

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT

Sale Interest: 47 Lots



[View Sale](#)



[Conditions of Sale](#)



**PHILLIPS**

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT

Sale Interest: 47 Lots

## Auction & Viewing Location

3 March 2022  
30 Berkeley Square, London

## Sale Designation

When sending in written bids or making enquiries please refer to this sale as UK010122 or 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale.

## Absentee and Telephone Bids

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

## Contemporary Art Department

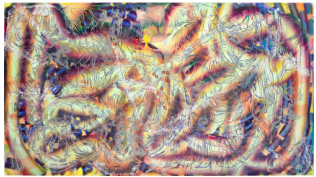
Rosanna Widén  
Senior Specialist, Head of Evening Sale  
+ 44 20 7318 4060  
[rwiden@phillips.com](mailto:rwiden@phillips.com)

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  
**Lauren Quin**  
*Airsickness*  
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000



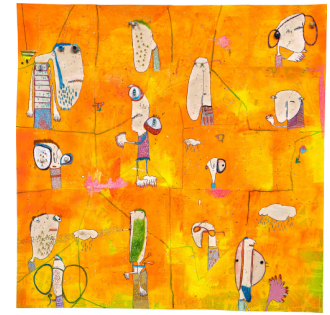
2  
**Doron Langberg**  
*Amy in Her Studio*  
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000



3  
**Cinga Samson**  
*Ubhle beenkanyezi VIII*  
Estimate £50,000 — 70,000



4  
**Kwesi Botchway**  
*The Apprentice Bench*  
Estimate £50,000 — 70,000



5  
**Rafa Macarrón**  
*Balcones*  
Estimate £30,000 — 50,000



6  
**Jadé Fadojutimi**  
*My Blanket has a Possessive Na...*  
Estimate £120,000 — 180,000



7  
**Issy Wood**  
*Chalet*  
Estimate  
£100,000 — 150,000

8  
This lot is no longer available.



9  
**Robert Nava**  
*Sylvia (87 Sylvia)*  
Estimate  
£80,000 — 100,000



10  
**Nicolas Party**  
*Houses*  
Estimate  
£1,100,000 — 1,500,000



# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

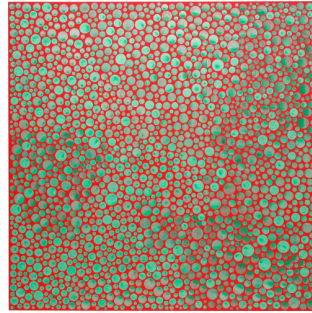
London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



11  
**Shara Hughes**  
*Crooked*  
Estimate  
£180,000 — 250,000



12  
**Cecily Brown**  
*When Time Ran Out*  
Estimate  
£2,000,000 — 3,000,000



13  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Dots Accumulation (WWPER)*  
Estimate  
£800,000 — 1,200,000



14  
**Günther Förg**  
*Ohne titel*  
Estimate  
£600,000 — 800,000



15  
**Gerhard Richter**  
*Abstraktes Bild*  
Estimate  
£1,800,000 — 2,500,000



16  
**Sigmar Polke**  
*Ohne Titel*  
Estimate  
£1,000,000 — 1,500,000



17  
**Henry Moore**  
*Family Group*  
Estimate  
£300,000 — 400,000



18  
**Hurvin Anderson**  
*Untitled (Handsworth Park)*  
Estimate  
£1,200,000 — 1,800,000



19  
**David Hockney**  
*Self-Portrait on the Terrace*  
Estimate  
£4,000,000 — 6,000,000



20  
**Cecily Brown**  
*Blithe Spirit*  
Estimate  
£500,000 — 700,000



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21  
**Tom Wesselmann**  
*Great American Nude, no. 91*  
Estimate  
£1,200,000 — 1,800,000



22  
**Alexander Archipenko**  
*Statue on a Triangular Base*  
Estimate  
£100,000 — 150,000



23  
**Francis Bacon**  
*Untitled (Head)*  
Estimate  
£600,000 — 800,000



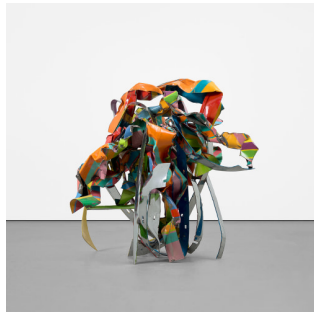
24  
**Jean Dubuffet**  
*Nos châteaux peu denses*  
Estimate  
£1,000,000 — 1,500,000



25  
**Banksy**  
*Laugh Now Monkeys with Monk...*  
Estimate  
£1,500,000 — 2,500,000



26  
**George Condo**  
*The Rock Thrower*  
Estimate  
£500,000 — 700,000



27  
**John Chamberlain**  
*Snatching Bookie Bob*  
Estimate  
£150,000 — 200,000



28  
**Ed Ruscha**  
*Huge Conditions*  
Estimate  
£1,100,000 — 1,500,000



29  
**Claude Monet**  
*Le Golfe Juan*  
Estimate  
£900,000 — 1,200,000



30  
**Anselm Kiefer**  
*Freia's Garden*  
Estimate  
£700,000 — 1,000,000

# 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

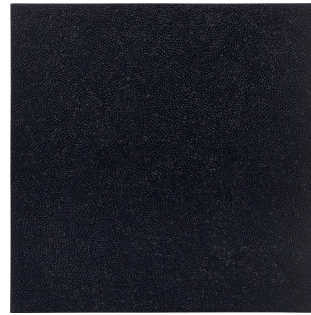
London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



31  
**Harold Ancart**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate  
£150,000 — 200,000



32  
**Jadé Fadojutimi**  
*A Cropped Perspective of This ...*  
Estimate  
£150,000 — 200,000



33  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Infinity Nets (SENN)*  
Estimate  
£1,200,000 — 1,800,000



34  
**Banksy**  
*Go Flock Yourself*  
Estimate  
£1,000,000 — 1,500,000



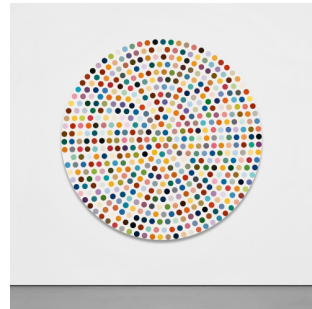
35  
**Felix Gonzalez-Torres**  
*'Untitled' (March 5th) #2*  
Estimate  
£450,000 — 650,000



36  
**Daniel Buren**  
*Peinture aux formes variables*  
Estimate  
Estimate On Request



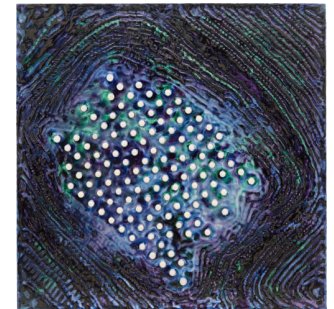
37  
**Damien Hirst**  
*Without You*  
Estimate  
£500,000 — 700,000



38  
**Damien Hirst**  
*Zinc Sulfide*  
Estimate  
£350,000 — 550,000



39  
**Glenn Ligon**  
*Figure #24*  
Estimate  
£300,000 — 400,000



40  
**Jack Whitten**  
*Space Busters III*  
Estimate  
£400,000 — 600,000

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41  
**Jean-Michel Basquiat**  
*Untitled*  
Estimate £600,000 — 800,000



42  
**KAWS**  
*THIS IS THE WAY*  
Estimate £600,000 — 800,000



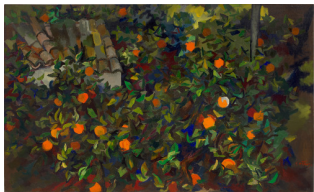
43  
**Serge Attukwei Clottey**  
*Glow girl*  
Estimate £30,000 — 40,000



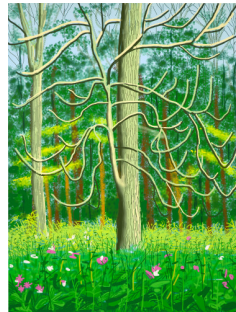
44  
**Tschabalala Self**  
*Chandelier 2*  
Estimate £100,000 — 150,000



45  
**Georg Baselitz**  
*Torso Frau*  
Estimate £400,000 — 600,000



46  
**Renato Guttuso**  
*Aranceto Notturmo*  
Estimate £70,000 — 100,000

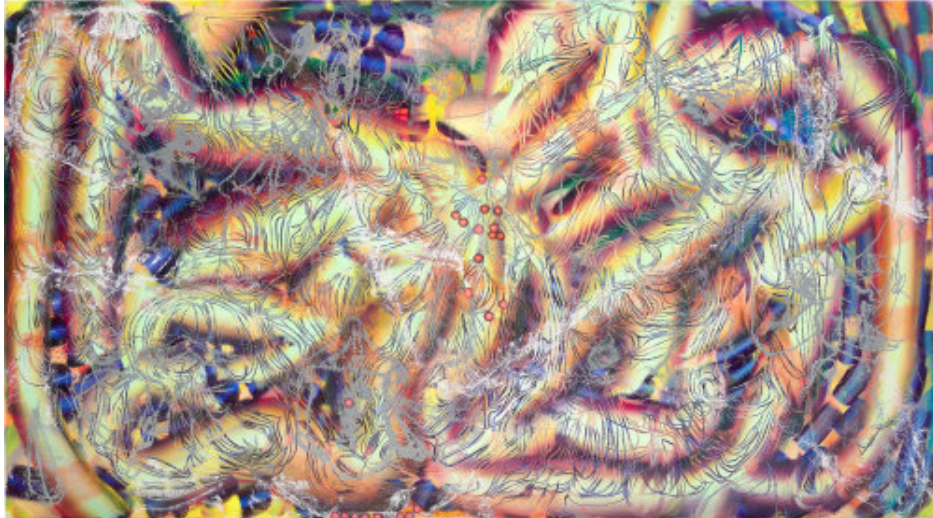


47  
**David Hockney**  
*The Arrival of Spring in Woldgat...*  
Estimate £180,000 — 250,000



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

1

### **Lauren Quin**

*Airsickness*

signed and dated 'L Quin 2021' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

127 x 229 cm (50 x 90 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2021.

**Estimate**

£30,000 — 50,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



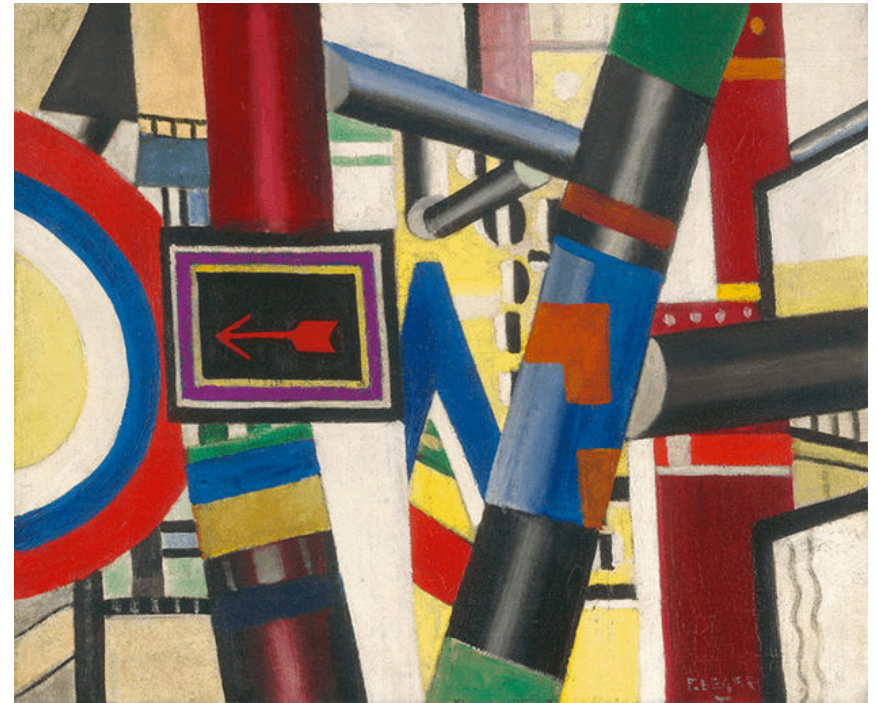
*'The medium of paint, how it works chemically – I had to learn it the hard way.'* —Lauren Quin

Presenting a psychedelic tangle of thick, tubular forms that appear to be burrowing into the densely layered surface of the canvas, the characteristically immersive and large-scale *Airsickness* marks the auction debut of one of Los Angeles' most exciting and in-demand emerging artists. Hailed as 'the painter doing abstraction her own way', Lauren Quin has developed an electrifying visual language that combines strikingly organic - even corporeal - forms with an intensely saturated palette and pulsating kinetic energy.<sup>i</sup> Bringing to mind twisted plant roots, bundles of arteries, or microbial life, Quin's forms possess a rhythmic vitality that animates the entire surface of the canvas.

Although having completed her MFA with the prestigious Yale School of Art in 2018, Quin describes her practice as largely self-taught, crediting her untrained father as an important and highly formative influence in her youth. It was an encounter with the so-called 'tubism' of the French Cubist Fernand Léger's early work however that firmly set the young Quin on her own path.

*'I looked at Léger's paintings as antithetical to mine in the way that they were organised, and I wanted to make something with that organisational tool'* —Lauren Quin

Characterised by their bold palette and graphic sense of line, Léger's paintings adapted Cubist methods and ways of looking, applying them to an art of everyday modern life. Fascinated by mechanical and industrial imagery, Léger incorporated these elements into his paintings, generating spatially complex fields of fragmented cylindrical forms viewed from multiple perspectives.



Fernand Léger, *Le passage à niveau, Esquisse (The Railway Crossing, Sketch)*, 1919, The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: The Art Institute of Chicago/Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Picking up on the compositional possibilities of these volumetric cylinders, and the ways in which Léger used them to organise light and structure in his work, Quin adopted the tube and reimagined it as 'a rule to bend – a rule to break', with highly innovative results.<sup>ii</sup>

*Airsickness* is typical of Quin's most recent body of work in its focus on these luminous, knotted tubes. Starting with these forms, which Quin manipulates into tunnel shapes through drawing and the application of gradients, she gradually builds up the surface of her work in a series of dense layers. The strikingly organic quality of these tubular forms works on a technical as well as visual level, the artist etching into the still-wet surface of her canvases with butter knives or medical spoons dipped in turpentine, revealing the layers of paint below and creating contrasting, overlaid ripples that vibrate across the canvas. Highly energetic, the densely patterned surface radically disrupts the viewer's perspective in a manner that recalls the compositional complexity of Albert

Oehlen's 'computer paintings', and the layered multimedia landscapes of fellow contemporary artists Sarah Sze and Avery Singer.



Left: Albert Oehlen, *U.D.O 15*, 2001 – 2005, Galería Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid. Image: Album/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Albert Oehlen. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

At first glance Quin's works seem to have the quality of digital collage, her careful use of gradient motifs appearing to reference computer tools and image-making. However, her methods are in fact remarkably analogue, involving drawing, scratching, systematic mark-making, and a form of trace mono-printing whereby the surface of the work is gently pressed onto an ink-covered pane of glass, staining the carved line drawings. Alongside this internal interplay of etched, printed, and painted layers that Quin likens to naturally occurring moiré patterns, her tendency to work on multiple paintings at once generates a profound sense of organic growth that moves beyond the picture's edge, closely binding these works together through their shared biomorphic structure. Organic, sensual, and highly active, *Airsickness* truly comes alive in the flesh, its snaking tubes evoking a sense of movement that oscillates between the microscopic and the interdimensional.

## Collector's Digest

- Just this year, Lauren Quin has been the subject of significant critical attention, with works recently acquired by prestigious institutions including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Miami,

the Walker Arts Centre, Minnesota, and the X Museum in Beijing. *Airsickness* represents the artist's auction debut.

- Quin opened her first European solo show *Bat's Belly* at Loyal Gallery Stockholm in June 2021 and presented her second solo exhibition of works at Friends Indeed Galley in San Francisco in July. She has also contributed to important group shows with Blum & Poe, Los Angeles and Downs and Ross in New York.

- Quin was awarded her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015 and earned her MFA from Yale School of Art in 2019.

<sup>i</sup> Stephanie Eckardt, 'In the Studio with Lauren Quin, the Painter Doing Abstraction Her Own Way', *W Magazine*, 8 July 2021, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Stephanie Eckardt, 'In the Studio with Lauren Quin, the Painter Doing Abstraction Her Own Way', *W Magazine*, 8 July 2021, [online](#)

## Provenance

Loyal Gallery, Stockholm

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

Stockholm, Loyal Gallery, *Bat's Belly*, 3 June - 17 July 2021, n.p. (illustrated)



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PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
AMERICAN COLLECTION

2

### **Doron Langberg**

*Amy in Her Studio*

signed with the artist's initials and dated 'DL 17' on the  
overlap

oil on linen

152.2 x 127.1 cm (59 7/8 x 50 in.)

Painted in 2017.

**Estimate**

£30,000 — 50,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*'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

Representing an urgent and important emerging voice in contemporary figurative painting, Israeli-born Doron Langberg's chromatically vibrant, and often large-scale works are grounded in a careful study of vulnerability, queer intimacy, and community. Frequently eliciting close comparison to the compositions of French *Intimistes* Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard, Langberg's paintings also belong to an emotionally charged revival of figurative painting unfolding in New York and headed by the likes of Jennifer Packer and Salman Toor. This auction debut comes shortly after Langberg's first solo exhibition with Victoria Miro in London and marks an exciting moment in the deepening critical appreciation that surrounds this emerging artist.

Departing from the more overtly erotic depictions of men in sexually explicit compositions that Langberg has become well-known for, *Amy in Her Studio* belongs to a body of work that shifted focus away from the vulnerability, tenderness, and awkwardness bound up with the sexual encounter into a deeper and more nuanced examination of the complexities embedded in our intimate relationships. 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>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7loYutYkto>

Doron Langberg discussing his inspiration and practice for Art Drunk's 'Why I paint' series

## Intimacy and 'Queer Intimism'

In what some have dubbed the 'New Queer Intimism', Langberg presents his circle of friends and lovers, often arranging them in domestic interiors executed in dissolving washes of colour that blur the boundaries between material reality and memory. Subject and environment flow into one another in Langberg's paintings, reconfiguring the shallow picture plane as a space of great emotional and psychological depth.

A recurring character in Langberg's painting, Amy - a fellow artist and friend - is shown here alone, sitting cross-legged on the floor of her studio, her shoulders rolled slightly forward as she leans her weight onto her elbows. Surrounded by canvas, scissors, and other studio ephemera, she seems

elusive and absorbed in thought. Executed in the same washes of rich, golden yellow and inky black as the space she occupies, Langberg collapses distinctions between the interiority and environment of his sitter here as Amy's studio and a study of Amy herself become remarkably interwoven. As Langberg has described, his interiors are highly charged and emotional spaces, at once real and 'something that's more of a continuation of the figure's interior life.' As a working space where the artist explores ideas and turns them into material realities of their own, the studio perhaps most vividly captures this porous exchange between interiority and environment that preoccupies Langberg's painting.

*'In my early twenties, my work was much more explicit. There was a conflation of intimacy and sex. As I grew as a person [...] I found that my language could also describe friendship and familial closeness. It doesn't have to be tied to sex or sexuality to be about queerness.'* —Doron Langberg

## Bonnard and the *Intimistes*

Langberg makes frequent and lyrical reference to his art-historical mentors, as the recent presentation of his strikingly sensual *Lover* alongside Hans Holbein's iconic *Portrait of Sir Thomas More* as part of the ongoing *Living Histories: Queer Views and Old Masters* aptly demonstrates. Citing Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Édouard Manet, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler as reference points which ground his own approach to the tradition of figurative painting, Langberg's particular blend of psychological directness and domestic quietude most vividly recalls Pierre Bonnard's scintillating canvases. Drawing on the same intense luminosity and vibrancy and shallow pictorial space employed by the French master, the titular Amy here appears to emerge from the dreamy washes of yellow ground, as undisturbed by our presence as Bonnard's many depictions of his model and muse Marthe floating in the bathtub or moving about their home.



Left: Pierre Bonnard, *Cabinet de Toilette (Nude in the Bathroom)*, 1932, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence Right: Édouard Vuillard, *Portrait de Pierre Bonnard*, 1935, Musée d'art moderne, Paris. Image: © Photo Josse / Bridgeman Images

As in Bonnard's painting too, it is the objects of everyday life that anchor the shallow composition here, the shocking blue of the role of tape cropped just out of frame in the upper right-hand side of the canvas possessing a sudden and unexpected material weight that counterbalances the lighter, more ephemeral aspects of the composition. These are friends, artists, sharing their domestic and working spaces in the 21st century, woven into the fabric of each other's lives just as the tender portraits of Vuillard and Bonnard from a century before capture.

Unlike Bonnard though, who rarely painted from life, Langberg's painterly process involves close and careful observation of his subjects, working initially on smaller-scale portraits in direct contact with his subjects. Demanding and deepening the sense of mutual trust, comfort, and intimacy that is developed in the relationship between model and painter, his paintings possess a psychological intensity and emotional charge that is impossible to ignore.

## 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.
- Most recently, his work was included as part of *Living Histories: Queer Views and Old Masters*, the Frick Collection's temporary residence at Frick Madison which placed four contemporary artists

in direct dialogue with Old Master paintings with a particular focus on gender and queer identity normally overlooked in European histories of art.

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

Living Histories: In conversation with Doron Langberg

<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> Tyler Malone, 'Doron Langberg and the New Queer Intimism', *Jewish Currents*, Fall 2019, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Doron Langberg, quoted in Tyler Malone, 'Doron Langberg and the New Queer Intimism', *Jewish Currents*, Fall 2019, [online](#).

## Provenance

Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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PROPERTY FROM A PROMINENT PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

3

### **Cinga Samson**

*Ubuhle beenkanyezi VIII*

signed and dated 'Cinga Samson 2018' on the reverse  
oil on canvas

80 x 59.7 cm (31 1/2 x 23 1/2 in.)

Painted in 2018.

Estimate

£50,000 — 70,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



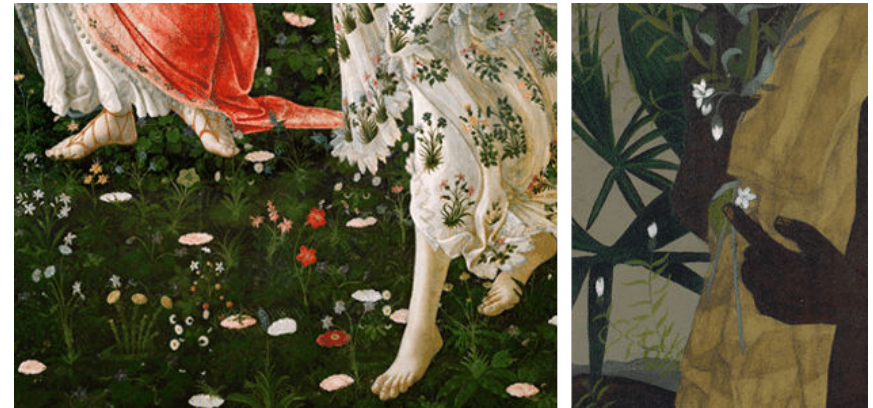
*'I felt it was important to start to celebrate myself and project more about what it is that I enjoy, about me, or what really makes me—elements that make me, as an African, as a young man, and as an artist.'* —Cinga Samson

With shaven head and milky, translucent eyes that seem to glow with an other-worldly vision, the mesmerising figure of *Ubuhle beenkanyezi VIII* is instantly recognisable as the work of young South African artist Cinga Samson. Casually dressed in blue denim jeans, a length of rich, gold fabric hanging down across his bare torso, the figure exudes a quiet confidence and self-possession. Although he stands turned squarely towards us, he seems remote, a sense of impassable distance captured perfectly by the title, which translates from the Zulu dialect as *The Beauty of the Stars*. Like a messenger between two worlds, the figure appears poised on the threshold between material and spiritual realms.

Highly stylised, Samson's portraits feel at once timeless and contemporary, the self-taught artist deftly blending youthful aspiration and traditional beliefs as he explores his own complex feelings around masculinity, spirituality, and modernity. This is especially pronounced in the present work, which was executed in 2018 and belongs to a broader series of self-portraits where the artist has more self-consciously introverted his gaze to 'celebrate myself and project [...] elements that make me, as an African, as a young man, and as an artist.'<sup>i</sup> Although his compositions are executed with a confident realism due, in part to the artist's tendency to work from carefully staged photographs, they nevertheless speak to a mysterious world that lies just beyond the scope of our understanding and powerfully expressive of the artist's description that, 'if you ever get too close, you start to approach danger.'<sup>ii</sup>

## Landscape and the Language of Flowers

Although Samson's work clearly belongs to a long tradition of figurative painting that combines European and African modes of figuration, landscape – or, more precisely, the undulating vistas particular to the Mthatha district of the Eastern Cape where Samson was born and raised – is also central to his pictorial language. While clearly geographically located, the more symbolic treatment of the floral motif here recalls the crisp rendering of Sandro Botticelli's *La Primavera*. Softly rendered in gently rolling hills behind the standing figure and bathed in Samson's characteristic twilight hues, the world of *Ubuhle beenkanyezi VIII* hovers between fable, dream, and reality, not unlike the allegorical canvases of [Kenyan artist Michael Armitage](#). Like Armitage, Samson's portraits also draw on a history of the exoticising Western gaze, using the landscape to explore ways of navigating African identity in a globalised world.



Left: Sandro Botticelli, *La Primavera*, c. 1477-78, detail, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Image: akg-images / Erich Lessing Right: Detail of the present work

Such ideas are obliquely referenced in the visual resonances struck between the ethereal, enigmatic quality of these landscapes, and Henri Rousseau's exoticised arcadian visions. As in Samson's highly decorative treatment of rich foliage that envelops his subject here, Rousseau's canvases were teeming with richly abundant fauna, the imagined landscape as important to Rousseau's historically specific vision as the animals and figures he populated it with. Similarly, Samson's portraits of young, aspirational African and diasporic men attempt to reconcile traditional cultural codes with a more globalised 21<sup>st</sup> century vision of success and aspiration signified by designer clothes, trainers, and material possessions.



Henri Rousseau, *Tropical Forest: Battling Tiger and Buffalo, 1908*, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Image: Bridgeman Images

Unlike Rousseau though, who famously never left France, Samson's careful observation of the flowers and plants indigenous to his native Cape Town are charged with personal and cultural significance. As the artist describes, flowers have formed a foundational element in his painting. His earliest works were traditional still lifes, elements that have woven their way through his work ever since. In 2015 as he was working on his *Scent of Flowers* series Samson developed this motif, experimenting with 'creating flowers that are burnt, leaving charcoal marks. I had this outline, this drawing of still life flowers in a vase, which were drawn in charcoal, on a dry brownish surface.'<sup>iii</sup>

As in the elegiac 2016 *Hliso Street* series which the artist dedicated to the memory of his mother, the figure holds the slender stem of an indigenous white-petalled flower here, introducing a funerary or ceremonial atmosphere to the piece. Emphasised by the muted palette and distinctive quality of Samson's light, the still and quiet atmosphere of the painting here is especially pointed when we learn of the personal significance of the Cannas flowers. As the artist describes:

*'There's a link I've found between me and the still lifes. I spent my earlier ages with my biological mother, who used to pick up flowers in the yard and put them in the vase [...] I was tapping into that memory.'* —Cinga Samson

In a nod to his earlier *vanitas* paintings and providing a poignant meditation on the brevity of life itself, the one, cut flower here is an elegant and loaded touch. However, in the proliferation of these small, white flowers across the tangled fronds that animate the surface of the canvas, Samson seems to be offering a more optimistic vision of the vitality of memory, and a sense that death itself might not represent the end of a journey, but another stage of a larger cycle.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl7lp3Js25Q>

Cinga Samson in his Cape Town studio discussing the role of masculinity in his paintings.

### Collector's Digest

- Based in Cape Town, Samson is a self-taught artist who began painting after joining the Isibane Creative Arts shared studio in Khayelitsha when he was 21.
- Before joining White Cube in 2021, Samson had been developing a significant reputation internationally with critically lauded solo exhibitions hosted by blank projects in Cape Town and Perrotin in New York. Since then, Samson mounted an exhibition of new works at The FLAG Art Foundation in October 2021 and has a forthcoming solo exhibition with White Cube in London.
- Examples of his work can be found in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York; South African National Gallery, Cape Town; and the A4 Arts Foundation, Cape Town.

<sup>i</sup> Cinga Samson, , quoted in Katy Donoghue, 'Cinga Samson Captures the Beauty and Spiritual Side of Young African Men', Whitewall Art, 16 April 2019, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Cinga Samson, quoted in Meara Sharma, 'An Artist Who Doesn't Want to Feed Western Fantasies About Africa', 21 February 2020, New York Times, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Cinga Samson, quoted in Katy Donoghue, 'Cinga Samson Captures the Beauty and Spiritual Side of Young African Men', Whitewall Art, 16 April 2019, [online](#).



3

**Cinga Samson**

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**Provenance**

blank projects, Cape Town

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE COLLECTOR

4

### **Kwesi Botchway**

*The Apprentice Bench*

signed and dated 'K. Botchway 20' on the centre of the bench; signed, titled and dated 'Kwesi Botchway The Apprentice Bench (2020)' on the reverse  
acrylic and oil on canvas

171 x 127.4 cm (67 3/8 x 50 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2020.

**Estimate**

£50,000 — 70,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I don't want to just produce realistic work but works that speak loud and can prompt dialogue [...] My focus is to be more conceptual, focusing on the language of colour. I want to elevate Blackness and also what Black truly represents.'* —Kwesi Botchway

Executed in stunning shades of tangerine and establishing deep chromatic harmonies across its impressive expanse, *The Apprentice Bench* is a visually arresting work from the young Ghanaian artist Kwesi Botchway. Supremely stylish and exuding a relaxed sense of self-possession, the figure dominating the composition leans back on a low bench, folding one leg up towards his body and raising one, playfully patterned sock underneath him. Holding a tool of his trade lightly in his hands, the titular apprentice gazes out past us, engaging, but impassive.

Describing himself as an 'Afro-Impressionist', Botchway belongs to an import and diverse group of contemporary figurative painters who seek to reframe the representation of Black bodies and narratives within the Western art historical canon by entering into a robust and sustained dialogue with its traditions. Drawing certain comparisons to the Old Master drama of Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's figures and the pointed insertion of the Black subject into a European art historical tradition developed by artists such as Kerry James Marshal and Titus Kaphar, Botchway's arresting works are marking him out as one of Ghana's most prominent and important emerging voices.

## Purple Black

*'In Kwesi Botchway's vibrant paintings, colour is everything. Colour is language, character, culture, community.'* —Katherine Finerty

Included in Botchway's celebrated first solo exhibition in Accra, *Dark Purple is Everything Black* with Gallery 1957 in 2020, *The Apprentice Bench* belongs to a distinctive body of work that establishes the primacy of colour - and its communicative power - in Botchway's practice. As well as the complex depths achieved in the passages of vibrant orange here, the present work also highlights the artist's uniquely bold application of purple in achieving deep melanin skin tones. Directly challenging any negative associations associated with deeper, darker skin tones, Botchway's assiduous use of purple here draws on the colour's historical rarity and elevated status, realigning the 'dark purple' skin with a culturally codified language of beauty, royalty, and power, and exploring new ways to 'communicate colour-consciousness, identity, representation, and perceptions of beauty'.<sup>i</sup> As the artist explains 'purple is an ancient colour which has been linked to royalty. The Queen of England, in the past, had to ban people from wearing purple. It was mainly used by people with power or authority. I took that inspiration. Instead of painting black people with purple clothes or putting crowns on them I would rather depict it through their skin.'<sup>ii</sup>



Left: Peter Clarke, *The Blue Bird*, 1959, The Norva Foundation, Cape Town. Artwork: © The Estate of Peter Clarke/DALRO/DACS 2022. Right: Detail of the present work

In this respect, Botchway's work sits in close dialogue with a rich tradition of modern and contemporary African and diasporic artists. In his rich handling of paint and colour, Botchway's work draws certain visual parallels to the canvases of the late South African artist Peter Clarke, who used portraiture as a vehicle for resisting the homogenisation of Black South African experience under Apartheid. In contrast to a levelling narrative of collective struggle, Clarke drew out the individuality and interiority of his subjects, developing a pictorial vocabulary of flat angularity and heightened chromatics that proved to be highly expressive and enduring.

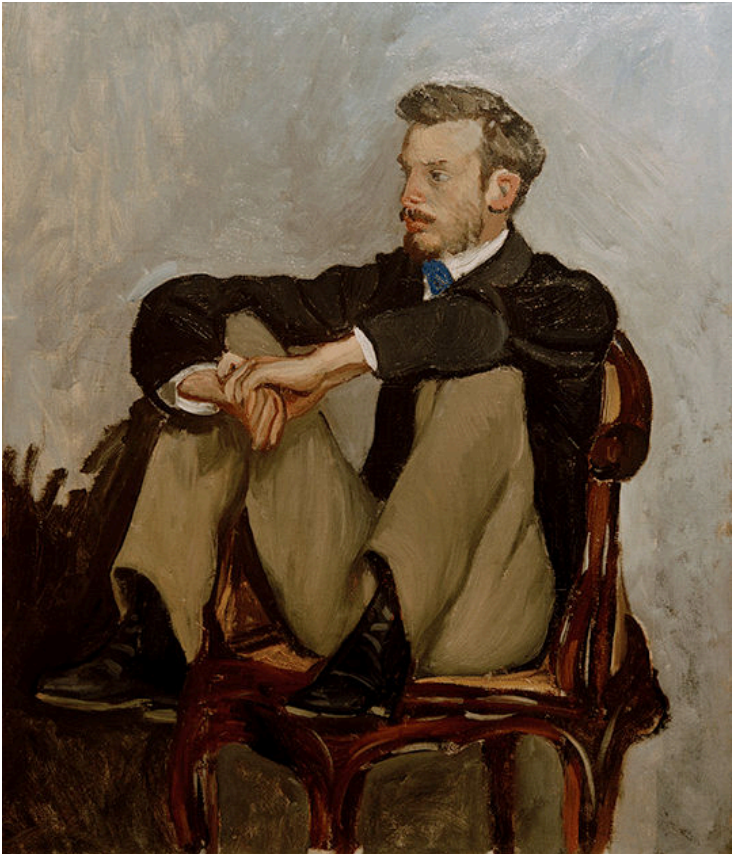
## Afro Impressionism

*'I am an impressionist and a portrait artist. I'm more focussed on the human face, I believe that's where our souls display their emotion.'* —Kwesi Botchway

Shifting his sights to more European traditions, Botchway engages deeply and directly with the traditions of 19th century French Impressionism. This legacy can be traced primarily in the artist's heightened palette, his deep sensitivity to the emotive power of light and colour, and, importantly, in his approach to fashion and the psychological reality of his subjects. Departing from the overt academism of the previous generation, Édouard Manet and early Impressionist painters moved increasingly towards an appreciation of the figure as an individual, psychologically complex



modern subject, a shift that clearly resonates with Botchway's own project. Shown in contemporary fashions and often in roughly finished, bare environments these 19th century paintings also provide a pictorial reference point for Botchway where 'fashion serves as a crucial extension of his figures' personality'. This is especially apparent in *The Apprentice Bench* where the figure's richly saturated overalls and bench contrast against the bare monochromatic ground in order to focus our attention on the psychological dimensions of the work. Characteristic of Botchway's paintings more broadly, the effect is 'at once grounded yet aspirational; reflective of an intermingling of cultures new and old, and an ever-evolving definition of luxury.'<sup>iii</sup>



Frederick Bazille, *Pierre Auguste Renoir*, 1867, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: akg-images

A tribute to and celebration of Black subjectivity and power, *The Apprentice Bench* has incredible presence, its strong narrative force underpinned by Botchway's technical facility. Against the deep purple tones of the figure's skin, the orange tint to the eyes burns brightly. A recurring feature in Botchway's work, this flourish communicates the expressive core of his aesthetic project. As he elucidates: 'I love intensity and white eyes for me are a bit plain, there isn't as much of a story behind them [...] the orange eyes create an intensity in the work. It's kind of like you're looking at someone who is staring at you intensely, posing their stories to you. The hot orange eyes signify a kind of superiority, I want to put black people in this state, to see themselves as not normal human beings but something more powerful, because you know for me I feel like black is the presence of everything.'<sup>iv</sup>

### Collector's Digest

- A strong emerging Ghanaian voice, Kwesi Botchway studied at Ghanatta College of Art and Design, as did his close friends Amoako Boafo and Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe.
- Like fellow Ghanaian Serge Attukwei Clottey, Botchway places community at the centre of his practice. Founder of the WorldFaze Art Studio based in Ogbodjo, the artist's birthplace and home to a large Zonga community, he works to provide residency and exhibition opportunities as well as practical and emotional support for young artists.
- Botchway has exhibited widely in recent years including the 2022 solo exhibition *Rumours of Blackness* with Maruani Mercier Gallery in Brussels and the 2020 presentation of his work in London with Gallery 1957.
- In November 2021, Phillips debuted Botchway's first work at auction as part of our [20<sup>th</sup> Century and Contemporary Art Evening Sale](#).

<sup>i</sup> Katherine Finerty 'Kwesi Botchway - Dark Purple is Everything Black', Gallery 1957, 2020, press release, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Kwesi Botchway, quoted in 'In Conversation with Kwesi Botchway, Unit London, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Kwesi Botchway, quoted in Stephanie Sporn, 'For Ghanaian Portraitist Kwesi Botchway, Fashion and Power go Hand in Hand', *Galerie Magazine*, 13 November 2020, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Kwesi Botchway, quoted in 'In Conversation with Kwesi Botchway, Unit London, [online](#).

**Kwesi Botchway**

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**Provenance**

Gallery 1957, Accra

Private Collection (acquired from the above)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

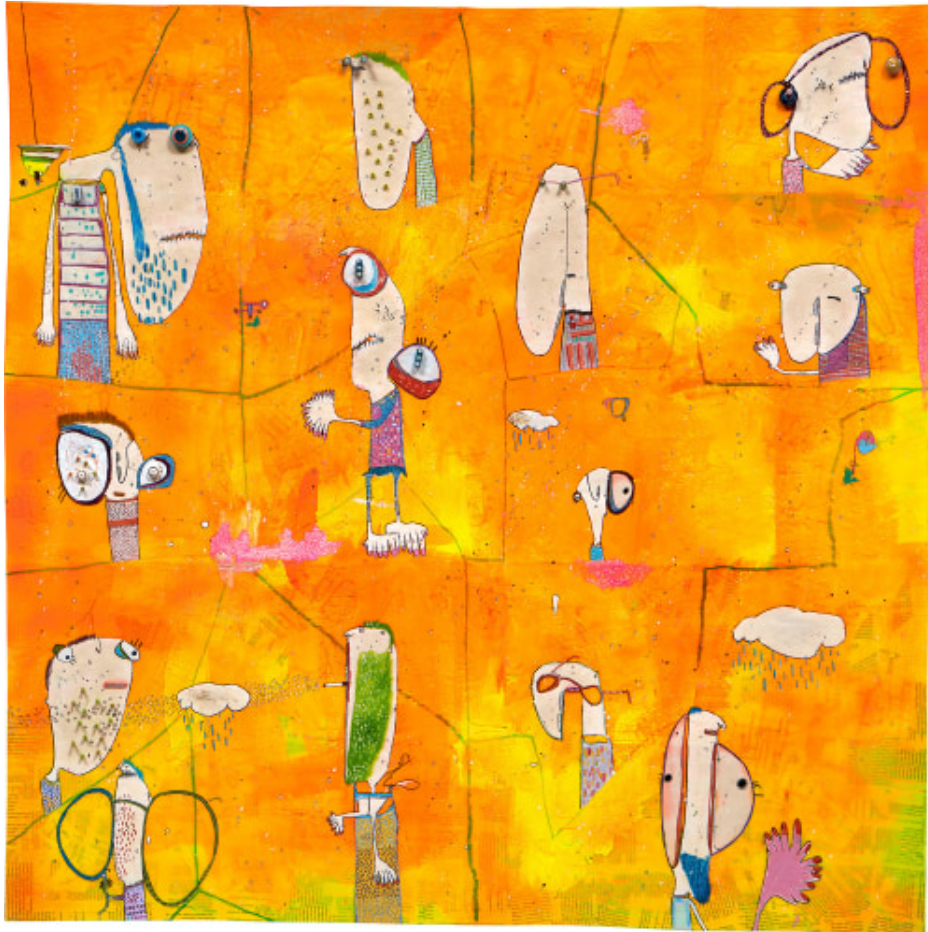
Accra, Gallery 1957, *Kwesi Botchway - Dark Purple Is Everything Black*, 19 May - 9 June 2020

**Literature**

Naomi Rea, 'Studio Visit: Kwesi Botchway on the Importance of Painting Faces and Celebrating His Fellow Ghanaian Artists', *artnet news*, 30 March 2021, online (illustrated in the artist's studio)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



5

**Rafa Macarrón**

*Balcones*

mixed media on PVC

113 x 113 cm (44 1/2 x 44 1/2 in.)

Executed in 2018.

**Estimate**

£30,000 — 50,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)





*'It is clear to me that I want to speak about life on the street, the everyday life, and my own existence. And I want to speak about these things with humour, more white than dark humour, more compassionate than cruel.'* —Rafa Macarrón

Hovering between dream and reality, Madrid-based Rafa Macarrón's brightly coloured compositions play host to an assortment of compelling, cartoon-like figures distinguished by their elongated and exaggerated features. Smoking cigarettes, sitting under rain clouds, and looking out from absurdly sized glasses, 13 of these flattened figures are present here, stacked against the acid yellow and fluorescent orange ground. Executed on a large scale, the pictorial space of *Balcones* is vertiginously shallow, the characters pushed right up against the picture surface. Playfully acknowledging this tension between two and three-dimensional space, the mixed-media elements protrude out from the surface of the work, reproducing the curiously permeable quality of dreams as any formal distance between the strange world of the painting and our own is compromised.

Working in bursts of spontaneity, the self-taught artist dispenses with preparatory sketches as he paints directly onto a wide variety of surfaces and materials including iron, aluminium, and PVC, as in the present work. In this manner *Balcones* takes on the mutable appearance and dynamic atmosphere of the metropolis, the artist animating the whole composition with a sense of motion and energy that best describes contemporary urban life.

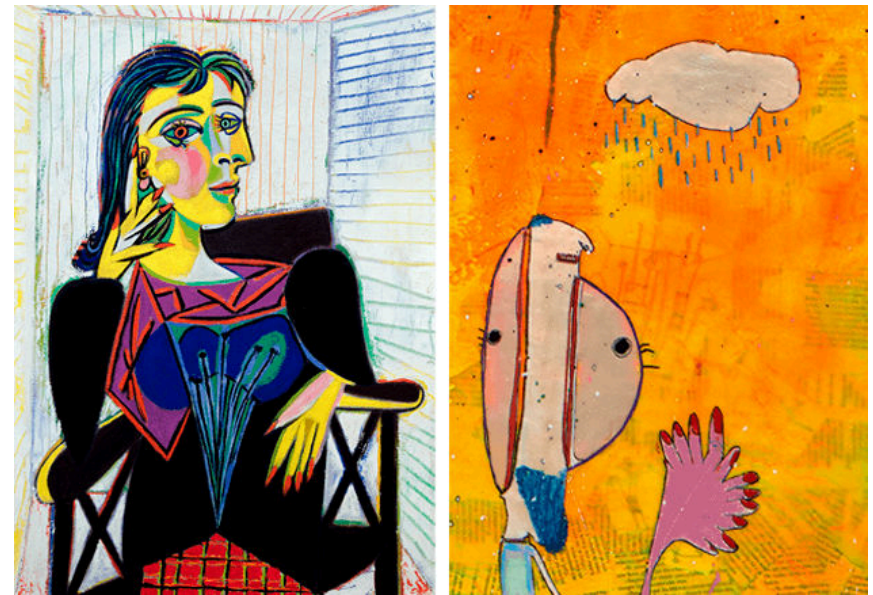
## Street Life

*'The characters come out of my everyday life and I take them out of context. They could be individuals living with us. When I create them, I always like to imagine where they come from, what they do, where they go, what life they have.'* —Rafa Macarrón

Immediately recognisable, Macarrón's characters concentrate a highly developed sense of individual personality within remarkably simplified gestures. A physiotherapist by training, Macarrón has a carefully studied knowledge of human anatomy, which he relates directly to his characteristic distortion of the figure. As the artist explains: 'To create my elongated figures requires knowledge and respect for anatomy. I know the structure of the body perfectly. Then, I begin to try out distortions and deformations, which I think works very well. I am able to create my own characters, each with their own soul and personality.'<sup>i</sup>

Influenced by comics and mid-century Spanish artists including those of the *El Paso* group,

Macarrón's work is rooted in a deep tradition of European figurative painting. In a recent interview the artist recalls a formative visit to the Musée Picasso in Paris when he was a child, 'When I entered one of the rooms I asked for a notebook and colored 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>ii</sup> In their economy and starkly graphic quality, these figures certainly recall Picasso's confidently executed drawings, although in their flattened combinations of frontal and profile portraits and the exaggeration of eyes, hands, and distinguishing features, they also evoke his iconic depictions of the Surrealist photographer Dora Maar that have become so synonymous with his name.



Left: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Dora Maar*, 1937, Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

Alongside the urban themes of Manuel Hernández Mompó, the scenes of everyday Parisian life captured by French post-war painter Jean Dubuffet in his *Paris Circus* series have clearly left the mark on the young artist, and it is unsurprising that he cites Dubuffet as a direct influence. Teeming with all the life and energy of the city, Dubuffet's *Paris Circus* works employ a similarly elevated perspective and flattened picture field used to such striking effect by Macarrón here. While certain visual comparisons could be drawn in terms of figuration and spatial arrangement,

both Macarrón and Dubuffet also share a remarkable tenderness for their figures, the ‘adventures and greatness of ordinary life, elevating everyday activities with mysticism and provocation.’<sup>iii</sup>



Jean Dubuffet, *Hôtel du Cantal*, 1961, Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris. Image: © Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance / akg-images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

It is this focus on the transcendental in the everyday that most vigorously informs Macarrón’s practice, something that the artist directly connects with certain mystical and religious aspects of his Spanish cultural heritage. Infusing this with a contemporary vocabulary inflected with nods to graffiti and street art, Macarrón continues a long artistic tradition focused on the complexities and contradictions of the human condition, and a celebration of contemporary life itself. Marking the artist’s evening sale debut, *Balcones* is a lively and compelling work from this promising Spanish artist.

## Collector's Digest

- Winner of the 2011 BMW Painting awards, Rafa Macarrón’s work is in demand internationally as his reputation as one of Spain’s most interesting emerging artists continues to grow.
- Following the opening of his first institutional show in March 2021 at the Contemporary Art Centre of Malaga, Macarrón also presented a solo exhibition at La Nave Salinas Foundation in Ibiza. Following exhibitions of KAWS, Keith Haring, and Kenny Scharf, Macarrón is the first Spanish artist to be the focus of a solo show at the foundation.
- Already this year Macarrón has presented a two-part solo exhibition with Nino Mier Gallery in Los Angeles. *The Girls* and *The Girl’s Dreams* opened in January and were presented across two of their galleries.

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

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

<sup>iii</sup> Gabrielle Leung, ‘Rafa Macarrón’s Dream-Like Characters to Take Over NYC’s Allouche’, *Hypenbeast*, 27 August 2019, [online](#).

## Provenance

Allouche Gallery, New York  
Private Collection, United States of America  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

6

### Jadé Fadojutimi

*My Blanket has a Possessive Nature*

signed and dated 'Jadé Fadojutimi Oct '18' on the  
reverse

oil on canvas

180.5 x 180.7 cm (71 1/8 x 71 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2018.

Estimate

£120,000 — 180,000 ⚡†

[Go to Lot](#)





*'A lot of my works are layered in what I am, or who I am. What I think things should be or shouldn't be.'* —Jadé Fadojutimi

One of the most exciting and in-demand artists working in Britain today, Jadé Fadojutimi is best known for her exhilarating, large-scale compositions which occupy a strange, shifting terrain between figuration and abstraction. Absorbing, rhythmic, and strikingly beautiful, the diaphanous layers of colour and complex spatial arrangements of *My Blanket has a Possessive Nature* are cornerstones of the artist's evolving style, and highly revealing of the ways in which form, colour, and texture combine in her works to generate unique 'emotional landscapes'. As the title's emphasis on the autobiographical suggests, Fadojutimi uses the objects around her as a means of exploring the fabric of identity itself, and while her work is conceptualised 'as a diary of my life', it is her studio that reveals itself 'as a diary of my childhood.'<sup>i</sup>

## In the Studio

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOjtHikN8UQ>

Ahead of the 2021 Liverpool Biennale Jadé Fadojutimi discusses her practice and the objects and ideas that inspire her in her London Studio.

Like [Henri Matisse's vibrant interiors](#), Fadojutimi's studio brims with colour, texture, and pattern, material elements that find their ways into her paintings in the production of complex immersive environments. Conceiving of her paintings as transparent windows reflecting the superimposed image of herself and the world beyond her, Fadojutimi transposes identity and experience into accents of pure colour, creating worlds where 'each line, each colour is an act of translation from a mood to a mark.'<sup>ii</sup>

Filled with verdant green houseplants, richly patterned throws and furnishings, and an assortment of toys, clothes, and sweeping cinematic soundtracks, Fadojutimi has described how she consciously designed her studio to feel like her bedroom – a familiar, comfortable space steeped in nostalgia and an emotional resonance that is clearly communicated in the present work. With its emphasis on the kind of protection, comfort, and warmth associated with childhood, the blanket of the title here strikes a deeply personal note that recalls the artist's discussion of her 2017 painting [When Teddy Left](#). A toy that the artist has had with her since birth, Teddy represents a deep emotional attachment for Fadojutimi, an intensity of feeling that she was able to harness to explore profound sensations of trauma and loss in the execution of the work. Similarly, it is the title of the present work which anchors our narrative approach to the piece, and while the titular blanket itself hovers at the edge of abstraction, its emotional reality is deeply felt.

