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PRESS RELEASE

Phillips Announces

AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN

Selling Exhibition in November 2017 to include works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Awol Erizku, David Hammons, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, and Kehinde Wiley, among others



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1981



Awol Erizku, *Oh what a feeling, aw, fuck it, I want a Trillion*, 2015

LONDON – 18 OCTOBER 2017 – Phillips is pleased to announce the unique upcoming selling exhibition *AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN*, curated by Arnold Lehman, Phillips' Senior Advisor and Director Emeritus of the Brooklyn Museum. Examining over three decades of the increasing public presence and artistic success within the contemporary American art community, these more than two dozen African American artists bring, for the first time to London, a full spectrum of the innovation and energy that characterizes their work and articulates the reason it is so highly sought after internationally. *AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN*, which will be on view at 30 Berkeley Square from 8 to 25 November, tells the ongoing important artistic history that picks up subsequent to the Tate Modern's exhibition, *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*.

Arnold Lehman, said: “We are incredibly excited to be hosting this celebration of contemporary African American art at Phillips London. The exhibition presents a rare opportunity to see era-defining works of art by increasingly renowned and groundbreaking artists who already have had a major impact on contemporary art in America. Reassessing and remixing critical predecessor exhibitions early in the century, such as *Freestyle* at the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Rubell Family Collection’s *30 Americans*, *AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN* looks anew at the increasingly powerful signature of these artists at work during the past three decades, and presents a vibrant array of paintings, photography, and sculpture. For the conclusions presented in *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* at Tate Modern, the artists of *AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN* offer a brilliant next chapter in the art made in the United States with new vocabulary and redefinition at every turn.”

Highlights from the Exhibition

One starring work of *AMERICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN* is an important painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat from 1981 (*illustrated page one*). Almost four decades before Basquiat became one of the highest-priced artists ever to sell at auction, and before his extraordinary current exhibition at Barbican Art Gallery, Basquiat showed a group of paintings in the 1981 exhibition at P.S.1 in New York, titled *New York/New Wave*. As critic Anthony Haden-Guest wrote in his 1988 *Vanity Fair* portrait, “...the pieces by Basquiat—who showed as Samo—were standouts. A style had suddenly fallen into place. The work is graphic, crudely drawn with oil sticks, often featuring bits of found writing—downtown street signs, whatever—and always using images at once witty and disturbing, like those used to propitiate powerful forces...” Alanna Heiss, the director of P.S.1, said, “The common reaction, which was mine, was that this was the new Rauschenberg. It was a really cliché ridden reaction, in terms of tingling, goose bumps, all the words we use all the time, but this time it was really true.”

Almost four decades later, this exhibition looks at the work of LA-based Awol Erizku, a young artist to watch. Installation, performance, photography, conceptual art and social media, especially Instagram, meld in his hands to create work that responds to the past and looks to tomorrow. Erizku’s *Oh what a feeling, aw, fuck it, I want a Trillion*, 2015 (*illustrated page one*), comes out of an insightful remix of the day it was made and, perhaps, Donald Judd’s ‘Stacks’ and Jay Z’s *Picasso Baby* lyrics.

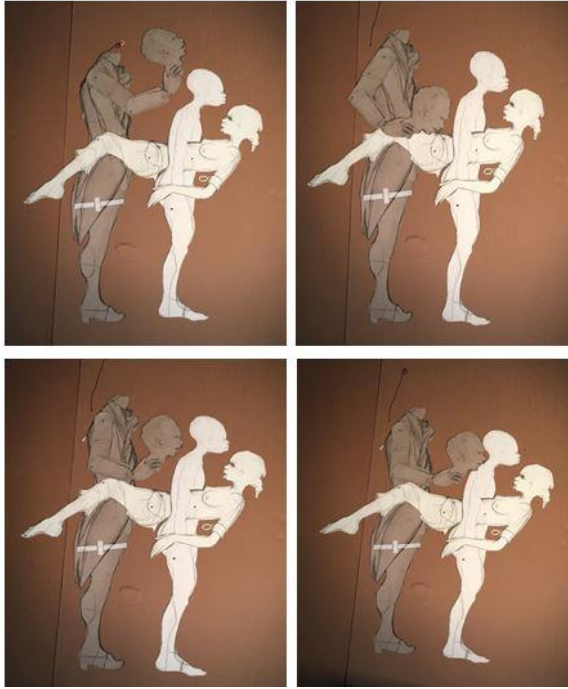
Other highlights include works by Mequitta Ahuja, David Hammons, Rashid Johnson, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, and Kehinde Wiley, who recently has been chosen by former President Barack Obama to paint his official portrait for the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery.



Mequitta Ahuja
Sales Slip, 2017



Lyle Ashton Harris
Ecstasy #1, 1987-88



Kara Walker
Forging Freedoms, 1996



Carrie Mae Weems
The Tate Modern, 2006-Present

Exhibition viewing: 8 -25 November 2017 | Monday - Saturday 10am-6pm, Sunday 12pm-6pm

Location: 30 Berkeley Square, London

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