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The Art Market **Collecting**

Christie's lines up £10mn eye-catching Old Masters

Celebrities add to buzz at Frieze LA; craft's growing appeal; artists support the Warburg Institute



Lucas Cranach the Elder's 'The Nymph of the Spring' (c1540) has an estimate of £6mn-£8mn

Melanie Gerlis FEBRUARY 24 2022

Christie's will offer two Old Master paintings valued at more than £10mn from the collection of the late philanthropic couple Cecil Lewis, a property developer, and his wife, Hilda. On July 7, Lucas Cranach's alluring "The Nymph of the Spring" (c1540) will be offered for between £6mn and £8mn, while an equally arresting still life from 1633, by the lesser-known Dutch Golden Age painter Jan den Uyl, is estimated between £2.5mn and £3.5mn. "It is wonderful to have two pictures in categories that currently appeal to modern taste and cross-category collectors," says Henry Pettifer, Christie's head of Old Masters.

Cranach's naked nymph has a moralising, "look but don't touch" message, Pettifer says, noting its inscription that reads "Do not disturb my sleep. I am resting." The undocumented painting has

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been authenticated by the Cranach expert, Dieter Koeplin, Pettifer confirms. The still life by den Uyl is seen as particularly fine and is signed on the tablecloth's corner with an owl ("uyl" is Dutch for owl). It was bought by Cecil and Hilda Lewis for \$2.2mn in 1988. They bought the Cranach privately in 1990.



Jan den Uyl's 'Pewter jug and silver tazza on a table' (1633) is estimated at £2.5mn-£3.5mn

Meanwhile, Christie's has upped its fees for buyers in all categories except wine. Its steepest commission is now 26 per cent on works that hammer for up to £700,000 (or \$1mn). This was previously a 25 per cent fee on items up to £450,000 (or \$600,000). Sotheby's has followed suit, resulting in the same fee for lower-priced categories. From February 28, it will charge a 25 per cent fee on sales up to £700,000 (or \$1mn), plus the 1 per cent surcharge that still applies at all levels.

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'Julie. Austin, Texas' (2021) by Alec Sloth © Alec Sloth. Courtesy Sean Kelly, New York

Exhibitors were abuzz about this year's return of Frieze Los Angeles (February 17-20). The city is benefiting from an influx of galleries, plus "there is a sense that we are on the cusp of the end of Covid," says Sean Kelly, whose New York gallery opens a secondspace in LA this summer. The city's Hollywood factor also means this fair boasted more celebrities than others on the circuit — Kelly confirms that the actors Gwyneth

Paltrow, Brad Pitt and Amy Poehler visited his booth — while sales were also strong. "We pretty much sold everything on our booth, plus a number of things from the iPad," Kelly says. His sales ran from a 2021 photograph by Alec Soth (\$16,000) to a cast iron 2017 sculpture by Antony Gormley (£400,000). The only gripe overall, says Joe Charalambous, president of TPC Art Finance, was that "anything priced below about \$200,000 seemed to have pre-sold, which can be off-putting to new collectors".

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Installation of glass hands by Elmira Abolhassani of North Lands Creative

There is a new generation of buyers of contemporary craft, including ceramics, textiles and glassware, drawn to the authenticity of handmade objects, says Isobel Dennis, director of London's Collect art fair, which runs at Somerset House until February 27. She notes a growing influence from countries such as South Korea and China where there is "a deep knowledge of traditional ways of making", while Instagram has added to the appeal too, she says. Influential proponents include the Olympic diver and vocal knitting enthusiast Tom Daley, who has the @madewithlovebytmdaley handle.

Glassware is a notable highlight among Collect's 31 in-person and nine online exhibitors, including totemic sculptures by Dawn Bendick (Joanna Bird Contemporary Collections); an installation of glass hands by Elmira Abolhassani (North Lands Creative); and works that replicate woven textiles by the Ghana-born, Sunderland-based Anthony Amoako-Attah, who says he uses glass to "preserve the value of my culture" (Bullseye Projects). Most works at the fair are priced between £5,000 and £25,000, organisers say.

Also in London this month is an exhibition dedicated to the 20th-century potter Waistel Cooper, who died in 2003. A contemporary of the potters Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Cooper's distinctive, rough-textured work is at The Fine Art Society until March 2.

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'Articles of Glass (All that Are Left)' by Cornelia Parker

Artists have dug deep to donate works to benefit the Warburg Institute, a cherished library, image archive and cultural research centre whose contents were transferred to London out of Nazi Germany in 1933. Works by Cornelia Parker, Anselm Kiefer and Michael Joo are among the 16 estimated to make up to £135,700 at Phillips, London on March 4. The proceeds will go towards a major development project, which has already raised nearly £14.5mn, that includes renovating the Institute's building on the University of London campus. The new building will include Edmund de Waal's porcelain-painted "Library of Exile", donated in 2020, while the British artist has also given his "Einmal" vitrine (2020) to the Phillips auction (est £8,000-£12,000).

Many of the other donated works relate to the library and its Jewish founder, Aby Warburg (1866-1929), a scholar who used his family's banking wealth to pursue his own wide-ranging cultural studies. Poland-born Goshka Macuga has donated a 2008 photograph from a series that refers to Warburg's trip to the US in 1895-96 (est £4,000-£6,000) while a 2016 work by the Italian artist Arcangelo Sassolino comprises 1,000 tonnes of paper (est £3,000-£5,000). "Warburg's work and persona has had a lasting impact on

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me, particularly his relationship to knowledge,” Macuga writes in reference to the sale.

There’s no stopping the growth of Gagosian. Having opened its 19th gallery in Gstaad last week, the business has now added to its three London outlets with a books and editions space on Burlington Arcade, opening on March 1. The covered walkways were built for fashion and jewellery stores off Piccadilly in 1819 and still exude old-world luxury.

Gagosian director Millicent Wilner says its new store, whose previous tenant was the jeweller Richard Ogden, “should bring a different audience”. She compares it to Gagosian’s shop that opened on New York’s Madison Avenue in 2009. The gallery began publishing in 1985 and now averages between 25 and 40 books a year, she says. Artist objects, including jewellery, will also be among the fare, while a first-floor area will host small exhibitions, starting with a Cy Twombly show. Wilner refers to the Burlington Arcade space as a pop-up but, she clarifies, it’s a case of being there for at least six months.”

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