## Making and Mending: Textiles and Identity

*'My first textile piece, Clustering Thoughts, has allowed me to work with a medium that has sparked my curiosity for a while. I believe in the power of colour, the power of thought and the will to express and converse through any medium that spurs you into conversation, whether that be with yourself, your surroundings, or the people around you.'* —Jadé Fadojutimi

Fascinated by fabric and fashion and the ways in which we weave our own complex narratives around ourselves, the language of craft and textile work is surprisingly well-suited to a discussion of Fadojutimi's practice. As in her paintings, textile work draws fruitfully on the personal and on the maker's immediate environment, playing with abstraction, colour, pattern, touch, and memory in its production. Themes and motifs familiar to textiles recur across her paintings in the form of looping ribbons, bows, and the trapezium of the patterned blanket occupying the centre of the present work. Turning her hand to fabric directly in 2019, Fadojutimi made these connections more explicit.

Recalling the bold abstractions and compositional complexity of Anni Albers' work and the deeply personal narrative power of Faith Ringgold's Story Quilts, *My Blanket has a Possessive Nature* moves beyond the representation of a specific object to a more nuanced investigation of the emotional resonance of colour and memory.



Anni Albers, *Pictorial Weaving*, 1953, Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan. Image: © Detroit Institute of Arts / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © 2022 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

Dominating the centre of the composition, a flurry of alternating brush marks executed in hues of vibrant oranges, slate greys, and flashes of white create a striking chequerboard effect. The energy and variety of these marks generates a concentration of rhythmic energy and vitality which is especially pronounced against the pale washes of pearlescent shades of pinks, mint greens, and sherbet yellows that surround it. Highly typical of Fadojutimi's virtuoso treatment of paint, the shimmering translucency of these passages are the result of the artist's use of Liquin, a thinning agent that dries fast and hardens the surface to a high sheen. Well-suited to her intensive and expulsive working practice, manipulating her materials in this way allows the artist to move paint freely and quickly across the canvas, creating a startling internal luminescence that has often drawn comparison to the effects of stained glass, or running water.

Pulled between figuration and abstraction and offering such a raw presentation of the interface between public and private worlds, *My Blanket has a Possessive Nature* offers a profound reflection on what it is to make and be made, echoing a long and poignant history of quilt making as much as it reflects on a more opaque, personal narrative. Executed in 2018, just one year after her graduation from the Royal College of Art and in the same year that she exhibited alongside Faith Ringgold at the Armory Show in New York, *My Blanket has a Possessive Nature* belongs to highly significant period in the formation of the artist's painterly language. Tellingly, the first work of Fadojutimi's to enter the Tate's permanent collection - *I Present Your Royal Highness* - also dates from this period and has firmly secured Fadojutimi's reputation as a formidable talent and leading voice in the contemporary British art scene.



Faith Ringgold, *Street Story Quilt*, 1985, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Faith Ringgold / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

## Collector's Digest

- At just 28 years old, Jadé Fadojutimi is the youngest artist to be represented in the Tate's permanent collection. A graduate of the Slade School and the Royal College of Art in London, her work is also included in major international collections including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, the Baltimore Museum of Art and The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
- After her first institutional show at Peer, London in 2019, Fadojutimi has gone on to present work in a series of key locations. Recent exhibitions include her American institutional debut at the Miami Institute for Contemporary Art, and the upcoming presentation of works at The Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire and the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin later this year.
- Presented at Phillips London last October, [Myths of Pleasure](#) represents the highest price achieved for Fadojutimi's work at auction.
- Jadé Fadojutimi has recently been selected to participate in La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani and due to be held later this year.

**Jadé Fadojutimi**

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<sup>i</sup> Jadé Fadojutimi, quoted in Katy Hessel, '27-Year-Old Painter Jadé Fadojutimi is in a League of Her Own', *Vogue*, 31 August 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Jennifer Higgin, 'From Life - Thoughts on the Paintings of Jadé Fadojutimi', Jadé Fadojutimi, *Jesture*, London, 2021, pp. 10-11.

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**Provenance**

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner



7

**Issy Wood**

*Chalet*

signed and dated 'Issy Wood 2019' on the reverse  
oil on velvet

160.7 x 130.4 cm (63 1/4 x 51 3/8 in.)

Executed in 2019.

**Estimate**

£100,000 — 150,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)





An interdisciplinary artist at the vanguard of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 marking her out since her first solo exhibition with Carols/Ishikawa Gallery in 2017. Taking her source material from old auction catalogues, her grandmother's compellingly dated possessions, and photographs taken with her phone, Wood unpicks the thread of tragedy that she finds quietly woven through contemporary commodity culture, establishing an 'intoxicating interplay of desire, luxury and degradation' that is particularly pronounced in *Chalet*.<sup>i</sup>

### Medieval Millennials

*'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

Painted directly onto thick velvet stretched like canvas, *Chalet* is typical of Wood's seductive style, belonging to a body of work 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. Closely focused on a pair of softly overlapping black leather gloves, *Chalet* draws together a wide net of disparate associations including masculinity, deviance, lust, and violence, the artist self-consciously playing with slippery distinctions between inside and outside, objects and objectification.

Referencing her classical style and the darkly imaginative world that her paintings inhabit, Wood describes herself as a 'medieval millennial'.<sup>ii</sup> Drawing together the antique and the contemporary in surprising ways, Wood's paintings maintain a level of temporal dissonance that recalls the unsettling atmosphere of Giorgio de Chirico's Metaphysical canvases, although her choice of palette and materials radically undercuts the sharply polished qualities of de Chirico's surreal visions.



Giorgio de Chirico, *Le chant d'amour (The Song of Love)*, 1914, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © DACS 2022

Once popular in ancient Kashmir, velvet painting historically designated wealth, prestige, and opulence. Slipping into kitsch in more recent years with popular subjects including depictions of Elvis Presley and Jesus however, the luxury material now also signifies a somewhat seedier set of associations that Wood amplifies to such powerful effect here.

## Hand in Glove

At first glance, the painting's title seems to be strangely unrelated to its subject, *Chalet* bringing to mind cosy Alpine homesteads more immediately than an empty pair of leather gloves. And yet perhaps the two are not so distinct after all: both protect the body from the elements, encasing it in a warm, safe layer that separates it from the world outside. Such use of illogical juxtaposition and imaginative play is not unusual for Wood, who has highlighted that her titles frequently hint at bodily protection or modes of armouring as her way of 'verbally working through what a painting is.'<sup>iii</sup> In this respect, while the leather acts like a second skin in the work, the visible ridges of the glove's stitched seams to introduce a note of vulnerability, visually recalling the puckered folds of a scar.

Such playful interchange between bodies and their accoutrements has proven to be a persistent motif in Surrealist painting and cinema. Taking on the shape of the hand it covers and able to stand in for it metonymically, gloves are especially charged objects, something not lost on the Surrealist objects of Méret Oppenheim and the fantastical designs of Elsa Schiaparelli. Oppenheim in particular seemed fascinated by the ambiguity of gloves, and the tensions between inside and outside, civilised and savage that they evoked. Alongside her infamous fur teacup, Oppenheim also used the thick animal material to cover a pair of gloves in the 1930s, the fingers tipped with wooden digits and lacquered red nails in a provocative correlation of woman and animal. Like Oppenheim, Wood's use of materials draws on the fetishistic - velvet's tactility, like fur's, working with the proximity of gloves to hands, human touch, and sensuality to produce a charged erotic symbolism.



Left: Elsa Schiaparelli, *Woman's Gloves*, 1936 - 37, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mme Elsa Schiaparelli, 1969, 1969-232-55d,e Right: Méret Oppenheim, *Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers*, 1936 / 1984, Ursula Hauser Collection. Artwork: © DACS 2022

As in her other velvet paintings depicting women's leather jackets, Wood delights here in the cognitive confusion that arises when painting the likeness of one fabric onto the surface of another, what she describes 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>iv</sup> Negotiating the complex gender politics of an artistic movement that offered certain liberations for women while it objectified them, women Surrealists used these slippages and gaps between meaning and representation to powerful effect. Wood has clearly observed this lesson, and her inclusion in White Cube's 2017 group exhibition *Dreamers Awake* convincingly situated her work within this artistic legacy.

Collapsing historical specificity in her own mode of 'temporal gaslighting', *Chalet* also recalls the Czech filmmaker Jiří Barta's short stop-motion animation *The Vanished World of Gloves*, where a history of cinema from silent movies to Surrealism and Sci-fi is told through the antics of strangely sentient gloves.<sup>v</sup> Playing on the strangely human quality our clothes are animated by, Barta's film certainly resonates with the weird and wonderful world of Wood's paintings, one that extends into her writing, installations, and music videos.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61sOc3pXBVw>

Jiří Barta, *The Vanished World of Gloves*, 1982

### 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 and Tate St. Ives. 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.
- 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> Rosanna McLaughlin, 'Issy Wood', *Mixing it Up: Painting Today*, (exh. cat.), London, Hayward Gallery, 2021, p. 112.

<sup>ii</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](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Issy Wood in conversation with Sarah McCrory, *Luncheon*, No. 8., 2019, p. 61.

<sup>iv</sup> Issy Wood in conversation with Sarah McCrory, *Luncheon*, No. 8., 2019, p. 60-61.

<sup>v</sup> Philomena Epps, 'Issy Wood Talks Painting the Tragedy and Ambivalence Lurking in Luxury', *Garage Magazine*, March 18 2019, [online](#).

7

Issy Wood

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**Provenance**

Carlos / Ishikawa, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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BELGIAN COLLECTION

9

### Robert Nava

*Sylvia (87 Sylvia)*

signed, titled and dated "'Sylvia" Nava 20' on the  
reverse

acrylic and grease pencil on canvas  
182.8 x 213.3 cm (71 7/8 x 83 7/8 in.)

Executed in 2020.

#### Estimate

£80,000 — 100,000 †

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*'I wanted to do something benevolent, but at first sight it seems scary [...] As if the dawn and its light had remained behind. We don't finally know whether the day starts or ends.'* —Robert Nava

Robert Nava is an artist who divides opinions. Like many pioneering visionaries before him, the American painter's work has been met with skepticism and delight in equal measure. Nava's playful and intentionally naïve approach to painting combines a childlike simplicity and nostalgic sense of uninhibited playfulness, allowing him to evoke fantastic narratives in the most direct of means. The primary focus of the artist's work are the fantastical creatures, born from Nava's imagination and executed in spirited gestures of spray paint, acrylic, graphite, and grease pencil. These metamorphic figures combine animals such as sharks, lions, rabbits, and wolves with archetypal characters from mythology including angels, dragons, skeletons, and witches. Treading a fine line between nightmarish and fanciful maintained through Nava's simplistic rendering, these chimeric beasts belong to a long tradition of unnerving fantasy that includes the hybrid forms that animate Leonora Carrington's Surrealist canvases, Alfred Kubin's strange, Symbolist prints, and Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky.



Left: John Tenniel, 'Jabberwocky', 1872, from *Through the Looking-Glass (And What Alice Found There)*, Lewis Carroll. Image: Lebrecht Music & Arts / Alamy Stock Photo Right: Detail of the present work

## Sorry We're Closed

As a child, Nava perfected traditional draftsmanship and gained a reputation with his peers in high school as the one who 'could actually draw from life.'<sup>i</sup> Since completing his MFA at Yale University, the artist has worked to 'unlearn' conventional attributes of fine art and reconnect with the

uninhibited expression and creativity of a child's mind, a factor that situates Nava's work in the context of early 20th century Surrealism, and the later categorisation of Art Brut by Jean Dubuffet. The resulting work draws comparisons to the irreverent 'bad' painting first theorized in 1978 by the New Museum's founding curator Marcia Tucker as well as Neo-Expressionists such as Georg Baselitz and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Basquiat's use of animal motifs is a particularly important reference point here, the headed wolf of *Sterno* from 1985 prefiguring Nava's loose gestural execution and emphasis on dynamic transformation. Like Basquiat's work, Nava's paintings give the viewer the impression of spontaneity and speed in their creation. Although the paintings are said to sometimes come together in a matter of moments against a techno soundtrack, the artist spends days preparing through sketching and re-sketching his ideas until the time of execution. He says in an interview with Nate Lowman 'Sometimes you need to go slow in the face of speed to make it look like speed.'<sup>ii</sup>



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Sterno*, 1985, Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona. Image: ADAGP Images, Paris / SCALA, Florence, Artwork: © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

The present work *Sylvia (87 Sylvia)* is one of six large-scale canvases exhibited in Nava's self-titled solo exhibition at *Sorry We're Closed* in Brussels in 2020. Each work in the exhibition represents an allegory pertaining to a different irreverent theme from Time to Ecology. *Sylvia (87 Sylvia)* is the Allegory of Extinction, number 6 of 6, its place in the series is fitting of the finality of its theme.

*And then, the encounter, the one that pushes, from which we do not recover. Predestination. Announced always in the stars. Sylvia. Sylvia, we look at her from beyond, because after 2020, we don't know what happened. Very few witnesses stayed*

*behind. Elon Musk finally sequestered the richest people on the planet by not asking them for their opinion and forced them into his ships heading....? We no longer knew anything about it, saw nothing. Sylvia is a "Painting Resurrected. The bottom almost destroyed and then brought back to life, in a thing that destroys things ». Sylvia's not a woman, it's a huge asteroid heading straight for us. VI—Allegory of Extinction*

Another central theme of the exhibition is light and darkness, described as the result of 'ritual initiated in the dusk. Ending at dawn.' The conception of *Sylvia (87 Sylvia)* is poised precariously between the two, with two thirds of the picture plane enveloped by the inky blackness of night. As if wiped away, like condensation on a bathroom mirror, gaps in the black pigment create four windows into the scene behind, allowing the viewer glimpses of the monstrous being behind. Heavily abstracted by the encroaching darkness, Nava's beasts are a tangle of teeth, scales, and claws, interrupted by planes of cobalt blue and gestural strokes of violet. Building on the theme of conflict debuted in the artist's 2019 exhibition *Vs* at Night Gallery in Los Angeles, the flashes of red and yellow pierce the picture space, conjuring images of lightening, lasers, and violent spurts of blood. Nava's creations wrestle with an invisible foe just shrouded by the gloom or perhaps with the blackness itself. These references to ingenuous violence are possibly what resonates so strongly with a generation of collectors raised on video games, sci-fi and fantasy stories. Nate Freeman explains 'The work transports them to a time when the biggest thing they had to worry about was a monster under the bed.'<sup>iii</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.
- Having joined Pace Gallery in 2020, Nava has already presented two exhibitions in their East Hampton space, the most recent opening in the summer of 2020.
- 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 News*, 19 April 2021, online

<sup>ii</sup> Robert Nava, quoted in Nate Freeman, 'Painter Robert Nava Is Hated by Art-World Know-It-Alls. So Why Are Collectors Fighting for Anything From His Studio?', *Artnet News*, 19 April 2021, online

**Robert Nava**

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iii Nate Freeman, 'Painter Robert Nava Is Hated by Art-World Know-It-Alls. So Why Are Collectors Fighting for Anything From His Studio?', *Artnet News*, 19 April 2021, online

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**Provenance**

Sorry We're Closed, Brussels

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Brussels, Sorry We're Closed, *Robert Nava*, 24 October - 19 December 2020

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



10 ♦

### Nicolas Party

*Houses*

signed and dated 'Nicolas Party 2015' on the reverse

soft pastel on linen

150 x 120 cm (59 x 47 1/4 in.)

Executed in 2015.

**Estimate**

£1,100,000 — 1,500,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)





*'Time, memory, history, in my eyes are some of the main subjects in art in general, quite often the keys in every art. That is why artists very often have represented themes that are stable over time, or that have been painted for a long, long time, like trees, plants, or flowers.'* —Nicolas Party

Executed in intensely saturated hues of reds, hot oranges, yellows and brilliant white, *Houses* is a rare example of Nicolas Party's distinctive architectural landscape. One of only two such works executed in the artist's signatory soft pastel, the present work was included in the 2015 exhibition *Nicolas Party: Boys and Pastel*, significant as the first major exhibition focused on the artist to be presented in the United Kingdom, and for the emphasis that it placed on Party's installation practice. Reconfiguring the rooms of Inverleigh House into vibrant painted environments, Party encouraged viewers to read these works as sculptural environments that interact closely with the space around them. Rendered with exceptional fluidity, *Houses* clearly speaks to this, Party's smoothly rendered volumetric forms here presenting a distillation of the dialogue between colour and shape shaping our physical environment.

## Landscape and Architectural Form



Chillon Château at nightfall with the Dents du Midi in the background. Image: Giles Laurent

Born in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1980, Party eloquently describes the central place that this landscape has had in shaping his practice and his attitude to form. From the timeless, roughly hewn monumentality of the Alps to the smooth surfaces of the Lausanne walls that he and his friends graffitied as teenagers, this formative environment underpins Party's landscapes and their translation of observable reality into Surreal, totemic forms.

*'While I was doing the graffiti, I was actually still doing a lot of fairly traditional landscape painting. That environment is quite picturesque, but it got complicated with the police for a time [...] Doing murals right now, it's similar in that it's a very physical environment and there is a time constraint—I was really chasing that sort of performance aspect.'* —Nicolas Party

From these early graffiti experiments, Party developed a keen sense of compositional economy and the emotional power that pure relationships of colour and shape could harness in the painting's surface with the right materials. As he explains 'The super-bright colours, the very clear lines and effective shapes, these are all things you do with graffiti.'<sup>1</sup> This architectural element would remain central to his interdisciplinary practice, evidenced not only in its depiction here, but in the artist's extension of these principles to the grottos, murals, and physical environments that he would go on to create.



Installation view of Nicolas Party, *Grotto*, Xavier Hufkens, Brussels. Artwork: © Nicolas Party

## Renaissance Man

*'When you look at an artwork from the past, you feel that time becomes much more elastic. Time and history become a 'zone' where you can travel' —Nicolas Party*

In its careful balance of symmetry, proportion, and the orderly arrangement of semi-circular arches, columns, and hemispherical domes, *Houses* draws on an instantly recognisable architectural vernacular established during the Florentine Renaissance. Themselves referring back to the ordered proportions of Classical architecture, these principles radically redefined the 15th century urban environment, and approaches to its artistic representation. Transforming pictorial space, Giotto di Bondone's frescos most succinctly capture this in the sense of weight and volumetric form that they possess. It is certainly possible to trace the crisp line of Giotto's stacked houses, and the subtle repetitions of curved arches and flat-fronted volumes here, Party using these architectural elements as a way of exploring 'the moment where an element that is very recognisable [...] switches into becoming what we would call a shape.'<sup>ii</sup>



Giotto di Bondone, *The Expulsion of the Devils from Arezzo*, 1297-99 (fresco), Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi, Assisi. Image: akg-images / Erich Lessing

In these spatial terms, Party speaks particularly about the impact of seeing Fra Angelico's frescos in the monk's cells throughout the Florentine Convent of San Marco, the arrangement of simple arches around a central courtyard modest but incredibly powerful, and capable of disrupting the cooler rationality of modernist architecture. Possessing a distinctive spatial power, the arch has become a key element in Party's practice since the execution of the present work, incorporated into both his pastels and physical environments.<sup>iii</sup>

*'That, I think, is very beautiful, these symbols of two forces that are joining right in the middle, and you are passing between them. So there's this feeling, and I really do believe that can affect you, along with the colours, basically the forms and shapes in different aspects of space.'* —Nicolas Party

Interviewed in 2020, Party addressed *Houses* directly in its relation to his subsequent three-dimensional installations, explaining 'I did two pastels a while ago with arches, the only two pastels with houses. I still want to go back to that, but I haven't yet. The Karma show [in 2017] was the first time that I used arches [...] that's very powerful and it works extremely well.'

The anachronism of Party's pictorial language in drawing on Renaissance architecture and fresco painting is echoed in his choice of medium, pastel being a technique most popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. Rather than the slower process of working with oils, chalk pastel allows the artist to work with a sense of speed and immediacy, building up layers of shading directly with his fingertips. As Party has suggested recently, 'I always look for a feeling of awkwardness hidden in a world of destruction', and in the refined and anachronistic quality of its finish, *Houses* possesses a remarkable affinity to the beguiling strangeness of Giorgio de Chirico and René Magritte's Surrealism, the volumetric presence of his forms and the intensity of chromatic relationships established between them taking on an entirely unique and charged presence.<sup>iv</sup>



Giorgio de Chirico, *Ariadne*, 1913, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © DACS 2022

## Collector's Digest

- One of the most critically acclaimed artists of his generation, Nicholas Party's work has been exhibited internationally in major institutional venues including at Le Consortium in Dijon (2021), the MASI Lugano (2021); FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2019); M WOODS, Beijing (2018-2019); and Magritte Museum, Brussels (2018).
- Party's work is represented in over 30 public collections worldwide, including K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Long Museum, Shanghai; Fondazione Fiera Milano, Milan; M WOODS, Beijing; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami.
- A major exhibition *l'heure mauve* has just opened at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Drawing together Party's landscapes portraits, and still lifes, it also features a site-specific temporary mural executed in pastels. Party has undertaken similar major mural commissions for

**Nicolas Party**

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the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2016), the Dallas Museum of Art (2016), and solo exhibitions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, (2017) and the FLAG Art Foundation in New York (2019).

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZozkE6dyBx0>

Nicolas Party: In the Studio, for Hauser & Wirth, 2019.

<sup>i</sup> Nicolas Party, quoted in Catherine Hong, 'Nicolas Party's Audacious Sense of Colour' 4 Dec 2019, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Nicolas Party, 'Nicolas Party: In the Studio', interview for Hauer & Wirth, 2019, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Nicolas Party, quoted in Sasha Bogojev, 'Nicolas Party: A Hug From On Top of You', Juxtapoz, Fall 2020, online.

<sup>iv</sup> Nicolas Party, 'See Inside Artist Nicolas Party's New York Studio, Where Each of His 2,455

<sup>v</sup> Pastels Has Its Own Cubby', 8 February, 2022, [online](#).

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**Provenance**

Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich

Private Collection, Netherlands

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Edinburgh, Inverleith House, *Boys and Pastel*, 2 May - 21 June 2015

**Literature**

Nicolas Party ed., *Nicolas Party Pastel*, New York, 2017, n.p. (illustrated)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Shara Hughes

*Crooked*

signed, titled, inscribed and dated 'SHARA HUGHES

2017 London "CROOKED" on the reverse

acrylic, oil and dye on canvas

175.3 x 154.9 cm (69 x 61 in.)

Executed in 2017.

**Estimate**

£180,000 — 250,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I'm really interested in nature because we will never see the same thing twice. It's always changing whether it's the time of day, mood, temperature, new life or death. Because it's alive and moving, it gives me freedom to really play around.'* —Shara Hughes

Shara Hughes' large-scale 2017 work *Crooked* is alive with pure colour and pattern. Playing with perspective, the artist knits together fragments of multiple imagined landscapes and planes of abstract colour. At the upper right corner, a lush green hill, peppered with yellow flowers, hovers vertiginously next to a winding aquamarine ribbon echoed by the looping forms of vibrant yellow and marigold spiralling out to the left of the composition. Hughes' distinctive and confident brushwork here fractures the composition further, the rhythmic patterning of longer, isolated strokes in the passages to the left creating a fascinating dialogue with the smoother, effervescent stripes of blues and violets that flow, tightly contained, over the undulating outcrop crowned with trees to the right. The overall effect is kaleidoscopic, as though we are looking at a landscape through a sheet of rushing water.

Highly energetic and compact, this central composition is encircled by swathes of bleeding colour in sunset tones and overlooked by two blue mountains, reminiscent of the deserts in the American Southwest immortalised in Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexico canvases. Unlike O'Keeffe though, whose paintings remain rooted in the contours and intense colours of the desert landscape, even as they hover on the edge of abstraction, Hughes' are entirely fictitious. Interviewed last year by Emily Spicer, Hughes shared her process, explaining: 'I don't have any plans when I start a landscape; it is usually very subconscious and intuitive. I merely play around with colour and texture, whether it's a work on paper, or a painting, and then something clicks and I start to organise it into a landscape that doesn't necessarily identify with a specific place.'<sup>i</sup>



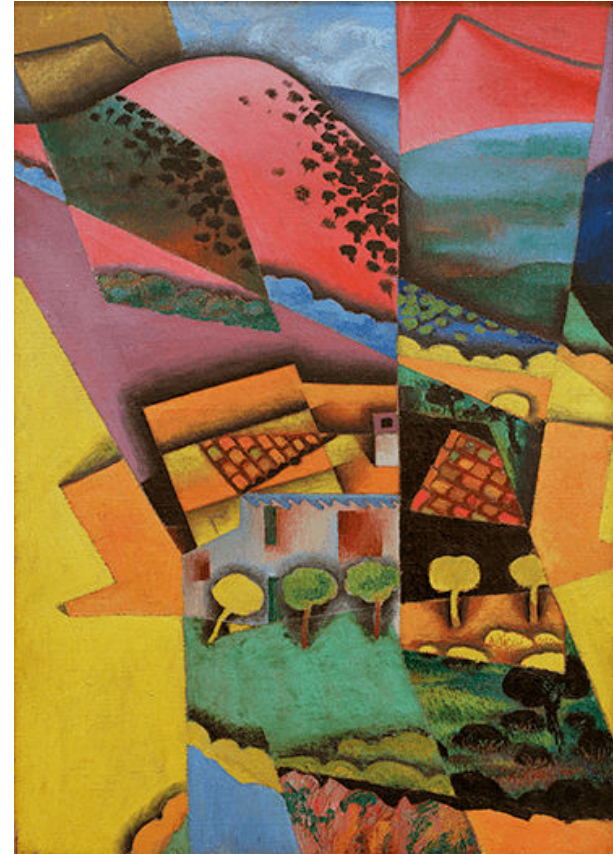
Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Mesa Landscape, New Mexico / Out Back of Marie's II*, 1930, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe. Image: Albert Knapp / Alamy Stock Photo, Artwork: © 2022 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / DACS, London

## Landscapes of the Mind

Hughes paints from memory and imagination, crediting her only source material as the work of other artists.<sup>ii</sup> The influence of the artist's contemporaries and predecessors is evident in places, but Hughes' visual process is distinctly her own. Comparisons can be drawn between *Crooked* and David Hockney's 1980 masterpiece [Nichols Canyon](#), most clearly in the vibrant palette and compositional arrangement of intersecting zones of colour and strong, central curved forms. While Hockney clearly delights in pure, expressive colour, he remains committed to a representational language, while for Hughes, colour forms a more elemental part of her intuitive approach to the act of painting itself. Wide strokes of orange and yellow wash which bleed and drip at the extreme edges of the work are contrasted with the compact stippling in the foliage. In this way the pictorial section possesses its own distinct identity, which when united conjures a landscape brimming with joyous discordancy. Executed in the same year as Hughes' inclusion in the 2017 Whitney Biennial, *Crooked* exudes the palpable exhilaration felt by the artist in what she has described as her 'proudest achievement'.<sup>iii</sup>

*'...the landscape is so seemingly simple. Everyone knows what a landscape looks like—there is an entire tradition of painting that informs our expectations. I wondered how I could take something that is seemingly so known and make it mine, while still getting all the satisfaction of painting, and the history of painting, in one.'*  
—Shara Hughes

Links have often been made between Shara Hughes and the French Fauvist painters such as Henri Matisse and André Derain, primarily due to Hughes' use of arbitrary colour. The artist has cited her favourite painting as Matisse's *Red Studio* (1911) and the influence of this masterpiece is undeniable in Hughes' earlier body of work which focused on whimsical interiors rich in symbolism in the decade preceding 2014. Matisse's distinctive flattening of space and perspective is a central component of these dreamlike domestic spaces. Its impact is still felt in *Crooked*, most keenly in the red planes, interrupted by negative space and cobalt blue forms. However, the present work also clearly draws on the visual language of Cubism, apparent in the jagged division of the picture space and dichotomous relationships established between figuration and abstraction. Employing a similarly vibrant palette, Juan Gris' 1913 *Paysage à Ceret* confronts the viewer with the scene appearing as if reflected in a shattered mirror. The roof of the small house is shirred off and shards tile pattern are presented amongst flattened passages of yellow and black. In a visual motif even more directly comparable to *Crooked*, areas of intricately detailed green foliage are contrasted with regions of hillside rendered in reds, pinks, and purples.



Juan Gris, *Paysage à Ceret*, (*Landscaper near Ceret*), 1913, Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Image: ak-images

Building from these Cubist principles, Hughes' landscape in *Crooked* provokes a strong sense of spatial ambiguity. Viewers find themselves constantly navigating between forms that resemble one thing as easily as another. The meandering shape dissecting the left half of the picture plane, which at first glance, appears so obviously to depict a river, could just as easily resemble the magma filled channels to the centre of the earth, or the minute tunnels manufactured by ants. This expanding and contracting of the picture space both invites and challenges the viewer, cultivating an entirely unique visual experience again and again. Included in Hughes' 2018 solo show *Sticks and Stones* with Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco, *Crooked* stands as a forceful expression of the

## Shara Hughes

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central importance of landscape to Hughes' evolving practice, and of the complex blend of memory, observation, and intuition that defines her finest work.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlkXExxQ1qA>

Shara Hughes Gets Lost in Paint, In The Studio, ArtDrunk.

### Collector's Digest:

- Since her first solo show in 2007 at Rivington Arms in New York, Shara Hughes has been showing steadily in galleries across the US and Europe for nearly 15 years. In 2020, Hughes opened her first exhibition with Pilar Corrias in London. Her first retrospective in a major institution opened at the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis in October 2021, followed closely by the opening of *The Bridge* at the Yuz Museum, her first solo show in Mainland China.
- Examples of Hughes' works are included in the permanent collections of the Dallas Museum of Fine Art, the Foundation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Denver Museum of Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
- Shara Hughes' auction record was achieved at [Phillips 20th Century and Contemporary Art Evening Sale](#) in New York in November 2021.

<sup>i</sup> Emily Spicer, 'Shara Hughes - interview: 'I wanted the works to feel like figures you would visit at church, something divine'', *Studio International*, 17 May 2021, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Emily Spicer, 'Shara Hughes - interview: 'I wanted the works to feel like figures you would visit at church, something divine'', *Studio International*, 17 May 2021, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Christina Nafziger, 'Shara Hughes', *Art Maze Magazine*, no. 7, Spring 2018

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### Provenance

Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco

Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

San Francisco, Berggruen Gallery, *Shara Hughes: Sticks and Stones*, 10 May - 23 June 2018

### Literature

Christina Nafziger, 'Shara Hughes', *Art Maze Magazine*, no. 7, Spring 2018, pp. 34-35 (illustrated)

Mia Locks and Ian Alteveer, *Shara Hughes / Landscapes*, New York, 2019, p. 86 (illustrated)

Todd Bradway, ed., *Landscape Painting Now. From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*, London, 2019, p. 303 (illustrated)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Cecily Brown

*When Time Ran Out*

oil on linen

195.6 x 246.4 cm (77 x 97 in.)

Painted in 2016.

**Estimate**

£2,000,000 — 3,000,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I want to know how to paint, how to understand the trick and to figure out how to do it—something that old paintings reveal.'* —Cecily Brown

Rich with art historical allusion and painterly exuberance, *When Time Ran Out* is a masterful example of the visual and referential complexity of British artist Cecily Brown's most celebrated work. Executed in 2016, the work introduced a new, favourite motif for the painter – the shipwreck – one which allows her to explore her own, strikingly contemporary academism in relation to certain compositional, technical, and thematic elements of Old Master paintings. In its compositional arrangement and dramatic intensity *When Time Ran Out* draws directly on Jean-Louis Théodore Géricault's 19<sup>th</sup> century masterwork, *La Balsa de la Medusa*, highlighting Brown's insatiable absorption of visual culture, and her unique ability to understand and internalise pictorial structure. Replacing the darker palette of Géricault's iconic painting with bright hues and fleshy tones, Brown radically updates her art-historical reference point, while making a work entirely of her own.



Jean-Louis Théodore Géricault, *La Balsa de la Medusa* (*Raft of the Medusa*), 1819 – 19, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: akg-images

## The Eye of the Storm

Executed on an enormous, over life-size scale, Géricault's *La Balsa de la Medusa* is a masterwork of French Romanticism, imbuing the long-established tradition of history painting with an emotional and dramatic intensity in its focus on extreme states of physical and psychological distress. Inspired by the 1816 naval disaster of the *Méduse*, which ran aground off the coast of Mauritania leaving its 147 strong crew and passengers to the mercy of the sea, Géricault captures the fear and desperation endured by its cohort, left adrift on a makeshift raft for nearly two weeks before a rescue was finally made. Suffering unspeakable horrors and pushed to the very extremes of human existence, the fates of those who perished, and the knowledge of what those surviving 15 members had to undergo sparked an international scandal, quickly attaching itself to the deeper political unrest and public frustration with the French monarchy and ruling class that would ultimately end in violent revolution.

In depicting the moment when, after nearly two weeks adrift at sea, the remaining survivors catch sight of a ship in the distance, Géricault charges his composition with a desperate rush of upward momentum, the waves beneath the makeshift raft echoing the outstretched limbs of the surviving crew, and starkly emphasising the bodies strewn limp and lifeless beneath them. Raw and unflinching in its depiction of human suffering, Géricault is able to fully exploit the emotional intensity of his subject, generating incredible pathos and emotional range as we see the figures shift from desperation to delirium before their relief at the promise of rescue settles into profound grief at what they have survived.



Detail of the present work

## High Drama at Sea

These tensions are masterfully amplified by Brown's tempestuous composition, her vertiginous brushstrokes and singular ability to make paint appear to shift between solid and liquid states the perfect vehicle for the reinterpretation of this dramatic historical scene. Built up in layers of energetic, expressive brushwork, Brown's exquisite skill in rendering a sense of taut and muscular human form is powerfully demonstrated here, pushing the compositional arrangement of the Old Master composition to its extremes. While Géricault employed a sombre palette accented with high contrast of light and shadow to emphasise the sculptural form of his contorted figures and to intensify the drama of the piece, Brown's selection of saturated raw flesh tones shot through with energetic bursts of vibrant greens, orange tones, cobalt blues, and brilliant whites shatters the compositional clarity of the original image.

*'I have always wanted to make paintings that are impossible to walk past, paintings that grab and hold your attention. The more you look at them, the more satisfying they become for the viewer. The more time you give to the painting, the more you get back.'* —Cecily Brown

Disrupting distinctions between figure and ground within this restlessly shifting landscape of paint, strong compositional structures nevertheless re-emerge. Having deconstructed Géricault's classical presentation of the scene, the density of Brown's visceral, all-over treatment here exemplifies the kind of 'slow looking' that she asks of her viewers, her unique approach to a kind of figurative abstraction ensuring that her bodies appear to shift and merge before suddenly revealing themselves. Echoing Géricault's rhythmic patterning of pyramidal forms, Brown's densely packed figures and the robust nature of their rendering creates a remarkable sense of emotional and muscular strain here, emphasising the chaos and physical intensity of the scene. Animating the entire composition, Brown's intuitive, expressive handling of paint in 'upward-curving lines that convey a lurching, watery, gravitational pull' charges *When Time Ran Out* with a raw immediacy and high drama that speaks both to her close study of these Old Master paintings, and her extension of the gestural physicality and bravura brushwork of post-war American artists such as Willem de Kooning.<sup>i</sup>



Left: Eugène Delacroix, *The Shipwreck of Don Juan*, 1840, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Image: Josse / Scala, Florence Right: Willem de Kooning, *The North Atlantic Light*, 1977, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Image: Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Willem de Kooning Revocable Trust/ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

*'After I had drawn the Delacroix shipwreck a few times I Googled shipwreck paintings and the Gericault kept coming up. I tried to resist because it's much too famous, but then I thought what the hell. Once I started working it became the deepest drawing lesson ever. It's brilliantly composed.'* —Cecily Brown

The theme of maritime tragedy clearly captures Brown's imagination, and in 2018 she presented an exhibition of drawings with Thomas Dane Gallery entirely focused on these compositions and her painterly dialogue with the likes of Géricault and Delacroix. Included in Brown's first exhibition with Paula Cooper Gallery in 2017 in New York, *A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!*, the present work



marks a pivotal moment in Brown's career, and in the evolution of her painterly language. Characteristic of Brown's tendency to sample from a broad range of cultural references including film and literature, the title of the exhibition was borrowed from the Emily Dickinson poem *A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!* - an anxious plea that is at once a cry for help and a call to arms. Capturing the tension and immediacy that characterises the whole series, the titles of both *When Time Ran Out* and *A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!* draw particular attention to the juxtaposition of beauty and brutality so often set up in Brown's painting. As the artist puts it: My favourite things are to paint movement, figures in motion, and then tension and violence, but excitement and colour'.<sup>ii</sup>

*A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!*  
*Your prayers, oh Passer by!*  
*From such a common ball as this*  
*Might date a Victory!*  
*From marshallings as simple*  
*The flags of nations swang.*  
*Steady—my soul: What issues*  
*Upon thine arrow hang!*

*Emily Dickinson, A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!*

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

Cecily Brown Interview: Totally Unaware

## Collector's Digest

- Coming to auction for the first time, *When Time Ran Out* is a preeminent example of Cecily Brown's celebrated group of shipwreck paintings first presented at Paula Cooper Gallery in 2017, the last time the present work has been seen in public.
- Now based in New York, Cecily Brown was born in the UK and studied at the prestigious Slade School of Fine Art and is an internationally recognised and defining figure of contemporary art.
- The focus of solo exhibitions around the world, including the significant *Where, When, How Often and with Whom* held at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark in 2018 and the recent exhibition of new paintings installed in historic Blenheim Palace in 2021.

<sup>i</sup> Jason Rosenfeld, 'Survey', in *Cecily Brown*, London, 2020, p. 83.

<sup>ii</sup> Cecily Brown, quoted in "Cecily Brown: 'No work by a living artist should be more than \$1m'", *Financial Times*, 10 April 2020, online.

## Provenance

Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

New York, Paula Cooper Gallery, *Cecily Brown: A Day! Help! Help! Another Day!*, 27 October - 2 December 2017

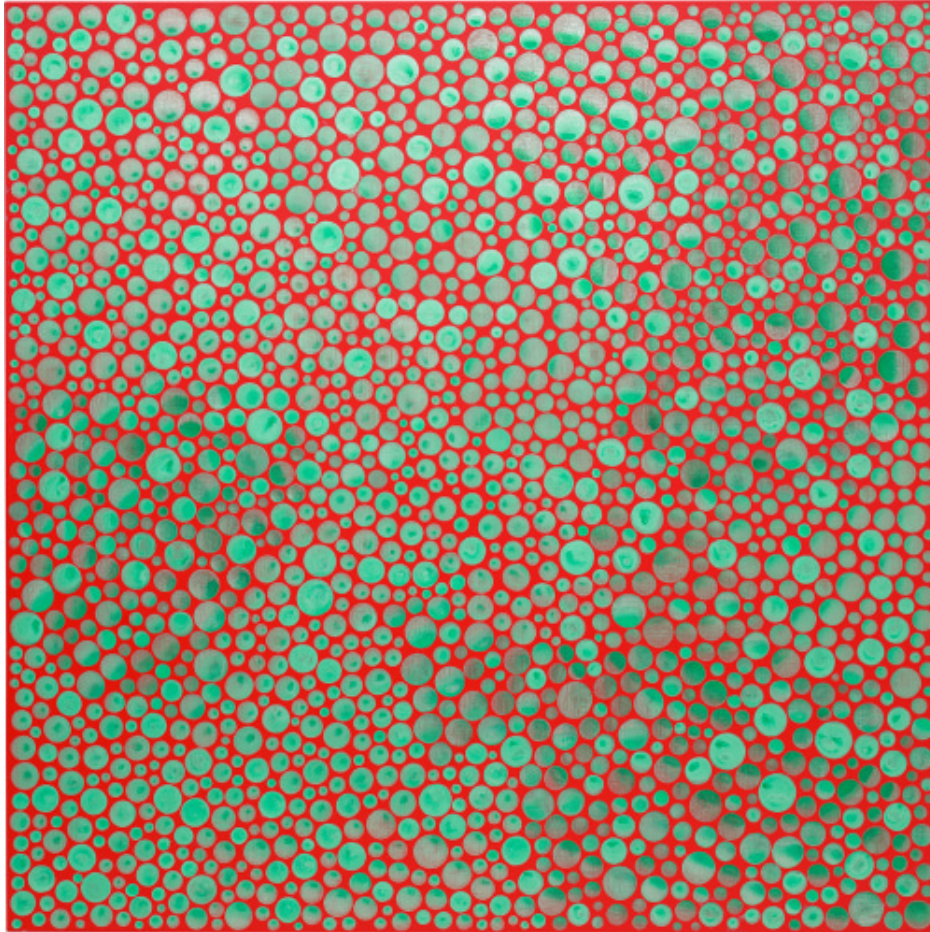
## Literature

'Art In Conversation. Cecily Brown with Jason Rosenfeld,' *Brooklyn Rail*, December 2017, online (illustrated)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Yayoi Kusama

*Dots Accumulation (WWPER)*

signed, titled and dated 'WWPER 2008 YAYOI - KUSAMA Dots-Accumulation' on the reverse  
acrylic on canvas

130.2 x 130.2 cm (51 1/4 x 51 1/4 in.)

Painted in 2008, this work is accompanied by a registration card issued by Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

Estimate

£800,000 — 1,200,000 †

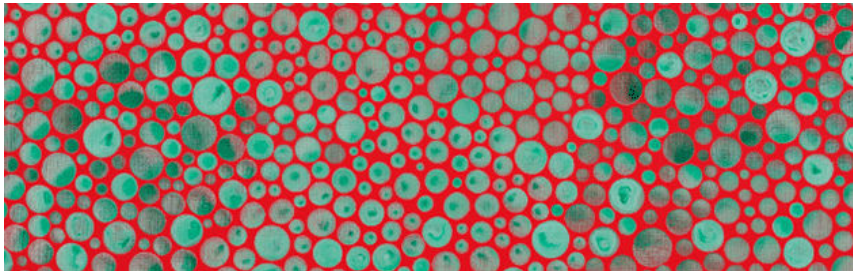
[Go to Lot](#)



*'Bring on Picasso, bring on Matisse, bring on anybody! I would stand up to them all with a single polka dot [...] I was betting everything on this and raising my revolutionary banner against all of history.'* —Yayoi Kusama

Stunningly executed in jewel-like shades of red and green, *Dots Accumulation (WWPER)* is an exquisite example of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's central artistic motif – the polka dot. Telescoping between the cosmic and the cellular, *Dots Accumulation (WWPER)* fills our visual field with its infinite, psychedelic accumulations, the dots seeming to move beyond the picture plane to immerse us in their delicate web of pure colour. Closely related to her celebrated *Infinity Net* series in its intricate, repeating, all-over pattern, *Dots Accumulation (WWPER)* captures the obsessive focus on accumulation, repetition, and the infinite that best characterises Kusama's internationally celebrated practice.

Now completely synonymous with the artist, Kusama first began to use polka dots at the very outset of her staggering 70-year career. Housed in The Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection, the 1952 ink on paperboard *Accumulation* is one of only a few examples of Kusama's early work to survive, and highlights its foundational role within her oeuvre. More than a visual strategy, the polka dot also embodies a profoundly personal narrative, emerging directly from the visual hallucinations that the artist has suffered from since childhood. Coupled with a strained and sometimes violent family dynamic, Kusama recalls standing in the vast fields of flowers that made up her family's seed farm in the Matsumoto Prefecture, overwhelmed by their seemingly infinite expansion, she felt atomised among them. Sometimes accompanied by auditory hallucinations, these visions persisted, as the artist has vividly described:



detail of the present work

*'One day, 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.'* —Yayoi Kusama

As Kusama is always keen to emphasise, obliteration is not a negative sensation, but one of being restored to an infinite plenitude, and the repetitive accumulations, dots, knots, and whorls that best characterise her work act as once as the materialisation of these visions, and a therapeutic response to them, a translation of 'hallucinations and a fear of hallucinations into paintings.'<sup>i</sup>

## Kusama's Self-Obliteration

Anointing herself as the 'High Priestess of Polka Dots', in the 1960s, Kusama harnessed the liberating potential of her infinite, accumulating dots in public performances and Happenings. Participatory, immersive, and obliterating the insular individuality of the self, Kusama staged scandalous Happenings where she painted dots over a host of naked bodies, either in public, or in mirrored environments prefiguring her immensely popular *Infinity Rooms*. Arrested for her 1968 anti-Vietnam war protest *Body Paint Festival*, Kusama married her aesthetic vision to one of global politics, emphasising our collective, universal identity over individuality. In painting the accumulating patterns of her hallucinations directly into the surface of human skin she believed she 'obliterated their individual selves and returned them to the infinite universe, vividly evoked in her 1967 avant-garde film *Yayoi Kusama's Self-Obliteration*'.<sup>ii</sup>

A favourite colour in Kusama's repertoire, the intricate red lattice work of this 2008 work visually recalls some of Kusama's most iconic works from this period, immediately evoking the red polka dots of her 1965 *Infinity Mirror Room-Phalli's Field*. Prefiguring her installation art and effectively bringing together her soft sculptures, mirrored environments, and the rich palette of the present work, *Infinity Mirror Room-Phalli's Field* made actual the implied infinity of her drawings and paintings, a model that clearly still resonated with the artist some 40 years later.<sup>iii</sup> Dressed entirely in red, Kusama directly identifies herself as one of the innumerable polka dots in this work, a vivid actualisation 'of the obsession, over the passionate accretion and repetition inside of me'.<sup>iv</sup>

## Artistic Intersections



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Sky Above Clouds IV*, 1965, The Art Institute of Chicago. image: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY/ Scala, Florence, Artwork: © 2022 Georgia O'Keeffe Museum / DACS, London

During her time in New York Kusama found herself at the heart of a robust avant-garde scene, her work more than often breaking new ground that her more influential contemporaries quickly adopted. Included in what has been retrospectively identified as the first Pop art exhibition in the United States, Kusama's first soft-sculpture *Accumulation No. 1* directly influenced the shift to fabric in Charles Oldenburg's work, while her phenomenal *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show* in 1964 prefigured Pop icon Andy Warhol's first exhibition of the repeating wallpaper motif *Cow* which covered the walls of Leo Castelli's gallery some months later.

She did also find inspiration and support there. Sensing a kindred spirit in the older, established artist Georgia O'Keeffe, Kusama contacted her from Japan, sending her examples of her work and asking for her advice as an older, woman artist. Visually recalling the repeating patterns of Kusama's *Infinity Nets and Accumulations*, O'Keeffe's *Sky Above Clouds* series was similarly inspired by her experience with air travel in the 1950s, and seems to speak to a more collaborative and supportive vision of infinite repetition and endless expansion.

More than any of her contemporaries, Kusama bridges divides between the disparate threads of American modernism. As Tate Director Francis Morris describes, Kusama possesses a unique ability to 'marry seemingly incompatible sensibilities – the "seriality" we associate with Minimalism, the "uncanny" of Surrealism and its fetishisation of the body part, the junk aesthetic of assemblage, as well as the active participation of the happening – reinforced Kusama's special status at this time as an outsider on the inside.'<sup>v</sup> With the phenomenal global success of the artist in recent years, and the realisation of her self-obliterating universe in sell-out *Infinity Room* installations world-wide, Kusama is finally, and firmly, standing on the inside.

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

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

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

<sup>iv</sup> Yayoi Kusama in conversation with Gordon Brown (1964), in Laura Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, London 2000, p. 103.

<sup>v</sup> Francis Morris, 'Yayoi Kusama: My Life, A Dot', in (exh. cat.), *Yayoi Kusama: Obsession Infinita*, 2014, p. 197.

### Provenance

Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo

Gagosian Gallery, New York

Private Collection (acquired from the above in 2008)

Lévy Gorvy, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

14 ♦

### Günther Förg

*Ohne titel*

signed and dated 'Förg 08' upper right

oil and acrylic on canvas

200.7 x 240.7 cm (79 x 94 3/4 in.)

Painted in 2008, this work is recorded in the archive of Günther Förg as no. WVF 08.B.0043.

We thank Mr. Michael Neff from the Estate of Günther Förg for the information he has kindly provided on this work.

**Estimate**

£600,000 — 800,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)





*'The spots became more and more abstract. He learned that they have a three-dimensional level on each spot. They are not just dots in a canvas. They are planned and precisely worked out on an empty filed.'* —Michael Neff

Possessing a remarkable sense of immediacy, vitality, and unparalleled verve, this untitled work from 2008 belongs to Günther Förg's iconic *Spot Paintings*, the last of his illustrious career and representing the culmination of five decades of sustained investigation into the nature of colour and structure. Characterised by loose scrawls of vibrantly hued pigments arranged in staccato formations across a vast expanse of brilliant white ground, the series presents a lyrical extension of the artist's earlier *Grid* and *Window Paintings*. Painted in 2008, the present work highlights the sophistication and confidence of Förg's handling of paint and emphasises how fundamental the principles of colour and painterly gesture were to his practice.

Liberating colour from the confinements of line and shape, in the present work Förg generates fascinating variety and movement through the careful juxtaposition of brighter hues of yellow ochre, vermilion, and electric shocks of cerulean blue, which oscillate against the earthier tones of chestnut browns and forest greens. The effect of this executed on such a large, immersive scale is deeply absorbing - highlighting at once the artist's unique vision, and his sustained dialogue with art historical tradition.

