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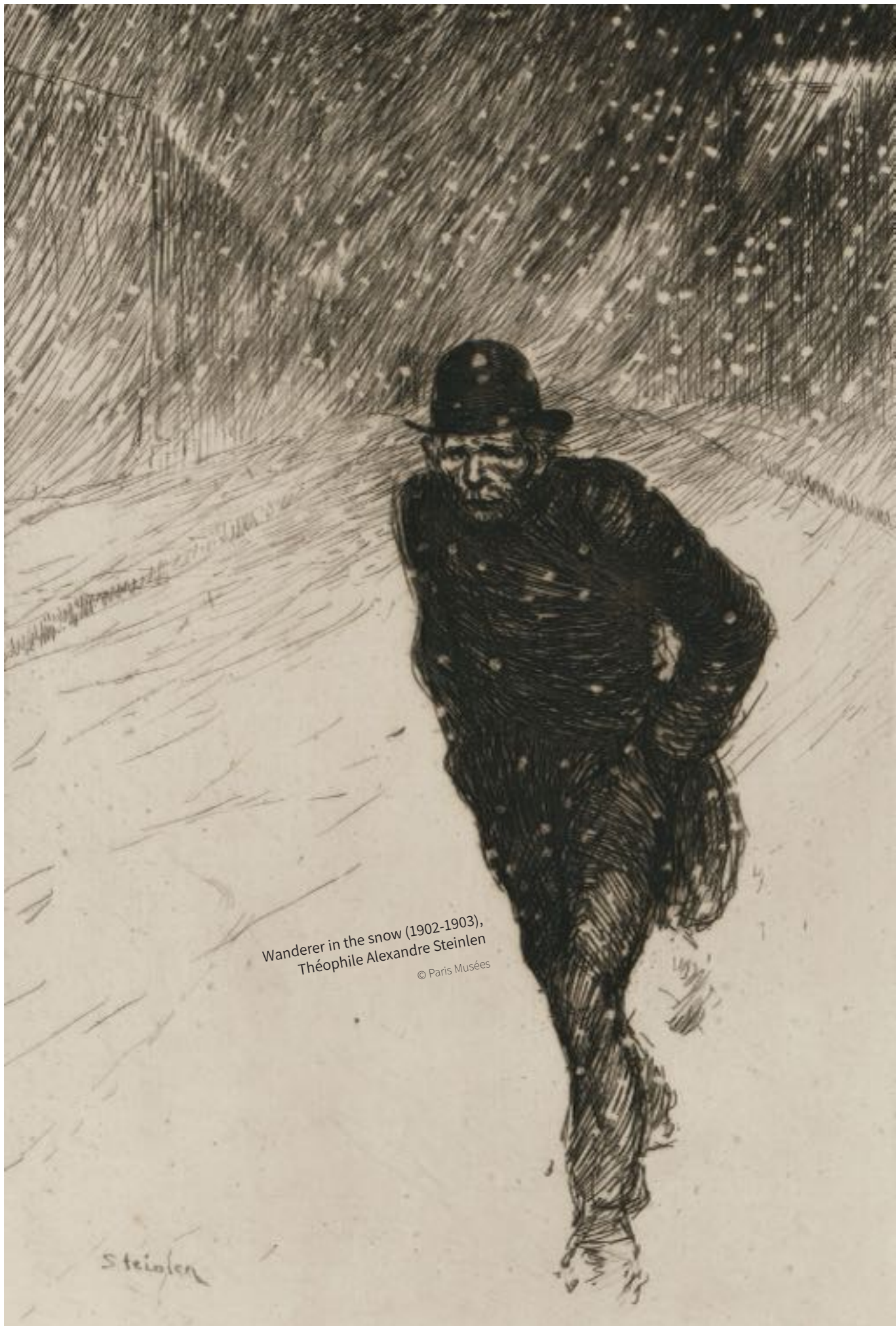
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Wanderer in the snow (1902-1903),
Théophile Alexandre Steinlen

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WILDFIRE



Atelier circulaire
Courtesy Atelier circulaire

ARTIST EDITIONS AND MULTIPLES: THE ART OF THE MISSING LINK

For years, artist editions and multiples lingered on the fringes of fine art. Today, they are celebrated as liberated forms of expression, embraced by artists, collectors and the art market alike.

Production method, conceptual artwork, distribution model, experimental playground — an artist edition or multiple embodies all these aspects at once. Rooted in the history of art and its techniques, these artistic objects, often difficult to categorise, defy strict definitions. They span a wide range of practices and mediums, from engraving and screen printing to sculpture, photography, objects, books, posters, postcards, videos — and now, NFTs.

The story of artist editions is deeply intertwined with the evolution of reproduction techniques. As early as the 15th century, the invention of woodcut printing in Europe revolutionised the dissemination of art by enabling the creation of multiple images. This technical breakthrough gained momentum with the advent of copperplate engraving and etching, allowing artists like Albrecht Dürer, Rembrandt and Rubens to develop expressive languages unique to these mediums. William Ivins J', in his seminal book *Prints and visual communication* (1953), highlights how these techniques formed “the first exactly repeatable system of pictorial communication,” transforming our relationship with images long before the age of photography.

The technique of printmaking quickly transcended its original role as a reproduction tool, evolving into a creative medium in its own right. Théophile Gautier captured this shift perfectly when he remarked, “A beautiful engraving is more than a copy.” Goya’s prints, particularly his haunting series *The disasters of war* (1810-1820), exemplify this artistic liberation. Art historian Susan

Tallman, in *The contemporary print: From pre-Pop to postmodern* (1996), notes that “printmaking allowed artists to explore visual and conceptual territories inaccessible to painting or sculpture.”

In the 19th century, lithography, invented by Alois Senefelder in 1796, emerged as a favoured medium among artists. Toulouse-Lautrec revolutionised poster art with his vibrant lithographs, while Daumier wielded the technique as a sharp tool for social critique. Lithography became not only a means of artistic expression but also a powerful vehicle for visual communication. As Michel Melot explains in *L'estampe impressionniste* (1994), “Lithography enabled the rise of a popular visual culture while maintaining its artistic legitimacy.”

The rise of the modern multiple

The concept of the “multiple” as we understand it today took shape with the avant-garde movements of the early 20th century, particularly through Marcel Duchamp and his groundbreaking ready-mades,

BRECHT EVENS



LEAF 2024

Photo Laurent de Broca. Courtesy Fondation Boghosian



Fairs and platforms: an expanding ecosystem

In Europe, London Original Print Fair (20 to 23 March) and Unfair Editions in the Netherlands, with its year-round events, have established themselves as essential gatherings for the editions market. Recently, other fairs have followed suit, creating a packed schedule at the end of March.

From 21 to 23 March in Brussels, Boghossian Foundation hosted the fifth edition of the Limited Edition Art Fair (LEAF) in the elegant setting of the Villa Empain. “Our LEAF fair was created to bring together publishers, gallerists, publishing houses and even artists from the Villa Empain’s residency program. This year marked its fifth edition. Every year, buyers of all ages flock to our doors, fall in love with a piece, take it home and return the following year!” says Louma Salamé, general director of the Boghossian Foundation. “This year, launched a series of editions called *B2*, created with artists who have developed close ties with Villa Empain. All proceeds from the sale of the *B2* editions will support our residency program.”

From 27 to 30 March, the fourth edition of the Paris Print Fair will focus on the world of printmaking: woodcuts, etchings, dry-points, lithographs and more. Organised by the Chambre Syndicale de l’Estampe, du Dessin et du Tableau (CSED), the fair will bring together 25 French and international galleries at the Réfectoire du Couvent des Cordeliers in Paris. This intimate event will feature timeless names such as Dürer, Rembrandt, Goya, Miró and Picasso, alongside Japanese printmaking masters and contemporary artists.

Newcomers are also joining the scene. The Brooklyn Fine Art Print Fair will make its debut from 27 to 30 March at Powerhouse Arts, featuring 41 art galleries, 28 artists and creators celebrating printmaking during New York’s Print Week, alongside IFPDA’s Fine Art Print Fair. In October 2024, Editions Dubai held its inaugural event as part of Dubai Design Week. Meanwhile, in Berlin, Miss Read (13 to 15 June), a fair dedicated to artist books and editions, reflects the growing interest in alternative forms of multiples.

