

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST

Sale Interest: 37 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



PHILLIPS

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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Sale Interest: 37 Lots

## Auction & Viewing Location

Auction 14 October 2022 4pm BST  
30 Berkeley Square, London, United  
Kingdom, W1J 6EX

## Viewing

5-14 October  
Monday - Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm  
Sunday 12:00pm-6:00pm  
[clientserviceslondon@phillips.com](mailto:clientserviceslondon@phillips.com)

## Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making  
enquiries please refer to this sale as  
UK010622 or 20th Century & Contemporary  
Art Evening Sale.

## Absentee and Telephone Bids

tel +44 20 7318 4045  
[bidslondon@phillips.com](mailto:bidslondon@phillips.com)

Rosanna Widén

Senior Specialist, Head of Evening Sale  
+44 20 7318 4060  
[rwiden@phillips.com](mailto:rwiden@phillips.com)

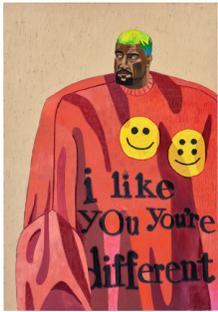
Olivia Thornton

Head of 20th Century & Contemporary Art,  
Europe  
+44 20 7318 4099  
[othornton@phillips.com](mailto:othornton@phillips.com)

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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1  
**Julian Pace**  
*Kanye*  
Estimate £20,000 — 30,000



2  
**Michaela Yearwood-Dan**  
*Coping Mechanisms*  
Estimate £20,000 — 30,000



3  
**Rebecca Ness**  
*Pencil Flipper*  
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000



4  
**Robert Nava**  
*Before Minotaur*  
Estimate £180,000 — 250,000



5  
**Emily Mae Smith**  
*Raft on Siren Sea*  
Estimate £80,000 — 120,000



6  
**Caroline Walker**  
*Night Scenes*  
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000



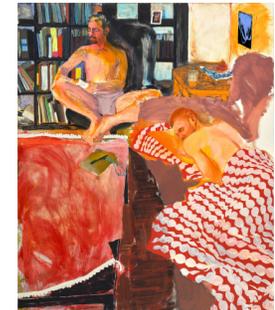
7  
**Issy Wood**  
*The butter*  
Estimate £80,000 — 120,000



8  
**Anna Weyant**  
*Cynthia*  
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000



9  
**Elizabeth Peyton**  
*Evan at the Reading Festival 1993*  
Estimate £480,000 — 650,000



10  
**Doron Langberg**  
*Nir and Zach*  
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000

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11  
This lot is no longer available.

12  
**Reggie Burrows Hodges**  
*First Serve*  
Estimate  
£220,000 — 280,000



14  
**Alberto Burri**  
*Sacco e Rosso*  
Estimate  
£3,000,000 — 4,000,000



15  
**Salvatore Scarpitta**  
*Red Freight*  
Estimate  
£900,000 — 1,200,000



16  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Pumpkin*  
Estimate  
£700,000 — 1,000,000



17  
**Mark Bradford**  
*Nodding Gunpowder*  
Estimate  
£2,000,000 — 3,000,000



18  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)*  
Estimate  
£1,000,000 — 1,500,000



19  
**Mickalene Thomas**  
*As If You Read My Mind*  
Estimate  
£200,000 — 250,000



20  
**Tschabalala Self**  
*Daydream*  
Estimate  
£100,000 — 150,000

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21  
**Banksy**  
*Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered ...*  
Estimate  
£1,200,000 — 1,800,000



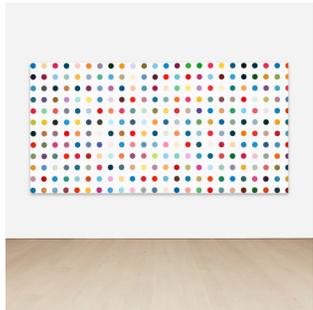
22  
**Ayako Rokkaku**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
£100,000 — 150,000



24  
**Rafa Macarrón**  
*Un Día en la Playa*  
Estimate £60,000 — 80,000



25  
**Banksy**  
*Laugh Now But One Day We'll B...*  
Estimate  
£1,000,000 — 1,500,000



26  
**Damien Hirst**  
*Biotin Hydrazide*  
Estimate  
£600,000 — 800,000



27  
**Austyn Weiner**  
*Working Through Not Knowing ...*  
Estimate £30,000 — 40,000



28  
**Andy Warhol**  
*Dollar Sign*  
Estimate  
£400,000 — 600,000



29  
**Marc Chagall**  
*Deux profils verts au cirque*  
Estimate  
£350,000 — 450,000



30  
**Damien Hirst**  
*Omnipotence*  
Estimate  
£350,000 — 450,000

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31  
**Harold Ancart**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
£200,000 — 300,000



32  
**Sigmar Polke**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
£400,000 — 600,000



33  
**Georg Baselitz**  
*Dr. Dumouchel (Remix)*  
Estimate  
£300,000 — 500,000



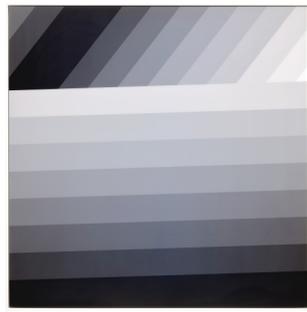
34  
**Luc Tuymans**  
*Lantern*  
Estimate  
£200,000 — 300,000



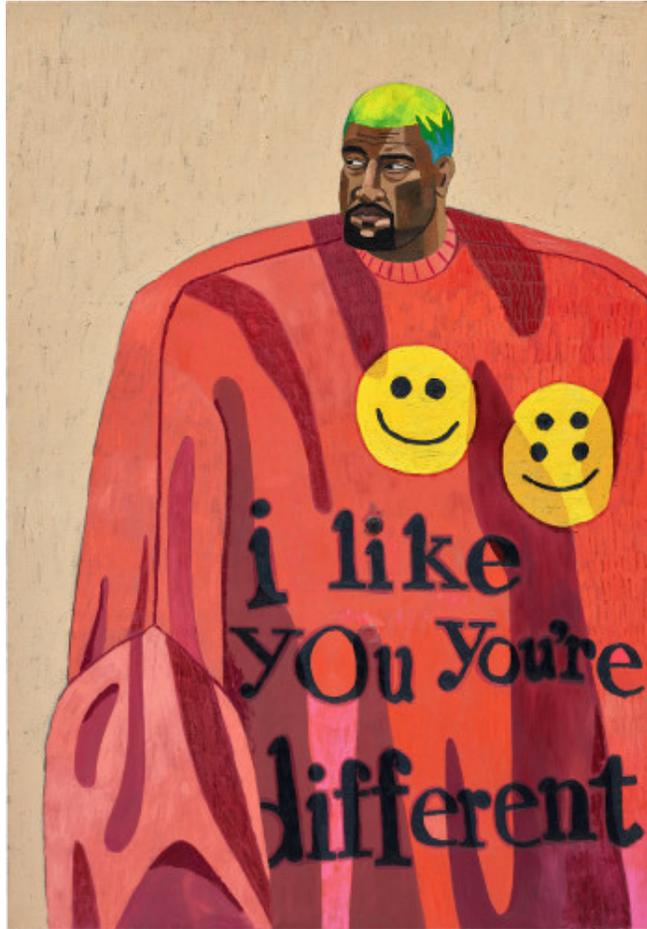
35  
**John Baldessari**  
*Female and Male Faces (With N...*  
Estimate  
£250,000 — 350,000



36  
**Takashi Murakami**  
*Sage*  
Estimate  
£400,000 — 600,000



37  
**Cory Arcangel**  
*Photoshop CS: 60 by 60 inches, ...*  
Estimate £70,000 — 100,000



1

**Julian Pace**

*Kanye*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'KANYE KANYE  
63021 Julian Pace LOS ANGELES, CA 2021' on the  
reverse

oil and acrylic on linen  
233.7 x 162.6 cm (92 x 64 in.)  
Painted on 30 June 2021.

Estimate

£20,000 — 30,000 <sup>†</sup> <sub>‡</sub>

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK5FscGJa8s>

*"I think I'm more interested in the human form and the people rather than who they are necessarily."* —Julian Pace

Currently based in Los Angeles, rising star and self-taught artist Julian Pace interrogates the play on absurd yet deep-rooted themes of celebrity worship, identity, and self-absorption in contemporary society through grand and imposing large-scale portraiture. Representing the artist's auction debut, the present work portrays the rapper and celebrity Kanye West, rendered through Pace's characteristically exaggerated proportions, bold angularity, and highly textured application of paint. Included in his recent exhibition *Julian Pace: Some Paintings* held at Simchowitz Gallery in October 2021, Pace's portrait of the iconic American public figure captures the graphic quality of his practice and the intersection of the traditional conventions of portraiture and mass media culture.



Installation shot of Julian Pace's solo exhibition *Some Paintings* with Simchowitz Gallery, Los Angeles, 2021. Image: Courtesy Simchowitz Gallery, Los Angeles

## Playing With Portraiture

In both their treatment and content, Pace's portraits clearly demonstrate his deep interest in art history and the figure of the artist, underpinned by several formative years spent in Florence, a city at the heart of Italy's Renaissance. Working primarily in traditional mediums and within the historical contexts of the genre, Pace places his portraits of contemporary celebrities such as Kanye West and Kendall Jenner alongside reinterpretations of some of the most immediately recognisable images from the Western art historical canon, including Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and *Lady with an Ermine*.

With his exaggerated frame filling the canvas, Pace here creates a visual analogue for the notoriety and candid persona of the titular 'Kanye' in a manner that recalls Pablo Picasso's iconic 1906 portrait of the avant-garde writer and art collector Gertrude Stein. Like Picasso – a portrait of whom was included in Pace's *Some Paintings* exhibition alongside the present work – the young artist generates a sense of solidity and monumentality through the reduction of the body to its volumetric masses, exaggerating certain features in this process.

Picasso / DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

## The Cult of Celebrity

Drawing sits at the foundation of Pace's practice, allowing him to distil the blend of humour and careful observation that his work has become internationally recognised for. Working from these delicate sketches, Pace then skilfully enlarges his drawings on canvas, explaining that 'scaling up means I can get into more abstraction in the details.'<sup>i</sup> One of two portraits of Kanye West produced during his time at The La Brea Studio Artists Residency, Pace here demonstrates his playful sense of colour and tone, his unique technical approach recreating the quality of his drawings in complex, textural ways. Depicted wearing an item from his own branded clothing line, 'Kanye' is a monument to the cult of the individual, compounded by the sweatshirt's slogan 'I like you you're different'. In a society increasingly obsessed with the idea of the individual, and how we look, act, and present ourselves, Pace's immediately arresting, larger-than-life portraits highlight the monumentalising effect of celebrity, a disarmingly literal take on the notion of blowing a sense of ourselves out of proportion as 'the ego of the image seems to grow with the shoulders'.<sup>ii</sup>



Left: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, 1906, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Succession



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn*, 1967, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

In this respect, Pace's work establishes a particularly robust dialogue with American Pop artist Andy Warhol, whose fascination with fame and tragedy, death and desire exposed not only the functioning of an incipient celebrity culture, but of something more fundamental at work in shaping 20th century American consciousness itself. Such observations have only become more relevant in our own image-saturated, digital age and moving seamlessly between contemporary celebrities, religious figures, and art historical references, Pace's portraits further collapse the distinctions between high and low culture first interrogated by these mid-century Pop artists.

## Collector's Digest

- Born in 1988, Julian Pace lived and worked in New York before being invited to take up a position with the La Brea Studio Residency in Los Angeles, which has hosted notable artists such as Amoako Bofo and Tschabalala Self.
- The present work was included in *Julian Pace: Some Paintings*, the artist's first solo exhibition with Simchowitz Gallery in 2021.
- Marking only the beginning of his incredible artistic output, the artist's most recent exhibition, *Facial Recognition* at Fabien Frys Fine Art in Dubai, runs from the 18 May - 4 September 2022 which celebrates the significance of portraiture in the digital age.

<sup>i</sup> Julian Pace, quoted in Evan Pricco, 'Julian Pace The Big Picture', *Juxtapoz Magazine*, 2021, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Evan Pricco, 'Julian Pace The Big Picture', *Juxtapoz Magazine*, 2021, [online](#).

## Provenance

Simchowitz Gallery, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

Los Angeles, Simchowitz Gallery, *Julian Pace: Some Paintings*, 9 - 30 October 2021

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2

### Michaela Yearwood-Dan

#### *Coping Mechanisms*

signed, titled and dated "Coping Mechanisms" 2021

Michaela Yearwood-Dan' on the reverse

oil and acrylic on canvas

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

Painted in 2021.

#### Estimate

£20,000 — 30,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I'm most proud of my choice to move away from figurative work, to integrate text and make my vulnerability visible to my audience." —Michaela Yearwood-Dan*

Combining text and gestural mark-making in exuberant and expressive passages of vibrant colour *Coping Mechanisms* is a work of high intensity by young British artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan. Diaristic and deeply personal, Yearwood-Dan's paintings record her observations on the key social issues of the day, prompted by her reflections on race, class, gender, and environmentalism. Focusing on tensions between nature and culture, her paintings and sculptures incorporate botanical motifs and forms in the creation of lush, all-over environments that are as contemplative as they are visually compelling.

### Lyrical Abstraction

In her elegant combinations of painterly gesture and poetic fragment, Yearwood-Dan's large-scale canvases nod to the all-over compositions of Cy Twombly, although where Twombly's references looked back to a classical past, Yearwood-Dan's are rooted firmly in the present moment, incorporating song lyrics, drafted notes of text messages never sent and her 'conversations' with Apple's virtual assistant, Siri. More than reflection on her technological present, Yearwood-Dan also responds to the socio-cultural experience of being a Black British woman. Faced with certain micro-aggressions as a student and in the art world more broadly, the artist was galvanised to start incorporating these experiences into her work, poignantly expressed here with the prominent line of text along the right hand edge a reminder to 'Be assertive, bold, and fearless'.



Left: Cy Twombly, *The Four Seasons: Spring*, 1993-94, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation Right: Detail of the present work

Borrowing certain cultural signifiers of contemporary Black Britishness including carnival culture, acrylic nails, and hooped earrings, Yearwood-Dan avoids trite stereotype or reductive cliché by inflecting this collective visual language with her own, lived experience. Even the incorporation of botanical forms has its roots in the artist's own life, houseplants especially resonant of her mother's reputation as 'the queen of clippings' and the leafy cemetery near her childhood home in South London, as well as drawing on deeper family connections to the Caribbean, where both of her parents are from. Here figuring in the repeating motif of the teardrop-shaped leaves of the 'weeping fig' houseplant adds a personal and highly relatable dimension to the *Coping Mechanisms* addressed by the title.

Believing firmly in art's inclusivity, Yearwood-Dan's compositions create inviting worlds that are spatially organised to make room for her viewers, eloquently realised in the billowing, cumulous passage at the centre of the present work. Recalling devotional ceiling frescos that carry the eye up, through flying putti and celestial visions to the heavens beyond, these portal-like passages

retain a sense of the transportive and ecstatic, carrying viewers with them to the centre of the work. Methodically working from the centre of her canvas outwards, the spatial logic of Yearwood-Dan's paintings are perhaps best contextualised in relation to her recent site-specific installation for Queercircle in London. Invited to contribute to their inaugural exhibition, Yearwood-Dan created a monumental wrap-around mural with purpose built seating set inside its curve, creating an immersive sanctuary for visitors to sit and reflect within. Making direct connections between this installation and her canvases, Yearwood-Dan explained 'Curating and creating a space with my work, both physically and metaphorically, is something I've always been really conscious of.'<sup>i</sup>

Michaela Yearwood-Dan discusses her practice and site-specific installation with Queercircle, London. Filmed by Winsor & Newton.

Finding solace in words in a time of emotional turbulence, Yearwood-Dan first began incorporating snatches of text and phrases alongside her thick impasto layers of paint in 2018 in the wake of a breakup. Demanding a slower kind of looking, words weave in and out of dynamic passages of paint. As the artist explains: 'I want people to spend time with my work, so some pieces of text are visible and others are not. I've intentionally made it so you can't read everything.'<sup>ii</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Interested in the intersections of society and the self, Yearwood-Dan's work moves between the personal and the political, combining reflections on class, race, and gender politics with more personal feelings related to loss and love.
- Yearwood-Dan has been celebrated with several solo exhibitions between New York and London. This year, Tiwani Contemporary celebrated the artist with a solo exhibition *The Sweetest Taboo* following their 2019 show, *After Euphoria*. In 2021 she was the subject of a solo exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery and in 2019 at The Lee Alexander McQueen Foundation.
- Most recently, Yearwood-Dan created a site-specific installation for Queercircle, a dedicated safe space for LGBTQ+ communities to gather. Earlier this year Yearwood-Dan was featured in the third annual Great Women Artists Residency at Palazzo Monti.

<sup>i</sup> Michaela Yearwood-Dan, quoted in Davy Pittoors, 'Michaela Yearwood-Dan 'holds the community' at Queercircle, London's new LGBTQ+ art hub'. *Wallpaper*, 14 Jun 2022, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Emily Tobin, 'Michaela Yearwood-Dan In her Studio', House and Garden, 18 November 2020, [online](#)

## Provenance

Galerie Maria Bernheim, London

Private Collection, Europe

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

London and Zurich, Galerie Maria Bernheim, *Images: Ghost Painterly Abstraction*, 2 September – 23 October 2021

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3

### Rebecca Ness

#### *Pencil Flipper*

signed, titled and dated "PENCIL FLIPPER" Rebecca Ness R. Ness 2020' on the reverse; titled 'Pencil Flipper Pencil Flipper' on the stretcher  
oil on linen  
229.9 x 210.2 cm (90 1/2 x 82 3/4 in.)  
Painted in 2020.

#### Estimate

£30,000 — 50,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I felt a responsibility to document our time" —Rebecca Ness*

Executed in 2020, at the height of the first wave of the global Covid 19 pandemic, the richly painted *Pencil Flipper* belongs to a body of work produced by American artist Rebecca Ness documenting this strange time. Diaristic and deeply personal, these paintings nevertheless communicate universal feelings of isolation and the comfort of the quotidian that have been especially acute during this period of our recent history. Working from photographs that 'allow me to create a backbone and architecture to the piece that is based on actual perspective', Ness works up her images with remarkable attention to detail and inventive additions.<sup>i</sup> Included in *Pieces of Mind* - the artist's 2020 exhibition with Nino Mier Gallery in Los Angeles - the present work is a playfully reflective piece that records our shared historical moment, and the conflicting sensations it brought with it.

### Painting, Interrupted

Representing the artist's major debut, when Ness started working on the paintings that would be included in *Pieces of Mind* she had initially envisioned canvases full of people and activity, documents of our public lives as fundamentally social creatures. As the artist explains though, 'once the pandemic hit, these paintings started to feel forced and didn't match the reality of the world outside the studio.'<sup>ii</sup> Turning instead to her immediate environment, Ness created quietly intimate works of her domestic everyday; portraits of herself and her partner, their shared home and the artist's empty studio space and the ephemera of domestic lives including piles of tea cups, group video calls, newspapers, and art materials. Executed on a large scale, these works capture the strange duality between the sudden contraction of our world to the size of our living room and the expansive sense of time stretching out before us.



Detail of the present work

Unlike other works from the series which take a wider angle on the interior spaces of her home and studio and document the material objects that took on a new resonance as our world got suddenly much smaller, *Pencil Flipper* is a closely cropped portrait of the artist absent-mindedly passing a pencil from one hand to the other, an otherwise unremarkable diversion that is afforded special attention here. Set against an empty, shifting blue background detailed with rapid cross-hatchings the portrait speaks poignantly to the highly relatable feelings of boredom, introspection, and isolation that have defined this period for so many, while also introducing an optimistic note of newly discovered joy in the simplest of pleasures. For Ness, whose partner is a surgery resident at New Haven Hospital, these paintings also bring to light certain anxieties provoked by the pandemic, especially for loved ones who might be put at risk. In this context, the perpetually flipping pen acts like a metronome, counting down the hours until her partner returns to the safety of their home.



Giacomo Balla, *Dynamism of a Dog on a Lead*, 1912, Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: DACS, London 2022

Visually referencing the chronographic experiments of Eadweard Muybridge, *Pencil Flipper* captures the arc of a pencil tossed from one hand to another simultaneously representing the successive phases of motion on a single picture plane. Finding ways of visually capturing the speed and dynamism of the modern age emerged as a central preoccupation of early 20th century avant-garde groups such as the Italian Futurists, who introduced techniques such as blurring, strong diagonal lines, and multiplication to generate a sense of rapid movement. While *Pencil Flipper* draws close to the playful decomposition of movement into moments in time animating paintings such as Giacomo Balla's *Dynamism of a Dog on a Lead*, Ness also introduces a note of irony here, adopting visual references typically used to describe the bustling urban metropolis in order to explore the experience of lockdown. Held within our homes, the small movements of our bodies became suddenly monumental, a sense of which Ness captures in the scale and awkward cropping of her work.

A document of its time which, in turn, deconstructs our experience of time, Ness' densely layered

and boldly detailed painting elevates small gestures, deconstructing the seemingly insignificant or fleeting moment into a powerful visual document of our times. Like contemporaries including Jonas Wood and Doron Langberg, Ness' paintings offer tender and careful observations of intimate spaces and the objects we share our everyday lives with.

### Collector's Digest

- Since completing her MFA with Yale School of Art in 2019, Rebecca Ness has been gaining critical attention for her large-scale works focused on moments of everyday life and personal experience.
- Representing the artist's evening sale debut, the present work was included in her major 2020 presentation *Pieces of Mind* with Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles.
- More recently, Ness has presented work in solo exhibitions with Galerie Marguo in Paris and Carl Kostyál Gallery in London.

<sup>i</sup> Rebecca Ness, quoted in 'Pieces of Mind: Rebecca Ness' Detailed Stunners @ Nino Mier, Los Angeles', *Juxapoz*, 10 July 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Rebecca Ness, quoted in 'Pieces of Mind: Rebecca Ness' Detailed Stunners @ Nino Mier, Los Angeles', *Juxapoz*, 10 July 2020, [online](#).

### Provenance

Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles

Private Collection

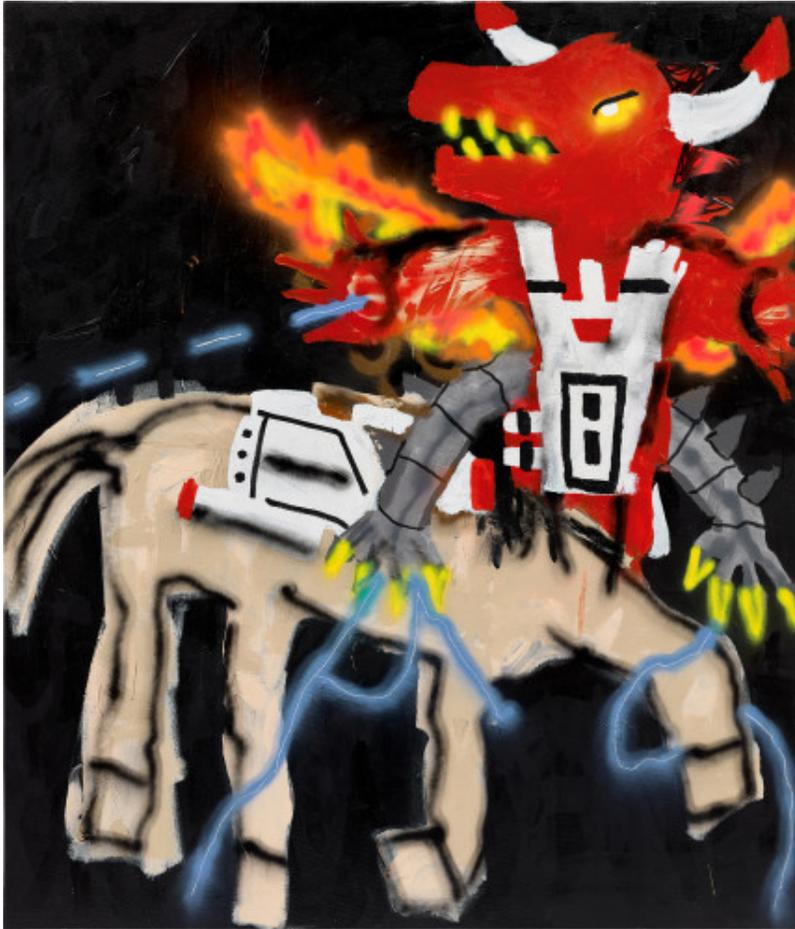
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Los Angeles, Nino Mier Gallery, *Rebecca Ness: Pieces of Mind*, 10 July – 31 August 2020

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PROPERTY FROM A PROMINENT PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

4

### **Robert Nava**

#### *Before Minotaur*

signed and dated "Before Minotaur" Nava 19' on the  
reverse

acrylic and grease pencil on canvas

213.4 x 182.9 cm (84 x 72 in.)

Executed in 2019.

#### **Estimate**

£180,000 — 250,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I think painting is a place you can go slow. In the face of speed, it can help instigate change, and it definitely can lend itself to a different angle of perspective and perhaps hope."—Robert Nava*

Robert Nava is a painter who challenges artistic convention. He intentionally reacts against 'the orthodoxy slapped into him in Yale's master of fine arts programme', presenting us with paintings which encapsulate the creativity of the childhood imagination in an equally unrefined style which test the ingrained notions of 'high-low' art.<sup>i</sup> *Before Minotaur* does exactly this as a large, energetic canvas, from which bright, phantasmagorical forms explode out of a jet-black background, in the same way, that a tangibly real dream jolts us awake in the middle of the night. A collage of different paint surfaces; a crudely sketched horse's legs and body rendered thick black lines over blank canvas, a bold, horned head coloured in primary, blood red pigment, and shiny, robotic arms from which sprout dangerously sharp yellow claws, all create a hallucinatory, metamorphic effect. His trademark combination of acrylic and grease pencil adds to this. Nava manipulates the glossiness of the pencil to create vivid, lustrous markings, most notably, the forks of lightning protruding from the robotic arms, and the more targeted laser beams which are shot from the being's upper arm. Compared to other parts of the canvas which are more abstracted, these appear graphically real, cementing the notion that we are witnessing some phantom or have been consumed within a video game console.

Nava, who earlier painted anthropomorphic, sentient trucks, inspired by his job as a delivery driver, works with a diverse selection of source material which includes the animal kingdom, religion, ancient artefacts, cave paintings, video games and monsters, among others. Engrossed by a past theory from his childhood which has reappeared, in deep thought whilst looking out the window, or drawing inspiration from the colours and forms of the city, the artist begins with a lengthy internalising process before turning to his sketchbook. Mountains of these books populate his studio and form the basis of his physical artistic process. Whilst listening to pounding dance music, Nava enters an intuitive trance state during which these drawings are supplanted onto the canvas rapidly. Whilst he notes that one painting once took him just twenty-seven seconds to make, his works are carefully thought out and obsessed over before their energetic transferal to the linen.

## Mythmaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



Pablo Picasso, *Minotaur and Dead Mare in Front of a Cave*, 1936, Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: © Peter Willi/Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022

Mythology 'is (and always was) a mirror image of life in the present', a means to deal with the truth, and in this way, it is a dominant force behind many of Nava's paintings.<sup>ii</sup> By linking *Before Minotaur* to the ancient myth of the half man half bull, he includes himself within a rich tradition of artists who have studied this motif to express their current contexts. Picasso integrated this subject into his work to allude to the 'savagery that lies beneath the surface of civilised life' and the political tensions of the 1930s, and Mary Reid Kelly and Patrick Kelly gave the minotaur a sex change in their 2015 work *Minotaur with Skull* to deal with modern notions surrounding gender.<sup>iii</sup> Comparisons can be drawn between the raw detail and bold colour of Jackson Pollock's *Pasiphaë* and Nava's work, Pasiphaë being the mother of the minotaur and a continual subject of interest of the Surrealists.



Jackson Pollock, *Pasiphaë*, 1943, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London 2022

Unique to most before him however, Nava links classic mythology to an unbridled and guileless way of imagining, one which we all experienced during childhood. He is transfixed by liminal states of being, so *Before Minotaur* portrays a hybrid monster, a part Minotaur, part Centaur, intergalactic warrior with a dragon's head and flaming wings. Such as in *Angel Shark*, which juxtaposes notions of pure, angelic nature, with an animal widely associated with violence, *Before Minotaur* combines distinctive traits to build something completely new, a modern mutation of popular myth. In a rapidly changing, modern world, one afflicted by mass culture, the internet, and fake news, Nava's works act as portals into the art of mythmaking in its purest form. And so do they act as portals into our society. When asked in an interview what his work would reveal about our society to a future onlooker, hope, chaos, beauty, imagination, and possibility were some of the qualities with which the artist responded.<sup>iv</sup>

*"...if you remove meaning, feeling gets a chance to raise its hand higher." —Robert Nava*

Nava's paintings reject categorisation and take comfort in a lack of explanation. By avoiding narrative and by creating unanswerable questions with which the viewer then runs off, they materialise adolescent nostalgia. Art 'is a place you can go', 'where possibility happens, where imagination lives', in the artist's own words, and *Before Minotaur* instantly transports us to this

place where we can feel, see, and interpret however we want to, whether it be a recollection of playing Dungeons and Dragons in a school bathroom, a half cow half fish drawing which our primary teacher told us was incorrect or the first time we watched a horror film when our parents were out of the house.<sup>v</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Originally from East Chicago, Robert Nava was awarded his MFA from Yale School of Fine Art in 2011 and is currently based in Brooklyn, New York.
- Since his graduation Nava has exhibited widely and has been the subject of solo shows in New York, Brussels, Los Angeles, and Copenhagen. His work also belongs in the Art Institute of Chicago's permanent collection.
- Having joined Pace Gallery in 2020, Nava has already presented several international shows with the gallery, most recently celebrating the opening of *Thunderbolt Disco* in London, his first solo exhibition in the city.
- Nava had his auction debut with Phillips' 20th Century and Contemporary Art Evening Sale in July 2020.

<sup>i</sup> Nate Freeman, 'Painter Robert Nava is hated by art world know-it-alls. So why are collectors fighting for anything from his studio?', *Artnet*, 19 April 2021, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> James Cahill, 'How Picasso, Pollock and Blake saw the Minotaur', in *Flying too Close to the Sun: Myths in Art from Classical to Contemporary*, London, 2018, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> James Cahill, "How Picasso, Pollock and Blake saw the Minotaur", Phaidon, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Robert Nava, quoted in Heidi Suckerman 'Conversations about art', 3 May 2022, 30:09, [online](#).

<sup>v</sup> Robert Nava, quoted in Heidi Suckerman 'Conversations about art', 3 May 2022, 27:24, [online](#).

## Provenance

Sorry We're Closed, Brussels

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



5

### Emily Mae Smith

#### *Raft on Siren Sea*

signed and dated 'Emily Mae Smith 2017' on the reverse

oil on linen

170 x 130 cm (66 7/8 x 51 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2017.

Estimate

£80,000 — 120,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*"... instead of going with whatever the canon of art history says, I actually just developed deeply personal relationships with specific paintings, giving them my read. In a sense my paintings are a response to these paintings and the web of social, cultural and emotional weight they carry instead of a reference to them." —Emily Mae Smith*

Immediately arresting in its clean, graphic quality and radically reduced palette, *Raft on Siren Sea* is a striking example of Texan-born Emily Mae Smith's sophisticated blend of art historical reference, sharp-edged wit, and feminist revisionism. Belonging to a distinct body of work that places itself in direct dialogue with the *fin de siècle* arts periodical *The Studio* through the appropriation of its title and distinctive typeface, *Raft on Siren Sea* highlights Smith's playfully subversive response to established art historical narratives. Blending visual references to Surrealism, the Chicago Imagists, and the various distinct movements associated with *fin de siècle*, Smith has developed her own, highly distinctive brand of 'feminist pop', introducing humour as a way of deflating and reframing assumptions related to women, class, and the imagined divisions between high and low culture.<sup>1</sup>

## The Studio

*"When I discovered it, I loved the idea that this word – 'The Studio' – would encapsulate everything you needed to know about art in some way [...] The Studio becomes a container for me to write new myths and new stories." —Emily Mae Smith*

Founded by Charles Holme with the utopian idea of bridging international communities by establishing and disseminating a shared visual language, *The Studio* was first published in 1893. Subtitled an 'Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art' it took the form of a monthly periodical – one of the first of its kind – and introduced the so-called Modern Style characterised by the likes of Aubrey Beardsley and Charles Rennie Mackintosh to both American and European audiences. As well as the title and its distinctive typography, Smith also borrows certain formal elements of the magazine, the simplified treatment of sinuous line and flat, broad contrasts of black and white so characteristic of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations and the limitations imposed by the printing process that are particularly obvious in *Raft on Siren Sea*.