## Modernist Legacies

*'By referring to the most diverse of artists from widely varying eras and styles of the 20th century, he brings out individual positions that were arguably of unparalleled relevance to artistic practice in subsequent decades.'* —Bernd Reiss

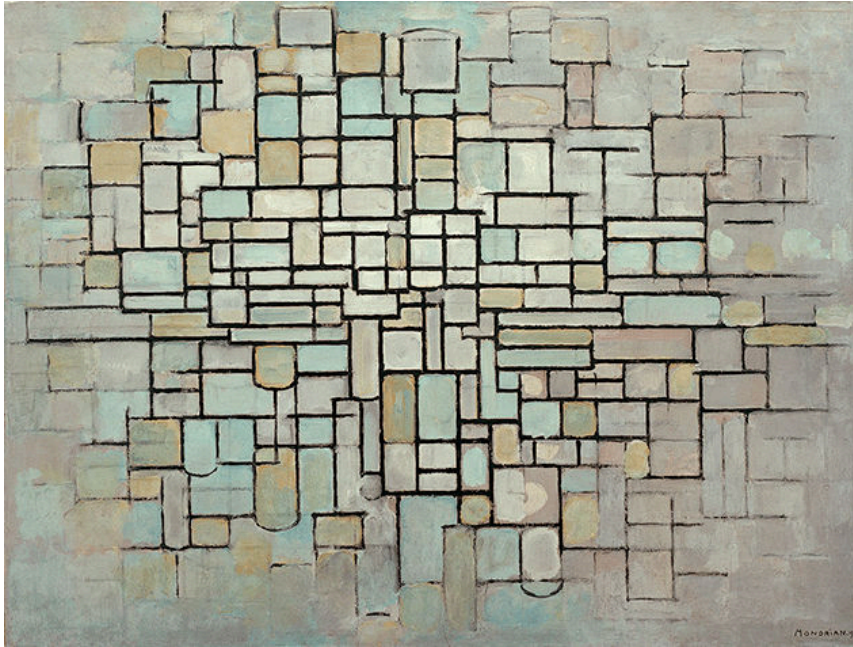
Fascinated by modernism and its legacies throughout his career, Förg developed a pictorial language that at once subverts and draws attention to its foundational principles. Born in Germany in 1952, Förg came of age in the height of the 1980s Cologne art scene, where artists like Sigmar Polke and Martin Kippenberger mounted an irreverent challenge against the traditions of painting itself. Resisting easy characterisation from the outset, Förg's early forays across multiple disciplines including painting, photography, graphic design, and sculpture laid the foundations for the ambitious conceptual and philosophical investigations that would define his career across a range of mediums and distinct bodies of work.

Addressing the aesthetic and perceptual purity of Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism, Förg's early monochromatic wall paintings and lead works interrogated modernist and minimalist concerns

from a contemporary perspective. Extending his experiments across a range of other media, Förg moved away from the greys and monochromes of his earlier work, becoming increasingly sophisticated in his command and control of colour with the advent of his *Grid Paintings* in 1992, prefigured slightly by his *Fenster-Aquarelle* series.

*'The brushwork—treated as both means and iconography—is the subject here, and the picture, if there is such a thing, assumes the look of a palette.'* —Suzanne Hudson

Although the lattice-like structures of his *Grid Paintings* are significantly loosened in the present work, the strikingly rhythmic interplay of horizontal and vertical elements remains. Endowing the piece with a remarkably airy yet architectural quality, Förg masterfully employs negative space to unify and establish harmonies between the disparate passages of colour. The effect of this on such a large scale is vibrantly energetic and atmospheric, recalling the pioneering abstractions of the Dutch modernist Piet Mondrian. While colour would later become increasingly significant for Mondrian, the grid - and the balance of positive and negative elements that it produced - was of fundamental importance from an early stage. Allowing him to move from his more representational beginnings, the grid provided Mondrian with the means to dissolve the image into interlocking horizontals and verticals, generating a pictorial harmony that communicated a deeper philosophical sense of universal balance, resolving the tensions between material and spiritual demands.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition No. 11 in grey, pink, and blue*, 1913, Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller, Otterlo. Image: akg-images

The transition from densely packed cross-hatchings of contrasting passages of colour to looser, more gestural scribbles evidenced in the *Spot Paintings* also highlights Förg's absorption of the lessons of American Abstract Expressionism. Drawing on and developing the investigations into the spatial relationships of colour undertaken by mid-century artists such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, the present work possesses a remarkable vitality, the intuitively arranged and animated forms forging complex relationships and intersecting dialogues across the large canvas. The all-over and decidedly calligraphic quality of *Untitled*, and the *Spot Paintings* more broadly, most pointedly recalls Cy Twombly's scumbled canvases, most obviously in the repetitive scrawl and the especially loosely treated passages to the lower right of the canvas where the artist has dissolved the grid completely in allowing paint to run and drip down the canvas.



Cy Twombly, *Lepanto VII*, 2001, Bayerische Staatsgemaltesammlungen - Museum Brandhorst, Munich. Image: Scala, Florence/bpk, Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin, Artwork: © Cy Twombly Foundation

Despite this rich and varied net of art historical references, Förg's *Spot Paintings* develop a unique language that is immediately recognisable and utterly his own. Presented at Galeria Filomena Soares 2008 exhibition, *Gunther Förg: New Paintings*, the present work is highly characteristic of what is undoubtedly one of the artist's most important and lyrical bodies of work, described by Rudi Fuchs as 'triumphant in their uncanny abstraction' and deliberate in the removal of 'defined or shaped figuration'.<sup>1</sup> In this last series Förg's deep and long-held commitment to an investigation of the nature of painting itself finds joyous expression in the gestural fields of animated brushstrokes that make up these *Spot Paintings*.

### Collector's Digest

- A master of German contemporary art, examples of Günther Förg's work now reside in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Tate Modern, London.
- After his first solo exhibition with Rüdiger Schöttle Gallery, Munich, in 1980, Förg continued to

exhibit widely throughout his life. The present work was included in an important early presentation of the Spot Paintings at Galeria Filomena Soares in 2008.

- As well as major solo shows at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Fondation Beyeler, Basel over the years, more recent posthumous exhibitions include the 2021 'Constellations of Colour' with Galerie Max Hetzler in London and Hauser & Wirth's presentation of Grid Paintings in Los Angeles in 2021, his first solo exhibition in the city.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLSRpRP1lpl>

Günther Förg: A Fragile Beauty, Stedelijk Museum

<sup>i</sup> Rudi Fuchs, *Gunther Förg: Back and Forth*, Gent, 2008.

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**Provenance**

Galerie Lelong, Zurich

Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon

Private Collection, Portugal

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Lisbon, Galeria Filomena Soares, *Günther Förg: New Paintings*, 19 June - 20 September 2008

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Gerhard Richter

*Abstraktes Bild*

signed, numbered and dated '761-1 Richter 1992' on the reverse

oil on canvas

82 x 61.7 cm (32 1/4 x 24 1/4 in.)

Painted in 1992.

**Estimate**

£1,800,000 — 2,500,000 <sup>†</sup>▲

[Go to Lot](#)

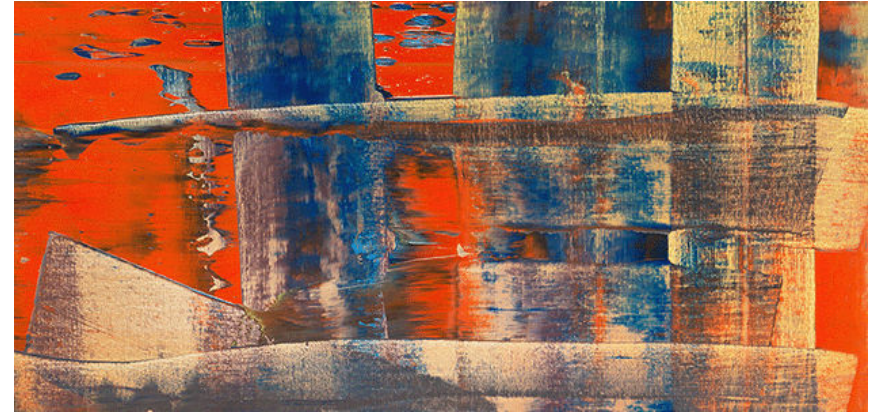




*'Abstract pictures do indeed show something, they just show things that don't exist. But they still follow the same requirements as figurative works: they need a setup, structure. You need to be able to look at it and say, "It's almost something." But it's actually representing nothing. It pulls feelings out of you, even as it's showing you a scene that technically isn't there.'* —Gerhard Richter

Chromatically dazzling in its bold striations of iridescent reds, blues, and yellows, *Abstraktes Bild 761-1* is a stunning example from the golden age of German artist Gerhard Richter's abstraction, executed several years after he first adopted his renowned squeegee technique. Radiant, lyrical, and muscular, Richter's skill as a colourist is particularly pronounced here, building rhythmic intersections of horizontal and vertical swathes of paint to a complex, painterly crescendo across its fluid, shifting surface.

As one of the most influential and innovative artists of the late twentieth-century, and a towering figure of abstraction, Richter has redefined the limits of painterly representation over the course of his long and illustrious career. Born in Dresden in 1932, the artist came of age in a rapidly shifting political and cultural landscape, first joining the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts in 1951 and later enrolling at the Dusseldorf Academy in 1961 alongside Sigmar Polke. With a didactic emphasis on Social Realism, the Dresden Academy seems an unlikely place for this master of 20<sup>th</sup> century abstraction to have cut his teeth, further emphasising the pioneering nature of his future work. Exploring a range of different artistic styles and technical approaches, Richter eventually settled on an experimental mode of figurative painting where he reproduced photographs in oil. Known as his photographic paintings, these works gained him international recognition in the early 1960s. More closely linked to his later chromatic abstractions than might initially appear, these works captured the artist's interest in a kind of visual equivalence, blurring the image allowing Richter 'to make everything equally important and equally unimportant.'<sup>1</sup> Eventually discarding the material underpinning of the photograph completely, Richter made the final leap into abstraction.



Detail of the present work

As the critical reception of recent survey exhibitions of Richter's painting at the Met Breuer and drawings at the Hayward Gallery highlight, interest in Richter's practice remains as robust as ever, especially with regards to his celebrated and ongoing *Abstraktes Bild* series, represented here in the attractively sized *Abstraktes Bild 761-1*, coming to auction for the first time in nearly 20 years. This visually arresting work is a paradigmatic example of the artist's technical and conceptual approach, executed at a time in the early 1990s when the artist was at the height of his intellectual and aesthetic enquiry into the nature of abstraction itself.



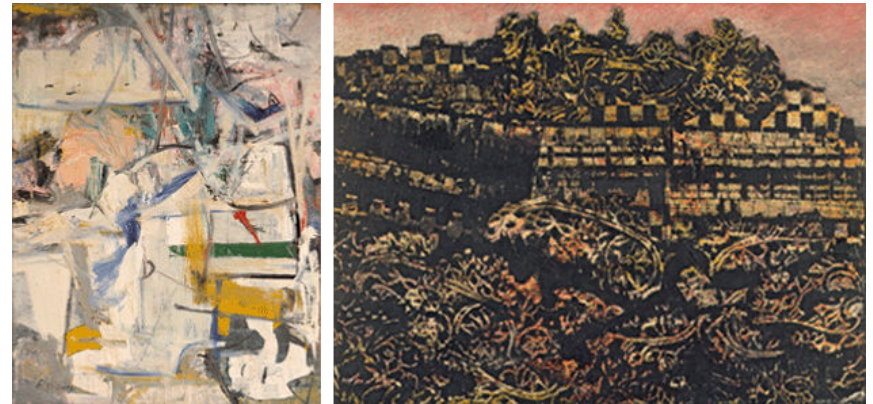
German artist Gerhard in front of his painting *Yellow Green* at his exhibition, Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, January 18th 2008. Image: Picture Alliance/DPA / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Gerhard Richter 2022 (0040)

## Richter's Intellectual Abstraction

Like other Richter works of this period, *Abstraktes Bild 761-1* excavates the very meaning of painting. Its intended focus is not on representation per se, but upon what it means to see a painting, where accumulations, unexpected pairings and chance erasures create an artwork that is both contingent and deliberate. Using his now famous squeegee technique, Richter scrapes paint across the canvas, the tool removing paint at the same time as it blends pigments together. Simultaneously revealing and concealing, these veils of colour become themselves the object of the work, there is no pre-figured image that is abstracted, rather it is the paint itself which is the subject in what Richter terms a 'free abstract'. The result is a vivid concentration on the question of the action of painting itself, the richly layered surface dramatising the recurrent forces of creation and destruction enacted across it. Perhaps the biggest erasure is that of the artist's hand itself; there is nothing in Richter's abstract paintings of this period that even hint of the gestural or the expressionist, save that the squeegee effect acts as a 'blow-up' of the brush stroke itself. Instead, what is presented is a continuum of creation, a series of creative moments that succeed one into the other, as noted by Richter himself who has elucidated: 'A picture like this is painted in different layers, separated by intervals of time.'<sup>ii</sup>

Building on a 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist legacy of critical reappraisal of questions around the image

and image-making that includes the variegated surfaces of German Surrealist Max Ernst's *frottage* experiments and Willem de Kooning's dense, richly textured canvases, Richter here manipulates broad passages of stunningly vibrant primary colour, using a diverse range of artistic tools to brush, scrape, and drag his pigments across his canvas, generating a strikingly energetic and muscular quality as wide strokes seem to flex and bend against each other.



Left: Willem de Kooning, *Easter Monday*, 1955-56, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Willem de Kooning Revocable Trust/ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022 Right: Max Ernst, *The Whole Town*, 1933, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Image: © Kunstmuseum den Haag / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

## Deep Reds

The foundational layer of the painting is executed in a deep red pigment, highly characteristic of Richter's work from this period, exemplified in the corpus of *Blood Red Mirror Paintings* and the cycle of six monumental canvases entitled *Abstraktes Rhombus* permanently housed in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. This background has what Richter terms an 'illusionist' quality (*ibid*), a smooth surface that Richter's squeegee will both decimate and extend with succeeding additions of colour and paint. The work demonstrates an ease and spontaneity that is in sharp contrast to the artist's notoriously laborious and complex working method, where Richter will have obsessively applied, reapplied, erased, remade, and at times obliterated the paint strata until the desired visual effect is achieved. The result of this aesthetic oscillation is a striking stimulation of the viewer's tactile senses; lattices of vibrant primary colours crisscrossing the canvas to create a hypnotic, immersive experience.

**Gerhard Richter**

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Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF6EluMNR14>

Clip from Corinna Belz, *Gerhard Richter Painting*, 2008 – 2009

**Gerhard Richter**

- Having just celebrated his 90th birthday on 9 February 2022, the artist's work will be celebrated across three exhibitions in his native Germany, including a show in Richter's hometown of Dresden. Curated by the artist himself, this intimate and personal show includes his last oil painting, and will coincide with the publication of the artist's final catalogue raisonné.
- Richter's work is currently being exhibited at the Espace Louis Vuitton Osaka. *Abstrakt*, which features 18 of the artist's works from the Fondation Louis Vuitton's collection, is on view until 17 April 2022.
- In November 2021, Richter signed a long-term loan agreement with the Nationalgalerie in Berlin, granting them 100 artworks, including his 'Birkenau' series which reflects on the Holocaust – a series that the artist has expressed must never be sold on the art market.
- In 2016, Richter's iconic *Düsenjäger* sold for \$25,565,000 in New York.

<sup>i</sup> Gerhard Richter, *Gerhard Richter: Writings, Interviews and Letters 1961 – 2007*, London, 2009, p. 33.

<sup>ii</sup> Interview with Wolfgang Pehnt in Richter, 2009, p. 132

**Provenance**

The Artist

Collection Michael Becher, Bremen

Schönewald Fine Art Xanten / Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco

Galerie Terminus, Munich

Private Collection, Berlin

Villa Grisebach Auktionen, Berlin, 1 December 2006, lot 97

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Munich, Galerie Terminus, *Gerhard Richter: sichtweise-schichtweise*, 30 May – 30 June 2006

**Literature**

Angelika Thill, ed., *Gerhard Richter. Catalogue Raisonné Band III, 1962-1993*, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1993, no. 761-1, p. 193 (illustrated, p. 136)

Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter. Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. 4, Nos. 652-1 - 805-6, 1988-1994*, Ostfildern, 2015, no. 761-1, p. 439 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FORMERLY FROM THE EMILY AND JERRY SPIEGEL COLLECTION

16

### Sigmar Polke

*Ohne Titel*

acrylic on patterned fabric  
90.2 x 74.6 cm (35 1/2 x 29 3/8 in.)  
Painted in 1965.

Estimate

£1,000,000 — 1,500,000 ‡▲

[Go to Lot](#)

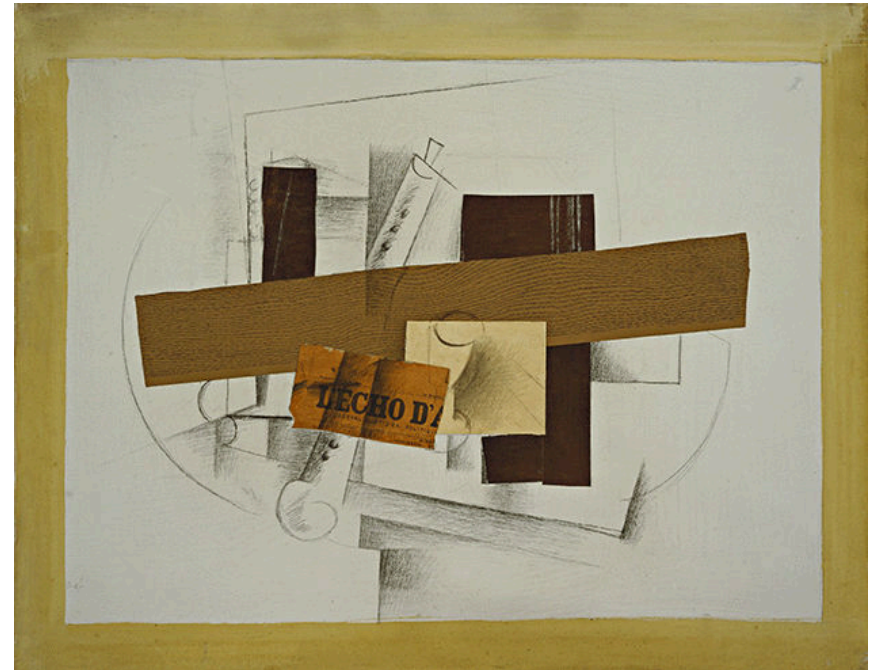




*'To start thinking that the support didn't have to be a blank piece of canvas, the way that you could feed off the support or you could actually create a support with your own painting to then add imagery on top. So, the support becomes an important part of the painting. There have been a few other artists over the years that have used material in a somewhat similar way, but their work always seems quite decorative, whereas with Sigmar's work it was integral to the way he works and the way he thinks. You do believe that he is a magician or a conjurer or alchemist.'* —Peter Doig

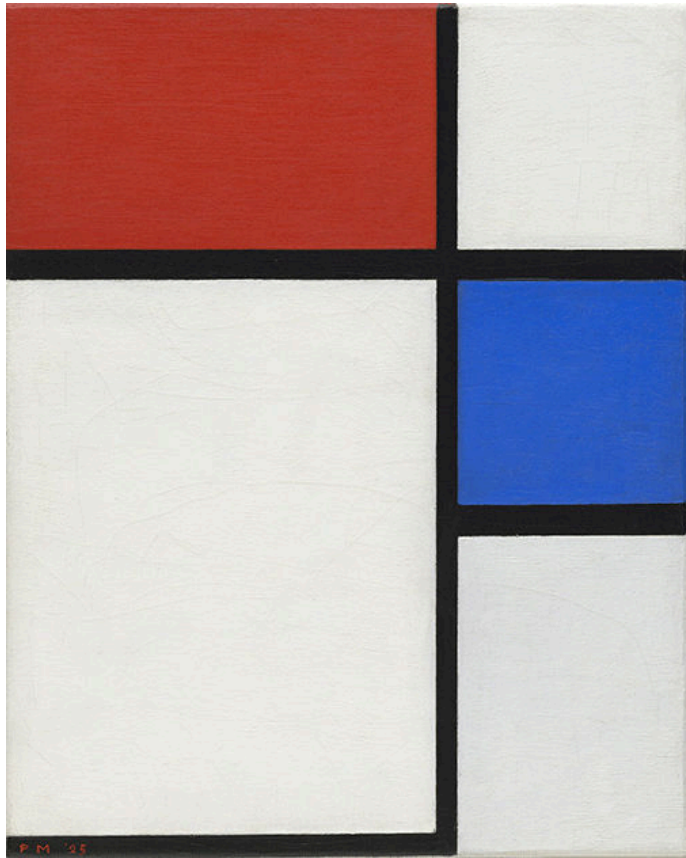
An incredible rediscovery preserved in the same family collection for over three decades following its acquisition in 1988 by the legendary Emily and Jerry Spiegel, *Ohne Titel* represents one of the most significant developments in 20th Century German Art. Executed in 1965, while Sigmar Polke was enrolled at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, *Ohne Titel* is a prominent and early example of Sigmar Polke's *Stoffbilder* series – works in which the artist cleverly appropriated materials of everyday life to address cultural and political issues. Reshaping and deconstructing the illusions and conventions of painting, Polke here replaces the standard canvas with a red fabric background of playfully rendered Native American figures, effectively revitalising a medium that was discounted after the rise of Minimalism and Conceptual art during the sixties.

Selected by Diane Waldman, formerly Senior Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the present work was lastly – and only – seen publicly in the *Aspects of Collage, Assemblage and the Found Objects in Twentieth Century Art* exhibition in 1988. A testament to *Ohne Titel*'s pioneering approach to technique and materials, it was placed alongside works by Cubist titans such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso and examples of Duchamp's Dadaist Readymades in a comprehensive survey on the mediums that revolutionized our ideas about the nature of art.



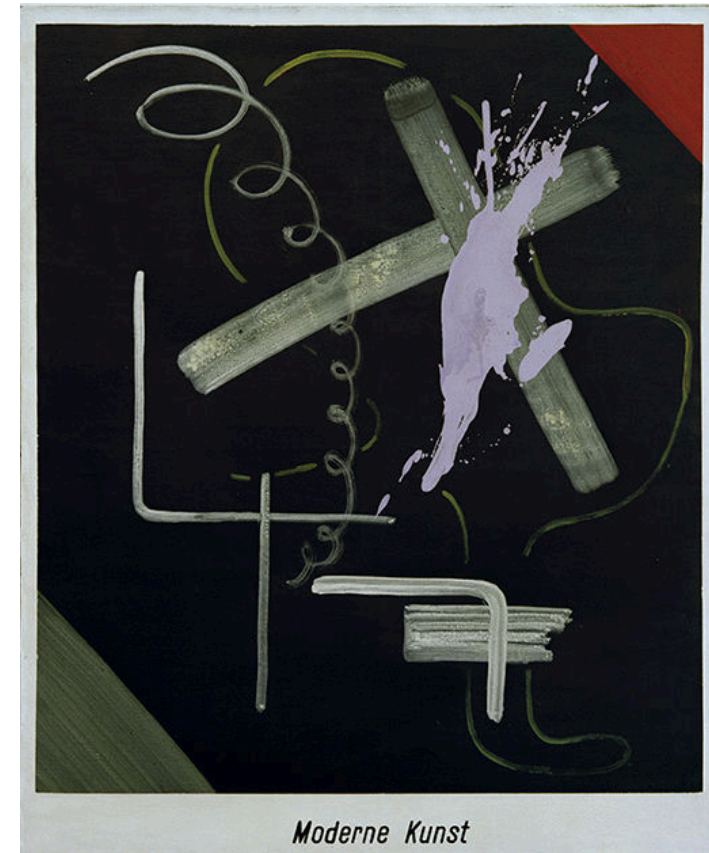
Georges Braque, *Still Life with Tenora*, 1913. Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Opening the door to a freewheeling combination of representation and abstraction, *Ohne Titel* mixes a mass-produced fabric with painterly forms. Similar to Picasso and Braques' use of the *papier collé*, Polke shockingly introduced real materials and texture into his work during his most experimental phase of his career at the time. In *Ohne Titel*, a patterned fabric that is somewhat reminiscent of children's illustrations is seriously disrupted by a kidney-shaped form – a familiar dichotomy in Polke's artistic practice – that seems to float against a yellow painted background. While this form is traversed by three thick silver lines and blue-grey brushstrokes, thinner purple lines dance harmoniously between each other in a looser mode that reminds us of Jackson Pollock's squiggles and Cy Twombly's spontaneous expressivity. Reflecting on the heritages of the early 20th century avant-garde, the composition is also divided in four geometrical rectangles that echoes the symmetrical structural aspects of Piet Mondrian's *Composition No. II with Red and Blue*, 1929.



Piet Mondrian, *Composition No. II, with Red and Blue*, 1929, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

Consistently infusing art historical references into his works, *Ohne Titel* sits comfortably with Polke's renowned *Gummibandbild Dürer-Hase*, 1970, that traces the familiar outline of the Old Master's work with rubber bands wrapped around nails hammered into fabric and *Moderne Kunst*, 1968, where his combination of squiggles and clean straight line seems at once nostalgic and sarcastic. Following the same attitude, *Ohne Titel* is a nod to early 20th Century abstraction and plays with the dominant artistic practices of the time. An innovative image with disparate elements, Polke thoughtfully challenges our own understanding and perception of the work. What is the meaning behind *Ohne Titel*? What seems a random and confound juxtaposition is, however materially and conceptually oriented.



Sigmar Polke, *Moderne Kunst*, 1968. Image: akg-images, Artwork: © The Estate of Sigmar Polke, Cologne / DACS 2022

Polke's urge to challenge artistic media cannot be explained outside the context of Germany's political and cultural landscape. The artist moved to West Germany, from the austerity of East Germany, where in 1963, together with fellow students Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg, Polke co-founded the *Kapitalistischer Realismus* (Capitalist Realism) movement. Sharing an interest in melding two apparently opposed art forms – the Social Realism practiced in Communist Europe, and the styles of the West's capitalist art-market system, Polke took on an ironic perspective on American capitalism and consumerism and the newly prosperous German middle-class. The patterned fabric in *Ohne Titel* deliberately mocks the banality of German middle-class interior décor and simultaneously pokes fun at abstract art in a way that was never conceived before. With

irreverent humour and a provocative voice, the present work masterfully pairs ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture into the same realm. This same confrontational approach can be seen throughout Polke’s varied artistic practice and triumphally in his coveted *Potato House*, 1967, a lean-to made of wooden lattice grids, braced by hundreds of potatoes, which echoes and parodies aspects of Minimalism.



Sigmar Polke, *Potato House*, 1967. Artwork: © The Estate of Sigmar Polke, Cologne / DACS 2022

*'He [Polke] deflated the utopian pretensions of modernism, recognized the artistic potential of consumer society's most banal products, stirred together photography and psychedelics to startling effect, mined the earth and heavens for unorthodox*

*materials, retrieved history as a vital subject for painting, created a new multilayered pictorial syntax, reconciled figuration and abstraction, and much, much more.'*  
—Raphael Rubinstein

Created at the inception of his career, *Ohne Titel* not only shifted the entire vocabulary of Polke’s art, but has inspired art of all different styles and forms throughout the 20th century. Affirming Polke’s enduring influence on art today, the Kunsthalle Dusseldorf is currently staging the exhibition *Productive Image Interference: Sigmar Polke and Artistic Perspectives Today*, bringing Polke’s work next to contemporary artists such as Avery Singer and Seth Price who, like him, are currently exploring new techniques and methods to address cultural and political issues.

Pushing the boundaries on both material and conceptual levels, the present work reflects the complexities and profound changes that took place in the artist’s life and a critical distance distinct to the German post-war experience. Displaying an unconventional beauty and with an impeccable provenance and art historical significance, works of the caliber of *Ohne Titel* are a rarity in the market and represent a unique opportunity for collectors to acquire a true masterpiece by the greatest German experimentalist.

### 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.
- At auction for the first time, *Ohne Titel* is one of the earliest *Stoffbilder* paintings coming from the esteemed former collection of Emily and Jerry Spiegel.
- Polke is currently subject to the exhibition *Productive Image Interference: Sigmar Polke and Artistic Perspectives Today* through March 6th at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, affirming his enduring influence on art today.

### Provenance

Private Collection, Cologne (acquired directly from the artist)

Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York

The Emily and Jerry Spiegel Collection, New York (acquired from the above in 1988)

Thence by descent to the present owner

**Exhibited**

New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Aspects of Collage, Assemblage and the Found Object in Twentieth-Century Art*, 29 March - 22 May 1988, no. 119



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LILLIAN  
FLORSHEIM

17

### Henry Moore

*Family Group*


bronze

14.2 x 11.2 x 7.5 cm (5 5/8 x 4 3/8 x 2 7/8 in.)

Conceived in 1945 and cast in bronze by 1957. This work is from an edition of 6 plus 1 artist's proof cast circa 1945 and a second edition of 9 plus 1 artist's proof which was cast between 1955-1957.

This work is recorded in the archives of the Henry Moore Foundation.

**Estimate**

£300,000 — 400,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*'Out of an exaggerated respect for the material, I was reducing the power of the form.'* —Henry Moore

## A Distinguished Provenance

Coming to auction for the first time from the collection of American artist and esteemed collector Lillian H. Florsheim, the provenance of this *Family Group* is unparalleled. A prominent patron of the arts, Florsheim possessed a keen eye, and her collection included notable works by Barbara Hepworth, Naum Gabo, Jean Arp, and Henry Moore. A sculptor herself, Florsheim began studying in the late 1940s, not long after the present work was first conceived. After a period of more academic training, she found herself drawn to abstraction, enrolling at Chicago's Institute of Design in 1951. Working well into her 80s, her sensitivity to materials and intuitive sense of form draws comparison to Moore's own. Florsheim's plexiglass works have been exhibited widely over the years and are represented in important private collections and The Art Institute of Chicago.



Lillian H. Florsheim in her studio. Image courtesy of the Lillian Florsheim Estate

## Henry Moore and *The Family Group*

One of British sculptor Henry Moore's most beloved and enduring motifs, the *Family Group* brings

together key formal and thematic elements that have come to define the sculptor's prodigious output. The quintessential image of family unity and harmony, in the present work two parents are presented frontally, an older child standing between the legs of the father, while a small infant sits playfully on its mother's lap. Executed with a masterful sense of compositional balance, the mother sits to the left of the father, their bent legs perfectly mirroring one another while the positioning of the softly shaped children one above the other creates a subtle upward diagonal force that charges the piece with a sense of vitality and motion.

So central was this motif to Moore's thinking during these years that he returned to it again and again across drawings and sculpture. Completing over 14 different sculptural variations on the *Family Group*, Moore also created 4 monumental versions of family groups, one of which – still installed at the [Barclay School in Stevenage](#) – is significant as Moore's first ever large-scale bronze sculpture, formally commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council in 1947.

Expanding the composition to include two children, the present work is often considered as one of the more complex versions of this theme, a fact that is greatly complemented by Moore's less naturalistic depiction of the figures here. Adopting a more fluid treatment of form, this version of the *Family Group* highlights the important dialogue that Moore established with his international contemporaries notably the undulating lines, hollows and biomorphic shapes that dominated Pablo Picasso's work in the 1930s. Although a relatively new medium to him at this point, Moore's command of bronze here also lends the piece a softness and mutability that speaks to the emotive power of his subject. Particularly apparent here in the softly rounded forms of the heads and sloping line of the shoulders, the elegant square void in the father's chest and rounded cavity in the mother's right breast gives weight to Moore's comment that 'if both abstract and human elements are welded together in a work, it must have a fuller, deeper meaning.'<sup>1</sup>



Pablo Picasso, *Woman in an Armchair*, 1932, Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022

## A History of the *Family Group*

As Moore described in a letter to The Museum of Modern Art curator Dorothy Miller in 1951 shortly after this version was cast, it was Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius who first discussed the idea of a family group with Moore in the 1930s as part of a progressive school project spearheaded by Henry Morris. As the Director for Education in Cambridgeshire, Morris had enlisted Gropius to design an ambitious project for a 'Village College' in Impington, which would not only offer education for

children, but facilities accessible to the wider community, including a lecture theatre, and sleeping accommodation for families should the need arise. It was Gropius who approached Moore with the idea of creating a large sculpture especially for the project, and Moore eventually suggested a family group as image that best encapsulated the spirit and vision of the school. Sadly a lack of funds, the departure of Gropius for America and, eventually, the onset of World War II all conspired to ensure that the project was all but forgotten until 1944, when Morris approached Moore once again.

## Drawing and Sculpture

*'The Family Group ideas were all generated by drawings.'* —Henry Moore

The *Family Group* works especially highlight the fundamental relationship of drawing to Moore's sculptural practice, a point emphasised by Moore himself in conversation with the late and highly esteemed critic David Sylvester where he identified the direct relationship between the resulting sculptures and his drawing practice. In addition to also having recently lost his mother, Moore became a parent himself in 1946, no doubt intensifying his feelings on this emotionally charged subject. Moore made many preparatory drawings of families in a variety of different arrangements and configurations during this period, several of which were then modelled in clay before being cast in bronze. Filling nearly two sketchbooks with drawings of variations on the family group theme, Moore found ways, not only of developing his compositional ideas, but of 'sorting them out.'<sup>ii</sup> A sketch included on a drawing titled *Family Groups: Ideas for Sculpture* from 1944 highlights the central role that preparatory sketches played in this respect, clearly echoing the arrangement and presentation of the figures in the present work.



Henry Moore, *Family Groups: Ideas for Sculpture*, 1944, Private Collection. Image: Reproduced by permission of The Henry Moore Foundation, Artwork: © The Henry Moore Foundation. All Rights Reserved, DACS / [www.henry-moore.org](http://www.henry-moore.org) 2022

In addition to this, the intervening years between the original Impington project and the casting of this variation of the theme in 1946 had witnessed a particular concentration of Moore's drawing practice, including his highly celebrated *Shelter Drawings*. Featuring tender scenes of families huddled together during the many bomb raids endured by Londoners during the Blitz, Moore's appointment as an Official War Artist led him to focus particularly on enduring images of love and protection, extended in the family group sketches and resulting sketches in their optimistic promise of a better future. Moore's own family unit was indirectly threatened by the war in 1940 when their Hampstead home was hit by shrapnel. Leaving London for a quiet hamlet in

Hertfordshire, Moore and his wife built a family home where they lived, worked, and raised their daughter in peace.

### Collector's Digest

- *Family Group* was first cast in 1946, the same year The Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted a major retrospective of the sculptor's work, it was only 2 years later in 1948 that Moore was awarded first prize for sculpture at the Venice Biennale, the highest acknowledgement of his status as a leading post-war artist on an international stage.
- Examples of Moore's sculptures can be found in the permanent collections of major international institutions including The Tate, London, The Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. His work can also still be enjoyed in public parks and spaces across the world.

<sup>i</sup> Henry Moore, quoted in Philip James, ed., *Henry Moore on Sculpture*, London, 1966, p. 72.

<sup>ii</sup> Henry Moore in 'Henry Moore Talking to David Sylvester', 7 June 1963, transcript of *Third Programme*, broadcast BBC Radio, 14 July 1963, Tate Archive TGA 200816, p.13.

### Provenance

Reid & Lefevre, Ltd., London

Lillian H. Florsheim, Chicago (acquired from the above on 15 February 1957)

Thence by descent from the above to the present owner in 1988

### Exhibited

London, The Tate Gallery, *Sculpture and Drawings by Henry Moore*, 2 May - 29 July 1951, no. 161 (terracotta example exhibited)

New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Henry Moore. 60 Years of His Art*, 14 May - 25 September 1983, pp. 62, 123 (another cast exhibited and illustrated, p. 63)

Long Island, Hofstra Museum, Hofstra University; Pittsburgh, Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State University; Philadelphia, Arthur Ross Gallery, University of Pennsylvania; The Baltimore Art Museum, *Mother and Child: The Art of Henry Moore*, 10 September 1987 - 17 April 1988, no. 30, p. 52 (another cast exhibited and illustrated, p. 53)



**Literature**

David Sylvester, ed., *Henry Moore. Sculpture and Drawings 1921-1948, vol. 1*, London, 1957, no. 235, pp. 14, 278 (terracotta example illustrated, pl. 265, p. 150)

Will Grohmann, *The Art of Henry Moore*, London, 1960, no. 121, p. 8 (terracotta example illustrated, n.p.)

Ionel Jianou, *Henry Moore*, Paris, 1968, no. 222, p. 75 (terracotta example listed; titled as *Groupe de Famille*)

John Hedgecoe and Henry Moore, *Henry Moore*, London, 1968, n.p. (another cast illustrated, p. 162)

Robert Melville, *Henry Moore. Sculpture and Drawings 1921-1969*, London, 1970, no. 343, p. 352 (another cast illustrated, n.p.; terracotta example, no. 354, p. 353, illustrated, n.p.)

Giulio Carlo Argan, *Henry Moore*, Milan, 1971, no. 81, p. 38 (another cast illustrated, n.p.; terracotta example, no. 83, illustrated, n.p.; titled as *Gruppo di famiglia*)

Josep Iglesias del Marquet, *Henry Moore y El Inquietante Infinito*, Barcelona, 1979, no. 33 (terracotta example illustrated, n.p.; titled as *Grupo familiar*)

David Mitchinson, ed., *Henry Moore Sculpture*, London, 1981, no. 178, p. 310 (terracotta example illustrated, p. 95)

David Sylvester, ed., *Henry Moore. Complete Sculpture 1921-1948, vol. 1*, London, 1988, no. 235, p. 14 (terracotta example illustrated, pl. 265, p. 150)

John Hedgecoe, *Henry Moore. Une vision monumentale*, Cologne, 2005, no. 237, p. 210 (another cast illustrated; titled as *Scène de famille*)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM AN ESTEEMED PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

18

### **Hurvin Anderson**



*Untitled (Handsworth Park)*

signed 'HURVIN ANDERSON' on the stretcher  
oil on canvas

205 x 244 cm (80 3/4 x 96 1/8 in.)

Painted in 1998.

**Estimate**

£1,200,000 — 1,800,000  

[Go to Lot](#)



*'In real life, the space I occupy is not the space where you can do everything that you want, it's only in painting that you can do everything you want.'* —Hurvin Anderson

Executed in luscious washes of greens, yellows and blues and hovering on the very edges of abstraction, *Untitled (Handsworth Park)* is an important and particularly vibrant representation of Turner Prize-nominee Hurvin Anderson's early work, and its evocative examination of identity, displacement and belonging remains absolutely central to his painting today. Completed in the same year that he graduated from the Royal College of Art, the monumental *Untitled (Handsworth Park)* is a foundational work in Anderson's celebrated oeuvre, articulating his deep and sustained engagement with a history of British landscape painting, while establishing his unique pictorial language and approach to painterly technique.

#### Park Life:

*'... it was, he told me, the first landscape he felt connected to, a place that exists yet is just out of reach – a sense of dislocation that is, perhaps, something experienced by many first and second-generation migrants.'* —Jennifer Higgie

Born in Birmingham to Jamaican parents who settled in the Midlands after their emigration in the early 1960s, the shimmering surfaces of Anderson's landscapes seem pervaded by an intense nostalgia. With careful attention to composition, colour and the vicissitudes of time and memory, his work captures that dual vision of both here and there or, as the artist puts it himself, of being in one place 'but actually thinking of another'.<sup>i</sup> As the recent exhibition *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s - Now* highlighted, this is a rich vein running through Anderson's practice, and one he shares with other diasporic or otherwise displaced artists. Often mentioned in close connection to Peter Doig, who has been something of a mentor for the younger artist, the two also share an artist vocabulary for approaching this subject, their paintings sometimes appearing washed in a diaphanous veil that places the viewer at a step removed from the scene in front of them, as in Doig's *Music of the Future*.

As the painting's title clearly identifies, the scene is a view out across Handsworth Park, Birmingham, where Anderson remembers playing football as a youth – a subject he has subsequently returned to again and again throughout his career working across photographs and memories. Although clearly identifiable as such, the vibrant intensity of Anderson's palette here is transformative. Working in tandem with the iridescent qualities of the painted surface, it generates a distorting double vision that falls like a veil between the artist and the scene in front of him 'as if he's examining these sites from a great distance, even though they're part of his heritage.'<sup>ii</sup>



Handsworth Park, Birmingham. Photograph by Hurvin Anderson, c. 1983. Image: © Hurvin Anderson. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2022

Deeply invested in the patterns and powers of memory, Anderson's compositions are never straightforwardly representational, but collapse time and space as they bring a complex mesh of disparate or loosely connected ideas or feelings together in a single frame. Just as Anderson's focus on the barber shop as a makeshift space that served a community's practical as well as social needs in his celebrated *Peter* series can be read as studies in 'psychological interiors', the artist's *Untitled (Handsworth Park)* works explore the aesthetic possibilities of a 'psychological landscape', operating in a zone between physical landscape and composite memory, and examining the imbrication of the self with the physical world.



### British Landscape Tradition:



Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Mortlake Terrace*, 1827, National Gallery of Washington, D.C. Image: Courtesy of National Gallery of Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.109

*'Painting is a practice with a history' —Michael J. Prokopow*

A keen student of European art history, Anderson's paintings maintain a particularly lively dialogue with a tradition of British landscape painting. Emphasising the natural world and the individual's emotional response to it, British Romanticism seems to be a particular touchstone, the layered allusions, and careful attention to shifting atmospheric effects of J. M. W. Turner's canvases offering an antecedent to Anderson's own shifting landscapes. Citing John Constable and William Coldstream as influences, Anderson enters into this history as a way of exploring 'how history plays a part in the present' – not just art history, but the intersections of the landscape with a variety of social, economic, and political factors that is deeply implicated in the British Colonial project.<sup>iii</sup>

In the face of industrialisation at home and expanding colonial interests abroad, the idea of the bucolic British landscape solidified over the course of the nineteenth century as a way of condensing an idea of English nationhood and identity. Founded in the 1880s, *Untitled (Handsworth Park)* itself was a response to the very pressing need for salubrious green space on the one-hand and the mania for picturesque scenery and 'prospect views' on the other. Celebrating an idealised version of tamed nature and foregrounding powerful themes of ownership, dominance and control that underpinned the British Empire's exploitation of land and resources abroad, beautiful landscapes effectively masked the power relations of the colonial system that fed directly into the wealth and prosperity of the country while directly shaping certain ideas around its national identity.



John Constable, *Wivenhoe Park*, 1816, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Image: Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Widener Collection, 1942.9.10

Emerging as one of Europe's most culturally diverse communities in the 1950s with the arrival of Windrush emigrants, Handsworth's history is itself profoundly shaped by the legacies of Empire and colonialism. Keenly aware of this fusion of Caribbean heritage within British culture, and of the tensions between the vision of a welcoming motherland and the harsher reality for so many Windrush migrants, Anderson would have no doubt witnessed first-hand the violence and racial tensions that marked Handsworth in the early 1980s. While this overt socio-political context is not immediately present in the quiet, depopulated scene, the shimmering landscape seems to capture a sense of this loaded history, and of the genre's own complex relationship to ideas of nationhood and identity.

Establishing a visual relationship between the tarmacked path and the grassy hillside, Anderson



**Hurvin Anderson**

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draws attention to the question of our intervention in the landscape, and of our assumptions around ideas of the 'natural'. Veiled in a pale, almost translucent wash of layered paints overlaying a complex surface moving between staccato brushstrokes, the precise outline of bare branches puncturing the background, and watery passages left to run down the surface of the canvas, *Untitled (Handsworth Park)* seems to present something to us that is visible, but that remains just beyond our reach.

**Collector's Digest**

- Splitting his childhood between the UK and the Caribbean, Hurvin Anderson's work looks closely at the relationship between landscapes – real and imagined – and identity.
- Having exhibited widely in recent years, Anderson was recently included in *Life Between Islands: Caribbean British Art 50's – Now* at the Tate Britain, which explores how British culture has been enriched and transformed by people from the Caribbean. The exhibition is on view until 3 April 2022.
- In 2017, Anderson was shortlisted for the prestigious Turner Prize.

<sup>i</sup> Hurvin Anderson, quoted in Michael J. Prokopow, *Hurvin Anderson*, London, 2021, p. 16.

<sup>ii</sup> Jennifer Higgin, 'Another Word for Feeling', *Hurvin Anderson: Reporting Back* (exh. cat.), Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 20013, p. 14.

<sup>iii</sup> Hurvin Anderson, quoted by Barry Scwabsky in his foreword to Michael J. Prokopow, *Hurvin Anderson*, London, 2021.

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**Provenance**

Private Collection, United Kingdom (acquired directly from the artist)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF MORRIS AND RITA PYNOOS

19 ♦

### David Hockney

*Self-Portrait on the Terrace*

signed, titled and dated 'Self portrait on the terrace  
Jan Feb March 1984 David Hockney' on the reverse

oil on canvas, in 2 parts

each 213.4 x 152.4 cm (84 x 60 in.)

overall 213.4 x 304.8 cm (84 x 120 in.)

Painted in 1984.

**Estimate**

£4,000,000 — 6,000,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)



*'Whenever I left England, colours got stronger in the pictures. California always affected me with colour. Because of the light you see more colour, people wear more colourful clothes, you notice it, it doesn't look garish: there is more colour in life here.'*  
—David Hockney



David Hockney with Ian Falconer and David Stoltz, in Los Angeles, c 1978. Image: © Michael Childers/Corbis via Getty Images

Soaked in a strong, California sunshine and executed in intensely vibrant passages of bright, bold colour, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* is an exquisite example of David Hockney's localised California landscapes, highly unusual in its incorporation of a delicately rendered self-portrait. Painting the areas in and around his Hollywood Hills home after having relocated to this spot on the West Coast in 1978, Hockney took great inspiration from the dramatic, expansive landscapes he discovered on drives through the hills above the city. Amongst the many, truly fantastic paintings of the wide-open vistas and unspooling ribbons of road carved into the hillsides around Los Angeles that Hockney captured in these years, undoubtedly it was the house itself that quickly emerged as a favourite subject, reproduced across a selection of paintings, drawings, and prints from the period.

In a flamboyant rejoinder to Le Corbusier's modernist maxim that houses should be designed as 'machines for living in', Hockney transformed his Californian ranch-style home into a lively theatrical set to stage life's dramas within. Unfolding in a succession of rooms decorated in

dazzling shades of electric blues, warm yellows, and hot pinks, Hockney succeeded, as he put it, in 'slowly [...] making my own environment - room by room - as artist's do.' A clear inheritor to Henri Matisse's strong sympathy for bold, unmodulated colour and vibrantly realised domestic interiors, Hockney's house and the paintings that he made there are in constant dialogue. Directly borrowing the rich, Fauvist palette that he had recently used to realise the set designs for a reimagining of Erik Satie's ballet *Parade*, the connections that *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* draws between painterly experiment, spatial form, and immersive environment are striking, 'the house being perhaps the closest analogue to the theatre, a real space in which to fashion an ideal world.'<sup>1</sup>

*'The idea of drawing water is always appealing to me. You can look at it, through it, into it. See it as volume, see it as surface. You can't do that with a floor or a wall.'*  
—David Hockney



David Hockney's house on the West Coast, c 1983. Image: Mary E. Nichols, Architectural Digest, © Condé Nast

Looking out from the second-story terrace, fitted with the cobalt blue decking that is wonderfully



rendered here, Hockney shows remarkable skill in combining multiple perspectives within the composition, sharply tilting the garden scene beyond the titular terrace so we are at once looking out and directly down onto the circular pool that has become, more than any other motif, a visual shorthand for Hockney himself.

Occupying a truly iconic place in the artist's oeuvre and dominating his production through the 1960s and 70s, examples of Hockney's pools are undoubtedly amongst the artist's most recognisable and beloved works. Coming to epitomise an idea of 70s 'California Cool', Hockney returned to the motif across a huge variety of media including acrylics, watercolour, photography, and his ground-breaking *Paper Pools* series, which he commenced in 1978.

Hockney has spoken frequently and eloquently on the subject of water's appeal for him, and how fascinating he finds it as a formal problem. Having established his memorable use of short, rhythmically intersecting blue curves as a means of rendering the visual effects of clear water pictorially, Hockney adopted this signature detail on the bottom of his own pool in a playful instance of life imitating art.

## Picture Perfect

*'I believe that the problem of how to depict something is [...] and interesting on and a permanent one; there's no solution to it. There are a thousand and one ways you can go about it. There's no set rule.'* —David Hockney

In 1983, just a year before *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* was painted, Hockney made a trip back to London from his adopted home in California. His visit coincided with the first major Cubist exhibition held in London, *The Essential Cubism: Braque, Picasso and Their Friends, 1907 - 1920* organised by Tate director Alan Bowness and curated by Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow. A major event, the exhibition presented the visual history of Cubism together for the first time, and would have a profound impact on Hockney, allowing him to ground some of the more experimental approaches to spatial organisation and temporality already being explored with the set designs for *Parade* and elsewhere across his practice. With palpable enthusiasm, Hockney reported visiting the show seven times, so energised by the pioneering challenges to established modes of representation and ways of seeing made by these early 20th century pioneers. As he said in one audio interview, he felt that 'Cubism is about another way of seeing the world, a truer way', allowing for a kind of slow looking that would lean more heavily into the nature of perception itself.



Pablo Picasso, *Les femmes d'Alger (Version 'O')*, 1955, Private Collection. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022

Although falling beyond the scope of the Tate exhibition, Pablo Picasso's 1955 *Les femmes d'Alger* series makes a striking comparison to the present work, identifying the ways in which Hockney addressed questions of spatial composition directly to his Cubist forbears. Just as Picasso's series was at once a nod to Old Masters and a tender homage to his friend and rival Henri Matisse, so too does Hockney combine key stylistic features of these two towering figures of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde, riotous Fauve colour and Cubist modelling perfectly balanced in his composition here.

In its radically flattened presentation of multiple perspectives, and in the forceful intensity of its palette, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* affectionately references key compositional elements of these iconic works, right down to the tight circularity of its composition and the knowing nod to Picasso's use of heavy line repeated in the intersecting lines of Hockney's blue decking here.