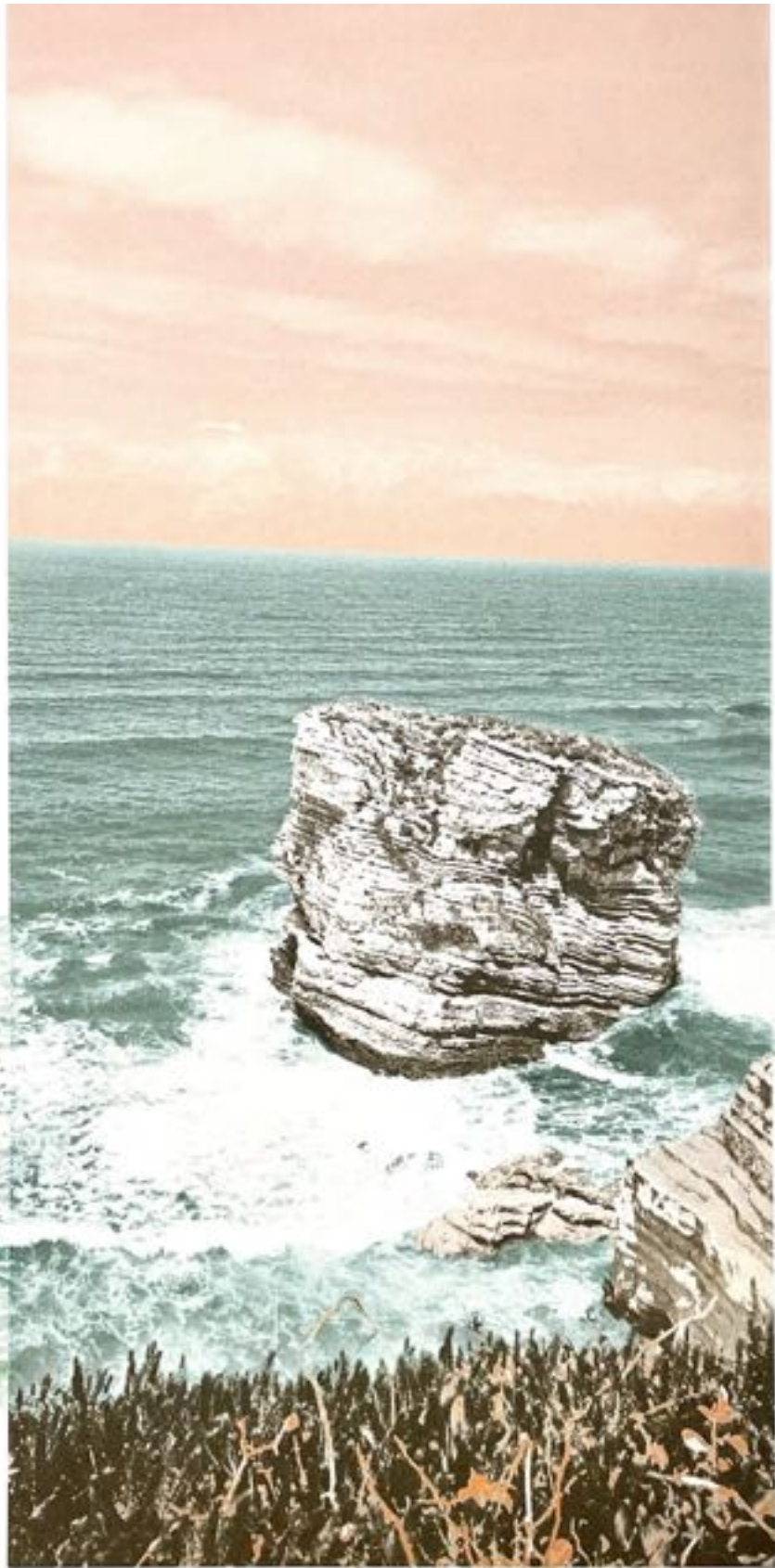
In parallel, numerous online platforms have emerged to meet the growing demand for artist editions. Websites like Artsy, Artnet and Artspace now feature dedicated sections for editions, while specialised platforms such as Counter Editions, Exhibition A and Sedition (focused on digital art) cater exclusively to this segment. These digital distribution channels have significantly broadened access to artist editions and contributed to the diversification of the market.

Bridging the gap between online platforms and traditional fairs, (Made Anywhere) is a stage dedicated to editorial art practices through fairs, performances, awards, research and networking. From 5 to 7 September, at Fimenco Foundation, the event will feature 100 stands and over 1,000 edited objects on display and for sale, aiming to “re-enchant an art world often stifled by luxury objects.” “From artist books to archives, from art multiples to performances, we define ‘edition’ as all original, editorialised creations that take free forms,” write the organisers in a *manifesto*-like statement that perfectly encapsulates the contemporary concerns of the medium.

which fundamentally redefined the notion of reproducible art. In 1935, Duchamp created his *Boîte-en-valise*, a portable box containing miniature reproductions of his key works. Rosalind Krauss, in *The originality of the avant-garde and other modernist myths* (1986), describes this project as “a radical challenge to the notions of original and copy, foreshadowing postmodern concerns around reproduction.”

By questioning the very essence of the artwork, artists of the 1930s began to incorporate ideas of distribution, accessibility and reproduction into their practice, moving beyond the sacred ideal of the unique, original creation. Walter Benjamin captured this shift in his seminal essay *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (1935), where he argued that the advent of reproducibility stripped art of its “aura”. The multiple emerged as a symbol of artistic transgression, challenging traditional boundaries and redefining the relationship between art and its audience.

In 1959, Daniel Spoerri, closely associated with the Nouveau Réalisme movement, refined and formalised the concept of the artist’s multiple by founding MAT Editions (Multiplication d’Art Transformable) in Paris. For its first edition, Spoerri collaborated with artists such as Jesús Rafael Soto, Josef Albers, Jean Tinguely, Victor Vasarel and even Marcel Duchamp to produce limited runs of 100 signed three-dimensional objects. “These art objects, created through low-cost serial production and designed for wide distribution,

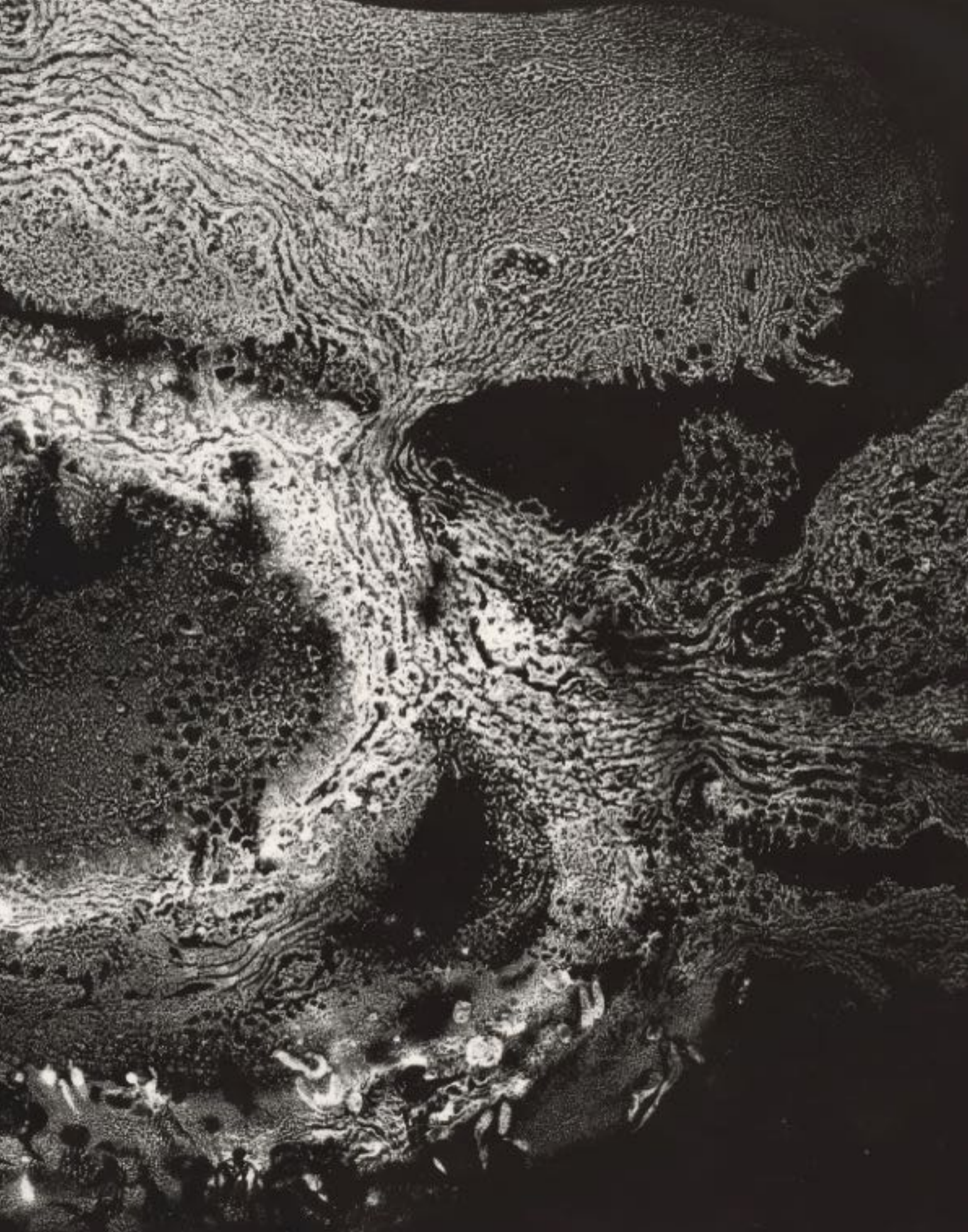


Ekumea (2024), Dana Cojbu

Courtesy Catherine Putman Gallery

Dana Cojbu





At last a thousand (State III, 1965), June Wayne

Courtesy MB Abram



Windows (Series IX, 1960), Clinton Adams

Courtesy Smithsonian American Art Museum

reflect a desire to democratise art, challenging the concept of the unique, sacralised artwork,” writes the Institut d’art contemporain de Villeurbanne.

