre – ways. *L'Enigme d'Isidore Ducasse* is one of Man Ray's wrapped sculptures, and features a sewing machine, covered in a blanket and tied with string. This abnormal view of a common object shares

visual similarities with *Cries Real Tears!* – in the bulging, black fabric – and both represent unconventional presentations of sartorial subjects.

"I lay the foundations for something that hints at the early twentieth century and throw in a mobile phone or a manicure, as a sort of temporal gaslighting." —Issy Wood

Wood's estranged compositions push the materiality of commodities to the forefront, in a strange curation of images that 'say so much without saying anything at all'.^{iv} In doing so, she comments upon and fetishises the vapidness of modern consumer culture, using auction catalogues and adverts as pictorial inspiration. She chooses objects based on their 'promise of the pristine', yet her edgy, sardonic composition and painting style ensures that 'this promise is broken almost every time'.^v

Collector's Digest

- Issy Wood is known for her unsettling, painterly oil works. *Cries Real Tears!* is part of her most popular series, which features imposing, closely-cropped views of women's jackets. The artist reached her auction record with a similar work, *Chalet*, which sold for £441,000 at Phillips London Evening Sale, on 3rd March 2022.
- A multi-disciplinary artist, she also writes and creates music, and the present work is named after a 5-song EP released in 2020 of the same name.
- Since her first major institutional show with Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art in 2019, Wood has exhibited her work world-wide, including the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Tate St. Ives, and Beijing's X Museum. She has held solo exhibitions with Michael Werner and Carlos/Ishikawa in London and New York, and she has forthcoming exhibitions in Paris and Seoul this year.

ⁱ Issy Wood, quoted in 'Issy Wood in Conversation with Sarah McCrory', *Luncheon*, no. 8, 2019, pp. 60-61.

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

ⁱⁱⁱ Barry Schwabsky, 'Issy Wood', *Artforum*, vol. 58, no. 8, April 2020, [online](#).

^{iv} Ayanna Dozier, 'Issy Wood's Hypnotic Paintings Reveal the Darker Side of Fertility', *Artsy*, 19 September, 2022, [online](#).

^v Issy Wood, quoted in 'Why Issy Wood's week beats your year', *Artspace*, 17 April, 2023, [online](#).

Provenance

Carlos/Ishikawa, London

Private collection, Europe

Acquired from the above by the present owner

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



PROPERTY OF AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN
COLLECTION

41

Maria Lassnig


Competition III

signed and dated 'M. Lassnig 2000' on the reverse
oil on canvas

207 x 153 cm (81 1/2 x 60 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2000.

Estimate

£400,000 — 600,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“I searched for a reality that was more fully in my possession than the exterior world, and I found it waiting for me in the body house in which I dwell, the realest and clearest reality.” —Maria Lassnig

With her characteristic strong, supple sense of line and expressive, vividly realised colour, *Competition III* is a particularly energetic illustration of Austrian artist Maria Lassnig’s abiding interest in the body and its sensations, and her pioneering employment of it as an instrument of self-realisation. Now internationally acclaimed as one of the leading artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, Lassnig did not paint her body as she saw it, but rather as she felt it – or felt *through* it, recording the physiological and psychological sensations registered within her body as a means of both mediating and defining her relationship to the world outside of herself. In posing herself the question of how best to represent the feeling body, in 1949 Lassnig created her first *Körperbilder*, or ‘body awareness’ paintings, a practice and unique mode of working that she would continue to refine throughout her career.

Body Work

Truly radical in their execution and unique in their appearance, Lassnig’s *Körperbilder* paintings are not conventional self-portraits in the sense that they do not depict the body from outside of itself as a fully comprehended whole, working instead from the inside out and focusing only on the parts of herself that she can feel while working. Figuration, for Lassnig then, ‘comes about almost automatically, because in my art I start first and foremost with *myself*. I do not aim for the “big emotions” while I’m working, but concentrate on small feelings: sensations in the skin or nerves, all of which one feels.’ⁱ In a radical reframing of the artist’s relationship to the canvas, she would often execute these paintings laying on the ground to order to provoke physical sensations, recording her body’s response to these poses in vibrant, expressive colour. Such intimate body consciousness destabilises centuries of pictorial tradition, aligned more closely to the key concerns and pioneering practices of 1970s feminist performance art than to any straightforward painterly tradition.

“I draw or paint a picture in a particular position: for example, sitting, leaning on one arm, you feel your shoulder blade; but, of the arm itself, only its upper portion, the palm of the hand, like the handle of a cane.” —Maria Lassnig



Left: Detail of the present work Right: Egon Schiele, *Männlicher Akt mit erhobenerm Arm*, 1910, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Fellow Austrian Egon Schiele’s sinuous, intensely wrought bodies are an often-cited exception to this, although Lassnig had little exposure to this avant-garde lineage; coming of age under Nazi rule, Lassnig’s early artistic training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna was rigidly traditional, in line with prevailing ideologies around ‘Degenerate Art’. Towards the close of 1960 she relocated to Paris, re-establishing links with Surrealists André Breton, Benjamin Peret, and Paul Celan, and crystallising her pictorial language and her growing interest in the infinite, internal world of the self. After eight, productive years in Paris, Lassnig followed Nancy Spero’s suggestion to move to New York, establishing herself within the vibrant East Village scene where she discovered feminist politics, co-founding the Women/Artist/Filmmakers, Inc. collective alongside the likes of Carolee Schneemann and Olga Spiegel.

