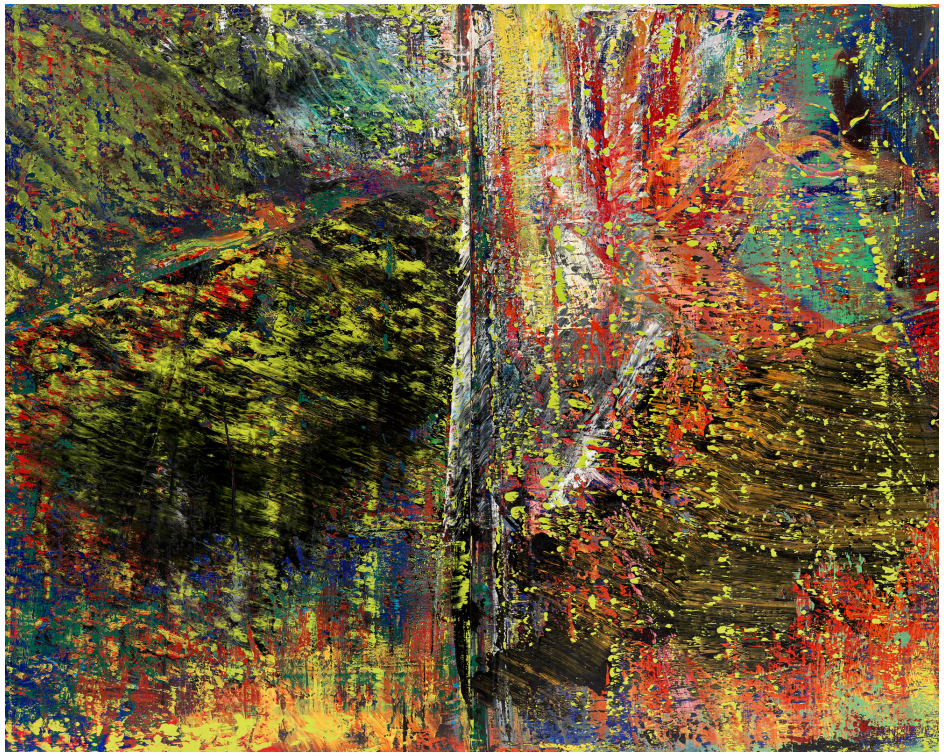
20th Century & Contemporary Art, Evening Sale Part II

New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST

Sale Interest: 30 Lots



View Sale

How to Buy

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20th Century & Contemporary Art, Evening Sale Part II

New York Auction / 14 November 2023 / 6pm EST

Sale Interest: 30 Lots

Auction 14 November 2023 6pm EDT

432 Park Avenue, New York, NY, United States, 10022

Viewing 4 November - 14 November

Sale Designation
When sending in written bids or making enquiries please refer to this sale as NY010723 or 20th Century & Contemporary Art, Evening Sale Part II.

Absentee and Telephone Bids
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bidsnewyork@phillips.com

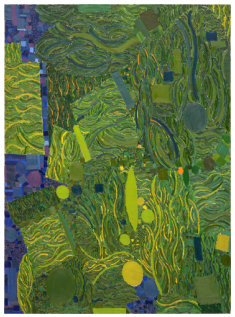
20th Century & Contemporary Art Department

Carolyn Kolberg
Associate Specialist, Head of Evening Sale, New York
+1 212 940 1206
CKolberg@phillips.com

Sale Interest: 30 Lots

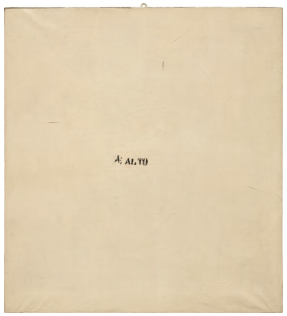
31
Ambera Wellmann
Ritz
Estimate $40,000 — 60,000

32
Lucy Bull
Dark companion
Estimate
$400,000 — 600,000



33
Lynne Drexler
Seasonal Green
Estimate
$300,000 — 500,000

34
Gerhard Richter
Abstraktes Bild (636)
Estimate
Estimate On Request

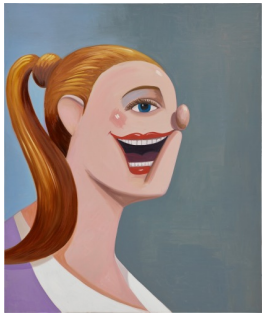


35
Mario Schifano
Alto
Estimate
$500,000 — 700,000

36
Georg Baselitz
Ein Roter
Estimate
$6,000,000 — 8,000,000

37
Helen Frankenthaler
Fire
Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

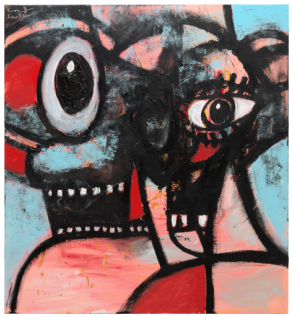
38
Gerhard Richter
Abstraktes Bild (557-3)
Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000



39
George Condo
Smiling Girl With Ponytail
Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

40
Georg Baselitz
Untitled
Estimate
$300,000 — 400,000

41
Pablo Picasso
Tête d'homme et nu assis
Estimate
$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

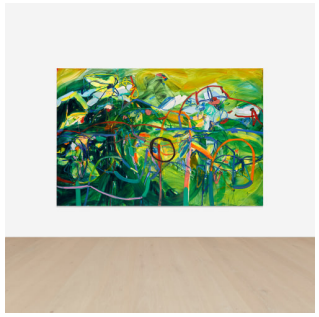


42
George Condo
Eyes Wide Open
Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

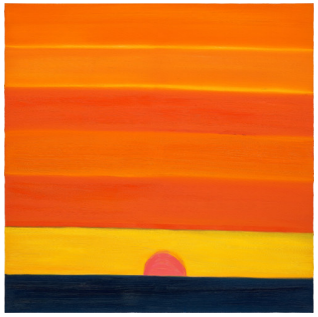
43
Joan Mitchell
Blueberry
Estimate
$9,000,000 — 12,000,000

44
Nicolas de Staël
Personnages au bord de la mer
Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

45
Ben Sledsens
A second nice break
Estimate
$120,000 — 180,000



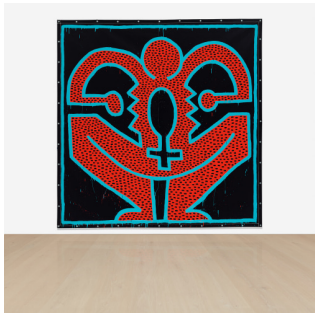
46
Jadé Fadojutimi
Quirk my mannerism
Estimate
$600,000 — 800,000



47
Matthew Wong
Pink Sunset
Estimate
$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

48
Damien Hirst
Covenant
Estimate
$700,000 — 1,000,000

49
Barbara Kruger
Untitled (Our prices are insane!)
Estimate
$500,000 — 700,000



50
Keith Haring
Untitled
Estimate
$2,800,000 — 3,500,000

51
Jeff Koons
Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice (...
Estimate
$3,000,000 — 5,000,000

52
Donald Judd
Untitled
Estimate
$600,000 — 800,000

53
Pablo Picasso
Tête de femme au chapeau
Estimate
$700,000 — 1,000,000

54
Christina Quarles
Floored
Estimate
$250,000 — 350,000

55
Lucio Fontana
Concetto spaziale, Attese
Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

56
Emilio Vedova
Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56)
Estimate
$400,000 — 600,000

57
KAWS
UNTITLED (DBZ2)
Estimate
$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

58
Jeff Koons
Lobster Log
Estimate
$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

59
Elizabeth Peyton
Mendips, 1963
Estimate
$900,000 — 1,200,000

60
Henry Taylor
Government Cheese
Estimate
$100,000 — 150,000

31

Ambera Wellmann

Ritz

signed and dated "ambera 2018" on the reverse
oil and pastel on linen
36 3/8 x 37 3/4 in. (92.4 x 95.9 cm)
Executed in 2018.

Estimate
$40,000 — 60,000

Go to Lot

"All my structures for desire consisted of paintings that weren't made for me, and never anticipated me as a viewer." —Ambera Wellmann

In Ambera Wellmann's *Ritz,* 2018, amorphous, ambiguously gendered bodies entangle in an intimate, almost orgiastic setting. The interplay of pale pink flesh complements the vibrant pinks of Wellmann's bed and background, evoking associations of both a playful, girlhood innocence and searing adult lust. The artist's figures possess a liquid quality, perpetually in states of becoming and undoing, as boundaries soften, and bodies seamlessly intermingle. Her nudes are incomplete and interlocking, with hazy, black-shadowed outlines that make it difficult—even undesirable—to parse out where one body ends, and another begins. This anatomical morph and blend is meant to seem fantastic, Wellmann says; her work "actually feels impossible, in order to create a diagram for what kind of infinite possibilities the body can have."[i]

Francis Bacon, *Studies for a Crucifixion*, 1962. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation/Art Resource, NY/ Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Francis Bacon/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

Wellmann begins each painting with sketches of instances where body parts touch or bodies make contact. She seeks "that erotically-charged moment, [which] becomes the central axis from which the rest of the painting develops."[ii] From there, she works with wet oils and pastels that allow her to stream and blend pigment across the canvas, allowing the painting to respond to itself rather than to a linear addition of elements. The colors she employs, coupled with a light brushwork technique that blurs lines, not only achieve an elastic luminosity, but also create the effect of liquid skin.

Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Sardanapalus,* 1827. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

The emotive eroticism of *Ritz* takes inspiration from the 18th and 19th century Romantic canon, whose artists, "in the midst of revolution," Wellman explained, "conceptualized violent spectacle as an engine of self-understanding and renewal."[iii] In *Ritz*, Wellmann navigates this sentiment through a feminist lens. She evokes the visual motifs and dynamism of Romantic, Rococo, and even proto-Modernist masterpieces—the square, platform bed and twisting bodies of *Ritz* recall the composition of Eugène Delacroix's *The Death of Sardanapalus,* 1827, Musée du Louvre, Paris, for instance, while her use of black shadows evokes Édouard Manet's provocative *Olympia,* 1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Her peach-pink skin tones and cherry-red nipples are as heightened and sensual as the nudes of Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.

"I am searching for ways to pictorially structure female desire, an endeavor that almost always coincides with an internalized male gaze—so there is rarely a singular sense of a body or self in the paintings. There is distortion, mirroring and, as much as the bodies appear lost in erotic acts, there is an awareness that they perform for the viewer as well." —Ambera Wellmann

Wellmann embraces the uncanny and erotic characteristics embedded in historical representations of women, but subverts the male artist's hegemonic gaze by deliberately challenging the traditional portrayal of desire as an individualized experience. Instead, as in *Ritz,* she orchestrates an amalgamation of multiple bodies, creating a collective sensation of sensuality that cannot be contained within one gaze, or one moment in time. This intentional departure from the singular male gaze disrupts traditional expectations, inviting viewers to witness an interconnected dance of lust and liberated sensuality.

Collector's Digest

- Wellmann's work is represented in a number of public collections, including The Columbus Museum of Art; ICA Miami; MFA Boston; and X Museum, Beijing.
- Recent solo exhibitions include *Antipoem,* Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Apr.-Oct. 2023; *UnTurning,* The MAC, Belfast, 2021; and *Ambera Wellmann,* Pond Society, Shanghai, China, 2021.

[i] Coco Romack, "Liquid skin, blurred lines: how Ambera Wellmann creates startlingly intimate scenes," *Art Basel,* Dec. 4, 2021, online.

[ii] Ambera Wellman, quoted in Louise Benson, "Ambera Wellmann Pushes Sensuality to Its Limit and Beyond," *Elephant*, Jan. 5, 2019, online.

[iii] Ibid.

Provenance
Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature
"Image of the Day: Ambera Wellmann, Ritz, 2018," *Elephant*, March 28, 2019, online (illustrated)

32

Lucy Bull

Dark companion

signed and dated "Lucy Bull 2020" on the reverse
oil on canvas
60 x 30 in. (152.4 x 76.2 cm)
Painted in 2020.

Estimate
$400,000 — 600,000

Go to Lot

"I want to titillate the senses. I want to draw people closer. I think people aren't used to paying much prolonged attention to paintings on walls, and I want to allow people to have more of a sensory experience. I want to draw them in so that there is the opportunity for things to open up and for them to wander." —Lucy Bull

Diaphanous webs of vibrant color overtake the surface of Lucy Bull's *Dark Companion,* 2020. Bull's marks glitter and shift in thin gauzes of gold, coral, green, and blue, stretching and waving, threadlike, in layers of bioluminescent oils. The visual effect is somewhere between that of a Y2K desktop screensaver and the undulating fins of a deep sea creature—a tension between digital and natural, synthetic and organic associations that pervades Bull's abstract oeuvre. The meditative canvas, open to prolonged contemplation and multivalent interpretation, gives life to the wanderings of a musing mind.

The viewer is hypnotized as they wander throughout the work, stepping into a universe in which neither time nor space are tangible, much less linear. Bull intuitively builds juxtapositions of light and dark color, in flashes of contrast which draw the eye along the featherlight golden strokes of her paintbrush. A base layer of navy blue, nearly black, lightens into bursts of bright teal; areas of slate grey dapple into golden yellow and fluorescent orange. Lemon yellow and hot pink spark across the canvas, while touches of white and lime green patter into small crescents, like the surfing edges of waves, or scales of a glistening dark creature. Bull's painted "companion" is all-enveloping, and the viewer is happy to be lost in its depths.

Max Ernst, *Profanation of the Spring,* 1945. Private Collection. Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

The emotional force of *Dark Companion* depends upon the viewer's willingness to embrace a meditative state of extended contemplation, an effect which Bull refers to as a sort of "timed release." In this way, Bull is inspired by her love of film, a medium that inherently depends on time for its artistic impact; just as the action of a film plays out over time, so do the visual effects of *Dark Companion.* "Time is everything," Bull says. "I've always been jealous of filmmakers, who expect no one will leave the theater. When I'm painting, I'm always thinking about creating the same kind of psychic space that a movie does."[i]

The cosmos Bull creates calls on the legacies of Surrealist artists, such as Max Ernst, who let the processes of the unconscious mind guide their artistic practice. Surrealist painters let the paint, brush, and gesture lead the way, with as little conscious intervention as possible. Bull cites Ernst's experience of "being a spectator to the making of his own work" as akin to her own process. "When things finally open up and click," she says, "it feels like magic."[ii]

Dark Companion is a mesmerizing journey through the depths of emotion and imagination, a testament to the power of art to transport us beyond the limits of language and into the uncharted territories of the mind. Bull "makes room for both precision and abandon, inviting viewers to participate in ever-unfinished processes of creation that she choreographs but never fully controls."[iii]

Collector's Digest

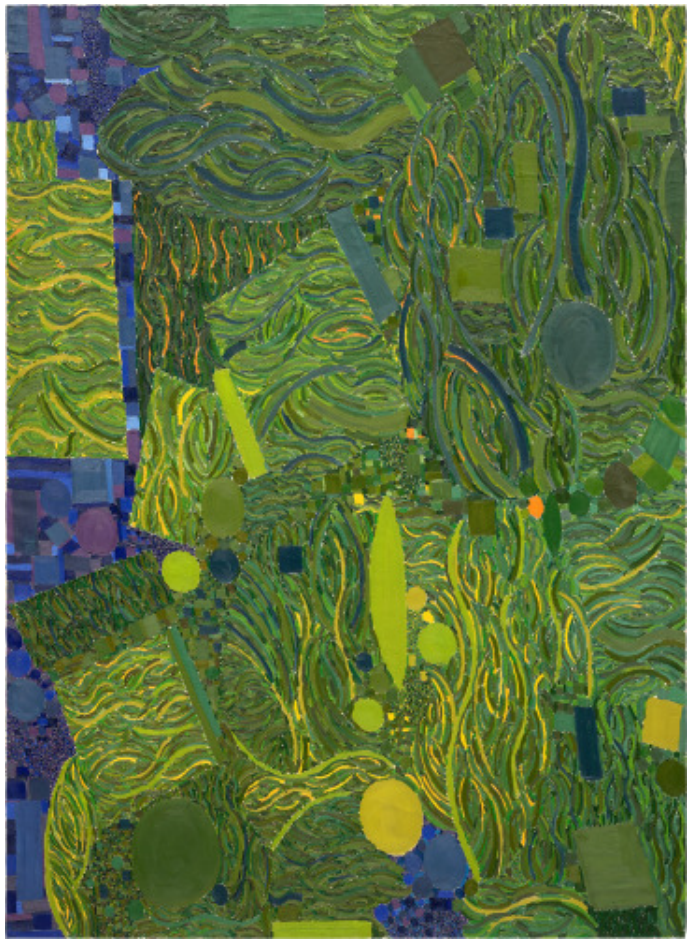
- Bull's work is currently on display at The Warehouse, Dallas, in *Lucy Bull: Nacar,* through November 25.
- Most recently, she had a solo exhibition at the Long Museum Shanghai, with *Venus World,* Jun.-Aug. 2023. Her work was also featured in the NGV Triennial at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne this year.
- Bull's paintings reside in numerous institutional collections, including MAMCO Geneva, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, among others.

[i] Lucy Bull, quoted in Kat Herriman, "Artist Lucy Bull Invites Others Into Her Cosmos," *Cultured Magazine,* 2020, online.

[ii] Bull, quoted in John Garcia, "Getting Lost in the Brushstrokes: Lucy Bull Interviewed by John Garcia," *BOMB Magazine*, Apr. 26, 2021, online.

[iii] David Kordansky Gallery, "Artist Lucy Bull: Bio," online.

Provenance
High Art, Paris
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner



33

Lynne Drexler

Seasonal Green

signed, titled and dated "Lynne Drexler Seasonal green 1969" on the reverse
oil on canvas
67 5/8 x 49 1/2 in. (171.8 x 125.7 cm)
Painted in 1969.

Estimate
$300,000 — 500,000

Go to Lot

"My vision is simply the world as I would like it to be." —Lynne Drexler

A disciple of Robert Motherwell and contemporary of Joan Mitchell, Lynne Drexler stood at the forefront of the second generation of Abstract Expressionists. The impasto-rich surfaces of the artist's lyrical canvases, such as *Seasonal Green*, 1969, helped propel American abstraction forward by shifting its focus from cerebral interiority to the beauty of the outside world. Her paintings were well-exhibited and acclaimed when they were executed—a *Los Angeles Times* review in 1965 recognized her "strong, purposeful approach" and "great potential significance" that could not be "dismissed lightly."[i] But as often happened with the women artists of her time, her vital contributions to Post-War abstraction became increasingly sidelined until she was almost written out of the art historical canon altogether. This omission is thankfully being corrected amid a widespread reappraisal of women's roles in the Abstract Expressionist movement as well as in the legacy of modernism. Exemplary of Drexler's visual thinking at the height of her career, *Seasonal Green* showcases the groundbreaking approach of this exceptional painter finally receiving her due.

Gustav Klimt, *The Park,* c. 1910. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

The late 1950s and 1960s were the most formative years of Drexler's career, a galvanizing period that gave her a taste of critical and commercial success. She had moved to New York in 1955 to study under two of the most influential painters of the era: Motherwell and Hans Hofmann, whose theories and teaching guided an entire generation of artists. Finding herself quickly subsumed into the New York School, Drexler rubbed shoulders with her peers at the Cedar Tavern, a legendary Greenwich Village watering hole frequented by Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Mark Rothko. By 1961, she had developed a signature stylistic idiom rooted in brilliantly contrasting hues applied in Pointillist swatches, which she unveiled at a solo show at the prestigious Tanager Gallery co-op. Coalescing the opposing color planes of Hofmann's "push-pull" technique with the

expressive power of Motherwell's canvases, her work began to incorporate the swirling grooves and dense clusters manifest in *Seasonal Green* by the end of the 1960s. This distinctive imagery, evoking Vincent van Gogh's Post-Impressionist landscapes, became marked by its resemblance to aerial views of lush forests and rocky coasts.

Vincent van Gogh, *Cypresses,* 1889. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1949, 49.30

The natural world was perhaps Drexler's most enduring theme, an endlessly stimulating subject that informed both her palette and the sensations she wished her paintings to invoke. The glistening blues and emerald tones employed in *Seasonal Green* were no doubt inspired by the rugged coastal landscapes of Maine, which held a special place for the artist until her death there in 1999. The tangle of greens—which is punctuated and defined by discs and winding lines painted in a spectrum of earthy hues—could be interpreted as a sprawling forest reaching out into the Atlantic. After Drexler and her husband John Hultberg spent their honeymoon on Monhegan Island, a rocky, remote island connected to the mainland only by ferry, they continued to make summer visits for two decades before she moved to the island full-time in 1983. An artists' haven since the late 19th century, the romantic topography and seclusion of Monhegan Island inspired generations of painters and sculptors, as varied as George Bellows, Louise Nevelson, Edward Hopper, and Andrew Wyeth. The works Drexler painted in the 1960s, including *Seasonal Green,* were based on sketches and photographs of the wooded areas and pebble seashores she would carry back with her to New York every year: source materials which provided her with a much-needed escape from the urban jungle of downtown Manhattan.

Drexler's commitment to these abstracted landscapes was steadfast and daringly original, especially considering that *Seasonal Green* was executed during a time when Pop and Minimalism had superseded Abstract Expressionism as the dominant force in the American art world. This was one reason why her work was overlooked for so long: her unwillingness to alter her approach to network or mirror passing trends. "I've always felt deeply within myself I was a damn good artist, though the world didn't recognize me as such," Drexler recalled. "I wasn't about to play their game."[ii] Today these paintings, such as *Seasonal Green,* stand as a testament to the purity and resilience of her vision. "When you look at her life's work, you see the humanity," curator Tralice Bracy expressed. "They are lyrical, joyful, intense paintings."[iii]

[i] Betje Howell, "Perspective on Art," *Los Angeles Times,* Apr. 1965.

[ii] Lynne Drexler, quoted in Roger Amory, *Lynne Drexler: A Life in Color,* Monhegan Island, 2008.

[iii] Ted Loos, "Out of Obscurity, Lynne Drexler's Abstract Paintings Fetch Millions," *The New York Times,* Oct. 22, 2022, online.

Provenance
Lupine Gallery, Monhegan, Maine
Acquired from the above by the present owner

34 o◆

Gerhard Richter

Abstraktes Bild (636)

signed, inscribed and dated “636 Richter 1987” on the reverse of the left panel; inscribed “636” on the reverse of the right panel
oil on canvas, in 2 parts
each 102 1/2 x 78 7/8 in. (260.4 x 200.3 cm)
overall 102 1/2 x 157 3/4 in. (260.4 x 400.7 cm)
Painted in 1987.

Estimate
Estimate On Request

Go to Lot

"No ideology. No religion, no belief, no meaning, no imagination, no meaning, no invention, no creativity, no hope – but painting like nature, painting as change, becoming, emerging, being-there, thusness; without an aim, and just as right, logical, perfect and incomprehensible." —Gerhard Richter

Gerhard Richter pulls the squeegee across a luminescent expanse of sticking, shimmering oil paint. A central space of black grounds the artist's brilliant gradations of strawberry red, acid yellow, bright cerulean, turquoise, and lime green. His tool swoops in wide diagonals; vertical and horizontal striations of pigment, a spackling of sunshine yellow and midnight blue. At such scale, the range of color, the prismatic rainbow of hues shining forth, is all-encompassing, overwhelming; astonishing in its depth, its encapsulation of the act of painting, of color played out across time. This is *Abstraktes Bild,* a painting of monumental scale, and a record of Richter, a true innovator, at the height of his powers.

Abstraktes Bild, 1987, comprised of two canvases, spans over eight feet in height and thirteen feet in width. The work is a consummate example of Richter's skill with the squeegee, a tool he integrated into his abstract paintings only one year prior, which has become a hallmark and visual signature of his richly varied practice.[i] With the squeegee, the artist pulls paint across the composition, working on both canvases at once, scraping layers out from under one another in a seemingly infinite field of color.

An Innovative Method

Gerhard Richter, *Venedig,* 1986. Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden. Image:/Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0230)

The late 1980s were arguably the most important period of Richter's artistic development. In addition to the career-changing innovation of the squeegee, 1986 marked the artist's first major retrospective exhibition, which travelled across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and the decade, as a whole, saw an increased engagement with Richter's work by American art institutions, galleries, and critics. As a result, *Abstraktes Bild* and its fellow, monumental *Abstrakte Bilder* of the late 1980s are among the finest and most desirable works in Richter's oeuvre. The works, with the unique visual and tactile qualities realized by the squeegee, speak to Richter's career-long pursuit of painting unbounded by ideology.[ii] His vision is the pursuit of painting, for painting's own sake.

Besides the present work, there is only one other *Abstraktes Bild* created in 1987, of identically massive dimensions, which resides in the Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon. Similar *Abstrakte Bilder* populate esteemed public and private collections around the world, including those of The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Ergo Versicherungsgruppe AG, Düsseldorf; Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, São Paulo; Carré d'Art, Nîmes; Landesbank Baden-

Württemberg, Stuttgart; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; and the Saint Louis Art Museum, which owns the iconic *November, Dezember, Januar* paintings of 1989. *Abstraktes Bild* was first exhibited at Galerie Durand-Dessert, Paris in 1988, and shown in the prestigious Carnegie International of the same year.

Video: https://www.nytimes.com/video/movies/100000001412673/clip-gerhard-richter-painting.html?action=click&gtype=vhs&version=vhs-heading&module=vhs&region=title-area&cview=true&t=9

Clip from *Gerhard Richter Painting,* 2011.

The use of the squeegee in *Abstraktes Bild* is essential to understanding the work's significance in Richter's oeuvre. The 2011 documentary, *Gerhard Richter Painting,* directed by Corinna Belz, gives unprecedented insight into the artist's technique. Clips from *Gerhard Richter Painting* reveal a physical, deliberate, and embodied process. Working with wood and acrylic squeegees often larger than his own body, Richter drags paint across the canvas, at times applying his entire body weight to the squeegee. Belz's microphones capture the deep scrape of the tool across the painted surface, and every squelch and drip of viscous oil paint. Each pass of the squeegee simultaneously covers the surface in new paint, excavates extant layers, and creates a new layer of color out of these accumulations.

One can imagine the practice played out, nearly 25 years earlier, with *Abstraktes Bild.* Richter's layers of paint record the movements of his body and squeegee. Through paint, we can see his entire body working to drag the tool from the upper left to lower right of *Abstraktes Bild.* We see the skittering vertical ridges of yellow and green; a passage of white that skips, ever so slightly, at the hinge of the two panels. It is a visceral, bodily feeling, enacted in visual terms.

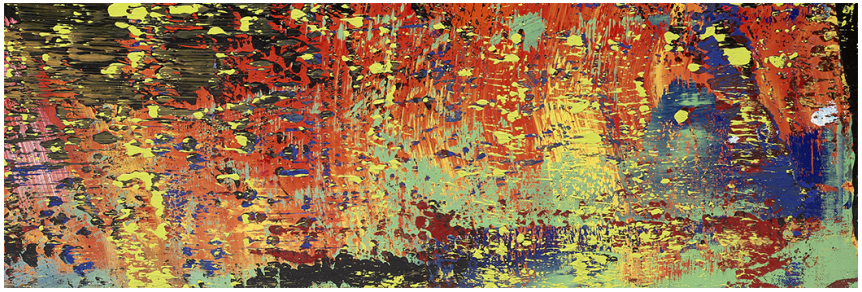
A Postmodern Context, A Natural Process

"The moment a narrative like Greenberg's or Judd's no longer dominated painting is the moment when painting got interesting." —John Yau

Richter created *Abstraktes Bild* in the international art historical context of postmodernism, a vein of criticism that deplatformed an artist's originality in favor of viewing the artistic process as a reinterpretation of existent forms. Postmodernist critics decried the death of painting in the 1980s, cynically arguing that painting, whether figurative, abstract, or in between, had nowhere else to go. No further innovation could come from that medium, they argued. Richter disagreed.

