

Phillips' ULTRA/NEO Series Spotlights a Diverse Range of Ultra-Contemporary International Talent

A themed series centered on a new generation of rising artists in 20th Century & Contemporary Art & Design Hong Kong Sales on 21-22 June



HONG KONG – 24 May 2022 – Phillips is pleased to present the ULTRA/NEO themed series in its upcoming 20th Century & Contemporary Art & Design Hong Kong Sales on 21-22 June, which features a broadened group of up-and-coming international artists such as Javier Calleja, Edgar Plans, Rafa Macarrón, Issy Wood, Danielle Orchard, Katherine Bernhardt, Melissa Brown, Aboudia and Robert Nava. This follows the success of Phillips' ULTRA/NEO series introduced in the Hong Kong Fall Sales last year, which shined a spotlight on a new generation of ultra-contemporary Asian artists. Works featured in the series were 100% sold and set multiple auction records for Susumu Kamijo, Izumi Kato, Atsushi Kaga, Ayako Rokkaku, Mayuka Yamamoto and Roby Dwi Antono.

Charlotte Raybaud, Head of Evening Sale, Phillips Hong Kong, said: "Building on the success of Phillips' ULTRA/NEO series presented in Hong Kong last season, we are excited to continue with this initiative by extending the artist lineup beyond Asia, in our forthcoming 20th Century & Contemporary Art & Design Hong Kong Sales. Since 2016, from when we had our first sale in Hong Kong, it has always been in our DNA to present curated sale themes and dynamic exhibitions in Hong Kong with fresh new angles to incorporate younger artists into the list of blue-chip names. And this season, we are delighted to present ULTRA/NEO across Evening and Day Sales, allowing for a designated spotlight to fall on such a stellar roster of young artists."

Danielle So, Head of Day Sale, Phillips Hong Kong, said: "Contemporary art is constantly evolving, and set against the acceleration of our world today, ULTRA/NEO is our love letter to a selection of ultra-contemporary artists, all born after the 1970s in a world that has seen rapid developments, both technological and cultural. All

coming of age during the internet era, a common thread that unites them is their strong ability to build upon art history and create fresh perspectives on themes of globalisation, national identity, surreal figurations, and the human condition through the use of high-octane colour palettes, bold lines and flattened forms. This group of artists represents a dynamic force and is certainly redefining what resonates with the collectors of our time.”

Spanish New Wave

The amalgamation of ‘ultra’ and ‘neo’ draws on the hyper-contemporary, liminal spaces in which artists of our generation exist.

Sharing a comparable conceptual and visual approach, Spanish artists such as Javier Calleja, Edgar Plans, Rafa Macarrón, Adriana Oliver, and Matías Sanchez employ a similar mode of expression where the artists create childlike ideations of their own cast of creatures and characters to combat senses of loneliness, injustice or nostalgia, demonstrating a current trend of the Spanish New Wave within contemporary art. Phillips currently holds the world auction record for Javier Calleja, achieved last November when his multi-part installation, [30 Works: Untitled](#) sold for over HK\$12 million/ US\$1.5 million. A few works by Calleja depicting his beloved big-eyed children will be presented in the ULTRA/NEO series across Evening and Day Sales this season. Also offered in the ULTRA/NEO series are Edgar Plans’ *Night Creatures*, 2020, and Rafa Macarrón’s *Sin título (Cosmos)*, 2015, both monumental in their scales, they are the largest works by the artists to come to auction.



Edgar Plans
Night Creatures, 2020
mixed media on canvas, 150 x 280 cm.
Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,800,000 / US\$154,000-231,000



Rafa Macarrón
Sin título (Cosmos), 2015
mixed media on aluminium and PVC, 183 x 296 cm.
Estimate: HK\$700,000-1,000,000 / US\$89,700-128,000

Female Gamechangers

Phillips has consistently been presenting works by female artists from different cultures, backgrounds, and eras across its global salerooms. Notable results by women artists contributed to Phillips’ most successful sale in company history held in New York recently, setting records for Yayoi Kusama and Robin F. Williams. Works by a group of rising female artists will be featured in this season’s ULTRA/NEO series, each with her own distinct style and artistic vocabulary.

Created in 2019, *Untitled* is beautifully emblematic of Japanese artist Ayako Rokkaku’s cartoon-like painterly aesthetic with her signature rainbow colour palette. First shown at the Museum Jan van der Togt, Amstelveen, in Netherlands the year it was created, *Untitled* features an endearing little girl dressed in pastel pink, holding a brush in her right hand and glancing to the side with a shy, mischievous smile. Rokkaku’s [Untitled ARP 07-013](#) sold for HK\$6.3 million/ US\$ 807,775 last November at Phillips Hong Kong and achieved her auction record at that time.

Introduced by Phillips to the Asian auction market in 2019, Genieve Figgis’ works have been attracting voracious demand from collectors across the region ever since. In her *Pink Ballroom*, 2018, striations of thick, meringue-like acrylics swirl into an amalgamation of a lavishly embellished pink backdrop. Patterns of velvet curtains and gilded

windows seem to melt into each other, creating a wet-on-wet effect – like a buttery tiered cake that has been left out in the rain.