Within this collaborative and supportive community, Lassnig continued to pursue questions related to the feeling, ever-changing body, expanding her practice to include film and animation projects. Like Lassnig, Schneemann understood that painting and artmaking were fundamentally dynamic, embodied acts, both artists querying what it might mean to be both image and image-maker simultaneously. Painting directly onto her body and realising herself as both an instrument and element of the work as early as 1962, the intense corporeality of Schneemann’s visceral performances are echoed in Yves Klein’s *Anthropométries*, where he painted directly onto the model’s naked body, using her as a living brush, dragging and pressing her body into the surface of the paper. Importantly though, while Klein remained a step removed in the execution of these

works, Schnnemann and Lassnig reclaimed the female body as a site of radical experimentation and instrument of self-realisation.



Yves Klein's Performance 'Anthropometrie der blauen Epoche', 1960. Image: Photo Scala, Florence/bpk, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin

Painted in 2000, when Lassnig was over 80 years old, *Competition III* defies prevailing notions of the ageing body as frail and failing, using instead the male-dominated language of sport and athleticism to express its vitality and verve. Exhibited with Petzel Gallery in 2002, *Competition III* belongs to Lassnig's series of late, great *Fußballbilder*, exceeding representation, functioning instead as a 'short-cut of the body [...] to activate and reactivate forces, to display what a body can do or where it can go, as well as its alienation, its obstacles.'ⁱⁱ

A supreme example of her mature work, and of the key themes that grounded her 70 year

practice, the artist is present here in the three, leaping forms, their physical expressiveness emphasised by Lassnig's characteristic use of fluid lines in bold shocks of pink, zinging neons, and vibrant turquoise set against empty space. Dispensing with the distractions of mood and atmosphere, the stark contrast of the vividly realised forms against the monochromatic ground offsets the lively vitality of the figures, the throbbing areas of bold colour flexing against each other like the muscles on our own bodies.

As with so many 20th century women artists – especially those working with the body in such radical ways – critical recognition came late for Lassnig, and yet her influence on a vast range of contemporary artists from Tracey Emin, Sarah Lucas, Dana Schutz, and Christina Quarles is immediately apparent. Placing her body and its sensations at the centre of her practice, Lassnig – along with Schneemann, Louise Bourgeois, and Alinz Szapocznikow – created a language for describing the experience of embodiment, reclaiming the specifically female body as a site of radical experiment.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjhR3YEOoK8>

Maria Lassnig: Portrait of the Artist, Hauser & Wirth, 2019

Collector's Digest

- Despite widespread recognition in her home country, being the first woman to be appointed as a professor of painting in a German speaking country, and the first to be awarded the Grand Austrian State Prize in 1988, Lassnig would not have a major international institutional show until the 1990s, the first major survey of her work in the UK coming remarkably late in 2008.
- Since her first major shows in Switzerland and Holland in the 1990s, she has gone on to be the subject of solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1 in New York, Tate Liverpool, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and The Serpentine Gallery on London. She is currently the focus of a major solo show at UCCA, Beijing, the first major presentation of her work in China.
- Lassnig's unique approach to self-portraiture, and her pioneering concept of 'body awareness' has gone on to influence a diverse range of contemporary artists working across a wide range of mediums.

ⁱ Maria Lassnig, '1000 Words: Maria Lassnig talks about her exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London', in *Artforum*, Summer, 2008, [online](#).

ⁱⁱ Élisabeth Lebovici, 'This Is Not My Body', in Éric Alliez and Peter Osborne, eds., *Spheres of*

Action: Art and Politics, Cambridge, 2013, n.p.

Provenance

Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York
Private Collection (acquired from the above in 2002)
Phillips, New York, 13 November 2019, lot 396
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited

New York, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, *Maria Lassnig*, October 24 - November 30, 2002

20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 13 October 2023 / 3pm BST



42

Alina Szapocznikow

Autoportret II


incised with the artist's initials, number, date and stamped with the foundry mark 'A.S. 66 4/7' on the reverse

bronze

20 x 24.6 x 10.3 cm (7 7/8 x 9 5/8 x 4 in.)

Executed in 1966, this work is number 4 from an edition of 7.

Estimate

£250,000 — 350,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



"I am convinced that all of the manifestations of the ephemeral, the human body is the most vulnerable – the only source of joy, all suffering, and all truth." —Alina Szapocznikow

Crowned by three, roughly modelled wings which open to reveal a fragment of a face, lips curled in an enigmatic smile, the long curve of its neck replaced by the splayed toes and exaggerated arch of a lifted left foot, *Autoportret II* is a strange and seductive work by pioneering Polish artist Alina Szapocznikow, a fascinating double self-portrait which places her firmly in the lineage of women working within Surrealism's visual language. Seen from the front, we first encounter this work as a more alarming assemblage, pieced together from isolated fragments of the body. Walk around the work, and we are confronted with something quite different, the central wing transformed to show the lower portion of her face, smoothly transitioning across the sweep of her throat and upper chest. Casting from her own body, a major breakthrough in her practice that she first hit upon in 1962, Szapocznikow explored ideas related to the commodification of women in the context of mid-century Pop Art, the legacies of Dada assemblage and the Surrealist object, alongside uniquely sculptural questions of form and materiality and the complex intersections of trauma, humour, and sensuality that her close attention to the body enabled.

