

An abstract graphic on the left side of the page. It features a central, stylized face in shades of red and orange. The face has two 'X' marks for eyes and a wide, open mouth. The background is composed of various geometric shapes and lines in the same color palette, creating a dynamic and layered effect.

SKARSTEDT

Art Basel Miami Beach

December 8–10, 2023

VIP: December 6–7

Miami Beach

Convention Center

Booth D14

Cristina **BanBan**

Georg **Baselitz**

Jean-Michel **Basquiat**

George **Condo**

Willem **de Kooning**

Eric **Fischl**

Günther **Förg**

Hans **Josephsohn**

KAWS

Jeff **Koons**

Robert **Mapplethorpe**

Agnes **Martin**

Albert **Oehlen**

Marco **Pariani**

Pablo **Picasso**

David **Salle**

Andy **Warhol**

Sue **Williams**

Christopher **Wool**

SKARSTEDT



Cristina BanBan

Composition A. 3 Figures

2023

oil on canvas

90 x 72 inches

228.6 x 86.4 cm

signed, titled and dated CRISTINA BANBAN "COMPOSITION A. 3 FIGURES"

2023 (on the reverse)

(Inv #9319)

\$120,000



In Cristina BanBan's latest body of work, continuing from her exhibition *La Matrona* at Skarstedt, London, the women who populate her paintings take on a new, darker palette alongside compositions that explore the juxtaposition of strength and pain. *Composition A. 3 Figures* is dominated by muted and midnight blues, olive green, maroon, and gray—colors that form a kind of abyss out of which the figures emerge. The woman on the far left of the composition raises her arm above her head, a pose that is at once classical and modern—evoking Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*—and defiant, tinged with a knowing certainty and stateliness. The figure on the right is hardly a figure at all, but more of a ghostly presence. Meanwhile, the central figure stands with her hands on her hips, which are further called into focus by the swath of green paint over her body. Each of the women's eyes are left unfinished, a compositional choice that forces us as viewers to look to our own emotions to decipher what is happening in the scene, and that speaks to the universality of BanBan's figures. For while the strength and pain of which she paints may be her own, it is a duality shared amongst human beings worldwide.

SKARSTEDT



Georg Baselitz

Trinker (Drinker)

1981

oil on canvas

51 x 38 1/4 inches

129.5 x 97.3 cm

signed and dated *G.B. 81* (lower right); signed, titled and dated

G. Baselitz Trinker 26. Sept. 81 (on the reverse)

(Inv #7494)

\$4,800,000

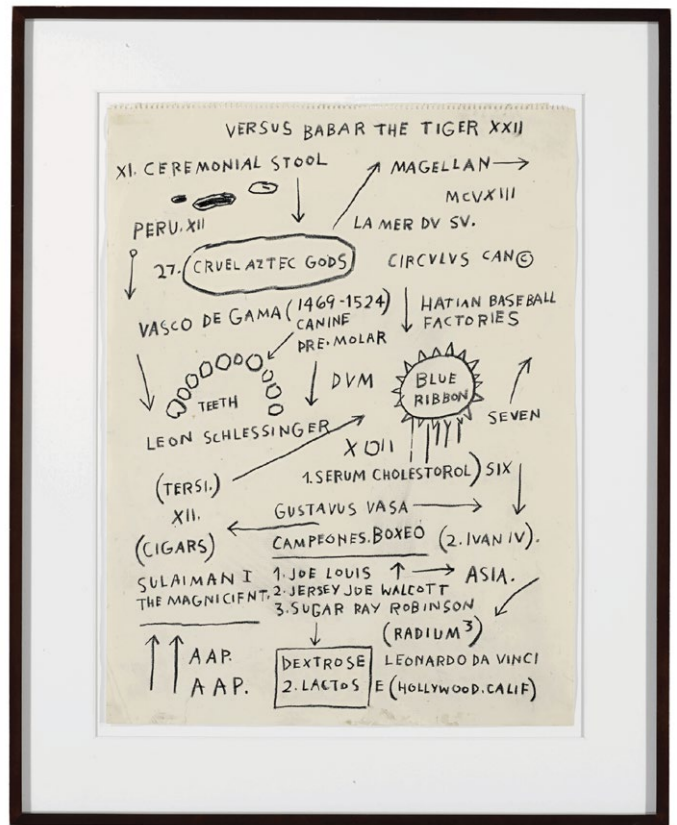
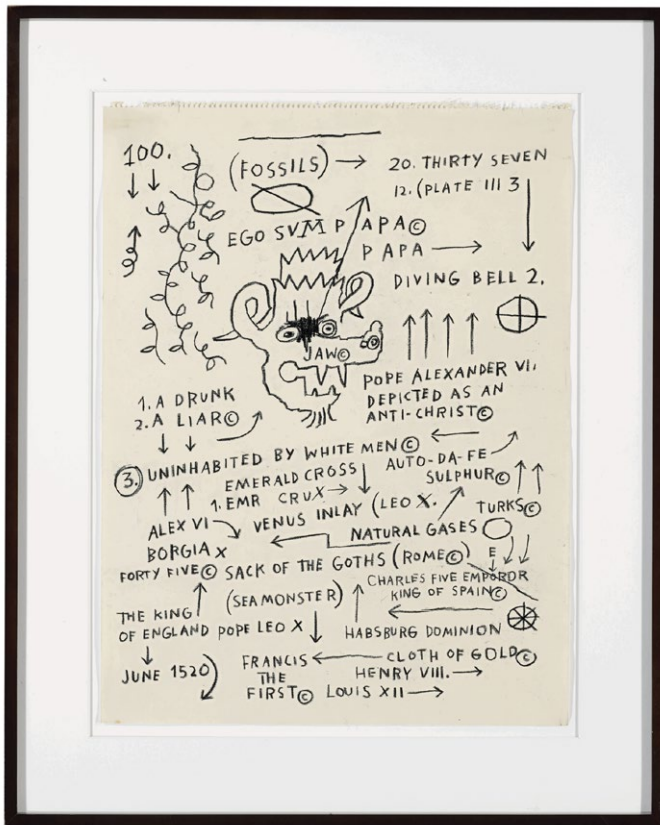


A vibrant palette with energetic brushstrokes, Georg Baselitz's *Drinker* signifies a remarkable period in the artist's production – part of an extended series of *Drinkers* [*Trinkers*] developed in the early 1980s. Faithful to his signature inversion of the figure, these works are enlarged portraits of subjects engaging in decisively elementary acts, drinking from blue-colored bottles or consuming fruit, as seen in his concurrent series of *Orange Eaters* [*Orangenesser*]. Departing from the profoundly melancholic subject matter of his works from the 1960s and '70s the *Drinker* flaunts an unintelligible yet brutish expression.

Evoking the intense techniques of such masters of twentieth-century Expressionism as Emil Nolde and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Trinker* nevertheless depicts a distinctly contemporary subject, acknowledging the spirit of younger artists such as Walter Dahn. The humorous consonance of the drinker's spiky hair and the red nose, as well as the emphatic defiance of the laws of physics exemplified in the exaggerated contours of the bottle, give an absurdist dimension to Baselitz's performative synthesis of art from the past and present. Meditating on the possibility of art historical lineage in the century ruptured by the Second World War, *Trinker* thus marks another crucial phase in Baselitz's articulation of stylistic individuality. "The challenge for Baselitz was to find a way to break loose from the subject and yet remain true to himself as an artist, and especially as a painter." – as Norman Rosenthal points out – 'His problem was how to be part of the Zeitgeist and yet also to remain outside it.'¹

¹ N. Rosenthal, 'Why the Painter Georg Baselitz is a Good Painter', in *Baselitz*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2007, p. 18.