Electrifying, obsessive, and unabashedly fun, American artist Katherine Bernhardt's characteristically energetic paintings are celebrations of colour and form. First gaining momentum in 2017, Bernhardt has held several institutional solo exhibitions worldwide, and her works are included in prominent public and museum collections. Featuring her most iconic motif of the pink panther, *Laundry Day*, 2017, dazzles with its large scale, bright shades of fuchsia, and brushstrokes full of verve and tenacity.



Ayako Rokkaku

Untitled, 2019

acrylic on canvas, 121 x 190 cm.

Estimate: HK\$2,000,000-3,000,000 / US\$256,000-385,000



Genieve Figgis

Pink Ballroom, 2018

acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150.2 cm.

Estimate: HK\$1,500,000-2,000,000 / US\$192,000-256,000



Katherine Bernhardt

Laundry Day, 2017

acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 306 x 245 cm.

Estimate: HK\$800,000-1,200,000 / US\$103,000-154,000

Surrealism Reimagined

The line-up for this season's ULTRA/ NEO also includes a list of newer names to the Asian auction market, notably Issy Wood, Danielle Orchard and Melissa Brown.

An interdisciplinary artist at the vanguard of the 21st century's revival and reinterpretation of Surrealist themes and motifs, London-based Issy Wood specialises in making the familiar strange, her unusual choice of materials and disquieting imagery distinguishing her since Wood's first solo exhibition in 2017. Painted directly onto linen, *A junction*, 2020, is typical of Wood's seductive style, belonging to a body of works that includes her closely cropped and magnified images of car interiors, leather jackets, and everyday commodities that are made unsettling in their proximity to bodies, desires, and an alluring darkness that extends far beyond her chromatic preferences.

Recalling the work of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, Danielle Orchard's nudes generate art historical and contemporary familiarity. Her paintings often reference their styles and subjects by portraying female nudes in an abstract manner. Her scenes have earned her gallery exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Copenhagen, and most recently, her first solo exhibition in Asia in Seoul. Melissa Brown's oeuvre is best characterised by intriguing interpretations of everyday scenery. By adding a touch of surrealism to her imaginative landscapes, the artist imbues her work with an abstract quality, inviting viewers to step inside her dreamlike world of unreality.



Issy Wood

A junction, 2020

oil on linen, 131 x 100 cm.

Estimate: HK\$ 900,000 -1,200,000/ US\$ 115,000 - 154,000



Danielle Orchard

Night Out, 2020

oil on canvas, 122 x 152.4 cm.

Estimate: HK\$ 300,000 - 400,000/ US\$ 38,500 - 51,300



Melissa Brown

The Royal Palm, 2019

Flashe, acrylic and oil on dibond, 149.9 x 198 cm.

Estimate: HK\$ 80,000 - 120,000/ US\$ 10,300 - 15,400



Robert Nava

Shark Wing Pegasus, 2019

acrylic & grease pencil on canvas, 182.2 x 213.2 cm.

Estimate: HK\$1,200,000-1,800,000 / US\$154,000-231,000

Fantastical Worlds

Transporting the viewer to a childlike world of imaginary hybridised creatures, *Shark Wing Pegasus*, 2019, features American artist Robert Nava's most iconic motif – two sharks, engulfing a turquoise pegasus in the foreground. Nava's signature fantastical world of mythical creatures defies the black and white distinction between the avant-garde and kitsch, introducing a skillfully planned playfulness that is reminiscent of children's drawings. Interestingly, the compositional technique of imitating children's drawings and returning to simple visual cues is commonly adopted by other contemporary artists presented in the ULTRA/NEO series this season, such as Aboudia, and Szabolcs Bozó.

One of the biggest names in the African art scene today, Aboudia is best known for his unsettling chronicles of chaos and violence in his hometown of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. *Untitled (Take Me II)*, 2011, is an early embodiment of the artist's signature graffiti style. Initially appearing guileless and spirited, Aboudia's paintings reveal themselves to be a brutally honest commentary on a war-stricken childhood and stolen innocence. He has enjoyed increasing success at auctions in recent years, having set all of his top 10 auction results in 2021. Beginning in 2007, the artist's work has been widely exhibited at prestigious institutions and galleries.

London-based Hungarian artist Szabolcs Bozó paints fantastical creatures that appear lifted from children's books. A self-taught artist, Bozó is part of a younger guard of artists who looks for inspiration in images made by children, and is known for his childlike large-scale paintings of animals and abstract characters.



Aboudia

Untitled (Take Me II), 2011

acrylic and mixed media on canvas, diptych, 117.5 x 274 cm.

Estimate: HK\$500,000-700,000 / US\$64,100-89,700



Szabolcs Bozó

One bird, a cat and a man, 2020

acrylic and oil stick on canvas, 130.5 x 160.5 cm.

Estimate: HK\$400,000-600,000 / US\$51,300-76,900

Auction:

[20th Century & Contemporary Art & Design Day Sale](#) – 12pm HKT, 21 June 2022

[20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale](#) – 6pm HKT, 22 June 2022

Hong Kong Preview: 10am – 7pm HKT, 18-21 June

Location: JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong, 88 Queensway, Admiralty

Touring Previews:

Singapore: 3-4 June 2022, 11am–7pm | The St Regis Singapore, 29 Tanglin Road, Singapore

Taipei: 4-5 June 2022, 11am-6pm | Bellavita Gallery, B1 No. 28 Song Ren Road, Xinyi District, Taipei

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