Left: Aubrey Beardsley, Design for the first issue of 'The Studio' An Illustrated Magazine of the Fine and Applied Arts, No. 30, September 1895, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Image: V&A Images / Alamy Stock Photo Right: Detail of the present work

In her first institutional solo show held at Le Consortium, Dijon in 2019, Smith dedicated a room to a selection of these 'Studio' pieces, which she has continued to work on since 2014. Presenting an enormous range in the art historical touchstones referenced, they are united as a body of works by the obvious inclusion of the text, and by the broader ideas that Smith finds embedded in the concept of 'The Studio' itself. Developing the notion that as a magazine and a physical space it encapsulates both the practice of artmaking and a knowledge of its history, Smith appropriates and occupies 'The Studio', installing her broom avatar as a way of making visible the historically marginalised work of women artists. An active and autonomous agent rather than a passive muse, using the studio conceit the broom is able to move across art historical space and time, parodying the tropes and narratives she finds there and rewriting them in Smith's own, distinct visual style.

## The Siren's Story

"... all that comes to pass on the fertile earth, we know it all" —*The Odyssey*

Creatures of classical myth and legend, the siren's reputation is one of cruelty and destruction, using their beguiling voices to lure unsuspecting sailors to their deaths. Most famously appearing in Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey* where the hero, desperate to hear their siren song, had himself strapped to the mast of his ship to restrain himself from the allure of their call, they have been historically presented as muses of the underworld – beautiful, but dangerous. A misogynistic cautionary tale illustrating the seductive powers of women to blind a man against his own interests and bind him to her will, the siren represents temptation, and the doomed fate of the men who weaken to it.

Originally represented in early Greek art as a hybrid of woman and bird, the siren is now more commonly thought of as a sea creature, a figure who has endured in our cultural imagination as the mermaid immortalised by folk tales, film, and painting. As a hybrid creature occupying both human and animal worlds, possessing enormous narrative power, and directly challenging the authority and arrogance of men, the siren seems a particularly appealing subject for Smith, and it is unsurprising that the figure has reappeared in several different guises across her paintings, most frequently in reference to the late 19th and early 20th century fascination with the figure, captured in the pioneering films of Georges Méliès and the painters of Pre-Raphaelite John William Waterhouse.

George Méliès, *La sirène*, 1904

Drawing on the fascination expressed by the Romantics for the supernatural and the sublime in the face of the scientific objectivity of the age, Waterhouse was especially drawn to scenes from legend and myth, his strangely haunting paintings of nymphs, mermaids, and sirens indivisible from the broader culture of *fin de siècle* Aestheticism and the themes, motifs and visual style that characterised the Pre-Raphaelite turn to Medievalism. The broom has appropriated a number of Waterhouse's most iconic paintings in recent years including *A Mermaid* (1900), *The Siren* (1900), and *The Sorceress* (c. 1911), and here seems to be using Waterhouse's depiction of the Odysseus myth to interrogate the gendered politics of this foundational piece of European literature.



John William Waterhouse, *Ulysses and the Sirens*, 1891, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Image: akg-images

Whereas Waterhouse represents the climax of the dramatic action, the winged sirens flocking around the small raft to draw the bound Odysseus to his watery grave, Smith takes a decidedly different approach. Sailing under a silent moon, at first glance the ship here seems empty, the lapping waves driving it on. Upon closer inspection though, we see the sea itself contains the unmistakable forms of female bodies, the rise and fall of the waves echoing a feminine silhouette. Replacing the hero Odysseus and his all-male crew, Smith places a female protagonist at the helm, the literal and symbolic figurehead for an alternative version of this canonical story. Tellingly, the mast is subtly reconfigured into the curved silhouette of a brush. At once evoking her broom avatar and the tools of her trade, Smith commandeers Odysseus' vessel - and, by extension, a literary and art historical tradition that has relegated women to monsters, bit-players on the side-lines of this tale of adventure and exploration - remaining the raft as an artist at the start of an epic adventure of her own.

### Collector's Digest

- Currently the subject of significant commercial and institutional attention, Emily Mae Smith has received important solo exhibitions around the globe, including at the Le Consortium, Dijon in 2018, Perrotin Gallery, Tokyo in 2019, the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah in 2020, and Rodolphe Janssen Gallery, Brussels, in 2021. Most recently, Smith presented her first solo exhibition in Paris in October 2021 and her first monograph was recently published by Petzel Gallery.
- Borrowing stylistic and compositional elements from the turn of the century British periodical

'The Studio', the present work belongs to Smith's celebrated series of the same title, with one example now held in Le Consortium's permanent collection.

- Smith received her MFA from Columbia University. Her work belongs to multiple public collections, including the Whitey Museum of American Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, among others.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/2nex0UnnVZw>

Emily Mae Smith discusses her practice ahead of her 2019 solo exhibition at Le Consortium, Dijon.

<sup>i</sup> Emily Mae Smith, quoted in 'Broom With a View: Emily Mae Smith's Humorous Art-Historical Revisions', Elephant, 15 November 2018, [online](#)

### Provenance

Mary Mary, Glasgow

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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6

### Caroline Walker

#### *Night Scenes*

signed, titled and dated 'NIGHT SCENES Caroline Walker 2017' on the reverse

oil on linen

210 x 270 cm (82 5/8 x 106 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2017.

#### Estimate

£100,000 — 150,000 ±

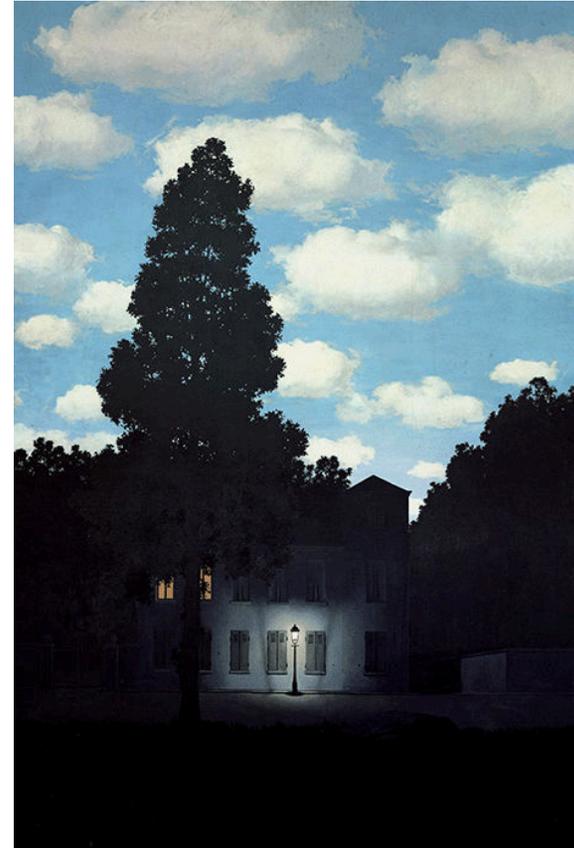
[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/V2kARLMtQPo>

*"The subject of my paintings in its broadest sense is women's experience [...] From the anonymous to the highly personal, what links all these subjects is an investigation of an experience which is specifically female." —Caroline Walker*

Highly cinematic in its sense of scale, narrative urgency, and bold contrasts of light and shadow, *Night Scenes* is a particularly seductive and compelling work by Scottish artist Caroline Walker. The title painting from her 2017 exhibition with ProjectB in Milan, *Night Scenes* lays bare some of the central tensions between public and private, empathy and voyeurism that animate her most powerful paintings. Recalling the juxtapositions of night and day used to such captivating effect in René Magritte's iconic *L'Empire des lumières* series, Walker's arresting work crystallises the contradictions of night time darkness as at once concealing and revealing. While Magritte's amplification of these tensions served his philosophical interrogation into the nature of perception and reality, Walker instead turns this lens inward in her psychologically-driven paintings of feminine interiority.



René Magritte, *L'Empire des lumières (The Empire of Lights)*, 1954, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Dramatically framed by the rigid geometry of an impressive modernist home set on a hillside above Los Angeles and brightly illuminated against the softly diffused evening light, a lone woman leans against a wall of the home's secluded courtyard. Her hair wrapped in a towel, one hand unconsciously clutches the opening of her dressing gown while a lit cigarette hangs lightly in the other. Her gaze leads us to the open gateway in the foreground, a compositional device that not only opens a voyeuristic window into this moment of unguarded privacy, but allows us a tantalising glimpse into the interior life of this woman. Carefully balancing observation with empathy, the narrative ambiguity is especially loaded here: as the woman gazes out towards the open door is she following a departing figure, or awaiting someone's arrival? Is she freshly washed in

preparation for bed, or is the night only just beginning?

## California Dreaming

As Walker has explained, her paintings operate as ‘formalised fictions concerned with the strange or ambiguous which can arise in the everyday and the banal’, a feature that is especially poignant in her Californian pictures from this period where lone, anonymous women set within glamorous settings seem to foreground ‘the notion of disappointed expectations and a kind of faded grandeur of what could have been.’<sup>i</sup> In their depiction of impossibly manicured gardens, light-filled modernist buildings, and sun-soaked pools, David Hockney’s highly celebrated *California Dreaming* series similarly highlighted the complex relationships at work between people and the spaces they occupy.



David Hockney, *Beverly Hills Housewife*, 1966, Private Collection. Image: Richard Schmidt, Artwork: © David Hockney

Although often distilling a fantasy of mid-century West Coast good life, paintings such as his 1966 *Beverly Hills Housewife* move closer to Walker’s subtle probing of the contradictions between luxury and the banality of its everyday reality. Standing, statuesque, on the terrace of her rigidly symmetrical span house, Hockney presents art collector and patron Betty Freeman like another object among her collection; still, impassive, and isolated from the world beyond the home. Playing with the same deeply entrenched cultural connections between women and domestic space, Walker’s framing of this anonymous woman within the illuminated courtyard here poignantly emphasises a kind of lonely detachment, and yet in this granular focus, Walker gives this sensation

a universal resonance, connecting the richness of her inner life to the sea of anonymous lights rolling out into the background.

## The Politics of Looking

Treading the line between intrusion and intimacy, Walker’s exquisitely handled paintings seem to capture fleeting moments of unguarded honesty, and yet her compositions from this period tend to be meticulously planned and carefully choreographed performances. As Benno Tempel describes, ‘each composition is carefully prepared. A setting – location, character and action – is found and photographed. Her photos are the starting point for sketches. These lead to studies in oil, where she explores colours and brushwork.’<sup>ii</sup>



Edward Hopper, *Night Windows*, 1928, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Heirs of Josephine Hopper / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London 2022

Combining the quiet introspection of Vilhelm Hammershøi and the more overt voyeurism of American artists Edward Hopper and Eric Fischl, Walker here places us in the position of unseen observer, her awkwardly elevated perspective and cropped angles charged with the fleeting sensation of the snapshot, despite their careful planning. As the artist explains, her paintings will often include ‘something you have to look through or past to get to the subject of the work’, architectural obstacles that frame her compositions, but also introduce a vital sense of distance between us and the private world we are intruding upon. For Walker, ‘looking is linked to technique’, the open gate in *Night Scenes* underscoring the boundary lines between inside and outside, private and public, light and dark that her luscious, painterly compositions dramatise.<sup>iii</sup>

## Collector’s Digest

- Since graduating from her MA with the Royal College of Art in 2009, Walker has been the subject of several solo exhibitions internationally, including *Janey* at Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh in 2020, *Women’s Work* at the Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham in 2021, and the forthcoming exhibition at K11 in Shanghai in November 2022.
- Following her exhibition *Caroline Walker: Birth Reflections* held at Fitzrovia Chapel, London in the early months of 2022, Walker’s latest solo show, *Lisa*, at Stephen Freidman Gallery presented a deeply intimate series of portraits documenting her sister-in-law’s journey through the first months of motherhood.
- Walker’s works are included in a number of prominent public collections, including the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, The UK Government Art Collection, London, and Kunstmuseum in The Hague.

<sup>i</sup> Caroline Walker, quoted in ‘Artists Statement’, Liverpool Museums, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> Benno Tempel, ‘A Day in a Life’, in Caroline Walker, *Windows* (exh. cat.), Amsterdam, 2021, p. 5.

<sup>iii</sup> Benno Tempel, ‘A Day in a Life’, in Caroline Walker, *Windows* (exh. cat.), Amsterdam, 2021, p. 5.

## Provenance

ProjectB, Milan

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

Milan, ProjectB, *Night Scenes*, 25 May – 30 July 2017

## Literature

Caroline Walker and Marco Livingstone, *Caroline Walker: Picture Window*, London, 2018, pp. 138-139, 303 (illustrated; ProjectB, Milan, 2017 installation view illustrated, n.p.)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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7

### Issy Wood

*The butter*

signed and dated 'I. Wood 2019' on the reverse  
oil on linen

140.5 x 100.3 cm (55 3/8 x 39 1/2 in.)

Painted in 2019.

**Estimate**

£80,000 — 120,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I'm convinced the way I configure these otherwise alluring products and garments often lowers them, literally, in tone, or happily switches them from being an advert to an expression of perversion, in the way painting can do." —Issy Wood*

Turning fashion into fetish, *The butter's* closely cropped depiction of a belted leather trench coat is a particularly seductive example from Issy Wood's most iconic series. Executed on linen in rich, creamy tones of beige and tan that visually recreate the tactile qualities of brushed leather, *The butter* very deliberately plays with modes of cognitive estrangement, generating jarring collisions between image, idea, and material in what she has described as 'a sort of joke with myself about painting, alluding to painting a fabric on a different fabric [...] it has an uncanniness to it.'<sup>i</sup>

While clothes often carry a strongly autobiographic element, standing in for the wearer and articulating something of their personality or identity, Wood's jackets – the majority of which belong to women – feel strangely unworn, a result, perhaps, of the second-hand nature of Wood's source material. Gleaned from the pages of old auction catalogues, second-hand eBay purchases, and iPhone photographs, Wood foregrounds a certain tragicomic element embedded within contemporary commodity culture, establishing an 'intoxicating interplay of desire, luxury, and degradation' in her strange, sensual compositions.<sup>ii</sup> Wood took this a step further in her major presentation for Goldsmith's Centre for Contemporary Art in 2019, installing a selection of 'failed eBay purchases, or clothing purchases that I made in some kind of insomniac haze' that the artist had painted over. As Wood explains, these poorly fitting or unsuitable garments speak 'to my taste in the negative: for dysmorphic or aesthetic reasons I have chosen not to wear [these items] but instead have painted on [them].'<sup>iii</sup>



Domenico Gnoli, *Green Bust*, 1969, Private Collection. Image: Album / Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Domenico Gnoli, SIAE / DACS, London 2022

Formally, Wood's closely-cropped and magnified portraits of everyday objects establish a relationship with Domenico Gnoli's surreal visions of painted details of clothes, furniture and highly stylised hair, and yet, while Gnoli's compositions always refer back to the body that occupies them, Wood's are strangely divorced from their human counterpart. A favourite motif of the artist, jackets in particular come to stand for a kind of protective armour for the wearer, having '[s]omething to do with privacy, and armour and a kind of defence – or a shell or second skin, depending on what you want to protect yourself from.'<sup>iv</sup>

## Hardboiled

With its clean lines and subtle tailoring, the trench coat is ‘The opposite of a statement piece, the trench melds itself to the wearer, becoming whatever it needs to be at that moment.’<sup>v</sup> The wardrobe staple of film noir and hardboiled detective thrillers, the trench coat is a potent signifier in our pop culture imaginary, assuming multiple identities as a tool of seduction and as a mode of subterfuge and disguise. Bringing the two sets of association together in one image, Wood endows the painting with a powerful erotic charge, one that is further complicated by the soft, yielding associations introduced by the work’s title.



Left: Sophia Loren in *The Key*, 1958 Right: René Magritte, *The Use of Speech*, 1927 - 1929, Private Collection. Image: © NPL - DeA Picture Library / G. Nimatallah / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Like René Magritte’s playful exposure of the arbitrariness of the relationship between sign and meaning, Wood’s title introduces a further interaction between image and word, ‘butter’ at once connecting to the material qualities of the jacket – its colour and the rich, creamy tactility of the

leather – and undercutting the notion of the jacket’s ability to function as a kind of protective armour. Glamour, in this instance, is shown to be ‘another protective façade [...] for anxieties around the female body, economic class, mental health – and, thus, intimately entwined with the experience of pain.’<sup>vi</sup>

Referencing her classical style and the darkly imaginative world that her paintings inhabit, Wood is often described as a ‘medieval millennial’, an appropriately discordant description for an artist so adept at generating temporal dissonance in the collision between the antique and the contemporary, the valued and the discarded that her paintings dramatise.<sup>vii</sup> Returning these familiar objects and making them somehow strange, Wood highlights our dependence on commodities, and the strained relationships we forge with them.

## Collector’s Digest

- Since her first major institutional show with Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art in 2019, Wood has exhibited her work world-wide, including the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Tate St. Ives, and Beijing’s X Museum. In 2021 her work was included in the critically acclaimed exhibition of contemporary painting in Britain, *Mixing it Up: Painting Today* at the Hayward Gallery in London.
- Featured in the *Artsy Vanguard 2020*, her works now reside in the permanent collection of Beijing’s X Museum, where she also enjoyed a significant solo exhibition in 2020. Her work is currently on view in New York as part of her solo exhibition *Issy Wood: Time Sensitive* with Michael Werner Gallery.
- An established musician, Issy Wood is signed with producer Mark Ronson’s Zelig Records, with her second EP *If It’s Any Constellation* released earlier this year.

<sup>i</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in ‘Issy Wood in Conversation with Sarah McCrory’, Luncheon, No. 8., 2019, p. 60–61.

<sup>ii</sup> Rosanna McLaughlin, ‘Issy Wood’, *Mixing it Up: Painting Today*, (exh. cat.), London, Hayward Gallery, 2021, p. 112.

<sup>iii</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in ‘Issy Wood in Conversation with Sarah McCrory’, Luncheon, No. 8., 2019, p. 60.

<sup>iv</sup> Issy Wood, quoted in ‘Issy Wood in Conversation with Sarah McCrory’, Luncheon, No. 8., 2019, p. 61.

<sup>v</sup> Janelle Okwodu, 'Here's Looking at You, Burberry! The Trenchcoat's Greatest Moments on Film', *Vogue*, 21 February 2016, [online](#).

<sup>vi</sup> Marg Kross, 'Issy Wood From Life', Cura, 2019.

<sup>vii</sup> Naomi Rea, 'They're very similar attitudes': Artist Issy Wood on her double life as a paintings sensation and ascendent pop star', *ArtNews*, 20 November 2020, [online](#).

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#### Provenance

Carlos/Ishikawa, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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8

### **Anna Weyant**

*Cynthia*

signed and dated 'Anna Weyant 2019' on the reverse  
oil on panel

61 x 45.7 cm (24 x 18 in.)

Painted in 2019.

**Estimate**

£100,000 — 150,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I like it when there's something that's not quite right in the image, something that doesn't fit... sometimes I have fun playing with the 'Instagram meets old painting' type of clash." —Anna Weyant*

Enigmatic and alluring, the young *Cynthia* looks out at us with an inscrutable and disarmingly knowing gaze characteristic of Anna Weyant's beguiling studies of adolescent girlhood. Richly painted in creamy porcelain tones touched with blushes of rose and peach, the portrait demonstrates the young artist's remarkable painterly skill, and the careful balance struck by her precisely rendered works between Old Master luxuriance and Surreal disquiet.

Intensely luminous, *Cynthia's* smooth, softened contours and muted palette of 'subdued liquid chartreuse, embellished with unexpected twists' are all highly evocative of the technical perfection and compositional clarity sought by Early Netherlandish painters such as Rogier van der Weyden, whose translucent surface textures and dramatic manipulation of light heightened the sense of devotional restraint advocated by his exquisitely modelled figures.<sup>i</sup> Adopting a kind of Gothic elegance, almost unnatural in its beauty, Weyant plays with these art historical connections in her three-quarter portrait, drawing wickedly sharp associations between compositional control and the illusion of emotional restraint later developed in the 'sea-washed cleanliness' of Lucian Freud's early portraits.<sup>ii</sup>



Left: Lucian Freud, *Girl with Roses*, 1947 – 48, British Council, London. Image and Artwork: © The Lucian Freud Archive. All Rights Reserved 2022 / Bridgeman Images Right: Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of a Lady*, c. 1460, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.44

## The Trauma of Girlhood

Representing what some have described as 'a new female genre [...] about the female body and the agency of women over their bodies', Weyant's portraits nevertheless incorporate a charged tragi-comic element that is difficult to place precisely.<sup>iii</sup> While her still lifes have an air of scenes suddenly abandoned, her portraits are more emotionally complex, her 'sort of semi-sympathetic, almost pathetic, but very endearing' characters drawn from a small group of friends whose features blend and morph into each other, taking on the smoothed and rounded faces of *Madeline* dolls.

A portrait of the painter Cynthia Talmadge, who Weyant worked with as a studio assistant before her more recent rise to fame, the beguiling piece returns her subject to girlhood while retaining the air of quiet knowing that comes with maturity. Bringing the child and adult back into such close proximity in this precocious and quietly deviant figure, Weyant captures the charged moment of adolescence and the 'low stakes trauma of girlhood' with deft precision.<sup>iv</sup> As the artist has explained, the passage between childhood and adulthood holds a particular fascination for her, a 'traumatic, dramatic, devastating, and hilarious time' that she finds herself compulsive returning to in her work and in the characters she depicts.<sup>v</sup>

*"I always thought she had a timeless look about her, like she could have been transported from the 1940s. I love when people have a sensibility about them that reminds you of some bygone era. It's rare." —Anna Weyant*

Executed in 2019, *Cynthia* is one of several works based on the same sitter, one of which was included in Weyant's debut solo presentation, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, hosted by 56 Henry in New York the same year. Cinematic with a sinister twist, the title of the exhibition was a direct reference to Todd Solondz's 1995 darkly offbeat coming of age film of the same name, although in terms of Weyant's painting, it was the dollhouse itself that took centre stage. Featuring two paintings of the traditional toy, the exhibition unfolded in a series of tragi-comic vignettes staged like isolated episodes from within the house featuring her cast of doll-like girls, including 'Cynthia'.



Domenico Gnoli, *Black Hair*, 1969, Private Collection. Image: Mondadori Portfolio/Electa/Sergio Anelli/Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Domenico Gnoli, SIAE / DACS, London 2022

It's smooth, impassive surface like a veneer to mask the emotional complexity beneath, *Cynthia* exemplifies the young Weyant's flair for the theatrical, and the space that her paintings occupy between innocence and the uncanny. Drawing us in and generating a powerful sense of intimacy or complicity between subject, artist, and audience, *Cynthia* illustrates critic Cole Sweetwood's claim that 'in terms of technical ability, Weyant's works rival the Dutch Golden Age masters which inspire her work, and in terms of narrative, she surpasses them.'<sup>vi</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Born in 1995 in Calgary, Canada, Anna Weyant lives and works in New York. She received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. Propelled into international stardom only within the past few years, Weyant has had multiple solo shows, beginning with her first high profile show, *Welcome to the Dollhouse* at 56 Henry, New York in 2019, followed by *Loose Screw* at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles in 2021, which sold out instantly; and *Splinter* with Blum & Poe, Tokyo (29 January - 12 March 2022).

- In June 2021, Phillips New York had debuted Weyant's work at auction with a [work on paper](#) that sold for more than five times its low estimate; in May 2022, her 2021 painting [Buffett II, sold for US\\$730,800 \(premium\)](#), more than seven times its low estimate.

- In the same month, Gagosian [gallery announced their solo representation of Weyant](#), making her the youngest artist to have joined the gallery's roster at 27 years old. Her first solo exhibition with Gagosian, New York will be opening next month.

<sup>i</sup> Sasha Bogojev, 'Anna Weyant: Welcome to the Dollhouse', Juxtapoz, 13 July 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Lawrence Gowing, *Lucian Freud*, London, 1982, p. 81.

<sup>iii</sup> Wendy Cromwell, quoted in Katya Kazakina, 'Prices? Six Figures – at Least. Waitlist? Interminable. Gagosian is Preparing for its Highly Anticipated Anna Weyant Solo Debut in November', *Artnet News*, 7 September 2022, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Anna Weyant, quoted in Noor Brara, 'Artist Anna Weyant Paints the Indignities of Being a Young Woman—and Collectors of All Ages Can't Get Enough', 16 September 2021, *Artnet news*, [online](#).

<sup>v</sup> Anna Weyant, quoted in Sasha Bogojev, 'Anna Weyant: Welcome to the Dollhouse', *Juxtapoz*, 2019, [online](#).

<sup>vi</sup> Cole Sweetwood, 'Pick of the Week: Anna Weyant, Alexander Tovborg, and Asuka Ogawa: Blum and Poe', *Artillery*, 21 April 2021, [online](#).

## Provenance

56 Henry, New York

Private Collection, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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9

### Elizabeth Peyton

*Evan at the Reading Festival 1993*

signed, titled and dated 'evan @ the reading festival  
1993 1997 Elizabeth Peyton' on the reverse

oil on board

30.6 x 23.4 cm (12 x 9 1/4 in.)

Painted in 1997.

Estimate

£480,000 — 650,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: [https://www.youtube.com/embed/xYb\\_CHEW5fw](https://www.youtube.com/embed/xYb_CHEW5fw)

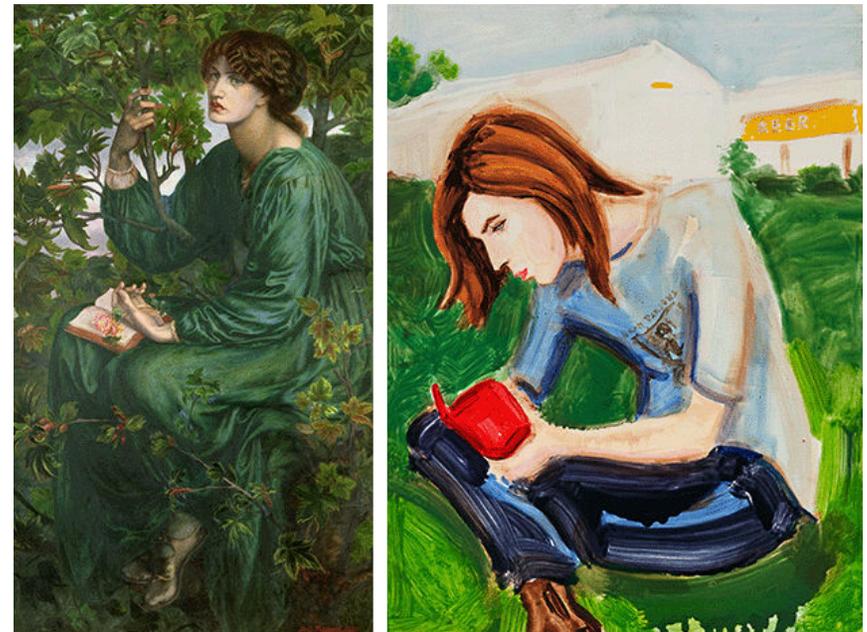
*"I really like how people contain their time, in their faces." —Elizabeth Peyton*

Lyrical composed with broad, sweeping brushstrokes and a vivid, jewel-bright palette, *Evan at the Reading Festival 1993* is a stunningly tender portrait from one of the finest figurative painters of her generation. Working primarily from photographs and printed media, Elizabeth Peyton is best known for her romantic portraits of rock stars, movie icons, and members of European Royalty, although the tone of her small-scale paintings moves far beyond celebrity adoration. Charged with emotion, these works collapse distinctions between realist painting and expressionist verve, and between the public performance of celebrity and the deeply personal relationships that we forge with them.

A portrait of Evan Dando, the frontman of 90's grunge band the Lemonheads, *Evan at the Reading Festival 1993* is particularly emblematic of Peyton's work, where, as Roberta Smith has suggested, 'Each image is a point on entwined strands of artistic or emotional growth, memorializing a relationship, acknowledging an inspiration or exposing an aspect of ambition.'<sup>i</sup>

The Lemonheads, 'Mrs Robinson'

Executed in 1997, the year of The Lemonheads last appearance at the infamous UK festival before their 8 year hiatus (and of Peyton's first solo exhibition in a major public institution) the work reflects a pivotal moment in both the artist's career and in the cultural shift into the millennium. One of several portraits of Dando, he is shown here quietly contemplative, his long hair swept from his luminous face as he reads from the red book in his hands. Elbows leaning on crossed legs, his shoulders gently curved in concentration it is an image of quiet introspection and unguarded honesty that takes on the ethereal quality of a Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece.



Left: Dante Gabriel Charles Rossetti, *Day Dream*, 1880, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Image: Bridgeman Images Right: Detail of the present work

Intimately scaled, but possessing immense emotional power, the work is closely related to Peyton's moving portraits of another grunge idol, Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain. Although eluding the sense of tragedy and melancholy that pervades Peyton's *Kurt* portraits, *Evan at the Reading Festival 1993* shares in the same powerfully evocative sense of a specific cultural moment, and of the nostalgia that its recollection brings with it. While Peyton's portraits 'create a democracy or equivalence amongst their subjects' akin to that of Andy Warhol who used modes of seriality and

repetition in his silkscreened portraits of the most iconic celebrities of his own day, Peyton's work marks a significant departure from Warhol's fascination with the mechanics of celebrity and the image.<sup>ii</sup>

*"I guess what I'm interested in is the quality of my subjects being able to be themselves while occupying this extreme role in the public imagination. You can see their will, and that's incredibly beautiful." —Elizabeth Peyton*

Coming of age in the 1980s when the Pictures Generation was in their ascendancy, Peyton's first exhibition was held in a locked room of New York's infamous Chelsea Hotel, featuring small-scaled portraits of famous historical figures including Marie Antoinette and Napoleon Bonaparte. These beginnings are telling, and even in Peyton's more recent paintings of her friends, family, and close circle of art-world acquaintances, the artist's interest in people as vehicles of history has remained consistent. Discussing this early exhibition some years later, Peyton explained: 'Reading about Napoleon made me think how people make history. They are the way the world moves, and they contain their time.'<sup>iii</sup>

Discerning no real distinction between those she knows personally and those she knows from history or through their music *Evan at the Reading Festival 1993* is emblematic of Peyton's finest portraits, presenting a moving statement on her deep emotional connection to music and literature. Moving beyond the purely representational on a journey inwards, Peyton's portraits of musicians including John Lennon, David Bowie, and Sid Vicious act as a vehicle for her to explore the deeply personal and conflicted feelings that these found source images provoke, images of those artists and musicians who most inspire her, the 'people who touch me, people who can help me feel my feelings.'<sup>iv</sup>

Video: [https://youtu.be/3Hw1l\\_j2vE?t=67](https://youtu.be/3Hw1l_j2vE?t=67)

'Elizabeth Peyton: Faces Contain Their Time', Interview by Marc Christoph Wagner, at Edition Copenhagen, 2013 for the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art

## Collector's Digest

- Executed in the same year as her first major solo show, *Evan at the Reading Festival 1993* is a powerful example of Elizabeth Peyton's painterly practice and contemporary reinterpretation of the tradition of portraiture.
- Since her first UK exhibition in a South London pub in 1992, Peyton has had major retrospectives at the Whitechapel Gallery, Royal Academy, and The National Portrait Gallery, as well as numerous

international exhibitions which have secured her reputation of one of the most important figurative artists working today.

- The Museum of Modern Art in New York now holds 32 of Elizabeth Peyton's works within its permanent collection.
- Most recently, Peyton has channelled her sense of the mutual reciprocity existing between art forms and artists with a dazzling poster design for Luca Guadagnino's transcendent new film *Bones and All*, screened at the Venice film festival in September 2022.

