

"The 50 Next Most Collectible Artists," *Art + Auction*, June 2012.

ART+
AUCTION

Art+Auction's 50 Next Most Collectible Artists

The task of choosing most-collectible artists is even trickier than it first appears, beginning with a discussion of what the term collectible means. To some it may simply be a synonym for popular. For certain connoisseurs it may function as shorthand for aesthetic quality. When the editors of Art+Auction convened for the first time to discuss the topic several months ago, we each brought our own predilections and biases. Was this an opportunity to laud established artists who had not been given their due? Should we hitch our reputation to our favorites from the up-and-coming generation? Ultimately, this being a magazine of the art market, we decided our aim should be to identify artists who have demonstrated past strength at auction or in primary sales and show promise of continued development. We did not want to merely list the people at the top of the market, but to cite those who might find themselves there in 10, 20, or 30 years. In short, we were looking for artists whose works have room to grow aesthetically and rise in terms of monetary value.

Setting the goal was just the beginning. Conversations with collectors, art advisers, auction house specialists, and dealers followed, as we sought to track who has been selling and who has been buying, which works have been most in demand and which undervalued. Some artists we thought showed potential fell by the wayside. In other instances, the more we talked and the more we learned, the more passionate we became. The short summaries on the following pages barely scratch the surface of fascinating careers filled with ups and downs. We hope that, taken together, they portray some of the complexity of the art market. We also hope that, individually, they lead you to delve more deeply into the work of these compelling, evolving — and collectible — artists.



Frank Thiel

Thiel makes formally sophisticated and technically flawless photographs that explore the transformation of Berlin, his home since 1985. Inexplicably, his large-scale color works have been overlooked in recent surveys of contemporary German photography, but he enjoys a committed collector base in North and South America, Europe, and Asia, and he's a steady presence in the art-fair booth of Sean Kelly, his New York dealer. New works are printed in editions of five plus two artist proofs, with smaller formats starting at about \$15,000 and larger ones at \$30,000. Thiel's photographs are solid sellers at auction, with prices generally in the \$10,000-to-\$28,000 range, in line with his primary market. His auction record is \$52,000, achieved by a 1999 photograph sold in 2010 at Phillips de Pury in London; the same print had sold at Christie's New York in 2008 for \$7,500. / **Untitled (C50), 2008 Framed C-Print Mounted to Plexiglas, 96 5/8 X 7 1/2 IN**