

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Christie's highlights female surrealism in new feature film

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*The women highlighted in the surrealism spot bring to light works that are likely to appeal to the new art collectors taking the market by storm. Image credit: Christie's*

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Auction house **Christie's** is diving into the surrealist world of notable women painters.

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Out with a mini-documentary entitled, *Nobody's Muse: A Guide to the Rebel Women of Surrealism*, the company showcases female surrealists of the 1920s. The move is timely, as more people are turning into contemporary art collectors most of which are women.

### Women's world

Female artists, especially surrealist painters, have not historically enjoyed the spotlight that men have generally been granted.

Christie's is addressing this invisibility, working to bring attention to the impressive women by putting their work centerstage. In the resulting documentary, the company taps industry experts from in-house and beyond to provide narrative-based education on the field and the artists themselves.

*Christie's presents "Nobody's Muse: A Guide to the Rebel Women of Surrealism"*

The piece addresses the fact that while women were viewed as merely muses and lovers in Europe, Mexico offered a liberating space for the artists to be valued for their work.

Rather than being defined by what they could offer male artists or their relationship to them, female surrealists were able to define themselves. The famed Mexican painter Frida Kahlo is discussed to this point, as she created art without using the labels of others what many Europeans would deem as surrealism, she dubbed as realism.

Ms. Kahlo's work has amassed widespread appeal today, as diverse perspectives and contemporary styles are increasingly valued. Works like hers are key in the world of art collectors, as younger consumers begin to take on the market, tending to air on the side of non-traditional financial maneuvers.

The influx of these next-generation collectors is normalizing practices like shared ownership, allowing for multiple

people to pool their resources in order to purchase a piece.



Surrealist artist Dora Maar's *Untitled work (known as "Hand Shell")* is among those highlighted in the documentary. Image credit: Christie's

With more than one person going in on an art piece, mass appeal is more an asset now than ever before. Popular, contemporary and famed pieces like Ms. Kahlo's have a better chance of catching the eye of all of the collectors involved in the purchasing partnership, since now, collecting is more of a group activity ([see story](#)).

Online art investment platform [Mintus](#) is among those offering multi-ownership options.

"The beauty of what Mintus is doing with fractional ownership is that they are enabling investors, even with limited knowledge of art, to access an interesting growth opportunity and avoid the frostiness towards newcomers that the industry can be guilty of," said Mark Bedford, investor, in a statement.

"You also avoid the huge mark-ups that galleries traditionally add to direct art investment, none of which the artists themselves ever benefit from."

No longer is art collecting reserved for the ultra-wealthy, who have been around priceless pieces of art in everyday settings all their lives. Now, the act of buying art is democratized, with the circle widened to include younger art aficionados, whose values tend to differ from older generations.



The spotlight brings the focus away from the women's relationship to male artists, and onto their accolades in their own rights. Image credit: Christie's

Christie's documentary on the women of surrealism in the 1920s also discussed the work of artists Dorothea Tanning, Remedios Varo, Meret Oppenheim, Dora Maar, Kati Horna and Leonora Carrington. While the work of these artists may not be as much on the radar of young collectors as Ms. Kahlo's work is, the creativity and feminist undertones of their surrealism is extremely appealing to the demographic.

The artists frequently depicted women as transformative, embracing ties to nature in an act of ecofeminism. Animal figures, imaginary beasts, plant-beings and powerful female figures dominate these works.

The centering of womanhood and feminist undertones are especially of note, as ultra-wealthy women are three times more likely than their male counterparts to collect art, according to a 2022 report from data intelligence firm Altrata ([see story](#)).

#### Female framing

Christie's surrealism discussion is quite fitting for the audience, which according to recent trends, is increasingly young and female.

This open-minded group is a powerful ally as a surrealism-carrying auction house, and their market is only poised to grow.



*The surrealist works of art from women of the 1920s incorporate feminist themes and nature, making it a good fit for the surging market. Image credit: Christie's*

Mintus reports that 17 percent of wealthy investors with at least \$1 million in portfolio assets plan to continue growing their art collections within the year. Only 14 percent plan to do so with their cryptocurrency investments.

"The wealthy investors have shown a significant appetite for art investment, and have told us that they expect that to continue no doubt a reflection of art's historically strong performance during challenging economic times," said Tamer Ozmen, CEO and founder of Mintus, in a statement.

"Art is a unique investment, yet it is still a smart investment at heart so you don't need to be an art aficionado to invest and benefit," Mr. Ozmen said. "It should be treated like any other asset class the fact that we are seeing art craft a place for itself as a go-to portfolio diversifier is a step in the right direction"

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