

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE NEW YORK COLLECTION



BORNE FROM A CITY IN DECLINE

FIRED BY A NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A NEW CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICE EMERGED

In the late 1970s, New York was a city in decline. Half-deserted, broke and rundown, it was the perfect breeding ground for a revitalised creative scene that reasserted the city's position at the centre of the art world. The Pictures Generation, graffiti art, hip hop, post-punk, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Neo-Expressionism, second wave feminism and gay right activism: suddenly a socio-political consciousness returned to the forefront of a new contemporary art practice.

Now, Sotheby's forthcoming Contemporary Art Evening Auction in London on 26 June will be led by an exceptional group of 10 works which speak to this exciting moment and its legacy.

Spanning nearly four decades of artistic production, the collection will see some of the most famous names in contemporary art, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cecily Brown and Richard Prince, presented alongside Kara Walker, who has made only rare appearances in London's Contemporary art evening sales, and Eric Fischl and Ellen Gallagher, for whom this will be a London Contemporary art evening sale debut.

Channelling a fierce socio-political contemporary angst, the collection signifies a creative call to arms borne of a specific moment in the history of New York City.

Issues of race, sexuality, gender and identity politics permeate the collection, beginning with early pieces by Richard Prince, navigating the meteoric ascent of Jean-Michel Basquiat, revelling in the eroticism of Cecily Brown, and arriving at the urgent racial discourses of Ellen Gallagher and Kara Walker.

All 10 works will be appearing at auction for the first time.

13 further works from the collection will open Wednesday's Contemporary Art Day Auction, including a very early spot drawing by Damien Hirst and works from Laura Owens, Mark Grotjahn and Richard Prince. The combined estimate for all 23 works is £11.9–16.1 million.

LOT 7 | CECILY BROWN

The Skin of our Teeth

1999

Estimate £750,000-950,000



Brown's work is concerned with translating sensation into paint. Her sweeping marks and glots of paint offer a new take on the tradition of the painted nude.

Executed with luscious pinks, hot reds, and peachy flesh tones and accented with swipes of yellow and black, *The Skin of our Teeth* is among the most corporeal of Brown's overtly sexual oeuvre; the viewer's eye roves across the slippages and spills that loosely delineate what may be a buttock, leg, limb or body part.

The artist's auction record has been broken four times since the beginning of 2017 alone.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 8 | CINDY SHERMAN

Untitled Film Still #21A, City Girl Close-up

Estimate £450,000-650,000



Measuring 71.1 by 88.9cm, this is one of the most iconic of Sherman's important series of untitled film stills ever to come to auction, and the first time that this image in this large size has been offered at auction.

One of the leading artists of the influential Pictures Generation, this work stars Sherman herself, and is perhaps the most widely recognised and reproduced example from the artist's groundbreaking series of 70 images: the *Untitled Film Stills*.

Depicting a young and alert career girl, the work builds on stereotypical feminine roles that became cemented in the collective consciousness of the American post-war generation, ranging from the sex kitten and the hardened heroine to the sophisticate and the lonely housewife.

With a full suite of *Untitled Film Stills* housed in The Museum of Modern Art, this is one of the most important bodies of work of the late Twentieth Century.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 9 | RICHARD PRINCE

Portrait of Cindy Sherman

1980

Estimate £90,000-120,000

This unique portrait from 1980 is the result of collaboration between two of the most profoundly influential members of the Pictures Generation, Richard Prince and Cindy Sherman.

Intended to interrogate the 'truthful' nature of photography, the pair dressed in matching suits and red wigs, the androgynous costume concealing the subject's true appearance and character and undermining the supposed 'truthfulness' of the image.

By further separating this image from the original double portrait, Prince has removed it from its original context and appropriated the image in his usual style, in which the figure is often isolated.



Read more [here](#).

LOT 10 | HENRY TAYLOR

C&H

2006

Estimate £120,000-180,000



Intimate in theme but monumental in scale, *C&H* demonstrates the principal hallmarks of Taylor's aesthetic.