SKARSTEDT



Jean-Michel Basquiat

UNTITLED (SEA MONSTER) / UNTITLED (CRUEL AZTEC GODS)

1983

oilstick on paper

each: 24 x 18 inches

each: 61 x 45.7 cm

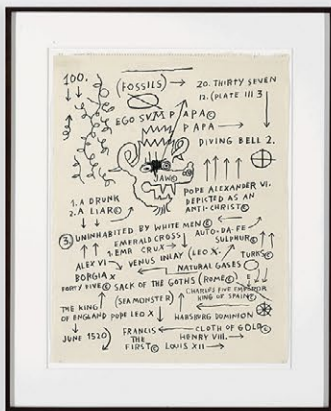
(Inv #8615)

\$2,000,000

RU. XII
7. (CRUEL AZTEC GODS)
↓
SCO DE GAMA (1469-1500)
CANINE
PRE-MO
↓
TEETH
↓
ON SCHLESSINGER
X
1. SERUM
GUSTAVUS
← CAMPEONE
LAIMAN I
MAGNIFICENT,
1. JOE LOU
2. JERSEY J
3. SUGAR
↑ A.A.P.
A.A.P.
↓
DEXTROS
2. LACTOS

“Basquiat’s great strength is his ability to merge his absorption of imagery from the streets, the newspapers, and TV with the spiritualism of his Haitian heritage, injecting both into a marvelously intuitive understanding of the language of modern painting.” – Jeffrey Deitch

These two works on paper were executed in 1983, a crucial year that saw Basquiat grappling with the sudden influx of attention and success he garnered in 1982—from sold-out solo shows to inclusion in that year’s Documenta and the beginnings of a fruitful collaboration with Andy Warhol. However, even as he rose higher and higher in his celebrity, Basquiat remained acutely aware of the precarity of his position as a young Black man in the United States. This understanding emerges subtly in his references to Hollywood, California and Leon Schlessinger, a notable Old Hollywood producer, in *Untitled (Cruel Aztec Gods)*. Hollywood, and the people who populate it, are known for their love of all things fame and their resistance to inclusion and diversity. Similarly, the teeth and their surrounding labels allude not only to the origin story of Basquiat’s car accident, but to one’s ability to have their voice heard—something that is often not afforded to people of color. References to European explorers furthers Basquiat’s ideas about the prosecution of people of color, with names like Sugar Ray Robinson and other successful boxers serving as a counterbalance in their success. *Untitled (Sea Monster)* echoes many of these same themes in its imagery and text, with a large monster anchoring the center of the composition. Arrows pointing in all directions allow the eye to move around the text, while also referencing Henry Dreyfuss’s *Symbol Sourcebook*, a compilation of symbols used by the unhoused to communicate—again underscoring the precariousness of Basquiat’s position, while simultaneously reminding viewers of his deft ability to create poetry from simple signs and symbols.



SKARSTEDT



George Condo

Liquor Store Attendant

2012

bronze

25 x 19 x 14 inches

63.5 x 48.3 x 35.6 cm

Edition 3 of 3, with 1 AP

signed with the artist's initials, dated and numbered *GC 2012 3/3* (on the underside)

(Inv #4344.3)

\$275,000



Although best known as a painter of mad and ecstatic figures, Condo began experimenting with depicting his characters in three dimensions as early as 1987. These works, known as “simulated found objects,” were devised in such a way that they looked like a true found object upon first glance, but further examination would reveal them to be products created entirely from scratch by the artist. This concept tied into the “fake Old Master” paintings he was working on around the same time, out of which was born his theory of Artificial Realism—that something can be a man-made fiction, yet carry such a power it appears real and true to the viewer. This, coupled with his idea of Psychological Cubism—depicting multiple mental states at the same time, à la Picasso—has sustained Condo for decades in his creation of fictitious characters that act as vehicles through which to explore the myriad states of emotions one can feel.

In *Liquor Store Attendant*, all of the quintessential elements of a Condo character are visible. Manic eyes cover his forehead, while he bares his teeth to the viewer, as if we are something appetizing. One can almost see the drool fall from his mouth. With ears sticking out and slightly forward, and a face that appears smashed into his skull, this liquor store attendant seems dumbstruck, clearly more attendant to the liquor than the customers of his shop.

Condo began experimenting with bronze in 2001, when he created a set of gilded bronze sculptures based on a reading of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* and his extensive study of classical Greek proportions. Condo has particularly gravitated towards working in bronze over the years, as his ability to choose the patina of each sculpture allows him to work like a painter while making a three-dimensional object. With each stroke and manipulation of the clay, Condo’s work in bronze displays the joy in rendering and the plastic potential of clay from which the casts are taken.

SKARSTEDT



George Condo

Rodrigo and His Mistress

2007

oil on canvas

52 3/4 x 46 inches

134 x 116.8 cm

signed and dated *Condo 07* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9130)

\$1,200,000



Belonging to the cast of characters that comprise his *Existential Portraits*, *Rodrigo and His Mistress* (2007) exemplifies George Condo's poignant observations on humanity, politics, and culture seen through the lens of an individual's psychological complexity. Evoking Old Master portraiture while simultaneously highlighting the grotesque, this painting sees figures set against nondescript or impoverished backgrounds as they gaze directly at the viewer. Their eyes bulge, their mouths scream, and one can feel the extreme heights of whatever moment they are in.

Rodrigo and His Mistresses depicts the butler Rodrigo standing beside a seated, masturbating woman. The composition evokes a family portrait, but the nefariousness of the situation lends a touch of irony, humor, and aggressiveness to the scene. Rodrigo, whom Condo has referred to as "a low life, the one who parks your car," is an apt figure to introduce into this sexualized environment. However, these images are not merely meant to shock and titillate. Indeed, their sexuality is meant ironically, affirmed through the grotesque nature of their union. Inspired by the hyper-conservative attitude of Americans in the early aughts, Condo has frequently returned to sexualized subjects as a means of reacting to the façade of morality that pervades our culture. That both Rodrigo and his mistress so unabashedly meet our gaze echoes this point. They do not invite us in per se, but they certainly force us to acknowledge our motives for staring.

SKARSTEDT



Willem de Kooning

Untitled VII

1986

oil on canvas

77 1/2 x 88 inches

196.9 x 223.5 cm

signed *de Kooning* (on the stretcher)

(Inv #6948)

\$7,800,000

In the late 1980's, with a renewal of focus and vision, de Kooning became "aware of his own mortality and the fragility of painting itself [and] applied himself with all deliberate speed to forge a lasting legacy".¹ Not only did de Kooning diverge from figuration to abstraction but he also changed materials and methods of applying paint in a way that showed his awareness of longevity and conservation, proving his new-found cognisance of his place within art history. Redirecting his approach to painting in this final chapter, de Kooning's canvases became spare, with sinuous lines of primary colours with loops and linear forms articulated across a white ground. This minimal and sharpened composition can be seen in *Untitled VII*.

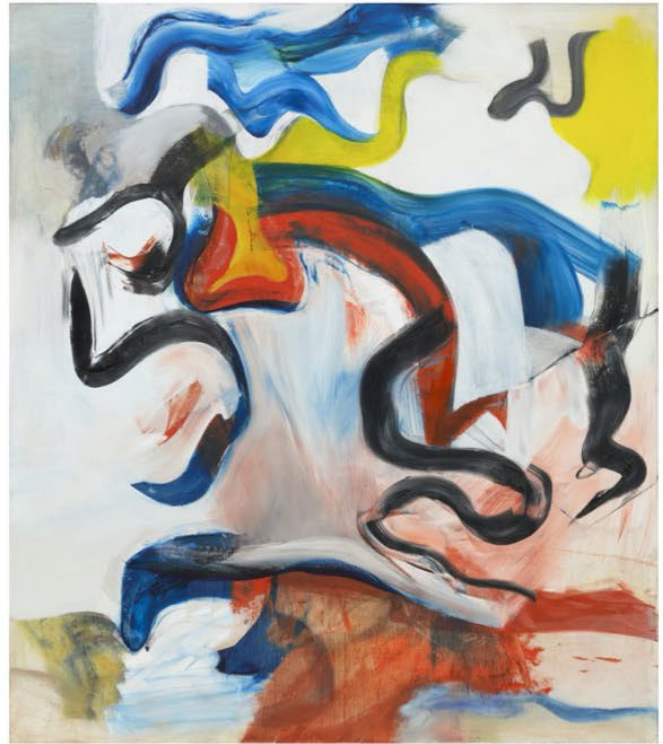
Though de Kooning spent a great deal of time on each work, he aimed to make them appear effortless. "Those lines on the late paintings look easy," de Kooning's assistant, Tom Ferrara explained, "but a lot of times he would spend days working on one edge" (T. Ferrara, quoted in M. Stevens and A. Swan, *De Kooning: An American Master*, New York, 2005, p. 602). In *Untitled VII*, a female form emerges along the left edge in blue outlines – rooting the abstraction in a de Kooning-esque nod to the female form.

