

June is a bustling month in the art world; between Documenta 14, the Venice Biennale, Art Basel, the London auctions and Masterpiece Art Fair, the market has been dense with activity. The sales this month came to a head with some minor surprises. Christie's single evening sale versus Sotheby's three put a slight dampener on the usual heated competition between the two predominant auction houses. Not to be long outdone, however, it has been rumoured that Christie's will be making its comeback presiding over a grand total of six sales in the October season. In the meantime, the evening sales garnered moderate success with modest auctions; what was lacking in drama was made up for in consistency. The lots may not have been plentiful, but most were of high-artistic calibre, making for a successful, albeit, more low-key season.

SALES RESULTS

Auction	Estimate	Hammer Price	Buyer's Premium
Sotheby's Actual Size	£23,400,000 – 33,800,000 (\$29,619,720 – 42,784,040)	£17,377,000 (\$21,995,806)	£20,932,250 (\$26,430,000)
Sotheby's Impressionist and Modern	£126,300,000 – 162,900,000 (\$159,870,540 – 206,198,820)	£112,010,000 (\$141,782,258)	£127,945,750 (\$161,500,000)
Christie's Impressionist and Modern	£136,300,000 – 191,700,000 (\$176,099,600 – 247,676,400)	£130,835,000 (\$166,600,000)	£149,500,000 (\$190,000,000)
Sotheby's Post-War and Contemporary	£44,300,000 – 60,600,000 (\$57,534,800 – 78,704,550)	£52,520,000 (\$67,300,000)	£62,325,750 (\$80,945,800)
Bonhams Post-War and Contemporary Art	£4,700,000 – 6,700,000 (\$6,096,840 – 8,691,240)	£5,806,000 (\$7,530,000)	£7,100,000 (\$9,200,000)
Phillips 20th Century and Contemporary Art	£17,900,000 – 25,400,000 (\$23,219,880 – 32,948,880)	£20,220,000 (\$26,220,000)	£24,400,000 (\$31,400,000)

Art Market Update July 2017

Curated Sale



SOTHEBY'S ACTUAL SIZE, 21st June 2017

The auctions kicked off with Sotheby's clever marketing ploy; their special curated 'Actual Size' sale. The concept certainly garnered a great deal of interest as small works appeared in the catalogue in exactly replicated dimensions, came to the block in an appealing array of mixed periods, ranging from an Old Master still-life to a 2016 work by Mark Grotjahn.

The majority of the works were of high quality and reached prices that reflected this, however these pieces were also interspersed with works that, for varying reasons, failed to find buyers, bringing the sell through rate of the auction down to 65.7%. 12 of the 35 lots were unsold, seven of which were consecutive lots, and 4 others sold on a single bid to their third-party guarantors. Notable among the no-sales was Cézanne's work on paper, *Baigneuses, La Montagne Sainte Victoire au Fond* which was estimated to reach £4,000,000 – 6,000,000.

Despite this hesitation, the bidding was strong and competitive on a number of bids most of which were for Post-War pieces including two works by Ed Ruscha, one of which, *Scream*, attracted a bidding war on the telephones and eventually reached £1,300,000 hammer, far above its high estimate of £1,000,000. Richard Pettibone's *Andy Warhol 'Elvis'* and Lucian Freud's *Strawberries* were other notable sales, along with 6 out of 7 works by Picasso that fetched high prices, including a stunning ring adorned with an oval portrait of Dora Maar that attracted more than 5 bidders, eventually selling for £480,000 hammer. The highest price of the night was reached by Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder's *Still Life of Flowers* - an elegant piece that was snapped up at mid estimate by Patti Wong for £2,500,000 hammer.

Art Market Update July 2017

Impressionist and Modern Sales



SOTHEBY'S IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN, 21st June 2017

Following straight on from the Actual Size sale, the tone of the evening was already in a mixed state due to the concoction of success and failure, meaning tensions were high in the room to see what the sale would yield. Luckily the Impressionist and Modern works saw a strong level of success on the block, namely two works by Giacometti and two works by Kandinsky that consecutively broke the record for highest price achieved by the artist at auction.