Most importantly, in Cubism's dissection of volumetric form and radical attempts to represent multiple perspectives simultaneously, Hockney found a means to expand his own thinking about



temporality in painting, a polaroid camera proving to be a surprisingly useful tool as he started to work through some of these pictorial problems.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz5vWgKy2Sc&t=30s><sup>1</sup>

#### What David Hockney's Brilliant Collages Reveal About Photos

It was only in the 1980s though, as Hockney was preparing for his major presentation of his more conventional photographs at the Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne- Centre Pompidou in Paris that he began to consider the possibilities of moving beyond the single photographic image. As Hockney explains, taking pictures from different viewpoints and then recombining them into a larger photocollages, he realised that the fractured photographic image made time visible in startling ways. This, coupled with the 'collage aesthetic' of the *Parade* project led directly to the striking compositional features handled with such assurance in *Self-Portrait on the Terrace*.

Using this approach to take photographs of the house, the artist discovered a pictorial language that he hadn't considered before, combining three different viewpoints to create a strikingly Cubist approach to perspectival simultaneity so confidently evoked in the present work. Restlessly innovative, Hockney has more recently extended this photocollage practice into video, his multi-screen installation *The Four Seasons, Woldgate Wood* using 9 cameras mounted on a jeep to capture 'a much more fluid perspective, and of course a wider time frame, making it possible to see more of where we have been and where we are going.'<sup>ii</sup>

What is especially distinctive in Hockney's painting though is his departure from the solid fractured planes of Picasso's reclining nude in favour of a very different approach to the question of simultaneity. Visually recalling the so-called 'Transparencies' that Francis Picabia developed in the 1920s, Hockney here finds an innovative way to transfer his examination of pictorial time onto the human figure. Tellingly, Picabia's term is itself rooted in a language of photography and film and proves remarkably effective here in aiding Hockney in 'trying to create a painting where the viewer's eye could be made to move in certain ways, to stop in certain places, move on, and in so doing reconstruct the space across time for itself.'<sup>iii</sup>



Left: Francis Picabia, *Mimos*, 1929, Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Image: Album / Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022 Right: Detail of the present work

Still proudly carrying his broad West Yorkshire accent, David Hockney is the quintessential British artist, and yet his painting has become synonymous with scenes of a laidback, Californian lifestyle. Bridging these two worlds, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* is a stunning expression of the artist's curiosity and verve, and his phenomenal skill as a colourist. Presented shortly after its execution in an exhibition of new works with André Emmerich Gallery, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* was also included in the career-defining 1988 - 1989 travelling exhibition *David Hockney: A Retrospective*.

A cherished work from the esteemed collection of Rita and Morry Pynoos, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* also testifies to the deep personal friendship that the couple developed with Hockney over the years. More than collectors, the Pynooses were deeply passionate about art, and about sharing their lives with the artists they met over the years. Acquiring the work almost immediately after its execution, *Self-Portrait on the Terrace* stayed with the Pynooses for nearly 40 years, a fitting home for this rare moment of quiet introspection by the artist, and a vision of Californian life that he shared with them.

<sup>i</sup> Kenneth E. Silver, 'Hockney on the Stage', in (exh. cat.), *David Hockney, A Retrospective*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Tate Gallery, Los Angeles,

1988, p. 72.

<sup>ii</sup> David Hockney, quoted in Constance W. Glenn, 'Artist David Hockney's House on the West Coast', *Architectural Digest*, 1 April 1983, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> David Hockney, in 'Chronology', The David Hockney Foundation, [online](#).

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#### Provenance

André Emmerich Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in October 1984

#### Exhibited

New York, André Emmerich Gallery, Inc., *David Hockney. New Work. Paintings, Gouaches, Drawings, Photo Collages*, 13 October - 3 November 1984 (illustrated, n.p.)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; London, The Tate Gallery, *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, 4 February 1988 - 3 January 1989, fig. 13, pp. 72, 256 (illustrated, p. 73)

#### Literature

Peter Webb, *Portrait of Hockney*, New York, 1988, no. 158, pp. 221, 224, 230, 253 (illustrated, p. 253)

Henry Geldzahler, 'Hockney at Home', *House & Garden*, March 1988, p. 157 (detail illustrated)

Paul Melia and Ulrich Luckhardt, eds., *David Hockney: Paintings*, Munich, 2012, fig. 71, p. 96 (illustrated)

Hans Werner Holzwarth and David Hockney, eds., *David Hockney: A Bigger Book*, Cologne, 2016, pp. 178-179 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE ITALIAN  
COLLECTION

20

### **Cecily Brown**


*Blithe Spirit*

signed and dated 'Cecily Brown 99' on the reverse;  
signed and dated 'Cecily Brown 99' on the stretcher  
oil on canvas

91.5 x 122 cm (36 x 48 in.)

Painted in 1999.

**Estimate**

£500,000 — 700,000 

[Go to Lot](#)





*'I have always wanted to make paintings that are impossible to walk past, paintings that grab and hold your attention. The more you look at them, the more satisfying they become for the viewer. The more time you give to the painting, the more you get back.'* —Cecily Brown

Painted in 1999, Cecily Brown's *Blithe Spirit* is a striking example of the artist's highly acclaimed practice and its careful balance of abstraction and figuration, past and present, paint and flesh. Engulfing the viewer into a sumptuous field of gestural brushstrokes, the present work expresses Brown's ability to channel the Old and Modern Masters of the art historical canon— from Paolo Veronese to Willem de Kooning – in the formation of a singular visual language that is entirely her own. Coming to auction for the first time from a renowned Private Italian Collection, *Blithe Spirit*'s intimate scale and sensuous tones, all come together in a bacchanalian riot of tantalising allusions, epitomising the artist's words: 'The paint is transformed into image, and hopefully paint and image transform themselves into a third and new thing [...] I want to catch something in the act of becoming something else.'<sup>i</sup>



Left: Paolo Veronese, *Rape of Europa*, 1578. Palazzo Ducale, Venice. Image: Scala, Florence Right: Willem de Kooning, *Untitled V*, 1977, Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo. Image: Albright Knox Art Gallery/ Art Resource, NY/Scala, Florence. Artwork: © Willem de Kooning Revocable Trust/ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

## Earthly Delights

*'One of the main things I would like my work to do is to reveal itself slowly, continuously and for you never to feel that you're really finished looking at something.'* —Cecily Brown

Following her graduation from the Slade School of Fine Arts and the epochal rise of the Young British Artists in the 1990s, Cecily Brown garnered critical attention, with her lush gestural compositions of explicitly sexual imagery. Painted the same year she joined Gagolian, the carnal details of *Blithe Spirit* emerge in a tangle of fleshy peaches and pinks, slowly coming to reveal the form of a woman, lying prostrate. Recalling the orgiastic scenes depicted by Hieronymous Bosch in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, the present work exemplifies this pivotal moment in the rise to fame.



Left: Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (triptych center panel detail), 1500-1505, Prado, Madrid. Image: © Museo Nacional del Prado © Photo MNP / Scala, Florence Right: Detail of the present work

Included in the 1999 exhibition at Galleria in Arco in Turin, *Fact & Fictions*, which celebrated the emerging talents of the international painting scene, *Blithe Spirit* encapsulates the continuous stream of colour, form and narratives that have become synonymous with the artist's practice. The year also marked Brown's breakout exhibition *The Skin Game* at Gagolian, which presented works characterised by their overtly erotic imagery. The artist later recalled: 'I think I was doing a lot of sexual paintings... what I wanted – in a way that I think now is too literal – was for the paint to embody the same sensations that bodies would. Oil paint very easily suggests bodily fluids and flesh.'<sup>ii</sup>



## Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

The present work takes its title from *To a Skylark*, a late poem by the English Romantic, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Brown extracts a line from the poem's first stanza, in which Shelley addresses a skylark as a 'blithe Spirit' since its unimpeded song surpasses all other beauty.

*Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!  
Bird thou never wert,  
That from Heaven, or near it,  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art*

*To a Skylark*, also inspired Noël Coward's 1941 comedic play *Blithe Spirit*, which centres on struggling novelist Charles Condomine who invites an eccentric medium into his home to host a séance; Madame Arcati inadvertently conjures the spirit of Charles' first wife Elvira, who becomes determined to complicate and sabotage their relationship.



A poster for the 1945 film adaptation of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* starring Rex Harrison and Constance Cummings, directed by David Lean.

## Collector's Digest

- Now based in New York, Cecily Brown was born in the UK and studied at the prestigious Slade School of Fine Art and is an internationally recognised and defining figure of contemporary art.
- Known for her assimilation of a broad range of cultural material, in 1999, Brown created additional works with titles that reference literature, such as *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which shares the title of a play by Thomas Wilder, and *Tender is the Night*, which references the F. Scott

Fitzgerald novel. This continues to be a theme in her recent work.

- In 2020, Brown exhibited in *Bustes de Femmes*, a group exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in Paris that focuses on female portraiture to celebrate how the female figure has been reinterpreted by modern and contemporary artists.

<sup>i</sup> Cecily Brown, quoted in Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith, 'Painting Sensations,' in *Cecily Brown: Paintings*, exh. cat., Modern Art Oxford, 2005, p. 55

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jun/12/art1>

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#### Provenance

Gagosian Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2002

#### Exhibited

Turin, Galleria in Arco, *Fact and Fictions: La nuova pittura internazionale tra immaginario e realtà*, 1999, no. 83, n.p. (illustrated)

Milan, Castello di Vigevano, *La donna oggetto. Miti e metamorfosi al femminile 1900-2005*, 20 May - 30 July 2006, p. 223 (illustrated, p. 34)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



21

### Tom Wesselmann

*Great American Nude, no. 91*

signed, titled and dated 'GREAT AMERICAN NUDE #91

Wesselmann 1967' on the stretcher

oil and Liquitex on shaped canvas

151.1 x 261.6 cm (59 1/2 x 102 7/8 in.)

Executed in 1967.

#### Estimate

£1,200,000 — 1,800,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*'Painting, sex, and humour are the most important things in life.'* —Tom Wesselmann

Painted in 1967, *Great American Nude, no. 91* presents a bold and unflinching celebration of line and form from Tom Wesselmann's most immediately recognisable series. Employing a visual language borrowed from film, photography, and advertising, Wesselmann's nude is closely cropped and explicitly posed, emphasising the depersonalised approach taken by the artist to his subject and the tension maintained in his finest works between artifice and life. Rendered in impossibly smooth, broad passages of flat colour, *Great American Nude, no. 91* is not a portrait of an individual woman, but a pictorial treatise on the Western tradition of the reclining nude itself. Updated and translated into a quintessentially American idiom shaped by the stirrings of sexual revolution, Madison Avenue ad men, and the glossy sensuality of *Playboy* magazine, Wesselmann reimagines this foundational art historical motif for the American Century.

## Great American Nudes

First exhibited in Tanager Gallery, New York in 1961, Wesselmann's *Great American Nude* series grew out of the small-scale collages of nudes set within interiors that he was making from scavenged postcards and other ephemera at the time. Playfully trading of a verbal association with the 'Great American Novel' – the once popular (and then parodied) idea of a canonical novel, capable of embodying the essence of America as both a concept and an identity – Wesselmann's enduring *Great American Nudes* series adopts the European tradition of the female nude as a vessel for excavating both the aesthetic history of his subject, and of its relationship to the American psyche and 'the Great American Dream' itself. While the European nude has traditionally stood in as a shorthand for 'art' itself, the American nude, Wesselmann seems to suggest, is 'a highly commercialised, objectified, and sexualised female being [...] a secular muse for the affluent society.'<sup>i</sup>



Left: PLAYBOY COVER - November 1960. Image: akg-images / Fototeca Gilardi Right: Amedeo Modigliani, *Nu couché, les bras ouverts* (Reclining Nude, Arms open), Collection Gianni Mattioli, Milan. Image: akg-images / MPortfolio / Electa

Deftly combining art historical reference with the recognisable trappings of contemporary consumer culture, Wesselmann's sensual depictions of the female form are visually arresting and powerfully provocative, evident here in the explicit compositional presentation of the figure and its juxtaposition to the still life arrangement on the low table. Recalling the languorous *odalisques* of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Henri Matisse, and Amedeo Modigliani, Wesselmann amplifies the veiled eroticism of these earlier nudes, supplanting their more painterly treatment with a hard, high gloss and surrounding them with consumer objects of everyday American life. As with the shock of controversy surrounding the unveiling of [Édouard Manet's Olympia](#) at the 1865 Paris Salon, the raw power of Wesselmann's *Great American Nude no. 91* is in the collapse of any aesthetic distance between this traditional subject and our own world, emphasised by her presentation as a flat cut-out, a pinup fantasy vision of our own making. With her exposed tan lines and contemporary décor, the subject of *Great American Nude, no. 91* is a resolutely modern woman, exposing our own attitudes to sexuality, femininity, consumerism, and the cult of the image.

Rooted firmly in its own myth of origins, the inspiration for this quintessential American series famously came to Wesselmann in a dream. Having reached something of an impasse in his practice, he was searching for ways of concentrating his focus when a vision in red, white, and blue came to him. With this patriotic palette, the *Great American Nude* was born and, although officially Wesselmann completed the series in 1973, the nudes in 'hot-toned interiors, some with heads cropped off, some all lipstick and tanlines and nipples' persisted.<sup>ii</sup>

*'When I made the decision in 1959 that I was not going to be an abstract painter;*



*that I was going to be a representational painter [...] I only got started by doing the opposite of everything I loved. And in choosing representational painting, I decided to do, as my subject matter, the history of art: I would do nudes, still-lives, landscapes, interiors, portraits, etc' —Tom Wesselmann*

Bold and eye-catching in its simplified treatment of form, contour, and colour, *Great American Nude, no. 91* clearly sits within a visual language of American Pop, a point which has led to sharp criticism of the visual equivalence apparently established between woman and consumer objects in his paintings. However, as critic David Cohen has highlighted, this was not an attempt to reduce women to objects, but a celebration of colour and shape, revealing less 'the eroticism of a Coke bottle so much as the fizzy delights of a nude.' Indeed, despite the visual concordance between Wesselmann's nudes and those of, say, [Roy Lichtenstein](#), Wesselmann himself was always resistant to his categorisation as a Pop artist, finding little in common with their studied irony and their use of everyday objects as a critique of consumerism.

Wesselmann's focus had always been visual rather than conceptual, and although he had started his artistic career as a cartoonist, his early artistic inclinations were shaped by the dominant trends of Abstract Expressionism. Later in life Wesselmann would recall the impact of seeing Robert Motherwell's *Elegy to the Spanish Republic* in the late 1950s as his first truly 'aesthetic' experience, one which left him with a vertiginous 'sensation of high visceral excitement in his stomach [...] it seemed as though his eyes and stomach were directly connected.' Ultimately leaving the physicality of the Abstract Expressionist brushstroke and handling of paint behind him, Wesselmann searched for 'other ways of making the painting, *the image, aggressive*', finding the conduit for this in his highly provocative nudes.



Robert Motherwell, *Elegy to the Spanish Republic*, 1961, The Metropolitan Museum, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Dedalus Foundation, Inc/VAGA, New York and DACS, London 2022

Although by the time the present work was executed, Wesselmann had resolved the tensions between figuration and abstraction that preoccupied his early years in favour of a kind of hypergraphic realism, the crisp, undulating line of the nude's flatly rendered body here still floats remarkably close to a more biomorphic fluidity associated with abstraction.

Executed in the last years of this series, Wesselmann's confidence with this developing pictorial language is evident in the present work, the titular nude reclining against a wide swathe of two-tone blue as the bold colour contrasts between accents of red, her exposed pale tan-lines, and warmer flesh tones especially concentrated in the cut-out silhouette. Confident, candid, and capable of dominating the pictorial space, there is something playful and joyous too in the manner in which the pose of the nude is grounded by the flash of leopard-patterned fabric and the full shapes and deep oranges of the fruit and flowers set against the wave of rich blue beneath her. Reinventing this classical European tradition for the American century, Wesselmann's work still provokes conversations about gender, sexuality, and representation, his masterful *Great American Nude, no. 91* a preeminent example of his 'epically scaled odalisques luxuriating amid the dazzling products of modern life.'

## Collector's Digest

- Completing Studies at Cooper Union and the Art Academy of Cincinnati, Tom Wesselmann started his career as a cartoonist before developing his fine art practice.
- Examples of Wesselmann's *Great American Nudes* can be found in the most prestigious American museum collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., amongst others.
- In 2015 Mitchell-Innes & Nash presented Wesselmann's first survey show in New York since his death in 2004.

<sup>i</sup> David McCarthy, 'Tom Wesselmann and the Americanisation of the Nude, 1961 - 1963', *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, Summer - Autumn 1990, Vol. 4., No. ¾, p. 103.

<sup>ii</sup> Martin Herbert, 'Review: Tom Wesselmann, David Zwirner, London', *Frieze*, Issue 179, 2 April 2016, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> David Cohen, quoted in Hermione Hoby, 'Great American Nudes artist Tom Wesselmann was not sexist say the women in his life', *The Guardian*, 19 Jan 2016, [online](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Slim Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1980, p. 12.

<sup>v</sup> Tom Wesselmann, quoted in 'Marc Livingstone, 'Tom Wesselmann: Telling it Like It Is', (exh. cat.), *Tom Wesselmann, A Retrospective Survey 1962 - 1992*, Isetan Museum of Art, Tokyo, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>vi</sup> Hilarie M. Sheets, 'Wesselmann's Nudes Uncovered At Show', *New York Times*, 10 September 2015, [online](#).

## Provenance

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York  
 Richard Wenninger, Frankfurt  
 Steven Malinchoc, New York  
 Private Collection, Europe  
 Sotheby's, London, 21 June 2007, lot 25  
 Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)  
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2014

## Exhibited

New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, *An Exhibition of New Work by Tom Wesselmann*, 1968, no. 1 (illustrated)  
 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; Cincinnati Art Museum; Denver Art Museum, *Beyond Pop: Tom Wesselmann*, 18 May 2012 - 14 September 2014, no. 48, p. 191 (illustrated, pp. 102-103)

## Literature

*Avant Garde #5*, New York, November 1968, p. 26 (illustrated)  
 Slim Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1980, pp. 7, 163 (illustrated, p. 163)  
 Sam Hunter, *Tom Wesselmann*, New York, 1995, no. 55, p. 167 (illustrated)  
 Bram Dijkstra, *Naked: The Nude in America*, New York, 2010, p. 415 (illustrated, pp. 412-413)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,  
NEW YORK, SOLD TO BENEFIT THE ACQUISITIONS  
FUND

22

### Alexander Archipenko

*Statue on a Triangular Base*

incised with the artist's signature, number and date  
'Archipenko 1914 6/8F' on the base

bronze

75.6 x 19.7 x 14.9 cm (29 3/4 x 7 3/4 x 5 7/8 in.)

Conceived in 1914 and cast in bronze by Sheidow  
Foundry in 1969, this work is number 6 from an edition  
of 8.

#### Estimate

£100,000 — 150,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*'Archipenko builds realities. His art approaches absolute sculpture closer and closer, a sculpture which will one day amalgamate with absolute painting and absolute architecture, an art beyond all style, beyond all techniques and auxiliary means.'*  
—Donald Karshan

Coming to auction directly from the highly distinguished collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, this important work by Ukrainian-born sculptor Alexander Archipenko comes with an exceptional provenance.



Alexander Archipenko, ca. 1920. Alexander Archipenko papers, 1904 – 1986. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Forms in Motion

*'In sculpture, Archipenko seeks above all the purity of forms. He wants to find the most abstract, most symbolic, newest forms, and he wants to be able to shape them as he pleases.'* —Guillaume Apollinaire

Supremely elegant in its careful compositional balance and attention to structural form, *Statue on a Triangular Base* is a preeminent example of the distinctive visual language pioneered by Alexander Archipenko during this formative period of his career. One of the earliest artists to apply broadly Cubist techniques to three-dimensional forms, the young Archipenko was a central player in the European avant-garde in the significant early decades of the twentieth century and was included in some of the era's most definitive exhibitions, including the infamous 1911 *Salon des Indépendents* and the epoch-defining 1913 Armory Show in New York.



Installation shot of the present work included in *Archipenko: The Parisian Years*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970. Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022



First conceived in 1914 during the artist's productive Parisian years, *Statue on a Triangular Base* is typical of the artist's sculptural investigation of space, simultaneity, sensuality, and the female form that defines his finest work. Included in The Museum of Modern Art's 1970 exhibition which took these 'heroic years' as its focus, *Statue on a Triangular Base* showcases Archipenko's radical experimentalism with regards to the representation of volumetric movement and the fracturing of the body into simplified geometric shapes and interlocking planes. As Katherine Kuh has described, the female nude was absolutely central to this artistic project:

*'Relying on the human body, preferably the female nude, as his point of departure, Archipenko constructed his figures with architectural precision, yet rarely sacrificed the rhythms of nature. His idealized women have the elongated elegance we sometimes associate with undulating plants, sometimes with those Gothic saints which echo the soaring churches they decorate.'* —Kathrine Kuh

With unbridled energy and a confidently fluid sense of form, Archipenko here extracts the essence of a female figure with a remarkable lightness of touch: presented in an exaggerated contrapposto pose, the angular form of the arm is perfectly mirrored by the triangular base of the title. Poised between these two, opposing diagonal forces, the sculpture contains an enormous amount of energy and kinetic potentiality, recalling the defining sculptural image of a body in motion, Umberto Boccioni's *Forme uniche della continuità nello spazio*. Arriving in Paris in 1911, the Italian Futurist first visited Archipenko in his studio the following year, no doubt admiring the sculptor's experimental approach and incorporation of moving parts in pieces such as *Médrano I*.



Left: Umberto Boccioni, *Forme uniche della continuità nello spazio Unique (Continuity of Forms in Space)*, 1913, Museo del Novecento. Image: Mondadori Portfolio/Electa/Luca Carrà/Bridgeman Images  
Right: Alexander Archipenko, *Médrano I*, 1912, courtesy The Archipenko Foundation. Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

## Section d'Or, Cubism, and Modern Art in America

*'Cubism will remain a document of the newly awakened spirit of the beginning of the mathematical and geometric 20th century.'* —Alexander Archipenko

Upon his own arrival in Paris in 1908, Archipenko had been immediately swept into the revolution in pictorial representation gripping the capital, as Cubism was reimagining the question of perception for a modern world. Employing multiple and often intersecting or overlaid viewpoints, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque directly addressed the concept of simultaneity across their painting, *papier collé*, and reliefs of the period. This concept, and its application in the representation of form chimed closely with Archipenko's own and allowed him to radically extend his investigation of positive and negative space, expressed here in the careful tension achieved in the work whereby 'that which is concave is also convex'.<sup>1</sup> Establishing a lively dialogue between material and subject, the rendering of these geometric planes in bronze further accentuates the sense of taut musculature and fluid movement achieved in Archipenko's treatment of plastic volume.

Swiftly adopted into the ranks of *La Section d'Or* after its formalisation as a group in the French Cubist school in 1912, Archipenko joined the likes of Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and the Duchamp brothers in their regular meetings held in member's homes in Puteaux and Courbevoie. The poet and critic of the age Guillaume Apollinaire championed his work, writing in *Der Sturm* magazine just the year before the present work was first conceived that 'Archipenko builds realities. His art draws nearer more and more to absolute sculpture, which will one day have to blend with absolute painting and absolute architecture in order to arise as pure plasticity, beyond all styles, all techniques and methods.'<sup>ii</sup>



Left: Marcel Duchamp, *Nu descendant un escalier, (Nude Descending a Staircase), No. 2*, 1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950, 1950-134-59, Artwork: © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022 Right: Alexander Archipenko, *The Bather*, 1915, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950, 1950-134-1, Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

Alongside several important international solo exhibitions in these years, Archipenko continued to

show alongside other members of the group, most notably in *La Salon de 'La Section d'Or'* held at the Galerie de la Boétie in Paris in 1912 and the 1913 *International Exhibition of Modern Art* held at the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment Armory in New York. Better known as The Armory Show, this exhibition was highly significant as the first, large-scale exhibition that introduced European modernism to an American audience. Included in the Cubist Room alongside Marcel Duchamp's much-derided *Nu descendant un escalier*, Archipenko's reputation as a pioneer in modernist sculptural form was internationally acknowledged.

Looking more closely at Duchamp's infamous painting, the relationship between the two artists in these formative years is striking, both in terms of their formal interests, and in Archipenko's extension of Duchamp's pictorial examination of the figure in movement into three dimensions. It was Duchamp too who personally convinced Archipenko to travel to America in 1920, and introduced him to Katherine Dreier, an American artist and important patron of the arts who co-founded the Société Anonyme, Inc., and gave Archipenko his first solo exhibition in the United States in 1921. Although often described as a 'pioneer Cubist sculptor', Archipenko went considerably further than this in his approach to plastic volume. As is clearly apparent in *Statue on a Triangular Base*, Archipenko 'never merely transferred Cubist theories from painting to sculpture, he virtually invented his own kind of three-dimensional cubism'.<sup>iii</sup>

### Collector's Digest

- One of the most important sculptors working in Paris between 1908 and 1920, Alexander Archipenko is often credited as being the first artist to explore Cubist principles in sculpture.
- Archipenko was included in some of the most significant group exhibitions of the early 20th century, including the 1910 *Salon des Indépendants* - his first public exhibition in Paris where he showed alongside Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, Fernand Léger, and the Duchamp brothers - The 1913 *International Exhibition of Modern Art* in New York, and was included in the last Cubist group exhibition at the *Salon des Indépendants* in 1920.
- The focus of major solo exhibitions internationally following his 1912 show at Museum Folkwang, Hagen for which the poet Guillaume Apollinaire provided the catalogue introduction, Archipenko also enjoyed considerable success in America. After the 1921 presentation of his work by the Société Anonyme, Inc., Kathrine Dreier also organised *Archipenko* with the Anderson Galleries in 1928. As recently as September 2021, Archipenko was the focus of *Archipenko in Italy* held at ML Fine Art, Milan.
- Today, his works can be found in the collections of numerous renown institutions, such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in Israel, the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis, and the Tate Modern in London.

## Alexander Archipenko

<sup>i</sup> Katherine Dreier, *International Exhibition of Modern Art arranged by the Société Anonyme for the Brooklyn Museum*, (exh. cat.), New York, 1926, p. 77.

<sup>ii</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Alexander Archipenko,' in Harry E. Buckley, *Guillaume Apollinaire as an Art Critic*, Chicago, 1981, p. 223.

<sup>iii</sup> Katherine Kuh, 'Alexander Archipenko: 1887 - 1964', in *Archipenko: The Parisian Years*, (exh. cat.), The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 20 July - 18 October 1970, n.p.

## Provenance

Frances Archipenko Gray, Woodstock

Gifted by the above to the present owner in 1969

## Exhibited

New York, Perls Galleries, *Alexander Archipenko: Bronzes*, 29 September - 24 October 1959, p. 10 (another cast exhibited)

Munich, Galerie Stangl, *Alexander Archipenko*, 14 February - 4 April 1964, no. 12 (another cast exhibited)

Los Angeles, The University of California Art Gallery, *Alexander Archipenko: A Memorial Exhibition*, 24 February - 9 April 1967, no. 20 (another cast exhibited and illustrated)

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Archipenko: The Parisian Years*, 20 July - 18 October 1970, no. 10 (this cast exhibited)

Ontario, The Art Gallery of Ontario, *Alexander Archipenko: The American Years*, January - February 1971 (another cast exhibited)

Saint-Paul-de-Vence, Fondation Maeght, *Sculpture of the 20th Century: 1900-1945*, 4 July - 4 October 1981 (this cast exhibited)

Madrid, Fundación Juan March, *Medio siglo de escultura*, 30 November - 23 December 1981 (this cast exhibited)

Tel Aviv Museum, *Archipenko: The Early Works: 1910-1921, The Erich Goeritz Collection at The Tel Aviv Museum*, 1981, pl. 15 (another cast exhibited and illustrated)

## Literature

*Les Soirées de Paris*, Paris, 15 June 1914, no. 25, p. 347 (plaster example illustrated)

Ivan Goll, *Alexander Archipenko: Retrospektive Ausstellung*, Potsdam, 1921, pl. 11 (plaster example listed; titled as *Femme*)

Ivan Goll, 'Archipenko,' *Horizont*, Vienna, 1921, no. 26, p. 78 (plaster example illustrated)

Ivan Goll, 'Archipenko,' *Ma: Aktivista-Folyóirat*, vol. VI, no. 6, 25 April 1921, p. 78 (plaster example listed)

Hans Hildebrandt, *Alexander Archipenko. Son Oeuvre*, Berlin, 1923, pl. 19 (plaster example illustrated; titled as *Statuette*)

Lioubomir Mitzitch, *Archipenko. Plastique Nouvelle*, Belgrade, 1923, no. 17 (plaster example listed; titled as *Femme*)

Alexander Archipenko, *Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years, 1908-1958*, New York, 1960, pl. 143 (another cast illustrated)

Giovanni Sangiorgi and Gino Severini, *Alexander Archipenko*, Rome, 1963, no. 12, pl. 7 (another cast illustrated)

Frederick S. Wight and Donald H. Karshan, *Alexander Archipenko: A Memorial Exhibition 1967-1969*, Oakland, 1967, p. 46 (another cast listed)

Donald H. Karshan, *Archipenko: International Visionary*, Washington, D.C., 1969, no. 19, pl. 62 (another cast illustrated)

Donald H. Karshan, *Archipenko. The Sculpture and Graphic Art*, Tübingen, 1974, p. 161 (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970, installation view illustrated, p. 65)

Alicia Legg, ed., *Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art. Catalogue of the Collection*, New York, 1977, p. 10 (this cast listed)

Katherine Jánoszky Michaelson and Nehama Guralnik, *Alexander Archipenko: A Centennial Tribute*, Washington, D.C., 1987, pp. 121, 159 (another cast listed)

Alicia Legg, ed., *Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art*, New York, 1988, p. 8 (this cast listed)

Alexander Archipenko Foundation, ed., *Alexander Archipenko Catalogue Raisonné*, 2018, fig. S.14-06B, no. 2845 (online)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



23

### Francis Bacon



*Untitled (Head)*

oil on fibreboard

65.5 x 55.5 cm (25 3/4 x 21 7/8 in.)

Painted circa 1948.

**Estimate**

£600,000 — 800,000  

[Go to Lot](#)





*'I am always surprised when people speak of violence in my work. I don't find it at all violent myself. [...] There is an element of realism in my pictures which might perhaps give the impression, but life is violent; so much more violent than anything I can do!'* —Francis Bacon

Executed in 1948, *Head* is a visually striking example of one of British artist Francis Bacon's earliest and most important bodies of work, the *Heads* that he intensively devoted himself to between 1948 and 1949. One of his earliest single-figure portrait studies, *Head* clearly signposts major compositional motifs and themes that would preoccupy the artist in subsequent years; establishing the foundations of his unmistakable visual vocabulary these pivotal works also testify to Bacon's unflinching treatment of the human condition, even at this early stage. Painted in anticipation of his first major solo exhibition at London's Hannover Gallery where six of these extraordinarily concentrated works announced Bacon as a forceful presence of the British avant-garde, *Head* documents the rapid evolution of the artist's work during this short period, bridging the raw, animalistic power of *Head I* with the bold theatricality of the thickly textured vertical veils of grey paint that would come to be such an iconic feature of his early painting and exemplifying Bacon's desire 'to paint like Velázquez but with the texture of hippopotamus skin'.<sup>1</sup>

Testament to the foundational importance of these early, single-figure portrait studies on Bacon's subsequent production, *Head I*, *Head II*, and *Head VI* all belong to major public collections, and three paintings from this core series of six are currently on view as part of the critically acclaimed retrospective *Francis Bacon: Man and Beast* at London's Royal Academy of Arts. Presented together in this way we get a powerful sense of the pivotal importance of 1948 and 49 in defining Bacon's practice as the figure clearly emerges as the central focus of his work. Bringing examples of these early *Heads* together too underscores their direct relationship to the artist's iconic series of *Screaming Popes*, made explicit with the inclusion of *Head VI*, the last of the 1949 series and the first of Bacon's paintings to directly reference Diego Velázquez's masterpiece *Portrait of Innocent X*.



Diego Velázquez, Pope Innocent X, c. 1650, Galleria Doria Pamphilj. Image: akg-images

### *Heads: A Background*

*'Everything is arranged around the exaltation of the figure rather than in the tight display of a theatrical moment [...] They vibrate. They are often draped in a muted incandescence. They are the gesture of vertigo and the stability of a scream.'*

Bacon first embarked on his series of *Heads* after his breakthrough 1946 work [Painting](#), an early and particularly arresting iteration of the crucifixion motif that would also take such precedence in

the artist's oeuvre. Like that larger-scale work, *Head* also incorporates the circular framing device and the beginnings of the cage motif, the 'delicate geometric structure that encloses the central part of the scene' that he would employ with increasing confidence as the *Heads* progressed.<sup>ii</sup>

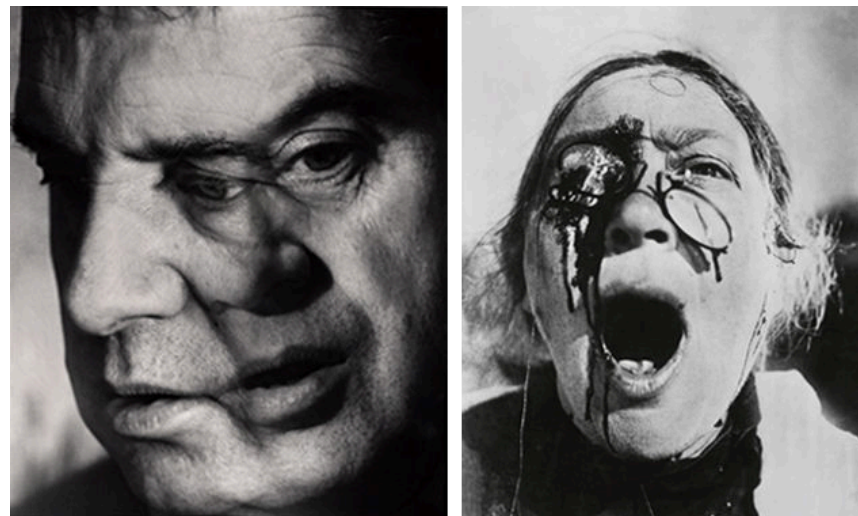
The 1946 *Painting* proved to be the springboard for this body of *Heads* on a practical as well as technical level. After being invited to Bacon's studio by fellow artist and friend Graham Sutherland in 1948, Erica Brausen - owner of the Hanover Gallery - immediately purchased the work and offered Bacon his first solo exhibition that would be held the following year. As well as establishing his status as a major artist of the British avant-garde at home, Brausen was also highly instrumental in launching Bacon on an international stage, swiftly gifting *Painting* to Alfred Baar at The Museum of Modern Art in New York where it was immediately celebrated in an exhibition of recent acquisitions in 1948.

*'I think art is an obsession with life and after all, as we are human beings our greatest obsession is with ourselves.'*

Although some of these works were started in Monaco, the *Heads* were primarily executed in Bacon's legendary Cromwell Place Studio, with its consistent northern light and proximity to the Natural History and Science Museums, as well as the extensive Victoria and Albert collection, as detailed by Michael Peppiatt. When Bacon vacated the premises in 1951, he left several works in the care of Robert Buhler, to whom he sold the lease, *Head* being one of only two works to remain in the family's collection until 2008. As was not uncommon in this period of post-war scarcity, *Head* is painted on a wood fibreboard known as Sundeala board, which Roy de Maistre and Graham Sutherland had also been using for reasons of economy during this period.<sup>iii</sup> Interestingly, as detailed in the catalogue raisonné, the fibreboard support in fact bears evidence of a previous work by di Maistre beneath Bacon's composition.

## Heads, Faces, and Screams

As Bacon discovered in his employment of the crucifixion motif in *Painting*, the close focus on the structure of the head - and the scream that so often contorted it under the artist's hand - provided 'a magnificent armature on which you can hang all types of feelings and sensation' that is used to particularly powerful effect in the present work.<sup>iv</sup> For Bacon, the head connected his major themes: the thin line between animal and man, and a profound ability to capture the brutal horror of existence.



Left: Francis Bacon, 1967. Image: © The Lewinski Archive at Chatsworth. All Rights Reserved 2022 / Bridgeman Images Right: Still from *Battleship of Potemkin*. Image: Album / Alamy Stock Photo

Alongside reproductions of Velázquez's *Portrait of Innocent X*, Bacon obsessively collected other images focused on heads and faces, notably reproductions of the frenzied oratory conducted at Nazi rallies, and medical texts, a favourite being one focused on diseases of the mouth that he chanced upon in Paris, and that fuelled a life-long fascination with medical imagery and research. Torn, crumpled, and splattered with paint, Bacon also kept a still from Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 cinematic masterpiece *Battleship Potemkin* in his studio. Pioneering in his use of montage, rapid cuts, and claustrophobic close-ups, Eisenstein understood the power of the face to convey intense and extreme emotion in an age of silent film, a fact remarked upon by Bacon himself who cited the 'tremendous force' of the image in this era.<sup>v</sup>

Capturing the distinct balance of violence and vulnerability conveyed by Eisenstein, *Head* appears suspended in a moment of distorting transformation, like a face contorted into a scream. As a formal exercise it is a marvellous illustration of Bacon's observation that 'Painting in this sense tends towards a complete interlocking of image and paint, so that the image is the paint and vice versa.'<sup>vi</sup>

In its layers of chalky whites and fleshy pinks shot through with greens, yellows, and vibrant flashes of red, *Head* is one of the more chromatically vibrant and tonally complex paintings from this body of work, which tend to resolve in an all-over grisaille. Similarly, there is a remarkable freedom to

the brushwork, especially pronounced by the juxtaposition of the explosive handling of paint in the head to the broader vertical treatment of the veiled background. Often read as the embodiment of post-war angst, Bacon's brutal treatment of the structure of the head here testifies to his uncanny ability to transform paint into the substance of the object depicted; taking on the materiality of flesh and bone, he endows the work with incredible weight and presence. Powerfully expressive, Head conforms to what Yves Peyré has described as 'this play between the central figure in the full crisis of presence and the background, which receives the tribute of being such a mystery in action. Something violent explodes in the midst of calm.'<sup>vii</sup>

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoFMH\\_D6xLk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoFMH_D6xLk)

Clip from 'Francis Bacon Fragments of a Portrait', Interview by David Sylvester. Originally broadcast on BBC1, 18 September 1966.

## Collector's Digest

- One of the great masters of 20th century, Francis Bacon's work continues to fascinate, and has inspired a range of biographies, artist's monographs, feature films, and philosophical readings over the years. Examples of his works reside in major institutions all over the world, including the Tate London, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, and the Stedelijk Museum, amongst others. Carefully reassembling the contents of his studio, The Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin is now home to an enormous collection of ephemera and material that Bacon worked directly from as part of his practice over the years.
- Currently the subject of a major retrospective at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, Bacon has been honoured with exhibitions all over the world, including *Francis Bacon and the Art of the Past* at the Hermitage in St Petersburg, the 2012 *Francis Bacon: Five Decades* at Art Gallery NSW, and the 2008 *Francis Bacon* hosted by the Tate Britain in London.
- Bacon's work belongs in the world's most prestigious public collections including The Tate, in London, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, amongst others.

<sup>i</sup> Francis Bacon, quoted in John Russell, *Francis Bacon*, London, 1993, p. 35.

<sup>ii</sup> Yves Peyré, *Francis Bacon or the Measure of Excess*, Paris, 2019, p. 22.

<sup>iii</sup> Michael Peppiatt, p. 106.

<sup>iv</sup> Francis Bacon, quoted in David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, London, 2012, p. 44.

<sup>v</sup> Archimbaud, 1993, p.16; Martin Harrison, *In Camera Francis Bacon: Photography, Film and the*

*Practice of Painting*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2005, p.26

<sup>vi</sup> Francis Bacon, 'Francis Bacon: Matthew Smith - A Painter's Tribute', *Matthew Smith: Paintings from 1909 to 1952*, exhibition catalogue, (London: Tate Gallery, 1953), p. 12.

<sup>vii</sup> Yves Peyré, *Francis Bacon or the Measure of Excess*, Paris, 2019, p. 22.

## Provenance

Robert Buhler, London (acquired directly from the artist's studio circa 1951)

Private Collection (by descent from the above)

Sotheby's, London, 28 February 2008, lot 153

Private Collection (acquired at the above sale)

Sotheby's, London, 30 June 2011, lot 192

Acquired at the above by the present owner

## Literature

Martin Hammer, *Bacon and Sutherland: patterns of affinity in British culture of the 1940s*, New Haven, 2005, pp. 127, 223

Michael Peppiatt, *Francis Bacon. Anatomy of an Enigma*, London, 2008, pp. 106, 122, 134, 143-144, 147, 153, 155, 160

*Francis Bacon: Five Decades*, exh. cat., Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2012, fig. 18, p. 36 (illustrated; dated circa 1949)

Martin Harrison, *Francis Bacon. Catalogue raisonné vol. I*, London, 2016, pp. 19, 68

Martin Harrison, *Francis Bacon. Catalogue raisonné vol. II*, London, 2016, no. 48-03, p. 184, 186 (illustrated, p. 185)

Martin Harrison, *Francis Bacon. Catalogue raisonné vol. V*, London, 2016, pp. 1526

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE AMERICAN  
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24

### Jean Dubuffet

*Nos châteaux peu denses*

signed and dated 'J. Dubuffet 57' upper left; signed,  
titled and dated 'Nos châteaux peu denses J. Dubuffet  
novembre 57' on the reverse

oil on canvas

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

Painted on 16 November 1957.

#### Estimate

£1,000,000 — 1,500,000 <sup>†</sup>▲

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*'Let us seek instead ingenious ways to flatten objects on the surface; and let the surface speak its own language and not an artificial language of three-dimensional space which is not proper to it [...] I feel the need to leave the surface visibly flat. The objects represented will be transformed into pancakes, as though flattened by a pressing iron.'* —Jean Dubuffet

Painted towards the close of 1957, *Nos châteaux peu denses* belongs to a small but highly significant suite of paintings executed in the mid-1950s by the pioneer of *Art Brut*, French post-war artist Jean Dubuffet. Unusual in Dubuffet's *oeuvre* in their close focus on a couple rather than the individual figure, these works all feature two monolithic characters, their strikingly iridescent bodies appearing to float, cut out against a dark, matte background. Related to the broader *Personnages monolithes* series, they share in the same extreme flattening of the figure and manipulation of surface textures that characterises this important group of pictures.

Executed at a crucial point in Dubuffet's career, just as he embarked on his radical *Texturology* paintings, *Nos châteaux peu denses* consolidates elements of the artist's earlier figurative works alongside his relentlessly experimental approach to materials. Looking forward as well as back, it also anticipates the closely cropped *Barbes* works, and the spatial complexity and narrative drama that would characterise his later *Métro* and *Paris Circus* series.

## Murals and Menhirs

Visually recalling the rough surfaces and uneven textures of prehistoric cave painting or ancient murals and possessing something of their timeless and distinctly human quality, *Nos châteaux peu denses* highlights Dubuffet's long-standing fascination and experimentation with the spatial and textural qualities specific to wall painting. Inspired by a keen appreciation for Brassai's photographs of Parisian graffiti, Dubuffet closely studied the material fabric of the city, believing its walls absorbed and recorded the histories of its inhabitants and offered 'its voice to that part of us which, without it, would be condemned to silence.'<sup>i</sup> Especially poignant considering the role that these spaces played during the French Occupation of Paris during World War II, these crumbling surfaces became palimpsests that directly connected the people with the city, opening up Dubuffet to 'an art that is directly plugged into our current life, that immediately emanates from our real life and our real moods'.<sup>ii</sup>



Left: *Head of a Young Woman, Velia, from the Tomb of the Orcus* (wall painting), 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Tarquinia, Lazio. Image: Bridgeman Images Right: Jean Dubuffet, *Mur aux inscriptions*, 1945, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Recalling the scratched, scraped, and lichen-encrusted surface of an important early painting like *Mur aux inscriptions* from 1945, the present work adopts the qualities of the graffiti-etched wall in its rendering of the two, monumental figures. In their chalky, variegated surfaces, these figures do not simply replicate the wall's surface, but seem themselves hewn from stone, their shapes recalling the enigmatic and ancient surfaces and shape of Bronze Age 'standing stones'. Dubuffet identified this directly, writing that 'the indefinite blurred contours of the figures I had formed, and the way they stood out so startlingly white against the black background, made them look like menhirs.'<sup>iii</sup>

Like these prehistoric monuments, the silhouetted figures of *Nos châteaux peu denses* are rendered through minimal means; standing out starkly against the dark ground, the sloping curve of shoulders, legs, and torso is loosely defined, while facial details have been applied with the greatest economy. Enigmatic and impassive, the arrangement of the two figures nevertheless seems to articulate something of the complexity of human relationships. Arguably the most compelling of this suite of monolithic couples in this regard, *Nos châteaux peu denses*' focus on the couple is not straightforwardly celebratory as in the more romantically titled *Les fiancés*, *Les vœux de mariage*, or *Jeunes époux*, all painted in 1955. The note of melancholy struck by the title here is

powerfully compounded by the subtle shift in the relationship established between the figures that, although physically close, seem each somewhat detached and unreachable, introducing an emotional and psychological depth to the slightly later work.



Left: Jean Dubuffet, *Les fiancés*, 1955, Galleria del Naviglio Collection, Milan. Image: Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022 Right: *Two Menhirs of man and woman*, 1100 - 800 BC (Iron Age), Museo Comunale della Civiltà Lunigiana, La Spezia. Image: Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

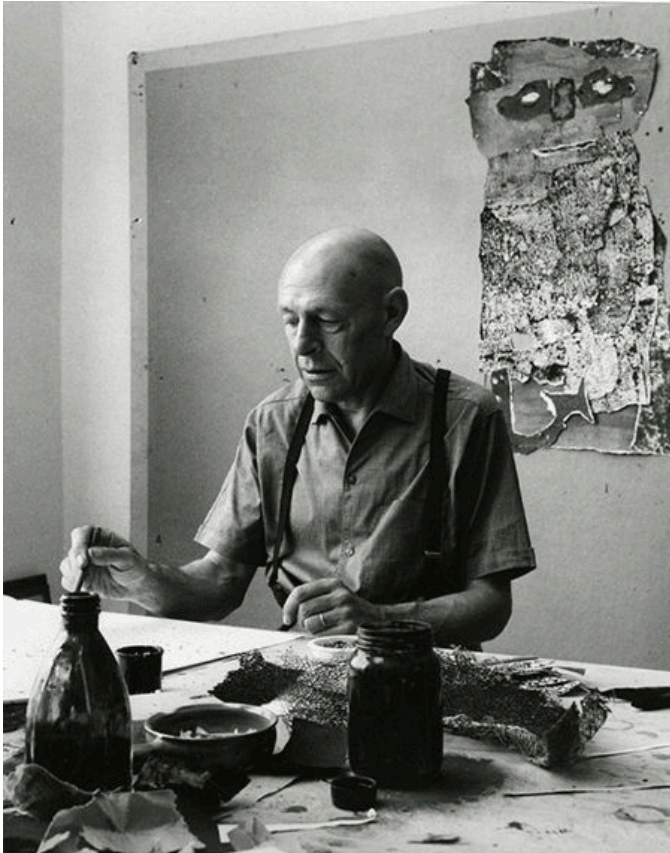
## Dubuffet's Mercurial Materials

*'Art should be born from the material. Spirituality should borrow the language of the material. Each material has its own language, and is a language.'* —Jean Dubuffet

Well known for his own unconventional approach to a whole host of unorthodox materials, Dubuffet also championed the concept of *Art Brut*, a way of describing art that was created outside of the limited conventions of academic training and reception. Coining the term in 1946, Dubuffet embraced an aesthetic that attacked traditional conventions and standards of beauty, especially with regards to the figure, and above all that of the female nude which, as Lynda Nead has convincingly argued 'more than any other subject [...] connotes "art".'<sup>iv</sup> Combining the extreme flattening of the figure that Dubuffet had employed with his *Corps de dames* series with the highly

experimental approach to materials that in the 1950s took the artist into new territory with the use of quick-drying enamel paints and the granular vision of the *Texturology* paintings, *Nos châteaux peu denses* is highly representative of the artist's restless experimentation with regards to materials and process during this important period, and of his commitment to overturning the pretensions and prejudices of academic aesthetic standards.

To create the thinned, highly textured, and strikingly geological surface quality of the present work, Dubuffet developed a unique approach to his materials, utilising a range of unconventional tools including kitchen utensils and newspapers. As the artist described: 'The paintings were begun in the same way as the *Pâtes Battues*, a technique I kept going back to, that of spreading with a spatula a very light (almost white) brilliant colour generously over layers (dry or partly dry) of different dark shades, the paint often thickly laid on. But now, over this fresh white paste, I spread various other shades, once more using strong colours and, without letting them dry, I applied whole newspapers, generally folded perpendicularly or sometimes intentionally crumpled. This operation removed a great deal of the colour...leaving only spots and flashes arranged in a curious and interesting fashion (with marks left by the folds of the newspaper). Finally with a large soft brush I spread a background of black paint, leaving, however, the outlines of a person...All I had to do then was to finish off the figures lightly with a brush, taking care not to make my interventions too precise and to spoil the character to which they owed their special effect, that of stone figures born of circumstances almost foreign to the original intentions, rising all at once and instantaneously formed'.<sup>v</sup>



Jean Dubuffet photographed by Paolo Monti, 1960. Image: Paolo Monti / Fondazione BEIC, Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

## Dubuffet in the 1950s

The year 1955 marked a decisive turning point for the artist; leaving Paris and the trauma of the war behind him, Dubuffet and his wife relocated to Vence in the South of France. Despite having threatened to renounce painting altogether in 1954, a brief but intensive exploration of sculptural form and refuse material seemed to revive the artist. This, coupled with an almost obsessive focus on the soil and weed-strewn paths of his new, rural home renewed Dubuffet's focus and shaped his radical reconceptualisation of the rigid academic distinctions between landscape and portraiture.