The canvas offers a variety of narratives involving the Black communities of California, depicting friends, family, acquaintances, homeless people, psychiatric patients, art world colleagues, critics and viewers. He is warmly democratic and levelling; representing all by means of his rich, bright palette. Taylor himself appears large and benevolent in the background.

The now redundant 'C&H' logo is of the California and Hawaiian Sugar Company – which had operated out of Crockett, California for exactly 100 years in 2006. It looms large and foreshadows Kara Walker's 2014 work *A Subtlety*, which explored the US sugar industry's exploitation of African Americans.

Taylor's work draws comparison to that of Kerry James Marshall, whose pivotal *Past Times* quadrupled the artist's record when it sold in New York last month for over \$21million (£15.6million).

Taylor's auction record has been broken four times since the beginning of 2017.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 11 | KARA WALKER

Untitled

1996

Estimate £90,000-120,000

Untitled is a macabre dreamscape drawing on the bourgeois, twee connotations of eighteenth-century cut-paper silhouette art.

Widely known for her scholarship in art history, Walker's work draws on the cut-paper profile caricatures made by the likes of Moses Williams in the



United States. Freed from slavery by Charles Willson Peale in 1802, Williams was an African-American profile-cutter who was taught to analyse and render facial types on black cardboard, which led to racist tropes and generalisations.

Walker depicts such cut-out figures performing an array of strange, sexual and violent acts; stripping the medium of its middle-class romance and revealing the nefarious assumptions of its privileged customer-base.

This will be the artist's third appearance in a Contemporary Art evening sale in London.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 12 | ELLEN GALLAGHER

Elephant Bones

1995

Estimate £200,000-300,000



Hugely respected for her works that privilege attention to detail and acute humorous wit, Gallagher enjoyed her first major solo exhibition in the UK at Tate Modern in 2013.

Elephant Bones injects narrative and African American history into the supposedly 'pure' forms of conventional 1960s Minimalism.

Her paintings belie thousands of meticulous cuts, prints and embossing that satirise Minimalism's piously clean lines. A rich tapestry, the unevenly-aligned squares of *Elephant Bones* evoke patchwork from the Southern states of North America, and, further back in history, the African kente cloth from which such embroidery originated.

She draws on the scientific hypothesis that elephants may recognise the bones of their families by scent – the suggested form of a trunk or excavated pathway at right alludes to an unseen animal.

This will be the artist's first appearance in a Contemporary art evening sale in London.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 13 | JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT

Untitled

1982

Estimate £7,500,000-10,000,000



1982: Within the space of a year – from the moment his work as SAMO© was prominently showcased in the legendary P.S. 1 show *New York / New Wave* in February 1981, through to his first solo exhibition as Jean-Michel Basquiat with Annina Nosei in March 1982 – he had gone from underground street lyricist to the star of the New York art scene.

Exhibited at the Larry Gagosian Gallery in Los Angeles only one month after his Nosei debut, *Untitled* is a masterpiece from this singularly formative year in Basquiat's meteoric career. Only exhibited once since its Gagosian unveiling – at

Tony Shafrazi's Jean-Michel Basquiat exhibition in 1998 – this painting makes its auction debut having remained in the same New York collection for twenty years.

Channelling a fierce socio-political contemporary angst, this painting belongs among the most striking and powerful of Basquiat's single head paintings of 1981-82.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 14 | ERIC FISCHL

The Tire Store

1989

Estimate £270,000-350,000



Rendered in ferric hues and a naturalistic style that is at odds with the uncanny nature of the scene, *The Tire Store* is a monumental work by one of the most talented contributors to the revival of figurative painting in 1980s New York. Known as a chronicler of the voyeuristic alienation of contemporary middle-class life in America, Fischl embarked in 1989 upon his India series after spending time there that same year.

In *The Tire Store*, two men stand in the forecourt of the titular store. An initially unremarkable scene, the viewer's eye is drawn secondarily to a chained monkey standing on one foot. The viewer's delayed awareness of this figure imparts one of the most distinctive qualities of dreams: the realisation of something obvious, and yet hitherto overlooked.

This will be the artist's first appearance in a Contemporary Art evening sale in London.