The second lot was Giacometti's miniature sculpture *Femme Debout sans Bras* that kicked the auction off on a strongly positive note as bidding both in the room and on the telephones drove the price up until it reached £1,800,000 hammer, far above its £1,000,000 high estimate. Similar success was found for Giacometti's second sculpture *Grande Figure*, a life size, golden painted figure that reached £15,800,000 hammer, and equally attracted many bids, particularly on the telephone. The other success story was the double act of Wassily Kandinskys. The first, *Murnau - Landschaft mit Grunen Haus*, a Fauvist landscape work sold for £18,500,000 hammer, holding the record for a total of about five minutes until the artist's early abstract canvas *Bild mit Weissen Linien* came to the block six lots later. The work was undoubtedly the top lot of the night, reaching £29,200,000 hammer, having been chased on the telephones by multiple bidders, including Patti Wong. It was won by a bidder in the room, however.

The slight disappointment of the sale was for the much-hyped work by Joan Miro, *Femme et Oiseaux* that was pegged to take home the highest price of the evening and was sold on a single lot to its third party guarantor for £21,700,000 hammer. The work is from a rare period of the artist's work and has not appeared at auction since 1984, all signals which pointed to the work being a highly sought-after piece. Perhaps its estimates were set too high, but this anomaly would be a good example of the difficulties in drawing logical patterns in the art market.

CHRISTIE'S IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN, 27th June 2017

This small 32 lot sale was led by a number of impressive works including a record-breaking Max Beckmann, a Picasso portrait of Marie-Thérèse and an 1889 Vincent van Gogh. Though still in keeping with the modest calibre of this season's sale tone, the auction, by comparison to its equivalent in June 2016 which totalled a mere £25,600,000, came in at more than that total reaching £149,500,000 including Buyer's Premium. Having said that, the total without Buyer's Premium fell 4% below the low estimate of the sale, meaning that Christie's was presenting a mixed bag of successes and set-backs.

One of the evening's leading lots, Egon Schiele's *Individual Houses with Mountains*, a beautiful landscape work, failed to find a bidder. This slight blow was followed up swiftly however by some truly notable works that created a surge of energy in the room. Among them, Vincent van Gogh's *Le Moissonneur* which sold for £5,000,000 above its high estimate of £16,500,000 having been chased by bidders from China, Spain and finally selling to an American Buyer for £21,500,000 hammer. Another such moment occurred two lots later when Picasso's *Femme Ecrivain (Marie-Thérèse)*, which had a third-party guarantee placed on it mere hours before the auction, sold to a Chinese collector for £31,000,000 hammer, making it a savvy deal for the shrewd guarantor.

The indisputable top lot of the night, however was for Max Beckmann's *Holle der Vogel*. The work came to the block with an undisclosed estimate and was chased by three bidders, eventually selling to Larry Gagosian for £32,000,000 hammer. Lots such as this were carrying the Christie's auction and are hopefully indications of an upward trajectory for the auction house, which promises to make a splash in October with its six sales.