"The heavy impasto and foamy bliss in his 70's paintings gave way to sanded and scraped surfaces, rainbows of colour yielding to thin ribbons twisting on bare backgrounds. You can still see the lyrical, seemingly effortless graphic virtuosity in some of the airy forms that loop and spin across these canvases"²

Other works from this period are in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Kunsthaus Zurich; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

¹ J. Zilczer, "Chapter 5: Looking Back," *A Way of Living: The Art of Willem de Kooning*, New York, Phaidon, 2014, p. 232.

² M. Kimmelman, "*he Lives hey Lived; Life is Short, Art is Long*," *New York Times Magazine*, January 4, 1998.



Willem de Kooning, *Untitled V*, 1982. Museum of Modern Art, New York



Willem de Kooning, *Untitled VI*, 1984. Museum Ludwig, Cologne



SKARSTEDT



Eric Fischl

Christian Retreat

1980

oil on canvas

64 x 96 inches

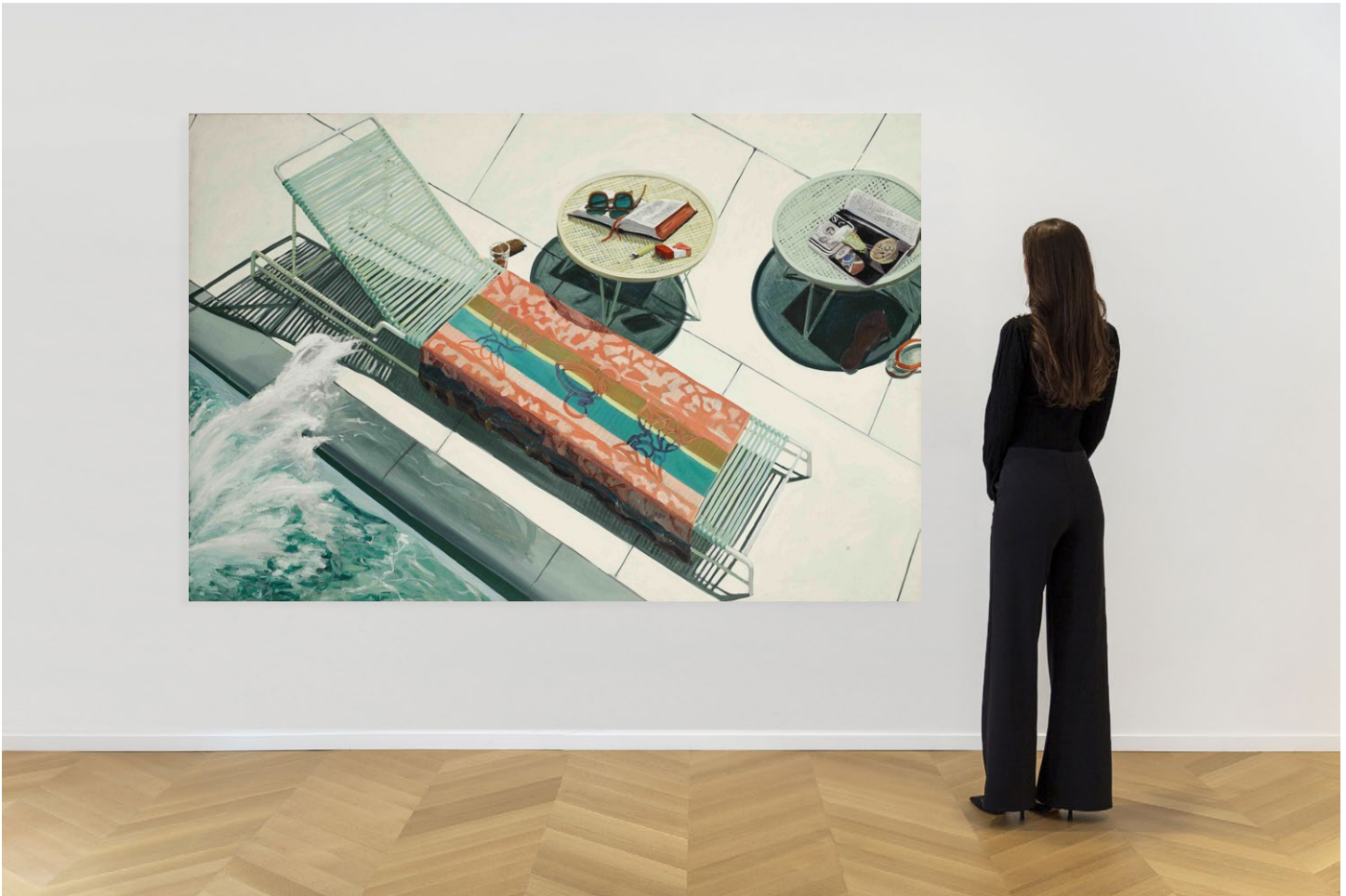
162.6 x 243.8 cm

titled, signed, and dated *CHRISTIAN RETREAT Born Again Retreat*,

Eric Fischl '80 (on the reverse)

(Inv #6238)

\$950,000



Eric Fischl's work is often characterized by a voyeuristic quality, offering the viewer a glimpse of an intimate moment. These moments are direct, sending out sophisticated psychological shocks. *Christian Retreat* (1980) displays a moment at once distinct and curious, as a splash of water approaches a vacated poolside recliner. On the closer of the two side tables rests a Bible, sunglasses, Marlboro cigarettes, and a lighter; the further table holds a magazine left open to an advertisement of TV dinner and beer, with abandoned sandals strewn underneath. Fischl only provides hints at who may have been lounging in this chair, but gives no clear answer as to what propelled them to dive into the water.

Unique within Fischl's oeuvre for its lack of identifiable figure, *Christian Retreat* is permeated with a sense of interiority, and maintains the cold intimacy he has become so well-known for. Having grown up in middle-class American suburbia, Fischl has long been drawn to its landscapes and cultural values for his subject matter, and he paints these themes with poignant deftness. For example, water, and particularly pools, are a recurring motif within his work. While on the one hand they function as symbols of a certain level of financial achievement and the scramble for upward mobility, on the other they operate as sites of the ennui and tension that this position within society contains.

The title likewise evokes all manner of associations and possible interpretations. What exactly is the "retreat" to which Fischl's title speaks? Is the offscreen figure on an actual Christian retreat, or perhaps running from Christianity itself? Painted in 1980, the conservative values of the era are represented in the details of the present painting, placing it within a distinct sense of time and place. Yet, it is latent with Fischl's characteristic critiques of consumerism and those values of the era.

Fischl's work has remained prescient for so many decades for the way he is able to hold up a mirror to our society, asking viewers to see life for what it really is while simultaneously reserving judgment in favor of a kind of innate understanding. Even without a central figure to latch onto, or perhaps for this very reason, it becomes clear that the subject of *Christian Retreat*, is, in fact, all of us.