Read more [here](#).

LOT 15 | RICHARD PRINCE

New England Nurse #1

2000

Estimate £250,000-350,000



New England Nurse #1 is one of the very first iterations in Richard Prince's celebrated *Nurse* series, first revealed to great public acclaim in 2003.

Drawing on his own collection of trashy nurse-fantasy novellas of the 1950s and 60s, Prince's *Nurses* play with gender stereotypes and explore the desire at stake in archetypes of popular Americana.

He challenges stereotypical female archetypes of the mid-twentieth century and presents female sexuality as both desirable and empowered. At the same, however, white paint is smeared across the nurse's mouth as if gagged. By masking the nurse's mouth, he silences the desirability prescribed by the novel's original illustration, thereby unmasking and challenging the ways in which society and culture has

historically determined identity.

The top 10 most valuable lots for the artist at auction are all works from the 'Nurses' series.

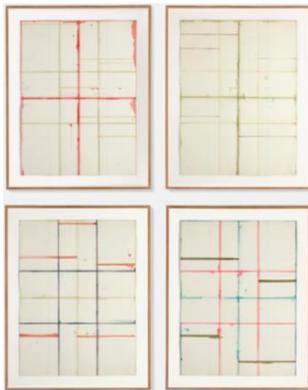
Read more [here](#).

LOT 16 | B R I C ≡ M A R D ≡ N

Basel Drawings (Window Studies no. 1, 2, 4, 5)

1983

Estimate £550,000-750,000



Commissioned by the Basel Cathedral Stained Glass Trust at the end of 1977, Marden created these studies as proposals for the windows of Basel Cathedral.

Occupying the majority of his time from 1978 to 1985, the commission acted as an artistic turning-point for Marden, who used the project as a vehicle by which to explore his interests in alchemy, the self, and the universe's foundations. The coloured lines map the intersections of the earthly and the spiritual.

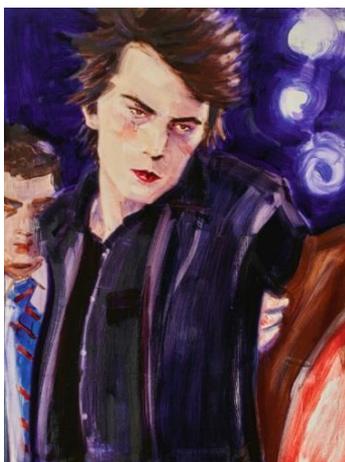
Read more [here](#).

LOT 17 | ≡ L I Z A B ≡ T H P ≡ Y T O N

Sid Vicious Arrested, Chelsea Hotel

1998

Estimate £400,000-600,000



Sid Vicious Arrested, Chelsea Hotel is a highly dramatised work that re-lives the downward spiral of Sex Pistols icon Sid Vicious, as he is arrested for the murder of his then-girlfriend, Nancy Spungen.

In a style akin to Douglas Blau and Richard Prince, Peyton reinterprets an image by photojournalist Allan Tannenbaum and reshapes Vicious in reflective melancholy. Detached from the surrounding pandemonium, Peyton zooms into Vicious, silencing the paparazzi behind a morose blue backdrop - the viewer only catches a subtle glimpse of the flash bulbs.

She awakens the vulnerability of her subject with dark circles under his eyes, and a teardrop, beauty trumping disenchantment.

Read more [here](#).

Images are available on request.

EXHIBITION

THU, 14 JUN | 01:00 - 05:00
FRI, 15 JUN | 09:00 - 05:00
SAT, 16 JUN | 12:00 - 05:00
SUN, 17 JUN | 01:00 - 05:00
MON, 18 JUN | 09:00 - 05:00
TUE, 19 JUN | 09:00 - 12:00
FRI, 22 JUN | 09:00 - 05:00
SAT, 23 JUN | 12:00 - 05:00
SUN, 24 JUN | 12:00 - 05:00
MON, 25 JUN | 09:00 - 05:00
TUE, 26 JUN | 09:00 - 12:00

AUCTION

26 JUNE 2018 | 7:00 PM BST | LONDON

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