The golden age of the 1960s

The 1960s marked the golden age of the multiple. Pop Art, led by figures like Andy Warhol, embraced industrial techniques to create limited-edition works. Screen printing became the defining medium of the era, enabling Warhol to produce his iconic Marilyn Monroe portraits and Campbell’s soup cans. Simultaneously, artists such as Joseph Beuys and Dieter Roth explored the multiple as a three-dimensional object, crafting conceptual editions that remained reproducible. In 1965, gallerist Marian Goodman launched her publishing house, Multiples, Inc., underscoring the pivotal role galleries have played — and continue to play — in the dissemination of artist editions.

Louma Salamé, director of the Boghossian Foundation, explains: “It’s not about opposing the unique piece to the multiple. Sometimes artists create editions of just one, two, or three pieces, increasing their rarity. What drives artists — from Picasso to Alechinsky, Josef and Anni Albers, or Andy Warhol — is the desire to seize a material and explore it in pioneering ways, combining the many possibilities it offers.”

Art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, in *Relational aesthetics* (1998), argues that “the multiple is not merely a reproduction but a mode of dissemination that fully contributes to the meaning of the work.” This idea gained momentum with the Fluxus movement, which used the multiple to bypass traditional art circuits and create works accessible to all. “The ‘multiple’ is neither a copy nor an ‘interchangeable replica’. The category of the multiple

is therefore a hybrid between reproduction and the unique original artwork,” asserts Michel Melot in *L’art au défi du multiple* (2012).

After a period of relative neglect in the 1980s, the artist’s multiple made a strong comeback in the 1990s, as highlighted by Océane Delleaux in her essay *Multiple d’artiste* (2010). Institutions played a significant role in its rediscovery, notably through exhibitions such as the MoMA’s 2006 show “Eye on Europe: Prints, books and multiples, 1960 to now”. A few cultural establishments have even dedicated themselves entirely to this art form, such as the Centre de la Gravure et de l’Image Imprimée in Belgium. Often, it is the artists themselves who take charge of producing editions. For example, Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas opened The shop in London in 1993, selling their own works directly to the public. Similarly, artist-run spaces like L’Atelier

circulaire in Montreal have specialised in promoting multiples, aiming to “work towards the enlightened rehabilitation of this art form”, as stated by its founders. Jean-Marie Marandin, in *Au-delà de l’estampe* (2021), summarises this resurgence: “In short, printmaking holds a rightful place among the tools available to contemporary artists, revealing itself as a medium full of vitality and conceptual and visual resources.”

Market growth and recognition

Over the past few decades, the market for artist editions has experienced exponential growth [see p.62]. Once considered minor works compared to unique pieces, multiples have steadily gained legitimacy and value in the art market. “Although generally more affordable and therefore less subject to speculative markets, editions reflect an artist’s body of work just as much as an oil or acrylic painting would,” notes

3 questions to... Éléonore Chatin

Éléonore Chatin is the director of Galerie Catherine Putman in Paris.

What are the main advantages of a multiple compared to a unique piece?

I would say financial accessibility, the ability to share the work with a larger audience and the variety of techniques available, which offer artists a real opportunity for experimentation.

Over the past decade, how have you seen the profile of collectors of artist editions evolve?

There have always been collectors specifically interested in multiples, either because they want to acquire works by artists they might not otherwise afford or because they are passionate about printmaking techniques. Some major artists — painters or sculptors — are also exceptional printmakers, such as Baselitz, Tony Cragg, Alechinsky or Kirkeby. It is also often a first acquisition for new collectors.

How are contemporary artists pushing the traditional boundaries of the multiple? Are there any specific artists you would like to highlight?

Artists are exploring the possibilities that printmaking techniques bring to their work. For example, the gallery’s latest edition is a print by Dana Cojbut, a photographer who extends his photographic prints through drawing. The aligraph reproduction of one of his photographs allowed him to experiment with colour, while lithography enabled him to continue the act of drawing directly onto the stone.





Village street under the snow at sunset, Johannes-Martin Grimelund

© Paris Musées

Louma Salamé, director of the Boghossian Foundation, which hosts the annual LEAF (Limited Edition Art Fair) in Brussels. She adds, “For collectors, it is also a way to acquire a signed work by an artist they admire at a lower cost.”

Numbers speak for themselves. According to the *Art Market 2023* report by Art Basel/UBS, the segment of editions and multiples has seen consistent growth since 2010. Between 2012 and 2022, the volume of artist edition transactions at auction increased by 71%, now accounting for nearly 12% of the global secondary market. This trend accelerated notably after the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by the rise in online sales.

The *Artprice 2024 Annual Report* confirms the growing momentum of the artist’s multiple. While the global art market has plunged by 33.5% and the high-end segment struggles, “activity around affordable works is experiencing unprecedented vibrancy, with the number of lots sold reaching a historic high,” notes the report’s analyst. Among the approximately 400,000 works sold for under \$600 in 2024, multiples stand out prominently. “Artists such as Salvador Dalí, Victor Vasarely and Marc Chagall have produced a vast array of prints, making certain pieces available for less than \$600,” the report highlights. “This segment of the market also includes unique works by other artists, offering collectors a variety of affordable options.” In January 2025 alone, around 60 lots by Dalí, 50 by Corneille and 40 by Picasso or Chagall were sold for under \$500, according to Artprice. “With such a budget, options are often limited to prints signed in the plate [i.e., printed directly onto the sheet without the artist’s handwritten signature], exhibition posters or unnumbered editions sometimes produced in the

thousands. However, it is possible to find more interesting pieces,” the report adds. For instance, a colour offset lithograph of Marie-Thérèse Walter with *Garland*, numbered to just 250 copies by Pablo Picasso, sold for \$485 during an online auction hosted by Canada’s Empire Auctions — “a rare opportunity at this price point”.

Another notable trend is the increasing value of editions by major contemporary artists, which now rival the prices of unique works. In 2022, a screen print of Banksy’s *Girl with balloon* (edition of 25) sold for \$1.1 million at Sotheby’s, while a complete set of Andy Warhol’s *Cowboys and Indians* fetched \$3.8 million at Christie’s. These figures, typically associated with paintings, reflect a profound reassessment of the cultural and market value of editions. As economist Clare McAndrew notes in *The Art Market Report 2023*, “Editions often represent a strategic entry point for new collectors, thereby contributing to the expansion of the art market’s base.” This growing accessibility, combined with the increasing recognition of multiples as significant works of art, continues to reshape the dynamics of the art world.

In this ecosystem, fairs dedicated to editions play a pivotal role [see box p.12], with the IFPDA Print Fair in New York leading the way. Founded in 1987, this fair, whose next edition runs from 27 to 30 March, annually gathers around 70 specialised exhibitors at Park Avenue Armory. The event showcases works ranging from Old Masters to contemporary artists. “Specialised fairs provide collectors with a unique environment to explore the technical and conceptual richness of editions while benefiting from the expertise of specialised dealers,” notes Jenny Gibbs, executive director of the IFPDA.

Editions in the digital age

Today, artist editions and multiples are undergoing yet another transformation. The advent of digital technologies has profoundly reshaped their landscape, starting with digital printing. More recently, the rise of NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) has introduced a new paradigm for digital multiples. As art historian Omar Kholeif observes in *Internet art* (2022), “NFTs challenge the very notion of editions by creating a form of artificial scarcity in the digital environment, continuing — through radically new means — the dialectic between uniqueness and multiplicity that has defined the history of editions.”

This technological evolution brings significant challenges to the market. Issues of authenticity, preservation and long-term valuation of digital editions remain complex. However, as highlighted in the UBS *Art & Tech Report 2023*, “digital editions potentially represent the most dynamic frontier of the multiples market, attracting a new generation of collectors familiar with digital environments.”