<sup>i</sup> Roberta Smith, 'Elizabeth Peyton: The Personal and the Painterly', *New York Times*, 9 October 2008, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew Higgs, *Elizabeth Peyton*, London, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>iii</sup> Elizabeth Peyton, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *The Lives of Artists, Volume 5*, London, 2019, p. 159.

<sup>iv</sup> Elizabeth Peyton, quoted in 'I paint people who help me feel my feelings', *Conceptual Fine Arts*, 19 December 2016, [online](#).

## Provenance

Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York  
Private Collection, Switzerland (acquired from the above)  
Thence by descent to the present owner

## Literature

David Rimaneli and Meicost Ettal, *Elizabeth Peyton: Live Forever*, Tokyo, 1997, n.p. (illustrated, p. 88)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



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### Doron Langberg

*Nir and Zach*

signed with the artist's initials and dated 'D.L. 18' on the overlap

oil on linen

243.8 x 203.2 cm (96 x 80 in.)

Painted in 2018.

**Estimate**

£60,000 — 80,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/zsMMIwiIQ88>

*"Intimacy and closeness are at the centre of my practice. Whether it's a portrait of a friend or depictions of a couple in bed, I want to express the multivalent and complex nature of relationships, highlighting our connectedness to one another." —Doron Langberg*

Executed in 2018 and included in the group exhibition *Zig Zag Zig* with New York's DC Moore Gallery in the same year, *Nir and Zach* is a tender scene of intimacy and domestic quietude by young Brooklyn-based artist Doron Langberg. Depicted in a moment of calm repose, the two figures find themselves comfortably alone, together, Nir sitting back against the shelves, absorbed by the book on his lap as Zach sleeps deeply, gently curled beneath a patterned throw. Soaked in warm washes of rich colour, the painting's inviting, soporific glow blurs the boundaries between material reality and memory, charging the work with emotional and psychological depth as the boundaries between interiority and environment blur and melt into one another.

Close friends of the artist, Zach and Nir belong to a recurring cast of characters around whom Langberg builds his luminous and tender studies of contemporary queer community and intimacy. Although also known for his more explicit compositions celebrating the physicality of the body, desire, and the electrifying charge of the sexual encounter, Langberg here extends his attention to the deeper and more nuanced emotional complexities that come with intimate relationships.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Le Lit (The Bed)*, 1892, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

As in the more tender portraits of backstage life that feature in Edgar Degas and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's studies of the ballet and the brothel, Langberg's painting demonstrates an emotionally sophisticated understanding of desire and touch, and of the complex relationships played out between physicality, closeness, and vulnerability. As the artist explains, while 'using a sexual image can be a powerful vehicle' for exploring emotional depth, an expansion of these terms has allowed him to develop 'a fuller understanding of what intimacy is, and [...] how more complex emotions can find homes in different imagery.'<sup>i</sup>

### Contemporary Intimism

*"In my work, the starting point is the world: my relationship with a person, something I saw, or an experience I had. Then it goes deeper and deeper into a painting world, which translates our phenomenological experiences into something that can only happen in painting language." —Doron Langberg*

Delighting in the pleasures of touch and great finding beauty in the quotidian, Langberg's paintings create a space for what some have dubbed a new 'Queer Intimism', a contemporary revival of the late 19th century French Intimism pioneered by the likes of Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard. Learning from Impressionism's interest in capturing the fleeting sensation, the *Intimistes* shifted their focus from the landscape and sites of new metropolitan modernity to the interior, elevating moments of everyday domestic simplicity and sociability as vessels for emotional interiority and psychological directness.

Often set in domestic spaces focused on the emotional currents passing between people, places, and objects, Langberg's chromatically brilliant and highly painterly compositions certainly nod to these art historical reference points. Recalling his first encounter with these artists as a student coming to America for the first time, Langberg explains: 'The colour, dappled paint handling, and play between flatness and depth were very inspiring for me. I was so taken by how an everyday scene, like a family sitting around, a loved one taking a bath, or a still life, can hold such emotional intensity.'<sup>ii</sup>



Left: Pierre Bonnard, *Woman with Dog*, 1891, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown,

Massachusetts. Image: Bridgeman Images Right: Detail of the present work

Harnessing this same, empathetic power, Langberg develops the pictorial language of Bonnard in his dissolving washes of vibrant colour, flattened, sinuous sense of line, and highly attuned sensitivity to pattern, a strategy that he would continue to develop in the works produced for his first solo show with [Victoria Miro](#) in London in 2021. Especially legible in the rippling folds of the blanket here, Langberg flattens these pictorial elements to the appearance of cut outs, stacking patterned passages atop one another, emphasising the shallow picture space and intensifying its emotive charge. As in Bonnard's compositions, *Nir and Zach* anchors these more abstracted elements in domestic details: a book cast casually at Nir's feet, the rippling surface of the blanket, and the everyday objects arranged on a small side table.

Adopting the pictorial language of 19th century Intimism, Langberg has built a body of work that magnifies everyday life and queer domesticity, examining vulnerability, intimacy, and sociability through his virtuoso painterly treatment. Inviting us in to these interiors, Langberg also offers us an insight into his own emotional world, a generous and tender act from one of his generation's most promising young painters.

The Seller will be donating a proportion of the proceeds of sale of *Nir and Zach* to *La Leonera*, a charitable project from Fundacion Casa Santa Ana.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/A99XDnNNznM>

Doron Langberg discusses his painting *Bather* and the dialogue his works generate with French Intimiste Pierre Bonnard.

### Collector's Digest

- Currently based in New York, in 2011 Langberg was awarded the Schoelkopf Travel Prize at Yale University, where he graduated with an MFA in 2012.
- Since his graduation, he has exhibited at a range of galleries in New York and beyond, opening his first solo exhibition in London, *Give Me Love* with Victoria Miro in 2021.
- More recently, the artist has contributed work to the Frick Collection's year-long project *Living Histories: Queer Views and Old Masters*, where a portrait by the artist was installed with Hans Holbein's *Portrait of Sir Thomas More*. In direct dialogue with Pierre Bonnard's portraits of Marthe

**Doron Langberg**

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in the bath, Langberg's stunning *Bather* now belongs to the permanent collection of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, where it was recently unveiled as part of the group show *A Place For Me: Figurative Painting Now*.

<sup>i</sup> Doron Langberg, 'What's Love Got to Do With It: Gaby Collins-Fernandez & Doron Langberg with Jarrett Earnest', *Brooklyn Rail*, Nov 2015, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Doron Langberg, quoted in Rebecca Martin, 'Doron Langberg - Intimate Interiors', *Metal Magazine*, [online](#).

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**Provenance**

DC Moore Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

New York, DC Moore Gallery, *ZIG ZAG ZIG*, 21 June - 10 August 2018

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
AMERICAN COLLECTION

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### Reggie Burrows Hodges

*First Serve*

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

acrylic and pastel on canvas

141.3 x 206.4 cm (55 5/8 x 81 1/4 in.)

Executed in 2019.

Estimate

£220,000 — 280,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"My practice has been inspired by the study of moments and translating the essence of them through colour, figuration, abstraction, and various techniques of mark making." —Reggie Burrows Hodges*

His compositions calm and controlled and peopled by anonymous figures who are often presented turned away from us or with their faces obscured from view, Reggie Burrows Hodges paintings are strangely evocative of the sensations of memory. This unique quality is especially concentrated in the softly diffused edges of his forms, described memorably by critic Hilton Als as 'controlled bleeding'. Drawing on his rich and peripatetic history including a childhood in Compton, California; studies in music and film; and an early career as a professional tennis coach, Hodges crafts narrative vignettes that are at once personal and more universally nostalgic. Although clearly taken from his own recollections and observations out on the tennis court here, rather than serving more prosaically autobiographic ends the many figures in Hodge's paintings might in fact be more fruitfully read as illustrating various 'characters in a giant narrative about American life as it is played out in games and loneliness'.<sup>i</sup> Depicted alone and in groups, at work and at leisure, these anonymous figures charge Hodges' compositions with a note of ambiguity, one that remains rooted in themes of identity and community, truth and memory in a way that communicates across generational and cultural divides.

The title of this magnificent 2019 work - *First Serve* - implies action, but the scene depicted by the artist instead captures the private, introspective moments before the start of the match. The viewer is fixed low in the foreground, the ball girl and boy standing with hands held behind their backs, poised on the edge of action. Gathering themselves for the game ahead, the two players are seated either side of the umpire, shaded from the blinding sunlight by umbrellas, further obscuring their features and recalling other, [notable compositions](#) from this body of work. Lingering on moments of stillness between action in this manner, Hodge's compositions draw on the quiet observations of French *Intimiste* Édouard Vuillard, later developed by American artists such as Milton Avery, to whom Hodges' technical approach is often compared.



Édouard Vuillard, *Jardins publics : la conversation, les nourrices, l'ombrelle rouge* (*The Public Gardens: The Nurses, The Conversation and The Red Umbrella*), 1894, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

Stacked behind the court, the bustling stands are built up from large passages of black pigment, highlighted with brightly contrasting white details. Almost entirely abstracted, these areas are highly evocative, vibrating with the agitated anticipation of the crowd they depict. The treatment of black here is especially significant, highlighting an important aspect of Hodges' painterly practice. Unusually, the artist begins his compositions by covering the white canvas with a black ground, only then adding layers of colour and white to pick out the forms and pictorial structure. Of this decision, the artist has said 'I start with a black background [as a way] of dealing with blackness' totality. I'm painting an environment in which the figures emerge from negative space [...] If you see my paintings in person, you'll look in depth'<sup>ii</sup>. Some critics have taken this interest in negative space as a potent 'metaphor for hegemonic white culture', and although Hodges certainly addresses questions of representation and identity, a celebration of the colour black and the contrasts it is able to draw out alongside other hues remains his central preoccupation.<sup>iii</sup> Like Avery before him, Hodges uses colour and opacity to create depth and texture within his works. Forms are flattened and subtly spread into the canvas in carefully controlled bleeds, speaking more to atmosphere than to a strict adherence to realism, supported by the artist's marvellous facility for storytelling.



Left: Mark Rothko, *No. 10*, 1950, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Image: The Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala, Artwork: © Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko / DACS, London 2022 Right: Milton Avery, *Interlude*, 1960, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art: Centennial gift of the Woodward Foundation, 1975, 1975-81-1, Artwork: © Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2022

Appropriately, alongside Avery, Hodges has also cited the American colour field painters as bearing a significant influence in developing his practice and, although it remains wholeheartedly descriptive and figurative, the impact of artists such as Mark Rothko can be felt in *First Serve*. The picture plane is horizontally bisected with the lines which draw out the sky, stand, and the blue edge of the court, a composition which is echoed in works such as Rothko's *No.10*, where rectangular passages of yellow, white and ultramarine are edged and feathered with black. In *First Serve*, Hodges' figures appear to emerge from the same pools of pure, flat colour, endowing them with an unusually fluid quality that is at once captivating and serene.

### Collector's Digest

- Recently awarded the Jacob Lawrence Award in Art by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Reggie Burrows Hodges has been the subject of intensifying critical attention in recent years following his debut solo exhibition with Karma Gallery in New York in 2021.
- Reggie Burrows Hodges made his auction debut at Phillips London in October 2021, when his *For the Greater Good* achieved £441,000, soaring over 15 times its low estimate.

- His work now resides in major collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Nasher Museum of Art, North Carolina, and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

- As the 2019 recipient of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Fellowship in the Visual Arts, Hodges has most recently been the subject of a solo exhibition at the Centre for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland in May of this year.

<sup>i</sup> Hilton Als, Suzette McAvoy, *Reggie Burrows Hodges*, (exh.cat.), New York, 2021, p. 11.

<sup>ii</sup> Hilton Als, Suzette McAvoy, *Reggie Burrows Hodges*, (exh.cat.), New York, 2021, p. 11.

<sup>iii</sup> Johanna Fateman, 'Reggie Burrows Hodges', *The New Yorker*, [online](#)

### Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



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COLLECTION

14 ♦

### Alberto Burri

*Sacco e Rosso*

signed, titled and dated 'Burri 56 Sacco e Rosso' on the  
reverse

burlap, combustion and acrylic on canvas, in artist's  
frame

68.2 x 101.5 cm (26 7/8 x 39 7/8 in.)

Executed in 1956.

**Estimate**

£3,000,000 — 4,000,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/hy4Fcd0ApAw>

*"Words do not mean anything to me: they talk around the painting. What I want to express appears in the painting." —Alberto Burri*

A defining example of Italian artist Alberto Burri's iconoclastic practice, and a symbol of the radical experimentation of European post-war art, *Sacco e Rosso* is a work of exceptional harmony and poignancy, its textures and chromatic variances deeply evocative of the body and the trauma of the 20th century. Undoubtedly Burri's most prized works, the burlap *Sacco e Rosso* are exceptionally rare. Held in the same collection for over 30 years, the present *Sacco e Rosso* is one of only 15 such works in existence, one of which is held in the permanent collection of Tate Gallery in London. Emphasising its status as a defining piece of Italian post-war art, the work was once held in the personal collection of renowned art historian and Burri expert Cesare Brandi, and comes to auction with an extensive exhibition history having represented the *Sacco e Rosso* paintings on an international stage. Combining compositional simplicity and emotive power, *Sacco e Rosso* speaks lyrically to the incipient poetry residing in everyday objects, especially when combined with more expressive modes of abstraction starting to take shape contemporaneously.

## War Wounds



Detail of the present work

Highly tactile, the repurposed burlap sacks used by Burri between 1950 and 1959 in the construction of these works are charged with profound lyricism and emotional intensity. Deeply connected both to the artist's experiences as a medic during World War II, and of his internment in an American prisoner of war camp in 1943, Burri's stitched, torn, and burnt *Sacchi* are transformed under the artist's hand into powerful corporeal metaphors that still resonate today and would have been viscerally felt in their immediate post-war contexts.

A vital all-purpose material, burlap was used in the war effort in the construction of makeshift tents and camouflage, for the transportation of supplies and in the building of barricades on the front line. Like many other prisoners of war, Burri turned to art as a means of surviving the monotony and maltreatment of daily life, using whatever materials he found to hand. The ubiquitous burlap was quickly transformed under Burri's treatment from inert material to a powerfully original medium, taking on added emotional weight when Burri returned to Naples in 1946 and understood the scale and impact of the destruction for the first time. Like the body on the battlefield, the city itself was blown apart, piles of dusty rubble and burnt out apartment blocks littering the streets, while the skeletal remains of bombed Renaissance churches tore at the sky.



Left: Church of San Pietro Martire, 1943. Image: Carlo Maggio / Alamy Stock Photo Right: Alberto Burri, *Sacco e Rosso*, 1954, Tate, London. Image: © Tate, Artwork: © Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini Collezione Burri, Città di Castello / DACS, London 2022

Trained as a surgeon before the war and having seen action at Yugoslavia's bloody front line in 1942, Burri had a practical understanding of the body's vulnerability, and of the tactile qualities of flesh and tissue. Rough to the touch, the *Sacchi* have open, grid-like weaves and rough and nubby surfaces that he worked up with a painterly facture through stitching, tearing, patching, and gluing', the powerful use of vermillion in these distinguished *Sacco e Rosso* works anchoring the

fabrics dematerialisation while accentuating ‘the recessions of wounds and craters’.<sup>i</sup> Capable of producing multiple associations and sensations at once thanks to ‘their real, not simulated textures’, the *Sacchi* spoke viscerally to the devastating physical reality of war on the body and materialised the deep emotional trauma of conflict in European collective memory of the 1950s.<sup>ii</sup>

*"Burri transmutes rubbish into a metaphor for human, bleeding flesh. He vitalizes the dead materials in which he works, makes them live and bleed; then sews up the wounds evocatively and as sensuously as he made them [...] He is an artist with a scalpel—the surgeon conscious of what lies within the flesh of his compositions and moved by it to the point that he can make the observer also sensitive to it." —James Johnson Sweeney*

Immediately arresting, the present *Sacco e Rosso* unfolds in sweeping passages of deep black, raw burlap, and blood red as colour, form, and medium are perfectly synthesised in the composition. Riven with pockmarked wounds and burns, the coarse burlap gathers in elegant folds towards the upper portion of the canvas, abutting the red passage, its torn and frayed edges amplified in the contrast. Drawing attention to these areas, Burri engages the tactile qualities of his material in a forceful appeal to the senses, shifting our experience from a purely visual one to a primarily tactile and emotional one and introducing an ‘increased psychological intimacy between artwork and viewer’<sup>iii</sup> Dominating the centre of the composition, the tear in the burlap here is especially evocative of this, immediately bringing to mind the theatricality of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio’s masterpiece *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, where looking alone is insufficient in eliciting feeling and empathy. As curator Emily Braun has suggested, while Caravaggio’s scene ‘enacts a narrative of touch’, *Sacco e Rosso* obliges ‘the viewer to probe the lacerations, whose depths are accentuated by the actual cast shadows.’<sup>iv</sup>



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, 1601 – 1602, Sanssouci, Potsdam

## A Matter of Materials

The careful balance of perceptual, tactile, and metaphoric elements used to such powerful effect in *Sacco e Rosso* can be traced through the radically experimental approach to materials taken by certain artists through the earlier years of the 20th century. Instrumental in establishing a formal language for Cubism, the *papier collé* of Braque and Picasso introduced the material of everyday life into their compositions, while Kurt Schwitters *Merz* assemblages radically challenged conventional definitions of art and demonstrated the poetic and visual potential incipient in discarded material. Artists as diverse as Paul Klee and Paul Gauguin had already explored the possibilities of using burlap as a ground, but it was Burri who fully exploited its metaphoric possibilities.

*"In the sack I find a perfect compliance between tone, matter, and idea that can never be found in colour." —Alberto Burri*

A brief trip to Paris in 1947 shortly after his first solo exhibition with the Galleria La Margherita would prove decisive in solidifying some of his ideas around materials that he had already been developing in looking to Italian predecessors such as Enrico Prampolini. Amongst the *Informel* artists whose work he encountered for the first time on this trip, Jean Dubuffet - who incorporated soil, glass, gravel, and tar into his own compositions - would prove to be particularly instructive in validating Burri's approach to materials and increasingly non-figurative work, the two artists sharing the understanding that 'materials unusual in painting almost always accompany or narrate something else apart from themselves.'<sup>v</sup>



Jean Dubuffet, *Path Bordered by Grass*, 1956, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Image: Albright Knox Art Gallery/Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Pushing materials to their extremes, *Sacco e Rosso* is an elegiac expression of the ineffable collective trauma keenly felt in those post-war years. Inflicting real damage onto his materials, it is deeply emblematic of both of the individual body and the scorched realities of a European post-war world. Nevertheless, within its scars and sutures, *Sacco e Rosso* carries itself with a quiet resilience and dignity equally evocative of the world from which it emerged. Ground-breaking at the time of its execution, in his *Sacchi* works Burri pioneered a highly personal style of *Art Informel*, and helped set the stage for Italy's radical *Arte Povera* movement. Exhibited as early as 1952, Burri understood the significance of these works, and examples of his *Sacchi* are now held in the most eminent international institutions, including The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, and the Tate Gallery in London.

<sup>i</sup> Emily Braun & Carol Stringari, 'Materials, Process, Colour: Sacchi', in *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting*, (exh. cat.), New York, 2005, p. 157.

<sup>ii</sup> Emily Braun, 'Touch and Empathy', in *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting*, (exh. cat.), New York, 2005, p. 50

<sup>iii</sup> Emily Braun, 'Touch and Empathy', in *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting*, (exh. cat.), New York, 2005, p. 50

<sup>iv</sup> Emily Braun, 'Touch and Empathy', in *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting*, (exh. cat.), New York, 2005, p. 52.

<sup>v</sup> Bruno Corà, *Alberto Burri: General Catalogue, Painting, 1945 - 1957, Volume 1*, Perugia, 2015, p. 34.

#### Provenance

Cesare Brandi Collection, Milan

Galleria Erica Fiorentini Arte Contemporanea, Rome

Nicola Carlo Luciani, Milan (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2005

**Exhibited**

- Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, *Mostra d'arte per gli artisti esuli d'Ungheria*, 15 April – 10 May 1957, no. 10, p. 7, n.p. (illustrated)
- XXIX Venice Biennale, 14 June – 19 October 1958
- Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, *Artistas Italianos de Hoje na 5ª Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo*, September – December 1959
- Milan, Galleria Lorenzelli, *Alberto Burri "I sacchi 1952-1958" Mostra Omaggio ad Alberto Burri*, 1 – 28 February 1979, p. 8 (illustrated, dated 1955/1956)
- Milan, Rotonda di Via Besana, *Artisti e Scrittori*, November – December 1984, no. 1, p. 86 (illustrated)
- Parma, Galleria d'Arte Niccoli, *Alberto Burri, la pittura come materia vivente, opere dal 1949 al 1966*, 30 October 1993 – 5 January 1994, p. 45 (illustrated, dated 1955)
- Milan, Galleria Blu, *Noi non abbiamo paura. Artisti contro*, April 1997
- Luino, Palazzo Verbania Civico Centro di Cultura; Milan, Galleria Blu, *Burri & Palazzoli, La Santa Alleanza*, 19 May – 8 November 2001, pp. 76-77 (illustrated)
- Rome, Galleria Erica Fiorentini Arte Contemporanea, *20 anni*, 16 April – 31 May 2012, n.p. (illustrated)

**Literature**

- Claudio Savonuzzi, "Nella pittura di Burri il miracolo di S. Gennaro", *Il Resto del Carlino*, 26 May 1957
- Cesare Brandi, *Burri*, Rome, 1963, no. 187, p. 203 (illustrated, dated 1955-56)
- Nemo Sarteanesi, *Burri: Contributi al Catalogo Sistematico*, Città di Castello, 1990, no. 370, pp. 94, 482 (illustrated, p. 95, dated 1955)
- Roberto Tassi, "Alberto Burri sacco per sacco", *La Repubblica*, 27 November 1993, n.p. (illustrated)
- Rachele Ferrario, "Alberto Burri – Niccoli", *Flash Art*, no. 181, February 1994, p. 100
- Elena Pontiggia, *Quarant'anni in Blu*, Milan, 1996, p. 67 (illustrated)
- Roberto Tassi, *La Collezione Barilla di Arte Moderna*, Parma, 1993, n.p. (illustrated)
- Martina Corgnati, "Burri & Palazzoli un 'sacco' amici nel nome dell'arte", *La Repubblica*, 16 June 2001, p. 18
- Bruno Corà, ed., *Burri: General Catalogue, Volume I, Painting, 1945-1957*, Città di Castello, 2015, no. 478, pp. 200, 306 (illustrated, dated 1955)
- Bruno Corà, ed., *Burri: General Catalogue, Volume VI, Chronological Repertory, 1945-1994*, Città di Castello, 2015, no. 478, p. 96 (illustrated, dated 1955)
- Scalpendi, ed., *Alberto Burri nell'arte e nella critica*, Milano, 2017, pp. 46-47, 49, 120 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



15

### Salvatore Scarpitta

*Red Freight*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "RED FREIGHT" S.  
Scarpitta 1961 75" x 61" c/o Leo Castelli 4 E 77 ST NY  
NY' on the reverse

bandages and mixed media on canvas

190.5 x 154.9 x 14.5 cm (75 x 61 x 5 3/4 in.)

Executed in 1961.

Estimate

£900,000 — 1,200,000 <sup>+</sup>▲

[Go to Lot](#)



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ltQvcZ8rfL0>

*"I started ripping up the oil paintings, the canvas that had become an utter enemy for me. It was a necessity connected with my human experience; the war had changed me, the fear and desire for vendetta, I needed to run the risk of leaving fingerprints. I wanted to come into contact with the hidden, most difficult nature of things." — Salvatore Scarpitta*

Executed in 1961, *Red Freight* is a rare and arresting example of Italian-American artist Salvatore Scarpitta's iconic three-dimensional wrapped paintings that brought him international renown on his return to the United States in 1958. Composed of wide, sculptural bands of deep, wine-red strips of canvas dried leather-hard and wound in a sequence of alternating horizontal and diagonal directions like bandages across a body, the work captures the balance between tension, depth, and plasticity that characterises Scarpitta's most powerful work.

Adding an especially emotionally charged element, the work's title, *Red Freight*, compounds visual associations between the composition and the wooden boards of the red Deutsche Reichsbahn freight trains repurposed under the Third Reich to transport weapons, goods, and, more tragically, people as the Nazi program of industrialised genocide intensified across Europe. In this respect, the corporeal dimensions of Scarpitta's wrapped canvases take on an added poignancy here. In its visual proximity to the wounded body, *Red Freight* not only underscores the impact of the events of World War II on Scarpitta's artistic development, but also points to the optimistic note of healing and regeneration that these works strike in their post-war context. In violently ripping into his canvases and repurposing the remnants in this way, Scarpitta not only deconstructed and subverted painterly convention, but in reinstating the canvas itself as the primary subject, opened radical new directions for art to take in the following decades.

## War Wounds

*"Burri makes wounds, but you heal them!" — Willem de Kooning to Salvatore Scarpitta*

Although American by birth and raised in Hollywood, in 1936 Scarpitta returned to his ancestral Italian home, studying and working in Rome throughout one of the city's most artistically dynamic and exciting periods. During his two-decade stay in the city, Scarpitta contributed to a vibrant post-war art scene alongside the likes of Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, and fellow American Cy Twombly, who Scarpitta shared a studio with on the Via Margutta.

Conceived, as he would lyrically put it, under the cloud of the Great War, Scarpitta, came to

maturation in the long shadow of World War II, where the 'dramatic scenes and images of wounded or dead soldiers' that he had witnessed as a child came back to him with renewed force.<sup>i</sup> Like fellow Italian post-war artist Alberto Burri, Scarpitta had seen active service during World War II, although this was somewhat complicated given his status as an American citizen in Italy. Serving in the United States Navy, Scarpitta was also enlisted as a so-called 'Monuments Man', charged with identifying, recovering, and cataloguing art looted by the Nazis during this period. Such careful attention to the material life of paintings no doubt had a significant impact on Scarpitta, and it is certainly possible to read his careful wrapping of these post-war paintings as a direct echo of this important restitutorial work, and as a sign of protection and recovery in the face of destruction and violence.



Left: Alberto Burri, *Combustione plastica (Plastic combustion)*, 1958, Citta di Castello, Fondazione Burri, Italy. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini Collezione Burri, Città di Castello / DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

Like Burri, Scarpitta's wrapped and bandaged canvases speak to a fundamental interest in the materiality of the artwork, *Red Freight* in particular drawing close to the corporeality of Burri's *Sacchi*. Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases offer another point of comparison, although as Piero Dorazio has suggested, Fontana's earliest *Tagli* canvases might in fact have been inspired by a visit to Scarpitta's studio in 1957, the 'famous slashes [...] suggested by the swathing bands of Scarpitta.'<sup>ii</sup> However, where both Burri and Fontana focused on the wounding of the canvas, Scarpitta saw this gesture through to its restorative conclusion, describing 'canvases as scars that needed to be bandaged.' Understood as part of an ongoing dialogue between key figures in this particularly dynamic phase of Italian art, Scarpitta's wrapped paintings were highly praised for

their originality and formal beauty from the outset, representing ‘the first case of a step forward after the provocation of Burri.’<sup>iii</sup>



Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale, Attese (Spatial Concept, Expectations)*, 1959, Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Milan. Artwork: © Lucio Fontana/SIAE/DACS, London 2022

## Meeting Leo Castelli

As Luigi Sansone compellingly describes in the artist’s catalogue raisonné, 1957 and 1958 were absolutely pivotal years for Scarpitta, witnessing a decisive breakthrough in his art practice as he

moved away from the dominant trends of Abstract Expressionism and towards the careful attention to material, plasticity, and colour that we see in a work like *Red Freight*. This sea change in Scarpitta’s practice was first announced in his 1957 exhibition at the avant-garde Galleria La Tartaruga, and the presentation of ‘his recent painting [which] establishes a relationship with the world in an increasingly intense, confidently lyrical way: free, simple, concentrated in a sign, in a thickening of material, a contrast of colour.’<sup>iv</sup> Building on this promise, the following year Scarpitta presented his first ‘bandaged’ paintings, which deeply impressed themselves on the legendary art dealer Leo Castelli when he visited the artist’s studio the same year.

*“... with Leo a great friendship was born, and a great, immediate interest in my work. Leo and I were like brothers.” —Salvatore Scarpitta*

Spurred by this meeting to return to the United States, Scarpitta quickly moved into close personal confidence with Castelli, who would prove to be one of the greatest champions of his work and a dear friend to the artist throughout his life. Through Castelli, Scarpitta was introduced to the most influential American artists of the day, including Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning, and after his first exhibition with the gallery in 1959 would go on to contribute to several group shows and present nine further solo exhibitions with Castelli. Exhibited at the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles shortly after its execution in 1961, *Red Freight* has also been included in significant retrospectives over the years, including the 1977 survey exhibition at the Contemporary Art Museum in Houston, and the Leo Castelli Gallery’s extensive 1982 show *Salvatore Scarpitta, American Cycle 1958-1982*. In 1990 the work was also included in *Sal Scarpitta in cooperation with Leo Castelli Gallery*, hosted by the Scott Hanson Gallery. Originally acquired by Leo Castelli, the provenance of *Red Freight* is exceptional, a testament both to the significance of the work, and of this most fruitful relationship between a legendary artist and dealer.



Installation view of the present work, *Sal Scarpitta in collaboration with Leo Casetelli* at the Scott Hanson Gallery, New York, 1990

## Collector's Digest

- One of the greatest Italian artists of the post-war period, Salvatore Scarpitta's work bridges many central art movements of the 20th century, including Minimalism, Abstract Expressionism, and *Arte Povera*. In its intense materiality and focus on the working lives of his materials, Scarpitta's wrapped canvases are undoubtedly the most highly prized of the artist's oeuvre, laying important groundwork for the *Arte Povera* movement and contemporary artists such as [David Hammons](#).
- When the work last appeared at auction in 2007, it set a world record for the artist.
- Examples of Scarpitta's wrapped paintings are held in major institutions worldwide including The Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Civico Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Milan, among others.
- Representing one of the most important working relationships of his life, this work was originally acquired by Leo Castelli, and presented in the significant 1982 exhibition *Salvatore Scarpitta, American Cycle 1958-1982* at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York.

<sup>i</sup> Luigi Sansone, *Salvatore Scarpitta: Catalogue Raisonné*, Milan, 2005, p. 52.

<sup>ii</sup> Piero Dorazio, 'For Salvatore Scarpitta' in *Scarpitta*, (exh. cat.), Arbur, 2000, p. 62.

<sup>iii</sup> Pietro Dorazio, quoted in Luigi Sansone, *Salvatore Scarpitta: Catalogue Raisonné*, Milan, 2005, p.

117.

<sup>iv</sup> Cesare Vivaldi, quoted in Luigi Sansone, *Salvatore Scarpitta: Catalogue Raisonné*, Milan, 2005, p. 65.

## Provenance

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York  
 Scott Hanson Gallery, New York  
 Christie's, New York, 23 February 1994, lot 62  
 Tricia Collins Contemporary Art, New York  
 West Collection, Pennsylvania (acquired from the above in September 1998)  
 Sotheby's, New York, 15 November 2007, lot 125  
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## Exhibited

Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, *Scarpitta*, 26 June – 22 July 1961  
 Houston, Contemporary Arts Museum, *Salvatore Scarpitta*, 14 May – 30 July 1977, p. 16 (illustrated, dated 1960)  
 New York, Leo Castelli Gallery, *Salvatore Scarpitta, American Cycle 1958-1982*, 20 November – 11 December 1982  
 New York, Scott Hanson Gallery, *Sal Scarpitta: A Curatorial Project by Collins & Milazzo. In Cooperation with Leo Castelli*, 3 - 24 February 1990, n.p. (illustrated, dated 1962-1963)

## Literature

Giorgio Di Genova, *Storia dell'Arte Italiana del '900. Generazione Anni Dieci*, Bologna, 1990, p. 262 (dated 1962-63)  
 Luigi Sansone, *Salvatore Scarpitta: Catalogue Raisonné*, Milan, 2005, no. 280, p. 179 (illustrated, p. 331)  
*Salvatore Scarpitta*, exh. cat., Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, 2012, pp. 146, 236 (illustrated; Scott Hanson Gallery, New York, 1990 installation view illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

16

### Yayoi Kusama

#### *Pumpkin*

signed, titled and dated 'Yayoi Kusama Pumpkin [in  
Japanese] 1989' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

45 x 38.5 cm (17 3/4 x 15 1/8 in.)