In his writings and interviews from the 1980s, Richter lays out his stance as an artist without ideology, who, therefore, is guided by his materials. "I am a materialist on principle" he wrote in 1986, meaning that, for him, every emotive association of art derives from its physical properties: for *Abstraktes Bild,* it is the paint, the support, the brush, the squeegee.[iii] For Richter, the lack of a universal ideology to guide all painting was not a death sentence, but a form of freedom, which allowed his abstract paintings to "evolve their motifs as the works proceeds," as in the natural world. "For nature, too, does not develop an organism in accordance with an idea," he wrote. "Nature lets its forms and modifications come, within the framework of its given facts and with the help of chance."[iv]

The above quotation can be read as a how-to guide for Richter's squeegee method. Given a squeegee, oil paint, and two wooden panels, the result of each *Abstrakte Bilder* is different, due the role of chance in the painting process. While Richter has control of what colors he uses, where he applies them, and how he moves the squeegee (in what direction, with what force), it is chance that creates the gradations of color across the surface; chance that stipples the lime green in its idiosyncratic, irreplicable pattern over the black center; chance that scratches through the teal and midnight blue. Abstraction is a way to give form to chance; "the moment of chance is very important," Richter explains, and "it is guided and used" in *Abstraktes Bild.*[v]



Crucially, chance takes place over time in *Abstraktes Bild.* The work is not the result of one swipe of the squeegee, or a spontaneous splat of dripped paint. As does nature, Richter's work takes time.[vi] While not etymologically related, *build* as a homophone for *Bild* is a useful interpretive framework here. Richter builds up the painted surface of *Abstraktes Bild;* the work builds upon itself, layer upon layer, like rings make a tree, sediment makes a rock, bees build a hive. *Abstraktes Bild* records Richter's movement with the squeegee; the process of nature, of work, over time.

Richter takes up the generative process of nature as his subject in *Abstraktes Bild*, rather than directly representing a landscape or a tree, and it is this evocation of process that gives *Abstraktes Bild* its rich associative power. *Abstraktes Bild* is a close-up of the bark of a tree. It is a comet-strewn night sky. It is the iridescent wings of a beetle. It is these and a thousand more things, and that, Richter says, is where the *Abstrakte Bilder* "get their effect from, the fact that they incessantly remind you of nature, and so they're almost naturalistic anyhow."[vii]

Naturalism and the Sublime

Gerhard Richter, *Geseke,* 1987. Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. Image:/Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0230)

"This little slice of nature, and in fact any given piece of nature, represents to me an ongoing challenge, and is a model for my paintings." —Gerhard Richter

Indeed, naturalism is a key feature of Richter's photorealistic paintings, and he has painted landscapes since the 1960s.[viii] Richter's photorealistic landscapes have a haunting, ethereal quality, engaged by the artist's strategic blurring of the mimetic surface. The moodiness of Richter's landscapes echoes the dramatic, emotive vistas of 19th century Romantic painters such as Richter's countryman, Caspar David Friedrich. For artists like Friedrich, the natural landscape was the ideal visual representation of the sublime, an aesthetic ideal of rightness or greatness, or even the divine. To encounter a sublime landscape was an emotional experience, provoking awe and a sense of satisfaction in the viewer.

Richter views his photorealistic landscapes and abstract works as complimentary practices, and he continued to create landscapes concurrent to his development of the *Abstrakte Bilder.* His mastery of the strategic blur in the former comes across in the press of lime and yellow in the black center of *Abstraktes Bild,* for example, and for a brief period in 1986, the artist experimented with combining his photorealistic landscape and squeegee techniques together in the same painting. The photorealistic work "has so much to do with reality that I wanted a corresponding rightness," Richter says. In abstraction, "I believe I am looking for rightness...in nature everything is always right: the structure is right, the proportions are good, the colors fit the forms."[ix] Thus, for Richter, "rightness," or perhaps, even, the sublime, lies not in the representational, but the abstract. It lies in the process of nature, the process of painting, as embodied in *Abstraktes Bild.*

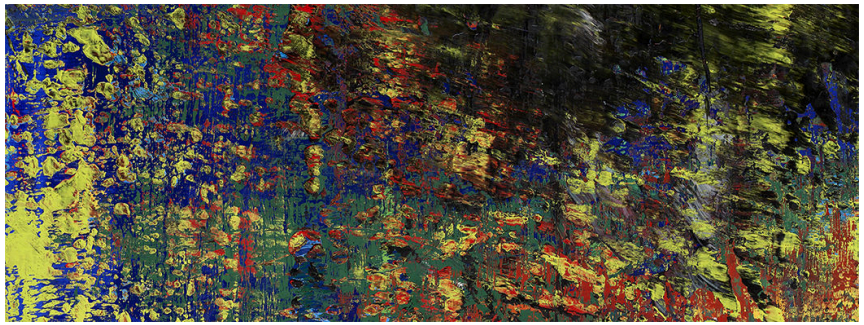
Caspar David Friedrich, *Das Riesengebirge (Giant Mountains),* c. 1830-35. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Nationgalerie, Berlin / Jörg P. Anders / Art Resource, NY

"Art is the highest form of hope." —Gerhard Richter

It was necessary for Richter to have a hopeful view of painting in the cynical, postmodern context of the 1980s. As an artist working in a Germany divided after World War II, hope was an irreplaceable tool for Richter to parse the difficulties of everyday life in his art, not to mention the trouble of memory and historical trauma. In a 1986 interview, the taciturn artist grows passionate

as he describes the link between art and hope. For Richter, making art is an essential part of the human experience, and celebrating it as such is essential to his 1980s practice. “It’s a hopeful thing” to make art, he says, “to possess this ability, and a good, humanistic thing. It stands in opposition to all the unpleasant things, such as aggression and malice, war and crime…to me [art] means this other side, which engenders hope, because we have this side in us: beauty, love, truth!!”[x]

Abstract art, for Richter, is the ideal form for this “hopeful thing,” as the absence of recognizable forms creates the “sheer necessity” of finding a deeper meaning, for ourselves and what we see, in the work.[xi] Working with chance, as in *Abstraktes Bild,* each painting by Gerhard Richter hinges on his unflinching faith that the work will emerge, out of layers and layers of paint, every time.



[i] Rosemary Cohane Erpf, *Painting in the 1980s: Reimagining the Medium,* University of Chicago Press, 2022, p. 111.

[ii] Gerhard Richter, quoted in Erpf, p. 105.

[iii] Richter, entry for 28 Mar., 1986, in “Notes, 1986,” in Dietmar Elger and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007,* New York, 2009, p. 161.

[iv] Richter, entry for 21 Apr. 1986, ibid.

[v] Richter, quoted in Nicholas Serota, “I Have Nothing to Say and I’m Saying It,” in Mark Godfrey and Serota, eds., *Gerhard Richter: Panorama,* exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2011, p. 27; Richter, quoted in “Interview with Anna Tilroe, 1987,” in Elger and Obrist, p. 198.

[vi] Richter, quoted in Serota, p. 17.

[vii] Richter, quoted in “Interview with Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 1986,” in Elger and Obrist, p. 186.

[viii] “Gerhard Richter: Landscapes,” *Gerhard Richter,* accessed Sep. 2023, online.

[ix] Richter, quoted in “Interview with Anna Tilroe, 1987,” in Elger and Obrist, p. 198.

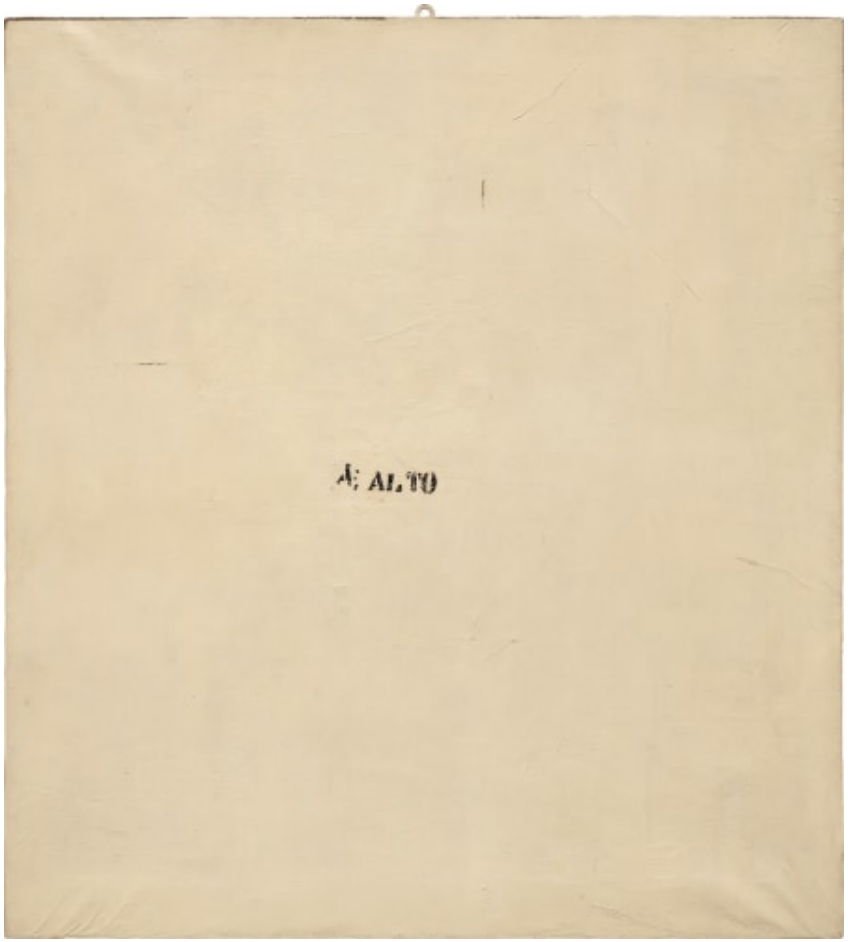
[x] Richter, quoted in “Interview with Christiane Vielhaber, 1986,” ibid., p. 191.

[xi] Richter, “Text for catalogue of *documenta 7,* Kassel, 1982,” ibid., p. 121.

Provenance
Galerie Liliane & Michel Durand-Dessert, Paris
Private Collection, France (acquired from the above in 1988)
Sotheby's, New York, November 14, 2018, lot 8
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited
Paris, Galerie Liliane & Michel Durand-Dessert, *Gerhard Richter*, March 19–April 23, 1988, n.p. (illustrated)
Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Museum of Art, *Carnegie International*, November 5, 1988–January 22, 1989, pp. 119, 199 (illustrated; titled *636 Untitled*)

Literature
Gerhard Richter: Catalogue Raisonné 1962-1993, exh. cat., Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 1993, Vol. III, no. 636, p. 182 (illustrated, n.p.)
Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter: Catalogue Raisonné 1976-1987, Volume 3*, Ostfildern, 2013, no. 636, p. 591 (illustrated)
Gerhard Richter: Panorama. A Retrospective, exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2016, p. 136



35

Mario Schifano

Alto

signed, titled and dated "Schifano 1960 "ALTO"" on the reverse
enamel on paper mounted on canvas
43 1/4 x 39 3/8 in. (109.9 x 100 cm)
Executed in 1960.

This work is registered in the Archivio Mario Schifano, Rome, under the n. 60/26 and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the Archivio Mario Schifano, Rome.

Estimate
$500,000 — 700,000

Go to Lot

A formidable figure in the Post-War Roman avant-garde, Mario Schifano was often referred to as "the Italian Andy Warhol." Despite this moniker, his work resounded far beyond the clever appropriation of Pop; Schifano's pictorial vision encapsulated the subversive undercurrent of Conceptual Art while presaging the formal economy of Minimalism. As a leading member of the Scuola di Piazza del Popolo, a loosely affiliated group of Roman artists, he executed a diverse corpus that took as its subject the material nature of painting, and harmonized with several international postmodern movements. This exploration began with Schifano's acclaimed *Monochromi*, a series of monochromatic abstract paintings including *Alto,* 1960, that depict what Claire Gilman called "the act and fact of viewing itself; the material means by which we see."[i] With its title stenciled across the eggshell white surface, *Alto*—which translates to "high" or "tall" in Italian—is composed of brown paper covered in industrial enamel paint and affixed to a canvas, exemplifying the artist's concern with ephemera and materiality.

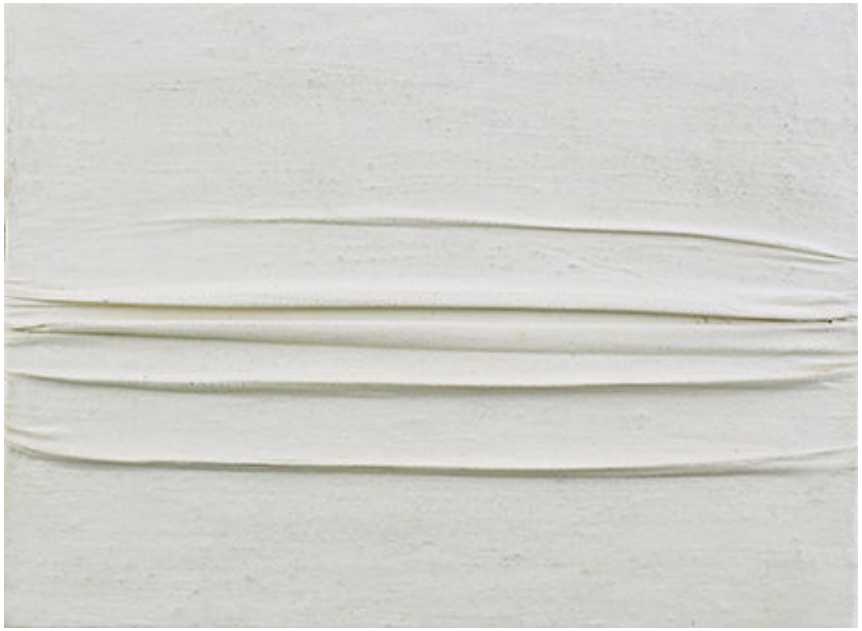
"Schifano sensed that painting should be seen with a contemporary eye and, after its aura is removed, needs to be hurled into the indistinct flow of words, sounds, and images—what constituted the very lifeblood of Post-War culture." —Luca Beatrice

1960 was a watershed year for Schifano, whose *Monochromi* debuted that year at the group exhibition, *Five Roman painters: Angeli, Festa, Lo Savio, Schifano, and Uncini,* presented at the influential Galleria La Salita in Rome. Signaling a departure from the gestural expression of *Arte informale*, this series immediately attracted critical interest for embodying a distinct painterly approach that eschewed easy categorization. This body of work soon caught the eye of significant dealers based in Europe and abroad, such as Ileana Sonnabend and Sidney Janis, who recognized the *Monochromi*'s broader resonance beyond the Italian avant-garde, and would later be responsible for bringing him to international prominence. Sharing an affinity with French *Nouveau Réalisme* and American Pop Art, these abstract pictures defied the traditional decorum of painting for a range of materials and subjects culled from the banality of everyday life.

Robert Rauschenberg, *Untitled (Mirror),* 1952. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

This preoccupation with the tactility of quotidian culture is manifest in the enamel house paint and pasted paper Schifano employed in *Alto.* With its creases and folds that resemble those of an advertising poster glued to a wall, the work speaks to the rampant rise of consumer culture that characterized the Post-War era. Schifano's use of unconventional painting media echoes his contemporaries' use of collage and enamel paint during the 1950s and 1960s—including Pop icons that Schifano greatly admired such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns—to evoke the visual language of mass media. This synergy is furthered by Schifano's use of the word *alto,* as text and stencils became frequent motifs in the American Pop vernacular due to their widespread

association with mechanical printing. However, while Rauschenberg and Johns explored the excesses and overstimulation of image saturation, the present work is almost entirely blank—coalescing the gestural strokes and drips of painting with the spatial ambiguity of a vacant television screen.



Piero Manzoni, *Achrome*, c. 1960. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

In this way, *Alto* seems to both resonate with and poke fun at the impassive purity and intellectual rigor of the *Achromes* his Milanese contemporary Piero Manzoni had begun two years earlier. "At first I used to paint with a very few colors," Schifano recalled in 1972, "because my work expressed the idea of the emblematic, of street signs, of perceptual phenomena, of primal things. I thought that painting meant starting from something absolutely primal… I would paint works… with nothing in them, empty images that went beyond any cultural intention. They wanted to be only themselves."[ii] Created during a formative moment in his career, these rare works exude the radical experimentation and formal intelligence that established his reputation as a pioneering voice of his era.

[i] Claire Gilman, "Mario Schifano: Beyond the Monochrome," in *Mario Schifano 1960–67,* exh. cat., Luxembourg & Dayan, London, 2014, p. 15.

[ii] Mario Schifano, quoted in Enzo Siciliano, "Lui ama Nancy la fotografa," *Il Mondo,* Nov. 16, 1972.

Provenance
Galleria D'Alessandro Ferranti, Rome
Collection Massimo Gatti, Italy (acquired from the above in 1975)
Private Collection, Rome
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Rome, Galleria D'Alessandro Ferranti, *La pittura come macchina del desiderio: Mario Schifano 1960/62*, 1975, n.p. (illustrated)
Spoleto, Palazzo Rancani Arroni, *Mario Schifano. per esempio,* June 27–July 26, 1998, p. 94 (illustrated)
New York, David Zwirner, *Roma/New York, 1953–1964*, January 12–February 25, 2023

Literature
Mario Schifano - Ampio Insoluto, exh. cat., Galleria AAM, Rome, 1978, p. 16
Fondazione M. S. Multistudio, *Mario Schifano, Opera su tela 1956–1982*, vol. I, Milan, 2007, no. 60/026, p. 22 (illustrated)

36 o◆

Georg Baselitz

Ein Roter

signed and dated “Baselitz 66” lower right; signed, titled and dated “Ein Roter 66 Baselitz” on the reverse
oil on canvas
63 3/4 x 51 1/8 in. (162 x 130 cm)
Painted in 1966.

Estimate
$6,000,000 — 8,000,000

Go to Lot

Ein Roter, 1966, is an icon of Georg Baselitz's *New Type,* or *Hero* paintings (1965-1966), a series hailed by Siegfried Gohr as "the masterful conclusion of all his early efforts."[i] The work represents the solidification of Baselitz's signature motifs across some of the most critical moments of his early career. It shows an artist coming into his own, navigating his cultural inheritance as a young German painter in the aftermath of World War II and a divided German state. As Gohr astutely notes, there is an overarching feeling of in-betweenness to this period of Baselitz's career, as he moves between motifs, cultural myths, and taboos, and reckons with the existential uncertainty of constant reinvention that lies at the core of his life's work.[ii]

Georg Baselitz, at right, with the present work in his Berlin studio, 1966. Photograph by Elke Baselitz. Image: © Elke Baselitz 2023, courtesy Archiv Castrum Peregrini

Self-portrait and icon at once, the towering central figure of *Ein Roter* stands rooted, barefoot, in the barren countryside, his body loaded down with pack and military fatigues. The red beret and title, *Ein Roter*, which translates to "a red one," hint to the Communist regime of Baselitz's native East Germany, but any heroic Socialist Realism is quickly cancelled out by the hero's unzipped trousers. Indeed, the painting is intentionally devoid of nationalism, or any sense of pride or boastfulness one might associate with a hero. The hero's expression is wistful; he holds a striped flag of unknowable national origin, which falls between his legs. The scenery behind him is desolate, with a bare-bones house, a crushed wheelbarrow, and an ambiguous rectangle, perhaps a warehouse, or a large brick, sketched out in brown paint. The rest of the landscape scrapes like stubble across the background, then disappears into nothingness.

The present work is part of the subset of the *Heroes* series created in Baselitz's studio in West Berlin in 1966. These canvases, with identical dimensions of 63 ¾ x 51 ⅛ in. (162 x 130 cm), foreground the *Hero* archetype, often with bare feet grounded into the landscape, and an upward, mournful facial expression. *Ein Roter*'s inclusion in a 1968 exhibition of Baselitz's work is markedly early for a *Hero* painting—the group was not shown comprehensively until 1973—suggesting that the artist held this painting in esteem as representative of the series.

[Left] Georg Baselitz, *Rebel*, 1965. Tate, London. Artwork: © 2023 Georg Baselitz [Right] Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, *Reisläufer / Bettler*, 1514.

Baselitz in Florence: Mannerist Forebears

Baselitz had learned about the Mannerists through books and prints in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and their artistic ethos inspired his *Pandemonium* period, c. 1961-1965, as seen in *Untitled,* 1963. However, it was not until 1965, when he was granted a fellowship at the Villa Romana, Florence, that Baselitz encountered the Italian Mannerists' paintings firsthand. Baselitz began his *Heroes* while a fellow at the Villa Romana, and we can directly see the influence of his exposure to Italian art on this series.

In *Ein Roter,* Baselitz plays with the human form, color, and composition in a way that's indebted to the Mannerists. Baselitz picks up on these artists' penchant for painting figures with small heads, for instance—the head of *Ein Roter* is disproportionate to his broad chest. There is a painterliness to *Ein Roter* as well, seen in the contiguous pale pink and yellow line that twists through the hero's body. The use of these fleshy colors, sinuous as Pontormo's figural work, creates an uneasy effect, as if the outline of the figure is hovering over the hero's earthen body.

Beyond such formal homage, the intellectual inheritance of Mannerism is present in *Ein Roter,* and the *Heroes* series at large. Baselitz studied art historian Gustav René Hocke, who wrote that the movement was "not only an expression of an intellectual crisis, but also an '*awareness* of a "profoundly unbalanced" world. [...] "Mannerism" thus describes the specific aesthetic behavior of a particular type of man within history and towards all forms of reality.'"[iii] These same words could describe Baselitz's approach to painting the *Heroes.*

Bronzino, *Portrait of Cosimo I de' Medici as Orpheus,* c. 1537-1539. The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. John Wintersteen, 1950, 1950-86-1

The Fallacy of the Hero

For Baselitz, the division of East and West Germany, and the prolonged trauma of World War II, combined with the predominant cultural narratives surrounding these events, were signs of an unbalanced world in which the artist felt like an outsider.[iv] He felt alone, existentially uncertain, and undefined. The *Heroes* are flush with the artist's own ambivalence, his desire for a guiding artistic principle at war with his distrust of ideology in art. *Ein Roter* is tall and broad, almost brick-like in his visage, like a human wall at the fore of the picture plane, and yet he is abject in manner.

There's a melancholy in his upward expression, a limpness to his arms, a slope in his square shoulder, that reflects the artist's own reservations about the idea of a hero in the first place.

As the artist reflected years later, "I was born into a destroyed order, a destroyed landscape, a destroyed people, a destroyed society. And I didn't want to re-establish an order: I'd seen enough of so-called order" in Nazi Germany, and Communist East Germany.[v] *Ein Roter,* then, can be read as a re-ordering of heroic principles.

"The hero only becomes a hero by means of a venerable reception and is—like history itself—the result of a construction, subject to changing purposes and political intentions." —Uwe Fleckner

The hero is one of the oldest and most enduring types in human history and folklore. But, as Uwe Fleckner observes in his investigation of Baselitz's *Heroes,* the hero, and which attributes of his are deemed heroic, are deeply dependent on his cultural context.[vi] In Baselitz's Post-War Germany, where *Ein Roter* was painted in his West Berlin studio in 1966, the hero, once the prop of Nazi nationalist propaganda, is now "a tabooed figure, which, as a result of war and despotism, [has] become eternally infused with guilt."[vii] In this cultural context, then, Baselitz's use of heroic visual tropes in *Ein Roter* becomes deeply ironic, ambiguous, and emotionally fraught.

Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog,* 1818. Hamburger Kunsthalle. Image: Bridgeman Images

In *Ein Roter,* Baselitz calls on the tradition of European history paintings, which depicted Classical and Christian stories in which hero was always the largest figure, or the one to which all other figures turn or look in deference. Caspar David Friedrich's heroic figures also come to mind, such as *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog,* 1818, Hamburger Kunsthalle, which places a solitary man in the foreground against a majestic landscape.

In comparison, the hero of *Ein Roter* is far greater than the diminutive landscape behind him; the house and crumpled wheelbarrow are no larger than his feet, with the landscape itself stippled in receding brown marks at left, almost an afterthought compared to the worked, wrought surface of

the hero's body. Richard Shiff identifies these marks on the body as a graphic form of stress, an "unruly surplus energy" expressed through strokes of paint. Unlike the marks articulating the eyes and nose, *Ein Roter*'s stress-marks do not necessarily contribute to the construction of the human form on canvas. The stubble-like pink dashes across the figure's crotch, for instance, or the same marks, dashing off the figure's pack and into the background, are not representational; they "evoke an attitude, a posture, a state of feeling."[viii]

And it is this feeling, this contradictory feeling of being a modern German man—abject, yet staid; apathetic, yet guilty; tired, yet hopeful—that Baselitz captures in the figure of *Ein Roter.* He has the attributes of a hero, but not the attitude; he is a motif without meaning. The hero is thus inverted, in a massive step forward for Baselitz's painting practice. From here, with the motif of the hero turned inside-out, Baselitz draws ever closer to his greatest innovation: the complete inversion of the picture plane in 1969.

[i] Siegfried Gohr, translated by Annie Bourneuf, *Georg Baselitz: Works from the 1960s and 1970s,* exh. cat., Foundation 20 21, 2006, p. 9.

[ii] Ibid., p. 5.

[iii] Gustav René Hocke (1957), quoted in Max Hollein and Eva Mongi-Vollmer, eds., *George Baselitz—The Heroes,* exh. cat., Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, 2016, p. 20.

[iv] Gohr, p. 5.

[v] Georg Baselitz (1995), quoted in Hollein and Mongi-Vollmer, p. 14.

[vi] Uwe Fleckner, "The Post-Heroic Hero: Georg Baselitz and the End of a Failed Ideology," ibid., p. 48.

[vii] Ibid., p. 52.

[viii] Richard Shiff, "Lost," ibid., p. 42.

Provenance
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne
Dr. E. Kremer, Aachen (acquired from the above circa 1980)
Hilde Grevenstein, Hauset (by descent from the above)
Christie's, London, February 8, 2006, lot 9
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited
Baden-Baden, Staatliche Kunsthalle, *14 mal 14: Junge deutsche Künstler. Georg Baselitz,* May 17–26, 1968
Kunsthalle Bielefeld, *Georg Baselitz: Vier Wände*, September 1, 1985–October 27, 1986, no. 8, pp. 117, 152 (illustrated, p. 117)
New York, Michael Werner Gallery, *Georg Baselitz: Hero Paintings*, March 2–April 14, 1990, no. 11, pp. 9, 31 (illustrated, p. 31)
Aachen, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, *Ostkunst – Westkunst*, June 29–September 22, 1991, p. 23 (illustrated)
Aachen, Jesuitenkirche Galerie der Stadt Aschaffenburg, *Deutsche Kunst nach 1945 aus dem Ludwig Forum und anderen Sammlungen*, April 8–June 5, 1995, p. 69 (illustrated; illustrated on the front cover)
Aachen, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, *Streit-Lust. For Argument's Sake. Die Kunst der Letzten 30 Jahre und die Sammlung Ludwig*, October 28, 2001–February 10, 2002, p. 111 (illustrated)
New York, Nyehaus, *Georg Baselitz: Works from the 1960s and 1970s*, January 11–February 17, 2007, p. 39 (illustrated)
Paris, Grand Palais, Galeries Nationales, *Picasso.Mania*, October 7, 2015–February 29, 2016, no. 238, p. 278 (illustrated)

Literature
Georg Baselitz: Bilder 1962-1972, exh. cat., Kunstverein, Hamburg, 1972, n.p. (illustrated)
Georg Baselitz, exh. cat., Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, 1981, p. 40 (illustrated)
Baselitz: sculptures, exh. cat., Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 1983, p. 12 (illustrated; erroneously titled, *Le nouveau type*)
Franz Dahlem, *Georg Baselitz*, Cologne, 1990, p. 84 (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, 1968, installation view illustrated)
Baselitz, exh. cat., Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Milan, 1997, pp. 17-18 (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, 1968, installation view illustrated)
Detlev Gretenkort, ed., *Georg Baselitz. Collected Writings and Interviews*, London, 2010, pp. 99, 318 (illustrated, p. 99)
Detlev Gretenkort, ed., *Georg Baselitz, Gesammelte Schriften und Interviews*, Munich, 2011, p. 99 (illustrated)
Georg Baselitz: The Heroes, exh. cat., Städel Museum, Frankfurt, 2016, no. 5, p. 24 (the artist with the present work in his studio, Berlin, 1966, illustrated)
Georg Baselitz, exh. cat., Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., 2018, p. 55 (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, 1968, installation view illustrated)
Richard Calvocoressi, *Georg Baselitz*, London, 2021, pp. 114-115 (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, 1968, installation view illustrated, p. 114)

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BEING SOLD TO BENEFIT THE GEISEL SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

37

Helen Frankenthaler

Fire

signed "Frankenthaler" lower right
oil on canvas
57 1/4 x 77 in. (145.4 x 195.6 cm)
Painted circa 1964.

Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

Go to Lot

Frankenthaler burst onto the New York painting scene in the early 1950s, combining the formal innovations and working methods of artists such as Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock with her own signature technique: the soak-stain. With the soak-stain, Frankenthaler thinned oil paint with turpentine to create a luminous wash of paint that soaked completely into the unprimed canvas, as seen in *Fire,* c. 1964. The technique, was, in its way, the apogee of influential critic Clement Greenberg's definition of modern painting: in Frankenthaler's work, paint and support became one united surface.

There is a physicality to Frankenthaler's soak-stain technique, too, that resonates with the depth of emotion and interpretation that the viewer finds in her work. Photographer Alexander Liberman visited Frankenthaler's studio circa 1964, where he captured the creation of *Fire* in a series of dynamic portraits—bringing the "action" of "action painting" to life. Liberman's images reveal how bodily Frankenthaler's painting process was: like Jackson Pollock, she spread her canvases on the floor of her studio to best brush and pour her brilliant expanses of color across them. In some images, Frankenthaler is standing, sock-footed, on the canvas itself; in others, she kneels, a bucket of paint in her hands. *Fire,* then, which seems to hold a distant horizon in its depth (perhaps with the orange orb, at center, like a setting sun), is all the more impressive, given the flatness inherent to her grounded working method.

Fire was featured in the landmark 2016 exhibition, *Women of Abstract Expressionism,* at the Denver Art Museum. The first comprehensive museum exhibition of its kind, the show presented female artists working in Abstract Expressionism, whose accomplishments and innovations were historically overshadowed by those of their male peers. Frankenthaler, however, can be seen as an exception to this gendered rule, for even in her own time, she was lauded as an artist of extraordinary talent. In 1960, for instance, she was honored with a solo retrospective exhibition at the Jewish Museum, New York, and she had solo exhibitions of her work at prestigious galleries across North America and Europe each year of that decade. *Fire* has been in the same family collection for fifty years, since 1973.

The present work installed in *Women of Abstract Expressionism,* Denver Art Museum, 2016. Artwork: © 2023 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Fire, with its rich expanses of bright color, is as exemplary as any of Frankenthaler's early soak-stain works, creating an emotionally resonant depth of field in the artist's signature style, while also signaling Frankenthaler's adept anticipation of 1960s trends in painting. Significantly, *Fire* is a soak-stain painting executed in oils; in the mid-1960s, the artist transitioned to using acrylic paints, and thus *Fire* is more closely aligned, in material terms, with the innovations that first brought Frankenthaler critical acclaim. Frankenthaler's combination of turpentine and oil creates a distinct haloing effect on the raw canvas that acrylic paint cannot achieve. This effect is visible at the edges of the layers of paint in *Fire,* as the red bleeds into the orange at top left, for instance. From Liberman's images, we can see how Frankenthaler allowed the paint to seep and spread across the canvas—in the four blots of scarlet, visible in one image, which we see expanded into bands of color in the final work. Frankenthaler's practice is one of both expansion and contraction, as she allows her paintings to grow across the canvas, then crops them down to the most effective composition. The process is both dynamic and controlled; in *Fire,* Frankenthaler places a ruler against the band of ochre running across the bottom of the canvas—one can see the halo of this tool in the final composition, emphasizing the horizontal flow of this golden field of color.

Fire's evocative title acts as an interpretive key to Frankenthaler's abstraction. As E.A. Carmean, Jr., explains, critics and scholars have long used Frankenthaler's titles to read images, moods, and associations into her abstract, landscape-like expanses.[i] With *Fire,* pools of fire-engine red center the composition, their soak-stained forms splashed in sharp relief against passages of blank

canvas and patches of goldenrod and indigo. A circle of burnt orange arches around the red center, echoing the ochre and umber-toned horizon lines at the lower edge, while a curving expanse of forest green swells up at the left, almost like a tree trunk. It is as if the viewer is watching a fire grow from a distance, perhaps taking shelter behind a tree as flames race across a prairie.

George Catlin, *Prairie Bluffs Burning,* 1832. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Image: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.375

The potential for such rich interpretation, Carmean argues, derives from "the intersection of two different kinds of *place* in [Frankenthaler's] art."[ii] The first is the physical place of the painting itself, as an environment the viewer is looking into, an imagined environment that Frankenthaler creates through the act of painting. The second kind of place is the "real world" of physical places and artistic inspirations in Frankenthaler's everyday life. Indeed, the horizontal canvases and panoramic painted expanses of Frankenthaler's oeuvre, *Fire* included, often encourage comparisons to physical landscapes and landscape paintings. And while Frankenthaler was hesitant to accept the gendered reading of her abstract work as particularly natural ("[my work] has no more to do with nature... than the greatest Pollocks or Monets have to do with nature," she once said), she agreed that, admittedly "the references [to landscape] are there," for herself and her male peers, too.[iii]

"Anything that has beauty and provides order (rather than chaos or shock alone), anything resolved in a picture (as in nature) gives pleasure—a sense of rightness, as in being one with nature… It is an order familiar and new at the same time."
—Helen Frankenthaler

The confluence of two senses of place, shifting between real and imagined, physical and painted, allow for the rich blossoming of feeling, mood, and emotion experienced when encountering works like *Fire.* Frankenthaler's dual evocation of real and imagined space gives her viewer a choice of emotional experience. The viewer can stand in the expansive feeling of an open landscape—a burning prairie, perhaps—or dive into the introspection of an abstract color field. As Frankenthaler herself explains, "in my art I've moved and have been able to grow. I've been someplace. Hopefully, others should be similarly moved."[iv]

Helen Frankenthaler, *Royal Fireworks,* 1975. Realized $7.8M USD at auction in 2020, a world auction record for the artist. Artwork: © 2023 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Leading Frankenthaler scholar John Elderfield identifies the movement between depth and flatness as a key feature of Frankenthaler's work in the early 1960s. He interprets this tension as the result of the artist's engagement with the developing aesthetics of Pop Art, Minimalism, and Color Field painting.[v] In *Fire,* for instance, Frankenthaler's crisp, flat, and clear planes of color anticipate the printmaking aesthetics of Pop artists, while the brightness of her colors connects to advertising's influence on Pop. Her fields of color fill the canvas to its edges. They are unambiguous and distinct, despite their soak-stained edges, drawing on the reserved, emotive power of the burgeoning Minimalists. However, it would be a mistake, says Elderfield, to see Frankenthaler's

engagement with the movements of her time as simply passing, or derivative. “Frankenthaler’s art of the 1960s, like that of the 1950s,” he writes, “is affirmatively of its time as well as exceptional in it.”[vi]

[i] E.A. Carmean, Jr., *Helen Frankenthaler: A Paintings Retrospective,* exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1989, p. 7.

[ii] Ibid., p. 8.

[iii] Helen Frankenthaler, quoted in Alexandra Schwartz, et al., *As in Nature: Helen Frankenthaler Paintings,* exh. cat., Clark Institute, Williamstown, 2017, p. 13.

[iv] Frankenthaler, quoted in Carmean, Jr., p. 8.

[v] John Elderfield, *Frankenthaler,* New York, 1989, pp. 139-141.

[vi] Ibid., p. 141.

Provenance
Private Collection, Denver (acquired in 1973)

Exhibited
Denver Art Museum, *Women of Abstract Expressionism,* June 12–September 25, 2016
San Francisco, Berggruen Gallery, *Helen Frankenthaler: Paintings*, September 26–November 9, 2019, no. 3, pp. 16-17, 58 (illustrated, p. 17)

Literature
Barbara Rose, *Frankenthaler*, New York, 1971, pl. 200, p. 262 (the artist with the present work in her studio, New York, 1964, illustrated)
Helen Frankenthaler: A Paintings Retrospective, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1989, p. 10 (the artist with the present work in her studio, New York, 1964, illustrated)
Yasmeen Siddiqui, “'Women of Abstract Expressionism' Challenges the Canon But Is Only the Beginning,” *Hyperallergic*, August 9, 2016, online (Denver Art Museum, 2016, installation view illustrated)
“Women of Abstract Expressionism at Denver Art Museum (DAM), through September 25, 2016,” *Arts Summary: A Visual Journal*, August 29, 2016, online (Denver Art Museum, 2016, installation view illustrated)
Kealey Boyd, “Sexism and the Canon: Three Female Artists Reflect on ‘Women of Abstract Expressionism,’” *Hyperallergic*, September 14, 2016, online (Denver Art Museum, 2016, installation view illustrated)
"A photo of “Women of Abstract Expressionism” at the Denver Art Museum," *VoCA Journal*, November 11, 2016, online (Denver Art Museum, 2016, installation view illustrated)

PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN COLLECTION

38

Gerhard Richter

Abstraktes Bild (557-3)

signed, inscribed and dated “557-3 Richter 1984” on the reverse
oil on canvas
41 3/8 x 39 3/8 in. (105.1 x 100 cm)
Painted in 1984.

Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

Go to Lot

With characteristic boldness and a bright sense of color theory, Gerhard Richter splits his 1984 *Abstraktes Bild* down the middle. To the left, perpendicular gradients of scarlet and grey create a sense of depth, as if viewing a fiery sunset over a mountain. Across the border, energetic brushstrokes of white, crimson, and phthalo green writhe against a lime green background that fades to a darker shade at far right. Diagonal strokes cross the center, like a storm cloud with lime green lightning bolts, uniting both sections in the same abstract ecosystem. These formal contrasts push and pull the eye over the canvas, across Richter's virtuosic juxtaposition of complementary colors and variance of brushstroke.

The 1980s were arguably the most important decade in Richter's career, as the artist transitioned from a largely representational painting practice, defined by his blurred photorealist paintings, to a practice dominated by abstraction. In 1983, the artist moved to Cologne, where he has maintained residence ever since, making *Abstraktes Bild* one of the earlier works to come out of the studio in which he produced his most iconic work. In contrast to his abstractions in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the gridded Color Charts and monochrome Grey paintings, the *Abstrakte Bilder* of the 1980s burst out in dynamic, kaleidoscopic hues. The bright, even explosive handling of paint across the surface of *Abstraktes Bild* is far-removed from the strict rigor of the artist's early abstractions. Richter's work received increasing attention internationally, and was shown more widely; in the year of *Abstraktes Bild*'s creation alone, he participated in the Venice Biennale (his third), and had four solo exhibitions across Europe.

Gerhard Richter, *Betty,* 1988. Saint Louis Art Museum. Image/Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2023 (0229)

Abstraktes Bild was previously in the collection of U.S. Senator Thomas Eagleton and his wife, Barbara, a philanthropic couple who contributed funds to art museums in their home state of Missouri. The couple originally donated *Abstraktes Bild* to the Saint Louis Art Museum, which owns Richter's 1989 suite, *November, Dezember,* and *Januar,* some of the finest of Richter's *Abstrakte Bilder* in public collections in the United States. Perhaps one of Richter's most iconic photorealistic paintings, *Betty,* 1988, resides in the Saint Louis Art Museum in part due to the Eagletons' generosity. Their selection of the present work speaks to the museum quality of *Abstraktes Bild.*

"Variations on a theme—the theme of painting—provide the rule of Richter's production rather than the exception." —Anne Rorimer

When Richter created *Abstraktes Bild,* art critics were working within the framework of postmodernism, a set of ideas that valued the artistic process as a reinterpretation of existent forms, rather than the product of one individual's original ideas. Postmodernist critics announced the death of painting in the 1980s, cynically arguing that painting—figurative, abstract, and otherwise—had nowhere else to go. Richter wasn't convinced.

In his own words, Richter leaned into "the sheer obstinacy of carrying on painting," and turned to abstraction to push the boundaries of his chosen medium.[i] In writings and interviews from the 1980s, Richter defined his position as an artist without ideology, who, therefore, is guided by his materials.[ii] He saw the absence of ideology as a form of freedom, which allowed him to focus on the process of painting, and the way in which paintings could, in a sense, create themselves. Painting was about "letting a thing come, rather than creating it," he wrote, and this intuitive, responsive approach to painting guides *Abstraktes Bild.*[iii]

Willem de Kooning, *Composition,* 1955. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Richter's receptive attitude towards the process of painting stands in contrast to the bombastic, emotive practices of the Abstract Expressionists and Lyrical Abstractionists a generation before him. Where such artists focused on the brushstroke as gesture, a record of a personal, emotional state, for Richter, the brushstroke is a tool, and one that he increasingly abandoned across the 1980s in favor of the squeegee. *Abstraktes Bild* does not use the latter tool, but shows the artist on his path to his signature abstract idiom, at a midpoint between gestural expression and the obliterative marks of the squeegee. From basal planes of red and green, reminiscent of Minimalist, Color Field expanses, Richter builds up his marks on the surface of *Abstraktes Bild.* In foregoing

the individualist idiom of gestural abstraction, Richter writes in his own painterly language, all the same.

[i] Gerhard Richter, quoted in "Interview with Wolfgang Pehnt, 1984," in Dietmar Elger and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007,* Distributed Art Publishers, 2009, p. 137.

[ii] Richter, entry for 28 Mar., 1986, in "Notes, 1986," ibid., p. 161.

[iii] Richter, entry for 28 Feb. 1985, in "Notes, 1985," ibid., p. 140.

Provenance
Kamakura Gallery, Tokyo
Vrej Baghoomian Gallery, New York
Wolff Gallery, New York
Christie's, New York, November 13, 1991, lot 287
Senator and Mrs. Thomas F. Eagleton, Saint Louis
The Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis (gifted by the above in 1994)
Christie's, New York, November 11, 2004, lot 184
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited
New York, Wolff Gallery, *Strategies for the Next Painting*, January 8–February 9, 1991, pp. 4, 18 (illustrated, p. 4)

Literature
Gerhard Richter. Bilder / Paintings 1962-1985, exh. cat. and catalogue raisonné, Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, 1986, no. 557/3, pp. 307, 399 (illustrated, p. 307)
Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter: Catalogue Raisonné 1976-1987, Volume 3*, Ostfildern, 2013, no. 557-3, p. 410 (illustrated upside down)

39

George Condo

Smiling Girl With Ponytail

signed and dated “Condo 08” on the reverse
oil on canvas
72 x 60 1/4 in. (182.9 x 153 cm)
Painted in 2008.

Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

Go to Lot

George Condo's *Smiling Girl with Ponytail,* 2008, grins out at the viewer from three angles at once. Her head, with its swooshing auburn ponytail, faces at a three-quarters angle, but the rest of her features turn in opposing directions. Her bright blue right eye, accented with periwinkle eyeshadow and a plucked brow, looks directly out from the center of her forehead, a position which suggests either a profile or head-on view—or both at once. Her button nose (one of Condo's stylistic signatures) pokes out into the sky blue-to-grey gradient background, but its small, oval shape and shading mimics the spot of blush on her cheek. Below these twisting features sits the girl's open, smiling mouth, with glossy red lips and even teeth. The mouth, grinning at almost the exact center of the canvas, is perhaps the most eerie, and unreal, element of all. It seems it would float off the face, if not for the cleft edge of her cheekbone.

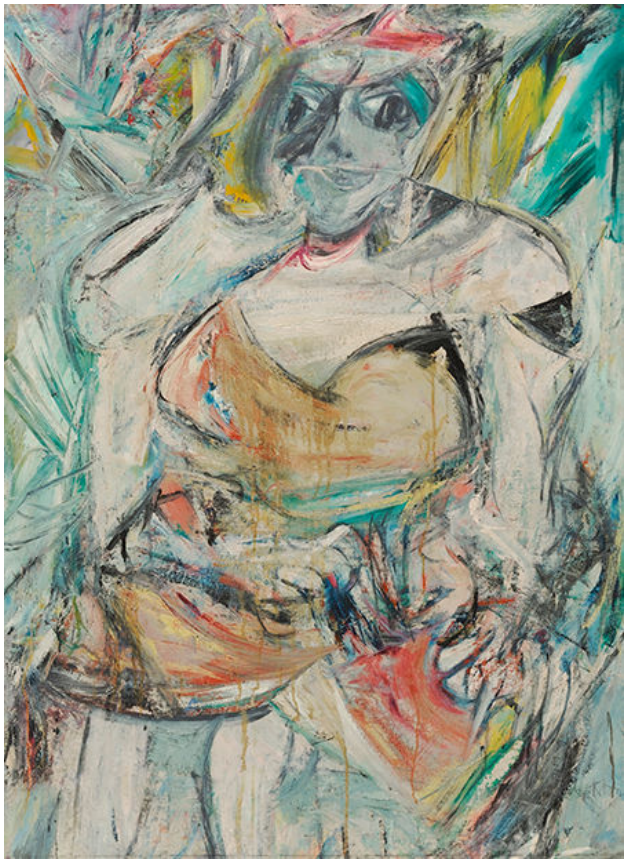
Pablo Picasso, *Sylvette,* 1954. Private Collection. Image: © Christie's Images, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The triangulation of facial features across *Smiling Girl with Ponytail* exemplifies the legacy of Pablo Picasso, one of Condo's greatest influences. *Smiling Girl with Ponytail* not only draws on the angularity and fragmentation of Picasso's innovative Cubist portraits, but the girl's swinging ponytail recalls one of Picasso's later muses, Sylvette. Picasso often painted the young woman in profile, to best render the lines of her long, high ponytail. However, where Picasso found his muse in individual women, Condo takes pride in the fact that his subjects are not real people, but "entirely imaginary subjects," he says, amalgamations of absurdity drawn from the characters and emotions of everyday life.[i] It is these aspects of the human psyche, rather than geometric planes, that Condo fragments in *Smiling Girl with Ponytail,* a technique he calls psychological cubism.

Condo developed his signature balance between figuration, fragmentation, and abstraction during the mid-1980s, when he lived in Paris and soaked in the European canon of art. Indeed, *Smiling Girl with Ponytail* reveals a residue of this time in his life, with the glossy, high finish of the painted surface, and three-quarter portrait pose of Condo's imaginary sitter recalling European portraiture traditions. Rather than being a dated homage to a bygone style, however, Condo's work is evergreen, combining older values of color, tone, and composition with newer, postmodern values of innovation and reinterpretation.

"My painting is all about this interchangeability of languages in art, where one second you might feel the background has the shading and tonalities you would see in a Rembrandt portrait, but the subject is completely different and painted like some low-culture, transgressive mutation of a comic strip." —George Condo

Beyond Picasso and the European canon, Condo calls on Willem de Kooning's abstracted female forms, and Philip Guston's cartoonish eyes and mouths. Like de Kooning in particular, Condo uses the human body as the basis of abstraction or change, which produces a psychological effect in the viewer. "The figure is somehow the content and the non-content, the absolute collision of styles and the interruption of one direction by another..." Condo explains.[ii] Something is always "off" with Condo's figures, in a way that makes the viewer want look closely, and see if they can sort their anatomy out again.



Willem de Kooning, *Woman, II,* 1952. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Condo coined the term psychological cubism to describe how his paintings, free from the linear time of real life, can show "two or three sides of a personality at the same time."[iii] Within the facial geometry of *Smiling Girl with Ponytail,* each angle of the face—three-quarters, profile, front-facing—perhaps corresponds to an aspect of the imagined sitter's personality. The three-quarter view is formal, old-fashioned. The eye and nose, in profile, playful and upturned. And the forward smile, bright red and glistening, is enigmatic, even ridiculous. Each facial feature, each angle, combines and recombines, morphs, nose into blush on the cheek, blush on the cheek into ear, in an absurd mash of humanity.

[i] George Condo, quoted in Stuart Jeffries, "George Condo: 'I was delirious. Nearly died,'" *The Guardian,* Feb. 10, 2014, online.

[ii] Condo, quoted in Thomas Kellein, "Interview with George Condo, New York, 15 April 2004," in *George Condo: One Hundred Women,* exh. cat., Museum der Moderne Salzburg, 2005, p. 33.

[iii] Condo, quoted in Julie Belcove, "George Condo interview," *Financial Times,* Apr. 21, 2013, online.

Provenance
Galerie Andrea Caratsch, Zurich
Alessandro Seno, Milan (acquired from the above)
Christie's, London, June 26, 2013, lot 223
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited
Paris, Fondation Dina Vierny du Musée Maillol, *George Condo: La Civilisation perdue. The Lost Civilization*, April 17–August 17, 2009, pp. 82, 159 (illustrated, p. 82)

40

Georg Baselitz

Untitled

signed “Baselitz” lower right
gouache, watercolor and oil pastel on paper
24 3/4 x 19 in. (62.9 x 48.3 cm)
Executed in 1963.

Estimate
$300,000 — 400,000

Go to Lot

Inspired as much by Italian Mannerists as Georg Baselitz's own Pandemonium Manifestos of 1961-1962, *Untitled,* 1963, provides insight into the artist's process at a critical point in his early career. Throughout his life as a figurative artist, Baselitz has worked to make recognizable motifs unrecognizable, an effort that came to its most longstanding realization with his inversion of the human figure starting in 1969. *Untitled* shows an artist working through his motifs of choice—the human figure and the landscape; the heart, the phallus, the cross—reckoning with the legacies of formal representation in art, and reclaiming the German avant-garde.

Georg Baselitz, *P.D. Zeichnung,* 1963. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © Georg Baselitz 2023

Untitled presents a chaotic mass of limbs and landscape. A thick line of white gouache pierces through the heart of the central figure, dividing the composition into upper and lower portions. At top, Baselitz paints a rich cerulean blue sky, with splotches of dark blue in overlapping washes. The line isolates the figure's unusual face above the rest of the work—it is grey and mottled, without discernable features, save an arresting, dark eye. Yet, the highly worked surface, with built up layers of gouache, watercolor, and oil pastel in the grey mass, shows the intention behind this obscuring effect.

Below the line, *Untitled* descends into pandemonium. The bright blue sky connects to an arid, acid yellow landscape, bordered by two bare trees and a picket fence. One knows that the central shape is a human figure, and yet, the visual signs of humanity are mixed up, misplaced, ambiguous. There is a bloodied, yellow expanse of chest; the figure's right arm arcs down, with black-outlined fingers pinching a phallus, which seems disconnected, facing the opposite direction from the body it might be attached to. A limp, phallic shape curls in lieu of a left arm. As for the figure's legs and feet, these body parts devolve into a knotted mass, crudely outlined in oil pastel at the bottom of the composition. It is as if the figure stands in the ruin of itself, a half-human held up in a pile of dismembered limbs.

"Blasphemy is with us, blastogenesis (blossoming of excrescences) is with us, paleness and blue are ours." —Georg Baselitz, Pandemonium Manifesto I, second version, 1961

Untitled dates to Baselitz's Pandemonium period, c. 1961-1964, when the artist's output was most strongly informed by the Pandemonium Manifestos he produced with fellow artist Eugen Schönebeck in 1961 and 1962. These manifestos, first exhibited as illustrated lithographs, were an act of catharsis, an ardent reclamation of the repulsive edges of the human experience, and a provocative desire to represent these edges, this pandemonium, in art. Baselitz called for "the bloated, warted, gruel-like, and jellyfish creatures, limbs and interlaced erectile tissue," a line, indeed, that describes the central figure of the present work.[i] *Untitled* is not, explicitly, titled as a Pandemonium Drawing (a designation made by the artist by the initials *P.D.* at the start of titles, such as *P.D. Zeichnung,* 1963, The Museum of Modern Art, New York), however, the work dates to the Pandemonium period and examines the same formal and philosophical tropes as other *P.D.* works.

Art historian Shulamith Behr argues that Baselitz's works from the early 1960s represent a quest for "creative self-ethnology," or, the development of one's own visual language out of a wider cultural inheritance.[ii] As an artist coming of age in Post-War Germany (the Berlin Wall was built concurrent to the writing of the Pandemonium Manifestos), Baselitz rejected both Eastern Socialist Realism and Western Abstract Expressionism, instead seeking his own formula, inspired by the "outsiders" of art history. As Behr writes, "creative self-ethnology involved an embrace of estranged identities: the asocial, the insane, the deviant and the amoral; categories deemed

'degenerate' during the Third Reich."[iii]

Pontormo, *Descent from the Cross,* 1526-1528. Chiesa Santa Felicità, Florence. Image: Peter Horree / Alamy Stock Photo

"In me there is... the Mannerists' addiction to excess, a tangle of tendrils and artifices, coldness and devotion…" —Georg Baselitz, Pandemonium Manifesto I, first version, 1961

Curator Isabelle Dervaux argues that Baselitz's approach to figuration in his Pandemonium period was inspired by the Mannerists, whose artwork experienced a surge in academic interest in the 1950s and 1960s, with the 16th century painter, Pontormo, as a particular hero of his.[iv] The Mannerists used exaggeration and contortion to counter the harmonious aesthetic of the Renaissance; Baselitz, too, with his Pandemonium figuration, as seen in *Untitled*, reacted against the rigidity of Socialist Realism, and the aesthetic unity of Abstract Expressionism. There is an echo of Pontormo's twisting, overlapping limbs in the swarming body parts of *Untitled;* the bright blue sky recalls the elder artist's bold use of color, especially blue, in his altarpieces. Per Baselitz, the Mannerists "reacted to the established order by trying to uproot it... So there sprang up a tradition of irrational emotion, manifested in formal irregularity, as a way of recovering existential originality."[v] The same words could apply to Baselitz himself and *Untitled.*

Uncredited artist, *The Avenging Angel,* reproduced in Hans Prinzhorn, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill,* 1922. Image: Keith Corrigan / Alamy Stock Photo

The artwork of mentally ill people, as reproduced in Hans Prinzhorn's 1922 text, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill,* is another art historical precedent for *Untitled*.[vi] Similar to the impact of the Mannerists, the influence of *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* plays out in both formal and philosophical terms in *Untitled*. Baselitz, like Jean Dubuffet, Paul Klee, and Max Ernst before him, found an aesthetic and compositional freedom in the artworks illustrated in Prinzhorn's text.[vii] Under the logic of the Nazi regime, avant-garde artists were equated with the mentally ill, and thus designated as degenerate.[viii] Baselitz confronts this history, and the attendant unprocessed wartime trauma, both taboo in Post-War Germany, through his invocation of an outsider, avant-garde aesthetic.[ix] *Untitled,* with its confusing compositional logic and disturbing, severed forms, reclaims the German avant-garde as a source of national and personal pride.

Untitled presents the majority of the visual motifs present in Baselitz's 1960s works, namely, the solitary figure in a desolate landscape, and the symbols of the phallus, the heart (indicated in two arcs of red across the body), and the cross (as an X marking the spot next to the artist's signature). Per Rudi H. Fuchs, Baselitz's works on paper act as an essential foil to the artist's paintings, ensuring that his motifs, which he works so hard to destabilize on canvas, remain untethered. As Fuchs writes, "the motif must not achieve finality, because that would make it content... The drawing cuts through the picture, just as the individual brushstrokes in the picture cut through or even tear apart the motif, so that it becomes pure artistic construction."[x] *Untitled,* in scrambling together Baselitz's motifs, frees them up to perform as "pure artistic constructions" in his paintings.

Georg Baselitz, *MMM in G and A,* 1966. The George Economu Collection. Artwork: © Georg Baselitz 2023

The white line cutting through *Untitled,* too, is an essential visual marker of Baselitz's formal metamorphosis across the 1960s. As he continued to work in the mid-1960s, a horizontal line becomes a necessary compositional detail, allowing the artist to divide motif from content, and figuration from representation, even further. His persistent fragmentation of the picture plane, and the imagery it contained, led to a stylistic shift c. 1966-1967, as visible in the *Hero* painting, *MMM in G and A*, 1966, The George Economu Collection, for instance, where the picture plane is divided, horizontally, in two, with different angles and realities existing above and below that line.

This progressive fragmentation, and detachment from pictorial convention, led to Baselitz's radical

inversion of the figure on the picture plane in 1969—"a provocation and, for Baselitz, at the same time an inner liberation," as Antonia Hoerschelmann writes.[xi] *Untitled* thus stands as one of the earliest visual clues towards Baselitz's future as an artist. It is a rare and essential relic, a consummate Pandemonium period masterpiece in itself, and an indicator of the innovation to come.

