

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Phillips reaches out to new collectors with accessible auction

July 7, 2017



Donald Baechler's "Coney Island" is part of Phillips and Artsy's "Summer School." Image credit: Phillips

By STAFF REPORTS

Auction house Phillips is working with Artsy on an online-only sale aimed at the novice art buyer.

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Titled "Summer School," the collaboratively curated auction kicked off July 7 and will run through July 25. Online channels in particular have played a large part in connecting new buyers with auction houses, giving them a way in to what could otherwise feel an intimidating process.

School's in for summer

Included within the auction are pieces from both established and emerging artists, reflecting the names that would be sold during one of Phillips' contemporary auctions. However, the artwork for this auction is being offered online only and at a more approachable price point, allowing more interested buyers to participate.

The late Tom Wesselmann's "Still Life with Petunias, Lilies and Fruit" is estimated between \$10,000-\$15,000, while Tom Otterness' statue "Lovers" from 1992 has an estimate between \$6,000 and \$8,000. While the auction information appears on both partners' Web sites, bidding will take place on Artsy.



Tom Wesslmann's "Still Life with Petunias, Lilies and Fruit." Image credit: Phillips

For those just starting out, the auction will include information from specialists on each of the lots, providing background.

Along with being featured online, a number of works from the sale will be showcased at Phillips' New York headquarters on Park Avenue from July 19-25.

"Online sales have become an integral part of the auction business and Artsy has made a significant impact on this front," said Megan Newcome, director of digital strategy at Phillips, in a statement. "Our partnership with them has allowed us to expand the reach of our live auctions to a younger, technology-forward collector community.

"We are excited to build on the success of this ongoing partnership and work with them in a new capacity by collaborating on Summer School, our first online-only sale together," she said.

While this is the first sale co-produced by the partners, this is not the first time Artsy and Phillips have worked together.

"When Artsy debuted the live auction technology one year ago, with Phillips as one of our launch partners, we knew providing Artsy's global collecting base with the opportunity to engage in live auctions in real time would be a key value-add for our partners and users alike," said Devang Thakkar, head of auctions at Artsy. "Now, we're excited to see Artsy's audience of online bidders help expand our partners' existing calendars via new sales like Summer School.

"This is also a showcase for property sourced through Artsy's growing consignment referral service that allows users to sell works for their collections with top-tier auction houses like Phillips," he said.

Online art dealer Saatchi Art is showing just how pervasive digital technology has become in all sectors after it found that online sales grew 24 percent in one year.

Affluent consumers are becoming more comfortable with buying art online, with 42 percent of galleries claiming customers are willing to purchase more art priced at more than \$5,000 online. The online sector has paved the way for more up-and-comers to be noticed and reach a broader audience, but also is also changing decision-making process, with social media becoming a significant influencer ([see story](#)).