Painted in 1989, this work is registered as no. 0854  
with the artist's studio.

#### Estimate

£700,000 — 1,000,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)

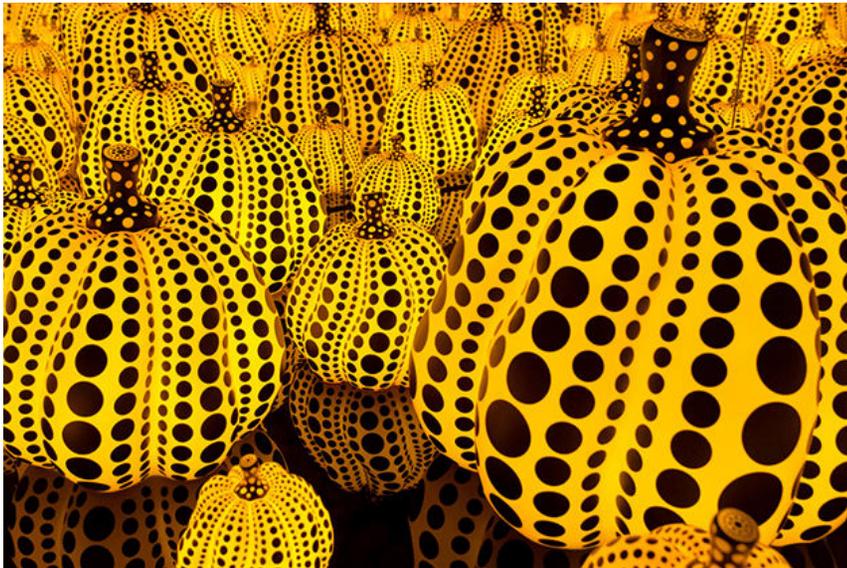


Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-CSF6Ke2VeU>

Brobbel / Alamy Stock Photo, Artwork: © YAYOI KUSAMA

*"I adore pumpkins. As my spiritual home since childhood, pumpkins bring about poetic peace in my mind. Pumpkins talk to me, giving off an aura of my sacred mental state. They embody a base for the joy of living shared by all humankind on earth. It is for the pumpkins that I keep on going." —Yayoi Kusama*

Undoubtedly one of the most iconic motifs of contemporary art and of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's incredible 70 year career, the polka-dot covered pumpkin combines the artist's compulsive focus on infinity and repetition with a highly personal and self-reflective dimension. Like Andy Warhol's Soup Cans, Kusama's bright and brilliantly patterned gourds are so closely connected to the artist that they function as both allegory and mode of self-representation, acting as a universal signature of the artist. Rendered in vibrant hues of rich, golden yellow and deep black most typically associated with the motif, the titular pumpkin is joyously misshapen here, crowned with an unusual blue stalk and set against a vibrant background of tessellating green geometric shapes that draw immediate connections with the artist's celebrated *Infinity Net* series. Particularly dynamic, the jagged vermilion border to the top and bottom edges of the canvas frames the gourd, focussing our attention on its capacity for infinite repetition and obliteration.



Yayoi Kusama, installation shot of *All the Eternal Love I have for the Pumpkins*, 2017. Image: Jurriaan

## Roots of the Pumpkin

Growing up on her family's seed farm in Matsumoto, Kusama was surrounded by the natural world, an environment that directly informed the severe auditory and visual hallucinations that the artist first began to suffer as a child. Unlike her more terrifying accounts of talking flowers that threatened to swallow her up in their infinite reproduction that can be traced in her later phallic soft-sculpture accumulations, the pumpkin was a more comforting vision. As the artist recalls, 'The first time I ever saw a pumpkin was when I was in elementary school and went with my grandfather to visit a bog seed-harvesting ground [...] and there it was: a pumpkin the size of a man's head [...] it immediately began speaking to me in a most animated manner. It seems that pumpkins do not inspire much respect, but I was enchanted by their charming and winsome form.'<sup>i</sup>

*"Dissolution and accumulation; propagation and separation; particulate obliteration and unseen reverberations from the universe—these were to become the foundations of my art." —Yayoi Kusama*

For Kusama, the experience of self-obliteration is ultimately positive, restoring the artist to an infinite plenitude which the repetitive accumulations, polka dots, and infinite spaces of the mirrored environments and nets facilitate, acting as both the materialisation of these visions and a therapeutic response to them, a translation of 'hallucinations and a fear of hallucination into paintings.'<sup>ii</sup> In co-opting the 'charming' pumpkin into her repertoire, Kusama distilled her internal struggles into a colourful and approachable form, restoring her to equilibrium and bringing joy to countless visitors in its radiant celebration of life and energy.

Beyond this personal narrative, *Pumpkin* also connects Kusama's work to some of the defining currents of artistic thought in the second half of the 20th century, uniting the bold, graphic qualities of Pop's serial approach to everyday items with Minimalist reduction and an emphasis on pattern and visual sensation linked to Op Art. While Kusama's *Infinity Nets* and immersive installations align with a cosmic vision of obliteration, the pumpkin grounds this sense of unimaginable vastness in the natural world, recalling her mentor Georgia O'Keeffe's expansive treatment of organic forms.



Left: Georgia O'Keeffe, *An Orchid*, 1941, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2022 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum/DACS, London  
Right: Detail of the present work

The pumpkin made its first appearance at the very outset of the artist's career in the 1940s, although the motif would only move to the centre of Kusama's practice in the 1980s and 90s. Executed in 1989, *Pumpkin* represents an important early iteration of the signature polka-dot covered gourd, featuring the same formal elements that the artist would go on to use in her most iconic installations to date, including the immersive mirrored environment created for the 1993 La Biennale di Venezia and many of her colossal outdoor sculptures.

Yayoi Kusama reading her poem 'Pumpkins'

### Collector's Digest

- One of the most prominent and prolific artists working today, Yayoi Kusama's practice blends painting, installation, sculpture, and performance to powerful effect.
- Arguably her most iconic motif, the pumpkin has appeared in various different formats in Kusama's career, including paintings, colossal outdoor sculptures and domestic-scaled ceramics, and her celebrated mirrored environments.
- Invited to be the first woman artist to represent the Japanese Pavilion in the 1993 La Biennale di Venezia, Kusama chose to centralise the pumpkin, constructing a vast mirrored room in an immersive installation of black and yellow polka dots. More recently in London, *All the Eternal Love I Have for the Pumpkins* was presented at Victoria Miro, before touring major institutions in the

**Yayoi Kusama**

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United States including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC and the Broad, Los Angeles, amongst others between 2017 and 2019.

<sup>i</sup> Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net*, trans. Ralph McCarthy, London, 2011, p. 75.

<sup>ii</sup> Yayoi Kusama, quoted in 'Yayoi Kusama by Grady T. Turner', *Bomb Magazine*, 1 January 1999, [online](#).

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**Provenance**

Private Collection

ACJ Auction, Tokyo, 5 April 2008, lot 56

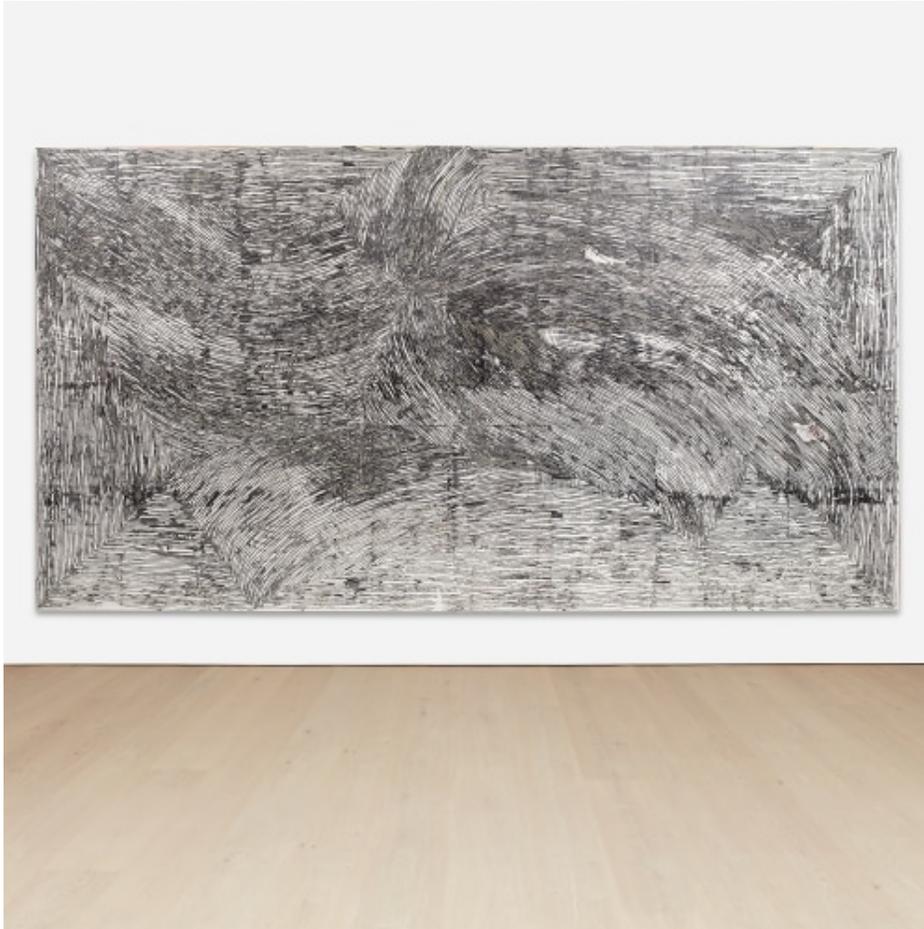
Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Sotheby's, Hong Kong, 5 October 2015, lot 830

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

17

### **Mark Bradford**

*Nodding Gunpowder*

signed, titled and dated 'Nodding Gunpowder 2013  
Mark Bradford' on the reverse

mixed media on canvas  
335.3 x 609.6 cm (132 x 240 in.)  
Executed in 2013.

#### **Estimate**

£2,000,000 — 3,000,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I'm always aware of where I want it to end up. I know I want it to be abstract, I know I want it to have social/political content clinging to the edges, at the fringe, and I know I want it to have a robust quality."* —Mark Bradford

Executed in 2013 and presented in the artist's major presentation with White Cube in London the same year, *Nodding Gunpowder* is a monumental expression of American artist Mark Bradford's careful attention to the realities of urban life in America, and the complex interplay of class, race, and history that shape our social experience. Alongside a sister work *Riding the Cut Vein* which now resides in the permanent collection of London's Tate Galleries, *Nodding Gunpowder* is a masterful example of Bradford's distinctive and socially-anchored mode of abstraction. Foregrounding ideas of process and materiality, its restrained palette of black, white, and grey focuses our attention on the expressive force of the artist's command of materials and line. Strikingly topographic in nature, the surface is whipped and whorled like the ariel imaging of a storm system, with '[s]weeping movements of lines converging and parting to create peaks and valleys across the canvas'.<sup>i</sup>

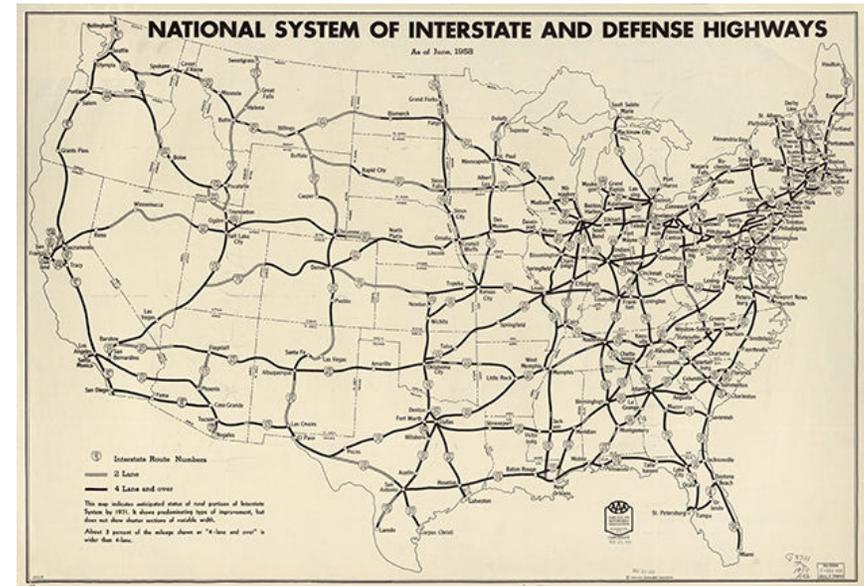
Charged with a magnetic energy, this cartographic quality goes far beyond visual comparison, rooted in Bradford's sustained investigation into American social history and class, his commitment to materials found in his immediate urban environment, and his fascination with the relationship between history, class, and the lived experience of urban space foregrounded in his 2013 White Cube exhibition.



Detail of the present work

## Trucks, Tanks, and the Topographic

His second exhibition with the gallery, *Through Darkest America by Truck and Tank* took its title from a chapter in former American President Dwight D Eisenhower's memoir which focused on his time as a member of the Transcontinental Motor Convoy of 1919. This, coupled with the president's observation of the efficiencies of the German autobahn system during World War II led to a championing of a national highway system, which in turn radically reshaped the urban environments that these snaking roads carved through. Using the map of the National System of Interstate and Defence Highways as the basis for the paintings in the exhibition Bradford explains: 'I wanted to play with the idea of the lens and the farther away you are, it then becomes really topographical and it becomes about geography, land shifts, and looking down from a distance. Then I wanted to zoom in really tight, where it almost felt like bubbling, hot asphalt.'<sup>ii</sup>



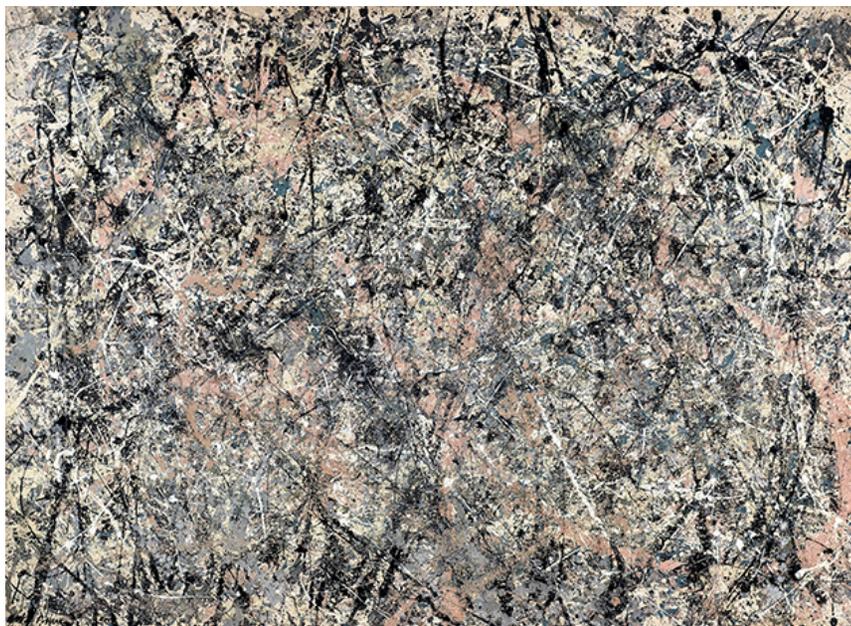
National System of Interstate and Defence Highways: as of June, 1958. Image: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

What had originally been conceived as a preemptive military manoeuvre to maintain control in the event of land invasion, the 10 - which snakes from Los Angeles to New York - also tore through the communities it passed through, including the artist's own Los Angeles. Deeply fascinated by this

mode of spatial and social engineering Bradford explains ‘what is interesting to me about freeways is that they always cut through poor neighbourhoods. Poor people have a much more immediate relationship to freeways because they are usually in their backyards. A freeway is a class marker, depending on which side of the freeway you’re on.’<sup>iii</sup>

## Abstract Histories

These ruptures and fissures are profoundly communicated in the present work, the surface riven with surging striations that place issues of materiality and process at the forefront of discussions of Bradford’s practice. Indeed, while the monumental scale and rhythmic intensity of *Nodding Gunpowder* recalls Jackson Pollock’s all-over compositions, these visual connections work to further emphasise Bradford’s radical departure from the tradition of a predominantly white, male American Abstract Expressionism and its celebration of the individual and gestural immediacy.

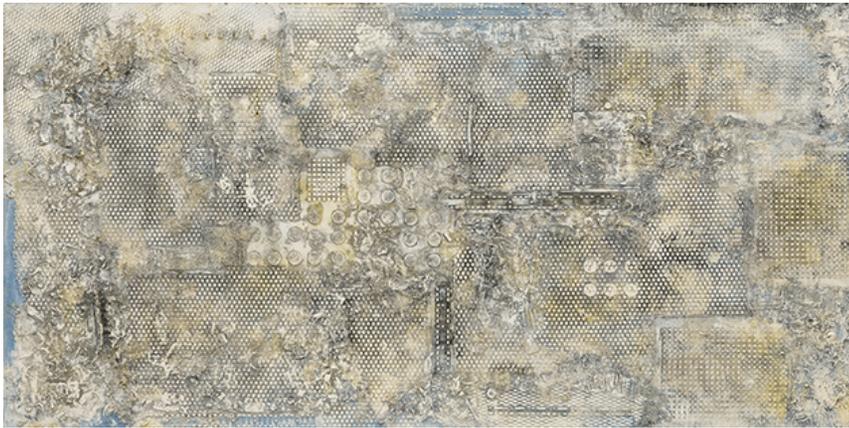


Jackson Pollock, *Lavender Mist: Number 1*, 1950, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London 2022

Expansive and densely layered, the present work uses the material of everyday, urban life - billboard sheets, newspapers, and posters - showcasing Bradford’s consistent ‘investment in social materials that have a “built-in history.”’<sup>iv</sup> On a material level, these urban materials are heavily saturated class signifiers, the content of certain billboard posters and flyers targeted at specific demographics within different pockets of the city. Scouring the streets surrounding his Los Angeles studio for these found materials, Bradford also highlights the extent to which working with this ‘brutal material [...] has so much to do with the hand, it’s process, which has to do with class.’<sup>v</sup>

Having accumulated this found and custom printed material, Bradford soaks the paper in large vats of water before pressing it into the surface of the canvas, tracing hand-drawn lines with a caulking gun, providing ‘a sub-layer of linear structure, billboard material, fragments of found text and, of course paper upon paper upon paper.’<sup>vi</sup> Accreting materials and creating highly textured palimpsests of arresting formal beauty in this manner, Bradford then sands the surface back, at once obliterating and emphasising the paper palimpsests beneath. Fusing image, material, and context in compelling and arresting ways, Bradford’s multi-layered compositions explore tensions between abstraction and representation, crucially asking viewers to confront the history and lived realities he invokes.

Bradford applies this keen sense of historical and political consciousness to his own position in histories of American abstraction too. Asking us to think more deeply about the condition of Black artists in their historical specificity Bradford acknowledges Black abstraction as something ‘completely separate from the dominant narrative of the time’.<sup>vii</sup> Scouring the pages of obscure art journals and catalogues, Bradford found a kindred spirit in the figure of Jack Whitten, whose innovative approach to material and technique provided Bradford with a lineage not only in terms of painterly experiment, but in his ability to deploy abstraction to more socially reflective ends.



Jack Whitten, *Bessemer Dreamer*, 1986, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Image: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © The Estate of Jack Whitten. Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth

## Collector's Digest

- Widely celebrated as one of the most influential artists of his generation, Mark Bradford resides in Los Angeles, the city where he was born in 1961.
- Since his breakthrough in the early 2000s, Bradford has exhibited widely, with significant solo presentations at major international institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, and the Long Museum in Shanghai.
- Most recently, Bradford has been awarded the Gordon Parks Foundation Award, an honour reserved for individuals whose work enriches lives and inspires the next generation.
- The present work was included in Bradford's 2013 exhibition at White Cube, Bermondsey, A sister work, *Riding the Cut Vein* now forms part of the permanent collection of Tate, London.

<sup>i</sup> Christopher Bedford, 'Patterns of Intention', in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 99.

<sup>ii</sup> Mark Bradford, quoted in Susan May, 'Call and Response': A Conversation with Mark Bradford' in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 75.

<sup>iii</sup> Mark Bradford, quoted in Susan May, 'Call and Response': A Conversation with Mark Bradford' in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 75.

<sup>iv</sup> Christopher Bedford, *Mark Bradford* (exh. cat.), Wexner Centre for the Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>v</sup> Mark Bradford, quoted in Mark Bradford, quoted in Susan May, 'Call and Response': A Conversation with Mark Bradford' in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 80.

<sup>vi</sup> Christopher Bedford, 'Patterns of Intention', in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 100.

<sup>vii</sup> Mark Bradford, quoted in Mark Bradford, quoted in Susan May, 'Call and Response': A Conversation with Mark Bradford' in *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America By Truck and By Stop*, (exh. cat.), London, 2013, p. 80.

## Provenance

White Cube, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

London, White Cube, *Mark Bradford: Through Darkest America by Truck and Tank*, 16 October 2013 - 12 January 2014, pp. 39-40, 153 (illustrated, pp. 38, 41; titled *Nodding the Gunpowder*)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE  
AMERICAN COLLECTION

18 ♦

### **Yayoi Kusama**

*INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)*

signed, titled and dated 'Yayoi Kusama 2016 INFINITY  
NETS UAFE' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

131.4 x 97.2 cm (51 3/4 x 38 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2016, this work is accompanied by a  
registration card issued by the artist's studio.

#### **Estimate**

£1,000,000 — 1,500,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*"My desire was to predict and measure the infinity of the unbounded universe, from my own position in it, with dots – an accumulation of particles forming the negative spaces in the net [...] in exploring these questions I wanted to examine the single dot that was my own life." —Yayoi Kusama*

Unfolding in undulating waves of brilliant emerald green, *INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)* is a stunning, unusual example of Yayoi Kusama's iconic series. Painted in 2016, in the same year as the Japanese artist was awarded the prestigious Order of Culture by the Imperial Family, this mature work represents the culmination of Kusama's life-long fascination with her signature repeating motif and the zenith of her incredible 70 year career. Created over half a century after her first *Infinity Net* painting, *INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)* emphasises the privileged position that the series continues to occupy in Kusama's pioneering practice, and its role developing a contemporary language of abstraction. Expansive, immersive, and beautifully delicate, the endlessly repeating and scalloped patterns of the present work resonate well beyond the limitations of the canvas, extending through her entire *Infinity Net* series out to her earliest soft sculptures, obliteration rooms, and provocative performances through to the mirrored environments and *Infinity Rooms* that are currently the subject of sell-out exhibitions worldwide.



Detail of the present work

## Searching for Infinity

Oscillating between the microbial and the cosmic, the intimate and the infinite, the expanse of shimmering white dots against a shifting green ground here creates a spectacular sensation of organic movement, one that is deeply rooted in the artist's own biography. Growing up on her family's seed farm in the mountain town of Matsumoto in Japan's Nagano ken Prefecture, the

young Kusama began to experience the profound visual and auditory hallucinations that continue to guide discussions of her practice. Against the backdrop of a strained childhood marked by trauma and violence, Kusama has vividly recounted these early episodes when 'after gazing at a pattern of red flowers on the tablecloth, I looked up [...] I saw the entire room, my entire body, and the entire universe covered with red flowers, and in that instant my soul was obliterated and I was restored, returned to infinity, to eternal time and absolute space.'<sup>i</sup>



A flower field in the seed nursery owned by Yayoi Kusama's family in Matsumoto, Japan. Image: © YAYOI KUSAMA

Kusama very quickly began to connect ideas of repetition, obliteration, and infinity, the repetitive action of painting – of transcribing and replicating these visions – allowing the young girl to harness these sensations across innumerable 'ink paintings featuring accumulations of tiny dots and pen drawings of endless and unbroken cellular forms or peculiar structures that resembled magnified sections of plant stalks.'<sup>ii</sup> In its deep, emerald shades, *INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)* seems to return to the earliest, botanical roots of these hallucinatory visions, recalling at once the seemingly infinite flower fields of her youth and the stunning, repetitious visions of Vincent van Gogh.



Vincent van Gogh, *Irises (detail)*, 1889, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Image: Courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program

### New York via *Pacific Ocean*

Committed to establishing herself as an artist, Kusama left Japan for New York in 1958, a journey that crystallised the aesthetic language of infinite repetition that she had been developing since childhood. Gazing down from the aeroplane on the rippled surface of the Pacific Ocean she found a visual touchstone for her visions, an oceanic infinitude that would provide the conceptual basis for the series. Executed shortly after her arrival in the United States, Kusama's first *Infinity Net* canvas was appropriately titled *Pacific Ocean*, a stunning expanse of shimmering white scalloped loops that can be traced in the present work.

*"Small forms flow into each other, grow and diminish, with an undulating rhythm so deeply tuned to nature that the viewer, as he lets himself become fully aware of the painting, experiences the same serenity and suppressed excitement that he feels in watching changing cloud formations, moving shadows of sun through leaves, water*

*ripples and shadow patterns in the water below."* —Beatrice Perry

Capturing the attention of prominent American artists and critics, Kusama's breakthrough exhibition was held at the artist-run Brata Gallery the following year. Significantly, Kusama chose to show five large white *Infinity Net* canvases, leading Donald Judd to applaud the originality of her concept and the strength of its execution in his role as artist-critic. In a careful and precise description of the 'small dense arcs' maintaining the surface of these works, Judd captured the sense of rhythmic variation that animates the whole series as 'small curves coalesce into longer arcs, swell or shift slightly, or form amorphous patterns.'<sup>iii</sup> Frank Stella was another important early champion, purchasing the stunning *Infinity Nets Yellow* canvas from her 1961 exhibition at Stephen Radich Gallery, now held in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.. Emphasising form over content, Stella's own brand of Minimalism dovetailed with Kusama's, the shapes and repeating patterns of his lithograph series *Shards* recalling the complex lattices of Kusama's *Infinity Nets*.



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Frank Stella, *Shards V*, 1982, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Image: © Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Gift of Frances and Peter C. Marzio in honor of Isabel B. Wilson, friend, collector, Life Trustee, Chairman and Chairman Emerita / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Artists Rights Society, New York and DACS, London 2022

Deftly combining the obsessional, repetitive, and immersive qualities for which she is best known, *INFINITY-NETS (UAFE)* is a luminous example of Kusama's landmark series and cornerstone of her practice. In her blending of seriality with modes of all-over painting in this manner, Kusama sought not only to disrupt distinctions between figure and ground, but to obliterate the nature of canvas completely, 'to cover the entire surface, filling out the void.'<sup>iv</sup> Through the small, repeated gestures of the *Infinity Nets*, Kusama moves beyond the canvas, allowing these nets to merge with herself, the room, and ultimately the entire universe, an idea developed in the current installations of her *Infinity Rooms* and *Obliteration Room* in London's Tate Modern.

## Collectors Digest

- One of the most prominent and prolific artists working today, Yayoi Kusama's practice blends painting, installation, sculpture, and performance to powerful effect.
- Amongst her most desirable works, examples of Kusama's celebrated *Infinity Nets* are held in renowned museum collections such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago, among other pre-eminent institutions.
- In 2019 the Yayoi Kusama Museum in Tokyo presented *HERE, ANOTHER NIGHT COMES FROM TRILLIONS OF LIGHT YEARS AWAY: Eternal Infinity*, an exhibition focused on the early *Infinity Nets* and associated documentary material. A comparable black *Infinity Net*, *BLACK NETS ON THE BLACK (OQRW)*, resides in the permanent collection of The Mori Art Museum.

<sup>i</sup> Yayoi Kusama, quoted in the press release for *Flower Obsession*, Melbourne, NGV Triennial Gallery, 2017.

<sup>ii</sup> Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, London, 2013, n.p.  
<sup>iii</sup> C36C Donald Judd, 'Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month - Yayoi Kusama', ARTNews, 58, no. 6 (October 1959), p. 17. <sup>iv</sup> C8C <sup>v</sup> C37C Marie Laurberg, 'Deep Surfaces: Yayoi Kusama in Infinity', <sup>vi</sup> C38C (exh. cat.), Humblebaek, 2016, p. 10.

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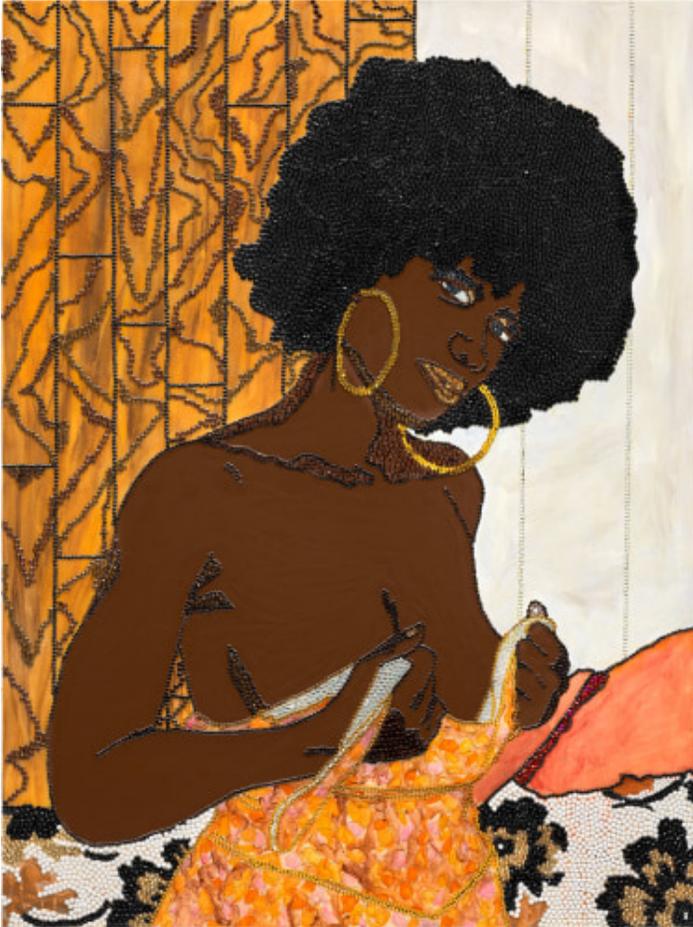
## Provenance

Victoria Miro, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2016

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



19

### Mickalene Thomas

*As If You Read My Mind*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated "AS IF YOU READ MY MIND", 2005 from (She works hard for the money....Pin-Up Series) 48 x 36 in Mickalene Thomas' on the reverse

rhinestones, acrylic, enamel, resin and graphite on wood

121.9 x 91.4 cm (47 7/8 x 35 7/8 in.)

Executed in 2005.

**Estimate**

£200,000 — 250,000 †

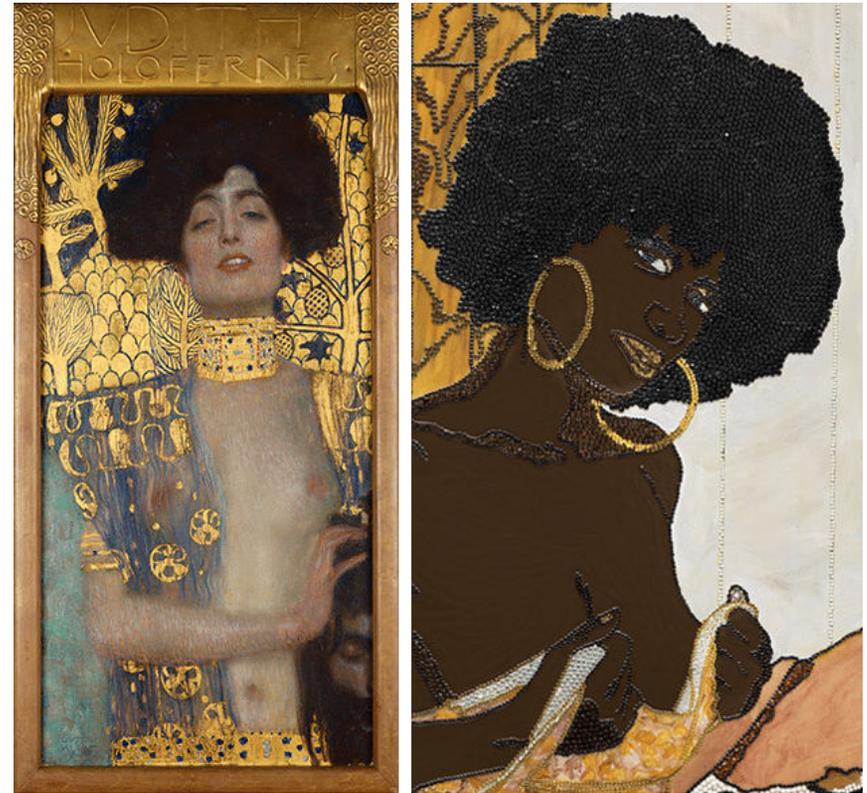
[Go to Lot](#)



*"The gaze in my work is unapologetically a Black woman's gaze loving other Black women". —Mickalene Thomas*

Engaging directly with art historical histories of representation and the male gaze, Mickalene Thomas' *As if You Read My Mind* presents a radical vision of Black femininity, one that redefines desire and feminine sexuality on its own terms. Richly layered and combining multiple textures in its construction, Thomas's sensitivity to materials is well demonstrated here, delicate hand painted and collaged areas bordered by the artist's signature rhinestone details. Visually dazzling, these decorative elements also draw attention to certain connections between beauty and artifice, gender and performance that is foundational to Thomas' practice.

