

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sotheby's brings in crowd with auction of Bowie-owned artworks

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Mick Rock's photo of David Bowie, on display at Sotheby's "Rock Style" exhibition in London

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

International auction house Sotheby's is commencing countdown for a three-part sale of the art collection of one of the world's most beloved figures.

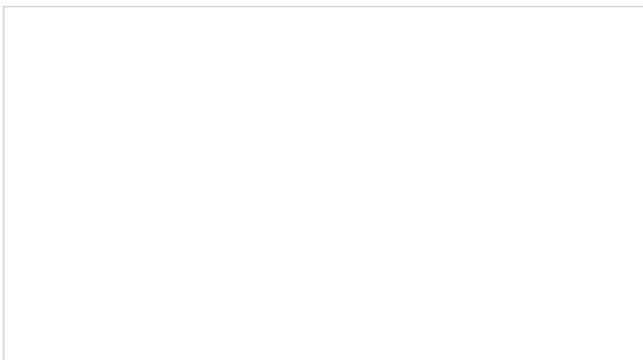
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Beginning July 20, Sotheby's will display the art owned by rock n' roll legend David Bowie, who passed away on Jan. 10 this year from cancer he kept hidden from the public, in its galleries ahead of a three-part auction. Mr. Bowie was a well-known admirer of artists ranging from Andy Warhol to Damien Hirst, and the breadth of his collection and the enormity of his popularity promise large crowds.

"Eclectic, unscripted, understated, David Bowie's collection offers a unique insight into the personal world of one of the 20th century's greatest creative spirits," said Oliver Barker, Europe chairman of [Sotheby's](#).

Starman

The exhibits will include works from Camden Town Group artists Harold Gilman and Frank Auerbach, assorted art from Peter Lanyon and Damian Hirst and various Contemporary African and Surrealist works.



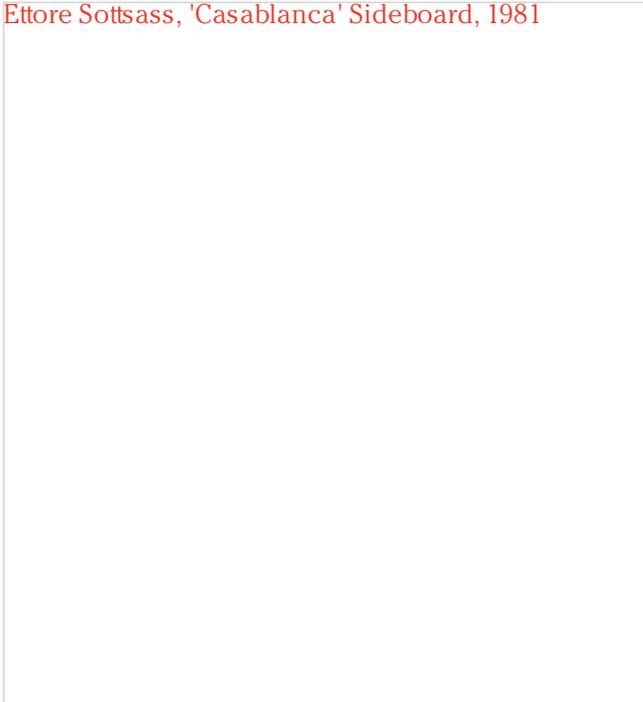
Damien Hirst, "Beautiful, shattering, slashing, violent, pinky, hacking, sphincter"

From July 20 to Aug. 9, Sotheby's St. George Street galleries will display a highlights preview to the public free of charge. The same collection will make its way to Los Angeles on Sept. 20-21, New York from Sept. 26-29 and Hong Kong Oct. 12-15.

The full exhibition, entitled Bowie/Collector, is exclusive to Sotheby's New Bond Street in London and runs Nov. 1-10. It will be followed by a three-part auction.

The first two parts of the auction, held the evening of Nov. 10 and on Nov. 11, will include Mr. Bowie's modern and contemporary art. The third part, also taking place Nov. 11, will focus on post-modernist design art, including the works of Ettore Sottsass and the Memphis Group.

Ettore Sottsass, 'Casablanca' Sideboard, 1981



Ettore Sottsass, 'Casablanca' Sideboard, 1981

In addition to his renown as a musician, Mr. Bowie also garnered attention for his work as an actor, where his roles ranged from the art-house acclaim as eponymous character of "The Man Who Fell To Earth" and a war prisoner in "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence" to more popular turns as the Goblin King in "Labyrinth" and Nikola Tesla in "The Prestige."

Likewise, his eclectic stage costuming and androgynous persona turned Mr. Bowie into something of a fashion icon, beginning with the album cover of "The Man Who Sold The World," featuring the songwriter in a dress. Comparatively little known is his avid art collecting hobbies, which he began cultivating early in his career.

Sotheby's has also created a video to promote the auction and exhibition. Interspersed with Mr. Bowie's own quotes, "Art is all I ever wanted to own, it has always been for me a stable nourishment," the video shows several of the artworks that will be featured as two workers prepare the gallery. It is set to an edit of Mr. Bowie's 1977 song "Moss Garden."

"Bowie/Collector"

The chance for fans to deepen their understanding of the star will likely spur traffic to the exhibitions.

Many of those fans may be relatively unfamiliar with the Sotheby's brand, providing it an opportunity to forge relationships with new consumers. At the same time, the distinction of the artworks themselves will attract the discerning art crowd that is more familiar with Sotheby's, meaning the brand can attract new consumers without alienating its regular clientele.

Heroes

The loss of Mr. Bowie was felt deeply by the luxury industry, which expressed its collective sadness earlier this year.

After news of musician David Bowie's death broke, luxury brands found their own ways to pay tribute to the late performer.

The singer, who was as much known for his fashion and style choices as he was for his music, was honored with tributes ranging from social posts to runway shows. In light of his death, luxury brands found ways to honor an artist who inspired them both personally and professionally ([see story](#)).

Sotheby's is not the first brand to leverage the artist's popularity in the hopes of making a connection.

German automaker Audi showcased its latest vehicle in style, with a tribute to the singer.

The Audi R8 V10 plus featured during Super Bowl 50 this past February with a David Bowie soundtrack, a surefire way to get more than a third of the United States population to take notice so soon after his death. A memorable Super Bowl commercial that strikes a chord with consumers can give a brand a long-lasting boost in awareness and generate desire and sentiment ([see story](#)).

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