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PRESS RELEASE

Phillips to Offer David Hammons' *African-American Flag* in May Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art



David Hammons

African-American Flag, 1990

Estimate: \$700,000 - \$1,000,000

NEW YORK - 20 APRIL 2017 - Phillips is pleased to announce that David Hammons' *African-American Flag* will be offered in the Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art on Thursday, 18 May. Executed in 1990 in an edition of only five, this particular example has never been offered publicly and is estimated at \$700,000-1,000,000. In 1990, it flew over Museum Overholland on the Museum Square in Amsterdam for the duration of the exhibition *Black USA*, and another original from the same edition has been in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art for ten years.

Jean-Paul Engelen, Worldwide Co-Head of 20th Century & Contemporary Art, said, “David Hammons is among the most important and fascinating artists of our time, defined by his political stance and refusal to confine himself to a particular aesthetic or medium. There is, however, a unifying thread in his oeuvre, with his works consistently being insightful, poignant, visually striking and politically engaged. His fickle relationship with the art world establishment and the inherent political commentary in his work reflect the complications of the time we live in, resulting in his unique way of visualizing the different truths we each experience. We are thrilled to offer his *African-American Flag* in our May Evening Sale, a captivating example from his remarkable career.”

In his work, Hammons frequently imbues potent symbols with a new meaning. From his basketball hoop sculptures *Higher Goals*, 1986, which commented on the limited opportunities available to young African Americans, to the arresting painting *How ya like me Now*, 1988, which depicts a young Reverend Jesse Jackson with white skin and blonde hair, Hammons has not shied away from topics which directly impacted his own life and which continue to be the everyday reality for a large portion of the American population. *African-American Flag* follows in this tradition – the red, white, and blue of the United States flag



David Hammons and his groundsman hoisting up his *African-American Flag* above Museum Overholland in Amsterdam, 1990

replaced with the red, black, and green of Marcus Garvey’s Pan-African Flag, which was first adopted by the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League in 1920.



Another example of David Hammons’ *African-American Flag* hanging beside Jasper Johns’ *Flag* in MoMA
Art © Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Instead of working directly with the Pan-African Flag, Hammons use of its colors within the context of the traditional American flag is a reminder of the many contributions made by African Americans throughout the history of the country. Hammons combines the two objects to create a new flag of the United States, his work assuming a new, distinctly black power, which stands for those people the traditional flag has not always represented.

Auction: Thursday, 18 May 2017, 5pm

Auction viewing: 5-18 May | Monday to Saturday 10am-6pm, Sunday 12pm-6pm

Location: 450 Park Avenue, New York

Link to more information: <https://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY010317>

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**Estimates do not include buyer’s premium; prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer’s premium.*

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