Artist editions and multiples hold a singular position in both art history and the contemporary market. The productive tension between the democratisation of art and the preservation of a certain rarity continues to drive this sector. As Susan Tallman aptly puts it: “Art editions exist at the intersection of two seemingly contradictory impulses: the desire to disseminate art as widely as possible and the need to maintain its value through rarity.” At a time when the boundaries between original and copy, physical and digital, unique and multiple are becoming increasingly blurred, artist editions seem particularly well-suited to explore these conceptual territories. More than just a market segment, they serve as a laboratory where the notions of artwork, authenticity and the dissemination of art are constantly reimagined.



BOOK 2/2



Robert Blackburn

ARR

WHO CAN BE CALLED A MASTER PRINTER?

What defines a Collaborative printer versus a Master printer? Can these designations affect the uniqueness and value of an editioned work? Experts at the Tamarind Institute help explain.

Most collectors of fine art prints have seen the term Master printer. In addition to print size, paper type, edition number and whether or not it is signed and framed, the provenance of a highly valued editioned work frequently indicates whether it was created by the artist alone or in collaboration between the artist and a Master printer at some esteemed printshop. Certain printers and shops can substantially elevate the value of an editioned work. For example, Atelier Lacourière-Frélaut in Paris is so esteemed that it even once received its own museum retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris. Its founder, Master printer Roger Lacourière, gained worldwide fame in the 1930s for his collaborations with Henri Matisse [see p.70] and Pablo Picasso. An editioned collaboration between Picasso and Lacourière will have a different market than, say, a later collaboration between Picasso and Master lithographer Fernand Mourlot, or between Picasso and Master Linocut Printer Hidalgo Arnéra.

Whereas in the case of Lacourière the Master printer title might be undeniable, specific rules surrounding who gets to use the title are often misunderstood and can even be controversial. “There’s a lot of history to the title of Master printer,” says Valpuri Remling, a Master printer and the Workshop Manager at the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, one of the most respected print shops in the world. “Like in any craft or skill, to be called a master takes time and dedication.” What is most important to realise, Remling says, is that it is not the printers who confer this designation upon themselves. Rather, it is a title bestowed by a profession in order to signify individuals who are trusted

carriers of knowledge and tradition. “It is rare that one would think of themselves as a master at anything — and printers surely do not, Remling says. It is a very humbling profession. You learn every day that you still have a lot to learn, especially if you are an adventurous printer and like to experiment with new approaches and materials as much as possible.”

Established in 1960, Tamarind took its name from its original address on Tamarind Avenue in Los Angeles. At that time, fine art lithography was seen by many as a dying field, as a slew of other positions had overtaken the contemporary art market and even university art departments were closing their print shops. In light of what they saw as a disappearing art, Tamarind’s founders — June Wayne [see box p.29], Clinton Adams and Garo Antreasian — concentrated first on research and documentation. They then recruited Master printers such as Bohuslav Horak from Czechoslovakia and Marcel Durassier and Serge Lozingot from France — the latter of which

was renowned for his collaboration with Jean Dubuffet on his *The phenomena* series.

Tamarind's early Master printers undertook collaborations with some of the most exciting artists of the time, including Josef Albers, Louise Nevelson, Ruth Asawa, John McLaughlin and Sam Francis. Their efforts helped spark a renewal of the art market's interest in lithography. More importantly, they initiated a teaching programme that kept alive the vanishing secrets of some of the most knowledgeable Master printers in the field.

The way those Master printers earned the title is the same as how printers in Tamarind's famous workshop earn the title today. Says Remling, "I am the Master printer of this particular workshop because I am ultimately the one responsible for the quality of work that we print and the lead person in collaborations with artists. I also mentor and oversee the work of my apprentice. Historically, one starts as an apprentice, works for five to ten years under the workshop's Master printer and then moves on to become a traveling printer, learning and collecting technical and material knowledge before either starting their own workshop and thus becoming a Master printer, or continuing to work in various shoppes as a Collaborative printer."

The fact that some Collaborative printers do in fact have the skillset and experience to potentially open their own shoppes blurs the lines between these two titles, Remling says. "Many people call any Collaborative printer a Master printer. The terms can get mixed. Then of course there is the designation of a Tamarind

Master printer, a title Tamarind gives to only those who have completed (nowadays) two years of training with us and (historically) would go out and start their own printshop. Personally, I like to call myself a collaborative lithography printer or 'the work horse/monkey at Tamarind.'"

Old master printers

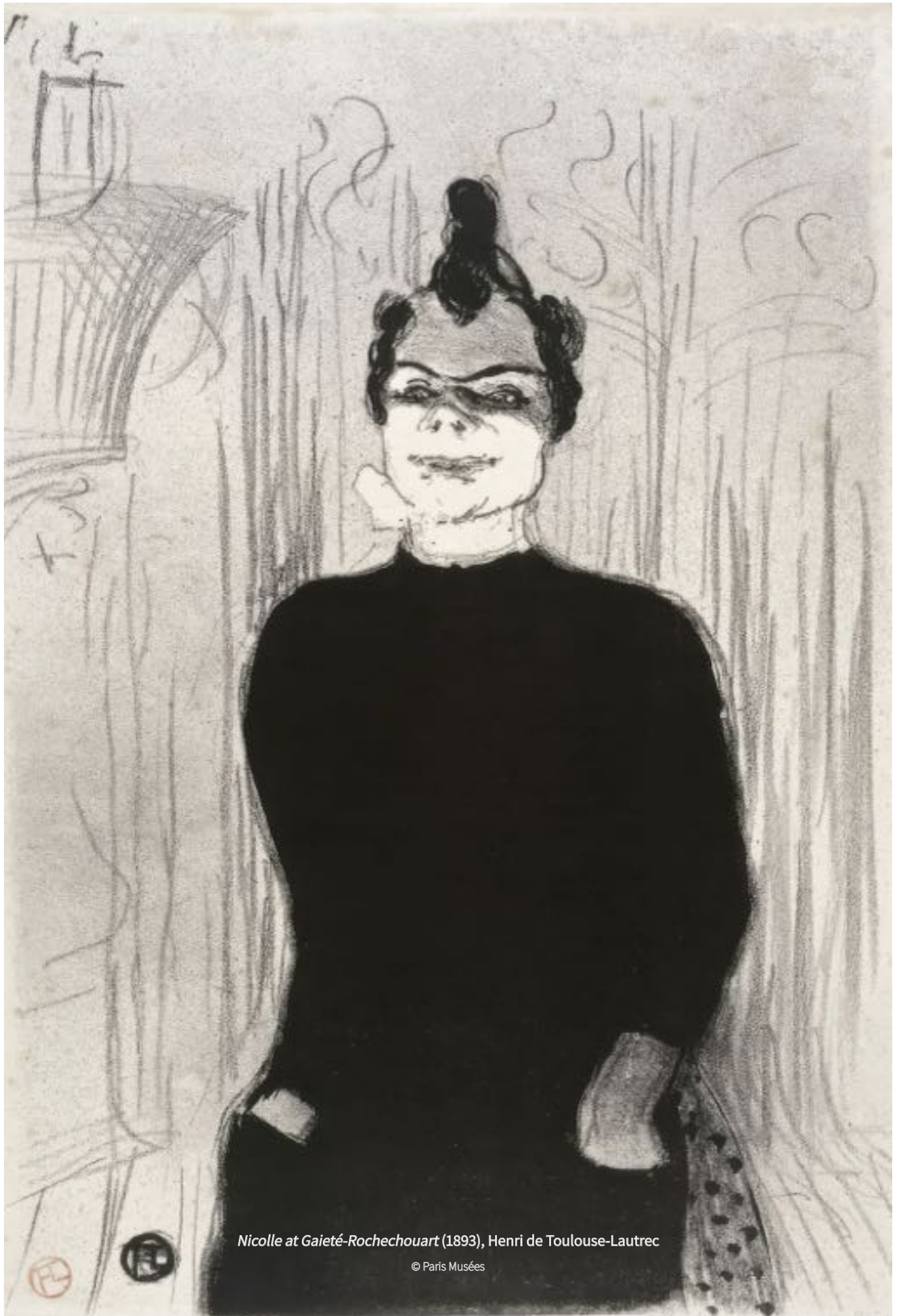
The humility with which Remling regards her own expertise is pervasive throughout the Fine Art printing field, where even the most seasoned veterans readily acknowledge how much more they have to learn. It is perhaps a remnant of the larger printing field in general, part of a vast, and perhaps unmasterable, ancient craft tradition. The earliest printing processes date back more than 5,000 years to cultures in the Fertile Crescent. The first prints on paper were Chinese woodcuts dating back 2,000+ years. Fine Art printing normally dates to around the 15th century, when printing technologies became widely available throughout the world.

Within the Fine art space, the term "Old master print" does not mean it is an old print made by a Master printer. Rather, it is used to disseminate between prints created by Old Master artists and prints created for other decorative or utilitarian reasons. Most Old masters did not collaborate with others to create their prints. Rembrandt, for example, owned his own equipment with which he made his own etchings and dry-points. By the 18th century many more artists had become interested in printmaking and a need for specialists in various printing techniques arose, giving rise to such a thing as a Fine art master printer.