Dubuffet had long been fascinated by the fluid intersections of these modes of painting, quipping as early as 1947. 'I think portraits and landscapes should resemble each other because they are more or less the same thing. I want portraits in which description makes use of the same mechanisms as those used in a landscape – here wrinkles, there ravines or paths; here a nose, there a tree; here a mouth.'<sup>vi</sup> Embarking on the *Personnage Monolithes* towards the close of 1955 Dubuffet imaginatively engineered new ways of exploring this theme.

Included in major Dubuffet exhibitions at the Galerie Beyeler in 1965 and the 1966 travelling retrospective hosted by the Dallas Museum of Fine Art and the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis *Nos chateaux peu denses* presents a powerful case for Dubuffet's rejection of artistic convention and pretension, representing a significant stage in the evolution of his aesthetic, his pioneering treatment of the figure, and his creation of 'strange bewildering worlds that exercise a kind of fascination.'<sup>vii</sup> A towering figure of French Post-War art, Dubuffet's work remains as provocative today as when it was first created, and has gone on to shape the artist languages of major contemporary artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat and Rashid Johnson.

## Collector's Digest

- With recent major retrospectives held at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel in 2016 and the Barbican Centre, London in 2021, Jean Dubuffet's work continues to attract significant critical attention and remains foundational to art-historical discussions of Post-War and contemporary art.
- Examples of his work reside in major institutions around the world including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Modern in London, and the Musée National d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou in Paris.
- Developing the concept of *Art Brut* in the 1940s, Dubuffet turned to the production of those operating outside of the narrow definitions of the *Beaux Arts* tradition including work made by prisoners, children, so-called 'primitive' artists, and the mentally ill in his search for a richer, more expressive model for artmaking. Radically decentering certain dominant art-historical narratives, Dubuffet pioneered more contemporary approaches to both the production and discussion of painting in the West.

<sup>i</sup> Jean Dubuffet, cited in 'Elanor Nairne, 'Matter and Memory', *Jean Dubuffet: Brutal Beauty*, (exh. cat.), Barbican, London, 2021, p. 11.

<sup>ii</sup> Jean Dubuffet, quoted in Mildred Glimcher and Jean Dubuffet, *Jean Dubuffet Towards an Alternative Reality*, New York, 1987 p. 57.

<sup>iii</sup> Jean Dubuffet, quoted in Peter Selz, *The work of Jean Dubuffet*, (exh. cat.), The Museum of

Modern Art, New York, 1962 p. 115.

<sup>iv</sup> Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude, Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality*, London, 1992, p. 1.

<sup>v</sup> Jean Dubuffet, quoted in Peter Selz, *The work of Jean Dubuffet*, (exh. cat.), The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1962 p. 113 - 115.

<sup>vi</sup> Jean Dubuffet, cited in *Jean Dubuffet: Metamorphoses of Landscape* (exh. cat.), Fondation Beyeler, Basel, 2016, p. 40.

<sup>vii</sup> Jean Dubuffet, 'Memoir', cited in Elanor Nairne, 'Precarious Life', *Jean Dubuffet: Brutal Beauty*, (exh. cat.), Barbican, London, 2021, p. 101.

#### Provenance

Paul Facchetti, Paris (acquired on 15 January 1958)

Galerie Beyeler, Basel (acquired by 1960)

Stephen Hahn Gallery, New York (acquired by December 1969)

James Goodman Gallery, New York

Redfern Gallery, London

Sotheby Parke Bernet, Inc., New York, 22 October 1975, lot 184

Galerie Alice Pauli, Lausanne

Private Collection, Brione (acquired by May 2000)

Acquired by the present owner circa 2002

#### Exhibited

Kunsthau Zürich, *Jean Dubuffet*, 17 December 1960 - 15 January 1961, no. 82

Tokyo, Salon de Paris, 1961, no. 18

Vienna, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Idole und Dämonen*, 5 July - 1 September 1963, no. 82, pp. 79, 119

Kunsthalle Basel, *Bilanz internationale Malerei seit 1950*, 20 June - 23 August 1964, no. 60

Basel, Galerie Beyeler, *Ausstellung Jean Dubuffet*, February - April 1965, no. 41, n.p. (illustrated)

Vienna, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, *Kunst in Freiheit: Dubuffet, Moore, Tobey*, 29 May 1965 - 27 June 1965, no. 18 (titled as *Unsere wenig festen Schlösser*)

Dallas Museum of Fine Arts (no. 47, p. 52, illustrated, p. 28); Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, *Jean Dubuffet: retrospective*, 16 March - 16 June 1966

Kunstmuseum Luzern, *Neue Formen expressionistischer Malerei seit 1950*, 28 July - 22 September 1968, no. 19, n.p. (illustrated)

London, Redfern Gallery, *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Summer 1972, no. 115

#### Literature

*Weltkunst*, 1965, no. 7, p. 265

Jacques Monnier, 'Du beau, du bon Dubuffet', *La Tribune de Lausanne*, 2 April 1967 (illustrated)

Max Loreau, *Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet. fascicule XIII: Célébration du sol I, lieux cursifs, texturologies, topographies*, Lausanne, 1970, no. 115, p. 87, 150, 153 (illustrated, p. 87)

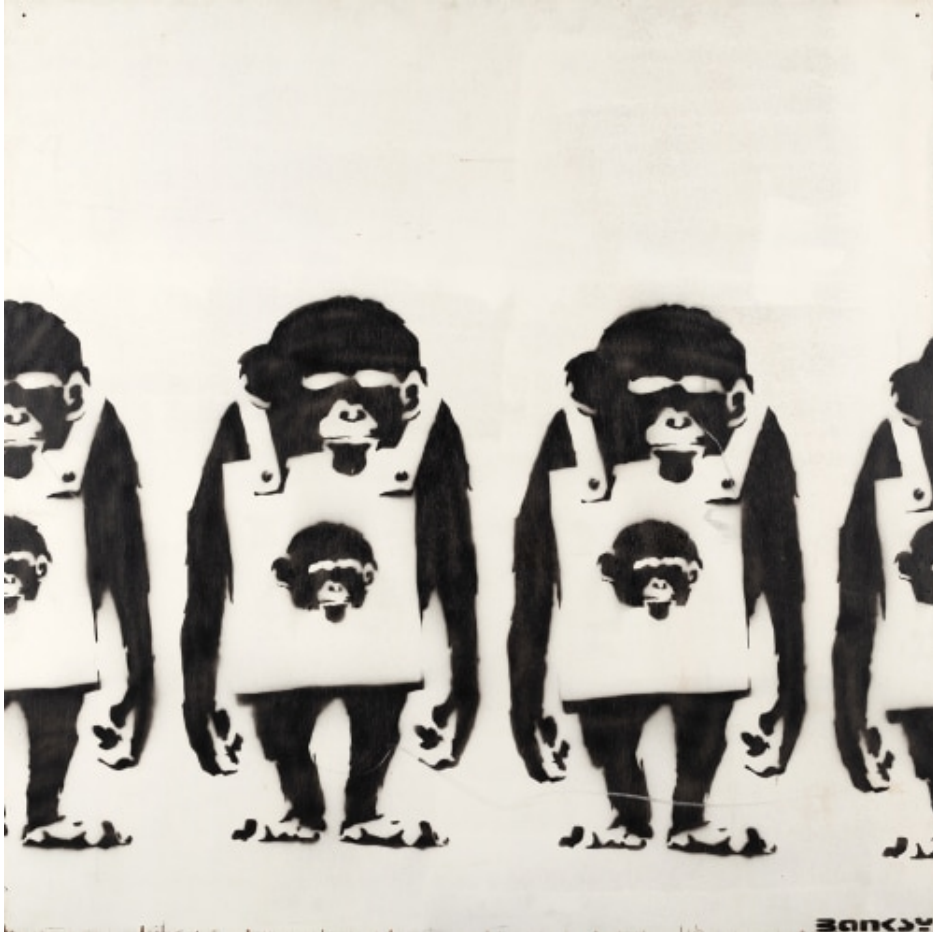
Max Loreau, *Jean Dubuffet. Délits. Déportements. Lieux de haut jeu*, Paris, 1971, p. 253

Mildred Glimcher, *Jean Dubuffet. Towards an Alternative Reality*, New York, 1987, pp. 154, 308 (illustrated, p. 155)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Banksy

#### *Laugh Now Monkeys with Monkey Placards*

stencilled with the artist's tag 'BANKSY' lower right  
spray paint on board

122 x 122 cm (48 x 48 in.)

Executed in 2000, this work is accompanied by a  
certificate of authenticity issued by Pest Control.

#### Estimate

£1,500,000 — 2,500,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



*'TV has made going to the theatre seem pointless, photography has pretty much killed painting, but graffiti remains pretty much unspoiled by progress.'* —Banksy

## Monkey Business

Presented for the first time at auction, *Laugh Now Monkeys with Monkey Placard* has an exceptional provenance and a fascinating history, representing an important moment in Banksy's transition from underground street artist to anti-establishment icon. Commissioned directly by the present owner for his hip-hop club in 2000, the work predates the larger *Laugh Now* mural that appeared in Brighton's Ocean Rooms nightclub in 2002. Often cited as the first commission of the iconic monkey stencil, this later *Laugh Now* work cemented the reputation of Banksy – and of street art more broadly – within its art historical contexts, even setting a record for Banksy's work when it was presented at auction in 2008. Much like this later work, *Laugh Now Monkeys with Monkey Placard* came out of a very culturally specific time and place, in the international intersection of music, street art, and style that was happening in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The influence of music and a Bristol-bred subculture of graffiti that included artists like 3D, Nick Walker, and Inkie on the anonymous Banksy's early development are well-documented, and on being invited to this new city for the commission of the present work Banksy immediately engaged with the environment and the burgeoning graffiti culture he found there. As well as the works commissioned for this venue, Banksy left a host of spontaneous guerrilla stencils dotted throughout the city, a record of his time there, and the foundation for a thriving street art scene that continues today.



Installation shot of Graffiti Art in Bristol, organised by the Arnolfini in Bristol in 1985 and highlighting the vital role graffiti played in the city in these years. Image: Arnolfini

Executed in black spray paint using Banksy's signature monochrome stencil technique, *Laugh Now Monkeys with Monkey Placard* ranks amongst the most important early examples of the guerrilla street artist's most enduring and instantly recognisable motifs. Closely cropped, the work shows four upright chimpanzees, shoulders sloping under the weight of the identical placards placed over the heads. A recurring and particularly provocative character in Banksy's repertoire, the monkey embodies his darkly comic approach to satire and social commentary, touching on issues related to inequality, political resistance, and protest that underpins the street artist's entire project.

## Laugh Now, and Other Monkeys

Alongside his trademark rat, Banksy's monkeys are amongst his most recognisable characters, and like the rat – that derided, shunned, and heavily-policed pest – Banksy has adopted the animal as something of a totem figure for the guerrilla graffiti artist himself. In his *Self-Portrait* from the same year Banksy presents himself wielding two spray cans and monkey head. Developing out of an early need for anonymity that has only become more pronounced as the years have passed, the monkey head disguise also features prominently in the 2010 film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*.

Given its evolutionary proximity to humans, the monkey also makes a witty point about the perception of graffiti and street art as ‘uncivilised’ and ‘untrained’ in the context of cultural elitism, classism, and perceptions around ‘high art’. In this way Banksy’s monkey motif ‘apes’ the satirical tradition of *Singerie* in which monkeys, often dressed as humans, are depicted dressed in the fashions of the time and engaged in human behaviour as a visual means of satirising the vanity and foolishness of its target. Typical to Banksy’s approach, the monkey allows him to ‘reframe global issues through the use of irony, and ironic inversion’, a means of highlighting ‘the kinds of power structures and hypocrisy that global ethical agendas must contend with.’<sup>i</sup>



Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, *Monkey Painter*, 1840, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne. Image: akg-images

As with related and later *Laugh Now* pieces, the present work makes use of the iconic stencil and frontal presentation of a line up of downcast chimpanzees, placard strapped over their shoulders. The title of the present work anticipates the later Ocean Rooms piece, and the slogan ‘laugh now but one day we’ll be in charge’ that appears most frequently on the placards of its various reinterpretations. Although the slogan itself does not appear on the placards of the present work, the references to it here, along with the cropping of the image to imply an infinite multiplication of their numbers, creates an evocative image of the oppression of the many by the few. A satire of power and the powerless, in a typically double-sided manner, it also highlights our capacity for resistance. Replacing the ominous warning with a picture of their own heads, *Laugh Now Monkeys with Monkey Placard* seems to suggest that if the oppressed could organise, revolution could, in fact, be possible.

*‘I use monkeys in my pictures for a lot of reasons [...] guerrilla tactics, cheeky monkeys, the fact that we share 98.5 per cent of our DNA with them. If I want to say something about people, I use a monkey.’ —Banksy*

Before this 2000 commission, the stencilled figure had been appearing in unexpected public spaces for some time. Significantly, the motif appeared in Banksy’s first – and now legendary – exhibition in London in 2000, the same year that the present work was executed. Indeed, it was a visit to London’s East End during these glory years that prompted the commission in the first place. 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>ii</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 monkey stencils. 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**

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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 London's Rivington Street.
- While indebted to the pioneering stencil graffiti of artists like Blek le rat, Banky's work has gone on to inspire a whole new generation of artists, and his works now form part of prestigious public collections including the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0b90YppquE>

Footage from Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, 2010

<sup>i</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>ii</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**

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

26

**George Condo**

*The Rock Thrower*

signed and dated 'Condo 07' upper left  
acrylic and charcoal on canvas  
134 x 116.8 cm (52 3/4 x 45 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2007.

**Estimate**

£500,000 — 700,000 †

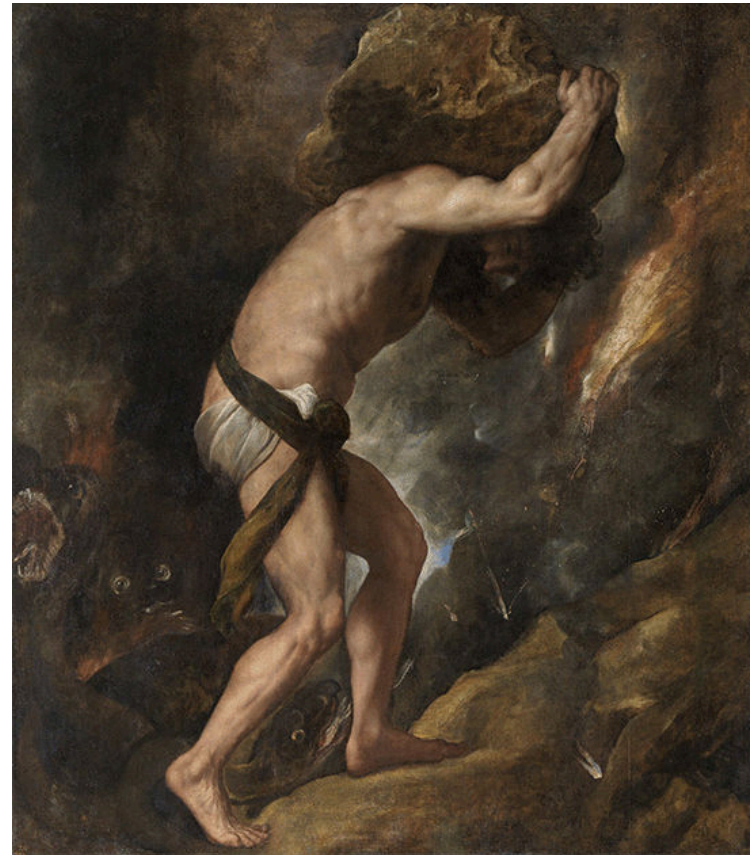
[Go to Lot](#)



*'[My work] finds a way to represent the human consciousness through portrait. That portrait could represent what's not only the exterior appearance of that person but what's going through their mind.'* —George Condo

A master of contemporary painting whose prolific output has spanned over forty years, George Condo's portraits combine a staggering range of art-historical, pop culture and mythic references whose interrogations of both physical and psychological reality have created a unique oeuvre that melds abstract and figurative elements. Condo's *The Rock Thrower* is a consummate example of the artist's knowing and articulate commentary on ancient stories as well as his critical engagement with the great masters of art history, his references roaming from Titian to Pablo Picasso. Interrogating both myth and art history, the present work is a raw meditation on the female form and the often unsettling physical contortions that the body can undergo through dislocation, fracture, and scarring. Condo's provocative and irreverent fusion of the recognisably human with the grotesque is an attempt to push against the boundaries of what figurative painting can visually represent, and the psychological depths that it is able to explore. Executed in 2007, and appropriately included in the artist's 2009 exhibition *George Condo: The Lost Civilisation* at the Fondation Dina Vierny-Musée Maillol, *The Rock Thrower* is highly representative of this, blending archetypal myth with one of the most established and important subjects in art history – the female nude.

## The Riff on Sisyphus



Titian, *Sisyphus*, 1548 – 49, Prado, Madrid. Image: © Museo Nacional del Prado / MNP / Scala, Florence

At once comical and monstrous, cartoonish and deeply human, George Condo's arresting characters belong to a world that seems to sit, lopsided, against our own. Highly dramatic, Condo's compositions and characters carry enormous narrative weight, a recognisable and sometimes recurring cast of fiendish faces that draw energy from this paradoxical relationship between the beautiful and the unsightly, as Massimiliano Gionni has described.

Rendered in a confident, heavy black outline against a wash of cool blue, *The Rock Thrower* is an

unusual monochromatic portrait by the artist, drawing from an impressively broad range of sources that encompass Old to Modern Masters. In a stark parody of the Myth of Sisyphus, Condo replaces the muscled, stoical male figure as painted by Titian with a grotesque, disjointed female form. Her twisted physiology bends and collapses beneath the weight of the rock, her arms forced into angles that cut away unnaturally from the rest of her body. In a striking counterpoint to Picasso's own *Woman Throwing a Stone*, who adopts the biomorphic curves and fluid lines most commonly associated with this period of his work, Condo's nude seems to be about to throw down her rock in a murderous rage. In the centre of the composition, we see what might be a recognisably human face, but which reveals itself rather as a terrifying spectre releasing a howl of anguish or possibly a mocking grimace.



Pablo Picasso, *Woman Throwing a Stone*, 1931, Musée Picasso, Paris. Image: © Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022

In these complex superimpositions of art-historical and mythic references, Condo's *The Rock Thrower* captures something of the artist's larger project too. Coining the term 'Artificial Realism' in the 1980s, Condo formalised the unique melding of abstract and figurative elements at work in his weird and wonderful portraits. As the artist described in more detail, 'it's a dismantling of one reality and constructing another from the same parts [...] a new conjunctive hyper-reality or hybrid image showing the simultaneous presences.'<sup>i</sup>

Launched with his breakthrough group of 'fake old master' canvases which the artist described as 'an artificial, simulated American view of what European painting looked like', Condo's provocative and irreverent fusion of recognisably human and grotesquely cartoon-like features continue to push against the boundaries of what figurative painting can visually represent, and the psychological depths that is able to explore.<sup>i</sup> Twisted into ghoulish proportions, which, like so many of Condo's portraits draws close to the reconstructed *gueules cassées* of veterans of the First World War, *The Rock Thrower* combines psychological nuance and complexity just as effortlessly as she collapses distinct, art-historical categories.

At once powerful and vulnerable, seductive and terrifying, *The Rock Thrower* ranks highly in Condo's 'arresting parade of tragi-comic beings [...] that exude an unsettling and profoundly compelling oddness.'<sup>iii</sup> Whilst the face can clearly be read as an expression of suffering, Condo's psychological cubism, inspired by Picasso but entirely his own, allows a variety of different emotional states to coexist in a single condensed image: the figure's face is at once the expression of pained anguish as it is the cathartic defiance of the figure as it casts away its burden. The teeth-bearing grins or screams of this figure also nod to [Willem de Kooning's](#) ferociously smiling, abstracted women, such as *Woman I* (1950-1952). Condo's own female forms, transformed into relevant, contemporary images that draw upon myth and art history stay true to the artist's stated intention to move 'between a scream and a smile'.

### Collector's Digest

- Alongside a major exhibition which opened at the Long Museum in Shanghai last September, Hauser & Wirth also presented an exhibition of new paintings and drawings across both of their London galleries in October 2021.
- Since his major international travelling mid-career survey *Mental States* in 2011, Condo has continued to exhibit widely, representing the United States at the 2013 and 2019 International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia.
- Now represented by Hauser & Wirth, Condo's paintings are held in important international collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., amongst others.

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

George Condo discussing his use of Artificial Realism in an interview for the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art

<sup>i</sup> George Condo, quoted in Ralph Rugoff, George Condo, *Existential Portraits: Sculpture, Drawings,*

*Paintings 2005/2006*, New York 2006, p. 8.

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**Provenance**

Galeria Andrea Caratsch, Zurich

Private Collection

Sotheby's, New York, 14 November 2013, lot 508

Private Collection, Hong Kong (acquired at the above sale)

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Paris, Musée Maillol, *La civilisation perdue*, 17 April - 17 August 2009, p. 160 (illustrated, p. 91)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



27

### John Chamberlain

*Snatching Bookie Bob*

painted and chromium plated steel

93 x 98 cm (36 5/8 x 38 5/8 in.)

Executed in 2000.

**Estimate**

£150,000 — 200,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)



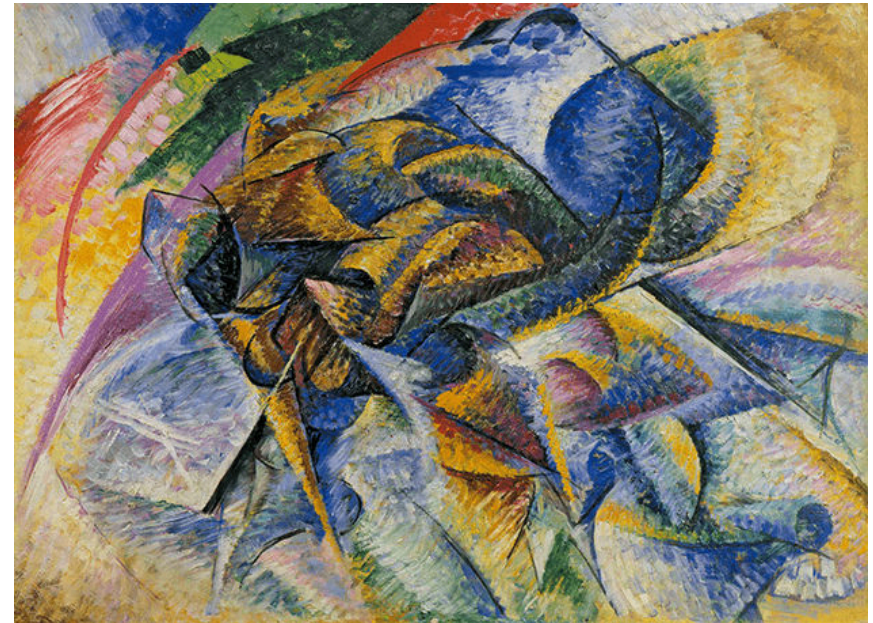
*'In finding your place in sculpture, you need to find the material that offers you just the right resistance. As it turns out, car metal offers me the correct resistance so that I can make a form—not overform it or underform it.'* —John Chamberlain

With its distinctive twisted ribbons of brightly coloured metal and intuitive sense of form, *Snatching Bookie Bob* is immediately recognisable as the work of celebrated American sculptor John Chamberlain. Carefully balancing the gestural immediacy of Abstract Expression, Minimalism's emphasis on industrial fabrication, and the vibrancy of Pop, Chamberlain developed a highly unique artistic voice that drew plastic volume and mass from everyday materials. The cornerstone of his practice, Chamberlain first started working with wrecked automobile parts in 1957, the beginnings of an inventive technical approach that would span six decades. Executed in 2000 and included in a solo exhibition of new sculpture with Pace Wildenstein in the same year, *Snatching Bookie Bob* is a confident expression of the mature artist's technical mastery, generating complex spatial relationships in the folds and textures of painted and chromium plated steel that here take on a remarkable fluidity.

## Chamberlain in Context

Having served in the US Navy during World War II, Chamberlain enrolled at the renowned Black Mountain college, a school particularly respected in the mid-century for its emphasis on interdisciplinarity and formal experimentation. Here Chamberlain wrote poetry under the tutelage of Charles Olson, whose notion of the poem as a vehicle for transferring energy from the poet to the reader, 'a high energy-construct and, at all points, an energy discharge' clearly chimes with Chamberlain's dynamic sense of sculptural form. Like poems too, his works can be seen as composed of distinct elements, extracted like individual words from their intended use and recombined in startling new relationships. In this respect, his practice is often described as developing a mode of three-dimensional collage, extending his earlier more painterly experiments - and the Abstract Expressionism that they drew on - into sculptural forms.

The energy of Chamberlain's compositions, and the expressive plasticity he extracted from his industrially produced materials makes a fascinating correlation to the forms and themes of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian Futurism, especially pronounced given the emphasis on the automobile in his practice. Indeed, it was an apocryphal car accident that gave birth to the first truly modern avant-garde movement, their 1909 manifesto detailing the symbolic rebirth of Futurism's founder F.T. Marinetti from the wreckage of a car crash into the modern machine age and the moment 'When I came up—torn, filthy, and stinking—from under the capsized car, I felt the white-hot iron of joy deliciously pass through my heart!'



Umberto Boccioni, *Dinamismo di un Ciclista* (*Dynamism of a Cyclist*), 1913, Peggy Guggenheim Collection (long term loan from the Gianni Mattioli Collection), Venice. Image: Heritage Images / Fine Art Images / ak-g-images

Although Chamberlain does not celebrate or fetishize the automobile in quite the same way, his commitment to it as a material, and as one rooted in 20th century modes of production and more conceptual notions of mid-century American aspiration certainly resonates with the aims and interests of the Italian Futurists. Not long after first experimenting with the sculptural possibilities of scrap metal, and car parts Chamberlain was included in the 1961 *Art of Assemblage* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, which emphasised these connections in showing his work alongside Futurist, Surrealist, and Cubist works.

Although he did expand his repertoire to include a range of other materials including plexiglass and galvanised steel, his sculpted automobile parts remain his signature works. Renewing his focus on the car in 1970, he developed his technical approach by cutting and painting the twisted strips of metal, as we can see in *Snatching Bookie Bob*. Sandblasting the original paintwork from the metal, Chamberlain reapplied a selection of bright and bold enamels by hand, juxtaposed against bare areas of polished chrome.

## The Snatching of Bookie Bob

The title of the work is taken from a short story by American writer Damon Runyon, whose world of gangsters, hustlers, actors, and petty criminals in and around Brooklyn and Manhattan captured the social dynamics and slang specific to the city coming out of the Prohibition era. Collected in the 1950 publication *Runyon on Broadway*, *The Snatching of Bookie Bob* focuses on the failed attempt of 'Harry the Horse' and 'Spanish John' to make some fast cash by 'snatching' notorious bookmaker 'Bookie Bob' and exhorting money from him and his associates.

*'Now I do not know Bookie Bob personally, but of course I know who Bookie Bob is, and so does everybody else in this town that ever goes to a racetrack, because Bookie Bob is the biggest bookmaker around and about, and has plenty of scratch.'* —*The Snatching of Bookie Bob*

Conforming to Runyon's distinctive prose style and told entirely in the present tense, the story opens in 1931 in the shadow of the Wall Street Crash, 'scratch', and ways of securing it being particularly prominent. Taken under house arrest the wily bookmaker convinces his captors to place bets through him to pass the time, which in the end far outweighs the sum they were ransoming Bookie Bob for in the first place, leading to a further scheme from which he will financially benefit. Bumping into Bookie Bob and his wife some weeks later it becomes clear that 'Bob's ever-loving wife' was the one that 'put the finger' on him in the first place.

In its wit, economy, and treatment of everyday, specifically American vernacular, *The Snatching of Bookie Bob* draws certain compositional comparisons to Chamberlain's 2000 work: both the crushed automobile parts and Runyan's use of contemporary slang both capturing something quintessentially American. While Chamberlain was always keen to highlight his use of crushed car parts as the result of availability rather than socio-political commentary, his works seems to speak poetically to the rise and fall of the American century, of Machine Age optimism, and aspiration. Building on these ideas and innovative approach to materials, Chamberlain has influenced a broad range of contemporary artists using recycled materials to directly address questions of consumerism, the environmental crisis, and global inequality today.

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

'John Chamberlain: The Artist', for the Guggenheim Museum. Curator Susan Davidson and artist Lawrence Weiner discussing the life and work of John Chamberlain.

## Collector's Digest

- Internationally renowned for his twisted metal sculptures and experiments with other industrial materials, examples of John Chamberlain's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Tate Collection in London.
- Over the years major retrospectives of Chamberlain's work across a range of media including photography, film, sculpture, and painting have been held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.
- After a yearlong restoration, the building that houses 23 monumental sculptures by John Chamberlain in Marfa, Texas will reopen this April.

<sup>i</sup> Charles Olson, 'Projective Verse', 1950.

<sup>ii</sup> Filippo. Tommaso. Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), in Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou, eds., *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, Edinburgh, 1998, p. 250.

### Provenance

PaceWildenstein, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



28 ♦

### Ed Ruscha

#### *Huge Conditions*

signed, titled and dated "'HUGE CONDITIONS" Ed Ruscha 2007' on the reverse; signed, titled and dated 'ED RUSCHA "HUGE CONDITIONS" 2007' on the stretcher

acrylic on canvas

91.4 x 121.9 cm (36 x 48 in.)

Painted in 2007.

#### Estimate

£1,100,000 — 1,500,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)





*'Words are pattern-like, and in their horizontality across the canvas, they answer my investigation into landscape.'* —Ed Ruscha

Often described as Ed Ruscha's preferred medium, individual words and enigmatic phrases have occupied the artist throughout his six-decade career, appearing in his work as early as 1959 and evolving over the years through a remarkable variety of scripts and styles. Although Ruscha had made drawings and paintings based on his drives through his adopted hometown of Los Angeles and the surrounding West Coast, he did not combine these two aspects of his work - landscape and text - until 1968. Appropriately, Ruscha's first combination of text set against a legible landscape was directly inspired by the iconic and unmistakable silhouette of the Hollywood Hills. Forming the literal backdrop to the city and standing metonymically for the idea of 'Hollywood' itself, this witty combination of word, idea, and text has been fundamental to Ruscha's artistic development ever since, and is a topic that he speaks eloquently on.

## Landscape and the Horizontal



Its title dominating the centre of the composition, *Huge Conditions* belongs to a significant body of paintings which Ruscha first embarked on in the 1980s, all featuring expansive landscapes overlaid with text. To achieve the stunning, photorealist finish that we see here, Ruscha initially sprayed a thin layer of paint directly onto the canvas, later working up the detail in acrylic paint more precisely applied with a brush. Finally, Ruscha applied the text using a stencil, its emblematic font an invention of the artist's own which he has named 'Boy Scout Utility Modern' - a title which sounds strangely like a witty echo of one of his *Word Paintings*. As Ruscha describes it, 'there are no curves to the letters - they're all straight lines.'<sup>1</sup> This square, straight quality to the typeface is emphasised by its wide spatial arrangement, and Ruscha's careful control of the painting's emphatically lateral composition.

*'I always liked horizontals. Horizontals to me were like landscapes. And I also got it from seeing movies as a kid. Eventually they began to stretch the screen size so that it became Panavistic—they kept making it wider and wider. So I've found myself making paintings wider. I like the idea of trying to capture the whole thing or giving you more and more and more and more.'* —Ed Ruscha

With this cinematic scope, Ruscha generates a remarkable sense of quietly atmospheric tension here not unlike the serene seascapes of Lucas Arruda or the extreme horizontality of Andreas Gursky's [photographs of the Rhine](#). Bathed in an ethereal dawn light, the rising sun just breaking over the line of the horizon, the scene takes on the eerie stillness of David Casper Friedrich's strange and sublime landscapes. Devoid of even the faintest human presence here though, the marshy expanse stretches out before us, silent and serene. A compelling ambiguity hangs over the scene - are we waiting for something to end, or are we gazing out at a new beginning? What are the 'conditions' referenced by the text, and what would failing to fulfil them imply? Sterling Ruby's astute observation that 'For me, your work represents the perfect balance of the apocalypse and serenity [...] symbolizing some sort of dichotic meditation on existence' is especially resonant here, emphasised by the tensions established between the flooded landscape and Ruscha's selection of text.<sup>ii</sup>



Casper David Friedrich, *Paysage du Nord, printemps, (Northern Landscape, Spring)*, ca. 1825, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In its panoramic scope *Huge Conditions* also recalls myths of the 'American West', a theme which recurs throughout Ruscha's *Word Paintings* and across his oeuvre more broadly. In 2016, the de Young Museum in San Francisco addressed this directly with the exhibition *Ed Ruscha and the Great American West*, while in 2005 Ruscha had himself tackled the question of American mythmaking in his presentation for *La Biennale di Venezia*. Responding to 19th century American landscape painter and founder of the Hudson River School Thomas Cole's pastoral cycle [The Course of Empire](#), Ruscha presented a series of works charting the changing landscape of Los Angeles and of shifting attitudes to ideas of 'progress' through the 20th century.



Andreas Gursky, *The Rhine II*, 1999, Tate, London. Image: © Tate, Artwork: © Courtesy Monika Sprueth Galerie, Koeln / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn and DACS, London 2022

The narratives surrounding the American expansion 'out west' are echoed in Ruscha's own, much mythologised artistic beginnings. Born in Nebraska in 1937, Ruscha passed his childhood in Oklahoma before leaving at the age of 18, driving a 1950 Ford Sedan all the way to Los Angeles where he enrolled at Chouinard Art Institute and eventually began work as a commercial sign-painter. Retracing the steps of generations of Americans heading west to make their fortune, Ruscha absorbed the wide-open landscape, punctuated here and there by the billboards and gas stations - symbols of American aspiration and expansion that would go on to become such prominent features of his work. Echoing the 'horizontal landscapes, flatlands, the landscape I grew up in', *Huge Conditions* captures the sense of optimism and vastness of the unknown that faced those early pioneers, and even perhaps the young Ruscha himself.<sup>iii</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- Based in Los Angeles, Ed Ruscha's career spans over 50 years across a variety of mediums and has become representative of a highly distinctive brand of American idealism.
- Since his first solo show at Ferus Gallery in 1963, Ruscha has exhibited globally, with notable solo shows at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Moderna Museet in Stockholm.
- Undoubtedly one of America's best known and widely respected artist, Ed Ruscha's work blends elements of advertising, graphic design, and fine art, most accurately captured in his highly celebrated *Word Paintings*.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoNePbo9DD0&t=257s><sup>1</sup>

Ed Ruscha, 'The Tension of Words and Images', Tate Shorts, Ed Ruscha explains why he is drawn to words and how he uses stencils and backgrounds

<sup>i</sup> Ed Ruscha, quoted in Kristine McKenna, 'Ed Ruscha in Conversation with Kristine McKenna', *Ed Ruscha: Fifty Years of Painting* (exh. cat.), Hayward Gallery, London, 2009, p. 58.

<sup>ii</sup> Sterling Ruby, *Interview Magazine*, 20 August 2016, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Christopher Bollen, 'Ed Ruscha', *Interview Magazine*, 20 August 2016, [online](#).

## Provenance

Gagosian Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Literature

Robert Dean, *Edward Ruscha. Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings. Volume Seven: 2004-2011*, New York, 2016, no. P2007.10, pp. 198, 598 (illustrated, p. 199)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



29 ♦

### Claude Monet

*Le Golfe Juan*

stamped with the artist's signature 'Claude Monet'  
lower left; stamped with the artist's signature 'Claude  
Monet' on the reverse

oil on canvas

65.1 x 92.4 cm (25 5/8 x 36 3/8 in.)

Painted in 1888.

Estimate

£900,000 — 1,200,000 ₤

[Go to Lot](#)



*'What I bring back from here will be sweetness itself, white, pink and blue, all enveloped in this magical air.'* —Claude Monet

Painted in the Spring of 1888 and saturated in the warm, softly diffused light of the Mediterranean, *Le Golfe Juan* belongs to one of Impressionist master Claude Monet's most successful and highly celebrated group of paintings. Executed over a three and half month stay in Antibes at the beginning of that year, the series is focussed on varying views out across from the Cap d'Antibes and its environs, capturing the shifting qualities of light and weather conditions that he found there. Compared to the darker palette and heightened drama captured in his Normandy canvases, the bright light and intense hues of the Riviera were a revelation for Monet, offering an entirely new perspective on one of his most favoured motifs. After a first, exploratory visit taken with Pierre-Auguste Renoir in 1883, Monet immediately set about planning a more extended trip alone the following year. Immersing himself in the environment that was so unlike anything he had seen before, he wrote with confidence to his companion, Alice Hoschedé 'Now I really feel the landscape, I can be bold and include every tone of pink and blue: it's enchanting, it's delicious.'<sup>1</sup>

On the suggestion of his dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who had a shrewd sense of the commercial appeal of Monet's coastal scenes, the artist returned on his second and final pilgrimage to the Riviera in January of 1888, staying at the artist's boarding house, *Le Château de la Pinède*. Painted during this formative sojourn, *Le Golfe Juan* powerfully distils Monet's mastery of light and shifting atmospheric effects, the swirling rush of short, choppy brushstrokes in raw pastel tones carefully echoing the elemental energy of the scene before him. Animated throughout with a sense of movement and breath-taking vitality, the painting captures the sensation of shimmering light breaking through the scudding clouds, its reflection broken into luminous fragments across the surface of the water. Although maintaining a sense of its topographic specificity, the seascape is also a vehicle for the artist to explore key Impressionistic themes of the transience of light and our perception of colour, with passages of thicker impasto shot through with brilliant ribbons of turquoise, deep reds, and cadmium yellows, drawing the painting towards the more abstract language of Monet's later work.

## Impressionism and the Sea

*'It is extraordinary to see the sea; what a spectacle! She is so unfettered that one wonders whether it is possible that she again becomes calm.'* —Claude Monet

Drawn to the sea since his school days in Le Havre, Monet would return again and again to the motif throughout his career. Encouraged by his mentor Eugène Boudin, who took the young Monet out on expeditions to paint the harbours and shoreline around Normandy, Monet drew on a long tradition of seascape painting that stretched from 17th century Dutch masterpieces to the

stunning atmospheric effects of J. M. W. Turner's canvases as he honed his technique. Painting *en plein air* beside Boudin, Monet laid the foundations for the rapid brushstrokes and evocative use of raw, unmixed tones that would come to define his most iconic work. Underscoring the central importance of the seascape to the Impressionist movement itself, it was of course Monet's hastily titled vision of sunrise over the port of Le Havre, *Impression, soleil levant*, that inspired the derisive label after the now infamous 'first Impressionist exhibition' in 1874.



Left: Joseph Mallord William Taylor, *Norham Castle, Sunrise*, c. 1845, Tate Britain, London. Image: akg-images / Erich Lessing Right: Claude Monet, *Impression: Soleil Levant (Impression: Sunrise)*, 1872, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. Image: Bridgeman Images

From Normandy down to the Riviera, the French coast offered numerous possibilities for Impressionist artists to pursue their painterly investigation of the shifting patterns of light and atmospheric effects thrown into such high relief by the restless motion of the sea. With the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions of small fishing villages and the emergence of the booming seaside resort, these locales also allowed for an intimate study of modern life that fascinated Monet and his contemporaries Édouard Manet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir.

By the 1880s Monet had travelled extensively, and had largely moved away from depictions of people at leisure in these coastal spots, focussing his attention instead on the landscape and the dynamic interactions between sky, sea, and rocky earth that so fascinated him. Completely devoid of human presence and intensely focussed on the elemental forces at play, *Le Golfe Juan* is a powerful statement of Monet's prowess as a painter of nature, and of the increasingly poetic and even philosophical dimensions that his work took on during this period. In its intense focus on pure colour and the subtle variations in light and its reflection cast across the surface of the water, *Le Golfe Juan* anticipates the sublime *Nymphéas* series that would totally absorb the artist in the last decades of his life.



## Towards Seriality

Moving to his beloved Giverny in 1883, Monet intensified his examination of the rural French landscape, returning to the same sites again and again as he focussed on a narrowing range of motifs that included the surrounding corn and flower fields, rows of tall poplars, and of course his iconic haystacks. Representing the first, formalised series undertaken by Monet in the autumn of 1888, the conceptual grounding of the Haystack pictures can be linked in significant ways to the variations in light, colour, and atmospheric effects explored across the Antibes pictures. Moving away from the Naturalism of his earlier works, in Antibes Monet opened himself up to a more poetic exploration of his key themes, producing nearly 40 works focussed on variations of 4 or 5 distinct motifs. Focussing on well-known vistas and tourist sites instantly recognisable to viewers familiar with the region, Monet combined topographic specificity with his distinctive handling of paint to capture subtle variations in weather conditions and compositional arrangement.

## Examples of the Antibes works held in major institutions



Claude Monet, *Cap d'Antibes (Antibes)*, 1888, The Courtauld, London. Image: © Courtauld Gallery / Bridgeman Images

## Examples of the Antibes works held in major institutions



Claude Monet, *Maison de jardinier à Antibes (Gardener's House at Antibes)*, 1888, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio. Image: © Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Wade, 1916.1044



## Examples of the Antibes works held in major institutions



Claude Monet, *Antibes, effet d'après-midi* (*Antibes, Afternoon Effect*), 1888, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Image: © 2022 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston / Gift of Samuel Dacre Bush / Bridgeman Images

## Examples of the Antibes works held in major institutions



Claude Monet, *La mer à Antibes* (*The Sea at Antibes*), 1888, Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal. Image: Artefact / Alamy Stock Photo

Displaying a particularly favourable panorama, *Le Golfe Juan* was, as Daniel Wildenstein details 'Painted on the western slope of Cap d'Antibes looking north-west [...] overlooked by the heights of Vallauris behind which lie higher hills culminating in the peak of Haut Montet.'<sup>ii</sup>

With its flattened sense of perspective and elevated view out across the water to the snow-capped Alps beyond, the compositional arrangement of *Le Golfe Juan* also makes clear visual reference to Katsushika Hokusai's enduring Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. An avid collector of ukiyo-e woodblock prints, Monet, like his fellow Impressionists enthusiastically adopted the lessons of Japanese aesthetics into their paintings, experimenting with cropping and shifts in perspective to emphasise the flatness of the picture plane. The methodical and closely controlled pictorial arrangement of the Antibes pictures emphasises the importance of this influence in Monet's thinking during the 1880s, especially apparent in the flat, rhythmic patterning of overlapping sections of land, sea, sky, and distant mountains of the present work.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Ukiyo-e print of the Tama River and Mt. Fuji*, 1823 – 29, The Metropolitan Museum, New York. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Howard Mansfield Collection, Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936

## Collector's Digest

- One of the leading artists of the Impressionist movement, Monet's work is widely understood as foundational to the development of 20th Century art, and his seascapes occupied a special place in his practice, and in Impressionism more broadly.
- The peak of Monet's enthusiastic and extensive travelling, the 1880s was a particularly rich period for the artist, his visits to the Normandy coast and the Riviera represented across a wide variety of seascapes that represent some of his most iconic works.
- Vividly evoked in an exquisite palette and Monet's characteristically rapid yet precise brushstrokes, *Le Golfe Juan* is one of only 39 paintings produced during this 1888 visit to Antibes, anticipating his more formalised approach to seriality undertaken later that year.
- Upon his return to Paris, 10 of the Antibes paintings were purchased by the art dealer Theo van Gogh and promptly exhibited at the Goupil Gallery, an early indication of the important place these works would occupy in Monet's *oeuvre* in the years to come.

<sup>i</sup> Claude Monet to Alice Hoschedé, 3 February 1884, cited in Daniel Zamani, 'Experiencing the Sublime: Northern Coasts', *Claude Monet: The Truth of Nature* (exh. cat.), Denver Art Museum, London, 2019, p. 220.

<sup>ii</sup> Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet, Catalogue raisonné*, vol. III, Cologne, 1996, p. 450.

## Provenance

Michel Monet, Giverny (by descent from his father)  
 Stephen Hahn, New York (acquired circa 1968)  
 Galerie Beyeler, Basel (acquired circa 1971)  
 Sotheby Parke-Bernet, New York, 21 May 1981, lot 522  
 Noortman & Brod (acquired circa 1983)  
 Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1987, lot 18  
 Aska International, Tokyo (acquired in 1989)  
 Private Collection, Japan  
 Sotheby's, New York, 6 May 2015, lot 328  
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

**Literature**

Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet. Vie et oeuvre - tome III. 1887-1898. Peintures*, Lausanne, 1979, no. 1180, pp. 5, 50, 74, 106, 270, 305, 307-309, 312 (illustrated, p. 107)

Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet. Vie et oeuvre - tome V. Supplément aux Peintures, Dessins, Pastels, Index*, Lausanne, 1991, no. 1180, pp. 46, 269, 283, 287, 293, 327, 328, 332, 335, 346

Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet. Catalogue Raisonné, vol. III, nos. 969-1595*, Cologne, 1996, no. 1180, pp. 449-450 (illustrated, p. 447)



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT




30

### Anselm Kiefer

*Freia's Garden*

titled 'Freia's Garden' upper left  
acrylic, emulsion, oil, shellac, metal, plaster, gold leaf,  
silver leaf, polystyrene and sediment of electrolysis on  
photograph mounted on canvas  
340 x 470 x 10 cm (133 7/8 x 185 x 3 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2013.

**Estimate**

£700,000 — 1,000,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*'Beauty requires a counterpart. And in thinking about this flaw, the other flaw occurred to me as well: the Morgenthau Plan. For it too ignored the complexity of things.'* —Anselm Kiefer

Breath-taking in its scale, near-sculptural use of materials, and the richness of its historical context, Anselm Kiefer's *Freia's Garden* is a powerfully affecting work from one of the most significant artists working in Germany today. Engaging directly with myth, memory, and the question of German post-war consciousness, the present work is a masterful expression of the innovative and philosophical dimensions of Kiefer's practice, and of the central key themes that anchor an oeuvre that is 'neither linear nor progressive in its development, but cyclical and reflective, mirroring the artist's view of life and history.'<sup>1</sup> First presented at the Royal Academy's substantial 2014 retrospective and executed the year before, *Freia's Garden* belongs to Kiefer's *Morgenthau* series, a cycle of works first exhibited in 2012 and publicly exhibited at the 2013 *Der Morgenthau Plan* hosted by Gagosian in New York. Arresting and immersive, other examples of these monumental works can be found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Albright-Knox Museum in Buffalo.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4mh4DW5h5o>

Clip from the BBC *Imagine* documentary, where Anselm Kiefer discusses his *Morgenthau* canvases ahead of his 2014 exhibition with the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

### The Morgenthau Plan and the Landscape tradition:

Historically an agricultural nation, the concept of the land has traditionally been closely bound with questions of German identity and consciousness. Well-represented in art historical terms by a long tradition of landscape painting that reached its most sublime expression within the contexts of German Romanticism and the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, the close bonds between German culture and the land were appropriated by the Nazis as the 'embodiment of the German vision'. As curator Kathleen Soriano details, the nationalist 'cult of German land - *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) - echoed Hitler's belief that "true Germans" came from the soil, from those who worked the land' and Nazi propaganda counterpointed ideas of urban degeneration with a bucolic, rural ideal as an important tool in the promotion of their nationalist ideology.



Caspar David Friedrich, *Sturzacker*, c. 1830, Hamburg Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Image: akg-images

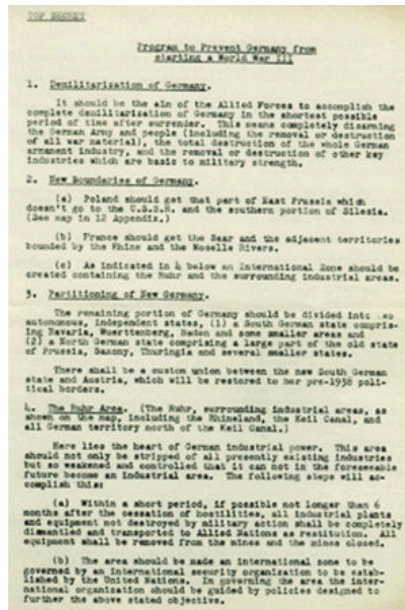
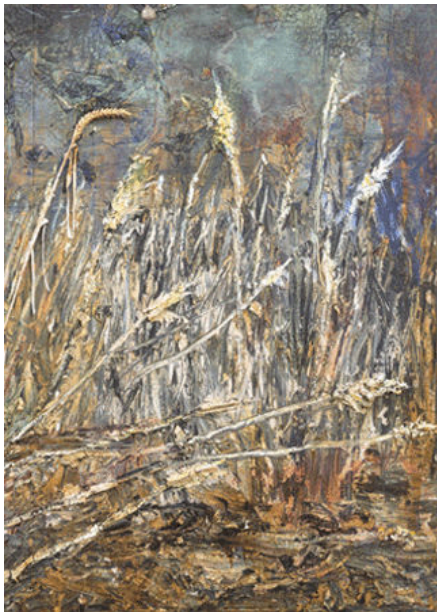
Kiefer's early paintings featuring expanses of ploughed and seemingly barren fields certainly draw on this cultural inheritance and the weight of its history, something that the artist radically expanded in his 1981 painting *Magarethe*, his first work to incorporate straw as a raw material. While these early works clearly develop Kiefer's abiding interest in cultural memory and the cycles of death and rebirth, his focus on the Morgenthau Plan addresses a specific aspect of German myth-making, an its impact on collective cultural identity.

Originally proposed by the United States Treasure Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., The Morgenthau Plan was designed as a measure to limit Germany's capacity to enter international acts of aggression by dismantling its industrial centres, physically dividing the country, and returning it to a pre-industrial agricultural society. Never realised, the proposal nevertheless loomed large in the German imagination, used to great effect as a blunt instrument of national propaganda and incentive to fight by Joseph Goebbels.

