

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sotheby's adds art-for-all advocate Kelly Rowland to curator series

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The auction house's latest guest curator, four-time Grammy award-winning artist Kelly Rowland, emphasizes inclusivity in a new video. Image credit: Sotheby's

By AMIRAH KEATON

Auction house Sotheby's is asking who better than a musician to discuss intrinsic connections and works of art.

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Four-time Grammy award-winning entertainer Kelly Rowland will join the auction house for the latest version of its Contemporary Curated series. The guest curator emphasizes the importance of inclusive approaches, considering the current diversification of collector demographics, in a new video.

Curated content

This month, Sotheby's is spotlighting a surprise celebrity's say in an upcoming sale of contemporary pieces.

Throughout the digital excerpt, Ms. Rowland, a self-described "art enthusiast" waxes poetic with the auction house, highlighting just a few of her favorites.

"I am blown away by Sotheby's collection of art, how beautiful it is, how timeless it is," Ms. Rowland says.

"I think that putting both of our voices together allows this new generation of art collectors... to have a place and a space to not be intimidated."

As the creative speaks confessional style, looking straight to camera in a production decision offering enhanced intimacy, a number of modern works, mainly erected by artists of color, flash across the screen.

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Influenced by the likes of Willem de Kooning and Joan Mitchell, British painter Cecily Brown's "Running Scared" is shown initially, followed by a set of screen-printed portraits, brightly colored in classic Andy Warhol fashion.

The talent proceeds to introduce herself, covering her many accolades. The artist, singer, songwriter and producer can now add a curation title in.

She explains that connection is key when scouting and sourcing, placing the story behind the work above all else.

"It just creates this beautiful space of conversation, which is what I love the most about art, is that it's subjective," she says.

Maine-based painter Reggie Burrows Hodges' "Playing Reggae Records at the Pace House #2" is the first piece the singer reflects on in-depth, stating that the piece elicited a reaction that amounted to a dreamlike state.

Our Contemporary Curated auction series returns to [#SothebysNewYork](#) this March with four-time Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter [@KellyRowland](#) as curator of the sale.

Stay tuned tomorrow when her picks for the sale on 9 March are formally revealed.

pic.twitter.com/WhGDF1pOz7

Sotheby's (@Sothebys) [February 23, 2023](#)

She goes on to reference her husband, recalling a chat over a conceptual item from American artist Stanley Whitney, stating a desire to find an option for her home, and labeling the piece a happy one.

The painter's style is inspired by Renaissance painting, minimalist sculpture and jazz music.

"I respond the most to figurative pieces but, most recently, my husband and I want to add more abstract pieces [to] our collection," she says.

Whereas Mr. Whitney's "Red, Green, Black, Blues" brings about visions of beauty in the eyes of the singer, American artist Earnie Barnes' distinctive work, "The Dunk," felt empowering to the talent.

"Four Ladies with Gold Hats' by Earnie Barnes reminded me of my Houston, Texas upbringing," Ms. Rowland says.

"I like to see myself and my kids even now reflected in art."

Ms. Rowland leaves off on a sentimental note, speaking to the value of creating generational wealth, and identifying the power of enabling her family financially through more expressive means.

"The reason I started to collect art was really because I wanted to leave a legacy behind for my kids."

For Ms. Rowland, values of nostalgia, whimsy and strength rise to the top.

Many of the musician's favorites were also protracted by artists of African American descent, the subject matter of their works arresting and important, at a time of transition for the overarching industry.

"There are so many young people and young artists who want to be a part of this art world," she says.

"That's the magic and power of art."

Live from New York

Sotheby's star-studded series has previously seen some popular hosts, British-Nigerian grime musician and producer Skepta ([see story](#)) and Emmy Award-winning producer and filmmaker Ryan Murphy included ([see story](#)).

Viewers watch as these newly-appointed curators try their hand at streamlining selections, carving out a bit of a niche based on their own preferences.

Launched in 2013, "Contemporary Curated" is an editorialized edition of Sotheby's modern art auctions, and takes place biannually in New York and London.

The singer's official Contemporary Curated auction session is slated for March 9 at 10 a.m. Eastern, upon which the full range of Ms. Rowland's picks will be revealed.