Combining art historical references with nods to 1970s pop culture, Thomas' portraits engage directly with 'the idea of covering up, of dress up and make up—of amplifying how we see ourselves', the gold tones and richly embellished surface here recalling Gustav Klimt's stunningly sensual *Judith and the Head of Holofernes*.<sup>1</sup> Dramatically cropping the severed head of Holofernes, Klimt shifts the narrative focus from the defeated patriarch to the rich inner life of the woman at the centre of the story in a way that prefigures Thomas' own commitment to representing the complexity of her female subjects and interrogating the dynamic between artist and muse.



Left: Gustav Klimt, *Judith and the Head of Holofernes*, 1901, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.  
Image: Bridgeman Images Right: Detail of the present work

### She Works Hard For The Money

Presented in three-quarter profile against a section of wood-panelled interior and boldly patterned upholstery reminiscent of 1970s interiors, the woman at the centre of the work looks out at us with coy confidence and self-possession. Borrowing its title from Donna Summer's 1983 hit, the present work belongs to Thomas' *She Works Hard For The Money Series*, foregrounding questions of women's work and the visibility of their labour in society. In addition to the homage made by the series title to Summer's influence and work, Thomas has previously immortalised the singer in one of her signature rhinestone portraits.

Building on her interest in film and magazine culture that creates space for Black experience, Thomas began to experiment with staged photographs, dressing her mother as Blaxploitation cinematic icon Pam Grier. The first Black woman to appear in a mainstream action movie as a strong leading character in the 1973 film *Coffy*, Grier represents a powerful touchstone for Thomas, an icon from her childhood and a model Black female empowerment and self-representation. The prominent gold hoops, 1970s interior, and indomitable presence of the sitter all seem to reference Grier's influence here, as in evident in a sister work *Do What Makes You Satisfied* (from the *She Works Hard For The Money Series*), now held in the permanent collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama. As in this earlier portrait, *As If You Read My Mind* captures the radiant inner beauty and power of her subject, a way of visualising female subjecthood that has marked Thomas out as one of the most interesting and innovative figurative artists working today.

*"By portraying real women with their own unique history, beauty, and background, I'm working to diversify the representations of Black women in art. We are not validated until we see ourselves: not only are we present, we demand that we be seen, be heard, and be acknowledged."* —Mickalene Thomas

As Thomas explains, 'All my muses possess a profound sense of inner confidence and individuality. They are all in tune with their own audacity and beauty in some ways. They are unafraid to exude boldness and vulnerability at the same time, and most importantly, they are real.'<sup>ii</sup> Maya clearly displays these qualities, meeting the viewers eye directly, and enjoying her sensuality on her own terms. In this respect the portrait presents a radical critique of the genre's historical objectification of women - particularly the overt sexualisation of women of colour. Dovetailing with 19<sup>th</sup> century Orientalism, where darker skinned women were featured in European painting they were frequently cast in the role of the exoticized other, often bare-breasted or lightly draped in the silks of the harem servant. Referencing the Odalisque trope adopted by European masters Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Gustave Courbet, and Henri Matisse, Thomas' stunning portraits retroactively disrupt the entrenched hierarchies of gender, class, and race reinforced by these paintings, reimaging the muse as a force in her own right.

The work's title takes on added significance in light of this, *As if You Read My Mind* evoking both the playful mutuality of 'you read my mind' and a more pointed assertion of female autonomy. Belonging to a body of work explicitly focused on the muse and its complexities, *As If You Can Read My Mind* was included in Thomas' 2018 exhibition *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me* hosted by the Wexner Centre for Arts. The work was hung as part of an installation, a three-dimensional realisation of the 1970s interiors that so often feature as the backdrop for her images of female desire and empowerment. Literally creating space for the women she depicts, in these room-scale installations Thomas establishes a dialogue between bodies and the spaces they occupy, the assortment of richly patterned fabrics and textures an apt visualisation of the kind of

feminist self-fashioning explored in her paintings. As Antwaun Sargent describes, 'the most public of private spaces and one often styled by Black women, the living room operates within Thomas' work as a metaphor for freedom, subjectivity, and the expression (silenced elsewhere) of Black sisterhood.'<sup>iii</sup>



Installation view of *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me* at the Wexner Centre, 2018. Artwork: © Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York and DACS, London 2022

### Collector's Digest:

- Mickalene Thomas has been the subject of considerable attention in recent years. The subject of a recent monograph, the artist has also had major exhibitions with The Brooklyn Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, and a four-location show staged across Lévy Gorvy's galleries in New York, London, Paris, and Hong Kong, amongst others.
- Included in Thomas' 2018 exhibition *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me* at the Wexner Centre for the Arts, Columbus, *As if You Can Read My Mind* belongs to a body of work focused explicitly on the complexities of the artist / muse relationship.
- The present work belongs to the artist's celebrated *She Works Hard For The Money* series, one painting from which now resides in the permanent collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art.

**Exhibited**

Boca Raton Museum of Art (on loan)  
 Columbus, Wexner Center for the Arts, *Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me*, 14  
 September - 30 December 2018, pp. 75, 121 (illustrated)

**Literature**

Roxane Gay and Kellie Jones, *Mickalene Thomas*, London, 2021, p. 265 (illustrated, p. 19; Wexner  
 Arts Center, Columbus, 2018 installation view illustrated, p. 117)

Mickalene Thomas: I Can't See You Without Me

<sup>i</sup> Mickalene Thomas, quoted in 'From the Archives: Mickalene Thomas on Why Her Work Goes  
 "Beyond the Black Aesthetic"' in 2011," *ARTnews*, September 14, 2018, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Mickalene Thomas, quoted in Katie Booth, 'In Mickalene Thomas' Awe-Inspiring Portraits, a  
 Meaningful Reflection of Black Women in Art', *The New York Times*, 29 January 2016, online

<sup>iii</sup> Antwaun Sargent, 'Sisterhood is a Behaviour: Mickalene Thomas' Restaging of Womanhood',  
 in *Mickalene Thomas: Femmes Noires* (exh. cat.), Toronto, 2018, p. 66.

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**Provenance**

Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York  
 Private Collection, USA  
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
GERMAN COLLECTION

20

### **Tschabalala Self**

*Daydream*

signed and dated 'Tschabalala Self 2015' on the overlap  
oil, acrylic, gouache, Flashe, fabric and canvas collage  
on canvas

159 x 126.7 cm (62 5/8 x 49 7/8 in.)

Executed in 2015.

**Estimate**

£100,000 — 150,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)

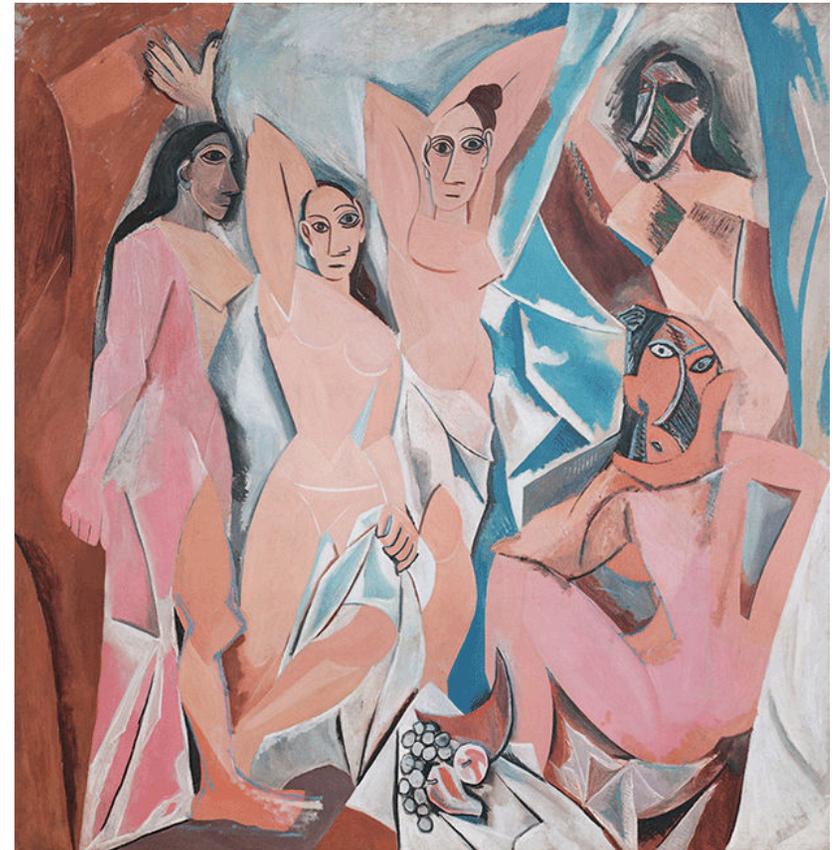


*"I believe there is a power in acknowledging your hypervisibility and trying to subvert it by performing in ways that are not expected and, at times, not respected. It's a way to corrupt whatever system you are being targeted by. —Tschabalala Self*

Confronting perceptions of the marginalisation and overt fetishization of the Black female body, Tschabalala Self is best known for her large-scale figurative mixed-media paintings, reaffirming what it means to be a Black woman in society. Asserting femininity in an act of defiant bodily self-expression, this striking and suggestive pose of a Black woman sat against a vibrant black and pink background in *Daydream*, rebels against the eroticised impositions of the female body, pertinently emphasised by the multitude of hands attempting to touch the figure. Aware that her paintings carry the weight of political and social implications on the surveillance and restrictions of black bodies, Self starts provocative conversations around the construction of Black identities in an attempt to raise dialogues over inclusivity and awareness. At its most direct, Self's textile-based works emphasise that 'you can't fully acknowledge someone's humanity unless you acknowledge every aspect of their humanity,' a point emphatically addressed in *Daydream*.<sup>i</sup>

## Reclaiming the Male Gaze

In her quest to tear down racial and gendered hierarchies, Self's body of work acknowledges the stigmas entrenched within the portrayal of Black female bodies throughout history and the history of art. In contrast to works that have sought to objectify the Black female body as an exoticised other, Self aims to rewrite these fetishized narratives by presenting the liberation of women in sexually empowered poses. Whilst Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, outraged audiences in its combination of sexual explicitness and so-called 'primitivist' appropriation of the formal qualities of African masks, Self reclaims these stylistic tropes by over-exaggerating the features in her figures to instead celebrate their physicality and race. Reclaiming the objectifying white male gaze in these materially complex works, Self transforms the female body into a site of self-fashioning and infinite possibility. Reimagining the forms and functions of the female nude, the figure at the centre of *Daydream* oversteps boundaries: thematically in its presentation of a powerfully self-possessed nude; stylistically in her highly effective use of fabric and textiles; and even spatially as her direct gaze and overhanging feet break with the boundaries imposed by the canvas itself.



Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022

## A Voice for Black Women

In her commitment to the intersecting questions of gender, race, and representation, Self belongs to a community of contemporary artists including Mickalene Thomas and [Deborah Roberts](#) who employ non-traditional materials as a means of emphasising the constructed nature of identity and as a challenge to conventional notions of beauty. Bringing together textiles, fabric, and alternative modes of making, Self's practice speaks poetically to the complexity of the social issues raised by her work. Strikingly autobiographic, Self's use of fabric also engages directly with the legacy of

artists such as Faith Ringgold, her highly textured paintings recalling the powerful combination of personal narrative, history, and social politics evident in the story quilts produced by Ringgold. Presenting a radical challenge to the male gaze, Self eradicates shame and demands that her figures occupy space. Amplifying Black female voices who have fallen through the cracks throughout history and reinvigorating discussions around female sexuality, as the artist states, 'the goal is to allow for there to be better understanding: more diversity and understanding for the Black body. New ways of understanding.'<sup>ii</sup> Significantly, *Daydream* was included in Self's 2017 exhibition with Parasol Unit in London, her first major exhibition in the United Kingdom, and a powerful presentation of the ideas at the centre of her practice.



Faith Ringgold, *Jo Baker's Birthday*, 1993, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri. Image: © Saint Louis Art Museum / Museum Minority Artists Purchase Fund / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Faith Ringgold / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2022

## Collector's Digest

- Born in 1990, Harlem, USA, Tschabalala Self lives and works in the New York tri state area. Represented by Pilar Corrias her most recent forthcoming exhibition opening this October at the gallery, *Homebody*, celebrates her new body of work centred around bodies in domestic spaces.
  - Having exhibited works in major international art centres including London, New York, Berlin, and Los Angeles, Tschabalala Self was the subject of a major solo exhibition in 2020 – her largest to date – at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston. Her work was recently included in the group exhibition *Women and Change* at the Arken Museum in Denmark and in *The Condition of Being Addressable* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Los Angeles. The present work was included in her 2017 solo presentation with Parasol Unit in London.
  - Examples of her work can be found in the collections of the Rubell Museum, Miami, the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, as well as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. New York institutions include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the New Museum.
- <sup>i</sup> Tschabalala Self quoted in Jason Parham, 'The Hypervisible Black Women of Tschabalala Self's world', *Fader*, April 2017, [online](#).
- <sup>ii</sup> Tschabalala Self quoted in Jason Parham, 'The Hypervisible Black Women of Tschabalala Self's world', *Fader*, April 2017, [online](#).

### Provenance

Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Kunstverein Hannover, *Beyond the Black Atlantic*, 15 February – 1 June 2020, p. 79 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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21 ♦

### Banksy

*Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered Is Currently Out Of Stock*

signed 'BANKSY' lower right; signed and dated 'BANKSY 12' on the reverse  
spray paint on found canvas on grafted board, in artist's frame

106.7 x 166.4 cm (42 x 65 1/2 in.)

Executed in 2012, this work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by Pest Control.

#### Estimate

£1,200,000 — 1,800,000 ▲

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I love graffiti. I love the word. Graffiti equals amazing to me. Every other type of art compared to graffiti is a step down – no doubt about it. If you operate outside of graffiti, you operate at a lower level. Other art has less to offer people, it means less, and it's weaker." —Banksy*

Audacious and provocative, in *Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered Is Currently Out Of Stock* guerrilla street artist Banksy collapses high culture and street art, applying the pointed satire of his site-specific graffiti to a direct critique of the connections between the art market, consumer capitalism, and environmental issues. Set within a heavy gilt frame evoking museum walls and Old Master paintings, the work is composed of an appropriated canvas featuring a romantic mountain landscape, defaced with the slogan 'Sorry The lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock' and attached to a densely spraypainted board behind. Uniting these different elements within the work Banksy forges unexpected dialogues between them, communicating his message with characteristic economy and wit.

In it's a clever combination of humour, appropriation, and the pointed conflation of so-called high and low art forms, *Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered Is Currently Out Of Stock* follows in the disruptive mode of Situationist artists such as Asger Jorn. Appropriating reproductions of well-known paintings and the canvases of amateur artists, Jorn applied thick, gestural marks and compositional additions, altering the meaning communicated by the original work in the process. Following Jorn, Banksy's recontextualization of these older canvases serves to emphasise that 'the meaning of old fashioned paintings had not yet been exhausted but could be renewed by means of new and unexpected pictorial inserts.'<sup>ii</sup>



Asger Jorn, *Hirschbrunft im Wilden Kaiser (Deer in Heat in the Wilder Kaiser)*, 1960, Nationalgalerie - Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Image: Scala, Florence/bpk, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin, Artwork: © Donation Jorn, Silkeborg / DACS, London 2022

Borrowing the vocabulary of advertising and consumerism to identify the hypocrisy involved in promoting a discourse of England as a 'green and pleasant land' while allowing profit-seeking enterprises to simultaneously dismantle that landscape, the work is a product of what Gianni Mercurio has described as Banksy's mode of 'brandalism': 'a rebellion against the great corporations that manage our lives, our forms of consumption, even the space in which we live, through choices that are exclusively aimed at making profit.'<sup>iii</sup>

## Graffiti to Gallery

First appearing in a large-scale stencilled work on the side of an empty building on the corner of East India Dock Road in London's East End in 2011, the text 'Sorry! The lifestyle you ordered is currently out of stock' playfully wraps political commentary in the familiar language of commodity consumption. Although simple, the interaction of the message with its location made a powerfully

pointed statement about gentrification in the East End, and the wild property speculation that followed the closure of the docks in the early 1980s. Littered with estate agent boards, the abandoned building appears to have been a casualty of this aggressive growth, stalled when the 2008 financial crisis started to bite.

Ironically invoking slogans associated with our own consumer experience, Banksy shifts our focus out to a more global level, using the familiar to open our eyes to global inequalities and existing power structures that operate in the background of our day to day lives. Having applied it in a critique of the economic forces and social inequalities played out in urban space, Banksy quickly adopted the slogan in a sharp critique of the art world, most pointedly in his 2013-14 collaboration with fellow Bristol-born artist Damien Hirst, defacing an immediately recognisable *Spot Painting* with grey spray paint and overlaid with the same white text we see in the present work. While this work played very deliberately with Hirst's reputation as representative of the market forces driving contemporary art to record prices, *Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered Is Currently Out Of Stock* returned to an earlier conflation of art, the environment, and the ethics of late capitalism that Banksy first deployed in his infamous 2005 *Crude Oils* exhibition.

*"The vandalised paintings reflect life as it is now. We don't live in a world like Constable's Haywain anymore and, if you do, there is probably a travellers' camp on the other side of the hill. The real damage done to our environment is not done by graffiti writers and drunken teenagers, but by big business... exactly the people who put gold-framed pictures of landscapes on their walls and try to tell the rest of us how to behave." —Banksy*

Littered with stencilled CCTV cameras, rubbish, burnt-out cars, and military helicopters, the broader group of 'vandalised paintings' to which the present work belongs made their first appearance alongside some 200 live rats in a disused commercial space in London's affluent Notting Hill in Banksy's *Crude Oils* exhibition. In their own way, these works are highly representative of our contemporary landscape, *Sorry The Lifestyle You Ordered Is Currently Out Of Stock* in particular articulating something that might not be visible, but is keenly felt in a period of economic and socio-cultural upheaval. Evoking the language of high culture and advertising and exposing the ways in which both are exploited by the dominant hegemonic order as tools for exercising and maintaining power, Banksy attacks established value systems and exposes the hypocrisy and disingenuity that characterise the times we live in. Finding innovative ways to translate a graffiti sensibility onto canvas, the defaced oil paintings represent a significant moment in the development of Banksy's practice, and of the scope of his institutional critique. In the words of the artist, 'if you want to survive as a graffiti writer when you go indoors your only option is to carry on painting over things that don't belong to you.'<sup>v</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Coming out of a generation of urban counterculture centred in Bristol in the late 1980s and 90s, Banksy is one of the leading and most provocative street artists of his generation. His stencils are amongst the most instantly recognisable and defining images of contemporary British art, and Banksy was recently voted the nation's favourite artist in 2019.
- The present work connects Banksy's earliest site-specific stencilled works with his later series of 'vandalised paintings' first presented at his 2005 *Crude Oils* exhibition in London, highlighting the evolution of his practice and the scope of his social critique.
- The vandalised paintings represent some of Banksy's most popular works, achieving some of the highest prices for the artist at auction.

<sup>i</sup> Banksy, quoted in Gianni Mercurio, 'I Dissent, Therefore I am', in Gianna Mercurio, *A Visual Protest: The Art of Banksy*, London, 2020, p. 7.

<sup>ii</sup> Gianni Mercurio, 'I Dissent, Therefore I am', in Gianna Mercurio, *A Visual Protest: The Art of Banksy*, London, 2020, p. 13.

<sup>iii</sup> Gianni Mercurio, 'I Dissent, Therefore I am', in Gianna Mercurio, *A Visual Protest: The Art of Banksy*, London, 2020, p. 13.

<sup>iv</sup> Banksy, quoted on Channel 4 News, 13 October 2005.

<sup>v</sup> Banksy, *Wall and Piece*, London, 2005, p. 128.

## Provenance

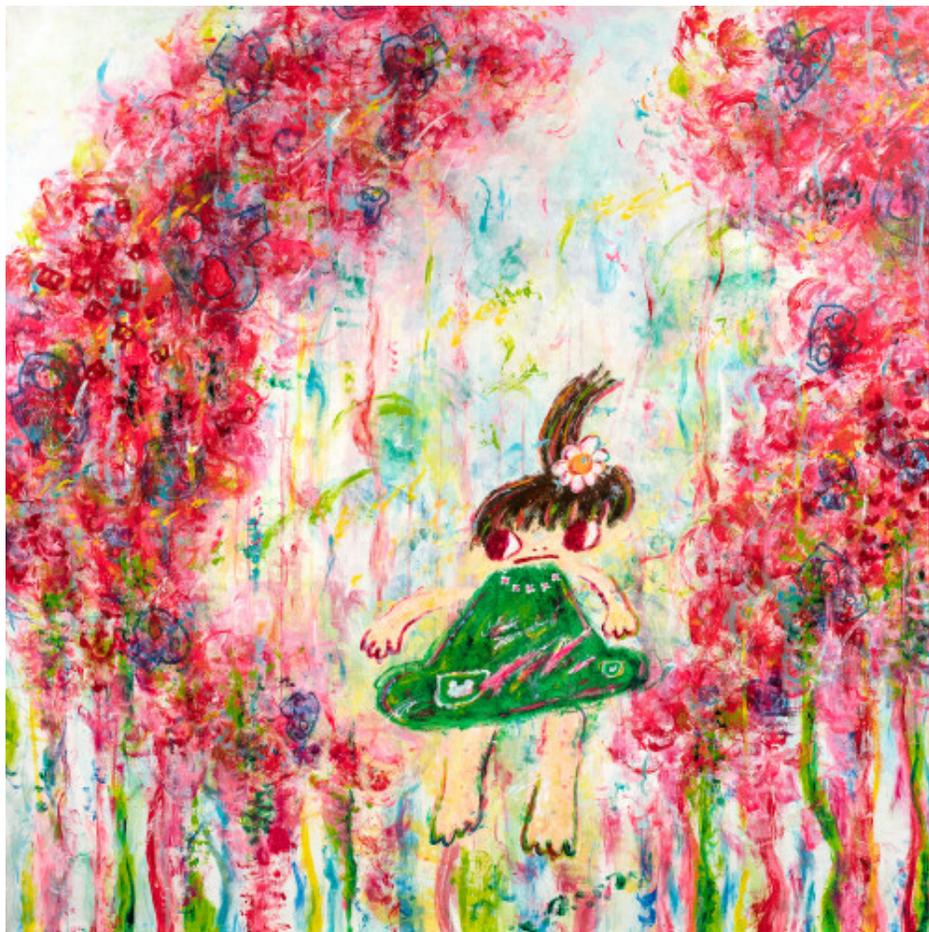
Private Collection, USA

Private Collection, United Kingdom

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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22

**Ayako Rokkaku**

*Untitled*

signed and dated '2011 Rokkaku Ayako' [in Japanese] on the reverse; inscribed 'ARP11-011' on the stretcher  
acrylic on canvas  
130 x 130 cm (51 1/8 x 51 1/8 in.)  
Painted in 2011.

**Estimate**

£100,000 — 150,000

[Go to Lot](#)



*"When painting alone in the studio it feels like playing- catching the energy ball between the canvas and myself." —Ayako Rokkaku*

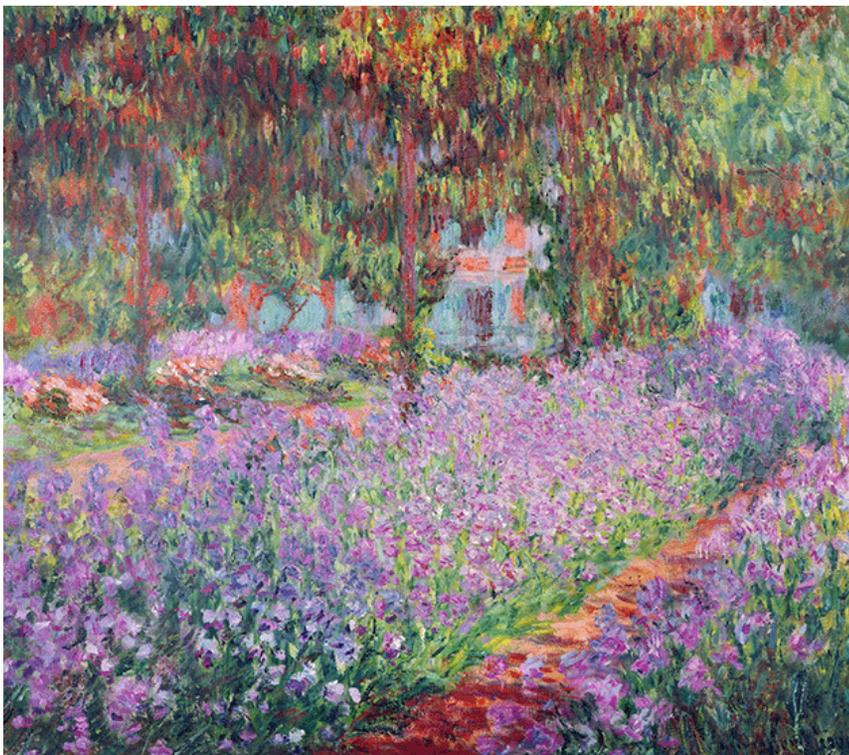
Exploding in flurry of energetic, gestural marks in fantastical, rainbow hues, *ARP11-011* is an exuberant expression of self-taught Japanese artist Ayako Rokkaku's distinct practice. Applying paint directly to the canvas with her fingertips, Rokkaku generates incredible energy and immediacy in her compositions, references to Japanese Kawaii culture and a Superflat aesthetic mediated through Abstract Expressionist verve and an Impressionistic sensitivity to light and colour. Recreating the joy and spontaneity of childhood creativity, Rokkaku works quickly and intuitively across a range of mediums, explaining 'I don't feel like I'm really painting unless my hands are in direct contact with the paint. It's more fun that way - using your hands, painting with your whole body.'<sup>i</sup>

## Colours In my Hand

Engaging directly with a history of painting as performance expressed in Yves Klein's Anthropometries and Has Namuth's 1950 documentation of Jackson Pollock, Rokkaku developed a solo presentation with Kunsthall Rotterdam in 2011 which foregrounded performative and participatory elements. Moving her studio into Kunsthall's 'Daylight Hall' for three weeks, Rokkaku created 'live paintings' in situ for *Colours In My Hand*, watched by visitors and a live webcam feed. As well as large murals and smaller works on cardboard which have become particularly associated with the artist, Rokkaku also covered canvases with her light-filled visions full of flower fields, populated by the figure of the young girl who acts as something of an interlocutor between the viewer and the fantastical worlds brought to life in her paintings. Forming part of this unusual exhibition, *ARP11-011* brings the performative and painterly aspects of Rokkaku's practice together to dazzling effect.

Ayako Rokkaku: An artist with the world at her fingertips, filmed as part of her 2011 exhibition *Colours in My Hand* at Kunsthalle Rotterdam.

Verging on the edge of abstraction, the swirling forms and colours coalesce into impressionistically rendered flowers in vibrant shades of fuchsia and violet that directly recall the fascination with the natural world obsessively captured by French Impressionist Claude Monet. Drawn at a young age to the formal qualities of late 19th century French painting and the studied contrasts of light and shadow developed by Jean- François Millet, Rokkaku 'became aware, for the first time, that reality and feelings can find expression in paint in a way that is not possible in words'.<sup>ii</sup> Applied directly with her hands, thick streaks of impasto shift and merge across the expanse of the canvas, a virtuoso expression of light, colour, and movement developed in dialogue with a lineage of expressionistic abstraction that combines formal elements from Claude Monet, Cy Twombly, Joan Mitchell, and Jackson Pollock. Featuring the familiar motifs of Rokkaku's endearing child figure set within a floral expanse *ARP11-011* seems to bear a direct relationship to Monet's masterful paintings of shifting light and weather patterns observed in his beloved gardens at Giverny, exercises in abstraction that reached their full expression in the *Nymphaea* series that occupied his final years.



Claude Monet, *The Artist's Garden at Giverny*, 1900, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

Appealing directly to our senses and possessing remarkable gestural energy, *ARP11-011* is a stirring example of Rokkaku's signature aesthetic, and her unique fusion of performance and painting which has established her as one of Japan's leading contemporary artists. Aside from its painterly virtuosity and incredible sense of colour, light, and vitality, *ARP11-011* also exemplifies Rokkaku's ability to transport us into her wonderful world, and back to the joyful abandon of childhood. As the artist lyrically puts it: 'When I'm painting, I try to get in touch with the way I felt as a child—to get back to my starting point, if you like. [...] Children can get completely absorbed in their pictures. I think maybe my pictures help to remind people of how they felt back then.'<sup>iii</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Born 1982 in Chiba, Japan, Ayako Rokkaku began her artistic career in 2002, during her early twenties. Rokkaku quickly established herself on the international art scene after exhibiting at the 9th edition of the Geisai art fair in 2006 and was awarded the prestigious Akio Goto Prize, founded by Kaikai KiKi Studio which is led by art world giant, Takashi Murakami.
- In 2018, Phillips Hong Kong was the first to bring Rokkaku to the eyes of the market with selling exhibition, *Sam Francis, Walasse Ting & Ayako Rokkaku: Perpetual Colours*, selling out before the first day of the opening.
- Since then, demand for the artist has exploded internationally. Rokkaku's works are included in the permanent collections of the Powerlong Art Museum, China; Sehwa Museum of Art, South Korea; the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan; and the Voorlinden Museum, Netherlands, amongst others. Rokkaku's recent exhibitions include solo presentation, *Born in the Fluffy Journey* with König Galerie, Berlin in 2021 and her institutional show with the Chiba Prefectural Museum of Art, *Magic Hand* in the same year. Most recently, Rokkaku enjoyed her first solo show in the United Kingdom with her exhibition *Imagination for Flying Adventure* at König London.

<sup>i</sup> Ayako Rokkaku, quoted in 'Rokkaku Ayako: An Artist with the World At Her Fingertips', *Nippon*, 3 October 2011, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Ayako Rokkaku, quoted in Arjen Ribbens, 'Playing with colors, small discoveries', (exh. cat.), Amstelveen, 2019, p. 65.

<sup>iii</sup> Ayako Rokkaku, quoted in 'Rokkaku Ayako: An Artist with the World At Her Fingertips', *Nippon*, 3 October 2011, [online](#).

### Provenance

Gallery Delaive, Amsterdam

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Kunsthal Rotterdam, *Colours In My Hand. Ayako Rokkaku*, 23 June – 21 August 2011

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



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### Rafa Macarrón

*Un Día en la Playa*

signed with the artist's initials, titled and dated 'RM 13 UN DIA EN LA PLAYA' lower right  
acrylic, ink, crayon and paper collage on canvas, in artist's acrylic box  
135.5 x 259 cm (53 3/8 x 101 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2013.