Rooted in one of Kiefer's most enduring motifs - the persistence of nature and blooming of flowers amid a desolate and destroyed landscape - the series came about after Kiefer relocated to his enormous warehouse studio in Croissy and found that he couldn't paint flowers without adding 'a



negative or cynical element.' He explains: 'I said to myself, "Oh, I can make a *Morgenthau* series. And in this series Germany will be covered with beautiful flowers, will be wonderful, because as a result of the Morgenthau Plan there will be no more industry, no more highways, just flowers."<sup>ii</sup> Grounded in the realities of Germany's socio-political history and excavating the ideological and conceptual role that the landscape has played in shaping its cultural identity, Kiefer used this armature as a way of imagining an alternative pastoral history that is not only markedly different to the post-war Germany that he grew up in, but that might help us collectively come to terms with a deeply traumatic past.



Left: Detail of the present work Right: Document outlining the Morgenthau Plan. Image: akg-images

In its monumental scale and arresting, immersive intensity, *Freia's Garden* is a paradigmatic example of Kiefer's reinvention of the landscape tradition. Heavily impastoed, the surface is vigorously worked, its stark palette of heavy pigments creating a dramatic intensity enhanced by the inclusion of gold and silver leaf and the densely organised sheafs of corn that seemed to be shifting in the breeze. The inclusion of diverse, organic materials has become a characteristic feature of Kiefer's painting and is used to startling effect here, elucidated by the artist as a means of allowing him to discover the spirit that is within these substances [...] upheave it and display it.<sup>iii</sup> An extension of the meditations of history and the cyclical passages of time, these materials are

themselves subject to change and transformation, introducing a note of poignancy to the composition. Devoid of human presence and cultivation, this seems like a land turned back to nature, its expanse of waving corn and the vivid blues of its deep, swirling sky visually recalling the agitated surfaces of Vincent van Gogh's last canvases.



Vincent van Gogh, *Wheatfield with Crows*, 1890, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam. Image: akg-images

Arresting in the equivalence of physical monumentality and the monumentality of 20th century European history, *Freia's Garden* like the other *Morgenthau* works 'draws us into the thick of what might have been and, in fact, was - a space where aesthetic attraction in the present scratches against historical awareness of the past to create an uncomfortable ambivalence.<sup>iv</sup> In its challenge to the kind of cultural amnesia that artists like Kiefer - who was himself born just two months after the end of World War II - found to pervade the second half of the 20th century, the *Morgenthau* paintings are related to his most overtly provocative works, the early *Occupations* series and *Heroic Symbols* paintings.

A meditative reflection on the history of landscape painting and of the role that landscape - both real and imagined - continues to play in the German psyche and cultural memory, *Freia's Garden* sits at the intersection of the past and the future, the spiritual and the terrestrial, death and rebirth. It is landscape that for Kiefer is 'deployed as the quiet witness to historical change, the vast impartial canvas upon which history is successively painted - and painted over.'<sup>v</sup>

## Collector's Digest

- A deeply intellectual artist, Anselm Kiefer's references and sources of inspiration span philosophy, poetry, theology and science. Here, the artist draws on the interweaving of myth and historical fact in shaping national identity.
- The subject of major international retrospectives at prestigious institutions including the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, he has most recently presented a new project in the Grand Palais Éphémère, Paris that continues his investigation of European cultural memory.
- Kiefer's career spans five decades and his work can be found in prestigious permanent collections including the Tate, London, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

<sup>i</sup> Kathleen Soriano, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Anselm Kiefer*, (exh. cat.), Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>ii</sup> Anselm Kiefer, 'Beauty Needs a Foundation: A Conversation with Anselm Kiefer', Jane Sirén, *Anselm Kiefer: Beyond Landscape*, (exh. cat.), Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 2013, p. 28.

<sup>iii</sup> Anselm Kiefer, quoted in Kathleen Soriano, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Anselm Kiefer*, (exh. cat.), Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014, p. 21.

<sup>iv</sup> Joe Martin Lin-Hill, 'Making Meaning Beyond Landscapes', *Anselm Kiefer: Beyond Landscape*, (exh. cat.), Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 2013, p. 44.

<sup>v</sup> Joe Martin Lin-Hill, 'Making Meaning Beyond Landscapes', *Anselm Kiefer: Beyond Landscape*, (exh. cat.), Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, 2013, p. 31.

## Provenance

Private Collection, Paris

White Cube, London

Private Collection, London

White Cube, London

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

London, Royal Academy of Arts, *Anselm Kiefer*, 27 September - 14 December 2014, no. 72, p. 227 (illustrated, pp. 212-213)

São Paulo, White Cube, *Anselm Kiefer Paintings*, 7 April - 20 June 2015



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

31

### Harold Ancart

*Untitled*

oil stick on paper, in artist's frame  
134 x 180 cm (52 3/4 x 70 7/8 in.)  
Executed in 2015.

Estimate

£150,000 — 200,000 <sup>+</sup>€

[Go to Lot](#)



*'To me, the understanding of form is the understanding of colour. This is what the visual environment is made of: masses of colours that overlap, blend, assemble, or dissociate from one another, and that generate forms.'* —Harold Ancart

Teeming with Harold Ancart's signature motifs and vibrant colour in an otherworldly landscape, *Untitled* from 2015 beautifully embodies the artist's painterly style for which he has become so highly regarded. Strongly identifying with an individualized 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 lexicon that is at once familiar and jarringly surreal.<sup>1</sup> Slightly distorted shapes, manipulated horizon lines, and inverted colour schemes challenge viewers to examine the world in new and different ways, as if through a pair of dazzlingly psychedelic lenses.

## Planet of Painting



André Derain, *The Turning Road, L'Estaque*, 1906, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Image: © Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Museum purchase funded by Audrey Jones Beck / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Although the present work evokes the vibrant canvases and formal experiments of early 20<sup>th</sup>

century forebears such as the Fauves and Die Brücke, *Untitled* determinedly stands as a singularly individual exemplar of Ancart's oeuvre. Born in Brussels in 1980, Ancart was a passionate artist even as a child, passing his school days by sketching and scribbling during class; as an art student at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de la Cambre, he firmly rebelled against the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ethos that painting was dead. Rather than turn to alternative artistic practices, as many of his contemporaries did, Ancart instead has plunged into the medium of painting with the same vigour exhibited during his primary school years. Uninspired by the dominant trend of post-conceptualism in Europe, Ancart relocated to New York, the openness and diversity of which prompted the artist to adopt it as his new home.

*'This is the planet of painting, after all, and Ancart's space exploration is the exploration of painted space.'* —Chinnie Ding

Dazzling and kaleidoscopic, *Untitled* from 2015 is a pre-eminent example of Ancart's confident handling of colour. Like a midnight sun rising to its apex, the central circular form sends chromatic shards across this supernatural landscape in which light and dark, paint and negative space vie for supremacy. In a celestial symphony of the heavens, the monolithic form of the moon is counterpointed against fractured bursts of lemon-yellow sunbeams. Tactile brushstrokes of red and black paint dance across the creamy sky like a shower of meteors and stars. Within the central circle, a patch of deep blue bleeds into brushed red, into orange and finally yellow, suggesting a window into a different landscape – perhaps the setting sun of another planet in this astral scene. Sprawling across the lower register of the painting, a sea of rich, saturated colour surges in an eye-wateringly bright maelstrom of paint that evokes the palette of post-Impressionist masters and the uncanny atmosphere of René Magritte's Surrealism. Against the depth of black paint, swathes of gold, ochre, aquamarine, scarlet and bubble-gum pink stream into one another, moving like the rainbow patterns of oil on water. The artist's signature trees shoot towards the sky, their lush fronds sharpened into focus by the geometrically blocked ebony outline. Juxtaposition features in the best of Ancart's practice: representation versus abstraction, the exotic and the familiar, flattened space and infinite depth, day and night, heaven and earth, the supernatural and the real, all tensions exquisitely reflected in the present work.



René Magritte, *The Banquet*, 1958, The Art Institute of Chicago. Image: akg-images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022 Detail of the present work

Although suggestive of a phantasmagorical dreamscape, *Untitled* ultimately celebrates the beauty found in nature every day. Whether zooming into such minute details of quotidian objects – as in his matchstick paintings – or turning outward to nature in his iceberg paintings – Ancart captures and transforms the mundane into the majestic, prompting the viewer to in turn see the world anew. ‘His paintings hypostatize his *en plein air* expeditions into the subconscious as obsessive, bold, increasingly overlapping strokes of oil sticks. The final compositions bear the physicality of their making and conjure forms that sometimes appear like objects from our environment. Often they arrive as in the fractal vision of an acid trip – first like towers, then fire, then crystals, then desert plants and mountains. The ambiguity encourages the eye to make its own travels.’<sup>ii</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, and the 2020 solo

exhibition with David Zwirner held across both of their New York Galleries.

<sup>i</sup> Harold Ancart, Julia Felsenthal, ‘Harold Ancart Brings His Kaleidoscopic Trees to Chelsea,’ *T Magazine*, 8 September 2020

<sup>ii</sup> Kat Herriman, ‘Back and Forth with Artist Harold Ancart,’ *Cultured*, 29 April 2019

### Provenance

CLEARING, New York

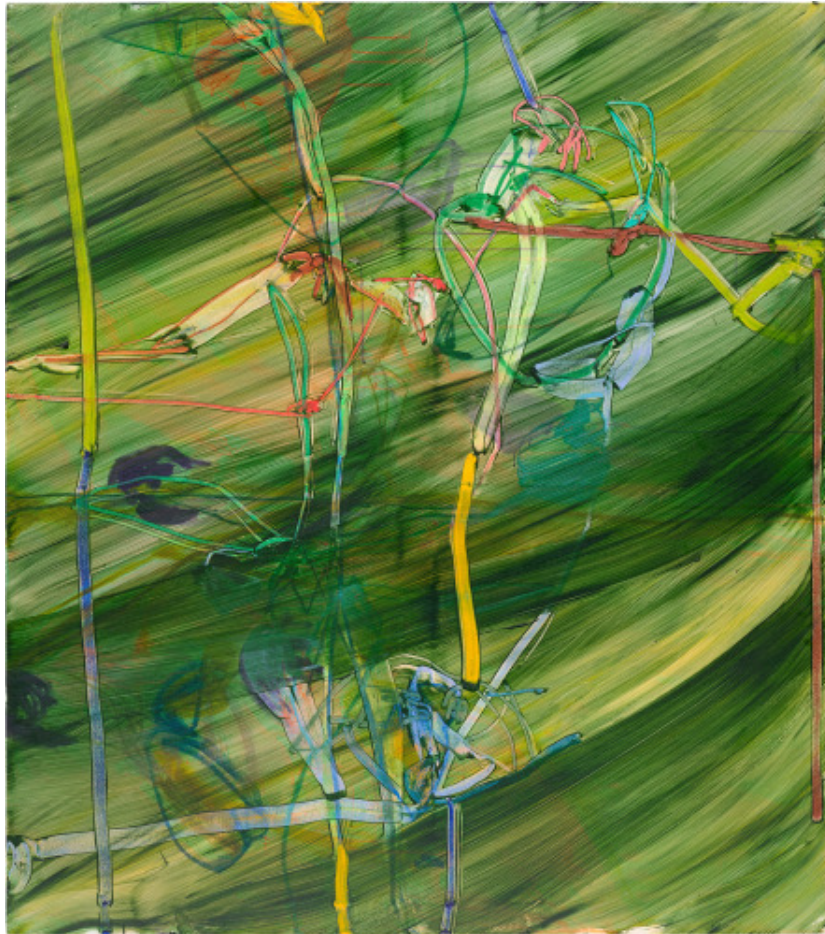
Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



32

### Jadé Fadojutimi

*A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect*

signed and dated 'Dec '20 Jadé Fadojutimi' on the reverse

oil and oil stick on canvas  
170.2 x 150 cm (67 x 59 in.)  
Painted in 2020.

**Estimate**

£150,000 — 200,000 ▲

[Go to Lot](#)





*'We are all colours that are constantly fluctuating, we change every day, we change every minute, and it was a wonderful thing to think about in terms of why these paintings feel so different to me all the time, because I am constantly changing, and the colours I am experiencing are constantly changing.'* —Jadé Fadojutimi

Driven by unseen elemental forces, young British artist Jadé Fadojutimi's *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect* unfolds in a rush of dynamic colour, the deep vitality of its broad sweeps of green stunningly representative of the artist's highly attuned sensitivity to rhythm and colour. At just 28 years old, Fadojutimi has the distinction of being the youngest artist to be included in the Tate Gallery's permanent collection and has been awarded numerous solo exhibitions in recent years. A leading voice in contemporary abstraction, her more recent paintings nevertheless gravitate around a pull towards figuration that the artist manages with incredible dexterity and finesse. Executed in 2020, *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect* highlights the new, graphic character that Fadojutimi's work has taken on in more recent years, introducing oil stick alongside paint in order to create a complex exchange between painterly depth and surface detail.

### Dreaming in Colour

As Fadojutimi eloquently describes colour - and its intersections with 'texture, line, form, composition, rhythm, marks, and disturbances' - occupies the very heart of her artistic project. This chromatic sensitivity is powerfully demonstrated in *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect*, where the rich, jungle-greens and intense luminosity of the large-scale work combine to create a multi-layered, immersive surface. Possessing a sense of vitality that evokes organic imagery of plants bursting into life, photosynthesising chloroplasts, and shifting underwater worlds, the dramatic intensity of Fadojutimi's execution and the vibrantly pearlescent qualities of her paint pulse with a personality and unparalleled energy, giving weight to Fadojutimi's assertion that 'identity can be translated through colour.'<sup>i</sup> The visual equivalence to certain plant structure structures is illuminating in its own way too, the close organic relationship between colour and light referencing Fadojutimi's recent experiments with neon pigments as a way of harnessing their distinctive sharpness and to move her painting into 'a different kind of spectrum of light.'<sup>ii</sup>

Built up in translucent layers of iridescent paint, *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect* is a highly characteristic of Fadojutimi's experiments with Liquin, a quick-drying agent that gives her oils their characteristic high, hard sheen. As eminent art critic Jennifer Higgie has described, this technical approach 'results in pictures whose surface recall panes of glass or fast-moving water. Shifting, reflective, impatient.'<sup>iii</sup>

Jewel-like in their crystalline brilliance these paintings adopt the fractured, shifting surfaces of stained glass, appropriate given the conceptual importance that Fadojutimi places on windows

throughout her painting and writing. At once opaque and transparent, stained glass is an especially powerful visual and symbolic device, physically separating us from our environment, but blending inside and outside, the self and the space around it. Capturing the strange experience of seeing our reflection superimposed on the environment beyond the glass, the artist conceives of her paintings like windows, 'reflections of myself and the objects I surround myself with.'<sup>iv</sup> Irrevocably intertwined and mutually evolving, Fadojutimi establishes a profound sense of symbiosis between her and her works that verges towards the spiritual dimensions of Wassily Kandinsky's lyrical chromatic abstractions. Notably, Kandinsky created more than 70 reverse paintings on glass, as well as numerous designs for stained glass windows, his 1911 *Improvisation No. 19* capturing offering a fascinating visual touchstone for the remarkable fluidity in the present work.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Improvisation No. 19*, 1911, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Image: © Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images

Often working through the night to loud, cinematic soundtracks in her South London studio, Fadojutimi uses her whole body as she paints, working in compulsive bursts of energy as she

translates memories, emotions, and sensations onto her large-scale canvases. As the artist details: 'I feel like painting involves the body so much, when I am making my works I paint by touch, and I feel like if I am not loose, if I can't even move, how can you paint? I have to jump sometimes to reach my paintings, and sometimes I think, do I want to jump or do I want to leap? Dancing is a big part of how I am in the studio.'<sup>v</sup>

In its rhythmic intensity, energetic immediacy, and finely tuned graphic sensibility Fadojutimi's painting is often compared to great American post-war painters Willem de Kooning and Lee Krasner. While these elements can all be discerned in the present work, in Fadojutimi's privileging of colour and gesture here *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect* also brings to mind the energy and mood of Abstract Expressionist Mary Abbot. Visually recalling Abbot's highly attuned sensitivity to nature and her environment, the deep green palette and physical presence of *A Cropped Perspective of This Whirlwind Effect* recalls the lush density of Mary Abbot's immersive emotional landscapes.



Mary Abbot, *All Green*, c. 1954, Denver Art Museum, Colorado. Image: Denver Art Museum, Gift of Janis and Tom McCormick, 2013.250, Photography courtesy of Denver Art Museum, Artwork: © Estate of Mary Abbott

### Collector's Digest

- At just 28 years old, Jadé Fadojutimi is the youngest artist to be represented in the Tate's permanent collection. A graduate of the Slade School and the Royal College of Art in London, her work is also included in major international collections including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Hepworth Wakefield.

## Jadé Fadojutimi

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- After her first institutional show at Peer, London in 2019, Fadojutimi has gone on to present work in a series of key locations. Recent exhibitions include her American institutional debut at the Miami Institute for Contemporary Art, and the upcoming presentation of works at the Hepworth Wakefield and the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin later this year.
- Presented at Phillips London last October, [Myths of Pleasure](#) represents the highest price achieved for Fadojutimi's work at auction

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOjtHikN8UQ&t=51s>

Jadé Fadojutimi, Studio visit ahead of the Liverpool Biennale in 2021.

<sup>i</sup> Jadé Fadojutimi quoted in: David Trigg, 'Jadé Fadojutimi Interview', *Studio International*, 26 April 2021.

<sup>ii</sup> Jadé Fadojutimi, 'Studio Visit:Jadé Fadojutimi', filmed for the Liverpool Biennial

<sup>iii</sup> Jennifer Higgie in *Jadé Fadojutimi: Jesture* (exh.cat.), London, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, 2020, p. 11.

<sup>iv</sup> Jadé Fadojutimi Tate short, 2020, online

<sup>v</sup> Jadé Fadojutimi, quoted in 'Jadé Fadojutimi: Sensation of the Sublime', *Twin*, 7 May 2021, [online](#).

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### Provenance

Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo

Acquired from the above by the present owner



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Yayoi Kusama

*Infinity Nets (SENN)*

signed, titled and dated 'SENN INFINITY NETS YAYOI KUSAMA 2011' on the reverse

acrylic on canvas

130 x 130 cm (51 1/8 x 51 1/8 in.)

Painted in 2011, this work will be accompanied by a registration card issued by Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc.

#### Estimate

£1,200,000 — 1,800,000 †

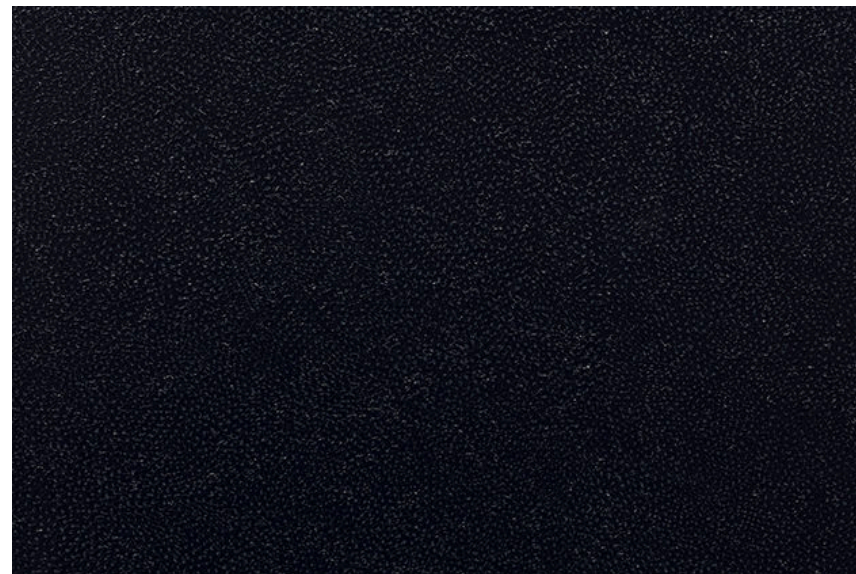
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*'My net paintings were very large canvases without composition—without beginning, end or centre. The entire canvas would be occupied by a monochromatic net. This endless repetition causes a kind of dizzying, empty, hypnotic feeling.'* —Yayoi Kusama

A stunning and unusual example of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's highly significant series, *Infinity Nets (SENN)* is a deeply contemplative and absorbing black-on-black painting that draws on a cosmic sense of expansion and infinitude. Applying the same endlessly repeating knots of paint across the wide expanse of the canvas, Kusama approaches *Infinity Nets (SENN)* in much the same manner as the other works from the series. However, instead of the bold colour contrasts between black and white, red and green, or yellow and black more regularly employed by the artist to establish a vivid optical tension between surface and painted ground, *Infinity Nets (SENN)* boldly confounds all pictorial space, confronting the viewer instead with a sense of the extreme materiality of paint, and the immersive optical effects of the shimmering nets. An exercise in obliteration, within the radically limited format of the square canvas, Kusama is still able to create incredible pictorial tension and drama, the energetic impasto of her knotted loops animating the impenetrable depths of the black ground and creating complex internal rhythms as the eye transitions from passages of thicker impasto to smoother sections of thinner and lighter paint. Disrupting the flat surface of the canvas and picking up patterns of shifting light as it passes, Kusama's treatment of paint here animates *Infinity Nets (SENN)* with a forceful dynamism, reflecting the obsessional focus on accumulation, repetition, and the infinite that best characterises her practice.



Detail of the present work

### Infinity and the Organic

Deeply rooted in the artist's personal history, the endlessly looping and repeating whorls seen here are the key motif reinvented across Kusama's staggering 70 year career and can be traced across the *Infinity Net* canvases, her soft sculptures or 'accumulations', her provocative 1960s Happenings, and the *Infinity Rooms* that are currently the subject of sell-out exhibitions in London and internationally. Like these disorientating mirrored environments - one of which was executed in the same year as the present work and is currently installed at Tate Modern as part of the extended [Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirror Rooms](#) - the overall effect of these looping and repeating patterns that spread and cover the canvases of her *Infinity Nets* is at once immersive and deeply moving.

*'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, 1960

As gallerist Beatrice Perry notes, the visual relationship established between the *Infinity Nets* and the natural world is striking, and has its roots in certain autobiographical resonances. Growing up on her family's seed farm in the Matsumoto Prefecture, Kusama's childhood was marked by traumatic early experiences with obsessional neurosis and hallucinations. As she poignantly recalls: 'One day, 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>

This hallucination would recur again and again: standing amongst the seemingly boundless fields of the family seed farm she describes being overcome by the sensation of being swallowed up by this expansive sea of flowers. For the young Kusama, the repetitive action of painting – of transcribing and replicating these visions – alleviated this oppressive sensation and she produced innumerable 'ink paintings featuring accumulations of tiny dots and pen drawings of endless and unbroken chains of graded cellular forms or peculiar structures that resembled magnified sections of plant stalks'.<sup>ii</sup>

## America and Abstraction

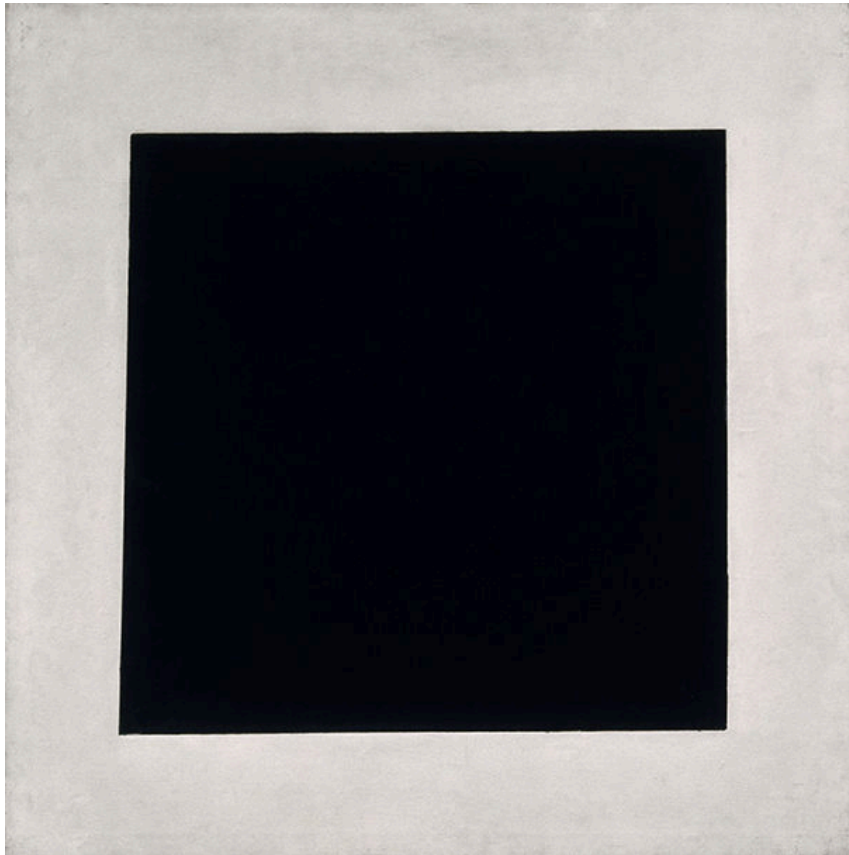
Travelling to the United States from Japan to pursue a career as an artist in 1958, this childhood obsession would expand into a robust aesthetic language as she gazed down from the aeroplane on the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean as she approached America for the first time. Finding in the softly undulating surface of the water a visual touchstone for her visions, this oceanic infinitude would provide the conceptual basis for the series, her first *Infinity Net* painting appropriately titled *Pacific Ocean* completed shortly after her arrival in New York.



Jackson Pollock, *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)*, 1950, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: akg-images, Artwork: © The Pollock-Krasner Foundation ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

In the context of an ascendent Abstract Expressionism, Kusama's all-over treatment of repetitive form found immediate correlates in the gestural expressivity of Jackson Pollock's canvases, while the emphasis on repetition and seriality in these early *Infinity Net* works established an important bridge between the artistic energies of Abstract Expressionism on the one hand, and minimalism on the other. Significantly, Kusama chose to show five large white *Infinity Net* canvases at her breakthrough exhibition at the artist-run Brata Gallery in 1959, which prompted artist-critic Donald Judd to applaud the originality of her concept and the strength of its execution. 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>

Evoking at once the molecular and the cosmic, the expansively infinite and deeply intimate, *Infinity Nets (SENN)* also imagines a new world composed of shapes and forms that chimes with the pioneering Suprematism of Kazimir Malevich. Transcending space and time, Kusama's *Infinity Nets*, like Malevich's deep *Black Square*, offers a new vision into the infinite that still resonates with us today.



Kasimir Malevich, *Black Square*, 1915, Russian State Museum, St. Petersburg. Image: akg-images

## 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.
- 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, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, London 2011, n.p.

<sup>ii</sup> Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, London, 2013, n.p.

<sup>iii</sup> Donald Judd, 'Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month - Yayoi Kusama', *ARTNews*, 58, no. 6 (October 1959), p. 17.

## Provenance

Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo

Gagosian Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in 2011



## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



34

### **Banksy**

#### *Go Flock Yourself*

signed, inscribed and dated 'Banksy London 2008' on the reverse

spray paint on metal

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

Executed in 2008, this work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by Pest Control.

Estimate

£1,000,000 — 1,500,000 ♣

[Go to Lot](#)





*'Let the streets be a feast of art for all.'* —Vladimir Mayakovski

Rising out of the Bristol underground graffiti scene as the most controversial, idiosyncratic talent of the 1990s, the anonymous street artist, painter and social activist Banksy has shocked the art world with his anti-establishment works providing dark humour, satire and political commentary at once. Impacting cities around the world with his political statements and disruptive vision, Banksy's work initially started appearing on streets, buildings, trains and public spaces. First unveiled in the ground-breaking *Banksy vs. Bristol Museum* exhibition in the summer of 2009, which brought the artist to international fame, *Go Flock Yourself* is a unique painting on metal containing some of the conceptual paradoxes the artist has become most known for.

*'This is the first show I've ever done where taxpayers' money is being used to hang my pictures up rather than scrape them off.'* —Banksy



Detail of the present work

Characterised by spray paint and cardboard stencils, *Go Flock Yourself* portrays a young man caught up in the act of vandalising a wall in a pink fleur-de-lis pattern – a distinct motif in Banksy's oeuvre. A tongue in cheek on a well-known phrase and sentiment, the artist ironically transforms

the forceful expression of dismissal in the title. With a revolutionary spirit, Banksy's figure is defiantly looking at someone, most probably the police, showing no intention of stopping his work. Like Banksy, the figure in *Go Flock Yourself*, uses spray paint to complete his illegal work under the cover of darkness, achieving a meticulous level of detail. Allowing Banksy to create complex images with speed, his distinctive use of stenciling kept him safely beyond the reach of the police. Perhaps this time not as rapid, the element of surprise and the air of challenge, *Go Flock Yourself* exposes Banksy's complex and often witty relationship with the police. Using satire to address the representation of bold disobedience, the present work comments on graffiti art as the most immediate and widespread expression of rebellion.



Hyacinthe François Rigaud, *Portrait of Louis XIV*, 1701, Musée du Louvre. Image: Bridgeman Images

Sitting in stark contrast to the remainder of the composition, the pink floral patterned damask pierces through the greyscale painting's ground. Challenging all ideas in his compositions, this motif echoes the flock wallpapers that tended to adorn high society walls of the 17th century. With a varied meaning and rather obscure origin, the fleur-de-lis first appeared in art history to represent French Royalty, most famously in the renowned *Portrait of Louis XIV*, 1701, where Hyacinthe François Rigaud adorned the monarch's voluminous mantle to celebrate his wealth, power and glory. Extracted from its original context, Banksy adopts the fleur-de-lis symbol to embody notions of rioting but also government control, oppression and poverty. A motif in Banksy's iconography that he has subsequently returned to over the years, the floral pattern significantly first appeared in Banksy's debut exhibition in the United States, where the artist notably painted a myriad of gold fleur-de-lis on an elephant to address the way poverty was ignored in our society. Additionally in most recent years, Banksy revisited the wallpaper stencil on a mural next to a refugee shelter in Paris to address anti-immigrant policies and today's escalating concern of young migrants living on the streets.



Still from *Downtown 81*, Image: MARKA / Alamy Stock Photo, Artwork: © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

A proud and determined opposition against authority, the present work is reminiscent of the beginning of Jean-Michel Basquiat's successful career, who famously inscribed provocative phrases and his alter ego tag SAMO<sup>®</sup> across the New York cityscape of the 1970s. Emerging from similar scenes, both artists encouraged revolution in the art world and moved their work beyond

the streets and into international galleries and museums, breaking down the boundaries between vandalism and art. Continuing his predecessor's legacy, *Go Flock Yourself* presents a precise image with a singular interpretation subverting an emblem of historical significance to boldly assert disobedience towards law enforcement. With the figure's expression of defiance and the play on words in the title, that capture on their own the audience attention, *Go Flock Yourself* is an exceptional and quintessential example of Banksy's work. It is a unique opportunity to acquire such an incredible work by the global myth who Banksy is.

### Collector's Digest

- *Go Flock Yourself*, 2008 was first unveiled in the ground-breaking exhibition *Banksy vs. Bristol Museum* in 2009, which drew over 300,000 visitors, quickly becoming one of the world's most visited shows of the year.
- The present work is a tongue in cheek take on a well-known phrase and sentiment showcasing the artist's ability to communicate open resistance.
- The present work exposes Banksy's complex and witty relationship with the police and comments on graffiti as the most immediate expression of rebellion.

### Provenance

Andipa Gallery, London  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, *Banksy versus Bristol Museum*, 13 June - 31 August 2009

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A RESPECTED PRIVATE EAST  
COAST COLLECTION

35

### **Felix Gonzalez-Torres**

*"Untitled" (March 5th) #2*

light bulbs, porcelain light sockets and electrical cords  
height 287 cm (113 in.)

Executed in 1991, this work is number 17 from an  
edition of 20 plus 2 artist's proofs and is accompanied  
by a certificate of authenticity.

Other examples from this edition are included in the  
permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago;  
the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the  
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Tate,  
London; and the University of Michigan Museum of  
Art, Ann Arbor.

#### **Estimate**

£450,000 — 650,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)





*'I'd like to propose once more the 'radical' idea that we can make this a better place for everyone.'* — Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Contemplative and deeply poetic, Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* is a profoundly moving sculptural expression that is at once personal and poignantly universal, evoking myriad associations such as love, loss, and the potential for continuous renewal. *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* comprises two standard light bulbs in porcelain sockets, hanging from electrical cords, gently resting in the warm, softly diffused glow of the other. Executed in 1991, the year his partner Ross Laycock died of complications from AIDS, the work may be seen as a discreet celebration of the beginning of life rather than the finitude of death, as the work quietly incorporates Ross's birthday into the parenthetical portion of its title, creating a space where 'people do not endure alone; they survive in pairs, as part of loving couples who age together [...] constituting a community of two.'<sup>1</sup> Formally, Gonzalez-Torres's use of parentheses alludes to the subtle ways in which language can shape our experiences, while also ensuring that his own experiences and references do not circumscribe the potential meanings that his work might accrue over time.

Highly representative of the American, Cuban-born artist's conceptual practice in its charged use of everyday objects and expansive thematic scope, *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* marks the artist's first use of illuminated light bulbs, directly prefiguring his celebrated light strings, a body of work comprising 24 pieces created between 1992 and 1994 which have since become synonymous with the artist. Of the artist's works made with light bulbs, *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* is poetic in its careful union of concept and execution, the two bare bulbs elegantly suspended from long cords and intertwined like two lives.

### Absence, Loss, and AIDS Activism

*'I think one of the reasons that I made artwork was for Ross. [...] I also make art to describe how I feel about other issues that are outside the so-called private sphere.'*  
—Felix Gonzalez Torres

While absence and the pain of loss are insinuated by many of Gonzalez-Torres's conceptual works, surfacing in the billboard of an empty double bed, the stacks of papers, and the jigsaw puzzles produced by the artist from the late 1980s onwards, these themes are invariably intertwined with a broad horizon of other potential meanings and political contexts. Indeed, the use of commonplace forms and often allusive imagery were part of the artist's nuanced efforts to ensure that the meaning of his works could remain thoroughly open-ended. In the context of the AIDS crisis and its exposure of an insidious homophobia that loomed large in cultural discourses during those years, Gonzalez-Torres's works avoided entanglement in censorship through a notable avoidance of

didactic expression; rather, the artist created works whose meanings are contingent upon their audiences. Gonzalez-Torres's work can also be read in context with the politically engaged visual activism of Keith Haring's work; however, Gonzalez-Torres's artistic practice offers a distinct complement to his efforts as an activist—informed by, but not contingent upon any one political project. The profound power of a work like *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* lies not only in the experience of a specific historical moment, not only in the austere and resonant beauty of its form (and its subtle reference to a loved one), but in its graceful proposition that illness and loss are fundamentally interlaced with a potential for infinite renewal.



Demonstrators chanting at AIDS rally, New York City, New York, 2002

Also conceived in 1991, the moving installation *"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* can be interpreted as addressing the physical realities of AIDS more directly. Its heap of candies in multi-coloured wrappers can diminish over time as participants remove the candies one by one. With an ideal weight of 175 pounds, the candies can be seen as a poignant surrogate for the body of a lost lover, friend, or stranger, yet the narrative is decidedly more complex than a literalization of loss, as the exhibitor can choose to replenish the candy at any time.

While Gonzalez-Torres's candy works may conjure the individual body, massed bodies, and the physical reality of AIDS (among an infinite array of other intimations), *"Untitled" (March 5th) #2* is aligned with a broader motif organised around the compositional structure of doubles. A work



made nearly contemporaneously, and sharing nearly the same title, *“Untitled” (March 5th) #1* used two circular mirrors to explore the persistence of love, feelings of loss, and the endurance of the coupled form: looking into one mirror, a viewer’s individual reflection may emphasise the emptiness of the second, or it may be seen in concert with the reflection of another. Echoing this coupling, *“Untitled” (March 5th) #2* adds a significant durational element—while both bulbs glow together, one will eventually burn out. Yet this loss is not permanent; when a bulb burns out, it must be immediately replaced, thereby pairing the experience of loss with the prospect of regeneration (The work may be exhibited with both bulbs turned on, or both bulbs turned off.) This cycle of uniformity, change, and renewal is also present in the compositionally related *“Untitled” (Perfect Lovers)*, where two wall clocks are installed side-by-side and set to the same time, moving in synchronicity until one inevitably slows and potentially stops, at which point the clocks are to be reset to the accurate time in the location of their installation. In the clocks of *“Untitled” (Perfect Lovers)* and the paired bulbs of *“Untitled” (March 5th) #2*, we may see a universal fear ‘of being just one,’ just as we might see an artist reconciling such fears with belief in a certain promise of immortality.<sup>iv</sup>

## Duchamp and the Readymade

*‘I think more than anything else I’m just an extension of certain practices, minimalism or conceptualism, that I am developing areas I think were not totally dealt with.’ —Felix Gonzalez-Torres*

In his use of mass-produced, quotidian objects, Gonzalez-Torres’s work may recall the earliest Dada Readymades developed by Marcel Duchamp and his contemporaries. The materials used in *“Untitled” (March 5th) #2* suggest a particular proximity to Duchamp’s glass constructions, and the glass vial of ‘Paris Air’ that he gifted to Walter Arensberg in 1919. Like Duchamp, Gonzalez-Torres understood that the quotidian object was so familiar as to be open to multiple meanings, endowing it with a certain metaphorical power. The light bulb immediately conjures associations tied to light, energy, warmth, security, and home to name a few, which are amplified by the presentation of the bulbs as a couple. Building on these metaphorical foundations, the work’s allusive yet open-ended title, and the artist’s subtle engagement of both personal memories and shared universal experiences, we can perceive a wholesale recontextualization of these associations and the introduction of more complex ideas surrounding finitude, fragility, separation, loss and their potential inverses of endlessness, durability, union, and renewal.



Marcel Duchamp, 50 cc of Paris Air, 1919, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950, 1950-134-78, Artwork: © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Far from Duchamp’s claim that the everyday objects involved in his Dada Readymades were selected with ‘visual indifference,’ Gonzalez-Torres’s choice of objects was carefully considered, imbuing them with metaphorical weight and poetic significance. Similarly, while his sculptural forms often elicit comparison to Minimalism’s coolly detached use of immediately available objects—such as Dan Flavin’s light sculptures or Donald Judd’s stacks—the artist makes significant departures from this tradition of impersonal neutrality, instead making work ‘at once lyrical in its poetry of loss and strident in its cry of rage.’<sup>ii</sup>

The generosity and collaborative nature of Gonzalez-Torres’s practice is perhaps best summed up by his desire that curators showing his work, owners, and anyone interacting with his work would play a participatory role (which varies among different bodies of work). Asked about an “ideal response” to his work, Gonzalez-Torres replied: “The answer will be very rhetorical because it would be, in each case, dependent upon the site, the date, and the purpose or the work, which changes in each case. I suppose I would be satisfied if they took action sometimes, or if it caused them to be critical, moved, inspired. Or to celebrate difference and the idea of change and renewal, the chance for love. I’d like to propose once more the ‘radical’ idea that we can make this a better place for everyone.”<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Nancy Spector, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, (exh. cat.) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1996, p. 143.

<sup>ii</sup> Felix Gonzalez-Torres, quoted in Nancy Spector, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, (exh. cat.) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1996, p. 15.

<sup>iii</sup> Ferguson, Bruce. "Felix Gonzalez-Torres" (Taped interview). Rhetorical Image. By Deidre Summerbell. New York: New Museum. 1990. P. 48.

#### Provenance

Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in October 1991

#### Exhibited

Brussels, Galerie Xavier Hufkens, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Michael Jenkins*, March - April 1991 (another example exhibited)

Glens Falls, The Hyde Collection, *Just what is it that makes today's home so different, so appealing?*, 8 September - 17 November 1991 (another example exhibited)

Tokyo, Wacoal Art Center of Spiral Garden, *Three or More: A Multiple Exhibition*, 1 October - 24 October 1992, p. 82 (another example exhibited and illustrated)

Glasgow, Tramway, *Read My Lips: New York AIDS Polemics*, 26 October - 1 December 1992 (another example exhibited)

Washington, D.C., The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Smithsonian Institution; Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Traveling*, 24 April - 11 September 1994 (another example exhibited)

New York, Fischbach Gallery, *Absence, Activism and the Body Politic*, 9 June - 28 July 1994 (another example exhibited)

New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 3 March - 10 May 1995 (another example exhibited)

Santiago de Compostela, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres (A Possible Landscape)*, 12 December 1995 - 3 March 1996 (another example exhibited)

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres (Girl Friend in a Coma)*, 11 April - 16 June 1996 (another example exhibited)

New York, Greene Naftali Gallery, *Broken Home*, May - June 1997 (another example exhibited)

Hannover, Sprengel Museum; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Vienna, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 1 June 1997 - 1 November 1998 (another example exhibited)

Barcelona, Fundació Joan Miró, *Lux / Lumen*, 19 June - 7 October 1997 (another example exhibited)

Harrisburg, Susquehanna Art Museum, *I'm Not Here: Constructing Identity at the Turn of the Century*, 2 December 1999 - 24 February 2000 (another example exhibited)

St. Gallen, Sammlung Hauser und Wirth, *The Oldest Possible Memory*, 14 May - 15 October 2000 (another example exhibited)

Albuquerque, National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico, *La Luz: Contemporary Latino Art in the United States*, 21 October 2000 - 27 May 2001 (another example exhibited)

Dallas Museum of Art, *Gonzalez-Torres/Joseph Beuys*, 16 February - 6 May 2001 (another example exhibited)

Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, *A Matter of Degree: Abstraction in Twentieth Century Art*, 10 November 2001 - 27 January 2002 (another example exhibited)

Avignon, *Collection Lambert, Coolustre*, 25 May - 28 September 2003 (another example exhibited)

Paris, Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, *Eblouissement*, 23 June - 12 September 2004 (another example exhibited)

New York, Lehman Maupin, *L'Art Vivre*, 15 April - 14 May 2005 (another example exhibited)

Waltham, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, *Broken Home*, 23 January - 13 April 2008 (another example exhibited)

Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, *Sparks! The William T. Kemper Collecting Initiative*, 3

May - 20 July 2008 (another example exhibited)  
 Clermont-Ferrand, L'Espace d'Art Contemporain La Tôlerie, *La Foule (Zéro - Infini): Chapitre 1 (unity - dualité - la meute - la masse)*, 6 May - 15 July 2008 (another example exhibited)  
 Paris, Passage du Retz; Israel, Petach Tikva Museum of Art, *Insomniac Promenades: Dreaming/Sleeping in Contemporary Art*, 11 July 2008 - 3 July 2009 (another example exhibited)  
 Clermont-Ferrand, L'Espace d'Art Contemporain La Tôlerie, *La Foule (Zéro - Infini): Chapitre 2 (chaos - contrôle)*, 10 October - 30 November 2008 (another example exhibited)  
 Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, *Permanent Collection Installation*, 21 December 2009 - 22 January 2013 (another example exhibited)  
 Brussels, Wiels Contemporary Art Centre; Basel, Fondation Beyeler; Frankfurt, Museum für Moderne Kunst, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Specific Objects without Specific Form*, 16 January 2010 - 25 April 2011 (another example exhibited)  
 Mexico City, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, *Somewhere/Nowhere*, 27 February - 23 May 2010 (another example exhibited)  
 Art Institute of Chicago, *Contemporary Collecting: The Judith Neisser Collection: Minimal and Postminimal Innovation*, 13 February - 22 May 2011 (another example exhibited)  
 New York, Pace Gallery, *Burning, Bright: A Short History of the Lightbulb*, 28 October - 26 November 2011 (another example exhibited)  
 Kunstmuseum Basel; Siegent, Museum für Gegenwartskunst; Lisbon, Culturgest; New York, Artists Space, *Tell It to My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault*, 2 February 2013 - 23 February 2014 (another example exhibited)  
 Paris, La Galerie des Galeries, *In a Sentimental Mood*, 28 May - 8 August 2013 (another example exhibited)  
 Cleveland, Museum of Contemporary Art, *DIRGE: Reflections on [Life and] Death*, 7 March - 8 June 2014 (another example exhibited)  
 Centre Pompidou-Metz, *1984-1999 La Décennie*, 24 May 2014 - 2 March 2015 (another example exhibited)  
 Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Pacific Design Center, *Tongues Untied*, 6 June - 13 September 2015 (another example exhibited)  
 Avignon, Collection Lambert, *Patrice Chéreau, un musée imaginaire*, 11 July - 11 October 2015 (another example exhibited)  
 Dublin, Irish Museum of Modern Art, *What We Call Love: From Surrealism to Now*, 12 September 2015 - 14 February 2016 (another example exhibited)  
 Modena, Manifattura Tabacchi, *The Mannequin of History: Art after Fabrications of Critique and Culture*, 18 September 2015 - 31 January 2016 (another example exhibited)  
 Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, *Permanent Collection Installation*, September 2015 - 2020 (another example exhibited)  
 Paris, Passage de Retz, *Représenter l'irreprésentable?*, 5 December 2015 - 15 January 2016 (another example exhibited)  
 Frankfurt, Museum für Moderne Kunst, *An Imagined Museum: Works from the Centre Pompidou, the Tate and the MMK*, 24 March - 4 September 2016 (another example exhibited)  
 London, Hauser & Wirth, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 27 May - 30 July 2016 (another example exhibited)

Reading, Artangel, *Inside. Contemporary Artists and Writers in Reading Prison*, 4 September - 4 December 2016 (another example exhibited)  
 Cleveland Museum of Art, *Permanent Collection Installation*, 27 February 2017 - Present (another example exhibited)  
 North Adams, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, *The Half-Life of Love*, 6 May 2017 - 25 March 2018 (another example exhibited)  
 Geneva, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, *Cady Noland, Laurie Parsons, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 31 May - 10 September 2017 (another example exhibited)  
 Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Give and Take: Highlighting Recent Acquisitions*, 4 March - 3 September 2018 (another example exhibited)  
 Milan, Massimo De Carlo, *MCMXXXIV*, 8 March - 13 May 2019 (another example exhibited)  
 Montpellier Contemporain, *Intimate Distance*, 29 June - 29 September 2019 (another example exhibited)  
 Hong Kong, David Zwirner, *Singing the Body Electric*, 11 July - 10 August 2019 (another example exhibited)  
 New York, Off Paradise, *Doubles*, 27 February - 27 July 2020 (another example exhibited)  
 Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, *Oh, Honey...A Queer Reading of the Collection*, 21 August 2021 - 20 February 2022 (another example exhibited)

#### Literature

*Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Roni Horn*, exh. cat., Sammlung Goetz, Munich, 1995, p. 20  
 Encyclopaedia Universalis, ed., *Universalia 1997. La politique, les connaissances, la culture en 1996*, Paris, 1997, p. 478  
 Dietmar Elger, ed., *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Text*, Ostfildern, 1997, pp. 40, 56, 57  
 Dietmar Elger, ed., *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Catalogue Raisonné*, Ostfildern, 1997, no. 118, p. 69 (another example illustrated)  
*Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, exh. cat., Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, 2006, p. 177 (another example illustrated, p. 164)  
*Las Implicaciones de la Imagen*, exh. cat., Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Arte, Mexico City, 2008, no. II.25, pp. 234, 193 (another example illustrated, titled as *Untitled No. 2*)  
*Reality Check*, exh. cat., Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 2008, p. 90  
 Dawn Ades, *Tate Latin American Acquisitions Committee: Celebrating 10 Years*, New York, 2011, p. 45  
 Julie Ault, ed., *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, Göttingen, 2016, no. 2, pp. 211, 373 (another example illustrated, pp. 89, 209, 360)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



Photo-souvenir : Peinture aux formes variables, mai 1966, 214 x 178,5 cm © DB-ADAGP Paris

36 ♦

### Daniel Buren

#### *Peinture aux formes variables*

inscribed and dated '215 x 180 cm MAI 66' on the overlap

paint on cotton cloth woven with red and white stripes, alternating and vertical 8.7 cm wide each  
206 x 180 cm (81 1/8 x 70 7/8 in.)

Painted in May 1966. This work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity, known as an 'Avertissement,' which will be delivered by the artist in the name of the new buyer.

#### Estimate

Estimate On Request †

[Go to Lot](#)





*'Something exists within the object that can never be appropriated. This little part, I try to make it visible.'* —Daniel Buren

Executed in May 1966, *Peinture aux formes variables* is one of French conceptualist Daniel Buren's earliest and most important works, presenting a bold and sophisticated handling of the stripe motif that he adopted only the year before, and that would eventually cement his reputation as one of the leading artists of his generation. Remarkably versatile and capable of dramatically altering the viewer's perception of space, these striped works have formed the conceptual core of Buren's artistic project since the 1960s, the stripe operating as 'not only something you can recognise, [but] also something I can use to change an environment.' In this compelling early example, Buren adopts the red and white striped fabric as a ground, applying white paint directly to it in elegant, curving lines that interrupt and gently disrupt the intense verticality of the fabric's pattern. Lyrically animating the composition, these 'variable forms' possess a remarkably rhythmic energy, giving the piece exceptional wall power that stands out even amongst Buren's finest works.

## Windows and Stripes

When asked by Emily McDermott in 2015 where the signature stripe came from, Buren explained: 'At the beginning it was intuition [...] In '65 I found this material that was close to what I wanted. It was the idea to have something very banal, but very strong. When I saw this [type of linen] material I thought using it would be much better [than a canvas]. I found it, used it, and I painted on it.' The regulated pattern of alternating fabric stripes here represents one of its earliest uses, and the formalisation of his highly recognisable motif. Indeed, the measurement of each band adopted by Buren for each of his subsequent works never deviated from this format whether appearing on fabric, buildings, or books.

Generating a loose, lattice-like frame across the fabric, the painted areas of *Peinture aux formes variables* take on the appearance of a window frame, its undulating curves like the faintest suggestion of curtains stirred by a breeze in a vague recollection of the sun-soaked Mediterranean interiors of [Henry Matisse](#) and Raoul Dufy. However, rather than moving towards any kind of naturalistic depiction of a scene beyond, the striped, mechanically reproduced fabric intervenes as a sharp reminder of the illusionistic nature of painting itself – a conceptual focus that connects Buren's work to earlier Surrealist experimentation in unexpected and illuminating ways.