[i]Georg Baselitz, "Pandemonic Manifesto I, Second version, 1961," in Detlev Gretenkort, ed., *Georg Baselitz: Collected Writings and Interviews,* London, 2010, p. 27.

[ii]Shulamith Behr, "Pandemonium Paintings" in Norman Rosenthal, et al., *George Baselitz: A Retrospective,* exh. cat., The Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2007, p. 51.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Isabelle Dervaux, "It's all about looking backwards," in Dervaux, et al., *Georg Baselitz: 100 Drawings from the beginning until the present*, exh. cat., The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, 2022, pp. 23-24.

[v] Baselitz, quoted ibid., p. 23.

[vi] "George Baselitz: Paintings and Drawings from the 1960s: Press Release," *David Zwirner* (formerly Zwirner and Wirth), Sep. 2002, online.

[vii] Sam Dolbear, "Hans Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*," *The Public Domain Review,* Feb. 29, 2019, online.

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] Antonia Hoerschelmann, "'It mustn't be compliant, but rather oblique': An Approach to the Complexity of Georg Baselitz's Paintings," in Dervaux et al., p. 13.

[x] Rudi H. Fuchs, quoted ibid., p. 11.

[xi] Hoerschelmann, p. 14.

Provenance
Galerie Michael Werner, Berlin
Private Collection (acquired from the above)
Phillips, New York, May 17, 2007, lot 46
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

41 o

Pablo Picasso

Tête d'homme et nu assis

signed “Picasso” upper right; inscribed and dated “3.12.64 II” on the reverse
oil and Ripolin on canvas
17 7/8 x 21 5/8 in. (45.4 x 54.9 cm)
Painted on December 3, 1964.

Estimate
$1,800,000 — 2,500,000

Go to Lot

"The aesthetic and formal revolution that took place in [Picasso's] last years... was as fundamental in its own way as the Cubist revolution." —Marie-Laure Bernadac

Exemplary of many of the pictorial and thematic concerns that characterized Pablo Picasso's late career, *Tête d'homme et nu assis* is one of the final variations on a subject that preoccupied the artist in the winter of 1964. A semi-abstracted male's head appraises a diminutive female nude, who sits cross-legged on an olive green rug. Her almond eyes and long black hair immediately identify her as Jacqueline Roque, his last love and muse, who often reminded the artist of a stunning odalisque. Their marriage in 1961 marked a remarkably fruitful and joyous period in Picasso's life that saw his work increasingly consider male fantasy and desire. Reading as a projection of his own mind, the nude sits next to a man's disembodied head that hovers as weightlessly as a theatrical mask. Executed the same day as a similar painting now held in Princeton University Art Museum, the present work shows Picasso contemplating his role as both a painter and lover.

Pablo Picasso, *The Artist and His Model,* 1964. Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Image: Buffalo AKG Art Museum/Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The discrete series that includes *Tête d'homme et nu assis* is situated within a larger chapter of Picasso's work from 1963–1964 that depicted artists with their models. At first, these images portrayed a painter—typically a self-portrait, as the present work likely is—on the left side, at work on a canvas. As the body of work developed, the canvas gradually began to disappear, with the painter beginning to apply his brush directly to the nude's body. With the paintbrush entirely removed in the present work, the female finally comes to life: as in the present work, she in no longer simply an object of the painter's creation but an embodied subject that meets his gaze. With no physical barriers remaining between reality and representation, *Tête d'homme et nu assis* interrogates painting's role in mediating our perception of the world.

Sitting with a direct, almost confrontational gaze, the woman's pose is evocative of the shocking nudes rendered by Édouard Manet, particularly his era-defining *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Indeed, Picasso had executed an extensive group of approximately 200 artworks just a few years earlier taking *Le Déjeuner* as source material, no doubt with the frequent comparisons between the artist and his forebearer firmly on his mind. "Given that Picasso had an instinctive grasp of art history, and a very clear idea of where he, Picasso, stood in relation to the past and the present, he had no problem identifying with Manet as the first modern artist, one who had set out to shock the bourgeoisie and had been pilloried for his pains, one who had been denounced for 'shamelessness' and 'vulgarity'..." John Richardson expounded. "And he set out to paint nudes who would be far more threatening, far more shocking than Manet's."[i]

Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 1863. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Photo Josse / Scala, Florence

It was not just Manet's revelatory paintings that had preoccupied Picasso's thinking, but the wider modern canon: the previous decade of his oeuvre had been dedicated to deconstructing the iconic images of art history. "By 1963 painting had been his model for ten years, in which he had analyzed and taken apart the paintings of other artists…" the curator Marie-Laure Bernadac recalled. "Having now done all he could with subjects of general import and multi-figure compositions, he returned to his point of departure: the scene of enactment, as it were, the fundamental battleground, the face-to-face confrontation between the painter and the model. This was the decisive turning point of the period."[ii] Having mined the history of Western painting, Picasso was left to renegotiate the very relationship at the core of artmaking: that between painter and sitter, creator and muse.

"A dot for the breast, a line for the painter, five spots of color for the foot, a few strokes of pink and green… That's enough, isn't it? What else do I need to do? What can I add to that? It has all been said." —Pablo Picasso

Tête d'homme et nu assis also sees Picasso reduce composition to its basic elements, employing an economy of brushwork that is at once concise yet highly-stylized. A single "S" shape defines both the man's right eyebrow and his nose; the woman's pubic area is defined only by a "T." Richardson clarified that these stylistic choices were meant to "preserve the directness and spontaneity of his first rush of inspiration, to be as free and loose and expressive as possible. In old age Picasso had finally discovered how to take every liberty with space and form, color and light, fact and fiction, time and place, not to mention identity."[iii]

The zig-zags, dots, and dashes that define the figures in *Tête d'homme et nu assis* may teeter on the brink of abstraction, but as a figurative subject the concept of an artist with his model has reoccurred in Picasso's corpus as early as his Blue Period. Sometimes these pictures were reflections of his passionate yet tumultuous romantic encounters; more often they were commentaries on the role of a creator and an artist's ability to bring to life their own fantasies. *Tête d'homme et nu assis* encapsulates both: it is a romanticized vision of Picasso as a painter and desirer in his ebullient final years.

[i] John Richardson, "L'Époque Jacqueline," in *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints, 1953–1972,* exh. cat., The Tate Gallery, London, 1988, p. 13.

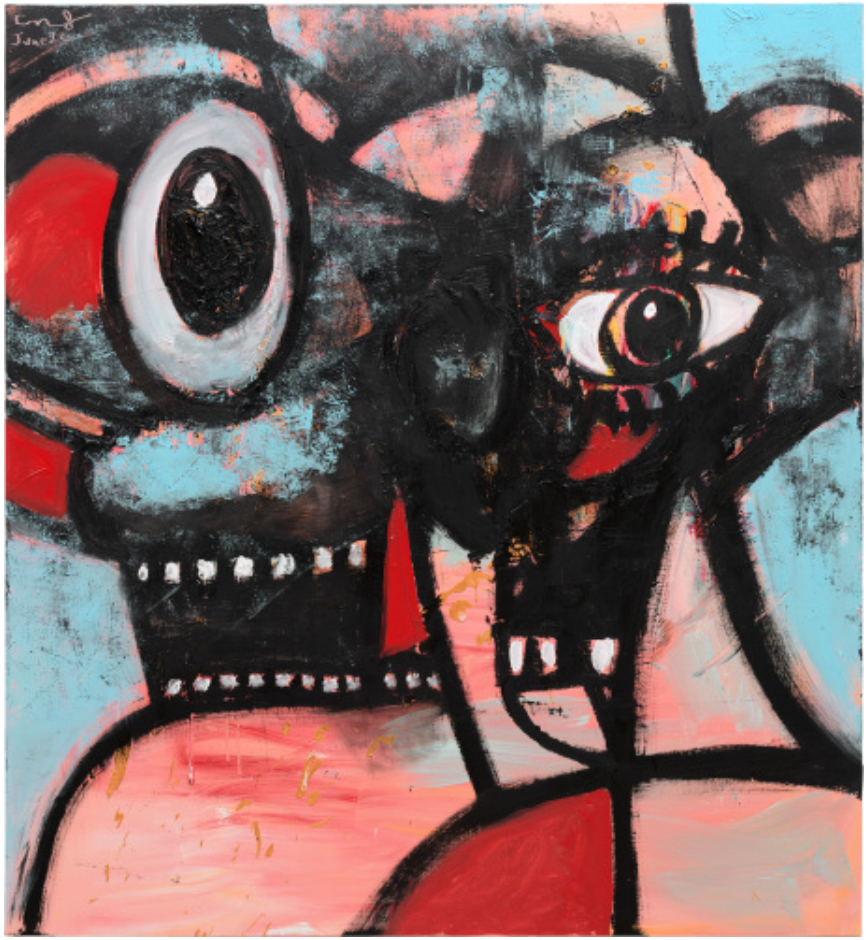
[ii] Marie-Laure Bernadac, "Picasso, 1953–1972: Painting as Model," *Late Picasso,* p. 73.

[iii] Richardson, p. 42.

Provenance
Galerie Louis Leiris, Paris
Galleria Seno, Milan
Grossi Collection, Matera (acquired in the 1970s)
Tabacchi Collection, Milan
Farsettiarte, Prato, December 3, 2011, lot 881
Private Collection, Switzerland
Galerie Knoell, Basel
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Pisa, Palazzo Blu, *Picasso: Ho voluto essere pittore e sono diventato Picasso*, October 15, 2011–January 29, 2012, pp. 266-267 (illustrated, p. 267; detail illustrated, p. 266)

Literature
Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1964*, Paris, 1971, vol. 24, no. 290, pp. 116, 253 (illustrated, p. 116)



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTION

42

George Condo

Eyes Wide Open

signed and dated "Condo June 22" upper left
acrylic and oilstick on linen
50 x 46 1/4 in. (127 x 117.5 cm)
Painted in 2022.

Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

Go to Lot

Eyes Wide Open, painted in 2022, represents a fresh iteration of George Condo's signature, self-described techniques of artificial realism and psychological cubism. The human form is both recognizable as a Condo character, and unrecognizably abstracted—one cannot tell how many figures there are; which panes of peach-colored pigment are meant to be human skin; which cherry reds are tongues. With cheeks, chins, ears, and mouths fractured to cubist oblivion, George Condo keeps his figures' eyes wide open.

Condo first developed the concept of artificial realism in the late 1980s, as a way to free himself from the confines of realistic figurative representation. The framework doubled as an accurate assessment of the modern material world, and the visual inputs affecting contemporary artists. As Condo explained, it's an idea "about representing reality, but reality being a construct of man-made appearances."[i] Artificial realism functions on two levels in Condo's work: first, at the level of his physical marks and painterly style, and then, second, on a more profound and philosophical level.

Franz Kline, *Untitled,* 1957. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen/ Walter Klein / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

With *Eyes Wide Open,* Condo invokes the "artificial" visual realities of art history and popular media, synthesizing high and low culture in one aesthetic output. The work employs thick black lines like those of Franz Kline, and peachy pastels and pale blues reminiscent of Willem de Kooning's *Woman* paintings. The black outlines of *Eyes Wide Open* also recall the aesthetics of newspaper comics and television cartoons, a connection furthered by Condo's stylized eyeballs and pearl-like teeth in gaping black mouths. As Condo rightly argues, these visual phenomena, whether contained to canvas, newsprint, or a television screen, are no less real than the natural world.

Eyes Wide Open captures the uniquely artificial reality of the internet and social media as well, and how Condo navigates those spaces as a contemporary artist and citizen.[ii] The work's square canvas, for instance, is adroitly suited to be shared and re-shared on Instagram. As in his earlier works, which play with Old Master traditions of portraiture, Condo evokes centuries' worth of representations of the human figure in *Eyes Wide Open,* and registers the emotional ambivalence of living in an image-saturated culture—especially one in which, thanks to social media, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish false images from reality.[iii] The splintering of the human form in *Eyes Wide Open* comes to resonate with the sensation of scrolling through social media, seeing slices of bodies, lives, and lifestyles, in an infinite queue of images.

Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians,* 1921. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Condo employs his concept of psychological cubism to register the emotional tenor of contemporary digital society. As the artist explains, with psychological cubism, he breaks the human form—especially the face—down to component parts in the lineage of Pablo Picasso, one of his greatest artistic influences. However, for Condo, physical fragmentation of the body on the canvas is a formal tool towards a larger aim of emotional fragmentation; it grants him the ability to show "two or three sides of a personality at the same time."[iv] In *Eyes Wide Open,* Condo's psychological cubism records conflicting emotions, as visible in the eyes of his figures. The eye at left, vertically-oriented and gendered male in Condo's visual idiom, registers shock or alarm, while the eye at right, almond-shaped with feminine lashes, has a glint of wry self-awareness in its yellow iris. The visual potency of these signs speaks to the enduring legibility and relevance of Condo's artistic vision to our contemporary realities.

[i] George Condo, quoted in Ben Weaver, "Artificial Realism," *The London List,* 2020, online.

[ii] Condo, quoted in Keith Estiler, "Sculptures Don't Lie: George Condo Talks New Exhibit, Kanye West, Fake News & More," *Hypeart,* Apr. 29, 2017, online.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Condo, quoted in Julie Belcove, "George Condo interview," *Financial Times,* Apr. 21, 2013, online.

Provenance
Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles
Acquired from the above by the present owner

PROPERTY FROM A PROMINENT PRIVATE COLLECTION

43

Joan Mitchell

Blueberry

signed "Joan Mitchell" lower right
oil on canvas
76 x 51 1/4 in. (193 x 130.2 cm)
Painted circa 1962.

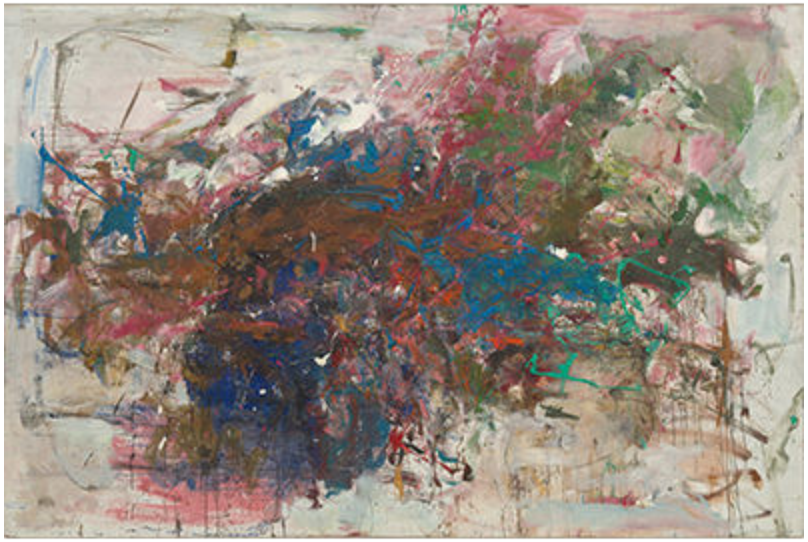
Estimate
$9,000,000 — 12,000,000

Go to Lot

Having established herself as a formidable talent in the New York Abstract Expressionist scene of the 1950s, Joan Mitchell moved permanently to France in 1959. Settling in the 15th arrondissement of Paris, where she shared a studio with her partner, the painter Jean-Paul Riopelle, Mitchell set to the task of earning a European reputation as an excellent painter in her own right—one that was not qualified by backhanded descriptors, like "American painter," or "lady painter," or dependent on her relationship with Riopelle.[i] While she had some solo exhibitions in Paris in her first few years in France, it wasn't until her exhibition, *Joan Mitchell: Ausstellung von Ölbildern,* at the Swiss gallery-cum-auction house, Klipstein und Kornfeld, Bern, in October of 1962, that Mitchell truly arrived at the height of her powers.

Blueberry, c. 1962, was a featured work in this career-defining exhibition, later praised as "some of the most chaotic and brilliant paintings of her entire oeuvre."[ii] As Jill Weinberg Adams explained, the success of this exhibition was "very, very important," to Mitchell, as it was "an opportunity to show a larger, interrelated, and extraordinarily dynamic body of work in Europe with the support of a really established, highly regarded, historic organization."[iii] After the exhibition, Klipstein und Kornfeld held the works in storage for over twenty years, until renowned gallerist Xavier Fourcade retrieved them for a groundbreaking exhibition of Mitchell's early 1960s work in New York in 1985.[iv]

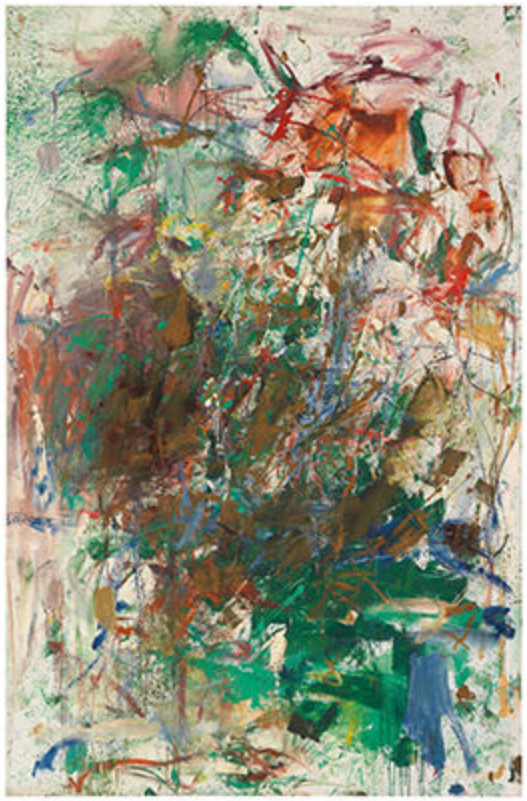
Selected works from *Joan Mitchell: Ausstellung von Ölbildern,* 1962



Joan Mitchell, *Grandes Carrières*, c. 1962. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell

Joan Mitchell, *Cous-cous*, c. 1962. Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell

Joan Mitchell, *Flying Dutchman*, c. 1962. Linda Pace Foundation Collection, Ruby City, San Antonio. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell



Joan Mitchell, *Bonhomme de bois*, c. 1962. Private collection. Artwork: © Estate of Joan Mitchell

Blueberry exemplifies Mitchell's painting practice in the early 1960s, and the formal innovations and emotional ferocity that brought her the respect of her international peers. A brilliant expanse of electric blue dominates the composition. Mitchell's application of paint in this area is forcefully thick; the paint dried in frozen swirls of pigment that build in matte ridges of impasto. While the body of this *Blueberry* is rendered in Mitchell's signature, determined horizontal brushstrokes, the edges of the form whisk off into waves, which dance like lightning in the upper reaches of the canvas. Mitchell skillfully balances the heavy, forceful blue with a light salmon pink. These peachy striations shine with ropey impasto—a nod, perhaps, to the palette knife applications of Riopelle; they string across the canvas alongside accents of ochre, lightening the areas of deep blue, dark umber, and slate grey.

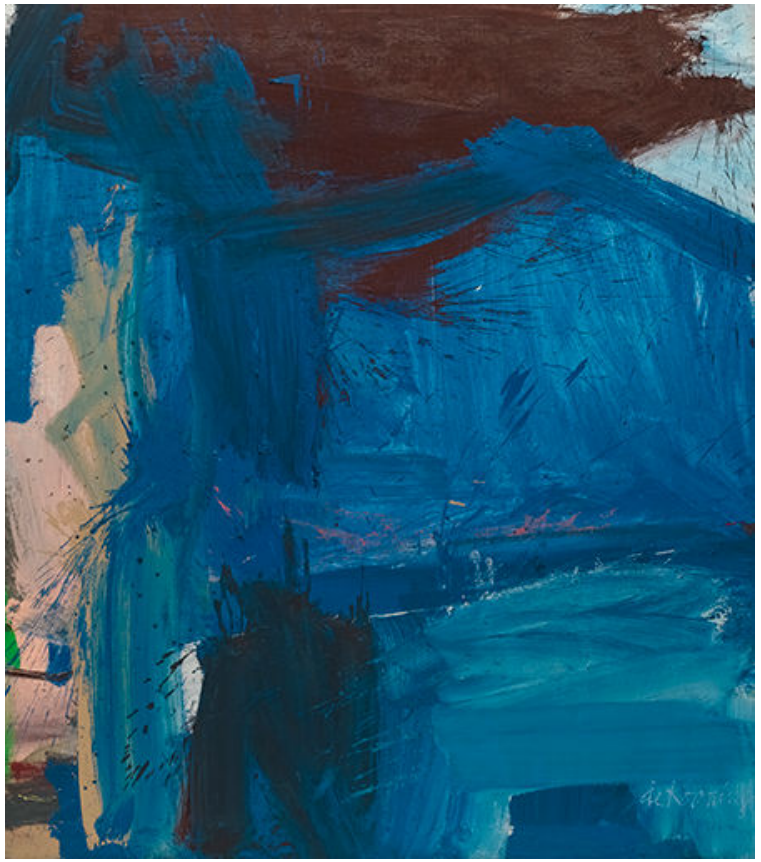
10 rue Frémicourt

Joan Mitchell's studio at 10 rue Frémicourt, 1959. Image: Photo by Walter Silver. © The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: The Photograph Collection, The New York Public Library

After years spent visiting Paris in temporary studios and short-term leases across the city, Mitchell finally found a studio of her own in 1959. The large loft at 10 rue Frémicourt, near the Eiffel Tower in the 15th arrondissement, provided the physical space and stability Mitchell needed to establish her career in France. As Sarah Roberts reports in her analysis of this period in Mitchell's career, Mitchell's innovations of the early 1960s are directly dependent on her procurement of the space on rue Frémicourt. For the first time, Roberts explains, Mitchell had a Parisian studio that she had chosen for herself and arranged to her painting needs: "no more scraping paint off floors. No more

rolling canvas after canvas to move from one temporary studio to another."[v] The rue Frémicourt studio had an abundance of wall space for tacking up unstretched work, as well as a movable wall, and ample storage for stacks of stretched canvases.[vi] In such a space, Mitchell could work on multiple canvases at once, in the serial style of Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and Claude Monet, some of her greatest artistic inspirations.

Having a stable studio granted Mitchell the time, space, and freedom she needed to establish herself as an artist, independent of her New York reputation. Within a year of moving to 10 rue Frémicourt, Roberts writes, Mitchell would have her first solo show in Paris, and "let loose a series of fervent experiments, testing herself and the physical properties of her medium."[vii] *Blueberry* stands as a record of this period of experimentation; the work is representative of Mitchell's desire to create in an idiom independent of her New York and Paris circles.



Willem de Kooning, *A Tree in Naples*, 1960. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

As the home of "*the* couple" in Paris, Mitchell and Riopelle's residence at 10 rue Frémicourt quickly became a social center of the Parisian art scene.[viii] And while Mitchell enjoyed "drinking, talking, and fighting" with her friends and peers—including Sam Francis, Samuel Beckett, and Alberto Giacometti, among countless others—her self-determination to establish herself as an artist on her own terms was of paramount importance.[ix] Mitchell expressed disinterest in *tachisme,* and similarly watery, contemporary trends in late 1950s French abstraction; the dismissal of American Abstract Expressionism as *passé* by French critics was similarly concerning.[x] Mitchell felt stuck

between the French and American avant-garde: “In France they’ve always said my work is violent gestural painting,” she later explained. “In New York, they’ve said it’s decoration. On both sides, they say it’s female.”[xi]

“Blue and pink and *très tormenté*”

Mitchell found a way out of her stylistic double bind through the very materiality of her chosen medium: oil paint. Rather than focusing on a theme, poem, or internal landscape to guide her abstractions, as she had done in the past, from 1960 to 1962, Mitchell let her materials take the lead. Her work became about paint itself, Roberts explains, its viscousness and tactility; “its body, its color, the way it moves, reacts and obeys or does not obey the artist’s direction.”[xii] *Blueberry* is a case in point: Mitchell’s application of paint ranges from the thick impasto of the dominant blue section, to the flat-brushed umber and grey below, to the strings of salmon pigment, and the wisping waves and splashes of blue and ochre at the edges of the composition.

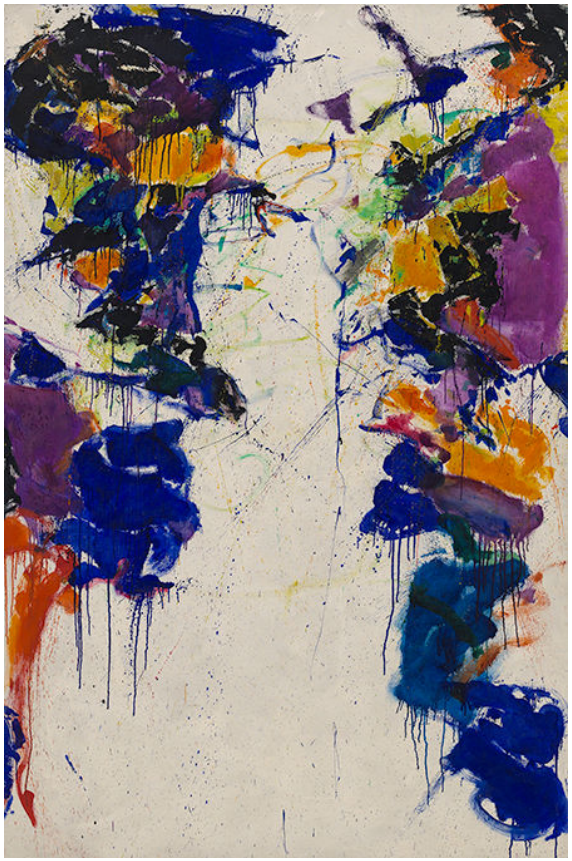
Such experimentation required a degree of physicality and athleticism, which in turn was dependent on the artist having enough space to make such work. 10 rue Frémicourt was perfect. Looking at the ropes of salmon paint, for example, one can imagine “the full-body sidearm throw required to create such long strings of paint and the wiry wrist action necessary to press bristles onto the surface, and then snap them free to discharge a spidery skein.”[xiii] *Blueberry* is a veritable riot of color, slapped and squeezed and squirted straight from the tube, which risks collapse into a “chaotic, unsightly sludge,” like a child who mixes all of her paints together, only to make a muddy brown.[xiv] But by keeping each pigment pure and unmixed, and through a masterful awareness of placement, proportion, impasto, and transparency, Mitchell succeeds in holding *Blueberry* on the right side of chaos.

“There is nothing more delectable than the ‘very violent and angry’ paintings that Joan Mitchell made at the start of the 1960s.” —Michael Waldberg

However, to reduce Mitchell’s achievements of 1960-1962, as realized in *Blueberry,* to a material display of athleticism is to miss the emotional ferocity inherent to such a physical painting practice. For it is the emotion, the raw feeling that bubbles beneath *Blueberry,* that gives its thick and dripping surface its power. Mitchell herself described her paintings of the early 1960s as “very violent and angry,” and historians like Roberts have pointed out parallels to the pains of Mitchell’s personal life; namely, her intense relationship with Riopelle, her parents’ sicknesses, and the violence in Paris during the Algerian War of Independence.[xv] Linda Nochlin, however, offers a psychological reading that is simultaneously more personal and archetypical, arguing, instead, that Mitchell paints with rage: the rage of a woman artist in a sexist society.

“The fact that Mitchell, though a woman, could take possession of her rage and, like a man, transform it into a rage to paint, was an extraordinarily difficult concept for a male-dominated art world to accept.” —Linda Nochlin

Though not always explicitly acknowledged as such, the mid-century art world was a man’s world, and in order for a woman like Mitchell to succeed, she had to do so on men’s terms. As Nochlin explained, “If she did not want to be categorized as a woman painter, it was because she wanted to be a *real* painter. And, at that time, a real abstract painter was someone with balls and guts.”[xvi] Mitchell was determined to prove that, at least metaphorically, she fit the profile.