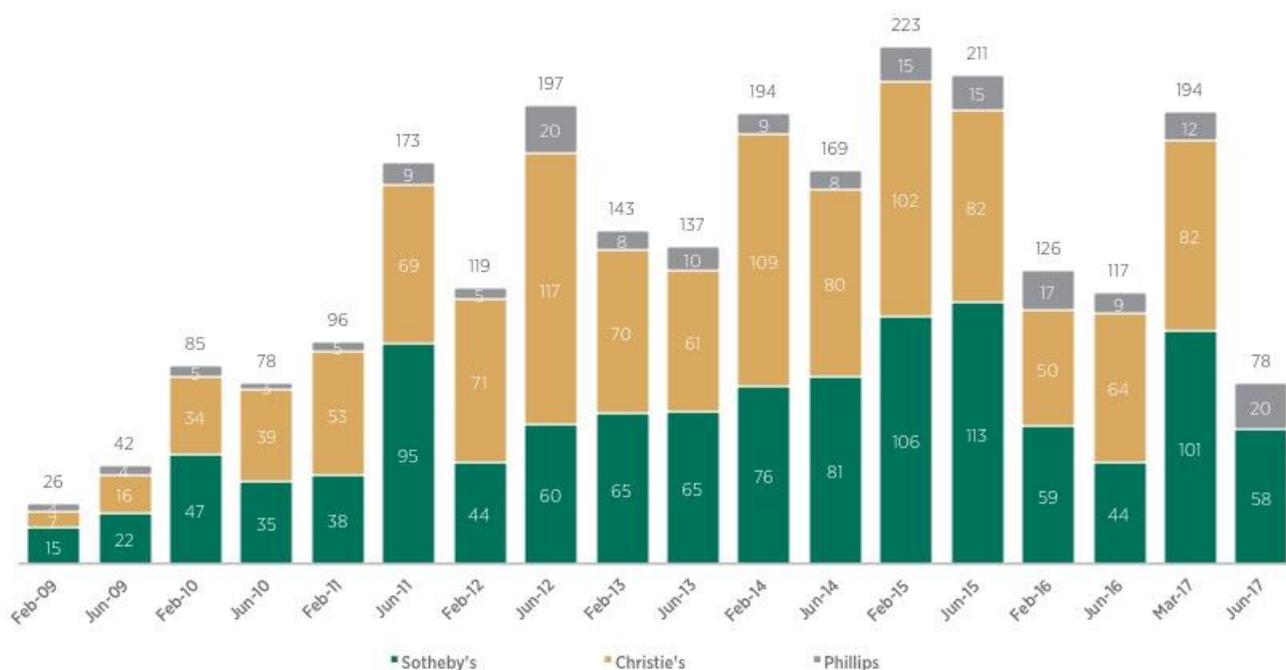
Art Market Update July 2017

Post-War & Contemporary Sales



Post-War & Contemporary Evening Sales London
Christie's, Sotheby's & Phillips (GBP millions)

ArtTactic*



SOTHEBY'S POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY, 28th June 2017

A similar landscape of successes and pitfalls littered the Sotheby's Post-War and Contemporary sale, which was propped up by 16 third-party guarantees and dominated by American Artists. Basquiat once again proved himself impermeable, with a triple panel work selling for £5,630,000 hammer, to a telephone bidder after being chased by both New York dealer Christophe van de Weghe and Paris collector John Sayegh Belchatowski. Two collaborative works between Basquiat and Warhol also came to the block and, for perhaps the first time, it was the former's name that carried the more desirable weight. The Basquiat market is certainly subject to extreme inflation, whether this is due to being blown full of hot air or whether the market can remain permanently afloat remains to be seen.

The other top lot of the evening was Cecily Brown's *The Girl Who Had Everything* which soared past its high estimate of £1,200,000 reaching £1,550,000 hammer. Cecily Brown is another artist whose market, it would appear, is impenetrable, having demonstrated strong sales at Art Basel earlier in the month. Another artist whose market seems untouchable is Wolfgang Tillmans whose *Freischwimmer #81* was battled over by numerous bidders and sold for almost double its high estimate at £410,000 hammer. A similar success was echoed for another Freischwimmer piece at Phillips the following night.

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Post-War & Contemporary Sales



One of the most promoted lots of the evening, Richard Prince's *School Nurse*, sold one bid above its guaranteed price at its low estimate for £3,500,000 hammer and two works by Gerhard Richter sold on a single bid to their third-party guarantor. Thanks to deals such as these the sale boasted a 95% sell-through rate and achieved a modicum of success for Sotheby's that has carried the auction house through as the top player in this season's sales.

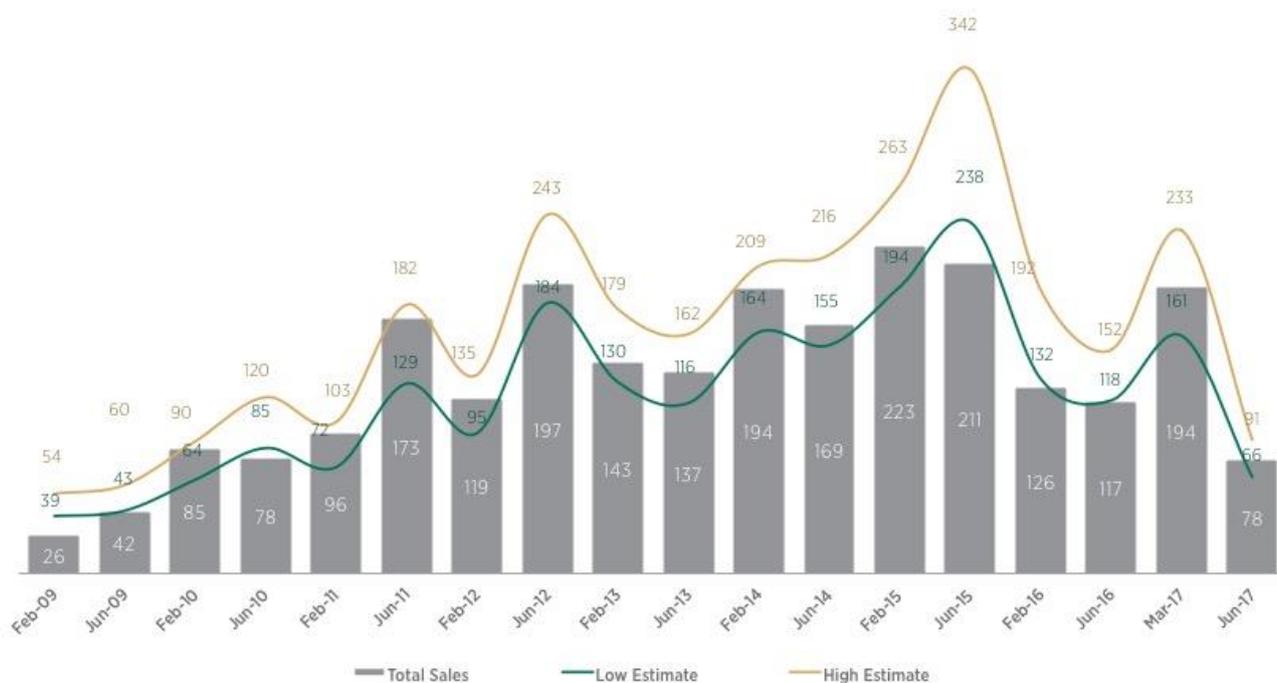
BONHAMS POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY & PHILLIPS 20TH CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY ART, 29th June 2017

The opportunity for middle market players Phillips and Bonhams to make an impact this season was boosted by Christie's cancellation of its Contemporary sale. Each of the smaller auction houses displayed strong performances; both successfully landed high above their total low estimates and both with above 90% sell-through rates.

Bonhams pulled in the highest total they have ever achieved for a Contemporary art sale, coming in at £7,100,000 including Buyer's Premium. The top lot of the sale was Mark Bradford's *Dream Deferral* for £1,300,000 hammer which was bought by Mnuchin Gallery. The Bradford was one of many contested works throughout the sale, boosting the energy in the room to a level of excitement that Bonhams does not often bring to the table.

Post-War & Contemporary Evening Sales London
Christie's, Sotheby's & Phillips (GBP millions)

ArtTactic*



Art Market Update July 2017

Post-War & Contemporary Sales



Phillips followed suit and distinguished itself as a top competitor in the Post-War and Contemporary market, coming in with its highest selling London June sale ever. Only two of the 31 lots on the block failed to find bidders whilst most others were sold at mid to high estimate. The lots were all strong pieces that were highly sought after by numerous bidders both in the room and on the telephones. One surprise online Japanese collector snapped up two works by Jonas Wood, igniting the artist's performance on the secondary market.

One of the highest achieving lots of the sale was a work by Keith Haring of two figures seemingly punching and embracing one another at the same time. The work sold above its high estimate of £1,800,000 for £1,950,000 hammer to dealer Jude Hess. Another work that created a buzz in the room was Tillmans' *Freischwimmer #84* which gained competing bids from at least five telephone bidders eventually selling for £500,000 hammer, double its mid-estimate, and a new record at auction for the artist.

Despite two works failing to find buyers and a couple of works selling to their third-party guarantors, the evening sale was a strong success for Phillips and has set them in good stead as a distinct competitor in the secondary Contemporary market.

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