René Magritte, *Le Blanc Seing (The Blank Signature)*, 1956, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 1985.64.24, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Moving considerably further in his interrogations into questions of surface and perception however, it was in these early works that Buren made the radical and decisive move away from painting and to creating works *in situ*. This shift allowed him to engage more robustly with his 'initial search for ways to strip painting of its illusionistic and expressive reference', and to begin the inquiry into the nature of the relationship between art object and environment which has continued to occupy him for over 50 years.

Well-known for his radical rejection and pointed critique of the traditional museum-gallery system, Buren challenged viewers to reconsider the relationship of art to its surroundings – most famously in his interventionist installation for the 1971 *Guggenheim International*, where his monumental striped banner was ultimately removed after complaints from other artists that it obscured their works. It is possible to trace this aspect of Buren’s practice here, the immersive scale and absorbing power of *Peinture aux formes variables* underscoring the capacity of Buren’s work to interact with and impact on the space it sits within. Tellingly, this has been a prominent feature in the work’s exhibition history. Providing a fascinating dialogue with the sculptural works of Alberto Giacometti in the 2010 *Daniel Buren & Alberto Giacometti Oeuvres contemporaines 1964 – 1966* organised by Galerie Kamel Mennour, *Peinture aux formes variables* was more recently installed alongside 18th century antiques in a 2015 exhibition with the Kraemer Gallery in Paris.



Detail of the present work

Abandoning his studio in 1967, Buren liberated himself still further from the conventions, expectations, and thus – as he found it – limitations that came with identifying as an artist. Joining the artists Olivier Mosset, Michael Parmetier, and Niele Toroni, in the year of the present work’s execution, Buren formed the group BMPT, whose central aim was to strip painting back to its most basic visual and physical elements using careful and systematic repetition. For Buren, the stripe was the perfect vehicle for this, and the mass-produced fabric that he used in these works enabled him to create a critical distance from convoluted notions of authorship.

Appropriately, a permanent installation of Buren’s works can be found in the so-called ‘Matisse Room’ at the Musée d’Art modern de la Ville de Paris, and it is Matisse’s free-floating cut outs and playfully abstracted forms that most closely prefigure the pioneering work made by Buren after 1966. Placed into such an intimate and immediate dialogue with Matisse, the complete installation of *Murs de peintures* – which includes works dating from 1966 – draws out the exciting formal exchanges between these two artists, one which is so clearly apparent in a foundational work like *Peinture aux formes variables*.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US5qB0qR6Ec>

Daniel Buren in conversation with Bernard Blisène, director of the Musée national d’Art modern – Centre Pompidou, Paris.

### Collector’s Digest

- Buren now has permanent installations all around the world, including Diamonds and Circles in London’s Tottenham Court Road Station, as well as pieces in the Guggenheim Bilbao, and Toyota Municipal Museum of Art in Tokyo.
- As well as presenting new work with Nara Roesler Gallery in 2021, the French conceptual artist’s most recent in situ installations include projects for the Élysée Palace and La Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris.
- In 1997 Buren was awarded the Golden lion for the best national representation at XLVII La Biennale di Venezia.

<sup>i</sup> Daniel Buren. Quoted in Emily McDermott, ‘Stripes Across the Decades’, *Interview Magazine*, 6 March 2015, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Daniel Buren. Quoted in Emily McDermott, ‘Stripes Across the Decades’, *Interview Magazine*, 6 March 2015, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Anne Rorimer, ‘Daniel Burren, From Paining to Architecture’, *Parkett*, 2003, n.p.

### Provenance

Collection of the artist, Paris  
 Galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris  
 Private Collection (acquired from the above)  
 Christie’s, New York, 8 May 2016, lot 23A  
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Villeurbanne, Le Nouveau Musée, *Comme Lieu Situation 1*, 15 November 1986 - 15 February 1987  
Villeneuve d'Ascq, Musée d'art moderne Lille Métropole, *Une Traversée - Peintures 1964-1999*, 21 January - 14 May 2000

Paris, Galerie Kamel Mennour, *Daniel Buren & Alberto Giacometti. Œuvres contemporaines 1964-1966*, 29 April - 26 June 2010, pp. 41, 77-78, 80 (illustrated)

Abu Dhabi, Galerie Kamel Mennour at Emirates Palace, *Daniel Buren & Alberto Giacometti. Œuvres contemporaines 1964-1966*, 1 - 10 November 2010

Paris, Kraemer Gallery, *Kraemer Gallery / Kamel Mennour*, 19 - 31 October 2015

Paris, Galerie Kamel Mennour, *Daniel Buren, Peinture aux formes variables, 1966*, 10 December 2020 - 16 March 2021

**Literature**

Daniel Buren, *Daniel Buren. Photos-Souvenirs 1965-1988*, Villeurbanne, 1988, no. 3, p. 283 (Le Nouveau Musée, Villeurbanne, 1986 installation view illustrated, p. 11; this work is illustrated upside down)

Annick Boisnard and Daniel Buren, *Daniel Buren 1964/1966: Catalogue raisonné chronologique tome II*, Paris, 2000, no. T II-293, pp. 143, 182 (illustrated, p. 143)

Laurent Wolf, 'Daniel Buren ou le malentendu', *Le Temps: Le Samedi Culturel*, Geneva, 25 January 2000, p. 1 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



37

### Damien Hirst


#### *Without You*

glass, painted MDF, beech, acrylic, fish and formaldehyde solution

121.9 x 182.8 x 16 cm (47 7/8 x 71 7/8 x 6 1/4 in.)

Executed in 2008.

#### Estimate

£500,000 — 700,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



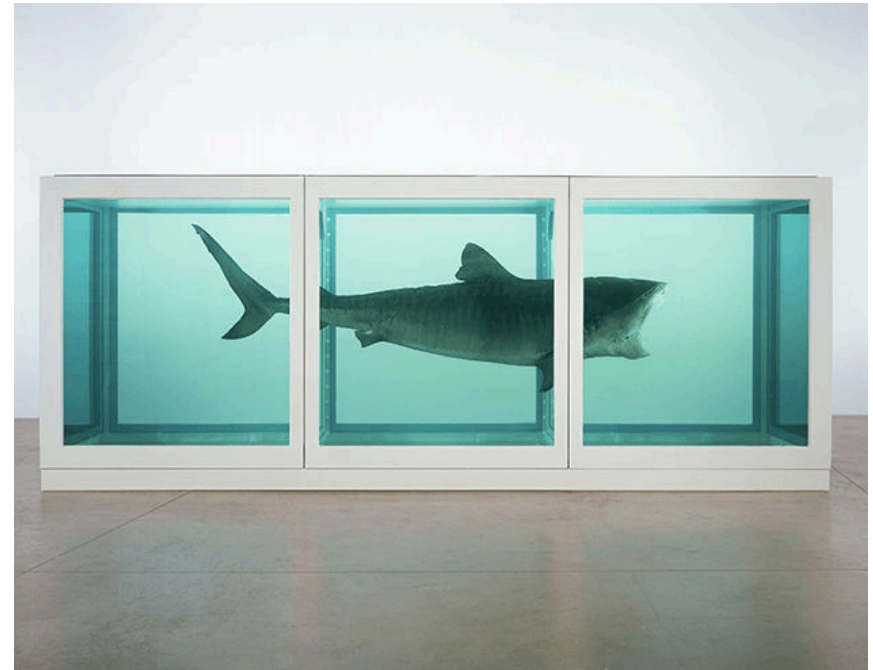


*'Water is always death to me. I don't know why. It wipes the slate clean. I didn't use formaldehyde to preserve artworks for posterity, I used it to communicate an idea.'*  
—Damien Hirst

The proximity of life to death has proven to be a prevailing theme for British artist Damien Hirst throughout his career, allowing him to explore more nebulous philosophical ideas related to religion, loss, love, and the cult of the commodity. Confrontational, monumental, and philosophically engaging, *Without You* is a spectacular example of the artist's deep engagement with these themes, and of his radical use of scientific materials and methods to push them to their aesthetic extremes.

### Formaldehyde and Fish Cabinets

Ranking amongst Hirst's first formaldehyde works, his ground-breaking fish cabinets are especially significant in the conceptual connections that they introduce across some of the artist's most iconic and enduring series. Establishing a formal relationship to the sense of order and approximation of scientific rationalism presented across the *Medicine Cabinets* and the *Spot Paintings*, they of course also recall one of the most iconic images of contemporary art, Hirst's *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*. Presented at Charles Saatchi's 1991 epoch-defining *Young British Artists* exhibition, the image of the thirteen-foot tiger shark suspended in formaldehyde has reached well beyond the limits of the art world, capturing the rebellious spirit of this new generation of British artists working on the cusp of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991, Image: Photographed by Prudence Cuming Associates, Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS /Artimage 2022

In characteristically glib fashion, Hirst described the sculpture as having 'to do with the obsession with trying to make the dead live or the living live forever.'<sup>1</sup> Like this infamous work, *Without You* draws on the conceptual difficulties involved in imagining our own mortality, the formaldehyde acting not simply as a chemical agent to preserve the creatures, but as a means of trying to approach this philosophical question aesthetically. Removed from their natural habitat and placed in 91 individual formaldehyde-filled Perspex boxes, the multiple varieties of fish appear to sit suspended somewhere between life and death, arranged in such a way that they almost seem to be swimming, absurdly frozen in time.

Tellingly, Hirst's first fish cabinet, the 1991 diptych *Isolated Elements Swimming in the Same Direction for the Purpose of Understanding (Left) and (Right)*, was also included in the *Young British Artists* exhibition, emphasising the foundational position held by these wall cabinets within Hirst's oeuvre. While the lone tiger shark confronts the sense of paradox and dissonance involved in our attempts to imagine the permanence of death, there is an added poignance involved in the fish cabinet's juxtapositions of life, movement, and the collective with sterility, suspension, and

isolation.

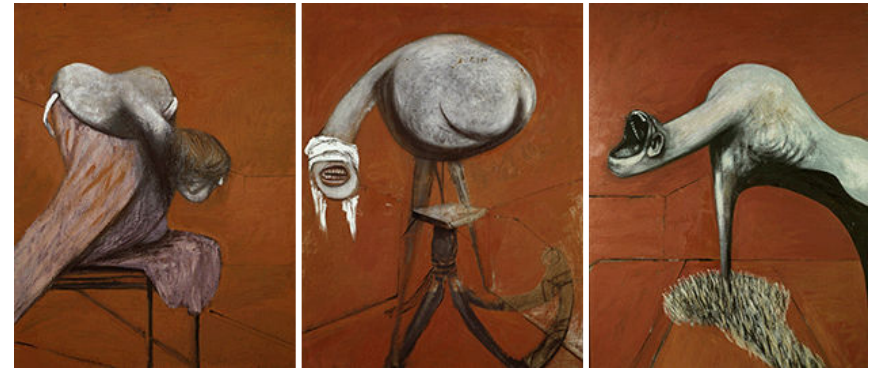
*'They all face the same way yet they can't make contact the way they do in the sea  
[...] in life we're separated by flesh and bones and you can't really move beyond that.'*  
—Damien Hirst

Belonging to the highly personal *Internal Affairs* series, *Isolated Elements* and its sister works have been described by the artist as an exercise in 'looking into myself, to try to work out why my body is separated from my mind or indeed if it is', something that is clearly picked up by the title and visual format of *Without You*.<sup>ii</sup> Raising questions about individual difference and conformity as well as the fragile line between life and death, Hirst borrows the visual languages of Minimalism, museum display, and scientific enquiry, using the mechanism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century display cabinet to take a wry look at the human drive to set chaos into order and to extract permanence from an otherwise fleeting existence.

## Curiosity and the Collector

*'I just can't help thinking that science is the new religion for many people [...] There are four important things in life: religion, love, art, and science. At their best, they're all just tools to help you find a path through the darkness. [...] Of all of them, science seems to be the one right now. Like religion, it provides the glimmer of hope that maybe it will be all right in the end.'* —Damien Hirst

Hirst first began to incorporate scientific imagery into his work at a very early stage in his career with the simple glass-fronted cabinets that he filled with pharmacological drug packaging and other medical items during his second year at Goldsmiths in the late 1980s. The cabinet structure has remained crucial to the artist, standing sometimes analogously in for the body, and sometimes for the scientific pursuit of knowledge itself. Highly revered by Hirst, Francis Bacon frequently adopted a cage-like structure as a framing device as a means of intensifying his visceral study of human flesh and angst. Similarly the cabinet functions in the present work as a device allowing Hirst to closely examine the relationships between science and art, natural history, and mortality.



Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, 1944, Tate Gallery, London. Image: akg-images / André Held, Artwork: © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. DACS 2022

Evoking the visual display of early natural history museums and their predecessors, the Curiosity Cabinet, *Without You* picks up on the 19<sup>th</sup> century mania for collecting and classifying objects from the natural world. Operating as proto-museums, the earliest Curiosity Cabinets or 'wunderkammers' attempted to impose rational order onto a chaotic world through careful categorisation, and as such were 'central to conceptions of knowledge and how its results were to be displayed [...] so that they inhabited the same physical space and conceptual space'.<sup>iii</sup> A potent symbol of man's hubristic pursuit of knowledge, they speak not only to a desire to collect and categorise, but to an Enlightenment faith in progress and the pursuit of rationality.

An avid collector himself, perhaps it is no wonder that Hirst found himself drawn to the aesthetics of display that we might associate with natural history museum collections and Victorian taxidermy. Recalling the practices of Kurt Schwitters and Joseph Cornell, collecting itself seems to fascinate Hirst, the artist elaborating that 'I've always collected things. When I was a kid it was rocks and minerals, which I used to display in boxes. I love how different forms of display affect what the eye sees. It's bound up in my interest in the Victorian obsession with nature, or really the dominance of man over the natural world. Those Victorian natural history displays are so stupidly self-confident, it's nature seen through the eyes of man, beautifully ordered according to aesthetics.'<sup>iv</sup>

This appreciation of the cabinet as an aesthetic object in its own right finds a powerful visual antecedent in the elegant Minimalism of Donald Judd's wall-mounted boxes, adopting a similar emphasis on seriality and presentation of clean, mathematical arrangement of forms. However, just as *Without You* offers a critique of rationalism's claim to knowledge and supremacy over the natural world, we can also identify the ways in which the present work challenges the aesthetic rationalism of Minimalism, introducing an element of variety and humour to the cabinet with the variety of species and the dryly comical effect of their arrested state.

Although it speaks poignantly to the inevitability and finitude of death, and the psychological pain of loneliness and isolation, *Without You* is also a celebration of life, freedom, and the pursuit of knowledge. As the artist himself has been keen to point out: '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.'<sup>v</sup>



Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1984, on loan to the Hamburg Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Estate of Donald Judd/VAGA, New York/DACS, London 2022

## Collector's Digest

- One of the most controversial and provocative figures of contemporary art, Damien Hirst's work has defined the YBA generation and continues to drive discussions around the role and meaning of art in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- First conceived in the early 1990s, Hirst's formaldehyde cabinets rank amongst his most instantly recognisable and conceptually important series, with iconic examples of these works held in major institutions around the world.
- Combining the seriality of the *Medicine Cabinets* and *Spot Paintings* with the philosophical dimensions of the formaldehyde works, the Fish Cabinets are central to Hirst's oeuvre. Having made their initial appearance in the artist's first institutional exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London in 1991, an example of these works has been included in every major survey exhibition since.
- Most recently Hirst has been awarded the inaugural exhibition in Gagolian Gallery's new space in Gstaad, Switzerland. *Myths, Legends, Monsters* opened in February 2022.

<sup>i</sup> Damien Hirst, quoted in Gordon Burn, 'Is Mr Death in?', *I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*, London, 2006, p. 7

<sup>ii</sup> Damien Hirst quoted in 'Damien Hirst & Sophie Calle', *Internal Affairs*, (exh. cat.), Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1991, n.p.

<sup>iii</sup> Brian Dillion, 'Ugly Feelings', Damien Hirst, London, 2012, p.23.

<sup>iv</sup> Damien Hirst, 'Wunderkammer', *Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector* (exh. cat.), Barbican, London, 2015

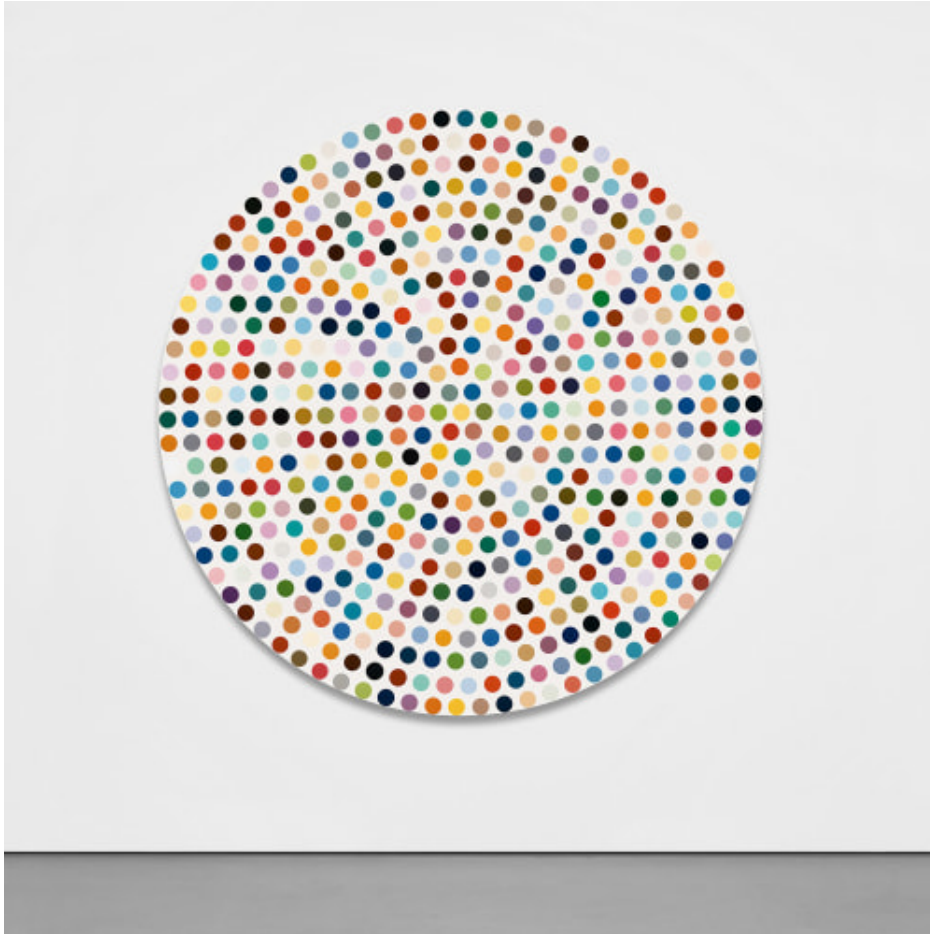
<sup>v</sup> Damien Hirst, quoted in Damien Hirst, Gordon Burn, *On the Way to Work*, London, 2001, p. 21.

## Provenance

White Cube, London  
 Private Collection, Helsinki (acquired from the above in 2009)  
 Phillips, London, 8 March 2018, lot 48  
 Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



38


### Damien Hirst

*Zinc Sulfide*

household gloss on canvas  
diameter 182.9 cm (72 in.)

Executed in 2004.

Estimate

£350,000 — 550,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



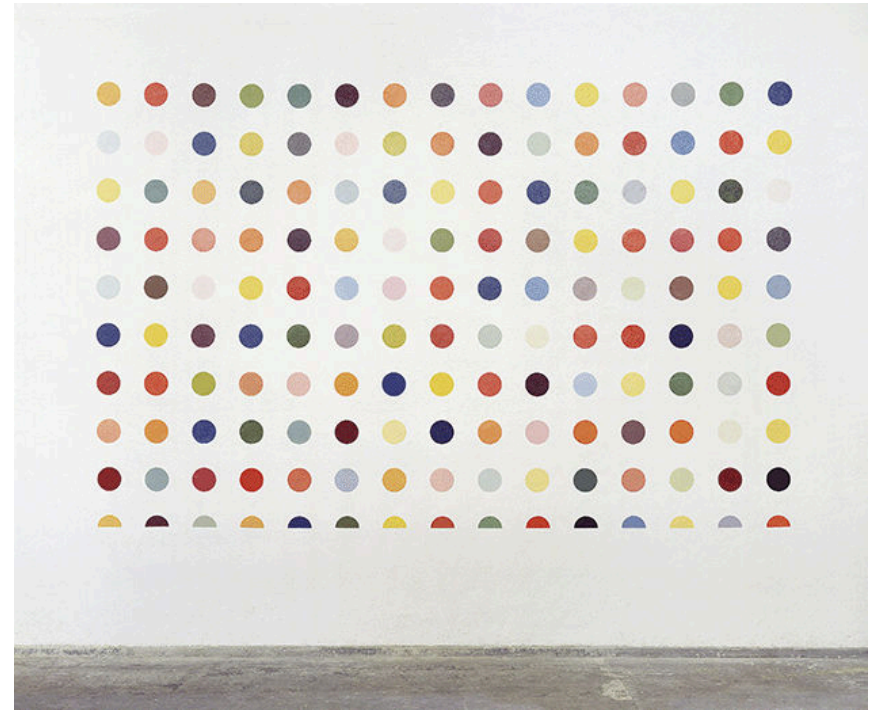


*'I was always a colourist. I've always had a phenomenal love of colour [...] So that's where the Spot paintings came from. It was just a way of pinning down the joy of colour.'* —Damien Hirst

Combining the tondo format of the *Spin Paintings* with the methodical application of precisely formed dots that characterise the iconic *Spot Paintings*, *Zinc Sulphide* is a mesmerising example of one of Damien Hirst's most important and instantly recognisable series. Spanning over a quarter of a century, Hirst's *Spot Paintings* have become synonymous with the artist himself, and have proven to be a remarkably versatile motif, given its strict limitations. Breaking with the more familiar grid-like arrangement of spots along strict vertical and horizontal lines, *Zinc Sulphide* presents the multichromatic spots in a series of concentric circles, radiating out from a central, butter-yellow dot. Meticulously organised, the crisply rendered dots come vividly alive within this tight circular format, exaggerating the optical interplay that is so characteristic of this celebrated series of works.

A sophisticated presentation of the artist's abiding interest in colour and its organisation, *Zinc Sulphide* strikes a balance between art and science that has proven to be an abiding conceptual touchstone for Hirst's practice. Its title appropriately referencing the inorganic compound most commonly used to create pigments and luminescent materials.

## Early Spots



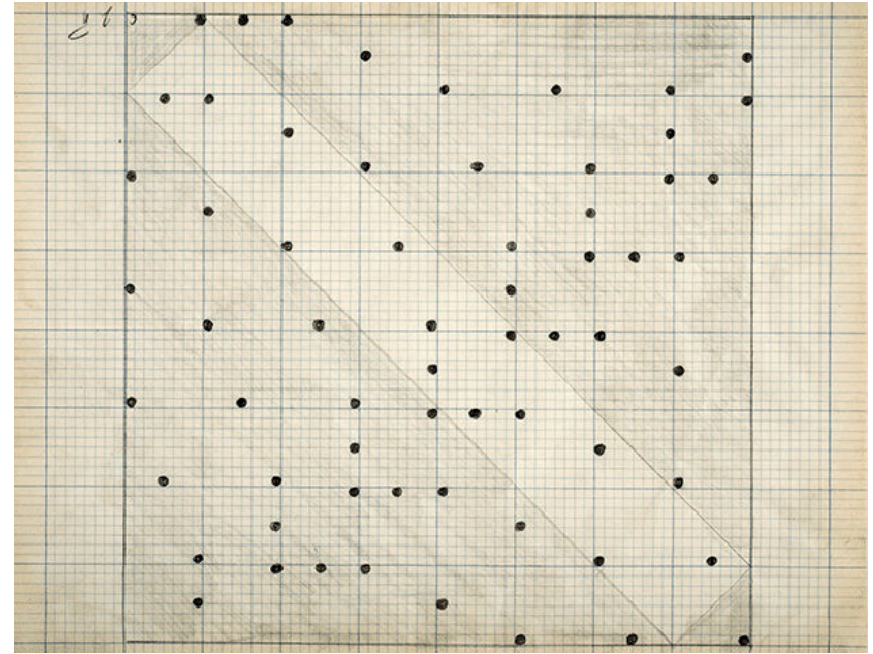
Damien Hirst, *Row*, 1988. Image: Edward Woodman, Artwork: © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/Artimage 2022.

Absolutely foundational to Hirst's oeuvre, the first spots were painted directly onto the Surrey Docks warehouse wall in the final phase of the now legendary *Freeze* exhibition curated by Hirst when he was an undergraduate student at Goldsmiths in 1988. Deeply revealing to the conceptual currents that run across Hirst's entire oeuvre, the artist described this seminal show in terms not so far removed from the *Spot Paintings* themselves explaining: 'I found I could work with already organised elements. And I suppose in *Freeze* the artists were kind of already organised elements in themselves and I arranged them.'<sup>i</sup> As with his slightly earlier *Medicine Cabinets*, Hirst found that setting himself certain limitations – the organising framework of the grid or glass-fronted cabinet; the size and colour of his forms; the number of spots or pills included in each work – generated an infinite variability.

*'The grid-like structure creates the beginning of a system. On each painting no two colours are the same. This ends the system.'* —Damien Hirst

Touching on a legacy of 20th century avant-garde practice that employed chance and randomisation as formative compositional tools, alongside these judiciously maintained limitations Hirst introduced an element of chance into his practice. In the case of the suite of twelve medicine cabinets that Hirst presented for his degree show in 1988, he assigned tracks from the 1977 Sex Pistols album as titles. Stumbling across the catalogue of chemical company Sigma- Aldrich's 'Biochemicals for Research and Diagnostic Reagents', Hirst expanded this principle by assigning titles for works at random, treating the catalogue as a vast and random title-generator perfectly attuned to his vision for the possibly infinite variety of the *Pharmaceutical Paintings*.

Rendered in uniquely mixed hues of household paint no two spots of the same colour appear on any one canvas, with remarkably versatile results. As Hirst quickly discovered with one of the first spot painting's inclusion of a black dot, the colours possessed a remarkable mutability when placed next to one another, some appearing to recede while others jumped forwards in a manner that references Bridget Riley and Larry Poon's foundational Op Art experiments of the 1960s.



Larry Poon, *Untitled*, 1964, Davis Museum and Cultural Centre, Wellesley. Image: © Davis Museum at Wellesley College / Gift of Joan and Roger Sonnabend / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Larry Poon. VAGA, New York / DACS, London 2022

Meticulously spaced so that the gap between each spot is identical to the spot itself, the pattern of *Zinc Sulphide* achieves the remarkable effect of refusing to resolve. As Michael Bracewell describes, 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>ii</sup> Yet, despite this energetic activity, the work achieves an incredible compositional balance and harmony rooted in the methodical, scientific approach to the composition based on a philosophy of chromatic relationships and their manipulation. Despite our attempts to resolve the spots that seems to float and vibrate against one another, our eye struggles to reconcile the tensions established between the colours, a deliberate strategy of the artist who explains: 'If you look closely at any one of these paintings a strange thing happens; because of the lack of repeated colours there is no harmony... in every painting there is a subliminal sense of unease; yet the colours project so much joy it's hard to feel it, but it's there.'<sup>iii</sup>

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## 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*.
- Since 1998 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 Hirschhorn 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> Damien Hirst, quoted in Damien Hirst and Gordon Burn, *On the Way to Work*, London, 2001, p. 124.

<sup>ii</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>iii</sup> Damien Hirst (*I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*, London, 1997, p. 246).

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## Provenance

Rafael Jablonka, Germany (acquired directly from the artist)

Sotheby's, New York, 15 May 2013, lot 474

Acquired at the above sale by the present owner

## Literature

Millicent Wilner and Jason Beard, eds., *The Complete Spot Paintings 1986 - 2011*, New York, 2013, no. 291, p. 844, (illustrated, p. 291)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

39

**Glenn Ligon**

*Figure #24*

signed, titled and dated 'Figure # 24 G Ligon 2009' on  
the reverse

acrylic, silkscreen and coal dust on canvas

152.4 x 121.9 cm (60 x 47 7/8 in.)

Executed in 2009.

**Estimate**

£300,000 — 400,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)





*"To call someone a stranger is to keep them at a certain distance, to deny them the possibility of approaching us and to keep us safe from their plight. In doing so we diminish them and we diminish ourselves. We need, as a society, to go in another direction. We need to go towards "them." —Glenn Ligon*

Executed in 2009, *Figure #24* is a luminous example of Glenn Ligon's text paintings that reference James Baldwin's 1953 essay "Stranger in the Village." This iconic series explores social and personal histories, memory, and representation, revealing the complexities and subtleties of race, language, sexuality, and gender. Ligon gained prominence in the early 1990s as a pioneering artist whose incisive work explored the contemporary American experience utilizing the methods and legacies of modern painting and conceptual art. Though he started his career as an abstract painter, he began incorporating works from the arts, literature, and history into his own practice in the mid-1980s to better articulate his political concerns and his ideas about racial identity and experience, best exemplified in *Figure #24*. Firmly placing African American voices into the canon of American painting, Ligon evokes the monochromatic reductivism of modernism, while retaining a particularly painterly modulation of text which supplants the graphic clarity of forerunners such as Ed Ruscha and Christopher Wool. As noted by Huey Copeland, 'Like it's dark antecedents — say, Malevich's *Black Square* of 1915, or Ad Reinhardt's black paintings of the early '60s — Ligon's [*Stranger series*] summons up death, matter, and the obliterate beyond; it seduces with a certain sleight of hand; it narrativises perception. Yet, in so doing, the work revises these earlier practices with the overlaying scrim of a blackness that is not merely rhetorical, but lived and felt.'<sup>1</sup>



Ad Reinhardt, *Abstract Painting*, 1963, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

In the present work, dark hues and coarse brushstrokes impose layers of text that blend across the canvas in dramatic interplay, creating a shadowy surface that evokes intense feelings of melancholy and uncertainty, as well as a reckoning with one's place in the world. Baldwin's famous essay - the original source material for *Figure #24* - highlights themes that are as poignant today, if not more so, than they were when it was published in 1953: racial identity, prejudice, and historical burden. Following the social justice movement of Black Lives Matter, and with long overdue attention given to police brutality towards African Americans specifically, *Figure #24* gains an even greater resonance and potency today than when it was painted in 2009. Quintessential to

this series reflecting on Black identity are the excerpts of Baldwin's text represented in a claustrophobic arrangement of stenciled letters; indeed, as the text progresses from top to bottom, the letters become illegible as they crowd into one another in a dense network of coal-flecked characters. Ligon has noted, 'I wanted the material that I was using for the paintings to have the same kind of gravitas as the text... [Coal-dust] obscures the text while making it more present and sculptural. There is always that push/pull in the work, of the desire for legibility and disappearance of the text.'<sup>iii</sup> Like predecessors Ed Ruscha or Bruce Nauman, Ligon plays with notions of readability and meaning in language, examining the power and fallibility of words and image.



Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, 1967, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Image: The Philadelphia Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © Bruce

Nauman / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

Continuing his engagement with Baldwin and their shared perspectives as Black, queer men, the series has pioneered a visual metaphor for the fragmented experience of both the African American individual and the achievements of Black artists, who are ceaselessly exoticized and presented as foreign even within their homelands. To execute these *Figure* paintings, Ligon screen-prints words onto a canvas, allowing for smears to reveal imperfections in the letters and alluding to how meaning can slip or evolve; words materialize and recede, resulting in a constantly engaging and deeply affecting experience for the viewer. The density from layering acrylic, silkscreen and coal dust creates an abstracted relief which both presents the reader with a legible text, but ultimately denies him complete understanding. Ligon has always been fascinated with this dichotomy between visibility and invisibility, amplification and obfuscation, particularly in how these polarities relate to the experiences and history of black people and identity politics. The coal powder-dusted surface glimmers as it catches the light, charging the work with a captivating quality, allowing the viewer to mediate on the absence and presence of black entities, while the smudged illegibility of the words alludes to marginalisation and exclusion of African Americans and the empty promise of the American dream.

Ligon's choice of media is extremely carefully considered; the artist explains that coal 'bumped up the physicality of the text, but at the same time obscured the text.... Coal dust is an interesting material for me because it's beautiful; it's a black, shiny material, but it's also a waste product ... leftover from coal processing. I am drawn to it because of all of the contradictory readings it engenders'.<sup>iii</sup> By implementing the detritus to coal dust and elevating it to the fine art of contemporary painting, Ligon creates a unique tension between waste and beauty. Defined by a seductive coarse relief, the letters in the painting blur across the canvas, resulting in an unsettling reading experience as one tries to decipher the text that echoes the intersectional reading of identity and personal experience for Black people in America today. Through the richly worked surface of *Figure #24*, Ligon expands upon the formal legacy of the Western avant-garde and employs a radical abstraction that examines critical questions of identity and visibility.

### Collector's Digest

- The present work was exhibited at Regen Projects II in Santa Monica from 2009 to 2010. As the youngest artist ever to be included in Obama's selection of artworks loaned to the White House, Ligon's work occupies a prominent position in both art historical and cultural terms.
- In addition to sampling writings from James Baldwin, Ligon also quotes from other famed Black writers including Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, and others.

**Glenn Ligon**

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- Together with Thelma Golden, Ligon conceptualized the term ‘Post-Blackness,’ describing it as ‘the liberating value in tossing off the immense burden of face-wide representation, the idea that everything they do must speak to, for, or about the entire race.’
- Ligon’s work has been included in major international exhibitions at esteemed institutions including Tate Liverpool, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

<sup>i</sup> Huey Copeland in (Exh. Cat.), Toronto, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>ii</sup> Glenn Ligon, quoted in Exh. Cat., Toronto, The Power Plant (and travelling), *Glenn Ligon—Some Changes*, 2005, pp. 128-129

<sup>ii</sup> Glenn Ligon quoted in Glenn Ligon: stranger, exh. cat., The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, 2001.

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**Provenance**

The artist

Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Private Collection

Luhring Augustine, New York

Private Collection

White Cube, London

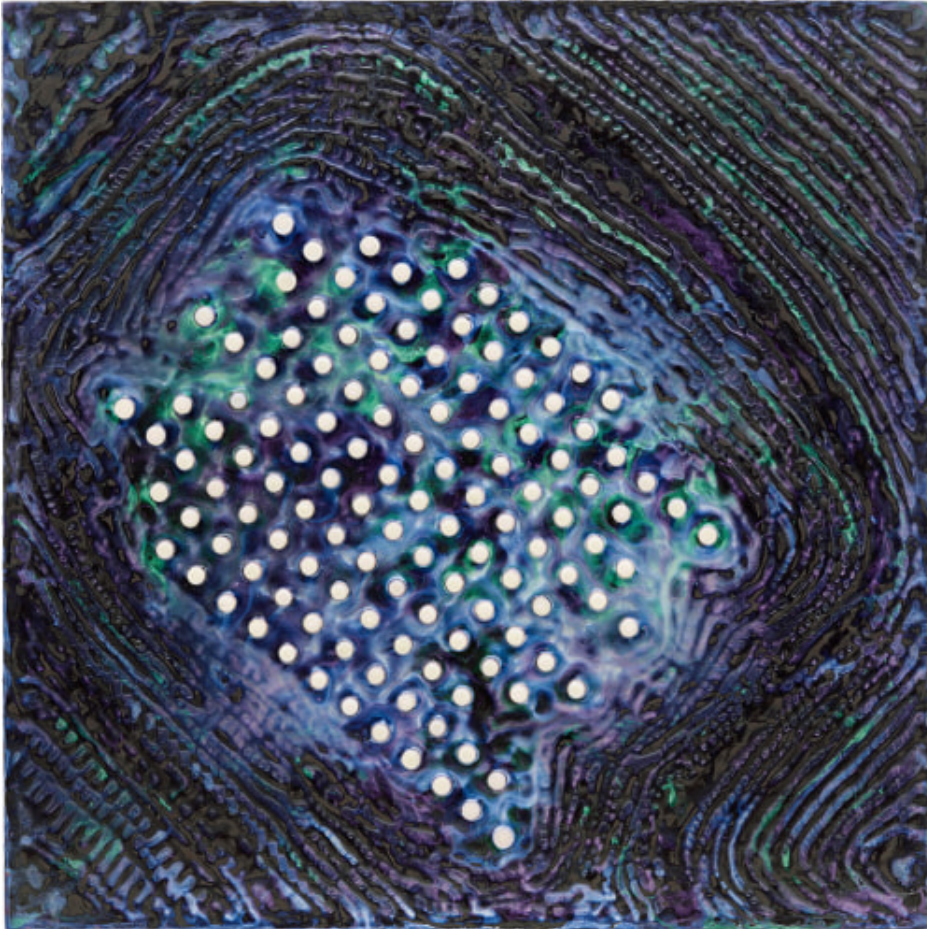
Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

Los Angeles, Regen Projects, *Glenn Ligon: Off Book*, 11 December 2009 - 22 January 2010

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM AN EXCEPTIONAL EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

40

**Jack Whitten**

*Space Busters III*

signed, titled and dated 'SPACE BUSTERS III 2014  
JACK WHITTEN' on the reverse  
acrylic and polyurethane on panel  
121.4 x 121.4 cm (47 3/4 x 47 3/4 in.)  
Executed in 2014.

**Estimate**

£400,000 — 600,000 ‡

[Go to Lot](#)





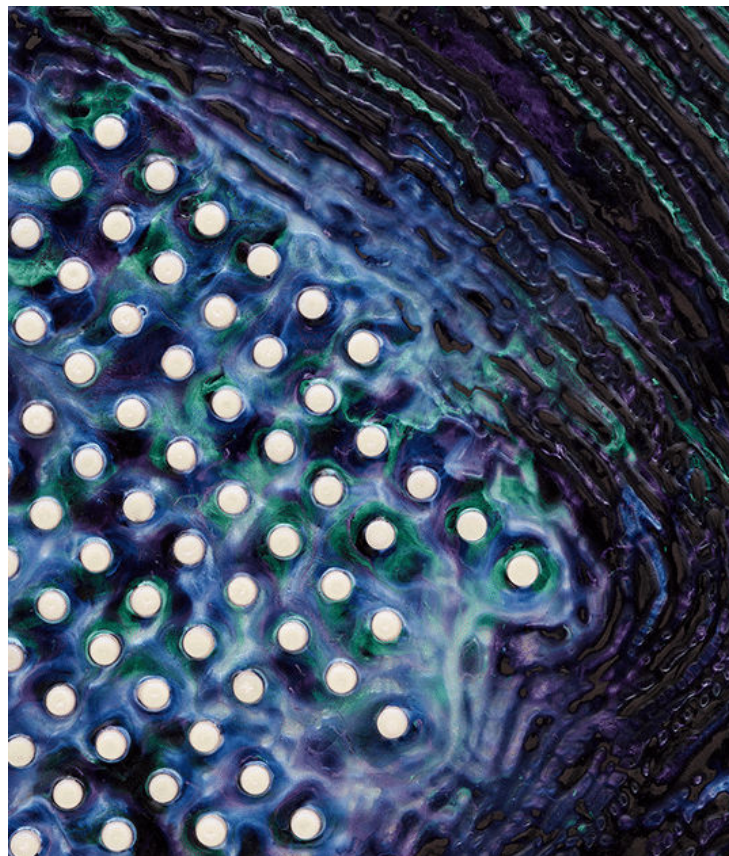
*'Abstraction has enabled me to explore a wide range of knowledge and emotions without depending on narration. My art is an art of materiality. I deal with paint as matter. I do not paint a painting. I make a painting.'* —Jack Whitten

Executed in the twilight years of the artist's radically innovative career, *Space Buster III* exemplifies Jack Whitten's thought-provoking and investigative work. Best known for his abstract canvases, mosaic-like composition, and deep engagement with the legacy of African American history, Whitten will be honoured later this year with an exhibition at Dia Beacon in Beacon New York, which will bring together his landmark series of Greek alphabet paintings from the 1970s. Both a maverick and politically engaged, Whitten's status as a pioneer of contemporary art is frequently reiterated, especially in regard to his relentless technical experimentalism and exploration into the materiality of painting.

### Painting as Process

The present work showcases the painter's often radical experimentation with his medium; having exhausted the possibilities of paint and brush, Whitten departed from traditional applications in the 2010s in favour of more robust and forceful painterly techniques. In 2013 Whitten himself remarked on this artistic departure: 'I cut paint, I laminate paint, I grind paint, I freeze paint, I boil paint ...'<sup>i</sup> In the present work, the interrogation of the limits of paint takes place in tandem with an overtly sculptural process that juxtaposes two and three-dimensional forms to create a composition bursting with the kind of energy the artist employed to veritably shatter the distinctions between painting and sculpture. In the artist's own words: 'My paintings are not painting in the traditional sense of painting a painting. I "make" a painting. They're all done through process, as opposed to painting with a brush. That came out of sculpture. When you're carving wood, you're "making" – cutting, chiselling, grinding, sanding, laminating. All those practices figure into the painting process for me.'<sup>ii</sup>

### Cosmological Jazz



Detail of the present work

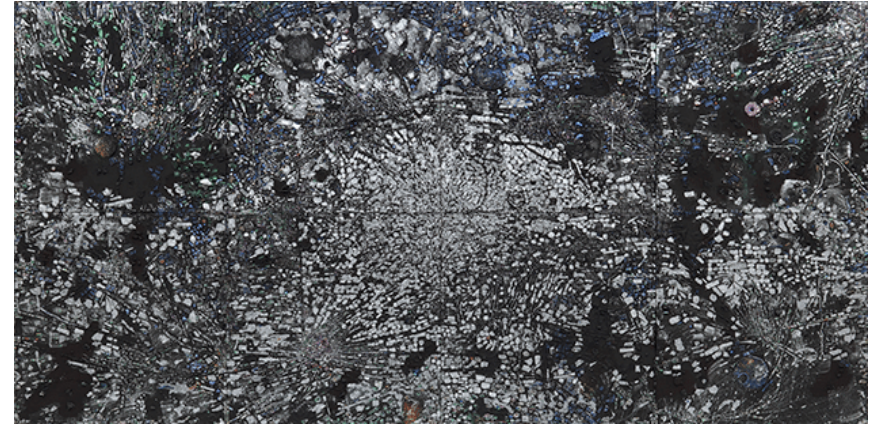
Whitten's deft negotiation between the conventional boundaries of artistic media is beautifully captured in the present work – the 'space' of the flat two dimensions of the canvas being stretched, elevated and finally burst by the sculptural elements of the composition. Whitten's playful interrogation of space is analogous to the experimentation and subversion of what might be his foundational artistic inspiration – Jazz. Noting that 'the person who got me trapped in all of this was John Coltrane', Whitten's own artistic practice bears the hallmarks of crafted improvisation and chromatic alteration characteristic of Jazz music.<sup>iii</sup> In *Space Buster III*, the taut lattice of tiny white

orbs, sculpted by the artist through casting a mixture of polyurethane and acrylic, provides a clean, static structure, or in musical parlance a *composition*, around which an *improvisation* of whorls of inky black, cobalt blue, and jade green paint swirl and oscillate in undulating concentric loops.

The interplay between composition and improvisation, so redolent of Jazz, is captured visually in this work, as is the artist's preoccupation with the cosmological. Indeed, Whitten regarded his position as 'closer to that of a cosmologist' than a modernist painter; rather than being in lockstep to a notion of artistic progress, his focus was on going back through time to reimagine and reconstruct the past in order to better represent the present.<sup>iv</sup> In this way Whitten conceived the role of the artist as analogous to that of the scientist, albeit with an injection of the subversive qualities of the Jazz musician. Whitten's reverence for the ordered forms of nature, as well as the theories that explain them, is evident in *Space Busters III*. Laden with 'tesserae', Whitten's preferred term for the acrylic structures which first appeared in his work of the early 1970s, *Space Busters III* poses hemispheric forms against a backdrop of gaseous nebulae, themselves analogies for the paradoxical operations of Nature where chaos and life unfold according to an axiomatic logic of creation. This astronomical symphony creates a sublimely affecting experience for the viewer achievable only through the artist's mastery of material and paint.

*'I can build anything I want to. I'm not a narrative painter. I don't do the idea or the painting being the illustration of an idea. It's all about the materiality of the paint.'* —Jack Whitten

In seeking the sublime through the manipulation of materials and support, Whitten found contemporary company in peers such as Mark Bradford. Like Whitten, Bradford transforms such trivial materials like fragmented posters, hairdressers' permanent endpapers, and bits of collage into kaleidoscopic maps that bridge the gap between abstraction and representation, painting, and sculpture. *Space Busters III* is the visual expression of the paradoxical relationship between composition and improvisation, between the galactic dimensions of cosmological time and the pixelated detail of its minutely crafted tesserae.



Jack Whitten, *Atopolis: For Édouard Glissant*, 2014, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image: © The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence, Artwork: © The Estate of Jack Whitten. Courtesy the Estate and Hauser & Wirth

Of the limited suite of three *Space Busters* paintings Whitten executed in 2013-2014, the present work features the most complex composition, possessing more than five times the sculpted spheres of paint. The present work is further distinguished by a deeper and more variegated colour palette. In addition to the seafoam green that dominates *Space Busters I* and the dark teal of *Space Busters II*, Whitten here introduces flickers of violet, indigo, and aquamarine, creating a much richer tableau of colour and a greater interplay of abstracted forms.

In its relentless material creativity, *Space Busters III* sprawls across the canvas in an incandescent explosion of form and colour. Among the more mature works executed by the artist in the 2010s, *Space Busters III* epitomizes the dynamism and experimentation for which Whitten is best known.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFVsd450nCU>

Jack Whitten: An Artist's Life, Art21, 'Extended Play'

## Collector's Digest

- Jack Whitten is being honoured later this year with an exhibition at Dia Beacon in Beacon New York; this will be the first-ever exhibition devoted to the artist's Greek Alphabet painting series (executed in 1975-78), and will include 40 paintings from private and institutional collections

(opens November 2022).

- Examples of the artist's oeuvre are included in esteemed museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Tate, and the Art Institute of Chicago.
- Former President Obama awarded Whitten the National Medal of Arts in 2016, just two years after he executed the present work.
- The top 10 prices for the artist at auction have all been achieved in the past 5 years, indicating huge demand for the artist's work.

<sup>i</sup> Jack Whitten, quoted in the 2013 catalogue archive for *Two x Two: For Aids and Art*, online.

<sup>ii</sup> Jack Whitten, quoted in Andy Battaglia, 'Jack Whitten: Abstract Painting's New Heavyweight Artist,' *BlouinArtInfo.com*, 6 February 2013, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Jack Whitten, quoted in Victoria Sung, 'Jack Whitten and the Philosophy of Jazz', *Walker Art Magazine*, 22 September, 2015, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> (<https://www.alexandergray.com/attachment/en/594a3c935a4091cd008b4568/Publication/594a3ceb5a4091cd008b71d1>)

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#### Provenance

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



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### Jean-Michel Basquiat

*Untitled*

watercolour, oil stick, crayon and pencil on paper  
57.2 x 48.3 cm (22 1/2 x 19 in.)

Executed in 1984-1985, this work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Authentication Committee of the Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat.

**Estimate**

£600,000 — 800,000 ±

[Go to Lot](#)





*'[...] black people are never portrayed realistically in... not even portrayed in modern art enough, and I'm glad that I do that. I use the 'black' as the protagonist because I am black, and that's why I use it as the main character in all the paintings.'* —Jean-Michel Basquiat

A succinct presentation of Jean-Michel Basquiat's remarkable ability to distil complex narrative elements into deceptively simple forms, *Untitled* captures the human condition with startling precision. Developing out the enigmatic symbols and simplified forms that Basquiat created as a street artist, Basquiat's figure belies a complex engagement with both myth and the art historical canon, as well as with the human condition itself. Formerly in the esteemed collection of Lio Malca, *Untitled* has only been in two private collections since and comes to market with impeccable provenance. Included in the 2019 exhibition [Jean-Michel Basquiat: Made in Japan](#) at the Mori Arts Centre Gallery in Tokyo, the first full-scale exhibition of the artist's work in the region, *Untitled* offers a uniquely important insight into Basquiat's drawing practice, and his legacy today.

### The Post-Modern Prometheus

Highly energetic, Basquiat's gestural brushwork here has rendered the subject's body with a vigour and tenderness that highlights his deep engagement with sources as disparate as anatomical drawings, African art, and modern painting. Indeed, it was Basquiat's representations of the human form that initially garnered him such widespread acclaim. As Kellie Jones notes, 'Basquiat's canon revolves around single heroic figures: athletes, prophets, warriors, cops, musicians, kings and the artist himself.'<sup>i</sup> The promethean figure here rises triumphantly despite his almost skeletal form; his fragility and his humanity openly evident to the viewer. Basquiat has chosen not to armour his hero with signs and symbols, nor has he adorned him with his signature crown. Instead, Basquiat peels back his figure, revealing the vulnerable soft tissue and organs within. In laying bare the raw physicality of his figure, Basquiat imbues his work with a vivid humanity that is at once both compassionate and evocative of African figurative traditions. The exaggerated cranium, the ordered rows of set teeth and contoured eyes recall the expressive and visually striking designs of African carved masks. The figure is then both a tribute and a rebuke to Western art history; whereas such African figures had so influenced Pablo Picasso amongst others, Basquiat firmly foregrounds the African figurative tradition in the familiar Western trope of the *memento mori*.



Left: Picasso, *Self-Portrait*, 1907, Narodni Galerie, Prague. Image: Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2022 Right: Leonardo da Vinci, *The layers of the scalp compared to an onion and other studies*, c.1490-93, Royal Collection Trust, London. Image: Svintage Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

*Untitled* is one of the most unique works on paper within Basquiat's oeuvre; indeed, few other works on paper compare so closely to Basquiat's paintings, nor indeed do many other fragmented final works exist. Drawing, for the artist, was a compulsive practice, a way of life: 'something you did rather than something done,' Robert Storr once noted, 'an activity rather than a medium'<sup>ii</sup>. As gestural, colourful, and expressive as the artist's best paintings, the present work is stirring both for its painterly prowess as well as its intensity. Bursting with colour, the central figure's kinetic energy spreads across the composition. Bright orange and red brushstrokes cohere in the upper right corner as a comet flares across the sky, a harbinger for the artist's own meteoric rise in contemporary art.