On Matter and Metaphor

Born in Pabianice, Poland to a family of Jewish medical professionals in 1926, Szapocznikow witnessed first-hand some of the most unimaginable horrors committed against the body in the 20th century, she was first ghettoised when Poland was invaded by the Nazis and later transferred to Bergen-Belsen via Auschwitz where she survived her teenage years working in a camp hospital. Separated from her mother in 1944 and assuming that her family had all perished she fled to Czechoslovakia, where she trained as a stonemason and sculptor at the Higher School of Arts and Industry in Prague. Relocating to Paris in 1947, Szapocznikow continued her studies, working in a traditionally classical style, crafting solid, sturdy bodies in stone in defiance of her own direct experience with the vulnerability of human flesh.



Alina Szapocznikow working on *Le Voyage (Journey)*, 1967, in her studio in Paris, 1967. Image: © Alina Szapocznikow, courtesy the Estate of Alina Szapocznikow/ Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris and Hauser & Wirth / DACS 2023

Moving amongst a milieu of left-wing expatriate intellectuals, artists, and writers, Szapocznikow identified as a Socialist, returning to communist-controlled Poland in 1950 after contracting Tuberculosis that, although managed effectively with experimental new treatments, nevertheless further damaged her health and body in significant ways, leading, ultimately to her premature death. Working in the sanctioned Soviet Realist style while in Poland, Szapocznikow gradually grew restless, returning to Paris in 1963 to pursue a set of new and radically different sculptural methods and materials including the non-traditional and decidedly visceral polyurethane and polyester resin that she is best known for. Featuring lips, breasts, and other isolated female body parts in bright, Pop colours, her work in this vein is perhaps her most well-known, and was frequently read as flirtatious and provocative. Yet, even as they celebrate a witty sensuality, these arresting sculptural objects still seem to carry the weight of the past with them, sex and death making strange bedfellows in her work.

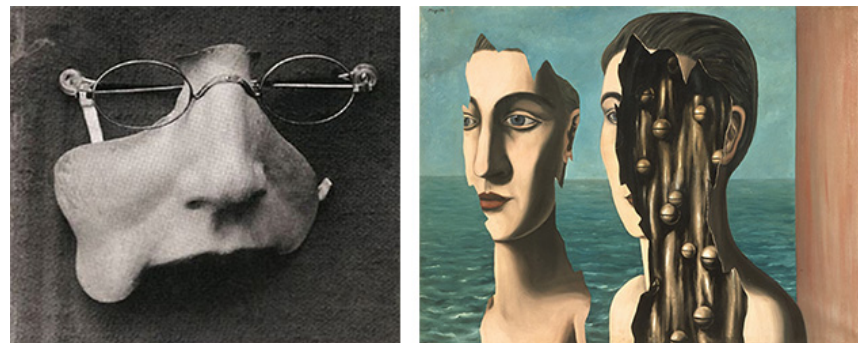


Alina Szapocznikow, *Petit Dessert I*, 1970-71. Artwork: © Alina Szapocznikow, courtesy the Estate of Alina Szapocznikow/ Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris and Hauser & Wirth / DACS 2023

While biography should not overshadow the work itself, the exploration of the body in all its disfigurements and frailties is central to Szapocznikow's sculptural project, the vehicle through which she was able to address key sculptural questions of volume, space, light, and materiality. As the artist herself poetically described: 'My gesture is addressed to the human body, "that complete erogenous zone". To its most ephemeral sensations. [...] I am convinced that of all of the manifestations of the ephemeral the human body the most vulnerable, the only source of all joy, all suffering and all truth, because of its essential nudity, as inevitable as it is admissible on any conscious level.'¹

Awkward Objects

In its isolation and strange rearticulation of disparate body parts, *Autoportret II* speaks powerfully and poetically to the trauma and violence of war, and of the artist's role in reclaiming and rebuilding that body. Cast from the lower portion of her own face, the central section of the frontal self-portrait has strong visual resonances with the pioneering experiments in prosthetics that emerged to aid disfigured soldiers returning from the trenches during the First World War. Artworks in their own right, these portrait masks were developed first by English sculptor Captain Derwent Wood, and later by American sculptor Anna Coleman Ladd who set up a studio in Paris in 1917, working from older photographs of the subjects and delicately finished in oils to match their pigmentation and recreate certain facial features. Echoing Szapocznikow's process and selection of materials here, the masks were made first by taking a cast of the soldier's face, reworked in accordance with older photographs to resemble their original image, and then cast in copper. Like these touching objects, in the inclusion of the more organic elements crowning the facial fragment in the frontal view and their transformation to a second self-portrait on the reverse, *Autoportret II* seems to sound a more hopeful note about the renewal and rebirth of the self from these shattered pieces.