Sam Francis, *Shining Back,* 1958. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Image: The

Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Sam Francis Foundation, California / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

In a manner that was both vulnerable and exceedingly daring, Mitchell harnessed her anger and rage—two stereotypically "unladylike" emotions—and channeled them in aesthetic terms into her art. In Mitchell's paintings, "meaning and emotional intensity are produced structurally, as it were, by a whole series of oppositions," Nochlin wrote—in the frission of blue and salmon in *Blueberry,* for instance, or the tension between areas of thick, viscous paint, and sparsely brushed spaces.[xvii]

To Nochlin, and indeed, to Mitchell herself, rage became an aesthetic choice in her work of the early 1960s; and rather than being (self-)destructive, Mitchell's rage was generative, artistic, inspiring—"What a wholesome emotion rage is—or can be!" Nochlin wrote.[xviii] Mitchell, too, seems to have seen rage as a useful tool, writing to Francis in 1961 of her newest paintings, which were "blue and pink and *très tormenté*"—a description that, coincidentally, suits *Blueberry* exceedingly well.[xix] By listing the emotional key of her work alongside its colors, Mitchell revealed her understanding that both color and emotion could set the tone of a painting—and that both were important tenets in her art practice.

[i] Éric de Chassey, "A Country of Her Own: Joan Mitchell and France, 1948-1967," in Sarah Roberts and Katy Seigel, eds., *Joan Mitchell,* exh. cat., The Baltimore Museum of Art and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2020, p. 94.

[ii] Ken Okiishi, "Painting Paintings," in Yilmaz Dziewior, ed., *Joan Mitchell, Retrospective: Her Life and Paintings,* exh. cat., Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2015, p. 46.

[iii] Jill Weinberg Adams, in conversation with Robert Manley, May 2020, online.

[iv] Ibid.

[v] Sarah Roberts, "Frémicourt," ibid., p. 97.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] Ibid., p. 99.

[ix] Ibid.

[x] De Chassey, ibid., pp. 92, 94.

[xi] Joan Mitchell (1989), quoted ibid., p. 94.

[xii] Roberts, ibid., p. 100.

[xiii] Ibid.

[xiv] Ibid.

[xv] Mitchell, quoted in Linda Nochlin (2002), "A Rage to Paint: Joan Mitchell and the Issue of Femininity," in Maura Reilly, ed., *Women Artists: The Linda Nochlin Reader,* 2015, online; Roberts, ibid.

[xvi] Nochlin, ibid.

[xvii] Ibid.

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] Mitchell (1961), quoted Roberts, ibid., p. 100.

Provenance
Xavier Fourcade, Inc., New York
Private Collection, Los Angeles (acquired from the above in 1985)
Jonathan Novak Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1996

Exhibited
Bern, Klipstein und Kornfeld, *J. Mitchell, Ausstellung von Ölbildern*, October 5–31, 1962, no. 4, n.p. (illustrated)
New York, Xavier Fourcade, Inc., *Joan Mitchell: The Sixties*, April 3–May 4, 1985, n.p. (illustrated)

Literature
Stephen Westfall, "Reviews: Joan Mitchell at Fourcade," *Art in America*, no. 10, October 1985, p. 156 (illustrated)
Cora Cohen and Betsy Sussler, "Joan Mitchell," *Bomb*, no. XVII, Fall 1986, p. 24
Joan Mitchell: peintures 1986 & 1987. River, Lille, Chord, exh. cat., Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, 1987, pp. 32, 65
Judith E. Bernstock, *Joan Mitchell*, New York, 1988, p. 60
Klaus Kertess, *The Paintings of Joan Mitchell*, New York, 1997, no. 32, p. 203 (illustrated, p. 77)

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

44

Nicolas de Staël

Personnages au bord de la mer

signed "Staël" lower left; titled and dated "1952 PERSONNAGES AU BORD DE MER" on the stretcher
oil on canvas
25 5/8 x 31 7/8 in. (65.1 x 81 cm)
Painted in 1952.

Estimate
$2,000,000 — 3,000,000

Go to Lot

"A painting must be both abstract and figurative: abstract to the extent that it is a flat surface, figurative to the extent that it is a representation of space." —Nicolas de Staël

Executed during a pivotal moment in Nicolas de Staël's oeuvre, *Personnages au bord de la mer,* 1952, represents the vitality and emotive fluidity that characterized the artist's pioneering visual language. In a scene rendered in an unexpected palette of brilliant color, three figures composed of thick squares of paint stand before a seascape. This scene—composed only with a palette knife—is illustrative of the tension between figuration and abstraction that underpinned the entirety of de Staël's career. During the early 1950s, he was attempting to coalesce these two aesthetic styles in a bold affront to a contemporaneous artistic milieu dominated by Abstract Expressionism in the United States and *Art Informel* in Europe. Bravely turning his back on the fashionable interest in gestural abstraction, *Personnages au bord de la mer* exemplified his renewed painterly approach to form and color.

After ten years spent in the studio focused on largely abstracted compositions, 1952 witnessed a marked shift in de Staël's practice when he began painting outdoors. The patchwork effect that characterized his earlier work was replaced with a more figurative idiom composed of impasto-rich rectangles rendered against flat planes of color. "De Staël had always maintained that he was not an abstract painter," the art critic and friend of the artist Douglas Cooper recalled, and this new body of images was "a sign that he at last felt confident enough to take a fuller aspect of reality directly."[i] As seen in *Personnages au bord de la mer,* these squares served a pictorial function—representing three beach-goers—and created an illusion of depth by separating the figures from the landscape behind them.

André Derain, *Fishing Boats, Collioure,* 1905. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

When de Staël first introduced recognizable forms into his work in the spring of 1952, he began by painting still lifes, a soccer match, and a jazz orchestra. In the second half of the year, with all hesitation cast aside, "one finds him painting *sur le motif* small landscapes—some of the most perfect, most lyrical, and freshest of all his creations," according to Cooper.[ii] Painting in nature—*sur le motif* or *en plein air*—was a method of working that was pioneered by John Constable but became most closely associated with Impressionism. Taking up this rich art historical tradition, de Staël began depicting land- and seascapes in the Parisian suburbs of Gentilly and Rosny before travelling to Normandy and then Le Lavandou, a small seaside town in the south of France where he executed *Figures, Le Lavandou,* the study for the present work. Captivated by the summer light and coastline of the Mediterranean for the first time since his youth, he began to let nature more directly permeate his images.

Nicolas de Staël, *Figure au bord de la mer,* 1952. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf / Walter Klein./ Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

"Light is simply flashing here, much more than I remembered," the artist expressed in a letter to his gallerist Jacques Dubourg in 1952. "I will create scenes of sea, beach, taking its brightness to the edge if all goes well, and also of nocturnal shadows."[iii] The bright sun of Provence left an indelible impact on the artist's palette, suffusing his pictures with a new radiance that signalled a departure from his muted earth tones. The vibrancy of the South of France is captured in the scarlet sky and vivid yellow sea of *Personnages au bord de la mer*, the intensity of the oil paint emphasized by its broad application with a palette knife. This employment of chromatic color lent his canvases, including the present work, an expressive and spontaneous quality that is reminiscent of Fauvism.

Though its accompanying study was executed *sur le motif,* the present work was painted later in 1952 in his studio in Paris. "A painting conceived outside but executed alone, one to one in the workshop, will always be more concise than the other kind," de Staël wrote to Dubourg while in Le Lavandou. "Try to reserve a few major paintings for me, not too large, of those you like," Dubourg replied, requesting a grouping which would include *Personnages au bord de la mer*.[iv] These images that the artist initially conceived on a smaller scale in Provence but refined and edited in Paris are today celebrated as among the finest in his career, including *Figures au bord de la mer,* 1952, Kunstammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, and *Le Lavandou,* 1952, Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Exquisite portrayals of one of de Staël's most enduring themes—the tranquillity of the seas—they embody the aesthetic rigor that secured his reputation as one of the most important and influential painters working in Post-War France.

[i] Douglas Cooper, "Nicolas de Staël: In Memoriam," *The Burlington Magazine,* vol. 98, no. 638, May 1956, p. 142.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Nicolas de Staël and Jacques Dubourg, *Lettres à Jacques Dubourg*, London, 1981, n.p.

[iv] Françoise de Staël, Nicolas de Staël, *Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint,* Neuchâtel, 1997, p. 131.

Provenance
Jacques Dubourg, Paris
Galerie Nathan, Zurich
Galerie de l'Elysée, Paris
Private Collection, Belgium
Patrick Derom Gallery, Brussels
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature
Jacques Dubourg and Françoise de Staël, *Nicolas de Staël, Catalogue raisonné des peintures*, Paris, 1968, no. 513, p. 224 (illustrated; titled *Personnages au bord de la mer, Le Lavandou*)
Françoise de Staël, *Nicolas de Staël, Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre peint*, Neuchâtel, 1997, no. 476, pp. 367, 668 (illustrated, p. 367)
Françoise de Staël and Nicolas de Staël, *Catalogue raisonné of the Paintings*, Lausanne, 2021, no. 476, pp. 321, 623 (illustrated, p. 321)

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN COLLECTION

45

Ben Sledsens

A second nice break

signed with the artist's initials "B. S." lower left; signed and dated "BEN SLEDSENS 2017" on the reverse
oil and acrylic on canvas
85 5/8 x 66 7/8 in. (217.5 x 169.9 cm)
Painted in 2017.

Estimate
$120,000 — 180,000

Go to Lot

In *A second nice break,* 2017, a bright orange campfire in the foreground draws the viewer into Ben Sledsens' midnight forest tableau. Two young men wearing baseball caps stand in the fire's glow, looking at an unseen creature or scene beyond the edge of the canvas. Behind them, the dark forest stretches out, with each tree delineated in deep shades of turquoise, lavender, phthalo green and blue, and indigo. Sledsens' use of both oil and acrylic paints further enriches the painted surface, which varies between a shining and matte finish. Elongated tree trunks draw the eye up to the star-strewn night sky, which itself reflects into the lake at the center of the composition, creating a cycle of observation akin to the sensation of looking out over a landscape in real life.

Lucas Cranach, *Hunting near Hartenfels Castle,* 1540. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Image: Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1958.425

For Sledsens, born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium, the combination of art history with a personal sense of artistry is the key to the accessible yet rigorously defined sense of place in his work. The depth of field and high horizon line of *A second nice break* reflects the influence of Northern Renaissance painting, particularly hunting scenes by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Lucas Cranach, among others. The fine articulation of individual trees and stars evokes the precision of the Northern Renaissance tradition, while the small foreground figures—perhaps avatars for the artist, who is often photographed wearing a baseball cap—scale the viewer into the scene, emphasizing the depth and natural abundance of the landscape.

Georg Baselitz, *Landscape with Pathos,* 1970. Saint Louis Art Museum. Artwork: © Georg Baselitz 2023

And yet, *A second nice break* has more contemporary referents as well. Sledsens' bright, straight-from-the-tube colors give the work a modern, faux-naïf quality, while the intentional vertical flattening of space recalls the work of artists like Henri Rousseau and Jean Brusselmans.[i] Sledsens explains that an exhibition of Georg Baselitz's radically inverted canvases inspired him to think differently about painting, which led Sledsens to look to comics and cartoon art as a valid form of artistic inspiration.[ii] Thus, in *A second nice break,* the figures' gestures towards a scene beyond the canvas suggest a sense of narrative, as if the work before is one panel in a larger story of interconnected canvases.

Indeed, Sledsens' work holds a storybook quality; his purposeful pictorial simplicity, folkloric sense of whimsy, and bright color palette make *A second nice break* seem like an illustration of the artist's own imagination. We step into Sledsens' private world of campfires, trees, and shooting stars, a welcome break from the harshness of our reality, which grants us a vision of a sincere, hopeful utopia to come.

Collector's Digest

- Sledsens' recent solo exhibitions include *Ben Sledsens,* El Centro de Arte Contemporáneo (CAC), Málaga, 2022. His work is in several esteemed international collections, including those of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg; The Museum of Contemporary Art (M HKA), Antwerp; CAC, Málaga; and the Nassima Landau Art Foundation, Tel Aviv.

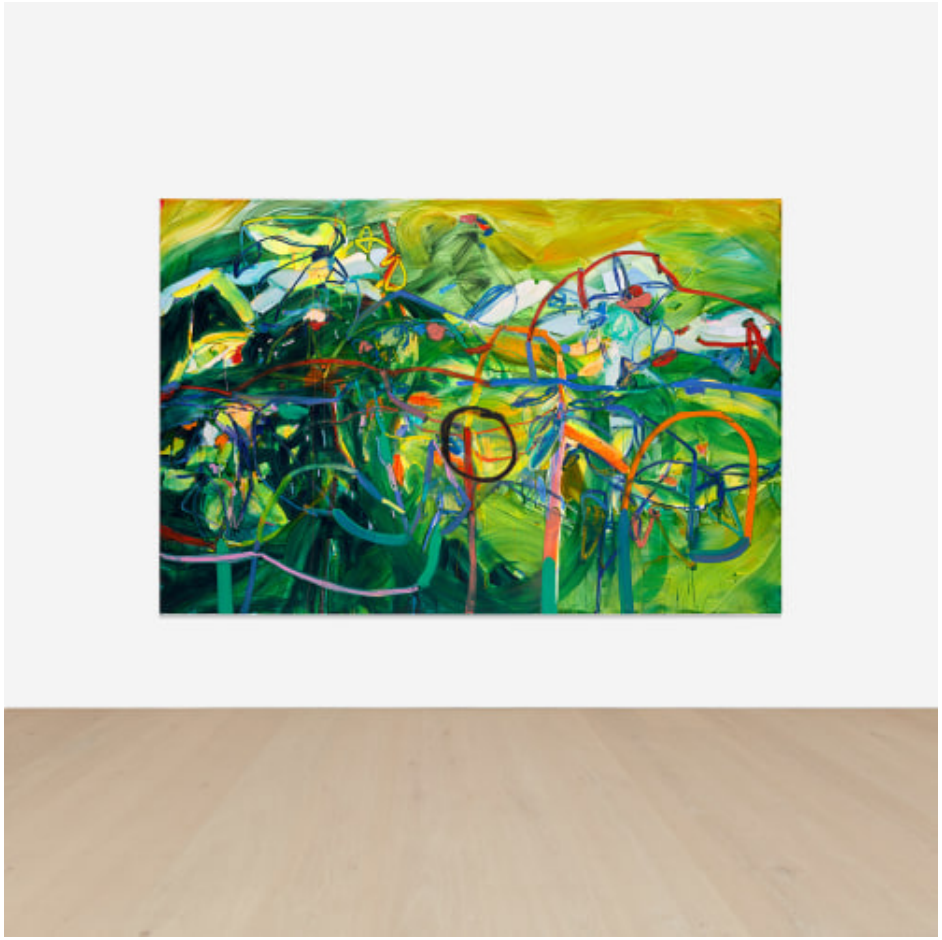
- The artist made his auction debut with Phillips in the New York 20th Century and Contemporary Art Day Sale in 2021.

[i] Ian Mundell, "Ben Sledsens Shapes Art History Into Personal Utopias," Jan. 12, 2021, *the low countries,* online.

[ii] Ibid.

Provenance
Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Los Angeles, Nino Mier Gallery, *Ben Sledsens: Before the crow crows*, October 14–November 25, 2017
Los Angeles, Nino Mier Gallery, *Group Show: Some Trees*, July 20–August 31, 2019



46

Jadé Fadojutimi

Quirk my mannerism

signed twice and dated "Jadé Fadojutimi Feb '21" on the reverse
oil, oilstick and acrylic on canvas
78 3/4 x 118 1/8 in. (200 x 300 cm)
Executed in 2021.

Estimate
$600,000 — 800,000

Go to Lot

Quirk my mannerism, 2021, exemplifies the mix of spontaneity, emotional vulnerability, and exploration inherent to Jadé Fadojutimi's artistic process—sweeping, softened arcs of green sway across the background of the canvas, as jagged streaks of oilstick dart in a colorful tangle of drawn lines. The artist often creates a painting in a single night, moving through the actions that form each composition like a midnight ballet—brushing broadly across the canvas ground, dripping concentrated pigments in gestural sweeps, and drawing onto the canvas with oil sticks, often directly onto still-wet paint layers. None of these steps are predetermined; but rather, they occur in the moment, as Fadojutimi follows her intuition through a process she calls "orchestrating randomness."[i]

Lee Krasner, *Portrait in Green*, 1969. The Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Artwork: © 2023 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Fadojutimi's process follows in the footsteps of her twentieth-century forebears, including Lee Krasner and Joan Mitchell. These Abstract Expressionist painters emphasized spontaneity and the physical action of painting as central components of artmaking. Fadojutimi's works build upon these traditions in distinctly contemporary ways, with a visually striking use of fluorescent colors and compositions that combine free line and fields of color.

These same dynamic combinations of line and color illustrate another major source of inspiration for the artist: Japanese anime. Within *Quirk my mannerism,* the neon pink and orange lines almost radiate with motion over the green and yellow background, as if depicting a character flying across an animated landscape. Fadojutimi also looks to more contemporary artists such as Amy Sillman, Laura Owens and Makiko Kudo, whose influence is evident particularly in the primacy of color in Fadojutimi's practice and life.

Animation still from *My Neighbor Totoro,* dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1988. Image: Photo 12 / Alamy Stock Photo

In her most creatively productive sessions, Fadojutimi "dances and runs at the canvas, scales ladders, cries, and sometimes breaks off to write in her diary."[ii] This inextricable connection between painting and writing is significant for the artist, as she considers both practices an essential part of her process. As she describes it, "the excitement to write in the middle of painting is just the same as the excitement to place the next mark on the canvas."[iii] Titles come to her through this writing, and the centrality of language is abundantly clear from the poetic names of her works. Ranging from the pithy, to the alliterative, to the long and wordy, the language she uses tells a story. The present work's title, *Quirk my mannerism*, plays with the viewer's verbal expectations; the word "quirk" is used unexpectedly as a verb, leading the viewer to contemplate what the title could be asking them to do—how can one "quirk" Fadojutimi's mannerism?

"I completely bathe in the conversations between color, texture, line, form, composition, rhythm, marks and disturbances that allow me to gush. Since I have no systematic way of working, I find myself painting slightly differently each time."
—Jadé Fadojutimi

In a way, Fadojutimi's titles encourage the viewer to seek out corresponding representational forms within her abstract compositions. The artist has frequently commented on the tension between abstraction and figuration, which she sees "as opposite ends of the same spectrum."[iv] While not purposefully creating representative compositions, she notes that her "paintings derive their shapes, colors and patterns from clothing, anime, video games, soundtracks, childhood obsessions, memories, drawings, traumas, experiences, and objects I have collected along the way. They are woven together into emotive environments that breed characters and forms."[v] The forms in *Quirk my mannerism* hint at these characters imagined by Fadojutimi—a circular eye here, a bent limb there, frantic movement suggesting animate life—but ultimately leave the painting wide open to interpretation, allowing each viewer to experience it personally.

Collector's Digest

- Fadojutimi is the youngest artist with work in the collection of Tate Modern, London; the museum purchased *I Present Your Royal Highness,* 2018, when the artist was only twenty-six years old. Her work also populates the collections of the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, Kunstmuseum Bonn, and the Institute for Contemporary Art, Miami, among others.
- Phillips holds the auction record for Fadojutimi with *Myths of Pleasure,* 2017, realizing £1.1M ($1.3M USD) at Phillips' 20th Century and Contemporary Art Evening Sale in London in 2021.
- Currently, her work is on display in *Space for Imaginative Actions* at Kunstmuseum Bonn, through Jan. 1, 2024, and at the Shah Garg Foundation, New York, in *Making Their Mark,* an exhibition of significant women artists of the past century, through Jan. 27, 2024.

[i] Jadé Fadojutimi, quoted in "Jadé Fadojutimi – 'The Numbing Vibrancy of Characters in Play'," *PEER Gallery*, Aug. 11, 2022, video, online.

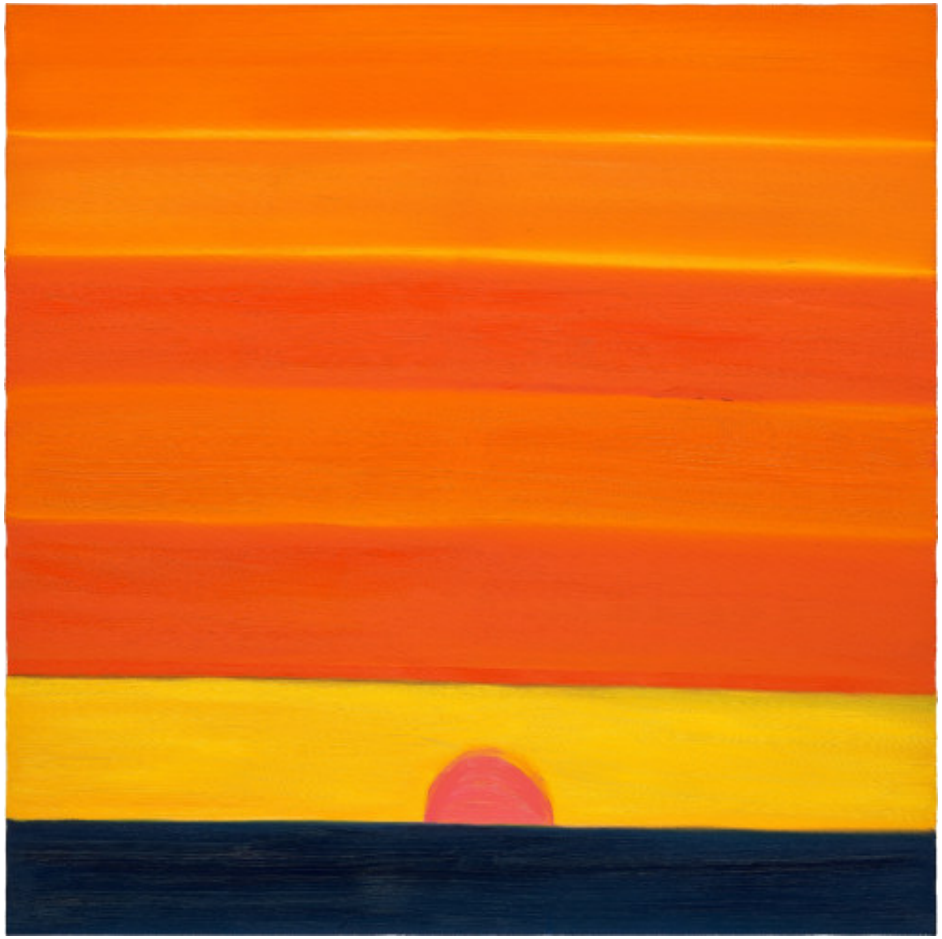
[ii] Alex Needham, "'Painting takes me over – like witchcraft': Jadé Fadojutimi, art's hottest property," *The Guardian,* Sep. 7, 2022, online.

[iii] Fadojutimi, quoted in *PEER Gallery.*

[iv] Fadojutimi, quoted in David Trigg, "Jadé Fadojutimi – interview: 'I bathe in the conversations between colour, texture, line, form, composition, rhythm, marks and disturbances,'" *Studio International ,* Apr. 26, 2021, online.

[v] Ibid.

Provenance
Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED COLLECTION

47

Matthew Wong

Pink Sunset

signed, titled and dated "PINK SUNSET" "Wong 2018 [in Chinese]" on the reverse
oil on canvas
60 x 60 in. (152.4 x 152.4 cm)
Painted in 2018.

Estimate
$1,200,000 — 1,800,000

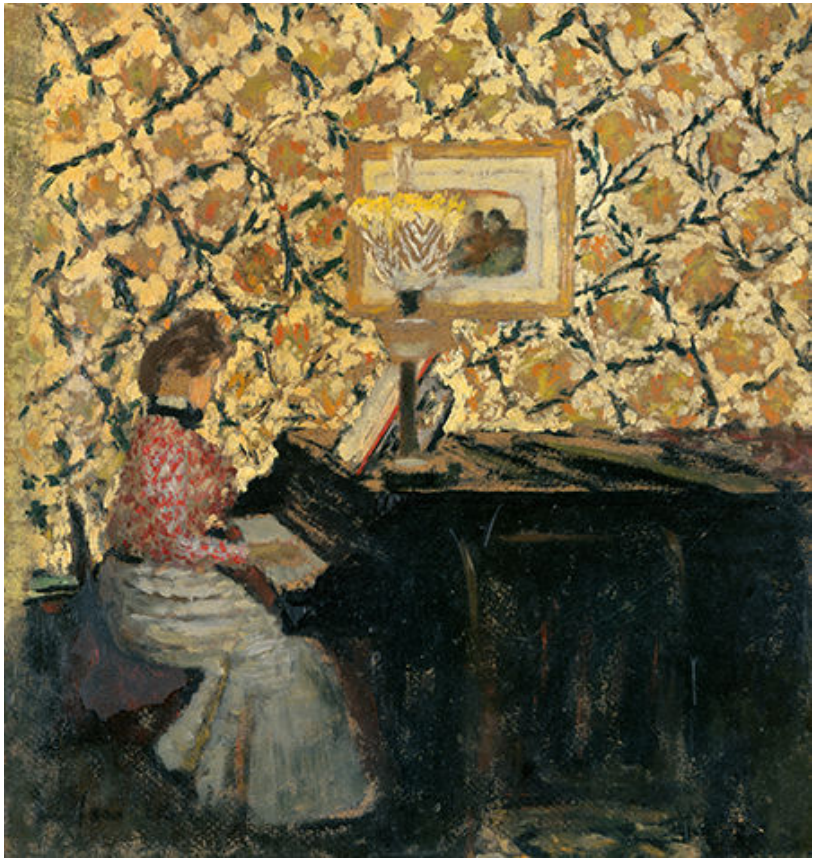
Go to Lot

Matthew Wong's short, yet brilliant career began with a solo exhibition at Karma Gallery, New York, in 2018. The exhibition brought the artist's work, already known by the likes of John Yau and Jerry Saltz via Wong's social media posts, shining into the daylight of New York's art world. Building off of five years' independent study of the Western art historical canon and traditional Chinese ink painting, Wong's introspective, richly surfaced canvases coalesced around themes of landscape and time; "the time spent walking, living, looking, thinking, drawing, and painting."[i] The show received critical acclaim, with Wong hailed as "the future of painting"—and as the only solo exhibition of his work to premiere during Wong's lifetime, the event has reached almost mythical importance in the recent history of contemporary art.[ii]

Kenneth Noland, *Early Flight,* 1969. Artwork: © The Paige Rense Noland Marital Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Pink Sunset, 2018, was created concurrent to the exhibition and included in its limited edition catalogue. With breathtaking simplicity, Wong's *Pink Sunset* captures the glow of the setting sun, in straited bands that seem to distill the length of a sunset into one, united visual experience. Multiple moments of time, recorded in color across the sky, exist at once in *Pink Sunset,* in "the perceptual sensation of watching the light change as a day wears on."[iii] This approach to time reflects an East Asian influence, reminiscent of the passage of time across the scroll paintings of one of Wong's favorite artists, the 17th century painter, Shitao, while the neat lines of the sunset recall Kenneth Noland's Color Fields. In his review of Wong's Karma exhibition, Yau praised the artist's ability to synthesize Eastern and Western art, and "[make] them into something that is recognizably his. It is not about adapting to one culture or another," Yau wrote, "but about absorbing as much as he can until the source becomes less and less important to point out."[iv]

As for the emotional heft of the work—the weighty stillness of the half-set sun, the brilliance of yellow, red, and blue—Eric Sutphin of *Art in America* draws a parallel to the Nabis, a late 19th century French group of artists, whose richly colored, stylized paintings share a mysticism and reverence for the everyday with Wong's output.[v] Akin to the softly lit interior scenes of Édouard Vuillard, Wong's works, "despite their ebullient palette, are frequently tinged with a melancholic yearning."[vi]



Édouard Vuillard, *Misia at the Piano,* 1895-1896. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, 1975.1.224

Pink Sunset treads this emotional line, evoking melancholy and solitude as aesthetic choices. As the artist shared in a 2018 interview, spending time alone was a key aspect of his creative process; Wong found "the most stimulation and enjoyment from matters of the mind," and so, he explained, "it's inevitable that the solitary nature of [my life] seeps into and informs my work." He

continued, saying "I do believe that there is an inherent loneliness or melancholy to much of contemporary life, and on a broader lever I feel my work speaks to this quality in addition to being a reflection of my thoughts, fascinations and impulses." [vii]

By centering the setting sun at the bottom of *Pink Sunset,* Wong encourages the viewer to step into his emotional state, and experience the sublime beauty of watching a sunset all on one's own. Far from being maudlin, Wong's melancholy is serene and still—it is a vital sense of solitude, like that which Wong experienced and loved. To gaze at *Pink Sunset* is to remember the freedom of a long walk by oneself, the pleasure of watching a movie alone. This pleasurable side to solitude, as expressed in Wong's paintings, is a quality that curators have increasingly picked up on in posthumous exhibitions of the artist's work. Wong's evocation of solitude in works such as *Pink Sunset* holds artistic significance beyond the tragic details of his biography: his painted melancholy is intentional; it is pain and pleasure at once.