In order to distinguish whether a printer was truly an expert at their craft, a system of guilds emerged to designate different levels of knowledge, such as journeymen, apprentices and finally masters, who could become shop owners.

In most printing fields and in most of the world, this old system of guilds and technical designations has gone away. Even within the fine art field, most printers today, like Remling, are humble enough in the face of how much there is to learn to be happy to call themselves a "work horse" rather than a master of anything. Nonetheless, Remling says, "If someone is skilled enough to lithographically reproduce an image originally made in another medium, then that alone is an achievement worth recognising."

Nonetheless, Diana Gaston, the current and 4th Director of Tamarind Institute, says it is as important today as ever to maintain a rigorous technical training system within the printing field, including relevant designations such as Master printer. "Tamarind Institute's primary mission is to provide advanced training in lithography to ensure that the field maintains a pool of skilled printers and educators, Gaston says. A critical part of our mission is also to engage contemporary artists in the process of collaborative printmaking, which in turn provides ongoing challenges for our printers to meet during the course of the collaboration and editioning. The broad range of artists we bring to Tamarind, many who have no previous experience in printmaking, maintains a certain skill level in the workshop. The artists are essential to our printers being able to hone their skills and continually advance the medium through experimentation."



Nicolle at Gaieté-Rochecouart (1893), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

© Paris Musées





Jaime Sabartés, Jacques Frélaud, Jacqueline and Pablo Picasso

ARR



Valpuri Remling
Photo Francis Reynolds
Courtesy Tamarind Institute

Five Master printers who shaped the field

Aldo Crommelynck

Born in Monaco in 1931, Crommelynck's specialty was intaglio printing, a process in which the image is engraved or etched into a surface and the ink is held by the recessed areas. For decades he was the most sought after Master Printer alive. While still a teenager, he apprenticed with French Master Printer Roger Lacourière, working with famous artists such as Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Miró and Picasso followed him when he opened Atelier Crommelynck in 1955, which also attracted the likes of Jean Arp, Alberto Giacometti, Le Corbusier, Georges Braque, David Hockney, Jim Dine and Jasper Johns.

Stanley William Hayter

Born in London in 1901, Hayter founded the famously collaborative and experimental Atelier 17 in Paris in 1927. Hayter pioneered a printing technique called Viscosity Printing, which combines intaglio and relief techniques to create single plate, multi-coloured prints. He worked with dozens of influential artists, including Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Hedda Sterne, Yves Tanguy, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Salvador Dalí, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. His shoppe still exists, though it changed its name to Atelier Contrepoint after Hayter's death in 1988.

Dan Welden

Born in the Bronx in the 1940s, Welden invented Solarplate printing, a non-toxic etching and relief printing process using a light-sensitive polymer. Since developing the technique in the early 1970s, he has collaborated with some of the most influential artists of the past 50 years, including Dan Flavin, Eric Fischl and Willem de Kooning. Welden notably worked with Elaine de Kooning on a limited series of black and white prints she made of her Lascaux cave paintings in the 1980s. He has given workshops all over the world espousing low-tech methods and non-toxic, water soluble printing processes.

June Wayne

Born in Chicago in 1918, Wayne was the principal founder of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop. She established the printshop in response to a movement by artists and universities away from collaborative printing techniques. A principal mission of the workshop has always been to conduct research and provide training and apprenticeship programs. Now operated by the University of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Tamarind runs one of the most important print shops and Master Printer training programs in the world.

Robert Blackburn

Born in New Jersey in 1920, Blackburn opened his eponymous printshop in his New York loft in 1947. He invited artists to freely utilise his facilities, encouraging a collaborative and experimental environment. He notably introduced Romare Bearden to the collagraphy printing process that became essential to Bearden's visual language. Blackburn collaborated with or was the Master printer on editions for scores of the most famous artists of the mid-20th century. He also taught printmaking at more than half a dozen influential universities. After his death, the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts opened a new foundation and print centre modelled after his workshop and named in his honour.

Uniquely valuable

Since 1970, Tamarind has been affiliated with the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. That university connection has allowed for the creation and maintenance of an extensive archive and library, which helps Tamarind's students understand the long history of printing. One of the biggest misunderstandings about that history

— a misunderstanding still prevalent among artists, collectors and dealers — is how to distinguish the difference between a so-called multiple or an artwork that is part of an edition and what the market refers to as an original or unique work.

"Artists come to us to collaborate and create original work in lithography," Remling says. "Each run, each colour and each impression are individually inked and passed through the press. An original lithograph is merely a piece of art that was created in the medium of lithography and like any other medium it has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is the possibility of the multiple — but it is just that, a possibility. A lithograph can exist as a unique piece, though the method of creation remains the same as a lithograph that was editioned." Even if multiple prints are created, and each of those prints is almost identical, the essential nature of printing inevitably results in tiny inconsistencies between prints. Individual works within the edition are thus, for many reasons, considered original and unique, even though several have been made.

Collaboration between an artist and a printer is another misunderstood realm. Some collectors believe that an artist-made print is more valuable because they are the only

ZOOM

one involved in its making. However, rather than diminishing the value of the work, a collaboration with a particular printer can add value, depending on the knowledge and skill of that collaborator. “Collaborative printmaking is truly its own field,” Remling says. “There are wonderful artists and printmakers that create and print their own work beautifully. Then there are artists who collaborate with a printer to create the work. Lithography is quite tedious and requires many special tools and materials, and it is not possible for every artist to have their own studio. In addition, lithography can be quite difficult to master. This is why artists have traditionally worked with printers when it comes to lithography.”

In addition to the technical know-how, a Master printer can bring knowledge of specific materials and other ideas to the table that can help an artist realise new ways they might be able to accomplish a project. “Someone who knows paper and ink, especially the lithographic inks and their mixing, can be a huge asset to an artist normally working in another medium,” Remling says. Most importantly, she points out that working collaboratively is a fun and challenging way to approach an artistic project. “For any artist, it’s a big shift from their often solo studio time,” she says. Whatever we call that person who helped an artist realise their artistic goal — Master printer, Collaborative printer, or work horse/monkey — Remling says the important thing for artist, dealers and collectors to recognise is that collaborative printmaking allows for a unique kind of back and forth, and the freedom to try something new. That spirit is what makes the fruit of a particular collaboration between artist and printer unique and valuable for everyone involved.





Tamarind Institute's workshop
Photo Kenton Bueche. Courtesy Tamarind Institute

FROCCUS



Rembrandt leaning (2022), Rembrandt

© Paris Musées

HANDLE WITH CARE!

Displaying editions of art and multiples often presents a real challenge for museum curators. Balancing preventive conservation with the appeal of exhibitions, they must showcase their printed masterpieces without putting them at risk.