SKARSTEDT



Günther Förg

Untitled

2001

acrylic on canvas

47 3/8 x 39 5/8 inches

120.3 x 100.6 cm

signed and dated *Förg 01* (upper right)

(Inv #9286)

\$350,000



A maze of crisscrossing lines of red, green, black, gray, and yellow, Günther Förg's *Untitled* (2001) uses the simplicity of the line to self-reflexively ask what it means to create a painting. Attempting to create a painting that is reduced down to its most essential parts, works such as *Untitled* explore how these elements of line and color can transcend subject matter to evoke a sense of complete freedom, for the marks left on the canvas are simultaneously gestural and precise, intimate yet sweeping. Förg's lack of interest in conceptual understandings of a painting, therefore, give way to a more intuitive approach to art making.

This idea can be found throughout Förg's oeuvre, but becomes particularly apparent in the series from the last handful of years of his life. *Untitled* belongs to a series known as the *Grid Paintings*, a group of works begun in the early 1990s defined by the matrices of quick, colorful strokes. These themselves were a transformation and continuation of his *Fenster-Aquarelle*, or *Window Watercolors*, that took the art historical motif of the window that was first popularized as a metaphor for the illusionary and flat picture plane during the Renaissance, and explored how it could be used as a vehicle for abstraction and the painterly act itself. Distinctly aware of his art historical predecessors, Förg's *Grid Paintings* both continue this lineage while engendering an entirely new way of both making and seeing.

SKARSTEDT



Günther Förg

Untitled

2008

acrylic and oil on canvas

66 7/8 x 78 3/4 inches

170 x 200 cm

signed and dated *Förg 08* (upper right)

(Inv #9267)

\$1,200,000



Painted in 2008, Förg's *Untitled* from his *Tupfenbilder* series is a celebration of the sheer act of painting, highlighting the suppleness of the brush stroke through an expressive application of rose pinks, bright reds, cool grays, and earthy browns and greens that render every bit of texture visible. The German word for “spot paintings,” the series is noteworthy for its position as his final body of work before he was taken ill and ceased painting in 2009.

Born out of his earlier series of “grid paintings,” the *Tupfenbilder* takes the lattice structure of the grids and morphs them into expressive, lyrical waves of color that appear to float on top of the off-white canvas—a color Förg chose for its contrast to the bright hues of the rest of the painting. The aesthetic choices of form and color speak to Förg's theoretical practice, particularly his formal purism, belief in the artwork as object, and an analytical interest in space.

The series likewise took inspiration from images of Francis Bacon's studio. Förg saw a kind of intimate familiarity in the drips and splatters that covered every inch of Bacon's workspace. While Bacon used the walls and doors around him to wipe his brushes of excess paint, Förg would similarly work out the value of a color by dabbing the pigment from his brush onto a cloth or paper surface. That his inspiration is at least partially drawn from an artist one would not immediately connect to Förg speaks to the importance of the history of modern and contemporary painting in his work. As curator Gavin Delahunty noted in the catalogue for Förg's major 2018 retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum:

“Each canvas conveys decades of attention to the history of art with an emphatic sureness. They are a return, in the sense that they resist the archives of his painterly practice to draw on previous compositional elements that held hidden potential. They are both old and new; and it is this tension that powers these works...His decades-long exercise of looking at gesture, color, line and composition had prepared him for the successful integration of all these elements into painting that had a directness, intensity, and carefree abandon that consolidated and confirmed his long-buried instinctive abilities.”¹

1. Gavin Delahunty, “Günther Förg: Apparitions of Modernism,” in *Günther Förg: A Fragile Beauty* (New Haven: Yale University Press with Stedelijk Museum and Dallas Museum of Art, 2018), 72-73.

SKARSTEDT



Hans Josephsohn

Untitled

1990

brass

47 1/4 x 27 1/2 x 18 7/8 inches

120 x 70 x 48 cm

Edition 1 of 6, with 2 AP

signed and dated *JOS 90* (on the base)

(Inv #9196.1)

\$200,000



Over the course of six decades, Hans Josephsohn remained exceptionally devoted to the human figure—its contours, its spatial depth, and its very essence. Inspired by ancient influences from Greek, Egyptian, and Assyrian sculpture, as well as Medieval art, Romanesque churches, and Indian temple reliefs, Josephsohn connects these disparate influences in his sculptures to create forms that feel simultaneously ancient and modern. Mottled with the vestiges of the artist's hand, their textured surfaces and austere presence speak to his own fraught experience to humanity. Although he was never one to dwell on his biography, his experiences as a German Jew at the dawn of World War II, forced to migrate first to Italy and then to Switzerland, undoubtedly played an role not only in Josephsohn's unwavering interest in the fact of the human body in space, but in the intimate quiet that surrounds them.

Josephsohn's faces and forms exist in the liminal space between abstraction and figuration. At once deeply specific and personal, they are also ethereally devoid of individualization. Josephsohn worked by building his objects in plaster or clay through an intuitive process of addition and subtraction—a process in which his original model's features would be blurred, expanded, or cut away, leaving only mere suggestions at identifiable features. Indeed, Josephsohn saw his models as mere vehicles to speak to more universal themes, and this blend of figuration and abstraction allows his sculptures to feel familiar, while at the same time allowing the viewer to project their own associations onto the work. Subsequently cast in brass, works such as *Untitled* (1990) offer a profound sense of contemplation and connection in a world characterized by rapid change and perspectives, reminding us of the power of art to capture the essence of the human experience.

SKARSTEDT



Hans Josephsohn

Untitled (Angela)

2000

brass

24 3/4 x 14 1/2 x 14 7/8 inches

63 x 37 x 38 cm

Edition 5 of 6, with 2 AP

signed, dated and numbered *JOS 2000 5/6* (on the base)

(Inv #9198.5)

\$100,000



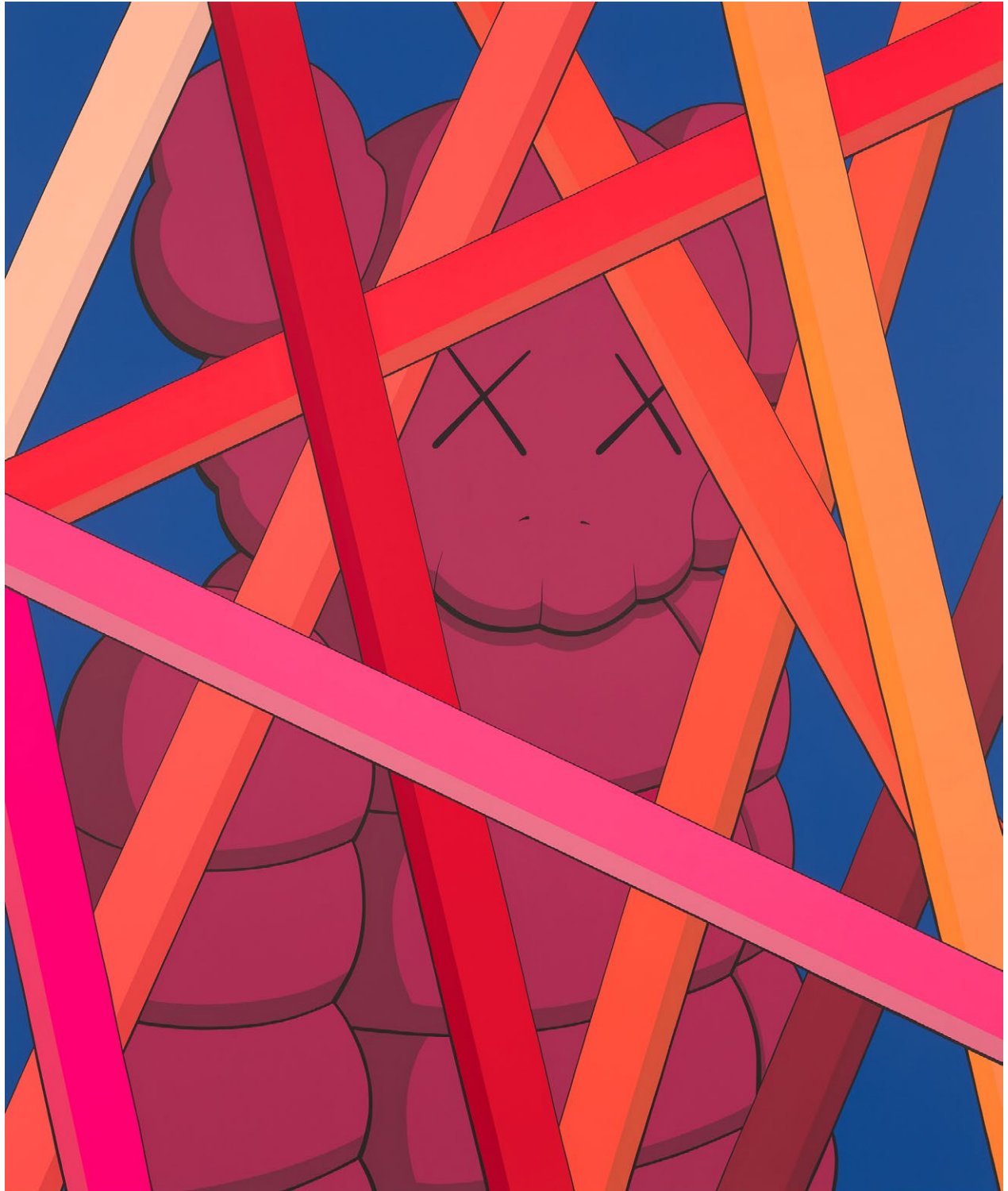
“Henri Gaudier-Brzeska famously said, ‘Sculptural energy is the mountain. Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.’ Think about mountains: they are extremely stable, ancient. They are formed through massive events, but there is a great slowness to them. For me, mountains are reassuring. When you meditate, imagining yourself as a mountain is considered one of the great stabilizers. The mountains survive us; they survive calamity. Sculpture has some of this permanence—Josephsohn’s certainly has....