[Left] Archival image of a portrait mask, c. 1917 [Right] René Magritte, *Le double secret*, 1927, Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Image: Photothèque R. Magritte / Adagp Images, Paris, / SCALA, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2023

One of the most prevalent and confoundingly powerful tropes deployed by Surrealist artists, the image of the double, or doppelgänger has its roots in the Freudian uncanny and was used to powerful effect by artists such as René Magritte, Claude Cahun, and Frida Kahlo to evoke the strange atmosphere of dreams and to explore the dichotomous relationship existing between the conscious and unconscious self. However, while Magritte's unsettling doubles vividly capture Freud's own focus on the more troubling aspects of such an encounter, Szapocznikow positions

this as a more joyful and transformative discovery. Closer in this respect to Cahun's captivating double self-portraits which used the trope as a means of searching out a visual language to describe a more fluid notion of sexuality and gender identity, *Autoportret II* seems to present this 'double identity' as a way of articulating the long tradition of positioning of Woman as Other, and of her own, wry appropriation of this as an expression of power and self-affirmation.

While her strangely compelling sculptural assemblages in resin, with their visceral material qualities that seem to ooze and melt and exceed the boundaries of the body in every direction speak profoundly and poetically to the sensuality of the human body, even in the face of its fragility and impermanence, cast in bronze, *Autoportret II* articulates a different set of material qualities: stronger, and more defiant. Widely regarded as one of the most important 20th century sculptors in her native Poland, Szapocznikow has only recently received international institutional recognition - a consequence perhaps of being both a woman and coming from outside of the more narrowly defined centres of modernism that traditionally structured the canon. This corrective has in more recent years given rise to major retrospectives, highlighting the profound influence of her practice on a new generation of artists focused on performance, materiality, and the body. As Lusia Heese elegantly put it on the occasion of her first major UK retrospective held at The Hepworth Wakefield, 'through a deeply personal lens, Szapocznikow tackled universal concerns that continue to resonate today. In her work, the human body, her life-long subject, emerges as a staging ground for an exploration of human experience in all its physical and psychological reality.'ⁱⁱ

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GahfJ4cVDbY&t=65s>

Alina Szapocznikow at the Musée nationale d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, 2013

Collector's Digest

- Following years of critical neglect following her death in 1973, Alina Szapocznikow is finally receiving the international recognition that her work deserves. In the last decade major retrospectives of her work have been mounted at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, Wiels in Brussels, the Musée de l'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, and The Hepworth Wakefield. A significant display of her work was also presented as part of Documenta 14 in 2017.
- Selected to represent Poland at La Biennale di Venezia in 1962, her work was also included in the landmark group show *Dreamers Awake* held at White Cube, Bermondsey which looked at the legacies of Surrealism and then placed her in direct dialogue with other women artists working in this vein.
- The influence of her work can be seen in the work of artists working across a wide variety of disciplines: the feminist performance art of Hannah Wilke, Lynda Bengalis'

experimental approach to materials, Sarah Lucas' humorously abject forms, and the visceral work of Paul McCarthy and Paul Thek, amongst others.

- Examples of the present work have been included in major retrospectives at National Museum, Poland; WIELS Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and most recently at The Hepworth Wakefield in 2017.

ⁱ Alina Szapocznikow, quoted in E. Filipovic and J. Mytkowska, *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone*, exh. cat., New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 2012, p. 28.

ⁱⁱ Luisa Heese, 'Material and Metaphor: The Body in the Work of Alina Szapocznikow', in *Human Landscapes*, exh. cat., The Hepworth Wakefield, 2017, p. 40.

Provenance

Private Collection, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2015

Exhibited

Paris, Florence Houston-Brown, *Alina Szapocznikow*, 11 April - 6 May 1967, n.p. (illustrated in the artist's studio, n.p.)

Warsaw, Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, *Alina Szapocznikow, Rzeźba*, 7 - 30 July 1967, no. 32, n.p.

Carrara, V Biennale Internazionale di Scultura, July - August 1967, p. 269 (illustrated)

Paris, Galerie Philippe Demay, *Ni Fleurs, ni Couronnes*, 2 - 28 November 1974

Lodz, Muzeum Sztuki (no. 102, n.p.); Warsaw, National Museum (no. 86, n.p.); Poznan, Salon BWA (no. 91); Krakow, Palac Sztuki i Galeria Pryzmat (no. 77); Bydgoszcz, Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych (no. 80, n.p.); Gdansk, National Museum; Lund Konsthall (no. 40, p. 15), *Alina Szapocznikow: 1926-1973*, 6 September 1975 - 15 May 1977

Paris, Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, *Alina Szapocznikow: From Drawing into Sculpture*, 27 February - 20 May 2013, no. G, pp. 96-97, 176 (illustrated, pp. 96-97)

London, White Cube, *Dreamers Awake*, 27 June - 17 September 2017 (another example exhibited)

The Hepworth Wakefield; Saatlische Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, *Alina Szapocznikow: Human Landscapes*, 21 October 2017 - 7 October 2018, no. 41, pp. 106, 184, 203, 206 (illustrated, p. 106)

New York, Hauser & Wirth; London, Hauser & Wirth, *To Exalt the Ephemeral: Alina Szapocznikow, 1962-1972*, 29 October 2019 - 14 August 2020, pp. 60-61 (illustrated)

Literature

Lech Grabowski, 'Na przykład Szapocznikow', *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 1968, no. 2, pp. 48-49

(illustrated, p. 49)

'Alina Szapocznikow', *Przekrój*, 8 April 1973, no. 1461 (illustrated)

Bartłomiej Kurka, 'Alina Szapocznikow', *Nurt*, 1976, no. 6, p. 32 (illustrated)

Janusz Zagrodzki, *Alina Szapocznikow*, Warsaw, 1979, no. 20, n.p. (illustrated, n.p.)