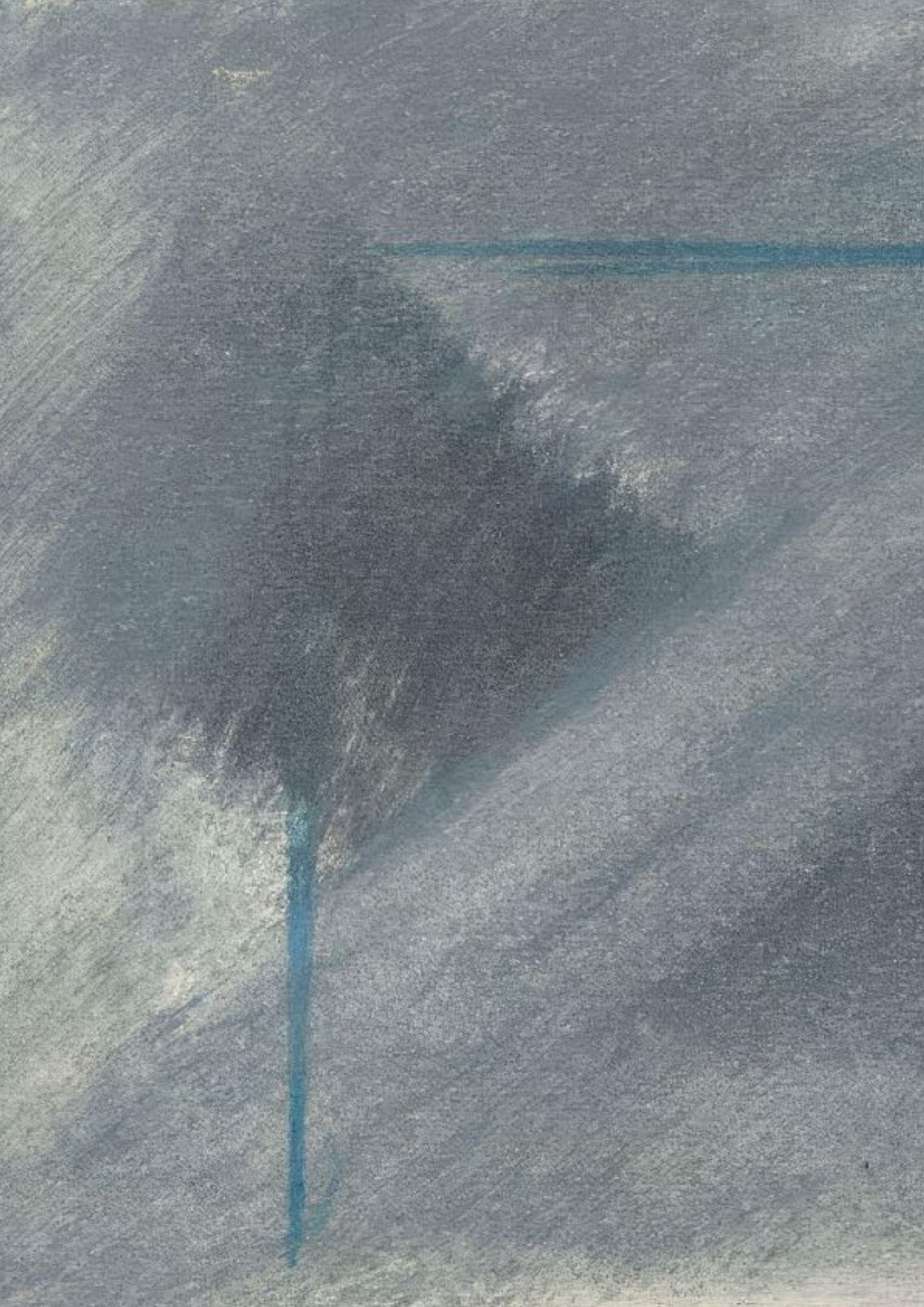
Specialised institutions dedicated solely to printed works are few and far between. Despite the public's growing enthusiasm for printmaking workshops, museums and art centres focusing exclusively on printed art remain rare — aside from major museums, which typically house their own print rooms. One notable exception is Belgium's Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée in La Louvière, which underwent a ten-month renovation last year. Now fully refurbished, it stands as one of Europe's few institutions dedicated to this art form. Its unique collection features works by around 2,400 Belgian and international artists, spanning the full spectrum of modern and contemporary printmaking practices. "The collection was built around the concept of engraving and its variations, primarily post-World War II. Our primary mission is to promote the production of editions," explains Christophe Veys, the centre's director.

A daily challenge

Engravings, prints, lithographs, screen prints, posters and artist books... Managing a collection of 16,000 fragile items is a daily challenge. "It is mainly the paper medium that requires special care, Veys notes. We need to avoid prolonged exposure to light — about three months maximum — followed by several years in darkness. Maintaining consistent humidity levels and stable temperatures is also crucial." To ensure optimal preservation, the Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée boasts several storage spaces with controlled climatic conditions: relative humidity of 50-55% and temperatures between 18 and 20°C. Lighting is carefully managed with UV-filtered spotlights,

allowing adjustable intensity levels. Each artwork, zone and room adheres to strict lux limits — 150 to 200 lux, with the option to dim to as low as 50 lux. The recent renovations also included a complete overhaul of the ventilation and air-conditioning systems, further enhancing preventive conservation measures. Why all these precautions? Because it is no myth — paper deteriorates quickly.

"For all types of paper, light triggers chemical reactions such as hydrolysis and oxidation of cellulose, breaking down the molecules that form the paper's fibres and making it more brittle," explains the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) on its website. But light does not just threaten the paper itself. The materials applied to the surface — whether natural or synthetic — also deteriorate, with exposure to light causing fading or even erasure. "The perception of colour can change significantly. Drawings, coloured prints, maps and posters are particularly vulnerable. Black pigments made from carbon, often used





The blue line (portfolio, 1971), Geneviève Asse

© BnF

in engraving, are more stable,” adds the venerable institution, which has unparalleled expertise in the field, managing a staggering 40 million documents [see box].

Handling is another constant challenge, as artworks move between storage and exhibitions. “Since January 2024, we have dedicated one of our three floors to a space called Voyage en collections, showcasing the treasures of our unique print collection,” says the director of the Belgian museum. “We rotate all the works on display every three months. It is an enormous task for our team, especially since most of our pieces are stored unframed in our state-of-the-art reserves. Visitors love the balance between our temporary exhibitions and the chance to discover hidden gems, whether it is our renowned Pierre Alechinsky collection or posters from May 68 — less famous but equally fascinating.”

Multifaceted editions

Art editions and multiples do not always mean paper. Constantly evolving, printmaking has moved beyond the sheet, blending with digital technologies, expanding into large formats or even taking on sculptural forms. By pushing the boundaries of the medium, contemporary printmaking introduces new conservation challenges while enriching the museum’s narrative. Christophe Veys elaborates: “Contemporary artists embrace new technologies, particularly digital ones and often combine multiple techniques. Some paradoxically question the concept of multiples, playing with uniqueness through extensive hand-finishing or by presenting their printing plates as standalone works of art.”

Pierre Soulages stands as a trailblazer in the realm of printmaking. “There is a whole movement of printmaking artists, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, who elevate engraved matrices to the status of artworks,” explains Jean-Marie Marandin in *Au-delà de l’estampe* (2021). “One of the first to do so in France, as far as I know, was Soulages, who cast his matrices in bronze, transforming them into sculptures. He even said that these sculptures led him to the concept of *Outrenoir*.”

Soulages, who regarded printmaking as equal to painting, had a deep fascination with technology. “He was very interested in the technical aspects of art. That is how printmaking entered his practice and became a central part of his work,” reveals Benoît Decron, director of the Musée Soulages in Rodez, which houses the entirety of the *Outrenoir* master’s printed works — a significant segment of his *œuvre*. “He was always close to the head of the printmaking workshop, as well as the press operator.

Geneviève Asse at BnF

Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) pays tribute to Geneviève Asse, a towering figure in 20th-century French painting and printmaking, with an exhibition spotlighting an extraordinary donation: twenty-five of the artist’s sketchbooks, gifted by her widow, Silvia Baron Supervielle.

At the crossroads of painting, drawing, printmaking and illustrated book design, these precious sketchbooks — most of which were created between the 1980s and 2000s — offer a deeply personal insight into Geneviève Asse’s creative process. Born in Vannes in 1923 and passing away in Paris in 2021, Asse began exploring printmaking alongside painting in 1954. She later ventured into bookmaking, collaborating with poets and writers such as Pierre Lecuire, Yves Bonnefoy, Samuel Beckett and Silvia Baron Supervielle.

Sketchbooks on display reveal the remarkable breadth of her artistic experimentation. Asse worked with a variety of formats, including bound codices, brocade-covered *leporellos* and Chinese calligraphy notebooks. Each served as a technical, rhythmic and chromatic laboratory, producing unique visual compositions that were intimately connected to her pictorial research.

The exhibition pairs these sketchbooks with a selection of prints and books from the BnF’s collections, which already held nearly the entirety of Asse’s printmaking oeuvre. This rare opportunity invites visitors to delve into the creative intimacy of Geneviève Asse, exploring the profound connections between her various artistic practices.

“Geneviève Asse, carnets”

Until 25 May
Bibliothèque nationale de France
Quai François Mauriac. Paris
www.bnf.fr



Untitled (1949), Pierre Soulages

Photo Christian Bousque - Courtesy Musée Soulages

“Most of the time, exhibitions featuring unique works tend to attract larger audiences. But ultimately, there’s no hard-and-fast rule. It is often the artist’s name that draws people in. For instance, a few years ago, BAM in Mons organised a Roy Lichtenstein exhibition without specifying that it was exclusively dedicated to multiples. The crowds came and, as far as I know, no one complained about this specificity.”

— *Christophe Veys*

He was curious about everything.” Like the Centre de la Gravure in La Louvière, the Musée Soulages rotates its collection of 143 prints, displaying around thirty at a time in its print room to ensure preventive conservation, notes Amandine Meunier, the museum’s collections manager. “The others rest in storage during this period.” In line with the artist’s wishes, the displayed works are shown under low lighting and without mounts, presented in black-backed display cases or table vitrines.

Dürer, Rembrandt... and the others

Preventive conservation is not the only challenge. Despite institutional and collector recognition, attracting the public or creating a blockbuster exhibition around printed art remains a difficult task. For more traditional museums, the temptation to rely on big names is hard to resist. Dürer, Rembrandt, Goya, Toulouse-Lautrec... For its 2023-2024 exhibition “Treasures in black and white”, Petit Palais in Paris leaned on iconic works and celebrated artists, drawing a respectable 76,863 visitors. “A great success,” the museum declared, though the numbers pale in comparison to its street art

exhibition “We are here”, which attracted 550,000 visitors during the Olympics — part of the museum’s annual total of 1.5 million visitors.