Basquiat executed the present work at the apex of his short, but prodigious career, at a time when he had already received significant recognition in the New York art scene. By 1982, he had exhibited at *Documenta VII*, Kassel and by 1983, was included in the Whitney Biennial, becoming the youngest artist to represent the United States in a major international exhibition of contemporary art. More recently, Basquiat was posthumously honoured with an exhibition at The Brant Foundation in New York, further solidifying the artist's firm position as a master of twentieth-century art. Executed just 3-4 years before the artist's untimely death, the present work

becomes further haunting, as if Basquiat built this fragile body up from oils and oil sticks, arcing a short-lived celestial phenomenon over his hero, and finally tearing the work, prematurely disrupting the figure's life.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Flexible*, 1984, Private Collection; sold by Phillips May 2018 for \$45.3 million.  
Artwork: © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat / ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

## Collector's Digest

- Jean-Michel Basquiat was widely exhibited, even at a very young age; indeed, by 1984-85 –

when the present work was executed – the artist had already exhibited at Documenta VII, Kassel and the Whitney Biennial, becoming the youngest artist to represent the United States in a major international exhibition of contemporary art.

- On the heels of the wildly successful exhibition at The Brant Foundation in 2019, the family of the artist is putting on an immersive exhibition, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: King Pleasure*, opening April 2022 in Chelsea, New York. This exhibition will bring together over 200 rarely seen works and underscores the deep appreciation for the artist today.
- Basquiat is one of the most sought-out after artists in the world today and holds the auction record for an American artist; furthermore, 7 of the artist's top 10 prices at auction have all been achieved in the past 4 years, illustrating the significant demand in the market for the artist's work.

<sup>i</sup> Robert Storr, 'Two Hundred Beats per Min,' in exh. cat., New York, Robert Miller Gallery, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Drawings*, 1990

<sup>ii</sup> Kellie Jones, 'Lost in Translation: Jean-Michel in the (Re)Mix, (exh. cat.), New York, Brooklyn Museum, *Basquiat*, 2005, p. 43)

### Provenance

Collection of Leo Malca, New York  
Private Collection, Hong Kong  
Acquired from the above by the present owner

### Exhibited

Tokyo, Mori Arts Center Gallery, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Made in Japan*, 21 September - 17 November 2019, p. 8 (illustrated)

### Literature

Taka Kawachi, ed., *King for a Decade*, Kyoto, 1997, p. 102 (illustrated)



42

**KAWS**

*THIS IS THE WAY*

signed and dated 'KAWS..14' on the reverse  
acrylic on canvas  
304.8 x 274.3 x 4.4 cm (120 x 108 x 1 3/4 in.)  
Painted in 2014.

**Estimate**

£600,000 — 800,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*'When I was younger, I wasn't going to galleries, I wasn't going to museums ... There was a lot of 'this is fine art' or 'this is not fine art'; 'this is commercial', 'this is high art'. In my mind I thought, art's purpose is to communicate and reach people. Whichever outlet that's being done through is the right one.'* —KAWS

Larger than life and dominated by vibrantly saturated colour, KAWS' monumental work *THIS IS THE WAY* beautifully synthesises the artist's unique blending of art history, pop culture, and contemporary iconography. Over a career spanning 25 years, KAWS has become known for his playful reinterpretation of instantly recognizable characters in 20th and 21st century visual culture, including *The Smurfs*, *The Simpsons*, and more recently, *SpongeBob SquarePants*. Formerly an animator at Disney, Brian Donnelly first chose 'KAWS' as his moniker to tag city streets in the 1990s, and quickly became a celebrated standout in the scene. KAWS' ability to re-examine and manipulate familiar images and characters has created a universally appealing body of work, which is currently being celebrated with a major exhibition blending physical and virtual works together for the first time at the Serpentine Gallery in London.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufNgthQzOFw&t=35sKAWS>

*KAWS and Fortnite collaboration exploring the idea of an exhibition existing in both physical and virtual spaces simultaneously*

In the present work, KAWS juxtaposes snippets and fragments from his cast of appropriated characters, fusing them into a singularly specific reinterpretation of the original source material. This collision of familiar cartoons is simultaneously recognisable and jarringly unfamiliar. The central figure's silhouette evokes the shapes of Garfield and Odie, two beloved animals from the American comic strip originally published in the late 1970s. Cartoon characterises abound: from the simplified triangular cat ears to the odd but universally accepted cartoon trope of a four-fingered hand, one gesturing outwards while the other rests jauntily on Garfield's hip in the character's characteristically sassy stance. Garfield's sidekick Odie appears in the L-shaped snout-like protrusion to the lower left, the outline of which also evokes the profile of the beloved muppet, Gonzo. 'The Great Gonzo' product of Jim Henson's broad imagination, is best known in the series for his eccentricity as well as the ambiguity of his character, a quality that KAWS cleverly fuses into his central figure. Upon closer examination, Odie's ears resolve into Gonzo's nose which then emerges as Squidward, the cantankerous cephalopod of *SpongeBob SquarePants* fame. As has become his trademark, KAWS replaces the character's eyes with large crosses, imparting a sinister and layered depth to otherwise vapid characters. These 'X' eyes appear both in the distorted visage of Squidward that has been superimposed on the lower half of the figure, as well as the partially covered KURF – KAWS' reimagination of *The Smurfs*. The rich blue body adorned with the little white hat – usually identified as a Smurf – has become so appropriated by the artist as to become a trademark image.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-RDGT5Lsp8>

Opening Credits, *The Smurfs*, 1981

Exemplifying KAWS' ability to conjure the precision of commercial fabrication, this central figure appears as flat and evenly rendered as the source characters do on the television screen or newspaper comics. Graphically, the shapes and colours of these varied cartoons remain recognizable, evidencing the artist's unique capacity to transcend the gaps between pop culture, language, and contemporary iconography; however, by obliterating the oversized eyes with his trademark 'X' symbols, KAWS introduces an ambivalent psychologically distanced counterpart to these usually cheery cartoons.

Uncanny and ominous in equal measure, *THIS IS THE WAY* presents a wealth of cultural references that highlights the depth of KAWS' engagement with the legacies of Pop Art. Heir to the likes of Jasper Johns, Claes Oldenburg, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Ed Ruscha, KAWS presents his audience with imagery that, although recognisable, becomes unfamiliar. In this way KAWS is able to masterfully tip the balance between the innocence and play typically associated with childhood cartoons, and a distinctive sense of unease. The fragmented bodies recall such influences as disparate as the Surrealists' beloved game 'Exquisite Corpse' and Jean Dubuffet's snipped and collaged works from the 1960s and 1970s; indeed, the quotation and cutting of various figures in Dubuffet's *L'hourloupe* series directly prefigures the collision of cartoons in *THIS IS THE WAY*. Germano Celant writes, 'By giving the comics a new face, the artist seems to aspire to update their past, which is not simply playful and lyrical, but can also be frightening and deathly. Hence the masks with "sewn" eyes that do not look ahead but inside at their own stories.'<sup>i</sup>





Jean Dubuffet, *Untitled*, 1963, Private Collection. Image: © Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2022

Commanding in scale and arresting in its vibrant tonality and universally legible pictorial content, *THIS IS THE WAY* successfully dissolves the purported distinctions between fine art and mass media, culture both high and low, and exemplifies the highly accessible art for which KAWS has become best known. Furthermore, by collapsing the space between the art historical canon and contemporary culture, the present work exemplifies Michael Auping's observation that 'KAWS is not just referring to pop culture, he is making it.'<sup>ii</sup> The title itself seems to conform to this reading, speaking to the future KAWS sees for his own practice, as well as the unknown directions in which art, pop culture, and the saturation of visual media will take us in the future. Forming part of KAWS' shrewdly referential iconographic repertoire, *THIS IS THE WAY* typifies the visual vocabulary with which the artist has solidified his position as a preeminent figure of neo-Pop, alongside such artists as Jeff Koons and Takashi Murakami.

## Collector's Digest

- Born in New Jersey in 1974, KAWS's interest in art was shaped by his engagement with skateboarding and graffiti subcultures. Graduating from the New York School of Visual Arts in 1996, KAWS worked as an animator for Jumbo Pictures. It was during this period where he had tagged the advertising posters found at bus stops on the streets of New York with crossed bones and 'X's for eyes. His interest in appropriating existing iconography to confront the viewer with the familiar, made strange, soon prompted him to revisit well-known characters from popular culture, reconceptualising their forms as he translates them into the realm of fine art.
- Now celebrated as one of the most innovative artists of his generation, work by KAWS can be found in prominent public collections around the world, including the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, and the Rosenblum Collection in Paris.
- In addition to extensive solo exhibitions around the globe such as the 2021 [KAWS: SPOKE TOO SOON](#), at Skarstedt in New York, KAWS's practice has most recently been honoured with a solo exhibition, the ongoing [KAWS: NEW FICTION](#) at the Serpentine Gallery, London. This pioneering presentation aims to create an exhibition experience that exists in both physical and virtual worlds simultaneously. KAWS also recently exhibited a monumental retrospective in his hometown, [KAWS: WHAT PARTY](#), which was hosted by the Brooklyn Museum in New York earlier last year.

<sup>i</sup> Germano Celant, 'BD and K', *KAWS: 1993-2010*, (exh. cat.), Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 2010, p. 55

<sup>ii</sup> Michael Auping, 'America's Cartoon Mind,' *KAWS: WHERE THE END STARTS*, (exh. cat.), Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, 2017, p. 63.

### Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner

### Exhibited

Málaga, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, *Respect*, 26 June - 4 October 2015

Madrid, Galería Javier López, *KAWS: PLAY YOUR PART*, 20 February - 11 April 2014

### Literature

*FINAL DAYS*, exh. cat., Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, 2015, p. 37 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED PRIVATE  
COLLECTION

43

### Serge Attukwei Clottey

*Glow girl*

signed and dated 'Attukwei Clottey 2021' on the  
reverse

oil and duct tape on cork board  
193 x 124.5 cm (75 7/8 x 49 in.)

Executed in 2020-2021.

**Estimate**

£30,000 — 40,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I'm always looking at how materials can significantly influence a work, and how it fits in the ideas I explore [...] instead of using paint to design the dresses of the characters, I use a material, [like duct tape] that will let me cut and join materials like the designers, tailors and seamstresses do in their shops and fashion houses.'*  
—Serge Attukwei Clotney

Fashion, fabric, and its ability to make and remake identity lies at the heart of Accra-based Serge Attukwei Clotney's interdisciplinary practice. Working across painting, performance, installation, photography, and sculpture Clotney explores the powerful agency of everyday objects, and the ways in which they intersect with personal and collective histories. Belonging to the artist's ongoing series of *Duct Tape Paintings* first presented at the 2020 exhibition *Beyond Skin* hosted by Simchowitz Gallery in Los Angeles, *Glow Girl* is a bold and beautiful illustration of Clotney's experimental approach to materials, and his ability to charge them with meaning and significance in his graphically simple yet highly striking portraits of African self-possession.

### The Importance of Materials

Composed from carefully selected strips of duct-tape arranged across cork boards, *Glow girl*, makes powerful use of everyday objects, notably the playful inclusion of a tape measure trim that edges the central figure's blouse. A prominent feature of Clotney's practice more broadly, repurposed materials form the conceptual foundation for his 'Afrogallionism' movement. Drawing attention to global inequalities and the geopolitical ethics of consumerism, Clotney describes the movement as an 'artistic intervention', whereby Clotney and his community-based arts collective GoLokal use reclaimed materials to create elaborate costumes and sculptural assemblages in their politically charged installation and performances. Of particular significance are the ubiquitous yellow jerrycans, originally intended for importing oil and now a potent symbol of water scarcity in the region. Clotney's sustained engagement with the discarded material draws together a discussion about the origins and management of plastic waste in Ghana with the complex legacies of colonialism.

*'If I can make people think with my work, break down those stereotypes, then perhaps more change will come.'* —Serge Attukwei Clotney

Similarly, the duct tape and cork used to such novel effect here are rooted in the politics and lived experience of the region. Sometimes used as a tool of oppression and violence against the Black

body, Clotney's use of duct tape is pointed. In using it to create the bold and highly patterned attire of the three women in *Glow girl*, the artist transforms the material into a symbol of pride, self-determination and protection as it traces, celebrates and works with their bodies rather than used against them. Referencing the community notice boards that operate as important sites of exchange and transmission of information for the good of Clotney's local community in Accra, the cork boards are highly symbolic and emotionally resonant objects for the artist. Moreover, in their warmth, textural qualities and specific tone 'which can change with exposure to the sun [cork] mimics the look of Black skin'.<sup>i</sup>



Detail of the present work

### Fashion and Performance

Fabric and costume also occupy a central place in Clotney's performance practice, a fascination with the aesthetics of display that extends into his multi-media portraits, as is evident in the bright, bold use of pattern, colour contrasts, and confident exuberance of *Glow girl*. In 2016, Clotney and members of his collective took to the streets dressed in the clothes traditionally worn by Ghanaian women, including stunning examples of the handwoven Kente cloth which holds a special significance for the Ashanti people. Titled *My Mother's Wardrobe* this procession performance addressed gendered traditions existing around death and inheritance in Ghana whereby Clotney, as an only son, was not allowed to inherit his mother's wardrobe. A protest against tradition, it also highlighted entrenched ideas about gender and sexuality within that society. Drawing attention to the ways in which fabrics act as a very literal form of material history, in *Glow girl* Clotney uses the proximity of textiles and fashion to identity and the construction of the self as a vehicle for challenging cultural norms.



In their vibrant blend of Ghanaian tradition and 70s cool, the three women in *Glow girl* remain fully in command of their own image. Radiating confidence and a self-possessed sensuality in their exaggerated poses and outrageously loud outfits, the figures recall the ‘cool realism’ pioneered by Barkley L. Hendricks’ portraits which brought ‘the attitude of musicians [...], the iconic style of old-world European painting, and the everyday Black folks he knew from the neighbourhood’ together in his own, unique visual style. Sharing in the same vivid sense of colour and bold presentation of the figure, both Hendricks and Clotey show a keen understanding for the visual language of fashion, and the historical uses that it has been put to, appropriating these symbols as powerfully expressive tools for the representation of Black identity.

Engaging with a specifically West African history of visual and material culture, Clotey’s portraits also take cues from mid-century black and white photographs as means not only of rethinking the past through the lens of the present, but of scrutinising the legacy of colonialism and interrogating embedded notions of gender and sexuality in the present day. In its emphasis on pattern and contrast, *Glow girl* particularly draws on the work of mid-century Malian photographers Seydou Keita and Malick Sidibé, Sanlé Sorly, and fellow Ghanaian James Barnor, whose combination of street and studio photography spanning the middle decades of the century introduced the world to a culturally vibrant Africa in the process of redefining itself on its own terms. Employing bold fabrics with vibrant, contrasting patterns these photographs provide a clear visual touchstone for Clotey’s compositional arrangement, juxtaposition of pattern, and playful confusion of the spatial relationships between figure and ground. More pressingly though, in redefining the African subject outside of the gaze of the coloniser in joyous and artful ways, these mid-century photographs align with Clotey’s highly articulate interest in the role played by social media in shaping the stories that young Africans tell about themselves, their communities, and their continent.



Seydou Keita, *Untitled*, 1952 – 55, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Image: © Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Museum purchase funded by Joan Morgenstern in honor of Louis Lechenger / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © Seydou Keita/SKPEAC - Courtesy The Jean Pigozzi African Art Collection

### Collector’s Digest

- Based in Accra, Ghana, Serge Attuwkwei Clotey is one of the region’s most significant contemporary artists who works across various mediums in his exploration of ideas around migration, identity, materiality, and the environment.



- Receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Brighton in 2019, Clotney has exhibited widely internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include Gallery 1957 in both London and Accra, Simchowitz Gallery in Los Angeles, Feuer/Mesler in New York and Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium Foundation, Oslo.

- In October 2021 Clotney's first duct-tape painting was presented at Phillips 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale where it sold for more than 10 times its low estimate.

<sup>i</sup> *Beyond Skin* press release, Simchowitz Gallery, 2021, online.

<sup>ii</sup> Antwaun Sargent, Rarely Seen Barkley Hendricks Paintings Show Early Talent as Portraitist of "Black Cool", *Artsy*, 16 August 2017, [online](#).

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#### Provenance

Simchowitz, Los Angeles

Acquired from the above by the present owner

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE EUROPEAN  
COLLECTION

44

### **Tschabalala Self**

*Chandelier 2*

signed and dated 'Tschabalala Self 2017' on the overlap  
gouache, pencil, Xerox, paper, plastic, oil, acrylic and  
Flashe on canvas

173 x 128 cm (68 1/8 x 50 3/8 in.)

Executed in 2017.

**Estimate**

£100,000 — 150,000 †

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I try to communicate with my characters a sense of complete freedom [...] They are free bodies, and they have total control over who has access.'* —Tschabalala Self

At once grounded and ebullient, Tschabalala Self's *Chandelier 2* is a statement and a celebration of Black female embodiment; of subjectivity defined on its own terms and in its limitless capacity for growth, change, and self-determination. Occupying the centre of the composition, a woman stands beneath the narrow shaft of light cast by the titular chandelier. Casting a striking shape against the canvas, her raised leg and pointed toes are elegantly counterbalanced by the exaggerated arch of her back as she throws her head back in abandon. Framed by a rhythmic series of overlapping squares boldly executed in a controlled palette of yellows, off-white, and a vibrant slice of orange, the composition takes on a highly dramatic quality that is further emphasised by the painting's impressive scale and the figure's contorted pose outlined by a heavy shadow.

What the artist has described elsewhere as a 'phantom appendage', the prominent shadow here embodies something of the character's personality rather than her physical reality. A vibrant example of Self's tendency to treat her figures as 'icons' or 'avatars', it dramatically emphasises and works with the figure 'to hold and retain overarching ideas about particular lived experience.'<sup>i</sup>

Directly drawing on a visual language of performance, Self seems to be making a more nuanced point here about the politics of self-representation and the historical objectification of Black women in visual culture and beyond. Exaggerating certain features including the figure's hair, breast, and buttocks, Self uses this shadow form to draw attention to the ideas and expectations projected onto the Black female body, radically resisting this objectification through the figure's joyous reclamation of her body and her image on her own terms. As the artist elucidates: 'My work does not comment on stereotypes and generalizations about the black female body, my practice absorbs these fantasies. The work is celebratory because one must thrive despite destructive rhetoric.'<sup>ii</sup>

Just as the small and humble light fitting can be reimagined as a grandiose chandelier or theatrical spotlight so too - Self seems to be suggesting - can women step out of the narrow identities ascribed to them and reimagine themselves in bold new configurations of their own design. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this performative element has only intensified in Self's practice, most recently in the debut of her first theatrical piece, *Sounding Board*, at Performa 2021 to widespread critical acclaim.



Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach 2*, 1990, Philadelphia Museum of American Art. Image: Philadelphia Museum of Art; Purchased with funds contributed by W. B. Dixon Stroud, 1992, 1992-100-1, Artwork: © Faith Ringgold / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

## Making and Mothers

*'I feel like my relationship to making, both formally and conceptually, are both inspired by my mother.'* —Tschabalala Self

Born in Harlem, New York in 1990, Self works across a range of media, creating compositions that combine painting and drawing alongside more non-traditional materials. Charged with

autobiographic significance, the materials that she uses include hand-printed and sewn scraps of found textiles, pieces of her own canvases cut up and recombined, and – most poignantly – pieces of patterned fabric that had belonged to her mother. A seamstress during her lifetime, Self's mother amassed an enormous collection of patterned fabrics, a resource that the artist turned to after her death. Using her mother's old sewing machine, the artist began to layer these different materials and textures on the canvas, a practice alluded to here in the vibrant collaged elements and the patchwork quality that they generate.

Poetic parallels can be drawn between the cutting, shaping and stitching together of these disparate materials and the complex intersections of identity itself, something that the artist deliberately draws on as certain material elements reappear like echoes across canvases that might be separated by years. Deftly interweaving the personal with the political, Self draws on her own history and the entrenched associations of textiles to women and 'women's work' in order to create highly charged objects that eloquently explore attitudes to race and gender in the 21st century. In this respect, her highly textured paintings recall Faith Ringgold's painted story quilts, and their powerful combination of personal narratives, politics, and history – an artist who Self cites as a particular formative influence growing up in Harlem.



Jacob Lawrence, *Builders #1*, 1972, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri. Image: © Saint Louis Art Museum / Eliza McMillan Trust / Bridgeman Images, Artwork: © The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation

/ Art Resource, New York / DACS, London 2022

The youngest of five children, Self was exposed to the arts at a young age, absorbing a wide range of visual influences, including that of pioneering American modernist Jacob Lawrence. Known for his visionary paintings focused on celebrations of Black creativity, labour, and craftsmanship, Lawrence focused his attention on exposing and celebrating the lives of those pushed to the margins of mid-century American society. This is particularly apparent in a work like the 1972 *Builders #1*, which bears comparison to *Chandelier 2* not only in its pronounced narrative force, but also in its compositional structure and the large, flat zones of bold colour so characteristic of his distinctive pictorial language. As Self explains in more detail: 'I call the works painting because they're using a painting language. They're on canvas, they're stretched, and, also, I think my understanding of a painting is one of color relationships or the relationship between different objects on a pictorial plane. If you're using actual paint or using objects or items that have embedded colour and assembling them like an assemblage, I think that it can still constitute as a painting. It's conceptually brought up as a painting, and it's using the same materials that are traditionally used in painting.'<sup>iii</sup>

Bristling with a highly compelling sense of feminine machismo and self-possession, Self's unnamed figure takes on a more universal identity, a celebration of self-embodiment that chimes with Self's desire to develop a more robust and celebratory rhetoric around identity. As the artist succinctly describes 'It is the space I occupy in the world, that is the body I came from. It is who I am and who my mother was. The more sincere a story you can articulate, the more people have access to it.'

### Collector's Digest

- Having exhibited works in major international art centres including London, New York, Berlin, and Los Angeles, in 2020 Self was the subject of a major solo exhibition – her largest to date – at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston.
- Examples of her work can be found in the collections of the Ruebell Museum, Miami, the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.
- In 2020, Phillip's also introduced Tschabalala Self to auction in our 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale in March 2019.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax5PpkVw8zU>

Tschabalala Self discussing her studio practice ahead of her solo exhibition at the Institute of



**Tschabalala Self**

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Contemporary Arts, Boston in 2020.

<sup>i</sup> Tschabalala Self, discussing her studio practice ahead of her solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston in 2020, [online](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Tschabalala Self, quoted in '5 Questions with Tschabalala Self, *Elephant*, 16 January 2017, [online](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Tschabalala Self, 'On not being afraid of hard work: in conversation with Brandon Stosuy', *The Creative Independent*, originally published 30 June 2017, [online](#).

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**Provenance**

Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York

Private Collection

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Literature**

'10 Female Artists To Watch', *Elle Magazine*, 9 May 2017, online (illustrated)

Brandon Stosuy, 'On not being afraid of hard work', *The Creative Independent*, 30 June 2017, online (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### Georg Baselitz

*Torso Frau*

signed, titled and dated 'G. Baselitz' 19.IV.98 Torso

Frau' on the reverse

oil on canvas

200 x 162 cm (78 3/4 x 63 3/4 in.)

Painted in 1998.

Estimate

£400,000 — 600,000 <sup>†</sup>▲

[Go to Lot](#)



*'At a certain point I had this idea to bring a completely different and radical point of view to painting: to put the paintings upside down, to get away from the idea of realistic depiction and to focus on painting itself.'* —Georg Baselitz

In its depiction of a sensuously rendered female figure set against a delicately adorned lavender ground, Georg Baselitz's *Torso Frau* represents a unique and lyrical moment in a career spanning six decades. Perhaps best known for his series of 'Hero' paintings, in which his roughly hewn male warriors bristle with post-war angst and gladiatorial presence, Baselitz here presents an extremely rare and more serene female subject in a moment of meditative repose. *Torso Frau* sits at a crucial moment in the artist's career in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in which Baselitz began looking to more expressionist brushwork and folkloric source material, here incorporating a fabric-like pattern to anchor his female figure. Departing from his previous focus on human representation and investigation of the relationship between figure and ground, Baselitz became increasingly interested in colour, shape, line and brushstroke. Executed on a larger-than-life scale and shifting between figuration and abstraction *Torso Frau* represents a high note in Baselitz's treatment of the inverted figure, his highly celebrated series strongly represented in his landmark solo exhibition in 1990, and again more recently in the retrospective hosted by Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou which closed earlier this year.

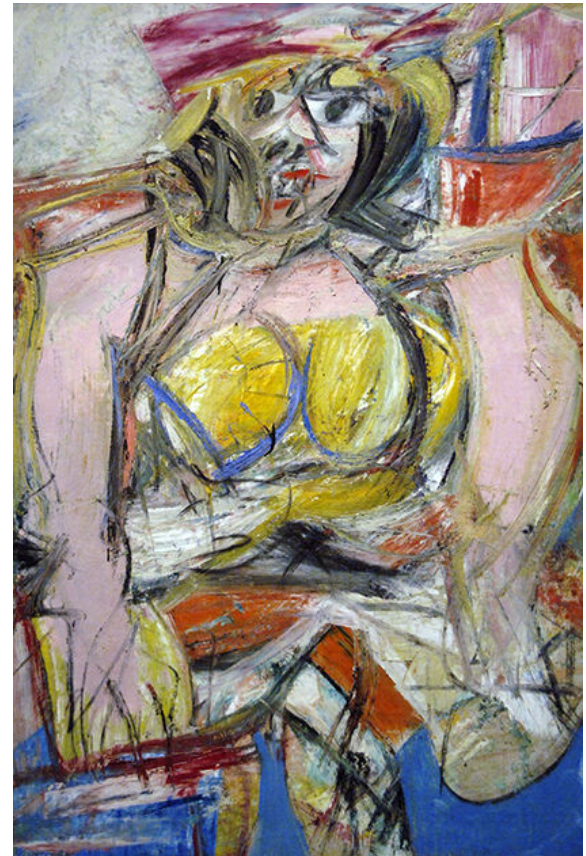
Since the 1960s, Baselitz has interrogated and reshaped the tradition of figurative painting again and again: fracturing his 'Heroes,' inverting his sitters, and exaggerating and distorting the human form. In the present work, Baselitz reprises his best-known corpus of inverted figures with chromatic brilliance and abandon. The artist's search for renewal in a devastated post-war Europe pointed him to Norwegian painter Edvard Munch, from whom he took great influence and inspiration. Finding a mutual interest in psychological mutilation and anxiety, Baselitz - like Munch - became fascinated with art's power to symbolize feelings and states of mind.



Edvard Munch, *Girl Crying IV*, 1907, Munch-Museet, Oslo. Image: akg-images

Baselitz's deep appreciation for his Expressionist and Symbolist forbear is best understood by the energetically rendered figures that dominate the artist's output of the 1980s; by that time, Baselitz had introduced his signature inverted figure, physically and psychologically displacing his subjects in a reflection of the contemporary human condition. Of the artist's uncanny ability to delve into our minds and mental states, Kevin Powers writes: 'Baselitz's art is not one of strategies but of aggravated history. It is his story, his way of taking a "measure" of our times. He feels his way through sensations, memories, pain, through the present, and through the past. This is his primordial "paste." He makes us aware of our own passionate existence and extends us beyond what we know of ourselves.'<sup>1</sup>

Set against this ethereal, gossamer ground, the inverted figure of *Torso Frau* takes on a distinctly sculptural and almost mythic presence. Distinguished by the tender treatment of the subject suspended in this lavender landscape, the present work brings together the traditions of figurative and abstract painting in a lush resolution of colour and pattern. Calligraphic dashes of burgundy paint torque and twist into themselves, recalling flowers, hieroglyphs, and calligraphic characters. Spaced regularly across a gossamer backdrop of light plums and violets, these floral marks resolve into an ornamental pattern that exemplifies the inspiration and delight Baselitz took from embroidered silks and folk art. Beneath the sensual and sculpted form of the torso, this tapestry of prismatic purple appears to billow and shift; she is Eve, the Woman of Willendorf, the Madonna, and Mother Nature, the archetypal female figure and the origin of the world. Recalling the forceful abstraction of de Kooning's nudes, Baselitz builds the body from gestural brushstrokes of raw pigment, juxtaposing fleshy tonality with vibrant green and orange. The vigorous abandon and battle-readiness of his heroes have here been replaced with a tranquillity and soft beauty extremely unique within the artist's painterly practice.



Willem de Kooning, *Woman IV*, 1952 – 53, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas. Image: akg-images / Album / Prisma, Artwork: © Willem de Kooning Revocable Trust/ARS, NY and DACS, London 2022

Over twenty years old, *Torso Frau* remains a significant and strikingly modern work, characteristics that exemplify the very best of Baselitz's oeuvre. The artist's need to forge his own type of artistic production cannot be understood outside the context of Germany's post-war landscape. Raised in the austerity of communist East Germany, Baselitz moved to West Germany before the erection of the Berlin Wall; distanced from the ethos of East Germany's dominant Social Realist style, Baselitz had the freedom to delve into the Abstract Expressionist trends more prevalent in the West. The artist, however, found himself uninspired by either and instead identified as an outsider. Indeed, this sense of psychological distance and isolation haunts the figure of *Torso Frau*, her body detached



from any identifiable location and instead floating against the flattened space of an abstracted world.

It is this disruption and rejuvenation of the art historical canon that sets Baselitz apart; dissatisfied with traditions and contemporary styles, Baselitz instead forges his own path, destabilizing the techniques of figurative painting and forcing representation and abstraction together. Norman Rosenthal writes: 'Standing within the long tradition of German art, and using time-honoured media, Baselitz has striven constantly to confront the realities of history and art history, to make them new and fresh in a manner that can only be described as heroic; heroic because his art has consciously gone against the grain of fashion, while always remaining modern. For Baselitz, the artist must be always an outsider, a worker and also, in a certain sense, a prince.'<sup>ii</sup>

## Collector's Digest

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

<sup>i</sup> Kevin Power, 'Hanging Between Analysis and Chaos,' (exh. cat.), *Hammergreen: New Paintings by Georg Baselitz* London, Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1991, pp. 5-6.

<sup>ii</sup> Norman Rosenthal, 'Why the Painter Georg Baselitz is a Good Painter,' (exh. cat.), Baselitz, London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2007, p. 15.

## Provenance

Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London  
 Robert and Ann Fisher, United Kingdom (acquired from the above in 1999)  
 Olyvia Fine Art, London (2013-2014)  
 Michael Hall Collection, Palm Beach  
 Acquired from the above by the present owner

## Exhibited

London, Anthony d'Offay Gallery, *Georg Baselitz. New Paintings*, 19 March - 24 March 1999, no. 5, pp. 26, 39 (illustrated, p. 27)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

London Auction / 3 March 2022 / 4pm GMT



PROPERTY FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,  
NEW YORK, SOLD TO BENEFIT THE ACQUISITIONS  
FUND

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### Renato Guttuso

*Aranceto Notturmo*


signed 'Guttuso' lower right

oil on canvas

140.3 x 230.8 cm (55 1/4 x 90 7/8 in.)

Painted in 1957.

Estimate

£70,000 — 100,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*'For us today [realism] means reclaiming the most elementary means of figurative expression, to represent a reality that is clear and recognisable to all, and to express that reality in the most complete way.'* —Renato Guttuso

A testament to its arresting visual power and art historical importance, Renato Guttuso's *Aranceto Notturmo* comes to auction with exceptional provenance, coming directly from the highly distinguished collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

## Introducing Guttuso



Renato Guttuso smoking, photographed by Mario De Biasi in the 1960s Image: akg-images / Mondadori Portfolio / Mario De Biasi, Artwork: © DACS, 2022

Known for his highly identifiable brand of expressionist realism, Renato Guttuso remains one of Italy's most highly esteemed post-war painters, giving form to a generation's struggles in the face of Fascist oppression and the destruction wrought by World War II. A committed communist and even elected to the senate for the Communist Party of Italy later in his life, Guttuso believed fervently in the social dimensions of art, of its power to reflect the lived reality of the working

classes and to effect real political change.

Growing up in the shadow of World War I, the southern Italy of Guttuso's childhood was one marked by poverty and political upheaval, a stark social reality counterpointed against the richly saturated colours and abundance of natural beauty of everyday life in Sicily. Virulently anti-fascist, Guttuso's depiction of sometimes politically incendiary subjects earned him a place with the *Corrente* group who 'harboured a cultural resistance to the fascist regime that prefigured the armed resistance in which a number of its members would later participate.'<sup>i</sup> Veering away from the perceived elitism associated with abstraction, Guttuso developed his own, distinctive brand of realism, one which overlapped with the aims and execution of the dominant *Novecento* group, although he rejected their stricter neoclassicism in favour of a more expressionistic use of line and heavily saturated Mediterranean palette which would prove to be hugely influential in shaping the artistic currents of Italian art in the immediate post-war period.

Bold, brightly coloured and executed on a large scale, *Aranceto Notturmo* is typical of the artist's accessible style and his celebration of the landscape and everyday lives of southern Italy and its people. Although his name is often associated with his more overtly political canvases that draw heavily on Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* in their stylised presentation of human vulnerability and suffering, Guttuso's painterly foundations are rooted in his native landscape, the artist even commenting later in life that his deepest inspiration was found 'in my childhood, my people, my peasants [...] the gardens of lemons and oranges'.<sup>ii</sup>

## The Legacy of Cézanne

*'Even a dream, a fairy tale or a feeling can have a figurative representation, as long as they are depicted through the representation of people, nature, concrete things without being misinterpreted.'* —Renato Guttuso

Richly painted in a flurry of precisely fragmented brushstrokes in alternating flashes of electric blue, deep, mossy greens, limes, and of course the bold, bright orbs of orange edged in white, *Aranceto Notturmo* is a dramatic example of Guttuso's technical virtuosity and skill. Strikingly contemporary, these thickly painted passages move almost into abstraction, so immersed are we in the thick foliage of the tangled orange grove. Evoking the dense heat and sweet smells of a Sicilian evening, the composition is anchored by the crenulations of the overlapping terracotta roof tiles in the upper left-hand side of the canvas, bringing to mind one of the artist's most frequently employed motifs: [the rooftop views out across Palermo](#).





Left: Detail of the present work. Right: Hurvin Anderson, *Grafting*, 2015, © Hurvin Anderson. All Rights Reserved, DACS/Artimage 2022

Drawing on the stacked and simplified geometries of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso's early Cubist [landscapes at l'Estaque](#), in these canvases, Guttuso demonstrates a remarkable compositional control, flattening his picture plane and piling its internal elements tightly against it. While aspects of this organisational schema remain in the present work, Guttuso's handling of paint seems looser and more confident here, referring back beyond Cubism to the volumetric weight and solidity of Paul Cézanne's still lifes, where the earliest stirrings of a more geometric treatment of form sit comfortably alongside a vibrantly complimentary palette of emerald green, viridian, sienna orange, and lead white. As in his more politically charged canvases, *Aranceto Notturmo* also conforms to art historian Maurizio Calvesi's description of Guttuso's mature palette as 'like the fire of Etna, like the turquoise of the Tyrrhenian Sea, like the green of the lizards and the twisted vegetation [and] like the yellow of the oranges and the sulphur.'<sup>iii</sup> Strikingly contemporary in its brushwork and handling, *Aranceto Notturmo* prefigures the densely layered canvases of Hurvin Anderson's evocative landscapes, bringing this mid-century work firmly in line with some of the most exciting painting of the genre emerging today.

Like Cézanne, Guttuso believed in 'an understandable and human art' and, just a year before the

present work was completed, he had travelled to Aix-en-Provence to visit an exhibition mounted to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Post-Impressionist's death.<sup>iv</sup> Reviewing the exhibition for *// Contemporaneo* Guttuso identified the French painter as providing 'the first text of the new painting, the true grammar of modern art', the foundations that Guttuso would continue to build on throughout his career.



Paul Cézanne, *Pommes et oranges (Apples and Oranges)*, 1895 - 1900, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Image: akq-images

Described by the hugely influential critic John Berger as 'the most significant European painter of the post-war period', Guttuso has more recently been enjoying a concentration of critical focus, with significant exhibitions hosted by Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, London in 2015 and a 2016 retrospective displayed at the former Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza in San Giovanni Rotondo.<sup>v</sup> Fusing a long-standing realist tradition with Cubist and Expressionist elements, Guttuso created an evocative painterly language to describe life in southern Italy, amply represented by this vibrant canvas.



## Collector's Digest

- A definitive Italian post-war artist, examples of Renato Guttuso's paintings are held in the permanent collections of the Tate Gallery in London, Rome's National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
- Active as an art critic during his lifetime, Guttuso wrote expansively on art theory and particularly on realism for a number of prominent publications.
- Recently restored, the Guttuso Museum is located in the impressive Villa Cattolica in Bagheria holds over 100 drawings and paintings by the artist.

<sup>i</sup> Lara Pucci, 'Guttuso, *Guernica*, Gramsci: Art, History and the Symbolic Strategy of the Italian Communist Party', Tate Papers, no. 23, 2020, [online](#).

<sup>ii</sup> Renato Guttuso, quoted in Rachel Spence, 'Renato Guttuso: Painter of Modern Life, the Es Collection. London - review', *The Financial Times*, 3 March 2015, [online](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Maurizio Calvesi, quoted in 'Renato Guttuso: Painter of Modern Life', *Wall Street International*, 2 December 2014

<sup>iv</sup> Renato Guttuso, quoted in David Irwin, 'Guttuso: Faithful to the Earth?', *The London Magazine*, vol. 1. No. 6., September 1961, [online](#).

<sup>v</sup> John Berger, quoted in Fabio Carpezza Guttuso, *Guttuso*, Milan, 1999, p. 29.

## Provenance

Mimise Guttuso Collection, Rome

Aca Gallery, New York

Acquired from the above by the present owner in April 1958

## Exhibited

New York, Aca Heller Gallery, *Guttuso*, 7 - 28 April 1958, no. 26, p. 31 (illustrated on the cover)  
 Große Kunstausstellung München at Haus der Kunst, *Arte Italiana dal 1910 ad Oggi*, 7 June - 15 September 1957, no. 98 (titled as *Aranceto grande*)

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, *Recent Acquisitions*, 30 January - 19 April 1959  
 Milan, Palazzo Reale (no. 106, p. 197, illustrated, p. 127); Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, *Arte Italiana del XX Secolo da Collezioni Americane. La Mostra, promossa e studiata dal Museum of Modern Art - New York, è stata realizzata dall'Ente Manifestazioni Milanesi*, 30 April - 10 September 1960; then travelled as New York, Santini Brothers Warehouse, *20th Century Italian Art from American Collections*, 24 - 26 October 1960

New York, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 14 May 1965 - 29 April 1976

## Literature

Milton Gendel, 'Art and artists under Communism. Guttuso: a Party point of view', *ART News*, vol. 57, no. 1, March 1958, no. 3, p. 27 (illustrated)

'Painting and Sculpture Acquisitions, January 1, 1958 through December 31, 1958', *The Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art*, vol. 26, no. 4, July 1959, p. 20 (illustrated, p. 13)

Alberto Moravia and Franco Grasso, *Renato Guttuso*, Palermo, 1962, p. 121 (illustrated)

Enrico Crispolti, *Catalogo ragionato generale dei dipinti di Renato Guttuso, vol. II*, Milan, 1984, no. 57/68, p. 86 (illustrated)

## 20th Century & Contemporary Art Evening Sale

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### David Hockney

*The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 (twenty eleven) - 4 May*

signed and dated 'David Hockney 2011.' lower right;  
numbered '9/10' lower centre


iPad drawing printed on four sheets of paper and  
mounted on four sheets of Dibond

each 117.5 x 88.3 cm (46 1/4 x 34 3/4 in.)

overall 235 x 166.7 cm (92 1/2 x 65 5/8 in.)

Executed in 2011, this work is number 9 from an edition  
of 10.

#### Estimate

£180,000 — 250,000 

[Go to Lot](#)



*'I just happen to be an artist who uses the iPad, I'm not an iPad artist. It's just a medium. But I am aware of the revolutionary aspects of it, and its implications.'*  
—David Hockney

Executed in a brilliantly bold selection of layered greens, yellows, and blues befitting its subject, *The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 (twenty eleven) - 4 May* is a joyous celebration of the natural world, life, and regeneration from this quintessential British artist. Drawing parallels to John Constable's sustained focus on the gently rolling hills of the Dedham Vale, or the seasonal changes occurring in and around the sleepy agricultural village of Giverny obsessively captured over four decades by Claude Monet, Hockney's return to his late mother's home in Bridlington offered a new and rich subject for the artist. Revelling in the seasonal shifts unfolding in his native Yorkshire countryside, the body of work that emerged from this period represents 'the most sustained and painterly sequence of pictures in his life', closely focused on qualities of light, colour and organic form.<sup>i</sup>

Completed alongside a series of more traditional oil paintings and watercolours, the multi-panel *The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 (twenty eleven) - 4 May* was first unveiled as part of the Royal Academy of Arts' sensational 2012 survey exhibition *David Hockney: A Bigger Picture*. Alongside one monumental oil painting arranged across 32 canvases, Hockney recorded the seasonal transition into spring in a series of fifty-one iPad drawings executed between January and June of that year, which were then printed on a large scale and arranged as a grand narrative cycle throughout one of the galleries of the exhibition. Bringing his paintings and iPad drawings together for the first time, the series announced the artist's reinvention of this classical subject with his pioneering use of cutting-edge 21<sup>st</sup> century digital technologies.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jabJKtqK0k>

David Hockney draws on his iPad in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art café ahead of his 2011 exhibition *Me Draw on iPad*

## Digital Painting

*'I know a lot about drawings and paintings, I've spent sixty years doing them. But this is new because of the layers, and because you can go back to them. You can't do that on paper or canvas.'* —David Hockney

Born in West Yorkshire in 1937, David Hockney rose to prominence as part of a generation of pioneering British Pop artists in the 1960s. Relocating to sun-soaked Los Angeles in 1964, where his prodigious output included his iconic images of swimming pools and snatches of Californian

life, Hockney later experimented with polaroid cameras and photography, fax machines, and early computer programs, entering into a playful exploration of the relationship between a tradition of landscape painting and technology that would be most fully realised on his return to Britain in the early 2000s.

Always open to the exciting possibilities that advancements in technology could introduce into his practice once the 'software could finally follow the hand', Hockney began experimenting with digital art in 2007, starting by making work directly on his iPhone in rapidly executed and strikingly dynamic compositions.<sup>ii</sup> Maintaining the sensation and immediacy of drawing, while allowing for a new kind of precision and freedom in its graphic quality, these works became increasingly complex and detailed with the introduction of the iPad into his practice in 2010.

Speaking directly about his approach to this new medium, Hockney explains: 'The app I used in 2011 was called *Brushes*. It was a new medium and I enjoyed finding out about it. I tried a few other apps but settled on *Brushes* as being the best for me. It was quite simple, as all the brushes were labelled with a mark, just a mark, no names, so you didn't have an oil painting brush or a watercolour brush, just the mark it made on the canvas.'<sup>iii</sup> Allowing Hockney to work quickly with an intensely saturated palette, fluid sense of line, and wide variety of paint effects, the medium complimented the immersive approach to his subject taken by the artist, leading him to develop 'a kind of Pointillist stippling and more discriminating grading' across this cycle of works that highlights the close connections between Hockney's landscapes and their art historical precedents.<sup>iv</sup>





Vincent van Gogh, *De roze perzikboom* (*The Pink Peach Tree*), 1888, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.  
Image: Bridgeman Images

Building up layers of colour in strong, confident marks, Hockney's spring landscapes capture the vitality and immediacy of Fauve painters André Derain and Maurice Vlaminck, and the emotional expressivity and technical virtuosity of Vincent van Gogh's spring canvases. Brought into direct dialogue with the Dutch master in the 2019 exhibition *Hockney – Van Gogh: The Joy of Nature*, Hockney's powerful command of colour across these late landscapes was particularly highlighted, an intensity that is carefully maintained across the iPad drawings. Despite the digital method of its execution, the versatility and drama of Hockney's iPad drawings have not been lost on critics, who have remarked especially on the elegance and variety of his mark-making, and 'how energetically they manage to achieve texture in their depthless surfaces.'<sup>14</sup>

## Hockney, Monet, and the Unfolding of Spring

*'The green of the spring is a luscious fresh green that's gone by about June really, but April and May have this very, very fresh green, and you need a few greens, you've got to use a few greens. It's a difficult colour but we can see more greens than any other colour.'* —David Hockney

In its scope and scale, Hockney's seasonal cycle of course recalls the close observation of the landscape and the almost imperceptible shifts in light and atmosphere recorded by Impressionist master Claude Monet. Certainly, Monet's approach to serial imagery and his forensic examination of the landscape around him in all variety of weathers directly informed Hockney's immersive approach to his subject and his thinking around *The Arrival of Spring*, *Woldgate Woods*, twenty eleven works. Working *en plein air* in the Impressionist tradition, Hockney was able to work quickly and precisely in the countryside that he had known from childhood, blending the sensorial experience of his total immersion in nature with a profoundly emotional one.





Claude Monet, *Printemps (Springtime)*, 1886, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Image: © Fitzwilliam Museum / Bridgeman Images

A definitive visual record of the English countryside, Hockney's reflections on the passing of time and the sequence of seasonal change are at once deeply personal and strikingly impassive – the seasons will continue to change, even if we aren't here to see them. Much like his Impressionist predecessor, Hockney realised that this classical subject could not be represented in a single painting but demanded the context of a larger narrative cycle. He explains: 'I realised to show the full arrival of spring, you have to start in the winter and go into the summer a bit, and then you see all the differences and all the rich things that happen to each tree.'<sup>vi</sup> Fittingly, Hockney has more recently returned to this theme in an exhibition consisting entirely of iPad drawings *David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring in Normandy, 2021*, and expanded it into a full seasonal cycle – *David Hockney: A Year in Normandy* presented at the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris in a lyrical echo of Monet's majestic *Nymphéas*.

Executed in the first week of May, in what Hockney affectionately terms 'Action Week', the present work captures this proliferation of growth as touches of white, streaks of yellow, and subtle modulations of green animate the foreground between the dancing heads of the blue lianas scattered across the sun-dappled undergrowth of Woldgate Woods. Referring directly to Monet's Impressionistic brushwork, starkly rendered branches stretch themselves out under the blue sky, filling before our eyes with the gauzy explosions of Hawthorn blossom across them. Approaching this new medium with an enthusiasm and energy that belies his eighty years, Hockney has reinvented himself as a great landscape painter, inserting himself in a long line of artists for whom technological innovation has opened radical new ways of approaching this most traditional of subjects.

## Collector's Digest

- Continuing to break records at auction and the focus of several, major retrospectives in recent years, David Hockney is undoubtedly one of the most important British artists working today.
- Since his inclusion in the seminal 1961 *Young Contemporaries* exhibition held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery Hockney has continued to exhibit widely. Recent notable exhibitions include the major career survey hosted by Tate Britain, London, the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2017, and the 2012 exhibition *David Hockney: A Bigger Picture* held at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

- Radically redefining his drawing practice, Hockney's pioneering use of the iPad has been the focus of recent exhibitions including *David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020* held at the Royal Academy of Arts in 2021 and *David Hockney: A Year in Normandy* at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

<sup>i</sup> Marco Livingstone, 'The Road Less Travelled', in *A Bigger Picture* (exh. cat.), London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2012, p. 24.

<sup>ii</sup> David Hockney, quoted in William Boyd, 'David Hockney, The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020', in *David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020*, (exh. cat.), London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2021, n.p.

<sup>iii</sup> Davvid Hockney, "'I love drawing": David Hockney on iPad painting and finding joy in spring', *RA Magazine*, 18 May 2021, [online](#).

<sup>iv</sup> William Boyd, 'David Hockney, The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020', in *David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020*, (exh. cat.), London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2021, n.p.

<sup>v</sup> Matthew Sperling, 'Nature Boys – Hockney and van Gogh in Amsterdam', *Apollo*, 7 March 2019, [online](#).

<sup>vi</sup> David Hockney, 'David Hockney in Conversation with Edith Devaney', in *The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020*, (exh. cat.), London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2021, n.p.

## Provenance

Galerie Lelong, Paris

Acquired from the above by the present owner

**Exhibited**

London, Royal Academy of Arts; Bilbao, Guggenheim Museum; Cologne, Museum Ludwig, *David Hockney. A Bigger Picture*, 21 January 2012 - 4 February 2013, no. 119.36, p. 227 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 236)

San Francisco, de Young Museum, *David Hockney. A Bigger Exhibition*, 26 October 2013 - 20 January 2014, no. 172, p. 219 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 151)

London, Annely Juda Fine Art, *David Hockney. The Arrival of Spring*, 8 May - 12 July 2014, n.p. (another example exhibited and illustrated)

Venice, L.A. Louver, *David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring*, 9 July - 29 August 2014 (another example exhibited)

New York, Pace Gallery, *David Hockney. The Arrival of Spring*, 5 September - 1 November 2014, p. 66 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 67)

Paris, Galerie Lelong, *David Hockney. The Arrival of Spring*, 21 May - 24 July 2015, p. 52 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 51)

Arles, Fondation Vincent van Gogh, *David Hockney. L'arrivée du printemps*, 11 October 2015 - 10 January 2016, pp. 36, 79 (another example exhibited and illustrated, p. 37; illustrated inside back cover)

Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, *David Hockney: Current*, 11 November 2016 - 13 March 2017, pp. 143, 319 (another example exhibited and illustrated, pp. 130, 283)

**Literature**

David Hockney and Hans Werner Holzwarth, eds., *David Hockney—A Chronology*, Cologne, 2020, p. 484 (de Young Museum, San Francisco, 2013 installation view illustrated)