Jola Gola, *Katalog Rzeźb, Aliny Szapocznikow*, Krakow, 2001, no. 323, p. 140

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43

Rudolf Stingel

Untitled

signed and dated 'Stingel 2012' on the reverse
oil and enamel on canvas
211 x 170.2 cm (83 1/8 x 67 in.)
Executed in 2012.

Estimate

£550,000 — 750,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



“Expressionism is a process. You look at reality and you let it move through you.”
—Rudolf Stingel

Over the course of his thirty-year career, Rudolf Stingel has interrogated the very nature of painting itself, turning the entire medium inside out. Born in the small alpine town of Merano, Italy in 1956, the New York-based artist first came to prominence in the 1980s with his celebrated series of silver monochrome paintings whose delicate interplay of texture, surface and pattern helped foreground a wider project to explore the boundaries and processes that underpin the very act of painting itself. A work of ageless finesse, the present untitled piece is stunningly rendered with silver enamel patterns playing off the deep red and purple tones, the whole composition imbued with a mystical quality that invokes the long painterly traditions of Arabesque decoration and Persian textiles, whilst simultaneously forming part of the artist’s own project of auto inquiry and artistic perception. Executed in 2012, it is a striking example of the artist’s famous carpet and wallpaper paintings, its shimmering details drawing the viewer into a series of poised dichotomies that interrogate the visual motifs of East and West, the luxurious and the economical and the abstract and the figurative.



Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Asleep at the Table* (detail), 1656-57, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.611

In his critically acclaimed submission to the 1989 iteration of La Biennale di Venezia, Stingel produced an instructional pamphlet - appropriately titled *Instructions* - in six different languages

where he detailed step-by-step directions on how to create the monochromatic canvases for which the artist was becoming celebrated. Presented alongside a series of Stingel’s own monochromes, *Instructions* sought to playfully deconstruct the notion of the singular creative artist with the intention of opening up his artistic practice to participation and reproduction by anyone who wished to do replicate his work. Highlighting the importance of unconventional but easily attainable materials, as well as using methods that were repeatable and formulaic, Stingel sought to democratise painting at the same time as he highlighted the aesthetic potential of everyday objects and environments. The present work falls squarely within this socio-aesthetic project. Executed using the mechanised yet aleatory process of painting first laid out in *Instructions*, *Untitled* sees layers of paint covered with a fine patterned gauze of silver enamel which is then removed to reveal a stencilled design of breath-taking elaborateness and intricacy indented across the entire surface of the canvas. The richness of colour and fineness of pattern evoke the ornate styles of the Rococo, Baroque and Belle Époque, although in its demystification of the ‘unique’ nature of the art object and foregrounding its openness to reproduction, it also evokes more Warholian ideas related to the nature of the artwork in the age of reproduction.

Stingel returned to questions of materiality in his work for the 50th La Biennale di Venezia in 2003, creating huge immersive environments of large, carpeted auditoria and foil-lined rooms. Again in Venice - that famous historic crossroads between the occident and the orient - Stingel undertook a monumental solo exhibition once again at the Palazzo Grassi in the 2013 edition of the Biennale, where the artist filled the space with an intricately patterned Persian carpet, covering the entire atrium and upper floors in an installation that once again questioned the boundary between a work and its setting. Engaging with notions of authorship and originality, *Untitled* encapsulates Stingel’s artistic investigations in a hauntingly beautiful, meticulously executed, and profoundly mesmeric canvas. In the words of the curator Francesco Bonami, ‘By disrupting painting’s assumptions of material, process, and placement, Stingel not only bursts open the conventions of painting, but creates unique ways of thinking about the medium and its reception.’ⁱ



Detail from the Alhambra Palace wall carving. Image: Pete Cutter / Alamy Stock Photo

The technical abstraction underpinning the canvas helps create a beautiful and rich meditation on memory and lost aesthetic traditions. Acting as a kind of opulent palimpsest, the painting brilliantly evokes a mystical, magical carpet, lending an otherworldly intrigue to the piece. For Bonami, such magic is entirely the intended effect, the silvery skeins of the Wallpaper and Carpet works acting as a 'fabric of history', a mesh of texts and references. For Bonami, these documents, images, and stories 'are the focus of figuration, while abstraction has the privilege of looking into dreams, visions, the future and its void waiting to be filled by history.'ⁱⁱⁱ The mystical and allegorical nature of Stingel's abstraction, and its potentially infinite replicability, echoes the decorative arabesques of medieval Islamic art. Like the arabesques of the great mosques and palaces of the Caliphate, Stingel's designs 'disappear' beyond the framing edge without ending, and can thus be regarded as infinitely extendable, their geometry hinting at universalist truth. When the design of a painting like *Untitled* is combined with the potential extension of artistic praxis, that is an artwork that anyone can create, Stingel's great emancipation of painting reaches its apogee. The present work is thus both an object of intense aesthetic meditation as well as the realisation of a more utopian project to liberate the work of art. Its importance is almost theological, its meaning transcendent.