Estimate

£60,000 — 80,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*"My characters live in a transcended daily life, clean days, sunsets, and fresh air."  
—Rafa Macarrón*

One of Spain's most internationally renowned contemporary artists, Rafa Macarrón's large scale multimedia paintings explore the infinite variety and casual intimacy of everyday life. Instantly recognisable for their elongated limbs, bulbous eyes, and exaggerated - often three-dimensional - features, his strange figures occupy an imaginary but familiar world. Recalling the great cycle of interlinked novels by 19th century French writer Honoré de Balzac, Macarrón explores the social ties that bind us together as much as the variety of human types that make up this rich panoply, his tender, sprawling portraits of the social networks that we situate ourselves within contributing to a kind of *Comédie humaine* for the 21st century.

### Life's a Beach

Strikingly democratic as a public space, the beach is a place where people come together across generational and class divides, locals and holidaymakers staking out a place on the sand from which to relax and enjoy the warm weather, reading alone or playing in the surf with their children. Such a scene seems particularly well-suited to Macarrón's artistic project to capture the everyday, the loose arrangement of his signature figures in *Un Día en la Playa* evoking all of the relaxed atmosphere of a day at the beach while the intense hues of saturated orange and azure blue seem particularly charged with the heat of the Mediterranean sun.



Édouard Manet, *On the Beach, Boulogne-sur-Mer*, 1868, Private Collection. Image: Bridgeman Images

A recurring setting in Macarrón's painting, the beach is an entirely modern concept, 'the classical period knew nothing of the attraction of seaside beaches, the emotion of a bather plunging into the waves, or the pleasures of a stay at the seaside.'<sup>i</sup> Newly accessible by rail and promoting a very modern mode of leisure, areas of the European coastline were reinvented over the course of the 19th century from working seascapes to specially designated holiday destinations industry that especially captured the imaginations of artists interested in the shifting coastal light and fleeting impressions of modernity concentrated there.

While French painters Eugène Boudin and Édouard Manet established the beach as a site of artistic interest that was enthusiastically developed by Impressionist masters, the intensity of the light and colour found in these coastal spots *proved indispensable in the development of Fauvism's richly saturated palette*. Like these early 20th century works by the likes of Henri Matisse and André Derain, Macarrón is highly attuned to the emotive power of colour, and confidently uses it to create certain moods in his works. As he has explained 'I create the background and then I place the figure. I use the extremities of the figures, textures, or background elements to break with the flatness and generate volumes, textures, and a sense of perspective. Colours also help me create atmospheres, like when I use magentas to create warmth.'<sup>ii</sup> Here the vibrant shades of tangerine generate a wonderful warmth, while the artist's experimental approach to form recalls the volumetric forms of Pablo Picasso's 1930s beach scenes.



Left: Pablo Picasso, *Bather with a Beach Ball*, 1932, Museum of Modern Art, New York Right: Detail of the present work

Macarrón acknowledges the influence of his fellow Spaniard on the development of his own practice. Recalling a formative visit to the Musée Picasso in Paris when he was a child, Macarrón has recently explained ‘When I entered one of the rooms I asked for a notebook and coloured pencils. I spent the whole morning trying to understand what was in front of me. At the age of seven I used to make drawings full of color, animals or people taken out from some unknown world.’<sup>iii</sup> Such a description could well serve for *Un Día en la Playa*, the confidence, economy, and variety demonstrated in its elongated figures ‘born from a fantastic, surreal, and expressionist figuration’ that recalls Picasso’s own.<sup>iv</sup>

Drawing on his training as a physiotherapist alongside a broad range of art historical and pop culture references, Macarrón’s experimental approach to figuration is complimented by a deep ‘knowledge and respect for anatomy’ that allows him to ‘try out distortions and deformations [...] to create my own characters, each with their own soul and personality.’<sup>v</sup> Highly typical of Macarrón’s work, here the artist offers us a vibrant vision of community and sociability, the beach being a democratic space where class boundaries fall away as everyone is free to enjoy at leisure. Tellingly, bathers and beaches formed the central focus of Macarrón’s first solo exhibition *El bañista (The Bather)* at Fundación La Nave Salinas in Ibiza in 2021, and more recently the City Council of Estepona, Malaga has recently unveiled Macarrón’s large sculptural figure *Perro I* on its seafront.

## Collector’s Digest

- Born in Madrid in 1981, self-taught artist Rafa Macarrón first came to prominence after winning the BMW Painting Award in 2010.
- Alongside solo exhibitions with Allouche Gallery in New York and Nino Mier Gallery in Los Angeles, Macarrón held his first institutional solo show at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga in 2021 with scenes of bathers and beaches providing the central thematic focus. Earlier this year the artist mounted his debut solo exhibition in Asia, held at the CVG Foundation in Beijing.
- Macarrón’s works are in the public collections of the Hudson Valley Centre for Contemporary Art, New York; Foundation BMW, Spain; Caja Campo, Valladolid, Spain; and Collection Mercadona, Spain, among others.

<sup>i</sup> Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840*, Berkley, p. 1.

<sup>ii</sup> Rafa Macarrón, *Street Art News*, 26 October 2021, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Rafa Macarrón, ‘Artist Interview: Rafa Macarrón’, *Street Art News*, 26 October 2021, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Rafa Macarrón, quoted in Melissa Mui, ‘Rafa Macarrón Explores Shape-Shifting Characters at La Nave’, *Whitewall Art*, 20 July, 2021, [online](#).

<sup>v</sup> Rafa Macarrón, quoted in Melissa Mui, ‘Rafa Macarrón Explores Shape-Shifting Characters at La Nave’, *Whitewall Art*, 20 July, 2021, [online](#).

## Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Banksy

#### *Laugh Now But One Day We'll Be In Charge*

stencilled with the artist's tag 'BANKSY' lower right;  
signed, numbered and dated 'BANKSY 03/05 2002'  
on the stretcher

spray paint and emulsion on canvas

91 x 91 cm (35 7/8 x 35 7/8 in.)

Executed in 2002, this work is number 3 from an  
edition of 5 unique examples and is accompanied by a  
certificate of authenticity issued by Pest Control.

#### Estimate

£1,000,000 — 1,500,000 ▲

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I like to think I have the guts to stand up anonymously in a Western democracy and call for things no-one else believes in – like peace, and justice, and freedom."  
—Banksy*

Featuring one of notorious guerrilla artist Banksy's most iconic and enduring images, *Laugh Now But One Day We'll Be In Charge* encapsulates the sharp wit and keenly satirical character of Banksy's work. A nuanced composition, this important early iteration of the *Laugh Now* works has been executed in combinations of black and white spray paint against an unusual slate-grey ground using the artist's signature stencil technique. Deceptively simple, the work communicates a powerful message in its stark economy. Although his shoulders slope under the burden of the sandwich board, his set jaw and subtly clenched fists indicate a spirit of defiant resistance in the face of his oppression, signalling an ominous warning of what is to come.

## Men and Monkeys

Advocating for the oppressed and disenfranchised within the socio-economic contexts of late capitalism, Banksy's work cleverly juxtaposes epigram and image as a way of challenging the status quo and the concentration of power in the hands of the few. Like the rat - another recurring character from Banksy's bestiary - the monkey is employed by the artist as a way of darkly addressing social issues, drawing on the animal's metaphoric relationship to humans to comment on issues of inequality, political resistance, and protest that underpins the street artist's entire project. As Patrick Potter has suggested, 'These images can be really arresting at their best. They've evolved from the kind of cartoonish carnival of Banksy's animal army to control irony, designed to reveal the foolishness hidden in plain view in our society's values.'<sup>ii</sup>



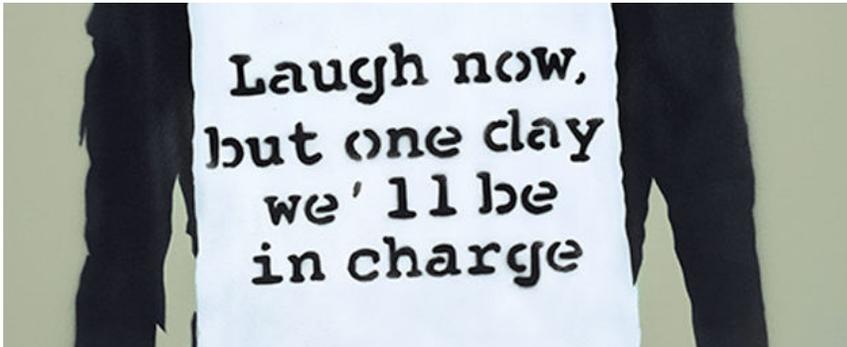
David Teniers the Younger, *The Monkey Painter*, 1805, Prado, Madrid. Image: Bridgeman Images

In this respect, Banksy contributes to a long satirical tradition of anthropomorphising animals in allegorical tales of human folly and hubris, notably the painterly tradition of *Singerie*. Featuring monkeys dressed as humans elaborately dressed in the fashions of the time and 'apeing' human behaviour and social codes, *Singerie* visually satirised the vanity and foolishness of its target – a tradition upheld in Banksy's 2009 *Devolved Parliament* where a host of chimpanzees replace Members of Parliament in a House of Commons debate, highlighting the 'kinds of power structures and hypocrisy that global ethical agendas must contend with.'<sup>iii</sup>

While the placard-carrying monkey here could be read as pointed socio-political commentary on the dangerously buffoonish tactics of our ruling elite, useful reference to the 18th century trend for *sing peintre* (or, 'monkey painter') provides a further point of reference. Used historically as a means of critiquing the pomposity of the artworld more specifically, the tradition of *sing peintre* certainly resonates with Banksy's anti-establishment position, and as a ways of speaking back to graffiti's historically maligned status.

Seen as uncivilised by Darwinian evolutionary logic, the Monkey itself proves to be something of a

cipher for the anonymous guerrilla artist, underscoring graffiti's reputation as a crude and 'untrained' mode of art-making in the context of cultural elitism, classism, and definitions of 'high art'. Banksy clearly made this identification at an early stage in his career, *his Self-Portrait* from 2000 featuring a monkey-headed figure wielding two spray cans, a disguise picked up again in the monkey mask adopted by the artist in the 2010 film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*.



Detail of the present work

## Monkey Business

Executed in 2002, just as Banksy was transitioning from anonymous street artist to a globally recognised icon, *Laugh Now But One Day We'll Be In Charge* marks one of the most important chapters in Banksy's career, and of the movement of street art from unexpected, public locations into more sanctioned spaces. Departing from the urban materials of brick walls and metal railway carriages more usually associated with graffiti, the work itself appears on canvas, one of five created by the artist using this stencil in this format and palette. Different iterations of the monkey stencil have been included in all major Banksy exhibitions - including his United States debut, *Existencilism*, a landmark exhibition which opened in the same year as the present work's execution.

More than any other motif, the lineage of the *Laugh Now* monkeys highlights the success with which Banksy has translated the energy and invective of graffiti into more traditional art world contexts, the stencil having been famously used in a specifically commissioned context in Brighton's Ocean Rooms nightclub in 2002. Executed in the same year as the present work, the six meter long commission was designed to form the backdrop of the nightclub's bar, six of the monkeys bearing the titular slogan seen here.

But the iconic design has its roots firmly in the tradition of street art, appearing in Banksy's first - and now legendary - London exhibition in 2000. As Banksy recounts of the exhibition: 'A week later we came back to the same tunnel with two buckets of paint and a letter. The letter was a forged invoice from a mickey mouse Arts organization wishing us luck with the "Tunnel Vision mural project". We hung up some decorator's signs nicked off a building site and painted the walls white wearing overalls. We got the artwork up in twenty-five minutes and held an opening party later that week with beers and some hip hop pumping out the back of a transit van.'<sup>iv</sup>

Staging what the flyer invitation described as 'an illicit outdoor gallery experience' Banksy populated Rivington Street in London's Shoreditch area with twelve stencils, including an iteration of the present work featuring the titular slogan. Although no murals of the work now survive, it remains an enduring image of British counterculture and the thriving street art scene in the years leading up to the millennium.

## Collector's Digest

- Coming out of a generation of urban counterculture centred in Bristol in the late 1980s and 90s, Banksy is one of the leading and most provocative street artists of his generation. His stencils are amongst the most instantly recognisable and defining images of contemporary British art, and Banksy was recently voted the nation's favourite artist in 2019.
- Ranking amongst his most iconic and sought-after motifs, the *Laugh Now* monkeys are directly related to Banksy's infamous 2000 'guerrilla exhibition' in East London's Rivington Street.
- Executed in 2002, the same year as the 'Ocean Rooms' commission and Banky's first American exhibition *Existencilism* this important early work is one of only five works in this format.
- While indebted to the pioneering stencil graffiti of artists like Blek le rat, Banksy's work has gone on to inspire a whole new generation of artists, and his work remains highly sought after by established and emerging collectors alike.

<sup>i</sup> Banksy, quoted in Demetrio Papanoni, 'Guerrilla Banksy and Postmodernism', in Gianni Mercurio, ed., *A Visual Protest. The Art of Banksy*, London, 2020, p. 20.

<sup>ii</sup> Patrick Potter, *Banksy: You are an acceptable level of threat and if you were not you would know*

**Banksy**

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*about it*, Durham 2012, n.p.)

<sup>iii</sup> James Brassett, 'British Irony, Global Justice: A Pragmatic Reading of Chros Brown, Banksy and Ricky Gervaos', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1., January 2009, pp. 232-3.

<sup>iv</sup> Banksy, 'Banging Your Head Against a Brick Wall' (2001), in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artist's Writings*, Berkley, 2012, p. 431.

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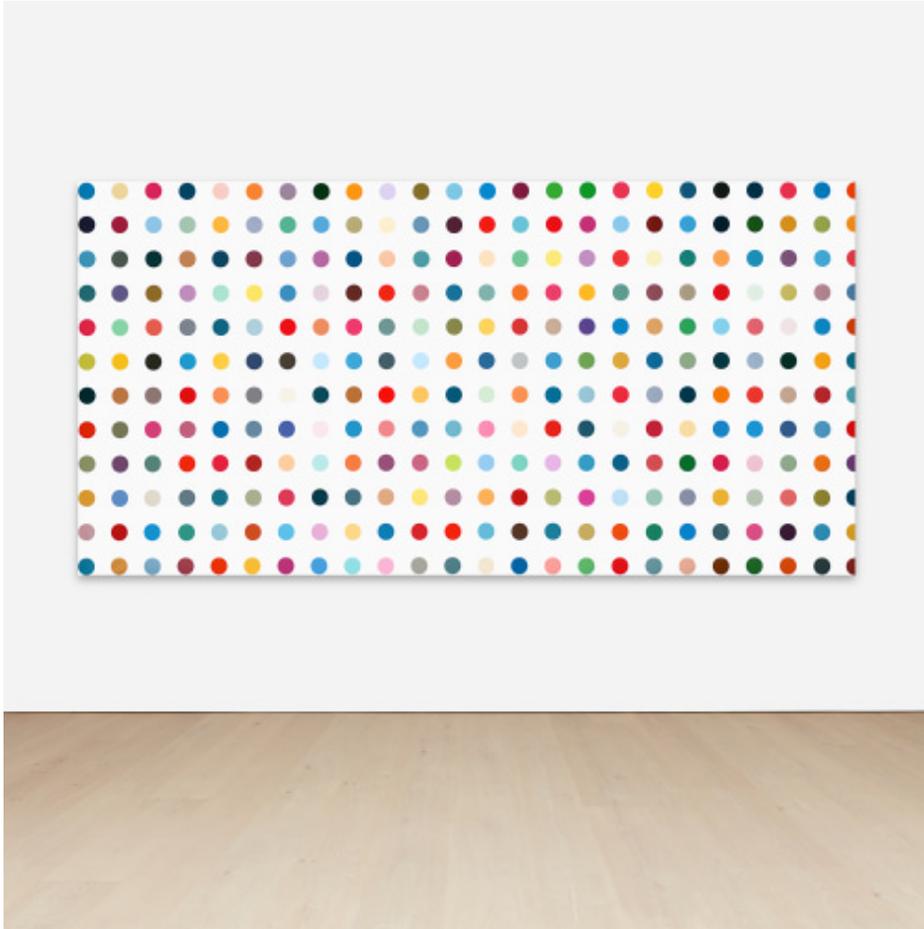
**Provenance**

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE  
AMERICAN COLLECTION

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## Damien Hirst

*Biotin Hydrazide*

signed 'D. Hirst' on the reverse  
household gloss on canvas  
233.7 x 472.4 cm (92 x 186 in.)  
4 in. spot  
Painted in 1995.

Estimate  
£600,000 — 800,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*"A scientific approach to painting in a similar way to the drug companies' scientific approach to life. Art doesn't purport to have all the answers; the drug companies do. Hence the title of the series, The Pharmaceutical Paintings, and the individual titles of the paintings themselves [...] Art is like medicine, it can heal." —Damien Hirst*

Executed in 1995, the same year that Damien Hirst was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize, *Biotin Hydraside* is an exquisite early example of the young artist's vision and ambition, a testament to the role played by his iconic *Spot Paintings* in establishing his reputation at the vanguard of the '90s British art scene. Meticulously rendered on an impressive scale, the work draws conceptual connections between Hirst's other foundational series, combining the ordered, grid-like structure of the *Medicine Cabinets*, the relationship between mortality and medicine explored across the cabinets and iconic formaldehyde works, and the exuberant sense of colour expressed by the *Spin Paintings*.



Detail of the present work

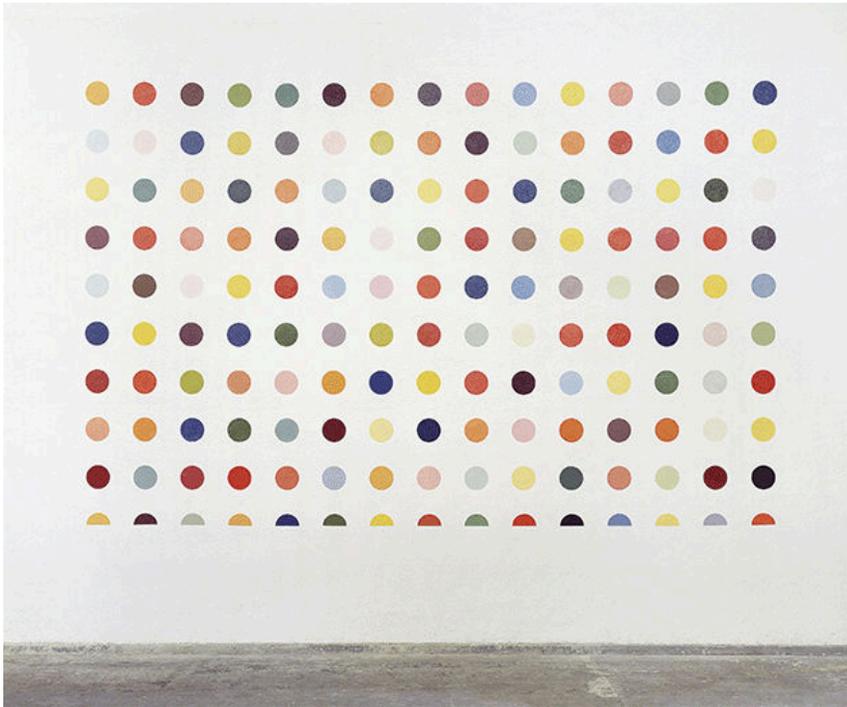
Arranged against a brilliant white ground, the uniquely mixed hues of household paint seem to vibrate with energy here, our eye seeking out patterns and responding to the chromatic relationships established across the composition that, nevertheless, fail to resolve. As Michael Bracewell has described, drawn to 'the warmer-coloured spots, the gaze then encounters seeming sudden diagonals, verticals or broken lines of semi-coherence; look again, and even these fleeting spooks of visual sense turn out to be illusions.'<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite this energetic activity, the work achieves an incredible compositional balance, rooted in the methodical, scientific approach to the composition based on a philosophy of chromatic relationships and their manipulation.

In this respect, *Biotin Hydraside* recalls the methods adopted by Gerhard Richter as he transitioned from working in black and white to centralising colour in paintings such as *256 Farhen*. Applying a mathematical precision to the mixing of his colours, Richter introduced an element of chance and randomisation in his selection of them. Stumbling across the catalogue of chemical company Sigma- Aldrich's 'Biochemicals for Research and Diagnostic Reagents', Hirst struck upon a similar strategy, employing the catalogue as a vast and random title-generator perfectly attuned to his vision of the possibly infinite variety the *Pharmaceutical Paintings*.



Gerhard Richter, *256 Farhen (256 Colours)*, 1974 / 1984, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco. Image and Artwork: © Gerhard Richter (0199)

Striking a balance between art and science, the *Pharmaceutical Paintings* operate according to strict limitations: crisply rendered and meticulously spaced, the relationships of spots within a painting are carefully regulated with no signal colour appearing twice in any individual composition. Although these early works were all painted methodically by hand, Hirst was interested in the idea of the spots appearing as though they had been executed by a machine, or 'by a person trying to paint like a machine.'<sup>11</sup> Despite the playful rigidity of this approach, the series has proven to be remarkably versatile, including unexpected elements such as the sudden cropping of spots on the right vertical edge of the present work, a reference at once to the infinitely expansive *Spot Paintings* and a call back to the very earliest works from the series.



Damien Hirst, *Row*, 1988. Image: Edward Woodman, Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2022.

## Spots and Freeze

Now spanning over a quarter of a century, Hirst's carefully rendered *Pharmaceutical Paintings* have become synonymous with the artist himself, bridging his earliest exhibitions as a student in London in the late 1980s to the staggering 2012 *Spot Painting* retrospective, hosted by Gagosian across eleven of their global galleries simultaneously, where the present work was also exhibited. Painted directly onto the wall of the Surrey Quays Warehouse which held the now legendary *Freeze* exhibition curated by Hirst as an undergraduate student at Goldsmith's in 1988, Hirst's very earliest *Spot Paintings* adopted a very similar format to the present work, both *Row* and *Edge* featuring the line of cropped spots used to dynamic effect here.

The cornerstone of Hirst's practice, *The Spot Paintings* allow the artist to balance mathematical precision with his obvious joy for colour, developing a harmonious system 'where colour can exist

on its own, interacting with other colours in a perfect format.'<sup>iii</sup>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/Zq7WkSuTcrs>

Damien Hirst, interviewed for Time on the occasion of his 2012 Gagosian show

## Collector's Digest

- Coming to prominence in the late 1980s as part of the group identified by collector and gallerist Charles Saatchi as a generation of 'Young British Artists', Damien Hirst is best known for his boundary-pushing sculptures of animals submerged in formaldehyde, his series of medicine cabinets, and his celebrated *Spot Paintings*.
- Executed in 1995, the same year that Hirst was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize, the present work represents a key moment in the artist's career.
- Since 1988 when the artist curated his seminal *Freeze* exhibition including work from his Goldsmith's peer group, Hirst has continued to exhibit internationally, with major shows at Tate Modern in London and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Examples of his work can be found in major institutions including the Tate, London; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Most recently, Hirst's *Spot Paintings* have been reimagined once again with his series of *Veil Paintings*, a looser, more gestural treatment of the motif that nevertheless still adheres to the same basic principles of the foundational series as an investigation into chromatic behaviour.

<sup>i</sup> Michael Bracewell, 'Art Without the Angst', in Jason Beard and Millicent Willner, ed., Damien Hirst, *The Complete Spot Paintings 1986-2011*, London, 2013, n.p.

<sup>ii</sup> Damien Hirst, quoted in *The Complete Spot Paintings: 1986 - 2011*, London, 2012, p. 822.

<sup>iii</sup> Damien Hirst, quoted in Damien Hirst and Gordon Burn, *On the Way to Work*, London, 2001, p. 119.

## Provenance

White Cube, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1996

**Exhibited**

New York, Gagosian Gallery, *Damien Hirst: The Complete Spot Paintings 1986-2011*, 12 January - 18 February 2012, no. 100, pp. 100, 831 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Austyn Weiner

*Working Through Not Knowing A Damn Thing About Any Thing*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'WORKING THROUGH NOT KNOWING A DAMN THING ABOUT ANY THING 2020 AUSTYN (PTI) L' on the reverse of the left panel; signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'WORKING THROUGH NOT KNOWING A DAMN THING ABOUT ANY THING 2020 AUSTYN (PTII) R' on the reverse of the right panel

oil and acrylic on panel, in 2 parts  
each 166.1 x 132.7 cm (65 3/8 x 52 1/4 in.)  
overall 166.1 x 265.4 cm (65 3/8 x 104 1/2 in.)  
Painted in 2020.

#### Estimate

£30,000 — 40,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*"Most of the time I approach a painting with no idea as to what it will be. But once in a while it hits like an arrow, and I know exactly what this work needs to become."*  
—Austyn Weiner

Executed on a monumental scale and dominated by sweeping, biomorphic forms set against a scintillating yellow ground, *Working Through Not Knowing A Damn Thing About Any Thing* represents the evening sale debut of emerging artist Austyn Weiner. With a background in photography, Weiner works across a wide range of mediums including oil paint, crayon, and charcoal, deconstructing physicality and feeling into sensual, erotically charged forms. Working with a supercharged palette that references the richly saturated colours of her childhood in Miami, Weiner's work is driven by an autobiographic urge – the need to translate raw emotion into 'transfer those feelings into a visual expression'<sup>i</sup>

## Emotional Abstraction

Born in Miami, Weiner studied photography and painting at the University of Michigan before relocating to Los Angeles in 2016 where her painterly language embraced a more expressive mode of abstraction, introducing a compositional openness through her treatment of form, line, and colour in order to more directly explore the expansive ideas of sexuality and the self, mass and movement. Retaining the documentary element of her photographic practice, Weiner's paintings are intimate records of her inner emotional landscape, mediated through her brush directly onto the surface of the canvas. Following in the tradition of artists like Tracey Emin in this commitment to an almost diaristic honesty, Weiner has been described as a 'rare young artist who's committed to revealing her image rather than cultivating it.'<sup>ii</sup>

*"I think I have always been drawn to a confident and seductive aesthetic across any medium I explore. It is more about the gesture, mood, and narrative and what it calls for. And in my case, a mix of hard and soft lines, expressive automatic gestures, and thoughtful, tender moments."* —Austyn Weiner

In *Working Through Not Knowing A Damn Thing About Any Thing*, this emotional transference plays out through an abstract mapping of fluid lines, contrasting hues, and convulsive shapes that structure the composition through the tensions and dialogues established between them. Drawing the viewer back to moment of creation with a powerful emotional charge, the primordial forms that dominate her compositions recall the surreal abstractions of Grace Pailthorpe and Arshile Gorky. As an artist bridging European Surrealism and American abstraction, Gorky's own interest in materialising the shifting patterns of the subconscious provides a particularly compelling

touchstone for Weiner's expressive inner landscapes.



Arshile Gorky, *Composition*, 1936 – 39, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota. Image: © Minneapolis Institute of Art / The Francisca S. Winston Fund / Bridgeman Images

## Pandemic and Performance

During the first three months of lockdown, Weiner underwent a period of growth. Along with the rest of the world, plans and routines shattered around her, and she had to adjust. Left with nothing to reinforce her practice from outside of herself, the artist redirected her focus inwards. Suddenly uninhibited and released from the boundaries of preconceived ideas, she felt free to respond intuitively to her creative impulses. Previously known for her abstract paintings marked by their exuberant line work, gestural energy and vibrant palette, Weiner decided to break her isolation via social media, producing daily confessional 'performances'. The daily broadcast 'Morning Wood with A Weiner' allowed Weiner to articulate her isolation and mourn the absence of touch and

physical intimacy, connecting with a virtual community and provoking reflections on the what it meant to her to be an artist and a woman.

In a moment of global uncertainty, Weiner tapped into the pervasive sense of collective anxiety, translated onto her canvases in a cathartic release in works highly attuned to human insecurity such as *Working Through Not Knowing A Damn Thing About Any Thing*. Reflecting on this experience the artist has explained: ‘Some days I am thriving in the isolation and feel more authentic than ever. Other days, a rat in a cage, helpless and lonely. Being quarantined on my own has been challenging to say the least, but most days I feel incredibly grateful for this uninterrupted time I have had to think and create uninhibitedly.’<sup>iii</sup>

### Collector’s Digest

- Following her first solo show at Journal Gallery in New York in 2019, Miami-born artist Austyn Weiner has moved into the international spotlight, not only for her absorbing paintings, but also for her fashion collaborations, debuted at Paris Fashion Week in 2019.
- Weiner’s work has been the subject of several solo shows, most recently at Carl Kostyál in London, The Journal Gallery in New York, and Bill Brady Gallery in Miami.
- The present work was included in the group show with Rental Gallery in East Hampton.

<sup>i</sup> Austyn Weiner, quoted in Maria Vogel, ‘I re-evaluate Nearly Everything in My Life’: a Topsy-Turvy Year, Artist Austyn Weiner is Focused on Finding Her Painterly Rhythm’, *Artnet*, 5 November 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Allyson Shiffman, ‘The Obsessive Austyn Weiner’, *Interview Magazine*, 23 August 2013, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Austyn Weiner, quoted in ‘Austyn Weiner is Working her Way Through the Pandemic in the Soul Car Garage’, *Whitewall*, 15 May 2020, [online](#).

### Provenance

Private Collection, USA

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

East Hampton, Rental Gallery, *Friend of Ours*, 4 – 30 July 2020

### Literature

Maria Vogel, ‘I Re-Evaluate Nearly Everything in My Life’: In a Topsy-Turvy Year, Artist Austyn Weiner Is Focused on Finding Her Painterly Rhythm’, *artnet News*, 5 November 2020 (illustrated, online)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

28

**Andy Warhol**

*Dollar Sign*

signed and dated '82 Andy Warhol' on the overlap  
acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas  
25.3 x 20.3 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 1982.

Estimate

£400,000 — 600,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I like money on the wall. Say you were going to buy... a painting. I think you should take that money, tie it up, and hang it on the wall. Then when someone visited you, the first thing they would see is the money on the wall." —Andy Warhol*

Born in the industrial hub of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Austro-Hungarian immigrant parents in 1928 just one year before the Wall Street Crash devastated the American economy and plunged the country into the Great Depression, the young Warhol's relationship to money and the American dollar was fraught. In the wake of the Second World War and the birth of the American Century, Warhol moved to New York to reinvent himself following his graduation from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1949 and immediately found himself swept up in the rapid socio-cultural changes sweeping the country. After years of wartime rationing, a new era of technological change, commercial enterprise, and prosperity dawned, with manufacturing rocketing as consumer consumption reached a new high. Fashion, music, and film all entered into a new golden age, with Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley presiding as secular icons over this brave new world.

## Money Talks

Long intrigued by the complex relationship developing between wealth and power, the dollar began to appear in Warhol's practice early, his 1950s drawing of a money-laden tree even predating the crystallisation of the familiar visual vocabulary of Pop art. Warhol returned to the motif in 1962 with his silkscreened paintings of photographed dollar bill drawings – wryly dodging counterfeit claims by using a drawing rather than a photographic image. Applying commercial printing techniques to more traditional art-making practices, Warhol radically reframed debates around art production and value in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Andy Warhol, *Printed Dollar Bill #3*, 1962, Collection of the Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

In his 1970 essay 'Raggedy Andy', esteemed art historian Calvin Tomkin suggests that Warhol's was inspired to adopt the motif after a conversation with designer and gallerist Muriel Latow. Prompting her for her more 'fabulous ideas', Latow playfully charged the artist fifty dollars. Playing along, Warhol wrote the cheque, leading the designer to muse: 'Money. The thing that more to you than anything else in the world is money. You should paint pictures of money.'<sup>i</sup>

Returning to the motif at a mature artist, the present work was executed in the same year as his *Dollar Signs* exhibition with legendary gallerist Leo Castelli at his Greene Street space in New York in the early months of 1982. A month later, *Artforum* featured Warhol in a feature piece on artists who had broken through, occupying the coveted centrefold position, Warhol chose to offer a fold-out triptych of *Dollar Sign* works to represent him.