Collector's Digest

- Wong's work populates esteemed public collections, including those of the Dallas Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Aïshti Foundation, Beirut.
- The first traveling museum retrospective of Wong's work, *Matthew Wong: The Realm of Appearances,* curated by Dr. Vivian Li of the Dallas Museum of Art, is now on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, through Feb. 14, 2024.

[i] "Matthew Wong: Press Release," *Karma,* Mar. 2018, online.

[ii] John Yau, "Matthew Wong's Hallucinatory Pilgrimages," *Hyperallergic,* Apr. 22, 2018, online.

[iii] "Matthew Wong: Press Release," ibid.

[iv] Yau, ibid.

[v] Eric Sutphin, "Matthew Wong," *Art in America,* Jun. 1, 2018, online.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Matthew Wong, quoted in Maria Vogel, "Matthew Wong Reflects on the Melancholy of Life," *Art of Choice,* Nov. 15, 2018, online.

Provenance
Karma, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature
Matthew Wong, exh. cat., Karma, New York, 2018, pp. 34-35 (illustrated, p. 35)

48

Damien Hirst

Covenant

signed, stamped with the artist's stamp, titled and dated "'Covenant' 2007 Damien Hirst" on the reverse
butterflies and household gloss on canvas
84 x 84 in. (213.4 x 213.4 cm)
Executed in 2007.

This work is accompanied by a letter issued by the artist's studio, Science, UK indicating that in their opinion it does not contain endangered species according to the species database published by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Estimate
$700,000 — 1,000,000

Go to Lot

The vibrant, iridescent wings of exotic butterflies are among Damien Hirst's most enduring materials, recurring time and time again in his oeuvre as a symbol of the transience of life. A kaleidoscopic mosaic of these gem-like insects, *Covenant,* 2007, is exemplary of the artist's iconic large-scale butterfly paintings. The image so compelled the artist—and epitomized his practice—that he took it up once again for an edition of screenprints six years later. With concentric circles unravelling like a Catholic prayer labyrinth, *Covenant* is a poignant meditation on ephemeral beauty and renewal. Indeed, according to Rod Mengham, "Hirst's prolonged exploration of the life cycle of the butterfly, its spectacular visual appeal, the mythological and cultural formations it has inspired, and the variety of forms of response it has provoked in both artists and scientists, is one of the most thoroughgoing and many-sided conceptual projects sustained by any contemporary artist."[i]

Damien Hirst, *In & Out of Love (White Paintings & Live Butterflies),* 1991, installed at Tate Modern, London, 2012. Image: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2023. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd, Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved/ DACS, London/ARS, NY 2023

The employment of butterflies in Hirst's practice can be traced all the way back to his first solo exhibition, the legendary *In and Out of Love* installation, 1991, held at a vacant commercial space near Anthony d'Offay Gallery, where the artist worked as a part-time technician. Upstairs, butterflies hatched from pupae embedded in five white canvases, and spent the duration of the show mating, floating around, and laying new eggs; on view downstairs was a series of monochromatic paintings with dead butterflies pressed into the surfaces. The vivid and disconcerting image of these dead insects was so striking that a detail of one of these latter canvases was chosen for the cover of the pilot issue of *Frieze* magazine that same year. Inspired by a Victorian tea-tray in which butterflies were pressed under glass, Hirst returned to the motif for his *Kaleidoscope* series begun in the early 2000s, removing the insects' bodies and arranging their wings into densely-patterned geometric compositions.

"My belief in art is a completely religious belief." —Damien Hirst

The many themes that these butterflies represent for Hirst—the transience of living beings, the inevitability of death, and the possibility of an afterlife—synergize with those explored by religion. In 2007, the year *Covenant* was executed, the artist began to turn more explicitly to the Christian iconography he exposed to in his youth. "I was Catholic until I was 12," the artist recalled, "[and] I loved the imagery."[ii] Deliberately drawing from the visual language of stained glass, the present work evokes the grandeur of medieval Christian cathedrals. This engagement with spirituality is furthered by its title: *Covenant,* referring to a sacred biblical agreement between God and a religious community, which plays a central role in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Also resonating beyond the Abrahamic religions, the work's concentric shape is redolent of the intricate mandalas used in Buddhist, Hindu, Shinto, and Jain traditions to picture the cosmos.

Buddhist *mandala* painting, Nepal. Image: Werli Francois / Alamy Stock Photo

Hirst's intention behind *Covenant* was therefore not to invoke a specific religious practice, but to interrogate the complex relationship between art, death, and belief. Symbolizing the fragility of life, the radiant metamorphosis of the butterfly is cut short by its very brief lifespan, which typically amounts to only two weeks. However, the butterflies are a metaphor not only for mortality but also for remembrance: after their death, their beauty is forever preserved in his paintings. "The butterfly's life-cycle is one of regeneration and transformation," the curator Andrew Wilson asserted, "and in Hirst's hands this symbol of love becomes a powerful means by which the certainty of death can be apprehended from the point of view of a celebration of life and thought."[iii]

[i] Rod Mengham, *Mandalas,* exh. cat., White Cube, London, 2020, p. 8.

[ii] Jonathan Jones, "Damien Hirst: 'I was a Catholic until I was 12. I loved the imagery—the blood,'" *The Irish Times,* Feb. 25, 2021, online.

[iii] Andrew Wilson, "Believer," in *Damien Hirst,* exh. cat., Tate Modern, London, 2012, p. 203.

Provenance
Gagosian Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Literature
Robin Pogrebin, "Damien Hirst Returns to Gagosian Gallery," *The New York Times*, April 21, 2016, online (illustrated)

49

Barbara Kruger

Untitled (Our prices are insane!)

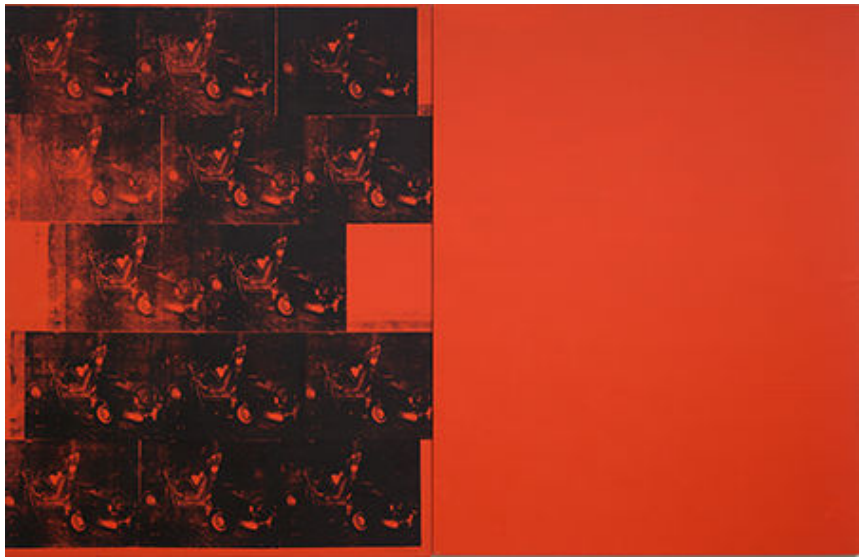
photographic silkscreen on vinyl
98 1/2 x 98 in. (250.2 x 248.9 cm)
Executed in 1987.

Estimate
$500,000 — 700,000

Go to Lot

Barbara Kruger's bold *Untitled (Our prices are insane!),* is emblematic of the artist's signature, eye-catching style: bordered in fire engine red, the appropriated, black-and-white face of a 1940s horror film star stares out at the viewer. Kruger's text, in the frantic cadence of advertising copy, runs at the same diagonal as the fake blood streaked across the figure's face: *Our prices are insane!*

The present work was executed in 1987, alongside some of the artist's most iconic works in public collections—including *Untitled (I shop therefore I am),* Pinault Collection, and *Untitled (We don't need another hero),* The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Untitled (Our prices are insane!)* brings together the conceptual artist's strong sense of graphic design, ad-speak, and visual juxtaposition in a witty commentary on communication and art in the late 1980s.



Andy Warhol, *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times,* 1963. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Kruger's fine art practice grew out of her career as a graphic designer at Condé Nast Publications, where she learned the effects that different combinations of images and typefaces could have on a reader. Her time in commercial graphic design was "the biggest influence on my work," she recalled, as her waged work "became, with a few adjustments, my 'work' as an artist."[i] Indeed, Kruger's keen editorial eye shines through in *Untitled (Our prices are insane!);* her selected horror film still strikes a perfect emotional chord—the face is terrified, yet not too terrifying to look at, and the actor's wide eyes draw the viewer into the work. Kruger's thoughtful placement of the text across the actor's cheek and nose keeps the most arresting features—the eyes, open mouth, and blood-stained cheek—visible, for heightened visual effect. Even the slant of the text is carefully keyed to the drip of the fake blood; these aesthetic choices mark out *Untitled (Our prices are insane!)* as a true masterclass in graphic design, and a masterpiece of Kruger's oeuvre.

Her selected text—*Our prices are insane!*—speaks to Kruger's intuitive understanding of the emotional tenor of advertising, and news media sensationalism. The use of hyperbole and the exclamation mark communicate a sense of frenetic urgency, related to the churn of the American economy in the late 1980s, as innovations in computer technology and expanded globalization at the end of the Cold War had a positive impact on the stock market. The 1980s, too, marked the beginning of investors' more explicit understanding of art as a valuable investment and commodity item.

Kruger's text registers the economic boom of the late 1980s, and the artist's own ambivalent place within capitalism, as a successful artist whose work commanded high prices. However, Kruger is not alone in the art market, and her signature use of direct address involves the viewer in the artwork's statement; these aren't just *her* prices, they are *our* prices.

Jenny Holzer, *Survival* series (1983-1985), installation view. Times Square, New York, 1985. Image: Courtesy Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Jenny Holzer / Artists Rights Society (ARS),

New York

Untitled (Our prices are insane!) belongs to the wider artistic output of the Pictures Generation, a loosely affiliated group of artists, including Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman, among others, whose work directly engaged the role of television, film, advertising, and news media on the popular American consciousness. *Untitled (Our prices are insane!),* with its almost hysterical advertising copy, relates to Holzer's decoupling of text and context. In Kruger's work, as in Holzer's, a line of text, removed from its original context, creates new meaning—in the present work, the phrase *Our prices are insane!,* overlaid on a horror film still, provokes emotional resonances beyond any ad-man's flash-sale focus. With *Untitled (Our prices are insane!),* Kruger asks a larger question about the role of language in contemporary society, which resonates to our present, social media age. In an over-saturation of text and image, how can either mode have meaning?

[i] Barbara Kruger, "Artist Bio," *The Broad,* accessed Oct. 2023, online.

Provenance
Galerie Philomene Magers, Berlin
The Sender Collection, New York (acquired from the above in 2006)
Sotheby's, New York, March 5, 2015, lot 275
Sprüth Magers
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2019

Exhibited
Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Fundación Costantini, *Bye Bye American Pie*, March 29–June 4, 2012, no. 13, pp. 133, 184 (illustrated, p. 133)

Literature
Barbara Kruger: Believe + Doubt, exh. cat., Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, 2013, p. 71 (illustrated)
Sophie Bubmann, "The Provocative Politics of Barbara Kruger," *Barnebys Magazine,* August 18, 2021, online (illustrated)

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

50

Keith Haring

Untitled

signed and dated '"JANUARY 1983 K. Haring ⊕" on the reverse
vinyl paint on vinyl tarpaulin with metal grommets
120 x 120 in. (304.8 x 304.8 cm)
Executed in 1983, this work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the Estate of Keith Haring.

Estimate
$2,800,000 — 3,500,000

Go to Lot

Keith Haring's unique visual language and symbolic sensibility unfurl across the surface of *Untitled,* 1983. His totemic central figure—nearly the full height of the ten-foot square tarp—crouches in a dynamic squat that bristles with energy, like a freeze-frame of a dancer, with the gravitas and timelessness of prehistoric sculpture. A monumental example of Haring's witty style, *Untitled* synthesizes the artist's enduring ability to imbue his 1980s downtown New York social milieu with an archetypical simplicity of form, in a universal language of freedom of expression.

House of Xtravaganza Legendary Voguers, Luis, Danny, Jose, and David Ian Xtravaganza, at Tracks, New York, 1989. Image: © Chantal Regnault

Coming out of the downtown New York scene, Haring's visual work takes on the vibrancy of the music and dance cultures that surrounded him. The rhythmic pose of the figure in *Untitled* recalls the boisterous physical movements of both break-dancing and voguing, in a dual reference to the underground hip-hop and queer communities that Haring circled within. Both dance styles are explosive, and take pleasure in physical distortion and the angles of the human body, and Haring captures this energy in the central figure of *Untitled.* "1982 to 1984 was the peak of rap music and breakdancing," Haring explained, and "graffiti was the visual tie-in" to this style of dance. "A lot of my inspiration was coming out of watching break-dancers, so my drawings started spinning on their heads and twisting and turning all around."[i]

After signing with dealer Tony Shafrazi in 1982, Haring sought a new format for his large-scale paintings, that registered the gravitas of gallery representation without sacrificing the grit and edge of his street art origins. While walking the streets of New York, he noticed a Con Edison construction crew who covered their equipment with a large sheet of industrial tarpaulin. The large-scale and machine-made quality of the tarp appealed to Haring, who sought out a tarp manufacturer in Brooklyn and purchased a selection of "canvases" for his inaugural solo show with Tony Shafrazi Gallery later that year. *Untitled* represented this seminal body of work early the following calendar year, in the group exhibition at Tony Shafrazi, *Champions,* January 15 – February 19, 1983.

"I am intrigued with the shapes people choose as their symbols to create a language."
—Keith Haring

Untitled is an aggrandizement of Haring's astute linear sensibilities, as perfected in his practice of graffiti. Through street art, Haring honed an economy of line and energetic expression, which give work like *Untitled* its striking visual quality. Haring's unique ability to create work that popped off city walls is translated into the bright color palette and dynamism of *Untitled.* The central figure is composed of arching sky-blue lines, confidently brushed against the black vinyl tarp, and filled in with a matrix of scarlet red gridded with rectangular black dots. In purposefully limiting his palette to blue, red, and black, Haring allows the cleverness of his composition to shine through.

Untitled is not just one figure, but multiple images in one. Haring codes a smiley face into the dancer's pose: their hands form the eyes, and the blue line of their legs turns into a smile. The negative space of *Untitled* holds symbolic value as well, most obviously in the feminine symbol, keyholded into the center of the figure. Further, the space under the arms of the figure cleaves into two halves of a broken heart locket, which wait to be reconnected by the feminine symbol "key."

Lotus-Headed Fertility Goddess Lajja Gauri, Madhya Pradesh, India, c. 6th century CE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Bequest of Samuel Eilenberg, 1998, 2000.284.13

The feminine symbol at the center of the work confirms a connection between the squatting pose of the figure and the forms of historic fertility and mother goddess sculptures, such as the Indian fertility goddess Lajja Gauri; the zig-zagged sides of the figure, too, recall the stylized body of the Ancient Roman she-wolf. These multivalent readings of *Untitled,* steeped in human history and Haring's contemporary moment, speak to the universality of his visual idiom.

[i] Keith Haring, quoted in John Gruen, et al., *Keith Haring,* New York, 2008, p. 236.

Provenance
Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York
Frederik Roos, Zurich and London (acquired in 1983)
Frederik Roos Collection, AB Stockholms Auktionsverk, Stockholm, June 2, 1994, lot 7118
Private Collection, United States
Christie's, New York, November 16, 2000, lot 41
Private Collection, Geneva
Max Lang, New York
Christie's, New York, November 15, 2017, lot 11B
Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

Exhibited
New York, Tony Shafrazi Gallery, *Champions*, January 15–February 19, 1983, pp. 49, 71 (illustrated, p. 49)
Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *© K. Haring 1986 ⊕*, March 15–May 12, 1986, no. 24, pp. 24, 78 (illustrated, p. 24)
Fondazione Triennale di Milano, *The Keith Haring Show*, September 27, 2005–January 29, 2006, no. 12, p. 171 (illustrated)
London, Barbican Art Gallery, *Panic Attack! Art in the Punk Years*, June 5–September 9, 2007, pp. 58-59, 212 (illustrated, p. 59)
New York, Phillips, *1970s / GRAFFITI / TODAY*, January 13–February 20, 2022

PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE COLLECTION

51

Jeff Koons

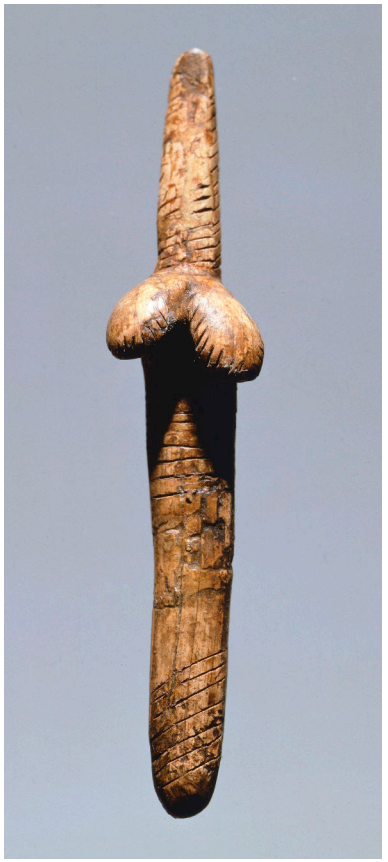
Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice (Magenta)

mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent color coating
109 1/8 x 43 1/8 x 28 1/3 in. (277.2 x 109.5 x 72 cm)
Executed in 2013-2017, this work is one of five unique variants.

Estimate
$3,000,000 — 5,000,000

Go to Lot

Central to Jeff Koons's practice is its irreverent interventions of the canon of art history, from the ancient statues of Praxiteles to the Surrealist dreamscapes of Salvador Dalí. A signature example of the artist's balloon sculptures, *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice (Magenta),* 2013–2017, stands as Koons's interpretation of one of earliest known pieces of figurative art. The work is from the artist's *Antiquity* series, which includes four sculptures that take as inspiration Venus figurines from the Upper Paleolithic period. Enlarged to nearly 35 times the height of the prehistoric icon on which it is based, this towering stainless-steel sculpture invites the viewer to experience the figure on entirely different terms. Its pristine mirror-polished magenta surface, reflecting the space around it, functions as an incisive commentary on postmillennial commodification that extends the Pop tradition. "The *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice*... is an evident attempt to re-introduce and re-invent ancient figurines in a modern context," the critic Natalia Gierowska illuminated. "The reflections make us feel included, ourselves an integral part of the art and thus absorb us as a part of the history of our civilization."[i]



The Dolni Venus ivory, Dolní Věstonice archaeological site, Czech Republic, c. 25,000 BCE. Image: DeAgostini Picture Library/Scala, Florence

Appearing directly in the artist's work since the late 1970s, the figure of Venus—the goddess of love, beauty, and fertility—has long influenced Koons's practice. From antiquity to the present day, she has functioned as an ever-evolving symbol of sex and desire, vital themes that thread together much of Koons's corpus. The *Dolni Venus* ivory, from which the present work takes its name, is a prehistoric carving that was excavated from the Dolní Věstonice archaeological site (today located in the Czech Republic) and dates from approximately 25,000 BCE. A heavily stylized rod with two breast-shaped knobs, this enigmatic object has been interpreted by archaeologists as representing both male and female sexuality. The slender figurine marks a stark contrast with the bulbous, almost spherical proportions of Koons's other three *Balloon Venus* compositions.

Koons's *Balloon Venus*

Jeff Koons, *Balloon Venus (Magenta)*, 2008–2012. The Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles. Image: Photo: Marc Domage/Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery, Artwork: © Jeff Koons

Jeff Koons, *Balloon Venus Lespugue (Red)*, 2013-2019. Image: Photo: Ella Bialkowska OKNO Studio, Courtesy Palazzo Strozzi, Artwork: © Jeff Koons

Jeff Koons, *Balloon Venus Hohlen Fels (Magenta),* 2013-2019. Artwork: © Jeff Koons

A reflection of Koons's engagement with the breadth of art history as well as its interrogations of the human condition, *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice* also alludes to the dramatic compositions and themes of Renaissance sculpture. According to Koons, *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice* "captures the essence of the different stages of a woman's life," directly referencing the *Vanitas Group,* a 15th century wooden sculpture by the late Gothic artist Michel Erhart, which is housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.[ii] Suggesting the transience of beauty and youth, the *Vanitas Group* depicts three figures—a young man, young woman, and elderly woman—standing shoulder-to-shoulder. The nudes are rendered in a striking realism that represents the two distinct phases of aging and their physical manifestations: vitality and decay. Though *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice* most conspicuously resembles the *Dolni Venus* ivory, upon closer inspection a third breast that Koons has added to the central rod comes into view. The three breasts are unequally sized, appearing as if they are in progressive stages of deflation that evoke Erhart's unnerving sculpture.

Michel Erhart, *Allegory of Transience, so-called Vanitas Group,* ca. 1470/80. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer.

Perhaps this optical illusion acts as Koons's *memento mori*, warning the viewer that we will all grow old and pass. "One of the reasons that I have always worked with balloons is that that the membrane is a reference to our skin; it's about both internal and external life," the artist expressed.[iii] Like skin, balloons are composed of a thin, fragile barrier that with time naturally begins to deflate and sag. This membrane separates outer appearance from a hidden interior, its pristine surface mimicking the deceptive image of perfection that societal standards of beauty encourage us to maintain. On the other hand, the steel that actually forms *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice* lends the work a sense of immortality—gesturing towards the oscillation between fragility and strength that underpins the cycle of life.

The gravity of these themes is counterposed by the present sculpture's bright magenta hue and childlike imagery. In addition to the present example, the artist produced unique versions of the form in red, violet, yellow and orange—fitting color choices for a balloon creation you might find at a child's birthday party. This playfulness is furthered by the work's anatomical humor, with the flaccid tops and lips of the balloons imitating nipples. Coalescing his interests in art history, desire, and play, *Balloon Venus Dolni Vestonice* embodies Koons's mission to explore the collective meanings of timeless signifiers and symbols. "For me," the artist articulated, "the [*Balloon Venus*] sculptures engage with human history and the connectivity of art that spans the history of humankind."[iv]

[i] Natalia Gierowska, "Jeff Koons: Shine," *The Brooklyn Rail,* Nov. 2021, online.

[ii] Jeff Koons, post on *X* (formerly known as *Twitter)*, Mar. 12, 2020, online.

[iii] Koons, quoted in Sarah Cascone, "Billionaire Victor Pinchuk's Jeff Koons Balloon Sculpture Could Fetch Over $10 Million at Auction to Benefit Ukraine," A*rtnet News,* Jul. 20, 2022, online.

[iv] Ibid.

Provenance
Gagosian Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2014

Exhibited
Parkes, National Gallery of Australia, *Bodies of Art: Human Form from the National Collection*, December 1, 2018–ongoing (another variant exhibited)
Tel Aviv Museum of Art, *Jeff Koons: Absolute Value. From the Collection of Marie and Jose Mugrabi*, March 10–October 10, 2020, pp. 30-32, 48, 59 (another variant exhibited and illustrated, pp. 31-32, 48)
Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, *Jeff Koons: Shine*, October 2, 2021–January 30, 2022, no. 27, pp. 31, 142-143, 190 (another variant exhibited and illustrated, pp. 143, 190)

Literature

Iker Seisdedos, “Factoria Koons: En Portada,” *El País*, No. 2017, May 24, 2015, p. 39 (another variant partially illustrated in the artist’s studio)

Art on View. National Gallery of Australia, no. 97, Autumn 2019, p. 5 (National Gallery of Australia, Parkes, installation view of another variant illustrated on the front cover)

Jessica Steinberg, “Jeff Koons’s sculptures arrive at Tel Aviv museum, sans artist,” *The Times of Israel*, March 9, 2020, online (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2020, installation view of another variant illustrated)

""Valor Absoluto” en el Museo de Arte de Tel Aviv,” *Aurora*, March 20, 2020, online (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2020, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Stacey Chan, “Meet the Member,” *Art on View. National Gallery of Australia*, no. 104, Summer 2020, p. 5 (National Gallery of Australia, Parkes, installation view of another variant illustrated)

“Phillips Announces Ground / Breaking, The First Private Selling Sculpture Exhibition to be Sold Online though Phillips X,” *Artfix Daily*, April 12, 2021, online (another variant illustrated)

“Le opere di Jeff Koons atterrano a Firenze, la nuova mostra di Palazzo Strozzi. Apre 'Jeff Koons. Shine', grandi sculture e installazioni che ripercorrono 40 anni di carriera dell'artista,” *055 Firenze*, September 30, 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Michela Conoscitore, "Shine di Jeff Koons abbaglia Palazzo Strozzi nel profondo. «Collegare il presente al passato significa continuare a legare le persone alla memoria biologica»," *Bon Culture*, October 2, 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

““Shine” di Jeff Koons a Palazzo Strozzi,” *Report Pistoia*, October 3, 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Lucrezia Caliani, “Jeff Koons a Palazzo Strozzi: no, non lo potevate fare anche voi,” *FUL Magazine*, November 13, 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Daniel Cisi, "Shine. Le scintillanti opere di Jeff Koons in mostra a Firenze a Palazzo Strozzi," *Glitch Magazine*, November 27, 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Natalia Gierowska, “Jeff Koons. Shine’” *The Brooklyn Rail*, November 2021, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

"[Anna's Italian Newsletter # 3] 3 selections of Italian exhibitions that are crowded with corona sickness, Koons, Crypto Art, Amazon now," *Art Exhibition Japan*, January 18, 2022, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

Harriet Lloyd-Smith, "At home with Jeff Koons," *Wallpaper,* October 9, 2022, online (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 2021, installation view of another variant illustrated)

52

Donald Judd

Untitled

stamped with the artist's signature, date and fabricator "JUDD JO BERNSTEIN BROS. INC. 76-5" on the reverse
stainless steel
10 x 72 x 26 in. (25.4 x 182.9 x 66 cm)
Executed in 1976.

Estimate
$600,000 — 800,000

Go to Lot

"It isn't necessary for a work to have a lot of things to look at, to compare, to analyze one by one, to contemplate. The thing as a whole, its quality as a whole, is what is interesting." —Donald Judd

With *Untitled,* 1976, Donald Judd presents a pristine expanse of stainless steel in a bull-nosed, cantilever form, mounted to the wall and curved with a perfect, rounded front edge. The surface of the work is smooth and unmarked, save a single, industrial seam that bisects *Untitled* down the center. The work is monumental in scale—six feet across, it projects almost two feet off the wall—and yet its polished and reflective surface produces a light, weightless quality that seems to defy the object's physical volume. *Untitled* is a powerful expression of Judd's signature aesthetic and intellectual rigor at the height of his career.

Donald Judd, *Untitled,* 1974. Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Artwork: © 2023 Judd Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The unadorned metal surface and breathtakingly austere form of *Untitled* are instantly recognizable as hallmarks of Judd's minimalist idiom. Though the artist did not like the term "Minimalist"—he preferred to call himself an "empiricist"—the influence his work had on Minimalism, as a wider art movement, cannot be overstated. Disinterested in the emotional heights of Abstract Expressionism, and uninspired by the prospect of representational painting, Judd felt that painting and sculpture had become "set forms," which the artist found creatively stifling. As articulated in his landmark 1965 essay, "Specific Objects," Judd defined an artwork as something that was interesting in its specificity and its inherent value as an object, unlimited by an arbitrary term like "sculpture."[i] For Judd, interesting, "specific objects" were radically minimalist objects, like *Untitled,* that pushed abstraction to its geometric extreme.

Frank Stella, *Avicenna*, 1960. The Menil Collection, Houston. Artwork: © 2023 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Given the cerebral nature of his personal art philosophy, it follows that, for Judd, the idea of an artwork was more important than his manual involvement in the process of production. With works like *Untitled,* Judd sought to eliminate the artist's hand as much as possible, which led him to begin working with industrial fabricators in the mid-1960s, including the Bernstein Brothers,

who fabricated the present work.[ii] This dual part artistic process—a period of ideation, followed by one of fabrication—aligns with what art historian James Meyer identifies as the core value of "progression" in Judd's work. His oeuvre is a modular system which, from an initial conceptual idea, opens to "exponential expansions, a potentially infinite number" of realized works.[iii]

Donald Judd, *Untitled,* 1967. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artwork: © 2023 Judd Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The present work projects forward in space, towards the viewer, in a bold, right-angled contrast to the flat surface of its supporting wall. This spatial relation emphasizes Judd's belief in the importance of an artwork's physical presence, the value of its volume in a room. The diffuse effect of direct light casts a silvery halo around the work, which focuses the viewer's awareness of the physicality of the object itself, and its relationship to the space around it. The work is both static and weightless; almost electric in its formal purity. In this way, *Untitled* actualizes the very core of Judd's artistic practice, which Roberta Smith succinctly described in 1975: *Untitled* holds "a concept of order which is a denial of most kinds of order; it is an insistence on the independence of things, a commitment fundamental to both his art and his life."[iv]

[i] Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," *Arts Yearbook 8,* 1965, reproduced in Judd, *Complete Writings 1959-1975,* Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975, pp. 181-189.

[ii] "Chronology," *Judd Foundation,* accessed Oct. 2023, online.

[iii] James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemic in the Sixties,* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001, p. 208.

[iv] Roberta Smith, "Introduction," *Donald Judd,* exh. cat. and cat. rais., The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1975, p. 3.

Provenance
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Doris Lockhart Saatchi, New York
PaceWildenstein, New York
Private Collection, Dallas (acquired from the above)
Private Collection, United Kingdom
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
New York, PaceWildenstein, *Donald Judd: Early Fabricated Work*, February 3–March 14, 1998, pp. 30-31 (illustrated, p. 31)

PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE COLLECTION

53

Pablo Picasso

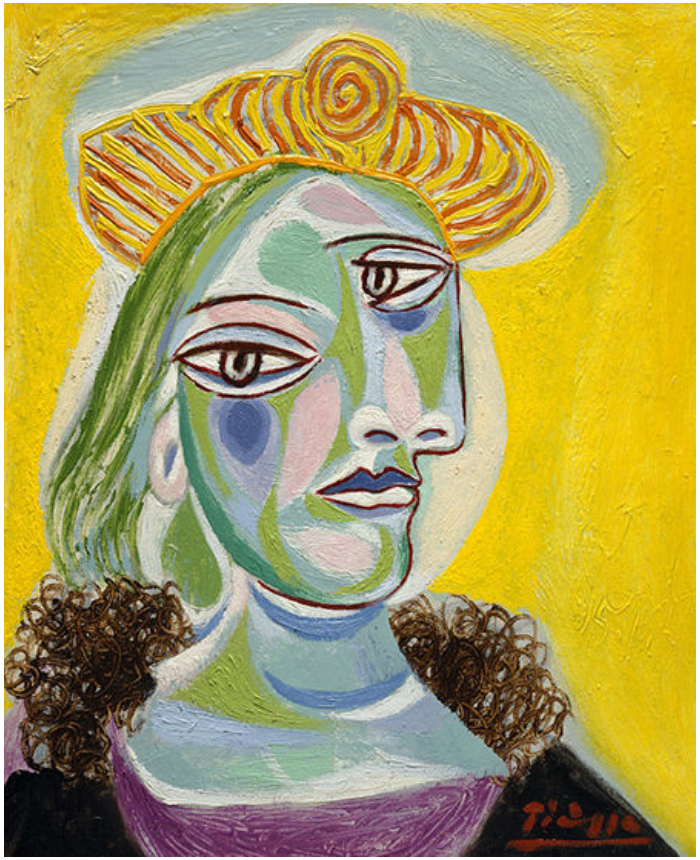
Tête de femme au chapeau

signed, inscribed and dated "13.1.62. I Picasso" upper left
crayon on paper
13 3/4 x 10 1/2 in. (34.9 x 26.7 cm)
Executed on January 13, 1962.

Estimate
$700,000 — 1,000,000

Go to Lot

In January of 1962, Pablo Picasso found himself engrossed by a single image: a bust of his final muse, Jacqueline Roque, wearing a large straw hat. The artist reworked this composition over several days, producing a diverse body of paintings, prints, and works on paper that de- and re-constructed one of Picasso's most enduring subjects. *Tête de femme au chapeau* takes its place in the long lineage of female portraits that traced both the artist's visual trajectory and his much-mythologized love life. Jacqueline is depicted in a straight-on, frontal view which is complicated by profile elements—such as the side of her mouth and nose—that recall the artist's earlier Cubist idiom. Radiantly rendered in Miró-esque thick crayon, she wears a blue-striped blouse evocative of Picasso's iconic Breton shirt and greets the viewer with wide eyes. The present work exudes a palpable confidence and playfulness that characterizes his mature approach.



Pablo Picasso, *Bust of a Woman (Dora Maar)*, 1938. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Artwork: © 2023 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

His longest-lasting relationship, Picasso and Jacqueline's marriage marked a final period of ebullience in the artist's life. The two met at the Madoura Pottery workshop in the South of France in 1953, where he was creating ceramics and she worked as a sales clerk. Instantly captivated by the 27-year-old, Picasso drew a dove on her house with chalk and reportedly brought her a rose every day for six months until she accepted his advances. They married in 1961, less than a year before he executed *Tête de femme au chapeau,* and relocated to a villa near Mougins, where they spent the last 12 years of Picasso's life. The subject of 70 of his portraits in 1962 alone, Jacqueline was his greatest muse, and their relationship spawned a particularly fruitful chapter in the artist's oeuvre. Her likeness is captured in the present figure's dark brunette hair and eyebrows, black eyes, and exaggerated high cheekbones—all of which became frequent motifs in Picasso's late works.

"When I was [a child] I could draw like Raphael, but it took me a lifetime to learn to draw like [children]." —Pablo Picasso

The exuberance of *Tête de femme au chapeau* is further conveyed by Picasso's employment of vibrant colored crayons, a medium that resurfaced with increasing frequency in the artist's work in the 1950s and 1960s. His interest in youthful materials during the period has been credited to times he spent drawing with his young children, Claude and Paloma, whom he shared with his previous partner Françoise Gilot. Perhaps in light of his own increasing age—he had turned 80 just months before executing *Tête de femme au chapeau*—the exposure to his children's vitality and playful imagination undoubtedly informed his pictorial language and choice of media. Picasso recognized in Paloma and Claude's compositions an expressive rawness and crudity which stood in stark contrast to his own precocious abilities: a prodigious master of academic drawing techniques, he was admitted to art school when he was only thirteen years old. "When I was their age I could draw like Raphael," Herbert Read recalled him saying at an exhibition of children's drawings, "but it took me a lifetime to learn to draw like them."[i]

Pablo Picasso drawing with Paloma and Claude at Villa la Galloise, 1953. Image: Photo Edward Quinn, © edwardquinn.com

This exultant representation of Jacqueline is a nod to his many earlier depictions of woman donning straw hats, from Dora Maar to Marie-Thérèse Walter. Coalescing the lyricism found in his paintings of the 1930s with the rigorous spatial ambiguity of his Cubist period, *Tête de femme au chapeau* gestures to many of the pictorial strategies that have defined Picasso's corpus. Considering the myriad synergies between this image and his past work, it is perhaps unsurprising that it was created during a particularly introspective time in the artist's life, when he was reflecting on the breadth of his career. Just a few months after he made *Tête de femme au chapeau*, the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened a comprehensive retrospective that spanned six years of his practice. The image was later memorialized as an emblem of this body of work when a corresponding lithograph was printed by Stuttgart's Daco-Verlag in 1990.

[i] Richard Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work*, 3rd ed., Berkeley, 1981, p. 307

Provenance
Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne (acquired directly from the artist)
Private Collection, Germany (acquired from the above)
Private Collection, Germany (by descent from the above)
Christie's, London, February 10, 2005, lot 666
Hammer Galleries, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Lucerne, Galerie Rosengart, *Picasso: An Idea Becomes Sculpture, Variations on a Theme*, July–September 1970, n.p. (illustrated in its unsigned state)
Stadthalle Balingen, *Pablo Picasso: Portrait-Figurine-Skulptur*, June 17–August 20, 1989, p. 123 (illustrated)
Stadthalle Balingen, *Pablo Picasso: Metamorphosen des Menschen. Arbeiten auf Papier 1895-1972*, June 22–September 24, 2000, no. 140, n.p. (illustrated)

Literature
Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso. Œuvres de 1961 a 1962*, Paris, 1968, vol. 20, no. 193, pp. 93, 154 (illustrated in its unsigned state, p. 93)

54

Christina Quarles

Floored

signed, titled and dated "Christina Quarles 2017 "FLOORED"" on the reverse
acrylic on canvas
40 x 50 1/8 in. (101.6 x 127.3 cm)
Painted in 2017.

Estimate
$250,000 — 350,000

Go to Lot

Amorphous, dripping body parts spill across a yellow and black checkered floor in Christina Quarles' *Floored*. Created in 2017, the year of the artist's first ever solo exhibition, which launched her to widespread critical acclaim, *Floored* displays Quarles' signature, undefinable bodies, bending and intersecting across a spliced picture plane, in a ripe visual synthesis of the multiple, shifting aspects of the self. Subverting the trope of the female nude in art history, Quarles' paintings upend our preconceived notions of race, gender, and space.

Egon Schiele, *Kneeling Girl, Resting on Both Elbows,* 1917. Leopold Museum, Vienna.

As a "queer, cis woman who is black but is often mistaken as white," Quarles is fascinated by the dissonance between how one's identity is perceived, and how one perceives oneself.[i] Her distorted and fragmented figures register the contradictions between external and internal perceptions of self, through a "layering of information [which] bypasses singularity for simultaneity."[ii] In *Floored,* it is challenging to discern how many figures are splayed across the floor—and which limbs belong to which person. Quarles eschews anatomical reality in order to paint "portraits of living within a body," as she says; touching, feeling, moving—the seven-fingered hand stroking the face at upper left, for instance, registers how it feels to be touched from within the body, feeling fingers curve and brush against skin.[iii]

The artist relishes the ambiguity of her figures, and the way in which her compositions encourage the viewer look closely and puzzle out each body. "I like to play with the desire I think we all have to complete the image, and whenever possible, to complete it into a figure," she explains.[iv] The viewer assumes, based on the presence of recognizable features, like the hands, feet, and breasts in *Floored*, that Quarles' forms are all body parts; Quarles hopes to introduce just enough ambiguity to her compositions to "nudge people enough in the direction of questioning their initial assumptions."[v]

Mickalene Thomas, *Racquel Reclining Wearing Purple Jumpsuit*, 2016. Private Collection. Artwork: © 2023 Mickalene Thomas / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The division of space in *Floored,* too, adds to the perceived ambiguity of the composition. As Quarles shares, she begins each painting with the fragmented shapes and abstract brushstrokes that will become her figures. Once these shapes are "fleshed out" on canvas, she pauses, photographs the work, and then takes it into Adobe Illustrator, where she digitally draws over the photograph to place "the patterns and the planes and the areas that really start to interrupt the figure."[vi] After this digital intervention, Quarles returns to the canvas to complete the work; the splicing of her figures across planes, then, is quite literally built into her painting process, as she shifts from canvas, to computer screen, and back again. The figure(s) of *Floored* exist in three planes of reality at once—the pink sky, the checkered floor, and a murky, subterranean layer of hazy yellow and grey.

Quarles' ambitions to upend assumptions about figurative painting are inherently antipatriarchal, antiracist, and queer. With a traditional canon dominated by paintings of nude women by white men, Quarles' queer gaze, like that of Mickalene Thomas or Jenna Gribbon, calls into question the power dynamics of her figurative representations. The practice of figure drawing—which Quarles has participated in since the age of twelve—relies on direct observation, and rewards the artist who is best able to see the physical body before them. Quarles' figures, with their twisting limbs, extra fingers, and blue-grey shadows, overlap and intersect in ways that defy any sense of figural reality; these are "bodies that resist a fixing gaze."[vii]

[i] Christina Quarles, quoted in *Christina Quarles, Matrix 271*, exh. brochure, University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, 2018, online.

[ii] Andrew Bonacina, "In Likeness," in *Christina Quarles*, exh. cat., The Hepworth Wakefield, 2019, p. 25.

[iii] Quarles, quoted in "Intimacy, Unknowing, and Discovery: David J. Getsy in conversation with Christina Quarles," ibid., p. 34.

[iv] Ibid.

[v] Ibid.

[vi] Ibid., p. 31.

[vii] Bonacina, ibid.

Provenance
Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles
Private Collection
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Los Angeles, Michael Kohn Gallery, *Engender*, November 11, 2017–January 27, 2018

Literature
"ENGENDER. Kohn Gallery," *The Menu* by *Quiet Lunch*, October 5, 2017, online (illustrated)
Christopher Harrity, "13 Works of Art Beyond the Binary," *Advocate*, October 16, 2017, online (illustrated)
Sasha Bogojev, "17 Artists Take on Gender Identity in "Engender" @ Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles," *Juxtapoz*, October 30, 2017, online (illustrated)
Adam Lehrer, ""Engender" At Kohn Gallery: 8 Artists On How Gender Functions In Their Work," *UNTITLED*, November 7, 2017, online (illustrated)
Katy Donoghue, "Beyond Binary: Joshua Friedman on "Engender" at Kohn Gallery," *whitewall*, November 16, 2017, online (illustrated)
Joel Martens, "ENGENDER: The Subjectivity of Male and Female," *The Rage*, December 5, 2017, online (illustrated)
Eve Wood, "Engender at Michael Kohn Gallery," *Art and Cake*, December 8, 2017, online (illustrated)
Ezrha Jean Black, "Artillery Best in Show 2017," *Artillery*, January 2, 2018, online (illustrated)
Michael Slenske and Molly Langmuir, "Who's Afraid of the Female Nude? Paintings of naked women, usually by clothed men, are suddenly sitting very uncomfortably on gallery walls," *The Cut, New York Magazine*, April 16, 2018, online (illustrated)

55

Lucio Fontana

Concetto spaziale, Attese

signed, titled and inscribed "1 + 1 Cosa vuoi nel mio studio Clara "ATTESE" l. fontana Concetto Spaziale" on the reverse
waterpaint on canvas
25 5/8 x 21 1/4 in. (65.1 x 54 cm)
Executed in 1964.

Estimate
$1,500,000 — 2,000,000

Go to Lot

"With the slash I invented a formula that I don't think can be further perfected. I managed with this formula to give the spectator an impression of spatial calm, of cosmic rigor, of serenity in infinity…" —Lucio Fontana

Taking a blade to waterpainted canvas, Lucio Fontana slashes open modernist conceptions of painting in *Concetto spaziale, Attese*, 1964. Though he began the *Attese* series in 1958, the present example dates to the height of Fontana's career and anticipates his achievement of the Grand Prize for Painting at the 33rd Venice Biennale in 1966. The formal simplicity belies a richness of philosophical and art historical meaning. With five diagonal cuts across a vibrant red canvas that peel open into a black space beyond, *Concetto spaziale, Attese* pierces through centuries of painting mores, in a work that synthesizes philosophical and artistic innovations from the Old Masters to Abstract Expressionists. The bright red waterpaint stands in contrast with Fontana's dark, black slashes, emphasizing, in tonal juxtaposition, Fontana's bold rupture with the painted tradition.

Art critic Clement Greenberg wrote in 1960 that flatness was the defining characteristic of modern painting. While Old Masters preserved the flat surface of the picture plane "underneath and above the most vivid illusion of three-dimensional space," Modernists sought an inverse effect. Per Greenberg, in a modern (often abstract) painting, "[o]ne is made aware of the flatness… before, instead of after, being made aware of what that flatness contains."[i] Fontana, with his *Concetto spaziale* ("spatial concept") series, opens up a third option: a painting that, by means of its ruptured surface, paradoxically emphasizes the flatness of the canvas, and reveals that flatness as an illusion.

Jackson Pollock, *Blue Poles,* 1952. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Image: © National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Purchased 1973 / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The dynamism of Fontana's work, *Concetto spaziale, Attese* included, derives from the artist's leading role in the development of Spatialism, a Post-War artistic attitude that emphasized how new technologies and scientific and philosophical developments impacted artistic production. As Fontana and his peers wrote in the *Manifesto Blanco* of 1946, art needed "a change in both essence and form. It is necessary to transcend painting, sculpture, poetry, and music. We require a greater art, which will be consistent with the demands of the new spirit."[ii]

In other words, Fontana sought to add a new, philosophical dimension to art, which found its physical expression in the shift from a two-dimensional to three-dimensional canvas in his *Concetto spaziale* series. He began with the *buchi* works, wherein he poked holes in the canvas, and culminated with his *tagli,* or slashes, as seen in *Concetto spaziale, Attese.* Creating ruptures in the painted surface, for Fontana, was a way to transcend the genres and traditions of the past, in addition to the contemporary trends in abstraction.

To create *Concetto spaziale, Attese,* Fontana began with vibrant red waterpaint, a water-based housepaint, carefully applied in layers so that no brushstrokes were visible. From there, while the canvas was still wet, he used a blade to slice the *tagli,* which he then eased open, further, with the flat of his hand. A friend of the artist described this gesture, this easeful opening, as a "caress" of the canvas, though popular analysis sees the *tagli* as a more violent, even iconoclastic gesture.[iii] Indeed, the slash, the blade tearing through canvas, is a dynamic motion, akin to the bold action painting contemporary to Fontana's practice.

Caravaggio, *Doubting Thomas,* 1601-1602. Bildergalerie, Potsdam. Image: bpk Bildagentur / Bildergalerie, Potsdam / Gerhard Murza / Art Resource, NY

However, where abstract action painting centered on the emotional expression of the artist, *Concetto spaziale, Attese* seeks a more universal, even Romantic sense of the sublime in painting. Fontana's process, of gently opening the canvas to reveal another dimension, recalls the bible story of doubting Thomas, popularly recreated by Old Master painters, such as Fontana's fellow Italian, Caravaggio, for centuries. In the story, Thomas, one of the apostles, cannot believe that Jesus has risen from the dead until he places his hand inside the spear wound in Christ's side. The spectator feels the urge, like Thomas, to reach through *Concetto spaziale, Attese* and touch the sublime. Indeed, as Fontana once said, the *tagli* "give the spectator an impression of spatial calm, of cosmic rigor, of serenity in infinity..."[iv]

Art historian Sarah Whitfield writes that Fontana's *tagli* "were not just gashes punched through a canvas, but a way of making the viewer look beyond the physical fact of the painting, to what Fontana called 'a free space.'"[v] The concept of "free space" exists both as a representation of infinite space without boundaries, and the philosophical space of free, wandering thought. Fontana emphasized this philosophical third dimension, aesthetically, by placing black tape across the back of each *tagli,* darkening the space behind the cuts like a mysterious void, or black hole. Indeed, the astronomical parallel is significant, as Fontana was inspired by the Space Race, and the daring scientific explorations that pushed the boundaries of the known world in the 1960s. *Concetto spaziale, Attese* thus ties philosophical, technological, and artistic innovations together in one. It is a pure expression of Spatialism, a painting for its present moment.

Collector's Digest

- The red color of *Concetto spaziale, Attese* is among the most coveted for Fontana collectors. The top three *Attese* works at auction have all been this hue.
- Dating to 1964, *Concetto spaziale, Attese* comes from the peak of Fontana's career. The top ten *Attese* works at auction all date between 1963-1966.
- Examples of the *Concetto spaziale, Attese* series can be found in the best public and private modern art collections worldwide, including The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Kunstmuseum Basel, and The National Museum of Art, Tokyo.

[i] Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 1960, in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism,* vol. 4, ed., John O'Brian, Chicago, p. 87.

[ii] Lucio Fontana et al., "Manifesto Blanco (White Manifesto)," 1946, *391,* accessed Jul. 2023, online.

[iii] Sarah Whitfield, *Lucio Fontana,* exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 2000, p. 31.

[iv] Fontana, quoted in Giorgio Bocca, "Il taglio è il taglio: Incontro con Lucio Fontana, il vincitore di Venezia," *Il Giorno,* Jul. 6, 1966, accessed Sep. 2023, online.

[v] Whitfield, 14.

Provenance
Galleria Carlevaro, Genoa
Andrea Denini, Genoa
Mr. Rinaldo Rotta, Genoa
Thence by descent to the present owner

Literature

Enrico Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana: Catalogue raisonné des peintures, sculptures et environments spatiaux*, vol. II, Brussels, 1974, no. 64 T 18, pp. 152-153, 231 (illustrated, p. 153)
Enrico Crispolti, *Fontana: Catalolgo generale*, vol. II, Milan, 1986, no. 64 T 18, pp. 518, 769 (illustrated, p. 518)
Enrico Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana: Catalogo ragionato di sculture, dipinti, ambientazioni*, vol. II, Milan, 2006, no. 64 T 18, pp. 710, 1040 (illustrated, p. 710)

56

Emilio Vedova

Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56)

signed and dated "Vedova 1956" lower right; signed and dated "Vedova 1956" on the reverse
oil on paper mounted on canvas
59 x 78 3/4 in. (149.9 x 200 cm)
Executed in 1956.

This work is registered in the Archivio Emilio Vedova, Venice, under the n. 1502 and it is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the Archivio Emilio Vedova, Venice.

Estimate
$400,000 — 600,000

Go to Lot

"Today we must make painting not 'in the manner of so-and-so,' but painting that speaks of our times, our violence, our sentence to live: of these strong, aggressive things." —Emilio Vedova

Brimming with pulsating, vigorous energy, *Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56),* 1956, vividly illustrates Emilio Vedova's dynamic approach to abstraction. The image stands as a significant representation of the artist's acclaimed *Ciclo della Protesta* or "Cycle of Protests" series, which he executed in the 1950s. Foregrounding the raw expressive potential and emphasis on materials championed by *Arte informale,* these works reflected Vedova's assertion that radical, politically-engaged art should be abstract. A flurry of vibrant strokes sweep across the surface, coalescing in a centripetal array of cadmium red and yellow elements. Overlapping and jostling against each other, collaged papers animate the picture plane and extend this sense of materiality. Despite their seeming spontaneity, these forms confront each other with an intense yet controlled harmony of composition. "If you look at the tension in my burning signs, it is easy to label them *Informal*!" Vedova explained. "But that is superficial. These works are structured—and these are the structures of my consciousness."[i]

Giacomo Balla, *Speeding Automobile,* 1912. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Vedova's practice expressed a political consciousness as early as the late 1930s, when his work began responding to the trauma and tragedy of the Spanish Civil War. Pablo Picasso's masterpiece *Guernica* (1937), which depicted the Nationalist bombing of the city in northern Spain, became a significant point of reference for Vedova. In 1946, he signed the "Beyond Guernica" manifesto, which urged Italian artists to engage with contemporaneous political concerns while evading the constraints of figuration. "The violent class of different situations/conflicts that contemporary man has to bear every day is Vedova's central theme," the art historian Werner Haftmann elucidated.[ii] The gestural smears and strokes of paint in *Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56)* convey the horror and violence that characterized the political reality of the Post-War era.

Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56) is from a smaller body of work within the *Ciclo della Protesta* that Vedova executed in the winter of 1955 and 1956 on a mountain vacation in Monte Terminillo, Rieti. These works were inspired by a recent trip he and his wife Annabianca had taken to Brazil for the artist to participate in the São Paulo Biennial in 1954; while there, he was awarded a Morganti Foundation prize that allowed him to stay in the country for three more months. From January to March, he travelled throughout Brazil, encountering the country's stunning forests and natural beauty as well as the coffee plantations and fazendas found further inland. The decade of the 1950s marked a crucial moment in the economic development of Brazil, as rapid industrialization and wealth inequality led to acute hardship among workers. The extreme poverty Vedova witnessed during his time in Brazil galvanized him to produce *Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56)* as a challenge to the injustices that faced both Latin America and all of humanity.

Emilio Vedova in Venice, 1956. Image: © Archivio Arici. All rights reserved 2023 / Bridgeman Images

The vitality and conflict between forms found in the present work seems to allude to the energized visual idiom of Vedova's pre-World War I forebearers, the Italian Futurists. However, while the Futurists aestheticized the brutal aggression of their generation's technological progress and social upheaval, *Ciclo della Protesta (Brasile '56)* evinces the disturbing and insidious nature of the modern world. In this way, the work does not *portray* a protest but instead constitutes Vedova's own moral protest to the fractured state of humanity: it is a condemnation of discrimination and violence in abstract terms. "His paintings... arise from an abstract fury or painful anger," Hartmann expressed. "They reveal... the gestures of protest and contradiction. Their dynamic force, their vitality is for freedom in the self-realization of the human being."[iii]

[i] Emilio Vedova, quoted in *Emilio Vedova,* exh. cat., Galerie Günther Franke, Munich, 1989.

[ii] Werner Haftmann, "Vedova," in *Emilio Vedova,* exh. cat., Galleria Civica di Arte Contemporanea, Trento, p. 53.

[iii] Haftmann, "Emilio Vedova," in *Emilio Vedova,* exh. cat., Galerie Günther Franke, Munich, 1989.

Provenance
Galleria Orler, Favaro Veneto
Catherine Viviano Gallery, New York
Private Collection, Rome
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
Palermo, Palazzo Branciforte, *Emilio Vedova Opere di Collezione*, February 3–April 23, 2017, no. 1502, pp. 50-51 (illustrated, p. 51; illustrated on the back cover)

57

KAWS

UNTITLED (DBZ2)

signed, titled and dated “KAWS..07 DBZ2” on the reverse
acrylic on canvas
40 x 70 in. (101.6 x 177.8 cm)
Painted in 2007.

Estimate
$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

Go to Lot

Untitled (DBZ2), 2007, leverages KAWS' understanding of both Japanese and American popular culture in the mid-2000s. In the legacy of Pop masters such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, mixed with the edge of Appropriation artists and street art, KAWS' keenly deploys the universal language of cartoons in his work, filtered through his own iconic character, the COMPANION.

At first glance, KAWS' *Untitled (DBZ2)* seems to perfectly appropriate a still from the popular anime series *Dragon Ball Z.* The work presents the show's main character, Goku, at left, and the god Kami, at right, facing the viewer in a yellow paneled room. However, KAWS has purposefully simplified the composition, removing the Japanese *kanji* on each character's tunic, and replacing each face with the visage of the COMPANION.

Animation still from *Dragon Ball Z,* Raditz Saga, episode 6, "No Time Like the Present," 1989. U.S. airdate: June 22, 2005.

Developed to accompany the advertisement models in KAWS' graffiti works of the 1990s, the COMPANION has become an iconic figure in its own right. With its fluffy poufs, and blank, skull-like face with crossed-out eyes, the COMPANION is as recognizable as any other international cartoon character, Goku included. KAWS painted prolifically from popular cartoons in the early 2000s, from *Dragon Ball Z* to *SpongeBob SquarePants* and *The Simpsons.* With works like *Untitled (DBZ2),* KAWS proves how cartoons can be a universal language, and a ready surface for his own COMPANION character, that allows his work to transcend geographic and cultural differences to reach a worldwide audience.

KAWS, born Brian Donnelly in New Jersey, first visited Japan in 1997, where he met fellow artists and culture makers including Yoshifumi "Yoppi" Egawa of HECTIC, Tomoaki "Nigo" Nagao (longtime KAWS collaborator and founder of A Bathing Ape), and Hikaru Iwanaga, founder of the toy design company, Bounty Hunter. These creatives introduced KAWS to the Japanese practice of creating high-quality, limited-edition collectible toys, and the subculture of *otaku,* an obsession with manga and anime (*Dragon Ball Z* included).[i] This relationship between popular culture and commerce became a blueprint for KAWS' own art practice, creating works that scaled from collectible toys to monumental sculptures.

KAWS, *Untitled (DBZ).* Private Collection. © KAWS

"KAWS' experiences in Japan heightened his awareness of the ability of cartoon

characters to speak to shared experience that can cut across language barriers." — Dr. Eugenie Tsai

Most importantly, perhaps, the language barrier KAWS experienced with the Japanese phenomena around him revealed the cultural power of cartoon imagery like *Dragon Ball Z* to speak to people across languages and cultures.[ii] The viewer doesn't have to speak Japanese, for instance, to understand *Dragon Ball Z*—its visual imagery, instantly recognizable to any fan, is an effective storyteller on its own. KAWS' COMPANION character functions in the same way—wherever one sees the COMPANION, regardless of context, they know that it is KAWS' work. KAWS began painting his COMPANION directly into cartoon stills, and creating his own collectible toys; he opened his own streetwear and collectibles store in Japan, OriginalFake, in 2006, one year before creating *Untitled (DBZ2).*[iii]

KAWS, *KAWSBOB 3,* 2007. Collection of Pharrell Williams. Artwork: © KAWS

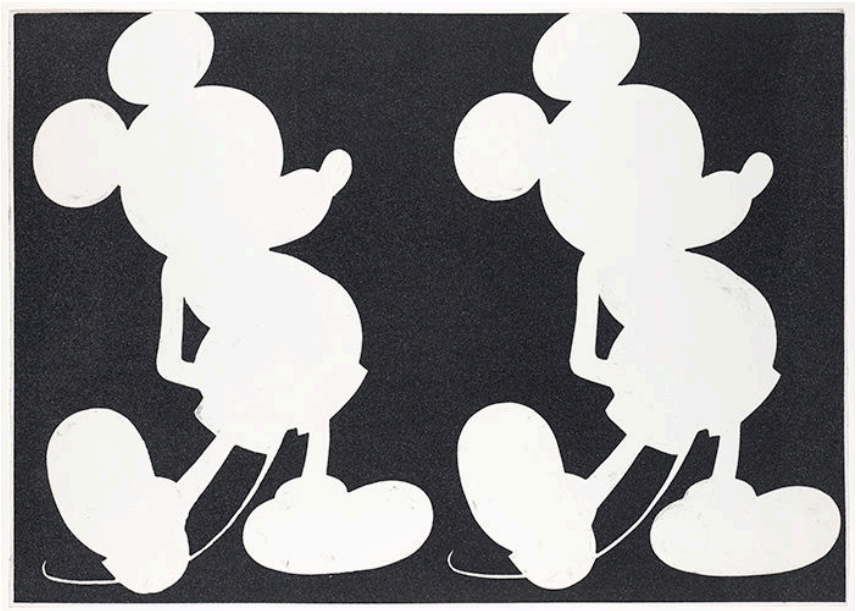
It is the universal relatability of cartoon characters that translates so effectively in KAWS' appropriation of *Dragon Ball Z* in the present work. In addition to replacing Goku and Kami's features with those of the COMPANION, KAWS simplifies the line work of the original composition, specifically by eliminating elements with strong verbal referents. Most obviously, the *kanji,* Japanese words written in Chinese characters, on Goku and Kami's garments have been removed, which give verbal clues to who each character is (Kami's for example, reads "god"). Instead, KAWS relies on the anime's strong character design for legibility—the viewer is to identify Goku by his orange and blue clothing, and Kami by his antennae and the peach-colored muscles on his arms. In other words, the universal language of the cartoon takes precedence.

At the edges of the work, too, one notices two speech bubbles. In a *Dragon Ball Z* manga, these bubbles may hold Japanese text, or an English translation, but in *Untitled (DBZ2),* the bubbles are left blank. There are no linguistic signifiers to limit *Untitled (DBZ2)* to a particular culture, language, or even to a specific story arc in *Dragon Ball Z.* KAWS does not need additional (con)text: the presence of the COMPANION's features says it all.

The composition of *Untitled (DBZ2)* comes from a scene from the episode "No Time Like the Present" in the Raditz Saga of the original *Dragon Ball Z* anime. In this episode, Goku, the hero, has just been revived from the dead (hence his halo, which KAWS faithfully reproduces), and Kami, the green-skinned deity who embodies goodness, brings him before the judge of Heaven and Hell to begin special training.[iv] At the same time, Kami's evil alter ego kidnaps Goku's son, and begins to train him. This episode is a turning point in the series that introduces new storylines, which bring the anime's central themes of good and evil into high relief. For an anime with such a robust cultural legacy—*Dragon Ball Z* is consistently ranked as one of the best anime of all time, and has led to dozens of dubbed and subtitled versions, spin-off series, video games, and a marketplace of collectible merchandise for fans—KAWS' selection of such a poignant moment steeps *Untitled (DBZ2)* in nostalgia for an iconic story.[v]

"We live in an era of reboots and remakes…reprocessing teenage affections in endlessly permuting ways. What, in visual art, hits this same nerve?" —Ben Davis

The universal potential of cartoons has engaged the artist since his earliest days as a graffiti artist, gaining notoriety for his interventions with billboards and advertisements around New York City, and his work as a background artist for Nickelodeon cartoons in the 1990s.[vi] He painted backgrounds for cartoons like *Doug* and *Daria,* a task which required precise brushwork, stylistic consistency, and color-matching skills. KAWS' description of how he painted his graffiti works strongly parallels the stylistic brief for a background painter, and would be an apt description for the painting style of *Untitled (DBZ2),* as well: "I painted with no brush strokes, clean and unobtrusive," he told art critic Carlo McCormick. "I wanted people to think that what I did was actually part of the ad campaign."[vii]



Andy Warhol, *Double Mickey Mouse,* 1981. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The brushstrokes of *Untitled (DBZ2),* too, are "clean and unobtrusive," and give the impression that KAWS' COMPANION really *is* in a scene from *Dragon Ball Z*. The work is as bright and clean as an animation cell. KAWS seamlessly integrates his own work into the source material with his precise brushstroke and the easily recognizable and reproducible forms of the COMPANION, creating an artwork that blurs the lines of originality and authorship. With *Untitled (DBZ2),* KAWS works in the legacy of Pop art (Lichtenstein's early Mickey Mouse paintings are a particularly strong parallel) with the irreverence and omnivorous pop cultural appetite of an Appropriationist. *Untitled (DBZ2)* synthesizes these myriad art historical and cultural references into the iconic visage of the COMPANION, *Dragon Ball Z*-style.

[i] "Summer Reads: Why KAWS messed with the Simpsons," *Phaidon,* 2022, accessed Aug. 2023, online.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] "No Time Like the Present," *Dragon Ball Wiki,* accessed Aug. 2023, online.

[v] "Dragon Ball Z: Reception and Impact," *Dragon Ball Wiki,* accessed Aug. 2023, online.

[vi] "Summer Reads: Why KAWS messed with the Simpsons," ibid.

[vii] KAWS, quoted in William S. Smith, "What the Rise of KAWS Says about the Art World's Ailments," *Art in America,* Sep. 3, 2019, online.

Provenance
Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

58

Jeff Koons

Lobster Log

polychromed aluminum, wood, stainless steel and coated steel chain
42 x 56 1/8 x 42 in. (106.7 x 142.6 x 106.7 cm)
chain length variable
Executed in 2003-2012, this work is number 1 from an edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof.

Estimate
$1,000,000 — 1,500,000

Go to Lot

With his characteristic playfulness, Jeff Koons creates an assemblage of art history and personal memory in *Lobster Log*, 2003-2012. The work is a *cadavre-exquis* made of polished aluminum, wood, and steel, consisting of the front half of a lobster-shaped pool toy, a tubular pool float, and a log in place of a tail. Suspended from the ceiling by a red chain, it is as if *Lobster Log* swims through the air, wearing a pool floatie through a sea of Surrealist references and Koons's own artistic motifs.

Inflatables have been a staple of Koons's art practice for decades, since the artist's first *Inflatables* series of the late 1970s, which placed inflatable vinyl toys in dialogue with mirrors. Later bodies of work have brought inflatable and mirror together in one object; the artist's famous sculptures in the forms of inflatable objects—toys, pool floats, and balloons—reflect the viewer and their surroundings in their highly-polished painted steel surfaces. *Lobster Log* is a *trompe l'oeil* inflatable object—or rather, an *assemblage,* in the absurdist lineage of Marcel Duchamp, that merges transformed readymades and everyday objects in unexpected combinations.

Salvador Dalí, *Lobster Telephone,* 1938. Tate Modern, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Lobster Log belongs to Koons's *Popeye* series, a body of work named for the macho comic strip character, Popeye the Sailor Man, and defined by its pool party iconography and *assemblage* technique. Koons explains that, for the *Popeye* series, he chose to combine pool floats with readymade objects (such as the log in the present work) in order to "give the inflatable a cultural history... a sense of a past, something to have a relationship with."[i] Given that Koons views inflatables as anthropomorphic objects, it follows that the inflatable's cultural past in *Lobster Log* aligns with Koons's own childhood memories and art historical influences.[ii]

As a child growing up in Philadelphia, Koons encountered Duchamp's *assemblage* and readymade work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art by the age of seven.[iii] He also recalls the pool float as a "liberating" object from about the same time in his childhood, as it enabled him to swim without his parents' assistance. However, Koons troubles a directly nostalgic reading of *Lobster Log* in material terms, as, by casting his lobster and inner tube in aluminum, he "liberates" them from any practical floating ability—*Lobster Log* would sink at any pool party, and yet, Koons suspends the object in midair. The viewer confronts this cognitive dissonance in the bold installation of *Lobster Log*.

Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel,* 1913 (1951). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY, Artwork: © 2023 Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

A sole reading of childhood innocence and play, however, stands in contrast with Koons's assertion that "there is a huge sexual fetish thing on the Web for pool toys."[iv] The lobster, too, is a sexually charged object in Koons's interpretation, and so its presence as a pool toy in *Lobster Log* is doubly loaded. For Koons, the lobster, itself an aphrodisiac dish, is a symbol of both male and female sexuality. He explains that the creature's arms are "very strong, but they could be fallopian tubes and its body could be the womb. If you look at its tail, it's almost like a stripper with a boa doing a feather dance, and also has tentacles that look like Dalí's mustache."[v] Salvador Dalí, one of Koons's favorite artists, and a direct artistic antecedent to the *Popeye* series, used the lobster as a symbol of erotic desire in his work.[vi] *Lobster Log* perhaps most closely parallels Dalí's absurdist *assemblage*, *Lobster Telephone,* 1938, in which, as Terry Riggs wryly notes in his description of the piece for the Tate Modern, "the crustacean's tail, where its sexual parts are located, is placed directly over the mouthpiece."[vii]

Like Duchamp and Dalí before him, Koons is aware of the seductive power of the fetish object—in both the sexual and consumerist connotations of the term. *Lobster Log* fuses multiple, overlapping meanings of desire, freedom, and play together in one object; the *Popeye* work is a keen deployment of what Arthur C. Danto—with Duchampian punning—calls Koons's "Pop-eye."[viii]

[i] Jeff Koons, quoted in Julia Peyton-Jones, et al., *Jeff Koons: Popeye Series,* exh. cat., Serpentine Gallery, London, 2009, p. 69.

[ii] Ibid., p. 70.

[iii] Koons, quoted in "Jeff Koons on his teenage meeting with Salvador Dalí," *Phaidon,* Jun. 24, 2019, online.

[iv] Koons, quoted in Sarah Thornton, *33 Artists in 3 Acts,* W.W. Norton, New York, 2014, n.p.

[v] Koons, quoted in "'It's Somebody Having Sex': Jeff Koons Bares the Subtext of His Art in Brussels," *The Huffington Post,* Oct. 15, 2012, online.

[vi] Terry Riggs, "Lobster Telephone," *Tate,* Mar. 1998, online.

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] Peyton-Jones, et al., p. 31.

Provenance
Sonnabend Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2003

Exhibited
New York, Seagram Building, November 12, 2013–ongoing (another example exhibited)

Literature

Jeff Koons: Hulk Elvis, exh. cat., Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2009, p. 123
Jörg Reckhenrich, Martin Kupp and Jamie Anderson, "Made in Heaven - Produced on Earth: Creative Leadership as Art of Projection," *Journal of Business Strategy*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2011, p. 22
Suzanna Andrews, “Showdown at the Four Seasons,” *Vanity Fair,* September 8, 2014, online (another example)

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT COLLECTION

59 o◆

Elizabeth Peyton

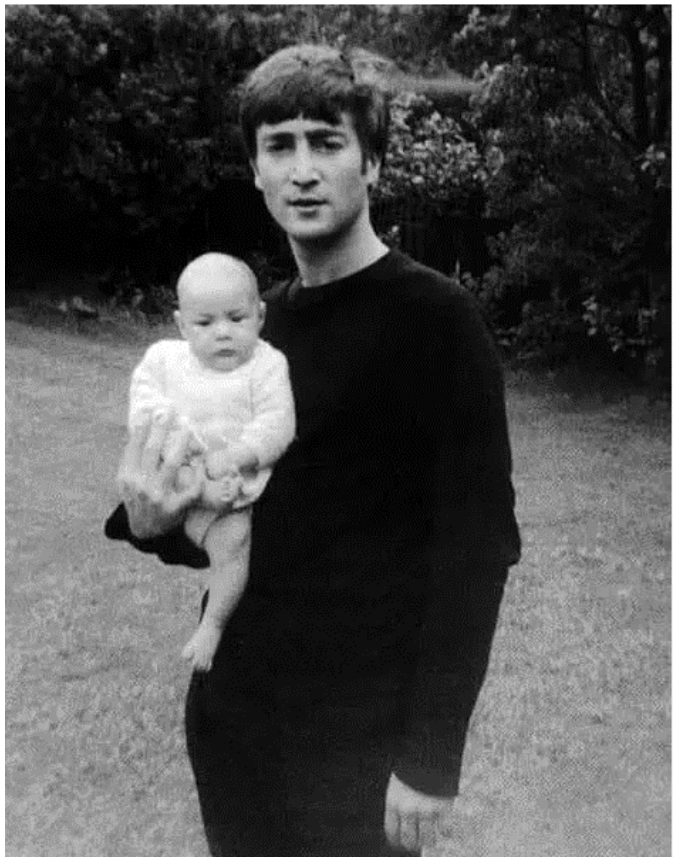
Mendips, 1963

oil on canvas
32 1/4 x 28 1/4 in. (81.9 x 71.8 cm)
Painted in 1996.

Estimate
$900,000 — 1,200,000

Go to Lot

A red-lipped young man slouches in a verdant garden in Elizabeth Peyton's 1996 painting, *Mendips, 1963,* holding a baby dressed in white. At first glance, the pale, lithe man seems an interchangeable member of the chorus of beautiful young people Peyton painted in the 1990s, a roster that included friends, lovers, historical figures, and celebrities. However, figural clues (from the man's bowl cut, to the infant in his arms), along with the work's title, reveal the specificity of Peyton's vision: a photograph of John Lennon at his family home, Mendips, in Liverpool, holding his infant son, Julian, born in 1963. Painted the year after Peyton was featured at the Venice Biennale in 1995, *Mendips, 1963*, presents the compositional elements and wider themes that brought her renown as a figural artist in the 1990s, with enchanting portraits that engage cultural ideals of fame, artistry, and intimacy.



John Lennon with his newborn son, Julian, at Mendips, 1963.

Photographs have long been a source of inspiration for Peyton; recounting her childhood, she says, "I drew a lot and put a lot of pictures of people up on the wall."[i] By drawing from photographs, Peyton engages a long-standing question of modern art, from the Impressionists onwards, of the relationship between painting and photography. Gerhard Richter's photo paintings stand as a contemporary forebear to Peyton's method. But where artists like Richter use photography as a tool against subjectivity and sentimentality, Peyton is forthcoming in her love and personal admiration for her painted subjects.[ii] Rather than focusing on the materiality of the photograph itself, she hones in on the personality of the subject, and "at some point," she says, "the photo's got to get lost."[iii]

Gerhard Richter, *Woman with Child (Beach)*, 1965. Private Collection. Image/Artwork: © Gerhard

Richter 2023 (0168)

With *Mendips, 1963*, the original photograph of John and Julian "gets lost" through Peyton's painterly interventions. She alters the composition in slight, yet significant ways, tilting Lennon, who stands upright in the photograph, on a diagonal, and cropping the canvas closer to his body, which encourages a more intimate relationship between figure and viewer. Peyton also trades in the photographer's black and white for a vibrant palette of spring greens, and the photograph's realistic precision gives way to rounded, swishing brushstrokes and an abstracted background. Lennon's face grows angular, and his features more stylized; he averts his gaze, in demure contrast to his photographed self. Peyton paints his berry-red lips parted and full, almost like a Pre-Raphaelite model's. Her brushstrokes seem to transform the suburban Liverpool setting of *Mendips, 1963* into a mythical English garden.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Proserpine,* 1874. Tate, London. Image: © Tate, London / Art Resource, NY

The romanticism of this act is intentional; as Caroline Roux wrote in 2013, "Elizabeth's pictures are evocations rather than likenesses, and they are romantic. She absorbs her sitter's qualities, mingles them with her own particular take (love, admiration, distant respect) and translates this into an image."[iv] In the case of *Mendips, 1963,* Peyton takes on the iconic visage of one of the 20th century's most famous musicians, but presents him in an unfamiliar light. Instead of seeing John Lennon, the singer, guitarist, and activist, we see John Lennon, the new father. It is an unexpectedly private moment, from a decidedly public life, and it is the surprising intimacy of such an image that placed Peyton's work at the vanguard of the return to figuration in painting in the 1990s.

Peyton likes to paint portraits of other artists who inspire her, and musicians like Lennon are among her favorites. For Peyton, it does not matter if she knows her subject personally, or only through their music, or a photograph.[v] As she explained in an interview for *Index* in 2000, music, like art, can collapse time and accelerate intimacy. There is a shared human emotion at the root of music that allows a musician's words or melodies to become those of the listener's, in a uniquely close, and personal way. She said: "It's like John Lennon [singing], you hear his breath. And you can have it. And if you really love that person, then you take them into your life and you make it better with them...It's a beautiful thing when a collapse occurs between our own personal needs and what's in the air."[vi]

[i] Elizabeth Peyton, quoted in "Raising Creative Kids: An Interview With Elizabeth Peyton," *Walker Art Center,* Mar. 31, 2009, online.

[ii] Jerry Saltz, "Elizabeth II," *New York Magazine,* May 7, 2008, online.

[iii] Peyton, quoted in Rob Pruitt and Steve Lafreniere, "Elizabeth Peyton," *Index Magazine,* 2000, online.

[iv] Caroline Roux, "Elizabeth Peyton: The Exceptional Portrait Painter," *The Gentlewoman,* no. 8, Autumn/Winter 2013, online.

[v] Peyton, quoted in Steve Lafreniere, "A Conversation with the Artist," *Elizabeth Peyton*, New York, 2005, p. 16.

[vi] Peyton, quoted in Pruitt and Lafreniere.

Provenance
Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York
Acquired from the above by the present owner

Exhibited
London, The Hayward, *The Painting of Modern Life: 1960s to Now*, October 4–December 30, 2007, no. 78, pp. 132-133, 194 (illustrated, p. 132)

Literature
Matthew Higgs, Meicost Ettal and Roberta Smith, *Elizabeth Peyton*, New York, 2005, pp. 73, 259 (illustrated, p. 73)
"The Painting of Modern Life at The Hayward," *Artdaily*, 2007, online

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Henry Taylor

Government Cheese

later signed and inscribed "BEEN EATING CHEESE 2 LONG Henry Taylor 07.28.07 BEEN THREW A LOT." on the reverse
acrylic and collage on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm)
Executed in 2003.

Estimate
$100,000 — 150,000

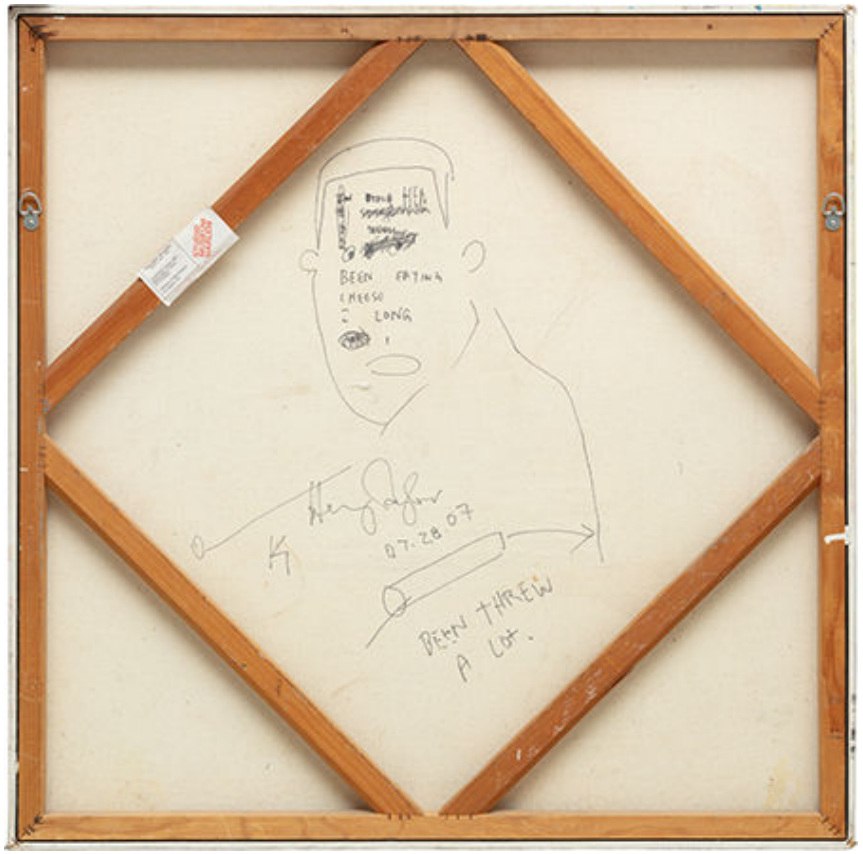
Go to Lot

Government Cheese, 2003, encapsulates Henry Taylor's reputation as a master of "character studies spliced with social commentary."[i] A captivating portrait of the artist's brother, the work is an early and vital touchstone in Taylor's oeuvre. When visiting Taylor's studio in 2005, gallerist Kathryn Brennan was so struck by *Government Cheese,* that she felt compelled to offer him his first gallery show on the spot.[ii] Two years later, *Government Cheese* was hung prominently in Taylor's first museum solo exhibition, *Sis and Bra,* The Studio Museum, Harlem, 2007, where it was the first painting visitors encountered in the galleries. Taylor signed the work at the end of the exhibition, including a drawing on the back of the canvas that supplements the personal and political message of the painting. *Government Cheese* is both cutting and kind, a heartfelt expression of Taylor's love for the Black community, and a critique of the social systems that limit its potential.

Andy Warhol, *Most Wanted Men No. 6, Thomas Francis C.,* 1964. Hamburger Kunsthalle. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2023 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Taylor paints his brother shirtless in *Government Cheese*, standing at a dressing table, in the pose of his mugshot. The composition is cropped close like a photograph, and the subject's frontal pose is distinct, and emotionally intense—features Taylor retains from the tension of his source image. His brother's gaze is direct and unfazed; there is a defiant shadow to his raised chin and closed mouth. However, instead of a mugshot placard of identifying numbers, Taylor's brother holds a block of government cheese.

"Government cheese" is a processed cheese product that has been subsidized by the American government since World War II. By the beginning of the Reagan administration, the government had a stockpile of over 500 million pounds of cheese—enough to give two pounds of cheese to every American.[iii] A portion of this surplus was distributed to low-income and elderly citizens via the welfare system in 1981; with its bricklike form, poor nutritional profile, and distinct orange color, government cheese became an iconic symbol of the American welfare system and its shortcomings.



Verso of the present work.

By replacing his brother's mugshot placard with a block of government cheese, Taylor draws an

equivalence between the welfare and carceral systems, the failings of which both disproportionately affect African American communities. “Every successful Black person has 18 members of his family living in the projects,” Taylor has said, “and we all know someone who’s in the system.”[iv] The supplementary drawing on the verso of the work emphasizes the work’s political message: it features a line drawing of a man with a flat top hairstyle, with the words “he been eating cheese 2 long” written across his face. Taylor adds the words “been threw a lot” under a drawing of an arrow through a tube. Taken together, these inscriptions clarify the pictorial message of the recto. The figure in *Government Cheese* has “been threw” both the carceral and welfare systems; he has endured systemic racism and oppression for far “2 long.”

“He’s the Manet of our generation.” —Kathryn Brennan

With *Government Cheese,* Taylor’s political stance is as assured as his paint handling, and it is this synthesis of style and substance that gives the work its affective power. The work is a virtuosic display of Taylor’s sympathetic style of portraiture, which gives dignity and respect to all his painted subjects—from the patients of a psychiatric hospital, where he worked for ten years, to the unhoused people living near his studio, to iconic Black figures like Jay-Z, Jackie Robinson, and Barack and Michelle Obama. This “collapsing effect” is very important to the artist, per Bennett Simpson, as proof that “he doesn’t think about people in different ways.”[v] His unflinching yet kind eye recalls that of Édouard Manet, the quintessential “painter of modern life” in 19th century France, known for his technically daring works that pushed the limits of respectable subject matter.

Édouard Manet, *Le Balcon,* (detail), 1868-1869. Musée d’Orsay, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

The painted surface of *Government Cheese* is stunningly rendered; the background of sage green, subtly variegated and cross-hatched, stands in an understated contrast with the brick red undertones of the subject’s skin, and a trace of green along the right eyelid pulls attention to his gaze. This sensitivity to color, and the painting of Black skin, evokes the chromatic sensibility of Taylor’s friend, Noah Davis. The background is painted right to the body, emphasizing the curve of his shoulders and elbows, with a flattened formalism and hard contour.

Taylor paints a disaffected still life in the foreground, which both registers the subject’s personal items, and trades in stereotypes of Black men’s vices: there is a forty-ounce bottle of Schlitz Malt Liquor, a prescription pill bottle, a comb, and a jar--maybe containing hair gel. The still life affirms

how the subject of *Government Cheese* expands beyond the specific representation of Taylor's brother, to represent an archetype of Black masculinity, and the wider systems that shape American Blackness.

> *"[Taylor is] a champion and caretaker of Black experience, suffusing his work with recognition and social commentary alike. In this role, his paintings communicate a deep sense of responsibility—to memory and community, to excellence and contingency." —Bennett Simpson, curator of Henry Taylor: B Side*

The ambitious visual program of *Government Cheese* aligns with Taylor's artistic practice at large; the artist has spent decades at work, "always feverishly painting, always intently looking—whether it's eyeballing a subject from behind a canvas, [or] gazing out the window of his car for some trash he might turn into a new sculpture."[vi] The brown paper collaged onto *Government Cheese* provides both a touch of realism (government cheese is distributed in non-branded, brown paper packaging), and a reference to the sculptural aspect of Taylor's practice, which combines found objects with signifiers of Black culture.

Regardless of institutional recognition, Taylor has maintained a wholehearted commitment to his craft and principles since his earliest days, as evident in *Government Cheese.* He is a shining example of the cumulative nature of artistic genius, the power of persistence, consistency, and unshakeable self-belief.

[i] Michael Slenske, "Henry Taylor, L.A.'s Favorite Painter, Flips the Retrospective," *Los Angeles Magazine,* Apr. 17, 2023, online.

[ii] Michael Slenske, "Henry Taylor, L.A.'s Favorite Painter, Flips the Retrospective," *Los Angeles Magazine,* Apr. 17, 2023, online.

[iii] Erin Blakemore, "How the US Ended Up with Warehouses Full of 'Government Cheese,'" *The History Channel,* Jul. 26, 2018, online.

[iv] Charles Gaines, "Interview with Henry Taylor," Blum & Poe, accessed October 24, 2023, online.

[v] Bennett Simpson, quoted in Slenske, ibid.

[vi] Slenske, ibid.

Provenance
Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner in 2004

Exhibited
New York, The Studio Museum Harlem, *Henry Taylor: Sis and Bra*, April 11–July 1, 2007
Greenwich, The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, *Animal Farm*, May 14–October 1, 2017 (dated 2005)

Literature
Chris Kraus, Jan Tumlir and Jane McFadden, *LA Artland: Contemporary Art from Los Angeles*, London, 2005, p. 20 (illustrated; titled *Untitled*; dated 2004)
Michael Slenskeapr, "Henry Taylor, L.A.'s Favorite Painter, Flips the Retrospective," *Los Angeles Magazine*, April 17, 2023, online