Collector's Digest

- Now represented by Gagosian, Stingel continues to exhibit widely, with a recent major show at the Fondation Beyeler in 2019.
- As well as participating in the Biennale Internazionale d'Arte di Venezia in 1999, 2003, and 2013, Stingel has been the subject of major mid-career retrospectives at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

ⁱ Francesco Bonami, 'Surface Tension', in *Rudolf Stingel*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2007, p. 10.

ⁱⁱ Francesco Bonami, 'Surface Tension', in *Rudolf Stingel*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2007, pp. 10, 14.

Provenance

Gagosian Gallery

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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44

John Chamberlain

Druid's Cluster (Swish)

painted and chromium-plated steel

216 x 99 x 42.5 cm (85 x 38 7/8 x 16 3/4 in.)

Executed in 1975.

Estimate

£350,000 — 450,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



“It’s taken me a long time, going to different materials and being engaged with different materials. My particular feeling is, as I’ve said, because I like them, I pay attention as to where they’re at. Then whatever I do to them, I can do to them and if it becomes something that hasn’t been done to them before in that usage, then I feel that there’s something there. And I play with that.” —John Chamberlain

Although American sculptor John Chamberlain would experiment with a range of non-traditional materials over the course of his five-decade career, the dynamic interplay of crumpled forms and complex spatial arrangements that the artist was able to achieve in his work with crushed automobile parts would come to define his sculptural project. A piece of remarkable grace and power, *Druids Cluster (Swish)* seems to defy the weight of its materials to float effortlessly against the wall, its gently folded forms holding rhythm and movement in perfect equilibrium. The work comes to auction with exceptional provenance, originally held in the personal collection of art dealer Heiner Friedrich - co-founder of the Dia Foundation in Beacon and the Lone Star Foundation, which merged in 1980 to form the esteemed Dia Art Foundation in collaboration with Philippa de Menil.

Seen in Steel

Whilst the artist had used colour in his sculptural works before 1976, it was only when returning to this distinctive material in the mid-1970s that he started to supplement the inherent coloration of his found metal with his own painted additions. A close reader of Abstract Expressionism and a firm friend of Willem De Kooning and Franz Kline, in *Druids Cluster (Swish)* Chamberlain augments his ground with splashes of bold colour and assertive line, creating expressive striations that flex against the sculpture’s more contingent forms. Building up layers of vibrant yet delicate skeins of colour that seem to fall lightly on the sculpted contours of warped metal the piece is animated with its own, lively personality, the chromatic depth and gestural combinations of drips and splashes achieved by the artist here working within the conceptual frameworks of Abstract Expressionism to bring Jackson Pollock’s immersive ‘all-over canvases’ into three dimensions.



Jackson Pollock, *Convergence*, 1952. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Image: Buffalo AKG Art Museum/Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Pollock-Krasner Foundation ARS, NY and DACS, London 2023

Despite its graceful contours, *Druids Cluster (Swish)* still possesses a crunching muscularity, the suggestion of violence held in its twisted contortions and more jagged edges alleviated by the all-over harmonies achieved by the artist’s interventions. This compositional balance lends the work its more organic, intensely naturalistic quality, endowing it with a sense of structural coherence. Chamberlain has referred to this unexpected but seamless interlocking of his sculptural pieces as the ‘fit’, where one attains ‘a certain sense of control’ over the object, a process that is both idiosyncratic and non-formulaic.¹ In *Druids Cluster (Swish)* automobile parts curl and coil like knotted roots, the greens and blues of the painted metal softening the harsh edges of the material and hinting at the central paradox of Nature as combining both creation and destruction, life and death.

Drawing us close to this line between creation and destruction, *Druids Cluster (Swish)* draws not only on the gestural immediacy of Abstract Expressionism, but also on Pop Art’s interest in the industrially reproduced and the objects of everyday consumer life. Andy Warhol’s famous and forensic dissection of traffic road accidents in his *Death and Disaster* series stands as a particular touchstone here, the two artists sharing a formal fascination for the crumpled metal, as well its capacity for commentary on mid-century America’s commodity culture, and the repurposing of these consumer products into the *objet d’art*.

Chamberlain’s compulsion to integrate the everyday, the *real*, into the work of art and the process

itself is analogue to the work of contemporary European *nouveau réalistes* artists - whose own links to the American Pop Art movement were evident in 1962's *International Exhibition of the New Realists* at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York. However, whilst the *nouveau réalistes* were still indebted to the legacy of Marcel Duchamp and the Readymade, and often overtly entrenched in old struggles against both bourgeois and socialist realist figurative painting and sculpture, Chamberlain's work is of a uniquely American perspective and character. *Druids Cluster (Swish)* seeks not to critique American industrial society, but to recognise its potentiality, the possibility that scrap metal and waste by-products might be repurposed into a uniquely American aesthetic practice.

That both Chamberlain and Warhol chose the automobile - the symbol *sine qua non* of post-war America - as both the material and the object of their work respectively speaks to the centrality of their artistic investigations in any history of post-war art as it developed in the United States. Chamberlain's own contribution is twofold, bringing the lessons of post-war American abstraction into the material realm of the familiar and everyday, and his translation of the gestural exuberance of their mark-making into the spatial dimensions of sculpture. *Druids Cluster (Swish)* encapsulates all of these tendencies, a writhing and powerful testament to both delicacy and brutality - a monument to the muscular power of an America then at the vanguard of creative expression.