“If I look at Josephsohn’s work, I have to think of the *Venus of Willendorf*, of Neolithic art, or of comets or asteroids being sent to us from outer space. Increasingly, scientists believe that life on Earth came from an asteroid impact, so actually our origin might be cosmic. When I think about sculpture at its best, when I think about Josephsohn, it feels like that. His work subconsciously reminds me of our cosmic origin. Of moon rocks, Martian landscapes, asteroids. His sculpture goes far back in time, not hundreds but hundreds of thousands of years, before there was life....

“I believe that art has to return to its reparative and, in many ways, utopian source. That’s why I am so moved to look at Josephsohn.”¹

1 Thomas Houseago, “Josephsohn,” *Blau International*, no. 3 (Winter 2020/2021): 99.

SKARSTEDT



KAWS

SAFE INSIDE

2022

acrylic on canvas

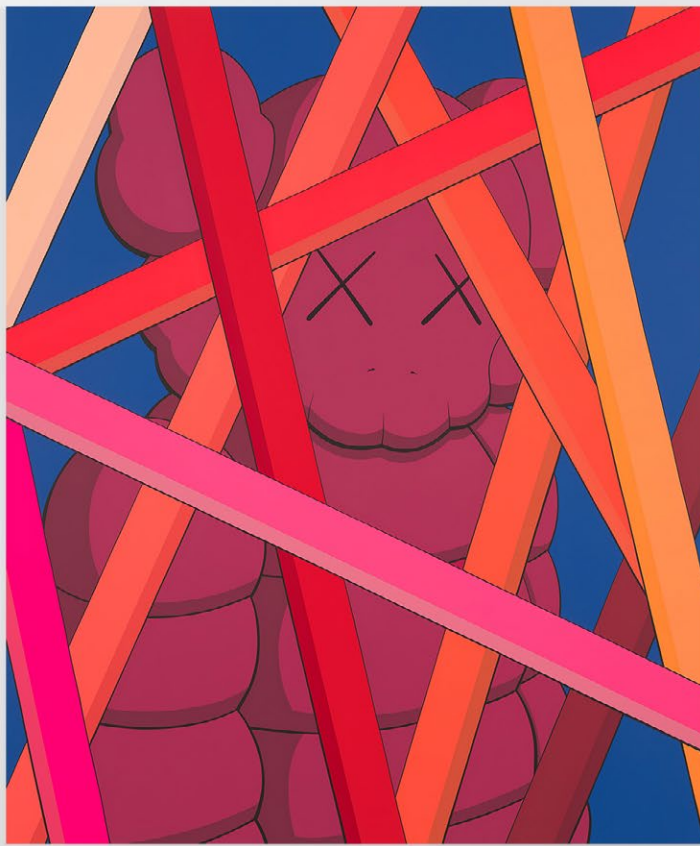
86 x 72 inches

218.4 x 182.9 cm

signed and dated *KAWS*, 22 (on the reverse)

(Inv #9361)

\$675,000



SAFE INSIDE (2022) belongs to a body of work created between 2022 and early 2023, although the nascent thought behind the series extends as far back as 2020, when global events allowed, or even forced, us to take a more inward, meditative reflection on the transient nature of time. In keeping with the rest of the series, *SAFE INSIDE*, CHUM appears before the viewer with a complex configuration of bright bands of paint acting as an additional barrier between us and him, calling forth the idea that time can feel exceptionally constricting or isolating. Time's seemingly illusionistic nature binds us to a sense of reality, and yet it is a device of our own making. It feels linear and fixed, but, in reality, is quite cyclical and malleable. When the seeds of this series were first planted, this understanding was at the forefront of our collective mind as we faced personal confinement, with little to do but experience the passing of time.

As KAWS continued to delve into these themes, the paintings in the series became progressively more elaborate and, at times, chaotic. This heightened frenzy likewise speaks to a kind of future we may find ourselves entering. Yet, KAWS ultimately leaves his viewers with a palpable optimism for the future. Whether through his choice of vivid colors or the sense of community fostered through their iconography and thematic musings, paintings such as *SAFE INSIDE* make clear that not all hope is lost, evoking what John Keats termed “negative capability,” or the ability to seek artistic beauty and make the most of what is around you, even when that prompts, or is provoked by, confusion and uncertainty.

In June 2023, *SAFE INSIDE* was transformed into an advertising panel, the kind one would see on the side of a bus stop in any metropolitan city, as part of the 2023 Kunsthal Charlottenborg Biennale, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Jeppe Ugelvig. Displayed in Copenhagen Central station before traveling to the courtyard of the Kunsthal Charlottenborg and then to public spaces across Denmark, the exhibition sought to investigate the advertising space and how it can be of use to artist's today. As an artist who came up on manipulating bus stop advertisements, and who continues to frequently collaborate with global brands, KAWS was a natural fit to explore these themes, and his use of *SAFE INSIDE* illustrates the global application of his message.

SKARSTEDT



KAWS

UNTITLED

2012

acrylic on canvas

40 inches diameter

101.6 cm diameter

signed and dated *KAWS..12* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9094)

\$325,000



Known for exploiting the ubiquity of cartoon imagery, using their familiarity to speak to more nuanced universal themes, KAWS achieves this effect in *UNTITLED* (2012) through a close cropping of the figure, honing in on the eyes to underscore the emotion hidden behind them. Traditionally, the tondo format was used to emphasize the center of an image by focusing on a scene within a frame that separates it from the rest of its environment. KAWS subverts this trope in his tondos, presenting his viewer with an extreme close up that calls into question the peripheral details: how big is this character, really? What is happening around them? Which of his characters is this? Oscillating between figuration and abstraction, foreground and background become indistinguishable, highlighting the painting's material significance in equal measure with the latent emotion underneath.