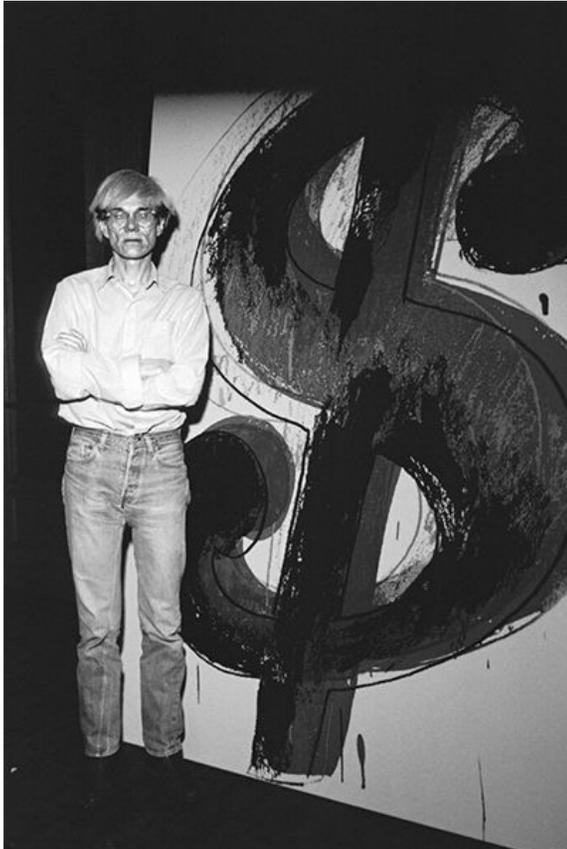
Installation view, New York, Leo Castelli, *Andy Warhol: Dollar Signs*, 1982. Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London.

Demonstrating Warhol's keen graphic sensibility, the present work is especially animated by the complex interaction of its layers – the vibrant coral ground offsetting the distinct layers of pine, dollar-bill green, and vermillion overlaid in three rounded, looping 'S' curves. Loosely scribbled, this final layer unites the different compositional elements and energises the entire work. Binding them closely to a study of the artist himself, curator Trevor Fairbrother suggests that the 'vivid brashness' of these works can be read as an artist's statement of sorts, while the canvases 'organise pulsating saturated colours into a spectacle as flagrant as a marching band or the lights on Broadway. Multiple overlaid impressions of the motif, deliberately misaligned, make the dollar sign appear to quiver and strain like a fish thrashing in a net.'<sup>ii</sup>

The final, overlaid vermillion dollar sign also draws a compelling visual connection with Warhol's iconic Campbell Soup works. Central to the Warhol oeuvre, the *Dollar Sign* and *Campbell Soup* series both articulate Warhol's fascination with commodity culture with remarkable directness. While the *Campbell Soup* and *Brillo Box* works reference consumer capitalism by invoking the

objects we fetishise, the dollar symbol clarifies the artist's focus on what drives consumption: money. Stating this so directly, Warhol challenged traditional notions of ivory tower artists and guardians of high culture who sought to separate fine art from commercialism.

*"Business art is the step that comes after art. I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. During the hippie era people put down the idea of business. They'd say 'money is bad' and 'working is bad'. But making money is art, and working is art - and good business is the best art." —Andy Warhol*



Andy Warhol with *Dollar Sign* painting, New York, 1982. Image: © Santi Visalli, Artwork: © 2022 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by DACS, London

More than any other artist of his generation, Warhol understood the role that the reproduced image would play in both reflecting and shaping contemporary culture, and in adopting pop culture imagery and commercial printing processes, Warhol developed a visual language that communicated this phenomena. Immediately recognisable, Warhol's motifs have become icons of 20<sup>th</sup> century art and visual culture, the *Dollar Signs* exemplifying in pictorial terms the dominating principles of the American century and 21<sup>st</sup> century late stage capitalism. In his *Dollar Signs*, Warhol astutely charged this universal symbol for wealth with desire, exposing the functioning of art as another commodity in an increasingly materialistic world.

### Collector's Digest

- The defining artist of post-war American Pop Art, Andy Warhol's work is immediately recognisable and remains highly desirable.
- Warhol first started using the iconic dollar sign motif in 1981 across a series of drawings, paintings, and screen prints. The *Dollar Signs* were first exhibited at Leo Castelli's Gallery in New York in 1982, the same year as the current work's execution.
- The subject of major international exhibitions at Tate Modern, London; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris, Warhol's work is also held in the permanent collections of the most important institutions worldwide.

<sup>i</sup> George Frei and Neil Printz, *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné Vol. 1: Paintings and Sculpture 1961-1963*, London, 2002, p. 131.

<sup>ii</sup> Trevor Fairbrother, 'ABC Dollar' in *Dollar Signs*, (exh. cat.), New York, 2002, p. 13.

### Provenance

Barrington Gallery, New York

Private Collection, Germany (acquired from the above in 1993)

Sotheby's, London, 11 February 2015, lot 168

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Phillips, Hong Kong, 8 June 2021, lot 23

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Marc Chagall

*Deux profils verts au cirque*

stamped 'Chagall' lower right  
gouache, pastel, ink and collage on paper  
50.9 x 32.8 cm (20 x 12 7/8 in.)

Executed in 1966, the work is accompanied by a  
certificate of authenticity issued by the Comité Marc  
Chagall and is recorded under no. 2014083.

#### Estimate

£350,000 — 450,000 <sup>†</sup>▲

[Go to Lot](#)



*"These clowns, bareback riders and acrobats have made themselves at home in my visions [...] with them I can move toward new horizons. Lured by their colours and make-up, I can dream of painting new psychic distortions." —Marc Chagall*

Marc Chagall long held a fascination for the circus stemming from his childhood in Vitebsk, Russia, where travelling bands of acrobats would perform for gathered crowds on the streets. Likely the young Chagall's first encounter with modes of performance and artistic display as eminent art historian Franz Meyer has suggested, he was bewitched by these colourful visions, one of his earliest paintings, *Village Fair* from 1908 incorporating the theme with swinging acrobats and a big top visible in the background. Returning to the motif throughout his working life, its relevance for the artist went far beyond formal or thematic concerns alone, satisfying instead 'a fundamental Chagallesque conception of art [...] just like colour and form, the circus act is not a copy but a representation, a reflection of life in its totality.'<sup>i</sup>



Marc Chagall, *The Blue Circus*, 1950, Tate, London. Image: © Tate

Balancing cool blues with vibrant, electric shocks of green, *Deux profils verts au cirque* is a particularly energetic depiction of this beloved subject, combining successive moments into a single, simultaneous vision. In its brilliant palette and compositional dynamism, the present work returns us to earlier paintings including *The Blue Circus*, now held in the permanent collection of the Tate Gallery, London. A consistent source of inspiration, for Chagall the circus represented something of the Carnavalesque, 'a timeless dancing game where tears and smiles, the play of arms and legs take the form of a great art'.<sup>ii</sup> In Paris, where Chagall spent the majority of the 1920s and 30s, he would regularly accompany his art dealer Ambroise Vollard to the circus, enthralled by the spectacle laid before him and sketching details of the performers and shows incessantly. As well as his famed *Cirque Vollard* series of 19 gouaches, such experiences would lead to major

compositions such as the artist's Moscow murals and the monumental *Revolution*, where fascism and the dark political realities of the 1930s are brought into high relief through the use of compositional strategies first worked out in his circus paintings.

*"I adore the theatre and I am a painter. I think the two are made for a marriage of love. I will give all my soul to prove this once more." —Marc Chagall*

The circus would return as a theme in Chagall's work from 1956 onwards, when having attended the shoot of a film about the *Cirque d'Hiver* in Vence, the artist set about recreating his circus motifs using the warm, Mediterranean colours of his home in the South of France. Executed in 1966, *Deux profils verts au cirque* originates in this later period of the artist's career, encapsulating Chagall's unwavering enthusiasm for the circus and its thrilling creative energies.

In the present work, daring endeavour and flamboyant, balletic stunts are accented by bold, bright colours, the unstructured composition lending pace and jeopardy to the unfolding scene. Using a mixture of gouache, pastel, pen and ink and collage in a high-key palette, Chagall powerfully combines a sense of the immediate and the fantastical. Vibrant passages of blues, vivid greens, and warmer pink tones animate the composition, lending definition to individual performers and their gravity-defying feats while simultaneously accentuating the blurring of the boundaries between the body and its extension in space, of human and animal, and of spectator to performer.



Left: Edgar Degas, *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando*, 1879, The National Gallery, London. Image: Bridgeman Images Right: Detail of the present work

Acrobats balance on beasts surrounded by tiers of spectators, and further performers – both human and animal, the latter painted in the same vibrant colours as the former – hover above the circus ring, acting simultaneously as subjects of the work as well as onlookers to the action below. The ring is a fluid, ill-defined space where the hint of a regular, circular form is subverted by the overspilling and overlapping whorls of colour, themselves punctuated by zig-zagging vectors suggesting speed and agility. All eyes in the circus are drawn to the pivoting *equestrienne*, her body perfectly poised as she balances on one leg atop her steed, the latter bearing resemblance to neolithic equine art. The dashing, derring-do moves of such *écuyères* inspired a number of other avant-garde artists over the years such as Georges Seurat and Edgar Degas, both of whom painted various stages of the fast-paced act in their studies of the circus.

In his work, Chagall consistently sought to create fantasy worlds in which anything was possible. *Deux profils verts au cirque* is exemplary of the bubbling, whirlwind life of the circus, of the thrilling

**Marc Chagall**

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demonstration of artistry in the face of utmost danger, and is testament to the great legacy of Chagall's own work, which was to see in unison the theatrical and the painterly, 'a marriage of love' to which Chagall dedicated his artistic energies. For him, the circus stage was the ideal setting for dreamlike, extraordinary acts: clowns, lovers, horses and trapeze artists floating in their own metaphysical spaces, defying - like the circus itself - the formal laws of composition.

<sup>i</sup> Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall, Life and Work*, New York, 1963, p. 554-6.

<sup>ii</sup> Marc Chagall, quoted in Susan Compton, *Chagall*, (exh. cat.), London, 1985, p. 14.

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**Provenance**

Estate of the artist

Galerie Kornfeld, Bern, 20 June 2014, lot 20

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Sotheby's, London, 2 March 2017, lot 149

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner



30

**Damien Hirst**

*Omnipotence*

signed, stamped with the artist's stamp, titled and dated "Omnipotence" Damien Hirst 2008' on the backing board; signed and stamped with the artist's stamp 'D. Hirst' on the stretcher  
butterflies and household gloss on canvas  
diameter 152.4 cm (60 in.)  
Executed in 2008.

**Estimate**

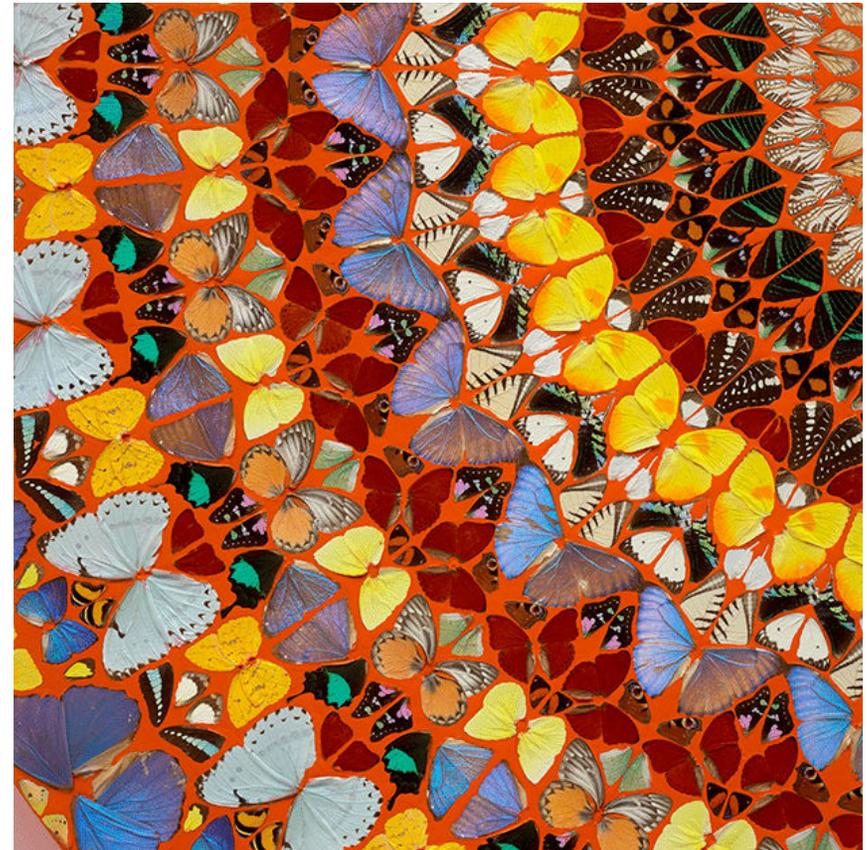
£350,000 — 450,000 ▲

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I think I've got an obsession with death, but I think it's like a celebration of life rather than something morbid. You can't have one without the other." —Damien Hirst*

Shimmering with a jewel-like iridescence, *Omnipotence* is a mesmeric example of British artist Damien Hirst's *Kaleidoscope* series. Composed of the wings of butterfly specimens geometrically arranged in a radial fashion around a central loci, marked here by a set of brilliant, azure wings, the work offers an appropriately kaleidoscopic vision, the dazzling fractured shards of lapis, citrine, topaz, and opal shades appearing to splinter and multiply before our eyes. Possessing remarkable vitality, chromatic variety, and radiance, the present work brings together key conceptual threads of Hirst's provocative practice: his fascination with colour and systems of structuring it; collecting practices and the aesthetics of display; mortality and the transience of beauty.



Detail of the present work

### Kaleidoscopic Vision

Although Hirst first formalised the *Kaleidoscope* series in 2001 with *It's a Wonderful World*, his fascination with butterflies and lepidoptery can be traced to the earliest stages of his career. Following the legendary 1988 *Freeze* exhibition that Hirst curated while still a student at Goldsmiths and the year before the phrase 'Young British Artists' was first coined by collector Charles Saatchi in his 1992 group exhibition of the same name, Hirst's first solo exhibition used butterflies to sensational effect. Spread over two floors of a disused commercial space, *In and Out*

of *Love* solidified Hirst's reputation as the precocious *enfant terrible* of the YBAs, the ground floor transformed into a humid hot house, the walls hung with pupae covered canvases from which hundreds of butterflies hatched over the duration of the exhibition, flying around the exhibition space before the eventually died.



Damien Hirst, *In and Out of Love (White Paintings & Live Butterflies)*, 1991, - Installed at Tate Modern, 2012. Image: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd, Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2022

An elegiac meditation on mortality and the fragility of life and of beauty, in the figure of the butterfly, Hirst found a potent vehicle through which to unpack some of the key themes that have gone on to define his career, and they remain a central motif for the artist today. While this early installation and Hirst's later *Butterfly Monochrome* paintings highlighted the gap between a fantasised ideal of the butterfly and our confrontation with its reality - exposing the ways in which 'the symbol exists apart from the real thing' - these later works move closer to an almost religious expression of adoration and perfection.<sup>i</sup>

Adopting the appearance of delicate stained glass, in its luminosity and radial arrangement, *Omnipotence* takes on the appearance of the kind of Gothic Rose window discovered in the most spectacular Cathedrals of Europe - a point directly referenced in the titles of some of the works from the series. Although not directly referencing ecclesiastical sites or architectural elements, the title of the present work of course also carries with it a strong sense of doctrinal wisdom, the omnipotence of the deity taken as a foundation stone for many different belief systems. Absorbing and meditative, the devotional aspect of the *Mandala* works was further emphasised by Hirst in the *Psalm* subseries, a limited group of butterfly works which Hirst started in 2008 - the same year as the current work's execution.



Stained Glass window inside Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. Image: incamerastock / Alamy Stock Photo

Deeply metaphysical, Hirst's work has long been interested in systems of belief, and here we can see the butterfly being invoked to speak to the more religious questions of the soul and the resurrection, adopted as the 'trace element of the spiritual in a fallen world and associated with the hand of the divine in the creation of material existence.'<sup>ii</sup> Beyond religion, Hirst's oeuvre also probes the ways in which medicine and science conform to a similar structure based upon devotion and faith, his - borrowing from Victorian models of classification and display - operating like reliquaries or shrines.

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Hirst's interest in the intersections of art and science are well documented and long-standing. As Jonathan Jones suggested on the occasion of Hirst's *White Cube* presentation of *Mandala* paintings, this inquiry was there at the artist's conceptual beginnings, having always 'claimed the same privilege for art that science has taken for granted since the 17th century - to pin the natural world to a table, to dissect and examine it.'<sup>iii</sup> Lending itself naturally to the serial approach practiced by the artist and drawing conceptual connections with both Hirst's *Natural History* series and his cabinet works, Victorian lepidoptery especially emphasised visual display over a strictly taxonomic organisation, a tradition well-suited to Hirst's own aesthetic approach. Doing away with the human imposition of order, Hirst's *Kaleidoscope* works instead offer a geometric and compound vision, one that, perhaps, invokes the eye of the butterfly itself.

## Collector's Digest

- Coming to prominence in the late 1980s as part of the group identified by collector and gallerist Charles Saatchi as a generation of 'Young British Artists', Damien Hirst is best known for his boundary-pushing sculptures of animals submerged in formaldehyde, and his sustained investigation of seriality, repetition, death and belief.
- Works from the *Kaleidoscope* series were first exhibited as part of Hirst's 2003 White Cube show *Romance in the Age of Uncertainty*. In 2007, Hirst presented a major series of the paintings in his solo exhibition *Superstition* with Gagosian Gallery in London and Beverly Hills.
- Also executed in 2008, one of the largest *Kaleidoscope* paintings, *Enlightenment*, measures over 7 x 17 feet and includes over 2,700 butterflies.

<sup>i</sup> Damien Hirst, quoted in Damien Hirst, *I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*, London, 2005, p. 118.

<sup>ii</sup> Rod Mengham, 'Butterfly Affect', in *Hirst: Madalas*, (exh. cat.), London, 2019, p. 4.

<sup>iii</sup> Jonathan Jones, 'Damien Hirst flutters around the cosmos on butterfly wings', *The Guardian*, 19 September 2019, [online](#).

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## Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



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### Harold Ancart

*Untitled*

oil stick and pencil on canvas, in artist's frame

215.9 x 175.3 cm (85 x 69 in.)

Executed in 2017.

**Estimate**

£200,000 — 300,000  

[Go to Lot](#)



*"When I start drawing or painting, time vanishes [...] It's almost like meditation. I've always noticed that my mind can wander extremely freely, and that great ideas about the world that surround me come to me while I am drawing and painting."*  
—Harold Ancart

Vividly rendered in a psychedelic palette of sharply contrasted and saturated colour, *Untitled* from 2017 is a vivid expression of the Belgian-born artist's confident handling of oil stick, and his uncanny ability to abstract reality in his invention of 'Natural subjects in unnatural colours'.<sup>i</sup> Possessing a remarkable tactility and exuberance, the present work opens a window onto a strange otherworldly scene, at once familiar and strange as recognisable natural forms are reduced to their rudimentary elements of line, colour, and shape. Scudded with soft clouds in shocking shades of blue and yellow, an infinite pink horizon stretches out beyond a flat, black sea, its surface ruptured by abstract, jagged forms in intensely contrasted blue and red hues.

Contemplative and serene, the vertical format of the present work draws on a Surrealist tradition epitomised by Yves Tanguy's illusionist landscapes of windswept beaches, vast horizons, and saturated gradients, giving eerie form to Ancart's own suggestion that 'without a horizon line, one gets lost and eventually dies.'<sup>ii</sup> Like his French predecessor, Ancart's fictive landscapes are utterly absorbing and transportive, deftly blending the Surreal with the Sublime as their 'ambiguity encourages the eye to make its own travels.'<sup>iii</sup>



Yves Tanguy, *Time and Time Again*, 1942, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. Image: © NPL - DeA Picture Library / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

## Surrealism and the Sublime

Executed in 2017 following an instructive trip to Iceland's volcanic landscape, the present work introduces compositional elements that Ancart would go on to formalise in his Iceberg paintings the following year. Introduced in *Freeze*, his first solo exhibition in London with David Zwirner Gallery, these Iceberg paintings share in the same distinctive compositional arrangement used by the artist in the present work and associated volcano paintings from this period, a sharp horizon line dividing the painting into simplified zones of sea, sky, foreground, and background, anchored

by a central motif and focal point for the viewer to orient themselves against.

Fracturing a more figurative whole into its abstract components in this manner, Ancart radically updates a 19<sup>th</sup> century pictorial tradition of the American Sublime developed in the deep horizons and dramatic landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church and his contemporaries. Travelling through much of the same scenery himself in a 2014 road trip across the United States, Ancart was so inspired that he turned the boot of his jeep into a mobile studio of sorts, painting in laybys as he traversed the vast landscape.



Frederic Edwin Church, *Vale of St. Thomas, Jamaica*, 1867, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. Image: akg-images

Developing poet and critic Charles Baudelaire's 19<sup>th</sup> notion of the *flâneur* as 'one who walks around and tries to isolate poetic moments out of the everyday urban landscape,' Ancart has created a specific visual language that is at once familiar and jarringly surreal.<sup>iv</sup> Slightly distorted shapes, manipulated horizon lines, and inverted colour schemes challenge viewers to examine the world in new and unexpected ways. Operating within what critic Chinnie Ding has described as a 'planet of painting', Ancart's sense of space is purely pictorial, and the art historical references absorbed into his work remaining 'like chromosomal traces enrich[ing] such dimensional unknowns.'<sup>v</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Born in Belgium in 1980, the New York-based Harold Ancart uses a vast array of media in creating complex pictorial worlds and sculptural installations.

- Ancart has already succeeded in carving out a role for himself in the contemporary art world; examples of his work belong to esteemed museum collections worldwide including The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Menil Collection in Houston, the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, among others.

- Ancart has been the subject of several important exhibitions, including *Harold Ancart: Untitled (there is no there there)*, held at The Menil Collection, Houston, in 2016. After his major 2020 presentation with David Zwirner held across both of their New York galleries, his most recent solo exhibition with the gallery *La Grande Profondeur* opened in 2021, marking his first show in Paris.

<sup>i</sup> 'Artist to Watch: PRIME FOCUS - Harold Ancart', *Artspace*, 1 May 2022, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Harold Ancart, quoted in Naomi Rea, 'How the Self-Depreciating Belgian Painter Harold Ancart Charmed the Art World', *Artnet News*, 10 September 2018, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Kat Herriman, 'Back and Forth with Artist Harold Ancart', *Cultured*, 29 April 2019, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Harold Ancart, quoted in Julia Felsenthal, 'Harold Ancart Brings His Kaleidoscopic Trees to Chelsea', *T Magazine*, 8 September 2020, [online](#).

<sup>v</sup> Chinnie Ding, 'Critics' Picks: Harold Ancart', *Artforum*, 18 June 2015, [online](#).

## Provenance

David Kordansky, Los Angeles

Private Collection, USA

Acquired from the above by the present owner

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### **Sigmar Polke**

*Untitled*

signed and dated 'Sigmar Polke 2000' lower right  
acrylic and ink on paper  
196.5 x 148 cm (77 3/8 x 58 1/4 in.)  
Executed in 2000.

We are most grateful to Mr. Michael Trier, Cologne, for  
his assistance.

**Estimate**

£400,000 — 600,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*"Polke's works were everything painting wasn't supposed to be: vulgar, mocking, parodic, decorative, heterotopic, discontinuous, self-reflexive, and self-critical... Polke was the consummate and emblematic Post-modern painter" —Alex Farquarshon*

Dominated by a tangled web of red paint spiralling out from its centre accented by tendrils of black and passages of bright yellow, this untitled 2000 work on paper by renowned German artist Sigmar Polke emphasises the artist's embrace of chance and painterly chaos in his compositions. Its surface shifting and variegated, Polke plays with tensions between pictorial flatness and depth, flux and the static image here, merging colour and form to startling effect. Balancing an ornamental sense of line with these more chaotic structures animating the surface of the work, *Untitled* highlights an important tension in Polke's work, which the 2017 exhibition *Sigmar Polke: Alchemy and Arabesque* addressed directly.

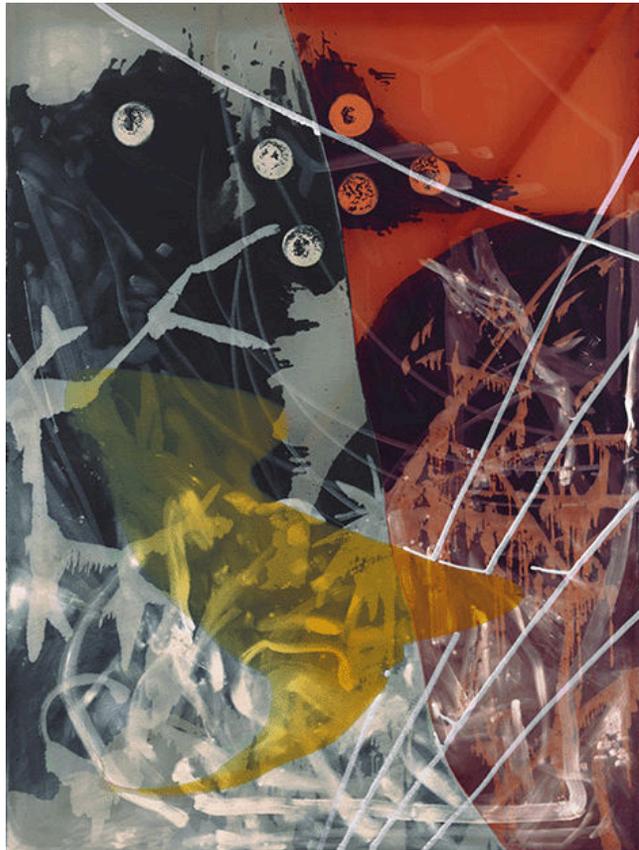
Widely regarded as one of the most radical and innovative artists working in Germany in the second half of the 20th century, Polke's experimentation with materials led him to incorporate fabric, photographs, words, and images in his compositions, eschewing neatly organised art historical narratives and signposting the inadequacies of knowledge itself. Characterised by the looping patterns of dripped paint layered over denser passages of chalky whites, sherbet yellows, and deep blues *Untitled* draws visual comparison to Jackson Pollock's infamous dripped canvases, only to undercut the narrative of individualism and mysticism attached to definitions of Abstract Expressionism and its apparent automatism.



Left: Jackson Pollock, *Watery Paths*, 1947, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome. Image: © Stefano Baldini / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

## The Doors of Perception

The complex layering of forms evident in the present work is a familiar technique of the artist, used to great effect in his *Stoffbilder* paintings on fabric and his iconic dotted *Rasterbilder* works. As experimental in life as he was in art, Polke pushed himself to move beyond the visible and the 'known', a path that took on new dimensions after he sampled hallucinogenic substances. Addressing the nature of visual perception and its relationship to cognition, Polke's approach to his layered compositions can be contextualised in light of his interest in psychedelics, and of the mind-altering experiences they afforded after opening what Aldous Huxley infamously termed 'The Doors of Perception.' Generating a remarkable sense of vitality and dynamism, *Untitled's* layers of colour and pattern speak to this sense of expanded, multiplied consciousness, and of the fundamental mystery of a world governed by chance, change, and the ineffable.



Sigmar Polke, *Helena's Australia*, 1988, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri. Image: © Saint Louis Art Museum / Friends Fund and funds given anonymously / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © The Estate of Sigmar Polke / DACS, London 2022

Writing in 1994 on the occasion of a major retrospective of the artist's career, just a few years before the present work's execution, art historian and curator Saskia Bos directly connected Polke's sophisticated use of colour and embrace of compositional chaos at this stage in his career, identifying the ways in which he 'has achieved a virtuosity in his handling of colour and paint not to be found in any of his early works. He applies layer on layer of dripping oils and lacquers, adding his glazes like an old master. [...] In Polke's most recent works it is colour itself that undergoes transformation.'<sup>i</sup> Of course, it is not only colour that is transformed under the artist's hand here, but the alchemical transmutation of forms themselves. As Bos goes on: 'Chance also plays a part in

the associative effect of the compositions; it is as if Polke, as the first spectator of his wizardry, sees signs emerging under his hands that make him think of new forms.' Harnessing visual disorientation and deliberately disrupting the logic of his surface here, Polke communicates a sense of reality as distorted and multiple, subject to the same manipulation of form exercised by the artist.

### Collector's Digest

- A defining figure of post-war German art, Sigmar Polke's practice was restlessly inventive and innovative, pushing boundaries on both material and conceptual levels.
- The subject of major solo exhibitions at Tate Modern, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Modern Art amongst others, Polke's works are now housed in the permanent collections of major international institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Städel Museum, Frankfurt; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>i</sup> Saskia Bos, 'Sigmar Polke, Boymans van Beuningen Museum', *Artforum*, Summer 1984, [online](#).

### Provenance

Private Collection, Europe (acquired directly from the artist)  
 Private Collection (acquired from the above in 2011)  
 Sotheby's, London, 17 October 2014, lot 16  
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

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London Auction / 14 October 2022 / 4pm BST



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### Georg Baselitz

*Dr. Dumouchel (Remix)*

signed, titled and dated '30.IX.2007 Remix G. Baselitz

Dr. Dumouchelle' on the reverse

oil on canvas

300 x 250 cm (118 1/8 x 98 3/8 in.)

Painted on 30 September 2007.

Estimate

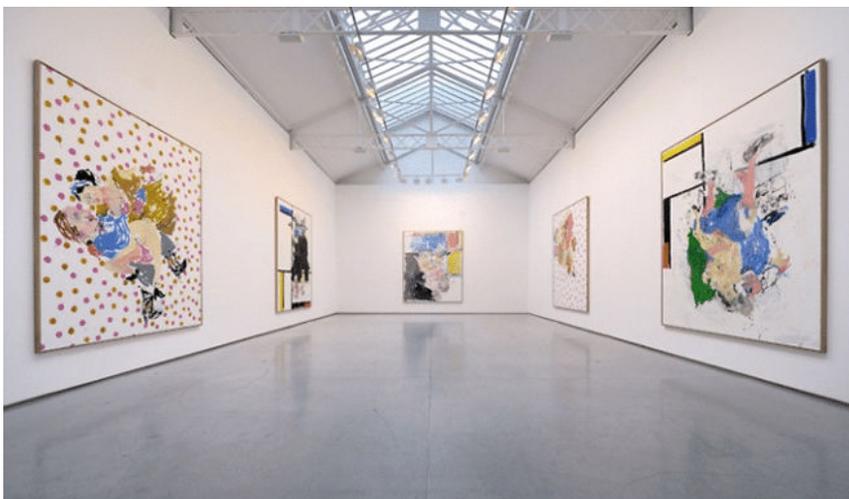
£300,000 — 500,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"If I place one of my old pictures next to them, like this picture from 1975 [...] it looks like an archaeological find, something I dug up. This is how they relate to each another." —Georg Baselitz*

Executed in 2007, the impressively-scaled *Dr. Dumouchel (Remix)* is a key piece from Georg Baselitz's acclaimed *Remix* series, which he started working on just two years before. Revisiting some of his most provocative compositions via photographs and catalogues, the German artist generated an innovative new body of work which addressed questions of permanence and change, originality and our relationship to history. Appearing like ghostly echoes from the past, these remixed paintings speak to our compulsion to repeat, and of what German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche described as the pattern of 'eternal return'.