Collector's Digest

- Internationally renowned for his twisted metal sculptures and experiments with other industrial materials, examples of John Chamberlain's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Tate Collection in London.
- Over the years major retrospectives of Chamberlain's work across a range of media including photography, film, sculpture, and painting have been held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. Since his death in 2011, Chamberlain has been the subject of several solo exhibitions, the most recent of which - *John Chamberlain: Five Decades* held at Mnuchin Gallery in New York - gave new insight into the development of the artist's distinctive and diverse practice.

ⁱ John Chamberlain, quoted in Phyllis Tuchman, 'An Interview with John Chamberlain', *Artforum*, February 1972, vol. 10, no. 6, [online](#).

Provenance

Heiner Friedrich, Cologne

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2011

Exhibited

New York, Leo Castelli Gallery, *John Chamberlain*, 27 March - 17 April 1976

Cologne, Heiner Friedrich, *John Chamberlain*, June - August 1978

New York, Kasmin Gallery, *Levity/Density*, 11 June - 16 August 2019

Literature

Noel Frackman, 'John Chamberlain at Castelli Gallery', *Arts Magazine*, vol. 50, no. 10, June 1976, p. 19 (illustrated)

Chicago Review, vol. 30, no. 3, Winter 1979 (illustrated, cover)

Julie Sylvester, *John Chamberlain: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculpture 1954-1985*, New York, 1986, no. 514, pp. 143, 237 (illustrated, p. 143)

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45

Damien Hirst

Fear


stamped with the artist's stamp 'HIRST' on some of the surgical instruments

glass, stainless steel, steel, nickel, brass, rubber, medical and surgical equipment

180 x 92.5 x 36 cm (70 7/8 x 36 3/8 x 14 1/8 in.)

Executed in 1994.

Estimate

£300,000 — 400,000 

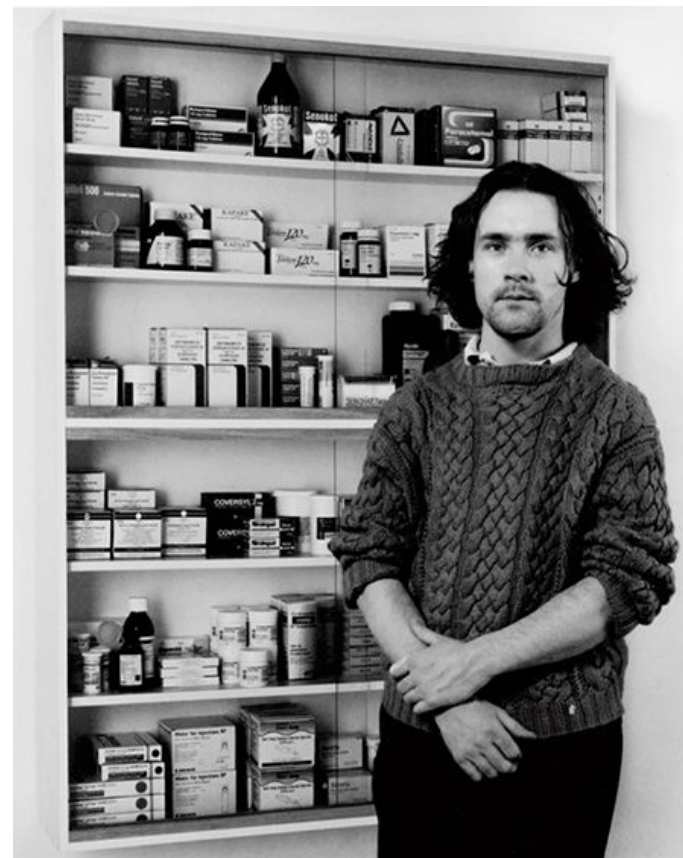
[Go to Lot](#)



“My interest in medicine and these kinds of instruments is that they’re kind of hope and fear mixed within then because you kind of look at them and they give you hope because if you need an operation or a tumour removed to live [...] But within that, from cutting you open there’s the risk that you might die or not recover or not come out from the anaesthetic so the whole thing of life and death is within these instruments and I love them for that reason.” —Damien Hirst

An early and important example of Damien Hirst’s *Instrument Cabinets*, created at a pivotal moment in the Young British Artist’s career, *Fear* brings together key concepts and themes that continue to preoccupy the artist today. Executed on a human scale, the steel framed glass cabinet brings into sharp focus Hirst’s unwavering interest in mortality, the frailty of the human body, and the faith that we invest in the tools and promise of modern medicine. It is this paradox that underpins Hirst’s entire artistic project – while we know, and fear, our mortality, we also refuse to accept its permanence; or, in the artist’s own words, ‘I am going to die and I want to live forever. I can’t escape that fact and I can’t let go of that desire.’

Conceived in 1994, the year after Hirst was first nominated for the prestigious Turner Prize and the year before he actually won it, *Fear* comes from a pivotal moment in the young Hirst’s rapidly maturing practice, and in the broader contexts of contemporary British art at the turn of the century. Alongside sister works *Still* and *Doubt* now held in the prestigious collections of The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston respectively, *Fear* stands in a close familial relationship to Hirst’s foundational *Medicine Cabinets* which he first embarked on in 1988 while still a student at Goldsmiths. Borrowing titles from the definitive late 70s punk album, *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s the Sex Pistols*, Hirst’s 1989 degree show presentation of thirteen *Medicine Cabinets* set the tone for the rebellious spirit that would come to define the art and personalities associated with the burgeoning YBA movement.