SKARSTEDT



Jeff Koons

Mountains

2000

oil on canvas

120 x 168 inches

304.8 x 426.7 cm

signed, titled and dated *JEFF KOONS "MOUNTAINS" 2000* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9121)

\$1,800,000



Marked by an overwhelming sense of frenetic desire, Jeff Koons's *Mountains* (2000) operates as a celebration of yearning, an evocation of quintessential Americana, and a commentary (although not necessarily a disavowal of) consumerism and media saturation. These themes, which have come to define Koons's four decades as one of the most prominent artists of his generation, take on even more potency and prescience than when the work was originally made. Part of his *Easyfun-Ethereal* series, Koons combines found images of food, landscapes, and the human form to create a spectacularly ornate composition that is filled to the brim and yet intriguingly flat. A postcard-beautiful seascape is almost entirely obscured by a closeup of a partially eaten Klondike Bar, a cut open limited edition chocolate Toaster Studel that looks like its straight off the box's advertisement, a ribbon, and pieces of mahogany hair blowing in the wind. These varied images—which Koons pulled from advertisements as well as his own personal photographs—creates a multifaceted sensorial experience. The prepackaged sweets invoke a sense of taste, the hair a sense of touch, and the sand and water a sense of sights and sounds.

Similarly, this mashup of images asks viewers to consider both childlike and adult notions of pleasure. Pleasure, for Koons, has always been paramount. As he noted in 2002, “You know, all of life is...just about being able to find amazement in things. I think it's easy for people to feel connected to that situation of not tiring of looking at something over and over again, and not feeling any sense of boredom, but feeling interest. Life is amazing, and visual experience is amazing.”¹ In this way, the juxtaposition of how pleasure can be perceived throughout one's life allows works such as *Mountains* to operate in a liminal space between works that touch of purely adult pleasure, such as his *Made in Heaven* series, or purely childlike pleasure, such as his *Celebration* series.

Mountains first debuted at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin as one of the original seven monumentally-sized paintings commissioned by the museum. In all of the works in the series, Koons compiled found digital imagery and rendered them on the canvas through the traditional medium of oil paint. This dichotomy of digital and analog, coupled with the all-over composition, infuses the work with the vernacular of American life and the bombardment of visual stimuli in our modern-day culture while remaining innately accessible and lighthearted.

1 Jeff Koons quoted in David Sylvester, *Interviews with American Artists* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2002), 334.

SKARSTEDT



Robert Mapplethorpe
Self-Portrait in Drag, NYC
1980

gelatin silver print
30 x 30 inches
76.2 x 76.2 cm
Edition 1 of 1
(Inv #4623.1)
\$350,000



One of the few self-portraits Mapplethorpe executed during 1980, *Self-Portrait in Drag, NYC* sees the artist blur his gender identity through the application of heavy makeup. Gazing before the viewer bare-chested, muscular, and doe-eyed, this image questions established notions of “male” and “female” through the juxtaposition of conventional signifiers of these identities, thereby revealing them to be socially constructed terms. Arriving in the art world at a moment that saw the simultaneous births of photography as a fine art and the underground gay culture of New York City, Mapplethorpe’s work began to take on themes of gender and sexuality as early as 1969, when he began making erotic collages. By 1980, the year of the present photograph, he had already solidified his classically elegant style, drawn to the minimalist sophistication of black-and-white photography. Photographs have often been analyzed for their ability to convey a sense of truth while presenting a completely falsified image, and *Self-Portrait in Drag, NYC* seems to revel in this dichotomy, propelling viewers to question their own beliefs about societal structures.

A smaller-scaled edition of this work can be found in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

SKARSTEDT



Agnes Martin

Untitled #5

1989

acrylic and graphite on canvas

72 x 72 inches

182.9 x 182.9 cm

signed and dated *a. martin/ 1989* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9372)

\$5,000,000



“I hope I have made it clear that the work is *about* perfection as we are aware of it in our minds but that the paintings are very far from being perfect—completely removed in fact—even as we ourselves are....The struggle of existence, nonexistence is not my struggle. The establishment of the perfect state not mine to do. Being outside that struggle I turn to perfection as I see it in my mind, and as I also see it with my eyes even in the dust. Although I do not represent it very well in my work, all seeing the work, being already familiar with the subject, are easily reminded of it.”¹

In a never-ending quest to make manifest her vision of the truths of life—which were centered around her belief in what she called the sublimity of reality, perfection, or transcendent reality—Agnes Martin eventually arrived at her signature grids, in which meditative planes of color are demarcated by the use of the line. Simple in its conceit, this nevertheless provided endless inspiration for Martin, including the series of *Black Paintings* to which *Untitled #5* (1989) belongs.

The series was completed in 1989, and each work is defined by its deep palette, which is in fact a dark gray instead of a true black. A departure from the pale colors she had used previously, there is a resilient, quiet stillness brought forward by the shifting gray tones that provides a contemplative experience for the viewer. As one embarks on this reflection, the subtle shifts that make this painting decidedly human come to the foreground: the play in spacing between the lines becomes more apparent, the small tremors of the graphite as she traced her hand along the canvas make themselves known, and an underlying rhythm begins to emerge the longer one looks. The feelings that arise from the act of viewing a work such as *Untitled #5*, a kind of quieting of the mind, gets the viewer ever closer to Martin’s conception of perfection.

1 Agnes Martin, “Journal Excerpts,” in Barbara Haskell, ed., *Agnes Martin* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), 25.

SKARSTEDT



Albert Oehlen

Untitled

1993

oil on printed fabric

36 1/4 x 25 1/2 inches

92 x 65 cm

signed and dated *A. Oehlen 93* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9058)

\$450,000



“In painting, you really have a completely absurd way of going about things. You’ve got something three-dimensional reduced to two dimensions, and that’s abstraction. Without this abstraction, you’d have to try painting on the object itself, or even to become the object. The work you do, the reshaping of reality into the picture, is such a remarkable transformation that it really doesn’t matter much whether an apple is still recognizable as such or not...If you understand the accomplishments of abstract painting, then you don’t have to paint abstract at all anymore. With hindsight, the difference is not that great.”¹

With its daubs and lines of earthy browns, deep blues, and white painted atop floral-patterned fabric, *Untitled* (1993) belongs to the series of *Fabric Paintings* Albert Oehlen produced in the 1990s that has come to define so much of what has made him one of the most important painters of the latter half of the twentieth century. Using found fabric as a support instead of a pristine blank canvas, Oehlen complicates the notion of the artist’s hand as central to modern painting. By including pre-determined motifs and compositions, the focus moves away from the subject or finished result towards the process of painting and the questioning of its conventions. Having begun to work in abstraction only five years before embarking on the *Fabric Paintings*, Oehlen was deeply consumed with the term “abstraction” itself and how it was defined in an art-historical context. Through works such as *Untitled*, he has laid bare the absurdity of the sheer act of painting.

SKARSTEDT



Marco Pariani

Drawing a Landscape

2023

oil, acrylic and spray paint on linen

80 x 61 inches

203.2 x 154.9 cm

signed, titled, dated twice and inscribed *Marco Pariani 2023 DRAWING A LANDSCAPE 2023*
(OCT.) OIL + ACRYLIC + SPRAY PAINT ON LINEN 80 X 61" (on the reverse)

(Inv #9329)

\$80,000



Drawing a Landscape (2023) belongs to Marco Pariani's recent body of work that challenges and expands upon the traditional notions of the landscape genre. In these works, a central abstracted image is surrounded by a lusciously black background, its depth heightened by a layer of pink gesso underneath the surface. The primary image is sourced from pictures of amusement park rides the artist finds while searching Instagram or Google Images, and these sources oscillate between innocent images of children enjoying perfectly functional rides, and more sinister shots of broken down and abandoned remnants of childhood memories past. Pariani does not distinguish between urban and rural terrain, and instead views them as two sides of the same coin, often with fluid boundaries between the two. Works such as *Drawing a Landscape* persistently question what defines a "landscape" in contemporary societies, which are often marked more by high-rises and machinery than any natural indication of land. Neither deriding this newfound "landscape," nor entirely celebrating it, Pariani nevertheless realigns the art historical genre of the landscape to imaging our contemporary backdrop in a new light.

SKARSTEDT



Pablo Picasso

L'Etreinte

9 September 1968

pencil on paper

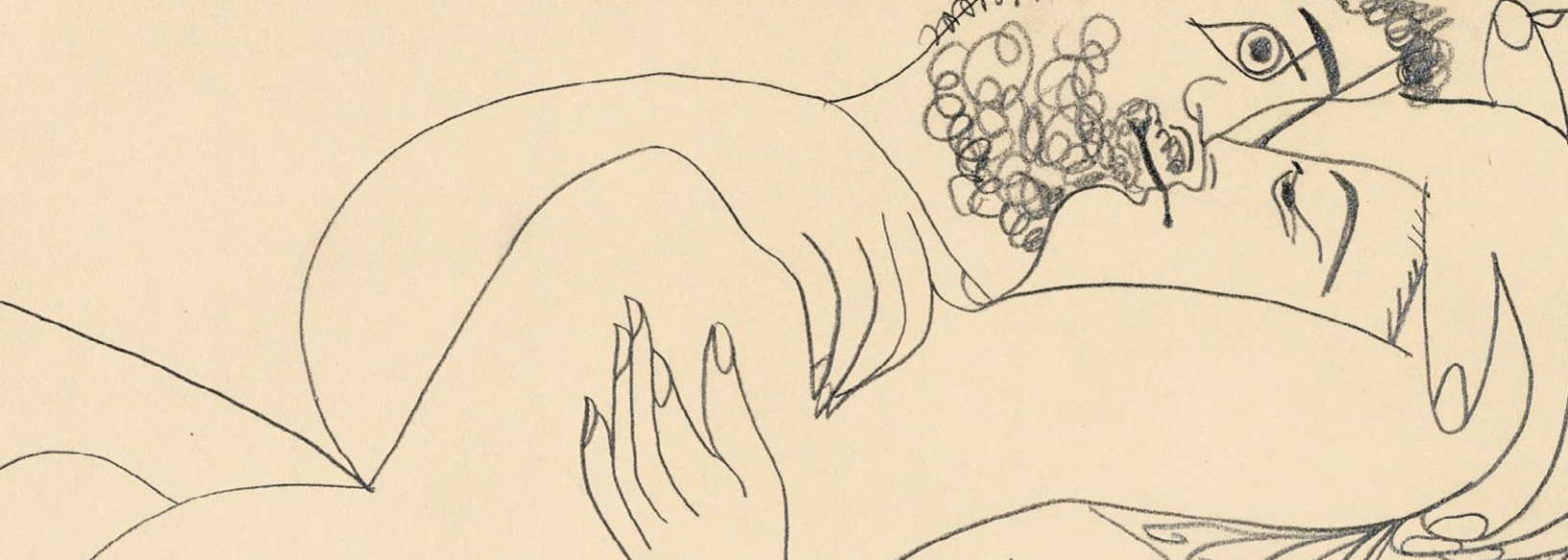
19 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches

49.5 x 64.8 cm

signed, dated and numbered 9.9.68.VI Picasso (lower right)

(Inv #8428)

\$850,000



‘Picasso made a single being out of two, expressing the carnal fusion brought forth by the act of kissing. Never had erotic power been suggested with such realism. He bared sexuality in an explicit way in *L'Étreinte*. ‘Art is never chaste,’ the painter said¹
- Marie-Laure Bernadac

Picasso drew the present work on 9 September 1968, a day of frenzied creative output focusing on his continued preoccupation with the theme of the lovers. He executed a group of works entitled *L'Étreinte*, depicting two lovers in varying stages of sexual activity ranging from kissing to making love. This exquisite example is one of the most complete and accomplished of these drawings further emphasised by the mock frame Picasso drew to surround his erotic composition, elevating its importance. In addition, the man's beard and even the flecks that Picasso used to show his pubic hair denote an attention that did not extend to most of the other works in the group. The completeness of the composition is augmented by the hatching to the right, alluding to the bunched material of the bedsheets.

Picasso is by no means the first to shock the viewer with his outward depiction of previously illicit subject matter. Instead, he follows the legacies of the old masters such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres who disguised his fascination with the female form under the guise of an exotic “other” in *le bain turc*. Other significant influences on this body of work include Raphael, Nicholas Poussin and Édouard Manet.

Whilst Picasso's influences range widely, his works are expressions of the artist's lived experiences. Residing in almost complete seclusion with Jacqueline Roque at Notre-Dame-de-Vie in Mougins, the artist was able to immerse himself entirely in his work, painting without disturbance for hours each day. The result was an exuberant burst of creativity that belied the artist's age.

Picasso's entire oeuvre is punctuated by his keen interest in the sexuality of the nude form, frequently intertwined with his relationships. From his sensual neoclassical works of the thirties through the *Peintre et modèle* series of the early sixties, Picasso had long been exploring the theme of the embrace, every new muse bringing a renewed creative energy to this recurring preoccupation across all media. 1968 was a fruitful year for Picasso who created his revealing series, 347 which illuminates the present work. In this series, Picasso depicts a multitude of scenes with recurring motifs of a painter making love to a woman. After all, Picasso's works were but an extension of the artist himself: as he declared, ‘I paint the same way some people write their autobiography’.²

L'Étreinte represents a fantasy and a manifestation of desire, not only for the pleasures of the flesh but for the vitality of youth. It shows his enduring interest in the masters of the past whilst remaining unpredictably fresh and vibrant in his treatment of the subject.

1 B. Leal, C. Piot and M. Bernadac, *The Ultimate Picasso*, New York, 2000, p. 458.

2 J. Richardson, *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints, 1953-1972*, exh. cat., London, 1988, p. 28

SKARSTEDT



David Salle

Wonder

2013

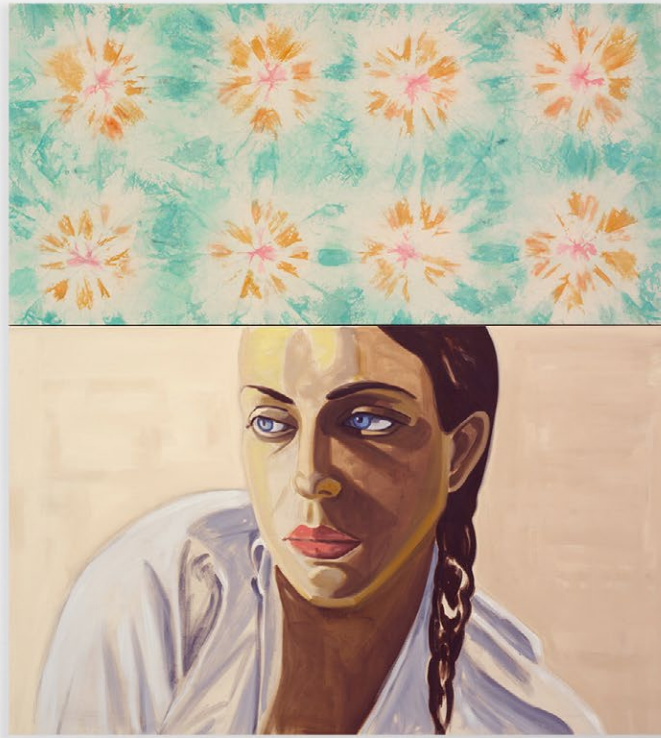
oil and ink on canvas

75 x 68 inches

190.5 x 172.7 cm

(Inv #4642)

\$250,000



David Salle, an American painter who helped define the postmodern sensibility, combines figuration with a varied pictorial language of multi-imagery. Since the mid 1980s, his work has incorporated allusions to Baroque artists: Diego Velázquez and Gian Lorenzo Bernini, to Post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne, to Alberto Giacometti and René Magritte, and to Post-WWII America. Inspired by these art historical modes, contemporary media advertisements, and design, Salle creates a multi-referential assemblage in *Wonder* (2013).

This work, aligned with Salle's oeuvre, challenges the viewer to abandon all preconceived notions of context. In juxtaposing unrelated imagery, Salle reflects on his own preoccupation with notions of contemporary culture and their fixation with questioning meaning. Salle's artistic style, similar to Rauschenberg's, delves into a transitive pictorial language where each unrelated image gains a unique relation to the other through proximity.

The artist states, "Every painting, consciously or not, contains instructions on where to look for a way in, for what it's about. This is contained in the painting itself, but you have to know where to look."¹

¹ Fredrick Tuten, "David Salle at the Edges," *Art in America* (September 1997).

SKARSTEDT



Andy Warhol

Man Ray

1974

acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

40 x 40 inches

101.6 x 101.6 cm

signed, titled and dated twice *Man Ray 1974 Andy Warhol 74* (on the overlap)

(Inv #9327)

\$1,300,000



Executed in 1974, several years before Man Ray's death, this portrait by Andy Warhol presents the sitter seemingly unaffected by time, his confident expression underpinned by the energetic brushwork. This iconic image is a direct reference to the Polaroid taken by Warhol in 1973, when he captured this endearing moment. Always in control, he instructed Man Ray to "hold the cigarette in his mouth, take off his glasses, and keep his hands away from his face."¹ The meeting of these two masterminds was orchestrated by by Turin based dealer, Giovanni Anselmino in Paris and captured via one of Warhol's favourite mediums, a Polaroid.

The present work is built up from a black silkscreen image that was finished with sky-blue acrylic paint. Thick, sweeping brushstrokes prevail across the canvas, highlighting the sitter and revealing the artist's hand. The worked surface of the painting points to Warhol's extended engagement with his subject and projects the sense of respect one does not feel in the images of his contemporaries. As Warhol's catalogue raisonné notes, 'Warhol's portraits of Man Ray show just how far he was willing to push painterliness, how freestyle the brush could become in his hands.'²

Whilst Warhol had begun accepting commissioned portraits of wealthy and celebrity sitters in the early 1970s, the present work was created from pure admiration. As a central figure in Dada and Surrealist movements, Man Ray holds a significant position in the Modern art historical canon. Warhol owned several of his photographs, paintings, and early books during his lifetime. He even noted in his diary that, while in Rome in 1977, he stayed in the same hotel suite as Man Ray had before his death³ A rich art historical dialogue exists between the two pioneering artists. Man Ray similarly executed portraits of celebrities contemporary to his lifetime. These celebrity portraits include actress Ada Garner, photographer Lee Miller, and artist Pablo Picasso. A diptych of Warhol's 1974 *Man Ray* paintings is part of the joint permanent collection of the Tate and National Galleries Scotland.

1. K. Goldsmith, R. Wolf and W. Koestenbaum, *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews: 1962–1987*, New York, 2004, pp.229–32.

2. N. Printz and S. King-Nero, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné: Paintings and Sculptures 1970–1974*, Vol. 3, New York, 2010, p. 374.

3. P. Hackett, eds. *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, Penguin Books, Ltd., London, 2010, pp. 25.

SKARSTEDT



Sue Williams

New Yellow and Orange

1996

oil on canvas

96 x 108 inches

243.8 x 274.3 cm

signed and dated *Sue Williams 1996* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9302)

\$250,000



“Once critics and viewers could look past the sexual content of Williams’s canvases, the sensuousness and sheer brilliance of her ‘lines’ became apparent. Thus a work like *Nem, Yellow, and Orange*, 1996, though rife with spread legs, limp penises and orifices, became noteworthy for its fantastical jumble of lines: thick, thin, curly, bumpy, rounded, curved. The energy of the painted lines, which almost seemed motorized on the canvas, singled Williams out as a leading practitioner of a new abstraction, a revitalized abstraction that was filtered through her experience as a woman and a painter. Content-seekers could still be satisfied by the sexual performances hidden within the whoosh of the thousands of paint strokes, but post-Pollock purists who thrive on gesture and improvisation saw in her the real-deal abstractionist comfortable with sacrificing (or burying) narrative to the delights of pure form. By 1996 it was clear that Williams was moving toward an abstraction that was not superseded by sexual content.”¹

SKARSTEDT



Christopher Wool

Untitled (P258)

1997

enamel on aluminum

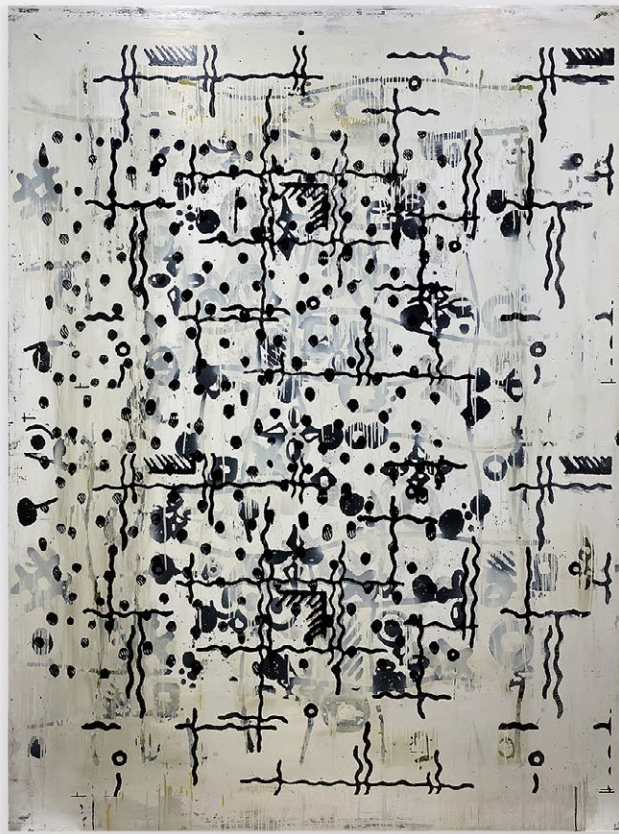
84 x 60 inches

213.4 x 152.4 cm

signed, dated and numbered *WOOL 1997 (P258)* (on the reverse)

(Inv #9376)

\$2,400,000



At once gesturally charged and aesthetically allusive, Christopher Wool's *Untitled (P258)* is a commanding example from the artist's corpus of abstract monochrome works. Executed in 1997, the present work juxtaposes a chaotic entropy with the austerity of its black and white palette, perfectly encapsulating Wool's anarchic painterly enterprise. Allowing the paint to sit directly on the surface without any of the absorption, the present work is executed on aluminium substrate which Wool would cease using by the end of the 1990s. Creating a striking juxtaposition, the textured, nearly transparent surface of white overpainted passages contrasts with the shiny gloss of black enamel. In the late 1980s, Wool began using semi-mechanical processes to create paintings. Using wallpaper pattern rollers, rubber stamps and stencils, he created all-over compositions of readymade motifs, banal patterns, and ubiquitous words and phrases on immaculate white aluminium surfaces in thick enamel paint. Combining the process-oriented practices of late-Minimalism with a quotidian "borrowing" from everyday life, Wool's paintings deftly sidestepped the baggage of painterly expressivity. Nevertheless, the mistakes and chance slippages of Wool's handmade-readymade method maintained a sense of free-hand energy in his work.

This work affords a highly revealing insight into the process of construction and destruction of pictorial vocabularies that have formed the foundation for Wool's conceptual and aesthetic enterprise. In the 1980s, amidst an artistic landscape predominated by neo-expressionist painting, Wool and a small enclave of artists, including Martin Kippenberger, Sigmar Polke, and Albert Oehlen, scrutinized the role of painting from within the medium, creating bodies of work that were inherently self-reflexive. Emerging from this context of painterly discourse, Wool's oeuvre has sought to dissect contemporary painting by exploring the potential of decorative images. Defined by its limited palette, compositional flatness, and dynamic layers of accumulation and erasure, the condensed imagery of the present work renders a myriad of art historical precedent with sensational economy.