When visitors take the step to come to our museum, any preconceived notions they might have about an exhibition solely dedicated to printed art quickly fade away,” observes Christophe Veys. “They realise that multiples are, first and foremost, works of art. Moreover, it highlights the artist’s desire to make their work more financially accessible.” On 14 June, Veys will inaugurate the museum’s new presentation, “Wings for prints”, which celebrates the structures — workshops, publishers and galleries — that contribute to the vitality of the medium. “We also have a very diverse approach to outreach. Our tradition of welcoming school groups is particularly strong, with storytelling tours, activity booklets for young visitors and observation games for individuals or groups.”

To showcase their multiples, museums often rely on strategic timing and collaboration. During the summer of 2023, the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris presented “Engrave the light”, an exhibition featuring 100 prints by masters of engraving, from Picasso to Rembrandt. “The exhibition found its audience and by a happy coincidence, it coincided with two other events dedicated to printmaking last summer: ‘Degas in black and white’ at the BnF and ‘Treasures in black and white’ from the Dutuit collection at the Petit Palais,” noted Érik Desmazières, director of the Marmottan Monet in an interview with the Académie des beaux-arts. As March draws to a close, the packed agenda of the Drawing week promises to be another excellent opportunity to explore editions as standalone works of art.



Christophe Veys

ARR



View of the “Kiki Smith” exhibition

Photo Vincenzo Chiavetta. Courtesy Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée



IN FRENCH



Deborah Kass' studio

Photo Mickaël Pijoubert. © Art Media Agency

DEBORAH KASS: DEMOCRATISING ART

For more than three decades, her work explores the intersection of pop culture, art history and the construction of self.

American artist Deborah Kass (1952), is known for her bold engagement with art history, popular culture and politics. Drawing inspiration from modernist icons like Andy Warhol, Kass has developed a practice that blends painting, sculpture and prints. Her work frequently explores issues of power, gender and representation. Through her editions, she has been a strong advocate for making art accessible to broader audiences.

How did you start working with editions?

Editions have always been a significant part of art history, particularly in printmaking and sculpture. When given the opportunity to create editions, I see it as a chance to share my work more broadly. There is no deep philosophy behind it; it is simply another way to put my work into the world. Prints and multiples allow my art to reach a wider audience, often at a lower price point, thus making them more accessible. This is important because, historically, prints have served as a democratic art form, offering people the ability to own art who might not otherwise afford unique pieces. It also presents a different creative challenge, working within the constraints of a reproducible medium while ensuring that each edition maintains the integrity of the original work. In 2009 I decided to explore this path, but my first editions turned out quite mediocre. It was not until I began working with Brand X — whom I have collaborated with since the 1990s — that my prints truly started to reflect my vision.

How does your approach to editions differ from your painting practice?

The processes are distinct, but there are similarities as well. When I paint, it is often

a more solitary and direct experience, but with editions, the process is more collaborative. I work with master printers and technicians who bring their expertise to the table, helping me translate my vision into a print medium. While painting is fluid and unpredictable, printmaking requires an understanding of layers, inks and techniques that lend themselves to a different kind of exploration. The process of editioning allows me to experiment in ways that painting might not. Working with other experts often leads to discoveries — whether through new materials, layering techniques, or colour variations — that I might not have considered if I were working alone.

How do you decide on the size of your editions?

My editions typically range between 40 and 65 prints, particularly for silkscreen fine art prints, but it depends on the process and the context. If I am working with digital prints or inkjet methods, I may produce a larger edition. Sometimes, the decision comes

EVERYBODY

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Deborah Kass

Photo Mickaël Pijoubert. © Art Media Agency

down to a conversation between me and the publisher. They assess demand and we agree on a number based on that. There are also industry standards for edition sizes, and those conventions influence my decisions. It is also important to consider that edition sizes affect pricing and exclusivity. If an artist is more established, they might produce larger editions because there is confidence in the market's ability to absorb them. If an edition is smaller, it can maintain a sense of rarity, which appeals to certain collectors. I once produced an inkjet print in an edition of 150 because I wanted it to be more affordable and accessible. Ultimately, the edition size depends on the artwork, the method and the market.

“The art history paintings 1989-1992”

The exhibition “The art history paintings 1989-1992”, now on view at Salon 94 in New York, brings together 12 works created during the Reagan-era in American society. As the middle class was squeezed and a new elite of wealthy young white men embraced art as a financial asset, Kass responded with paintings that challenged the exclusionary narratives of art history. Painted between 1989 and 1992, these works confront the narratives of art history that ignored the roles of gender, race, ethnicity and privilege in sustaining the *status quo*. The artist dismantles the myth of the male “genius” by deconstructing figures like Picasso, Pollock and Warhol, exposing how museums, markets and history uphold exclusionary structures. Blending high art with pop culture — Disney characters, wrestling manuals, male pornography — she disrupts traditional interpretations and reveals the hidden biases that shape artistic value. With key loans from The Guggenheim and The Jewish Museum, the exhibition remains a powerful critique of the art world's resistance to change.

“The art history paintings 1989-1992”

Until 29 March
Salon 94
3 East 89th Street, New York
www.salon94.com

“Editions have always been a significant part of art history, particularly in printmaking and sculpture. When given the opportunity to create editions, I see it as a chance to share my work more broadly. There is no deep philosophy behind it; it is simply another way to put my work into the world. — Deborah Kass

Let's talk about your sculptures...

Sculpture editions function slightly differently because of historical and legal definitions. Anything up to eight sculptures is considered an original, thanks to rules dating back to Constantin Brâncuși and laws concerning sculpture imports into the U.S. from France. Beyond that number, sculptures are classified as multiples. For my larger sculptures, I typically work in editions of four, so they remain within the “original” category. My monumental public sculptures — such as *YO/OY* — have been produced in very limited numbers, each uniquely placed in different locations. However, for smaller sculptures, I may

produce editions of 24, which aligns with industry standards. Regardless of the edition size, each piece maintains its integrity and artistic intent.

Would you say editions help democratise art?

Absolutely. In fact, I would say democracy is at the core of my practice. If you think about the history of printmaking, it has always been a way to make art more widely available. Prints are more affordable than one-of-a-kind works and accessibility is crucial for expanding art audiences. Some artists have taken this even further by producing posters or digital editions, but not

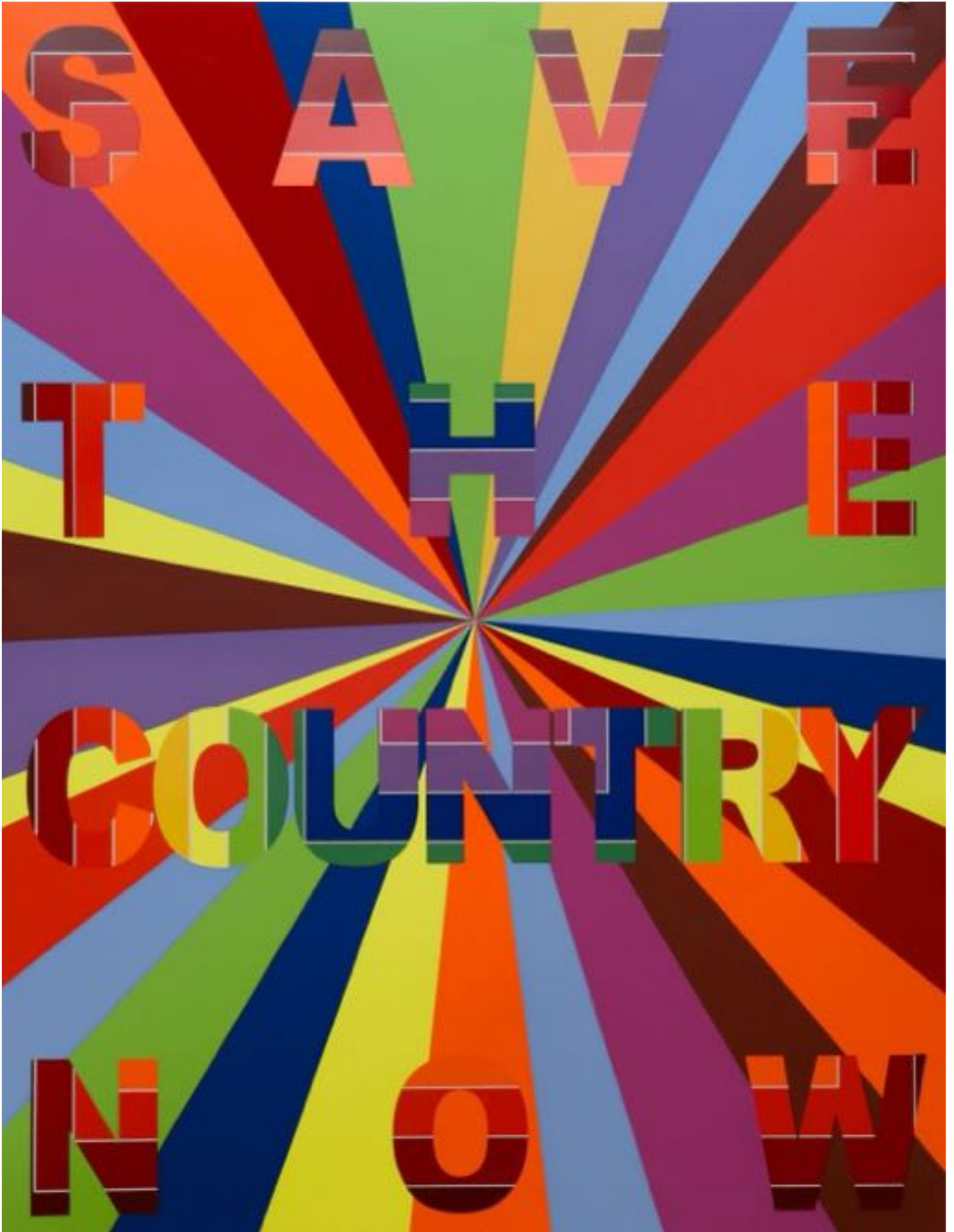
every artist wants their work to be so widely disseminated. Prints also offer a different set of possibilities and constraints but are no less significant. The importance of editioned works extends beyond affordability; it is also about reach. A single painting exists in one space, but an editioned print can exist in many places at once, expanding the conversation and influence of the work.