Damien Hirst at the *No Sense of Absolute Corruption* exhibition, Gagosian Gallery, New York, 1996.
Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2023

Clean and precise in its presentation, *Fear* features rows of meticulously arranged surgical equipment, the cold, impersonal materiality of their sleek, stainless-steel surfaces visually referencing the simple geometries and seriality typically associated with Minimalism. Speaking about the broader series of *Medicine Cabinets* to which the present work is related, Hirst made this connection more directly, explaining: ‘I like the way that you’ve got all these individual elements inside a cabinet related to organs inside a body. I like the kind of Koons consumerist feel to it. And then a lot of the boxes of actual medicines are all very minimal and could be taken directly from minimalism, in the way that minimalism inspires confidence.’¹ Poignantly underscored by Hirst’s use of the medicine packets that his grandmother left behind after her death in these earliest

cabinets however, the corporeal messiness of our own bodies is never far from these works, undercutting the more emotionally detached or Minimalist arrangement of its constituent parts.

As with his foundational *Medicine Cabinets*, the steel frame stands in directly for the body here, its fundamental fragility emphasised by the glass panels that encase it, but that also leave its contents poignantly exposed and vulnerable. Removing the corporeal messiness of the body, it is still powerfully evoked in *Fear*, the clinical arrangement of sterile, surgical instruments including kidney bowls, speculums, needle holders, and surgical scissors all highly charged with our knowledge of their functionality as tools to violently open the body. In its particularly evocative title, Hirst's vision of the cabinet as 'a kind of human, like with an abdomen and a chest and guts' is especially pronounced, especially when considered in light of master of body horror cinema David Cronenberg's 1988 film *Dead Ringers*, which Hirst has explicitly referenced in relation to the series.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gdgkflZdNO>

David Cronenberg, *Dead Ringers*, 1988

Hirst's fascination for the interwoven relationships between art, science, and faith have important art historical precedents in the long-held fascination with the human body, its anatomy, and dissection, most famously recorded in the sketchbooks of Leonardo da Vinci and in 17th century 'anatomy lesson' paintings. Significantly, in 2013 *Fear* was included in the Kunstmuseum de Haag presentation of *The Anatomy Lesson: From Rembrandt to Hirst*, where it was exhibited alongside all ten surviving anatomy lesson paintings produced in the Netherlands during this Enlightenment period, most notably Rembrandt's masterwork of the Dutch Golden Age, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaas Tulp*.

A gory spectacle, dissections were opened to public viewings once a year, taking place in theatres that still lend their name to the more clinical spaces of hospital operating rooms today. Commissioned by the Surgeons Guild for display in their meeting room, in *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaas Tulp* the young Rembrandt radically altered the conventions of the genre. Set with dramatic contrasts of light and shadow, the *mis en scène* depicts the titular doctor exposing the musculature of the dissection subject's arm to a group of fascinated onlookers. Drawing on Christ-like iconography in the artist's presentation of the corpse, the painting crystallises the profound shift taking place across 17th century Europe as Enlightenment principles related to the pursuit of science, rationality, and the so-called triumph of reason challenged religion's hitherto unwavering dominance as a framework for explaining the world. Like Rembrandt, in *Fear* Hirst draws on our compelling desire to make the unknown visible, the drive to demystify death and the deep anxieties provoked by an awareness of our own mortality. Playing on the densely woven web of fears and fascinations that has always characterised our relationship to medicine and the surgeon's trade, the *Instruments Cabinets* also function in this respect like religious reliquaries, playing on our capacity for hope and belief, even in the face of impersonal and inevitable death.



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaas Tulp*, 1632, Mauritshuis, The Hague

Collector's Digest

- One of the most controversial and provocative figures of contemporary art, Damien Hirst's work has defined the YBA generation and continues to drive discussions around the role and meaning of art in the 21st century.
- One of the first *Instruments Cabinets* that Hirst started working on in 1994, *Fear* is closely connected to the artist's earliest *Medicine Cabinets*, which undoubtedly rank amongst his most immediately recognisable and conceptually important series.
- Two sister works, *Still* and *Doubt*, are held in the permanent collections of The Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston respectively. A later, larger-scaled work *The Fragile Truth* also forms part of the esteemed Pinault Collection in Paris.

ⁱ Damien Hirst, quoted in Gordon Burn, *On the Way to Work*, London, 2002, p. 25.

Provenance

White Cube, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *The Anatomy Lesson - From Rembrandt to Damien Hirst*, 28 September 2015 – 5 January 2014, pp. 114-115, 141 (illustrated, p. 114)

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46

Raghav Babbar

The Bath in Holy River


signed 'BABBAR Raghav Babbar BABBAR' on the reverse

oil on canvas

101.8 x 76.2 cm (40 1/8 x 30 in.)

Painted in 2021.

Estimate

£30,000 — 50,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



“I’m most passionate about the small details in people’s faces that most of us don’t even notice, I mix something so quick, like a camera snapshot, with a long process of heavy impasto, and from that, I hope to create something very authentic that can only be achieved through the slow act of paint.” —Raghav Babbar

Provenance

Private Collection, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner