

Inside Art

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Sotheby's Sales Feature A Mondrian and a Bacon

Now that the first week of the big spring auctions is over, Sotheby's is wasting no time touting its sales in London next month, hanging highlights in its York Avenue galleries for collectors to peruse during the contemporary-art previews this weekend.

Knowing that today's appetite for prime abstract paintings appears boundless, Sotheby's expects a 1927 Mondrian that has not been on the market since the 1950s to be a star of its June 23 auction. This stark canvas, "Composition With Red, Blue and Grey," was first owned by Harry Holtzman, an artist who helped found the American Abstract Artists Group, an influential organization that espoused the principles of European Modernism, and who was a friend of Mondrian's and an expert on his work.

"There hasn't been a Mondrian of this quality for sale since the one in the Saint Laurent sale in Paris," said Helena Newman, co-head of Sotheby's Impressionist and Modern art department worldwide, referring to the auction of art and objects belonging to Yves Saint Laurent and his partner, Pierre Bergé, at the Grand Palais in 2009. At that sale, "Composition With Blue, Red, Yellow and Black," from 1922, was bought by the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi for \$29.4 million.

The 1927 painting at Sotheby's, which comes from an unidentified European collector, is estimated at \$23.5 million to \$30.2 million.

The Sotheby's contemporary-art sale on June 30 will offer yet another Bacon triptych. "Even though it feels as though there has been a proliferation of them up for sale, there really haven't been that many," said Oliver Barker, deputy chairman of Sotheby's in Europe.

In November Christie's sold "Three Studies for Lucian Freud" from 1969, for \$142.4 million. On Tuesday Christie's will put up "Three Studies for a Portrait of John Edwards," from 1984, expecting it to bring around \$80 million.

The Bacon triptych being sold next month is the earliest — painted in 1964 — and the small-



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Sotheby's will offer Francis Bacon's "Three Studies for Portrait of George Dyer (on Light Ground)."

est, just 14 by 12 inches, which makes it particularly desirable. Based on a photograph by John Deakin, "Three Studies for Portrait of George Dyer (on Light Ground)" depicts the artist's lover, and was painted at the height of their affair. It was included in the groundbreaking 1971 retrospective at the Grand Palais, on the eve of which Dyer committed suicide. It is estimated at \$25 million to \$35 million.

Bacon completed five small-scaled triptychs of Dyer; two are in museums (the Tel Aviv Museum and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark). "There's a hierarchy of Bacon sitters," Mr. Barker said, "of which George Dyer and Lucian Freud are at the top of the pile."

A Frick Lineup Change

On Tuesday, when "Schiava Turca" ("Turkish Slave"), Parmigianino's much-beloved 1530s portrait of an unknown young woman in sumptuous satin, goes on view in the Oval Room of the Frick Collection, the painting, on loan from the National Gallery in Parma, Italy, will be joined by three male portraits from the Frick's collection: Titian's "Portrait of a Man in a Red Cap" and "Pietro Aretino," as well as Bronzino's "Portrait of Ludovico Capponi" (1551). The installation, on view through July 20, will also include "Portrait of a Man," by Parmigianino, on loan from Aso Tavian, a collector and longtime supporter of the Frick.

"We thought it was good for the public to broaden the theme and provide some context," said

Denise Allen, a curator at the Frick who organized the show.

The Titians had been hanging in the Living Hall on either side of Bellini's "St. Francis in the Desert," just as the institution's founder, Henry Clay Frick, had placed them. Their migration to the Oval Room creates two obvious holes that needed to be filled.

They have been, with two later Renaissance depictions of St. Jerome in the Wilderness, one by Fra Bartolommeo, and another by Garofalo, both on loan from the Alana Collection, which is owned by Alvaro Saieh, a South American financier. The installation "reflects three different responses" to Italian landscape painting, Ms. Allen said, with a common theme of penitent saints as depicted by artists in Venice, Florence and Ferrara. "It is the first time that loans to the museum have been installed in the Living Hall," Ms. Allen added.

Extension for Nazi Show

Since March 13, when "Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937" opened at the Neue Galerie, visitors have lined up every morning outside, waiting up to an hour to get in. The first exhibition in the United States since 1991 devoted to Modern art collected by the Nazis, it includes about 50 paintings and sculptures and 30 works on paper, along with posters, photographs and other memorabilia from public and private collections here and abroad.

So far, about 32,000 visitors have seen the show, more than twice the museum's average at-

tendance for an exhibition, officials said. Tour bookings have more than tripled, and the \$60 exhibition catalog is selling four times faster than most others — about 200 a week — and has gone into a second printing.

Perhaps things will calm down now that the museum has extended the show by two months. Instead of closing on June 30, it will run through Sept. 1. By the time it ends, officials there estimate it is likely to have attracted about 115,000 visitors, making it one of the most popular shows in the museum's 13-year history.

W Turns to Art

Stefano Tonchi, the editor of *W*, is perhaps more sensitive to the convergence of art and fashion than most. His partner, David Maupin, is a founder of Lehman Maupin, the Chelsea gallery, and Mr. Tonchi has a power seat to observe how fashion designers are supporting museums.

As a result, he is starting *W* Art, what he hopes will be a special, twice-yearly magazine. The inaugural issue will be available free at the Frieze Art Fair, opening Friday on Randalls Island, and tucked into *W*'s June/July issue, on newsstands May 27.

"It's more about people," Mr. Tonchi said in a telephone interview, "collectors, artists, museum directors and the way they live." The first issue features a photograph of Pharrell Williams by Urs Fischer, and images of Mr. Williams by the artists Alex Katz and Rob Pruitt, the street artist J R and the Japanese pop artist who goes by simply Mr.