

HOME FURNISHINGS

Sotheby's entices younger clientele with Wyeth's curated furnishings

May 20, 2016



Hans Wegner adjustable tub chair

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

International auction house Sotheby's is helping design destination Wyeth celebrate its twentieth anniversary.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Wyeth will be opening a new space in New York's Tribeca neighborhood, while Sotheby's will hold an auction of more than 200 pieces of Wyeth furniture and design objects. The collaboration with Wyeth will help Sotheby's appeal to burgeoning and aspirational collectors.

"[Wyeth co-founder] John Birch possesses one of the strongest curatorial visions I have encountered in this field," said Jodi Pollack, Co-Worldwide head of **Sotheby's** 20th century design department. "Truly appreciating his design philosophy and aesthetic requires firsthand experience with the objects and artists that inspire him.

"The pieces in our June sale reflect his unwavering commitment to good design principles and integrity of material and craftsmanship," he said. "John only acquires what he loves, and that personal approach radiates throughout the offering."

Mid-century modernism

The original Wyeth showroom quickly rose to prominence for its attentive culling of 20th century furniture. It can now be found at showrooms on Spring Street in New York, in Sagaponack on Long Island, NY's east end, at online retailer 1stdibs and in department store Barneys New York, with whom the brand has collaborated.



Gino Sarfatti table lamp

Moving from a curated pick of 20th century designer furniture from the biggest names, Wyeth later opened a studio to complement its selection with its own branded goods with the goal of maintaining the high standard of craftsmanship it showed with its curated selections.

"Wyeth: The Art of Timeless Design" will take place at Sotheby's New York on June 7. The collection will mix Scandinavian, American and European modernist pieces, including pieces from designers such as Hans Wgner, Finn Juhl, Gino Sarfatti, James Prestini and Carl Auboc.



Poul Henningson ceiling light

Accompanying these and other key designers of the period will be works designed and executed by Wyeth Studio.

"The selection presented in this auction is a collection of my personal favorite objects gathered over 20 years," said

John Birch, co-founder of Wyeth. "These pieces and the people that created them have inspired me and brought me great knowledge and joy. The collaboration with the remarkable staff of Sotheby's has been a unique and awesome experience."

Estimates for the items in the collection that will be auctioned begin at \$1,000 but range upward of \$70,000.



Carl Aubock candleholders

The low starting point shows that Sotheby's is attempting to encourage new collectors, who are priced out of the multi-million dollar art sales that the auction house is known for. Offering an opportunity for younger or newer collectors to obtain a high-end furnishing or design objects could initiate them to the hobby, which will stay with them as their income increases.

Breaking down borders

Sotheby's move to a younger, more accessibly priced market comes just after the mid-range auction market has become more visible.

Earlier this month, auctioneers Paddle8 and Auctionata have announced a merger to exploit a gap in the auction market.

Paddle8's focus on contemporary art and design and its timed auctions and charity sales format will complement Auctionata's "vintage luxury" and industry-first livestreaming, cross-pollinating their respective consumer base. The merger will help serve an online-oriented consumer segment at a more accessible price point, with items at all prices up to \$500,000 ([see story](#)).

While the collaboration with Wyeth represents an opportunity to attract younger affluents, Sotheby's has tampered with its model in other ways to expand its clientele.

For example, Sotheby's made it easier for consumers to bid on art from contemporary and modern masters through eBay's live auction platform.

The Impressionist & Modern Art Day Sale on May 10 and the Contemporary Art Day Auction on May 12 were accessible to eBay's millions of active buyers, who could sign up to bid live. This opened up museum-quality pieces to a wider international clientele, potentially raising the amount these pieces went for ([see story](#)).

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.