Installation shot of *Georg Baselitz: Remix*, at Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, 2008. The present work can be seen hanging on the right. Artwork: © Georg Baselitz 2022

## Inversion and Repetition

Born under the shadow of World War II, a preoccupation with Germany's traumatic history and its national identity has been a consistent thread throughout Baselitz's oeuvre, the artist famously stating 'What I could never escape was Germany, and being German.'<sup>i</sup> Obliquely addressing this legacy in 1969 Baselitz produced his first inverted compositions, a way of reflecting on the

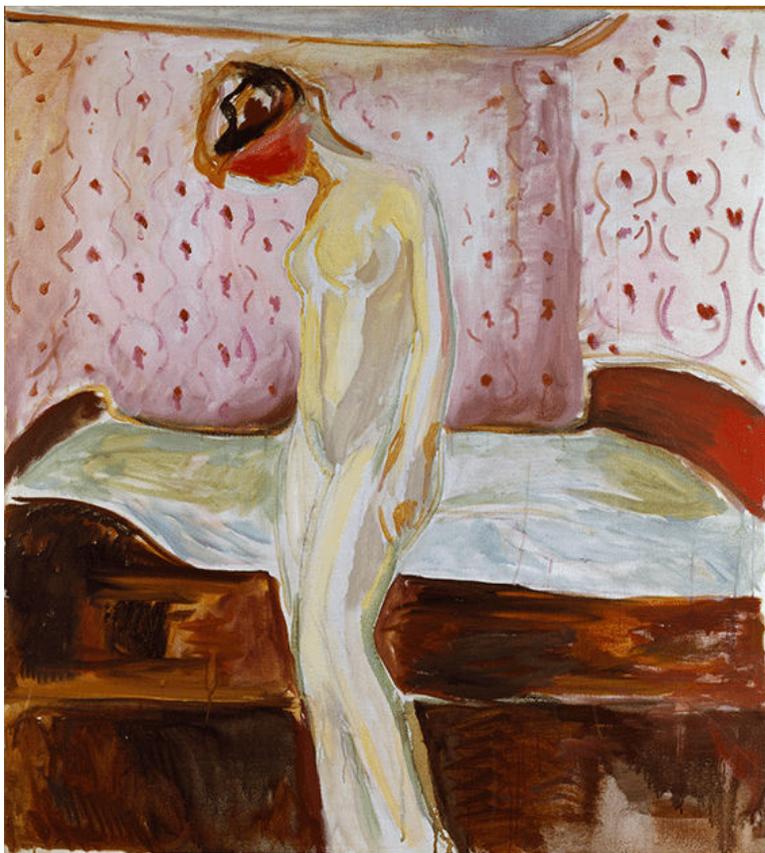
experience of living in a world turned upside down, and to draw attention to painting 'as a self-contained object without abandoning tradition.'<sup>ii</sup> While these inverted canvases can be seen as the artist staging a dialogue with political and aesthetic histories, the *Remix* paintings focus more squarely on the question of Baselitz's own artistic legacy and production. Reflecting on the series, Baselitz has explained:

*'Since I discovered the idea of remixing or revisiting old images, a great deal has changed. Now I work exclusively with old material, in the form of photocopies, drawings, and illustrations from catalogues. Onto what had its own integrity at the time, I now impose another method, sometimes even a different style or different colours, quite specific colours, or at other times only a smearing of white and a drawing on top of it. I try to retain one thing. The original stimulus. It was a different painter who did those earlier works. It was me, to be sure, but in a different spirit with a different intention.'* —Georg Baselitz

## Duchamp and the Chambermaid

Painted on a white ground covered in vibrant purple polka dots, *Dr. Dumouchel (Remix)* presents an amorous couple in a locked embrace. Conflating eroticism and humour, the rapid, graphic style evokes the ageing Picasso's erotic Volland Suite drawings, only to deflate their anxious emphasis on masculine virility. Bearing more than a passing resemblance to Baselitz himself, the aquiline nose and high forehead of the male figure in the present work in fact represent French Dadaist Marcel Duchamp.

The work is a remix of an earlier body of paintings including *Frisch verliebt – M. D.*, *Melodie*, and, *Im Walde von Blainville* that Baselitz had also used as the basis for *Marcel Duchamp and the Chambermaid*, a print first made for the Musée du Caen in 2002. The present work is one of several iterations on the motif presented together at *Georg Baselitz: Remix* with Thaddaeus Ropac in Paris in 2008. In revising this motif over several iterations across the small series, Baselitz paired the caricatured Duchamp with patterned backgrounds that seem to nod to certain art historical touchstones: the grid of Piet Mondrian and here, perhaps, a reference to another great self-revisionist, Edvard Munch who returned to the purple-flecked wallpaper of his *Weeping Women* composition several times over his career. Acknowledging a debt to Munch in the origins of the *Remix* series Baselitz has explained: 'Munch has always been a touchstone for me. It was then that I learned that he had painted his most successful compositions as many as twenty-seven times over the years.'<sup>iv</sup>



Edvard Munch, *Weeping Woman*, 1907, Munch-Museet, Oslo, Norway. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Of course, Duchamp himself was highly self-referential, even going so far as to create a miniature portable 'museum' of his earlier Readymades in his *Boîte-en-valise*. Although *Dr. Dumouchel (Remix)* features the revisited caricature of Duchamp, the work's title makes a further reference to the Dadaist, directly invoking an early and unusually Expressionistic portrait. Painted in 1910, Duchamp's *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel* depicts his childhood friend, Raymond Dumouchel, standing in three quarter profile with the fingers of his left hand spread wide and exaggerated in their proportions. In contrast to the controlled palette of olive and forest greens that ground the composition, Duchamp has added a vibrant pink aura around the outline of his figure, drawing

particular attention to the splayed hand. Visual resonances to this early painting abound in the present work, particularly in the economic modelling of the figure's head and the rich pink tones employed by Baselitz in this particular iteration of the *Duchamp and the Chambermaid* motif.

While Duchamp would ultimately turn away from painting, Baselitz reinforced its importance, proposing new directions for the medium in the specific contexts of post-war Europe. Refocusing attention on the painterly attributes of form, texture, and surface, in referencing Duchamp's early painting, Baselitz draws us back to a time before the so-called 'death' of the medium in favour of the more conceptual, 'non-retinal' approaches later advocated by the chess-playing artist. In remixing these older compositions Baselitz isn't simply recreating old works, but brining them into focus with the present, interrogating the past as he does.



Left: Marcel Duchamp, *Portrait of Dr. Dumouchel*, 1910, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: © Philadelphia Museum of Art / The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950 / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

## Collector's Digest

- One of the most significant German artists to emerge from the post-war era, Georg Baselitz's

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painting is rooted in these cultural contexts.

- Baselitz's works are included in the permanent collections of The Tate Gallery in London, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, and the Berlinsche Galerie, amongst others.
- The subject of many solo exhibitions in cities around the world including New York, London, Paris, Berlin, and Hong Kong, he has most recently been honoured with a significant retrospective at the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou which explored his six-decade career in detail.
- A 'remix' of his 1999 work *Frisch verliebt - M. D.*, the present work belongs to a small series of reinterpretations of this theme first presented at Thaddaeus Ropac in Paris in 2008.

<sup>i</sup> Georg Baselitz, quoted in Norman Rosenthal, *Baselitz*, Michigan, 2007, p. 36.

<sup>ii</sup> Richard Calvocoressi, *Georg Baselitz*, London, 2021, p. 140.

<sup>iii</sup> Georg Baselitz, quoted in 'Georg Baselitz in conversation with Robert Fleck', in Georg Baselitz and Robert Fleck, *Georg Baselitz: New Paintings and Sculpture*, New York, 2012, p. 9.

<sup>iv</sup> Georg Baselitz, quoted in 'Georg Baselitz in conversation with Robert Fleck', in Georg Baselitz and Robert Fleck, *Georg Baselitz: New Paintings and Sculpture*, New York, 2012, p. 16.

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#### Provenance

Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2008

#### Exhibited

Paris, Thaddaeus Ropac, *Georg Baselitz: Remix*, 20 February – 29 March 2008, pp. 18-19, 56 (illustrated, p. 57)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Luc Tuymans

#### *Lantern*

signed and dated 'Luc Tuymans 93' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

49.7 x 49.5 cm (19 5/8 x 19 1/2 in.)

Painted in 1993.

#### Estimate

£200,000 — 300,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I have a high distrust for images, even my own." —Luc Tuymans*

Magnified beyond recognition and divorced from any context outside of itself, *Lantern* is a particularly captivating work by acclaimed Belgian artist Luc Tuymans. Flattened into abstraction, the composition is difficult to read at first, its elegantly scalloped lines and compressed palette eventually resolving into the interlocking panes of glass and leading of the antiquated lantern of its title. Highly cinematic, Tuymans' closely-cropped format prompts reflections upon the nature of the image and interpretation – and how easily the two can be alienated from one another.

Remaining committed to the representational in an era when his contemporaries were veering increasingly towards abstraction, Tuymans first gained critical recognition in the early 1990s with his strange and highly evocative images that explored history and its representation, the machinations of power, technology and the image, and the strangeness of quotidian objects. Executed in 1993, *Lantern* belongs to this critical period of the artist's career, the year after his widely-acclaimed Documenta exhibition and just one year after he began to show with David Zwirner. Included in Tuymans' three-part 2008 retrospective where the work travelled between Budapest, Warsaw, and Munich, *Lantern* highlights the artist's deep respect for painterly tradition mediated through an image-saturated contemporary lens.



Walter Sickert, *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, 1892, Tate, London. Image: © Tate

Drawing on associations with darkened alleyways and seedier haunts, the deeply luminous red light casts a sinister glow that calls to mind the crepuscular light and hazy visions of Walter Sickert. Vibrating against the softer tones surrounding it, the vertical shock of red here seems especially to evoke Sickert's haunting *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, which retrospectively seems to fulfil Tuymans' description of his own work wherein 'even blurriness is painted, so it's very sharp.'<sup>1</sup> Sickert too was fascinated by the form and functioning of the image, and of its propensity towards ambiguity, something self-consciously cultivated in what Tuymans has dubbed his 'authentic falsifications'.

## Hypertrophy and the Image

Working primarily from found images and filmed footage, Tuymans' adopted the vernacular of photographs and film stills, finding deliberate visual strategies such as close-ups and extreme cropping to distort meaning and legibility, pushing the image into incomprehension. In this, his work looks back towards the Surrealism of fellow Belgian painter René Magritte, whose compositions carry viewers beyond the rational world, liberating art from more its more conventional role in relation to meaning. In the 1950s, Magritte began to develop his *Hypertrophy* series, where everyday objects such as apples, rocks, and roses, were enlarged to exaggerated proportions, filling out the small rooms they often occupy. This perplexing tension generates an unsettling effect that seems to speak to the sense of alienation and unease that pervaded post-war Europe, echoed in *Lantern's* own, disorientating magnification and its manipulation of the image.



René Magritte, *L'anniversaire*, 1959, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Image: Photothèque R. Magritte /Adagp Images, Paris / Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

## Collector's Digest

- One of the most influential painters working today, Luc Tuymans at once defies painterly convention, and embraces painting as the most traditional of all artistic mediums.
- Examples of Tuymans work can be found in major international institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, among others.
- Alongside his painting practice, Tuymans is also an accomplished and active curator, especially showcased in the 2015 exhibition that he organised with London's Parasol Unit, bringing together six painters of different ages and nationalities.
- A striking example of one of Tuymans' magnified images of quotidian objects, *Lantern* was included in the three-part 2008 *Luc Tuymans: Retrospective* where it travelled between Budapest, Warsaw, and Munich.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/cTKcwY-Uaf4>

Meet the Artist: Luc Tuymans, *The Guardian*, 2012

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/cTKcwY-Uaf4>

### Provenance

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Budapest, Mücsarnok Kunsthalle, *Luc Tuymans: Retrospective*, 15 December 2007 – 10 February 2008

Munich, Haus der Kunst, *Luc Tuymans: Wenn der Frühling Kommt*, 2 March – 12 May 2008, p. 85 (titled *Lamp*; installation view illustrated, p. 63)

Warsaw, Zacheta – National Gallery of Art, *Luc Tuymans: Come and See*, 30 May – 17 August 2008

### Literature

Frank Demaegd, ed., *Luc Tuymans, Zeno X Gallery: 25 Years of Collaboration*, Antwerp, 2016, p. 262 (illustrated)

Eva Meyer-Hermann, ed., *Luc Tuymans: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings Volume 1: 1972-1994*, New York, 2017, no. LTP 162, pp. 366, 488 (illustrated, p. 367)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### John Baldessari

*Female and Male Faces (With Notations) with Black and White Commentary*

vinyl paint on black and white photograph, in 3 parts  
overall 122.5 x 150.6 cm (48 1/4 x 59 1/4 in.)  
Executed in 1989.

**Estimate**

£250,000 — 350,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*"I am interested in what get us to stop and look, as opposed to simply consuming images passively." —John Baldessari*

A leading figure of 1960s Conceptualism, American artist John Baldessari infused cerebral complexity with wit and irreverent humour, a strategy that he described as 'reporting' on a world that 'is a little bit absurd and off-kilter.'<sup>i</sup> Although beginning his career as a painter, in 1970 he made a decisive move away from the medium, burning all of the paintings he had produced between 1953 and 1966, even interring the ashes in bronze, book-shaped urn with a plaque inscribed with his name and a record of the incinerated painting's short life. Executed in 1989, *Female and Male Faces (With Notations) with Black and White Commentary* exemplifies the direction into which Baldessari would push his practice after this pivotal moment, working primarily with the photographic image and making use 'of the classic materials of the humourist: irony, inversion, mistaken identity, trading places, taking one thing for another thing, recombining malapropisms, solecisms, deliberate understatement.'<sup>ii</sup>

*"I could never figure out why photography and art had separate histories. So I decided to explore both. It could be seen as a next step for me, getting away from paintings. [...] Later, that was called conceptual art." —John Baldessari*

Well-known for maintaining an extensive archive of found images, Baldessari playfully employed overlooked or neglected material (including photographs and a store of art historical and pop cultural images) obscuring and recontextualising these images through elision or addition. As the artist explained, stepping away from paintings and towards the photographic image and its own, distinct history in this manner laid the foundations for Conceptualism and a humorous meditation on the nature of art itself. A combination of three, found black and white photographs overlaid with scribbles and accentuating marks in black vinyl paint, *Female and Male Faces (With Notations) with Black and White Commentary* belongs to a body of composite photo works that 'seem very far from personal narratives and much more collective, like mythic structures that trigger powerful recognition.'<sup>iii</sup>

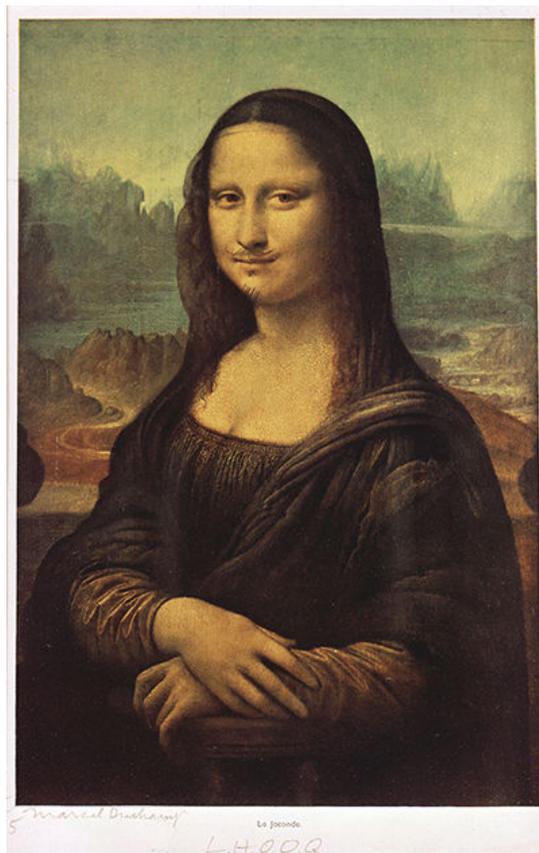


Installation shot of *John Baldessari: Recent Works, 1989*, Galerie Meert Rihoux featuring the present work, Knooke. Image: Courtesy Galerie Greta Meert

Exhibited with Galerie Meert in the year of its execution alongside similar composite works, *Female and Male Faces (With Notations) with Black and White Commentary* incorporates a diptych of a couple, closely cropped and cut to the same size, surrounded by a third photograph of two snarling dogs circling each other. Highlighting the ways in which images function like language – where meaning can prove slippery and largely contingent upon context – Baldessari complicates the relationship between the work's constituent parts, creating a dynamic interplay of image and idea. As Leslie Dick has described, 'During the 1980s, his fascination with the power of the cut became central, as photographs were cut up and into compulsively. These cuts included reframing the photograph, decapitating the figures in the photo, reducing the figures to silhouettes, flat outlines, or areas of colour, and recontextualising each image in relation to other images, slicing at its specificity until narrative fell away. His work demonstrates the ways in which the ideas derived from this exploration of photography—that meaning is generated through breaks and sutures, cuts and contiguities—extend to include all images, and indeed, thought itself.'<sup>iv</sup>

Closely related to Baldessari's signature coloured dot motif where he obscured the faces of his

figures beneath large stickers in bright, primary shades, the closely cropped faces here are covered in exuberant bursts of green and red, a strategy that forces viewers to look at an image's context rather than the narrative content of the images themselves. Developing conversations around appropriation, originality, and recontextualisation, in *Female and Male Faces (With Notations) with Black and White Commentary* Baldessari reinvigorates his source material with new meaning with strategies most famously deployed by the grandfather of Conceptual art, Marcel Duchamp.



Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919, Galleria Pictogramma, Rome. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

With a keen sense of linguistic play and incisive humour, Duchamp's infamous *L.H.O.O.Q.* represents an important touchstone for the present work, highlighting the ways in which an images context can be manipulated and its meaning shifted through addition and juxtaposition. Like Duchamp, Baldessari recognised the potential playfulness in reinvesting old images with new meanings, explaining: 'On one hand I think the older an image is the more it is exhausted of meaning – where it is a cliché. It's dead. Because clichés are dead. I like the idea of playing Dr. Frankenstein and reinvesting the dead, a metaphor, with life again. Because clichés are true – they just have lost their meaning. And I can pump another kind of meaning back into it, but you are still aware of the source and where I'm directing the traffic.'<sup>v</sup>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ly3e1WVU8Cc>

John Baldessari interviewed ahead of his major retrospective at Tate Modern, London in 2010.

### Collector's Digest

- The recipient of many awards and accolades during his fifty year career, including the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award at VB in 2009, John Baldessari is a towering figure of Conceptual art.
- Honoured with more than 200 solo exhibitions over the course of his career, Baldessari's first major retrospective was held in 1981 at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, with further major exhibitions mounted by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1991, and more recently, *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty*, which travelled to Tate Modern in London between 2009 and 2010.
- His works are collected in leading institutions worldwide, including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington DC, amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> John Baldessari, quoted in David Salle, 'John Baldessari', *Interview*, 9 October 2013, [online](#). Anny Shaw, "'Godfather of conceptual art' John Baldessari dies aged 88", *The Art Newspaper*, 6 January 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> John Baldessari, quoted in David Salle, 'John Baldessari', *Interview*, 9 October 2013, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Briony Fer, 'Unforseen Stopages', *John Baldessari Catalogue Raisonné, Volume Three: 1987 – 1993*, New Haven, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>iv</sup> Leslie Dick, 'John Baldessari: Cut to the Chase', *East of Borneo*, 1 November 2020, [online](#).

∨ John Baldessari, quoted in, Edelbert Köb and, Peter Pakesch, *John Baldessari: Life's Balance*, Work 84 – 04, Cologne, 2004, p. 94.

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**Provenance**

Galerie Meert Rihoux, Brussels

Private Collection, Belgium

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Brussels, Galerie Meert Rihoux, *John Baldessari: Recent Works*, 24 May – 30 June 1989

**Literature**

Patrick Pardo and Robert Dean, eds., *John Baldessari. Catalogue Raisonné. Volume Three: 1987-1993*, New Haven, 2015, no. 1989.14, pp. 167, 538 (illustrated; dimensions: 182.9 x 223.5 cm)

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### Takashi Murakami

*Sage*

signed and dated 'Takashi 2014' on the reverse  
acrylic, gold leaf and platinum leaf on canvas mounted  
on wood panel  
diameter 200 cm (78 3/4 in.)  
Executed in 2014.

Estimate

£400,000 — 600,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*"Japanese people of my generation grew up reading manga and watching anime and special effect films, so these things are thickly in our flesh and blood." —Takashi Murakami*

With works teeming with smiling sunflowers, manga characters, and fashion icons, Japanese artist Takashi Murakami's visual style is immediately recognisable in its eclectic combinations of historical, contemporary and futuristic references. Stemming from a wider series of pieces reflecting his own cultural roots, Murakami's *Sage* is rich in symbolism, its glittering, psychedelic composition combining acrylic, gold, and platinum leaf. First shown in a 2015 exhibition presented by Blum & Poe in Ibiza, the work exemplifies Murakami's drastic change in style and subject in the early 2010s, having shifted from an aesthetically driven, 'Superflat' practice towards a more esoteric, reflective artistic expression.



Left: School of Katsushika Hokusai, *Sage*, 18th–19th century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Annette Young, in memory of her brother, Innis Young Right: Detail of the present work

## Manga and the Graphic Tradition

Visually sumptuous, *Sage* represents the largest tondo format work by the artist to have come to auction. Recalling the graphic style of Japanese manga drawing, at the centre of the composition sits a mystical, cross-legged figure atop a pile of skulls, his technicolour robes in keeping with the glistening polka dot details and supercharged palette of the piece. The central figure's head, dominated by six, symmetrically arranged eyes is crowned with a tree, itself encircled by seven smaller floating figures, all rendered in a similarly animated visual language. In its arresting graphic quality, the ensemble calls to mind the distorted proportions and wildly imaginative characters of the highly celebrated Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki's 2001 film *Spirited Away*, a further nod to the role played by animation and manga in shaping Murakami's visual vocabulary. Despite these more contemporary pop culture references however, the title of the work identifies this mystical figure as a Sage, a sacred character in Japanese folklore whose wisdom transcends the temporal, revealing spiritual truth and guidance to others. Drawing inspiration from Eastern religious iconography, the Sage is shown here in seated posture and dressed in traditional robes, a burnished psychedelic halo behind him that recalls depictions of the Buddha, the smaller figures then recontextualised as Arhats – his enlightened disciples. Amalgamating various sources central to Buddhist thought, the composition at once evokes the Seven Stages of Buddha and the enlightenment of Buddha beneath the Bodhi Tree.



Left: *Buddha and the 16 Arhats*, 17th century, Oglethorpe University Museum of Art, Atlanta Right: Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Adam and Eve*, 1526, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. Image: © The Courtauld / Bridgeman Images

As this episode is so central to Buddhist teaching, it is not unusual to see Buddha depicted seated beneath a tree, and yet the prominent inclusion of apples here also draws on more Western allusions. A powerful symbol in Christian iconography, the apple tree appears throughout the history of European religious paintings as a symbol of knowledge, immortality, and temptation. Here, the inclusion of the tree coincides with the symbolic meaning of the sage, both implying divinity and intellectualism and condensing multiple signifiers together to create a new, multicultural sign. Embracing these overlapping cultural symbols in *Sage*, Murakami ushers in a more globalised view of cultural complexity and commonality.

## Confronting a Disturbing World

From the year 2011 onwards, Murakami's practice has seen a drastic shift from a brighter style comprising smiling sunflowers and *kawaii* anime characters towards more solemn subject matters of skulls, distorted figures, and religious icons. This introspective change in style and subject marks Murakami's response to the heart-breaking 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami and the ensuing

Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

*"I used to think of religion as something kind of false and hypocritical, but after the earthquake disaster, I realized in a time like that, religion and fairy tales and things like that are actually a necessity." —Takashi Murakami*

Executed in 2014, *Sage* is related to Murakami's celebrated *Arhats* series, a selection of which were also presented alongside the present work in Murakami's 2015 exhibition with Blum & Poe. A motif Murakami relentlessly incorporated in his post-2011 works, an arhat refers to a Buddhist figure who spread Buddha's teachings to save humanity from its dangerous desires. It is used by Murakami to illustrate the wish to recover from the painful aftermath of the 2011 tragedies.

As in *Sage*, the *Arhats* are focused on these mystical human figures, the uncanny distortions of their bodies evocative of the mutations suffered by organic beings under nuclear exposure. Creating a symbolic space for viewers to confront a disturbing world in which horror and hope are intermingled, Murakami's works express a deeply humane and honest compassion. Considering that the present work's original presentation was alongside pieces such as a colossal *Oval Buddha* measuring over eighteen feet tall, it is clear that the artist intended for in-depth meditation and rumination over humanity's plight.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-YPOWBQAd1M>

Takashi Murakami discusses his practice ahead of his 2017 solo exhibition *Takashi Murakami: The Octopus Eats Its Own Leg* organised by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

## Collector's Digest

- Rising to fame in the 1990s, Takashi Murakami is known for intermingling fine art and pop-culture references across paintings, sculptures, installation, and textiles.
- His recent large-scale retrospectives were held at [Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong](#) (1 June – 1 September 2019), [Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow](#) (29 September 2017 – 4 February 2018), [Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago](#) (6 June – 24 September 2017), and [Mori Art Museum, Tokyo](#) (31 October 2015 – 6 March 2016).

- Since 2002, Murakami has collaborated with various brands and celebrities including Louis Vuitton, Kanye West, Pharrell Williams, and G-Dragon. His works are included in major museum

**Takashi Murakami**

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collections globally.

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**Provenance**

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

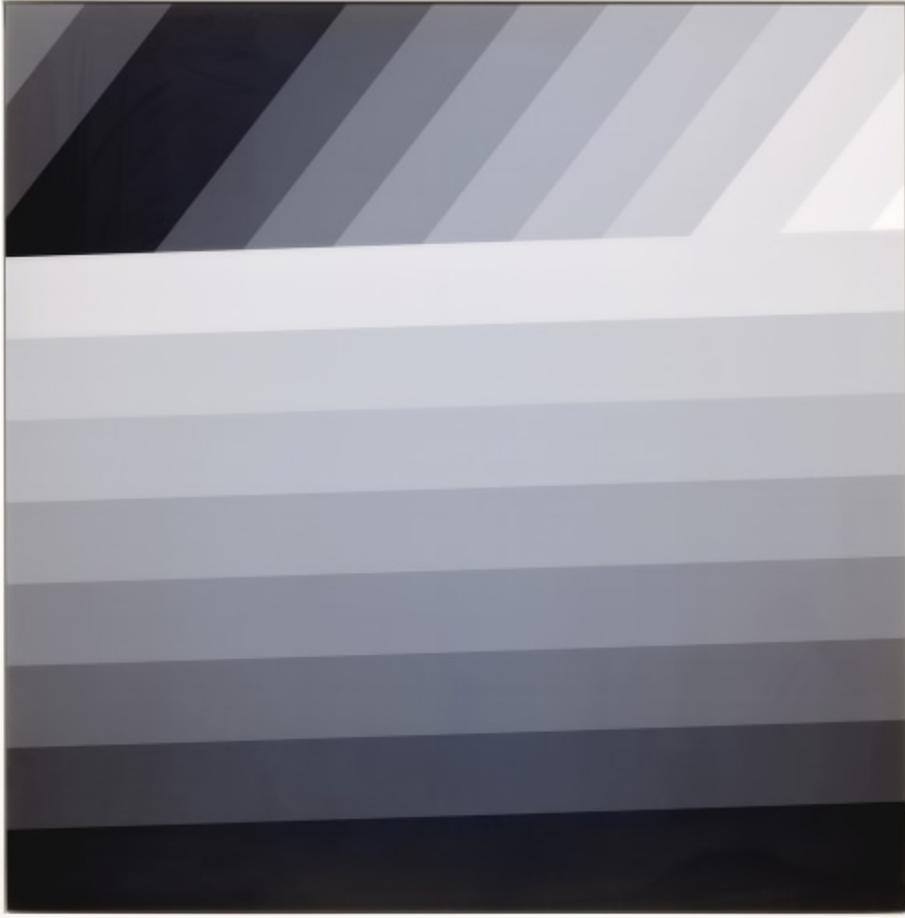
Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

HEART Ibiza presented by Blum & Poe, *Takashi Murakami*, 24 June - 26 September 2015

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### Cory Arcangel

*Photoshop CS: 60 by 60 inches, RGB, square pixels, default gradient "Grey Value Shapes", mousedown y=17960 x=620, mouseup y=20 x=0; photoshop tool "Wand", click= y=500 x=1940, tolerance=50; default gradient "Grey Value Shapes", mousedown y=120 x=5040*

c-print, in artist's frame  
155.9 x 155.9 cm (61 3/8 in. x 61 3/8 in.)

Executed in 2013.

#### Estimate

£70,000 — 100,000 ‡

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*"I like to pick things that people can't yet see its value; it hasn't yet become of interest. The game is always to give people something they recognise, but that might not entirely make sense to them." —Cory Arcangel*

A leader in the field of technology-based art, American artist Cory Arcangel pioneered the use of non-traditional tools from our digital everyday including image editing tools, computer games, and online media in his practice. An early adopter of digital technologies, Arcangel first learned to code in 1996, finding in the language of computer programming a way of connecting his classical musical training with modes of art-making. A Dadaist for the Digital Age, Arcangel's 'alternately crude and clever interventions into the technologies that are so embedded in our daily lives' address the constantly evolving relationship between culture and technology, drawing on a lineage of artists including Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol.<sup>i</sup> Despite being often described as a 'new media artist', Arcangel is quick to point out the speed of cycles of innovation and obsolescence built into our consumption of technology in the twenty first century. Quipping that 'all new media is old media', the artist appropriates low-fi, retro or obsolete technologies such as early iterations of Nintendo consoles and basic software programs, drawing out our relationships to these tools, and the technological and socio-cultural shifts they represent.<sup>ii</sup>

## Art and Technology

While Arcangel works across multiple mediums (including musical composition, performance, modified video games), it is his adoption of revolutionary raw artistic materials for which he is best known. Appropriating a wide range of software, hardware, and a range of digital media, the multi-disciplinary artist has developed a distinctive practice mediated through his use of everyday technological tools. Generated using the computer software programme Adobe *Photoshop*, *Photoshop CS: 60 by 60 inches, RGB, square pixels, default gradient "Grey Value Shapes", mousedown y=17960 x=620, mouseup y=20 x=0; photoshop tool "Wand", click= y=500 x=1940, tolerance=50; default gradient "Grey Value Shapes", mousedown y=120 x=50402* is a hypnotic example of Arcangel's celebrated *Photoshop Gradient Demonstrations* series, first developed by the artist in 2007. A readily available and highly accessible program, Photoshop's gradient tool allows users to generate gradual transitions between colours, the title of the present work referring to the exact coordinates of the mouse as it hovers over the x and y axis. An unusually monochromatic example, here Arcangel used the Grey Value Stripes gradient to achieve the rhythmic intersections of bands of grey, before transferring the computer-generated composition into a unique large-scale c-print using the highest quality of print technology, mounting, and framing.

*"People keep coming at me with the question, is it a painting or is it a photograph? Technically it's a photograph. It's a photograph because it's photographic paper. But obviously I think about them as paintings, because they refer to the history of painting, right? I also have to think about them as sculptures, because every part of the process is part of the project. They're sculptures because they play on the idea of what should be hanging in a gallery. In that sense they're also kind of ready-mades."*  
—Cory Arcangel

As well as the obvious Duchampian references embedded in the nature of its production and the title's functioning as its own 'Instructions for a Readymade', the formal qualities of the work align it more closely with the legacies of abstract painters such as Ellsworth Kelly. Introducing an element of chance into his work, Kelly also employed a more randomised approach to composition, cutting a black and white brushstroke into twenty squares, rearranged and inverted before being painted onto wood panels in a work like the 1951 *Cite*. Visually recalling the bold, rhythmic patterning of Kelly's work, in its chromatic control, the present lot also draws attention to questions of colour perception that chime with Kelly's own.

The cornerstone of Arcangel's practice, the *Photoshop Gradient Demonstrations* series have been prominently included in Arcangel's major exhibitions, including the 2010 *The Sharper Image* hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami and the major mid-career retrospective *Pro-Tools* held the following year at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Only in his thirties at the

time, Arcangel was the youngest artist to have been invited to present a retrospective of that size and scope at the museum. As its title playfully alludes to, the exhibition's concept was rooted in ideas around 'product demonstrations' and the emerging notion of software as essential professional tools. A digital pioneer, Arcangel's works 'ultimately do not evaluate technology itself but the human perspective on it—the ways in which we play with tools to engage the world.'<sup>iii</sup>

### Collector's Digest

- Now based in Brooklyn, New York, Cory Arcangel received a BM from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2000.

- In 2011, Arcangel became the youngest artist since Bruce Nauman to have been given a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Arcangel has also been the subject of major solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami in 2010; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin in 2010; the Barbican Art Gallery in London in 2011; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh in 2013, and the Fondation DHC/Art, Montreal in 2013. In 2005 he was awarded the Jury Prize of the New York Underground Film Festival.

<sup>i</sup> Taylor Dafoe, 'Cory Arcangel's Latest Artwork Is a Kim Kardashian-Themed Video Game. What Does It Mean? Don't Ask Him', *Artnet News*, 9 April 2021, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Cory Arcangel, *Whitney Stories: Cory Arcangel*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, 4 June 2014, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Christiane Paul, *Cory Arcangel: Pro Tools*, (exh.cat), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2011, p. 28.

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### Provenance

Team Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2014