Your work frequently engages with appropriation...

I use art history as if it is a pre-existing language — something familiar that I can repurpose to say what I want to say. Many of the artists I reference, from Picasso to

Save the country now! (2025), Deborah Kass

Photo Mickaël Pijoubert. © Art Media Agency





VOTE

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Vote Hillary (2016), Deborah Kass
© Deborah Kass

HILLARY

“I use art history as if it is a pre-existing language — something familiar that I can repurpose to say what I want to say. Many of the artists I reference, from Picasso to Warhol, were not necessarily speaking for me or people like me. By using their visual vocabulary, I can shift meanings, insert my own voice and comment on power, gender, politics and representation. — *Deborah Kass*

Warhol, were not necessarily speaking for me or people like me. By using their visual vocabulary, I can shift meanings, insert my own voice and comment on power, gender, politics and representation. It is about reclaiming space. If you take a form or language associated with power and make it work for your own message, you are both subverting its original meaning and asserting your own. My engagement with appropriation was especially significant earlier in my career when I was directly referencing figures like Warhol. At that time, I was deeply immersed in his visual world, using it as a tool to be as legible and impactful as possible.

Your connection with Warhol is particularly strong...

I would not say I identified with Warhol — I just appropriated him. But I did so with intention. Warhol's visual language is one of the most universally recognised in contemporary art, everyone understands him. That made Andy Warhol the perfect vehicle for my work because I could use that familiarity to communicate my own ideas clearly. He also worked extensively with repetition and editioning, which influenced me deeply. His process — creating variations on a theme and playing with mechanical reproduction while maintaining originality — deeply resonated with me. Even when silkscreening, every print is slightly different due to pressure, ink distribution and technique. That element of variation within repetition is something I learned from him.

Any favourite editions?

In 2016 I created *Vote Hillary*, a large silkscreen print for Hillary Clinton's campaign. I was very proud of it, almost ten years later and I am still selling them! Thanks to that work, I even had the chance to personally meet her. We talked about the print and she told me, “We really messed up.” The work is inspired by Andy Warhol's 1972 piece for the anti-Nixon campaign. My print is the same size as his — 250 by 250 — and initially, they sold for \$1,000, just like Warhol's did in 1972. Now they are worth \$7,500 and from 250 prints, I think I have around 50 left. I also have a new print coming out at IFPDA New York this week. The print is titled *Save the country now* and is inspired by a lyric from a 1968 song by Laura Nyro and YRO. The work was done with Brand X and is published by Goya Editions, which also runs a gallery in Baltimore. 10% of the proceeds will go to the American Civil Liberties Union, which is suing Trump on numerous fronts and is primarily dedicated to protecting our civil rights. The ACLU is one of my favourite causes and I have supported them for many years now. They need strong support, especially with everything going on. I am printing only 40 of these and hope to sell them all. It is a print I am very excited to promote!

You recently explored digital art with ARSNL.

What was that experience like?

It was an interesting experiment, though I cannot say I fully grasp the world of digital art and NFTs. The project involved a digital slot machine that generated different text-based designs, reflecting my ongoing engagement with language. However, the timing was unfortunate, as the crypto market crashed just as the project launched. I enjoyed the collaboration, but I do not see myself diving into NFTs as a major part of my practice. Many artists are pursuing that space and I think it makes sense for younger artists who understand the digital landscape more intuitively. For me, it was more of an exploration than a long-term commitment.

Where do you see the future of editions going?

Artists will always make editions. The market fluctuates, but prints and multiples remain a fundamental part of the art world. Given economic uncertainties, prints might become even more appealing to collectors as a more affordable entry point into collecting art. Ultimately, as long as there's demand and artists have something to say, editions will continue to thrive.



Red Deb (2000), Deborah Kass
© Deborah Kass

DISCUSSION



Casa de México
Compras y Fundación Casa de México

Andy mouse (1986), Keith Haring

Courtesy Heritage Auctions

THE EVOLVING WORLD OF EDITIONS

A year into her role as Prints and Multiples Consignment Director for Heritage Auctions, Rebecca Lax shares her insights into the evolving, global editions market.

With offices throughout the United States and an additional international presence in Europe, Japan and Hong Kong, Heritage Auctions is arguably the biggest global player in the online prints and multiples auction space. Rebecca Lax joined Heritage as Prints and Multiples Consignment Director in May 2024. She brought more than three decades of experience to the position. She worked in the gallery sector at Leo Castelli, Lelong & Co. and Jim Kempner Fine Art, in the production space at Solo Press and PACE Prints, in academics, as Finance Director of the LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University from 2005 to 2009 and in the auction space, consulting and sourcing for the Prints and Contemporary Art departments of Sotheby's, Christie's, Phillips, Bonhams, artnet auctions and Auctionata/Paddle8. She holds a degree in painting and printmaking from Bennington College, Vermont.

How does the global editions market look right now?

The global editions market is currently very robust, though we are approaching a moment of economic uncertainty due to recent tariff issues introduced and economic uncertainty with all the recent DOGE cuts by the current US administration. Despite this, in the broader art world, there are notable developments aimed at strengthening international markets. For example, the United Kingdom has recently extended its tax-free import policy for art and antiques to a period of up to four years — an initiative designed to bolster the post-Brexit art market. This kind of policy shift has significant implications for the global print market. It encourages the consignment flow of blue-chip artist editions from the US and other countries into the UK,

where collectors and dealers benefit from favourable import conditions. As a result, we are likely to see a movement of artworks by British artists previously held in US collections being deaccessioned and redirected to London, one of the key epicentres of the international art scene.

In what ways is the market evolving?

We are seeing some softening at the very top, particularly with blue-chip names like Warhol. Warhol editions always require professional oversight, as the Warhol Foundation no longer authenticates works. At the same time, the market is expanding in the mid-career and emerging artist segments. The overall shape of the market is broadening — imagine a wide, low pyramid with artists like Warhol at the top. This growth is driven in part by a new generation of printmakers, including recent graduates who are opening their own print shops and by the continued success of print-focused art fairs. These fairs [see box p.12], such as the venerable IFPDA, the new Brooklyn Prints Fair, the London Original Print Fair, now in its 40th year and Art on

Paper, remain essential platforms for publishers and dealers alike. Only recently has the IFPDA opened its membership to individual print studios (without gallery spaces) and to university-affiliated print shops. Another driver of growth in this market is the increasing participation of mid-career to blue-chip galleries, which began investing in the print sector over a decade ago. Today, many have established dedicated editions departments or even standalone spaces, such as David Zwirner's Utopia Editions and Hauser & Wirth Editions, which has its own dedicated gallery space. Auction houses are also leaning in, with offerings like Phillips' online Drop/Shop. However, this surge in primary dealer involvement has downsides. The dominance of primary galleries in publishing and distributing new print editions has restricted access for longstanding, respected secondary market print dealers. As a result, this once-vibrant area of the print world is diminishing, with primary dealers seeking to control both the production and sales of their artists' editions, effectively consolidating power within their stables.

Was the editions market affected by COVID?

Yes. The online prints market saw a significant surge, initially jumping by 30 to 40% over previous levels. This was largely driven by increased demand as people spent more time at home, feeling disconnected and looking for ways to engage with art during their downtime. Prints departments at brick-and-mortar auction houses that had access to inventory on-site were able to pivot quickly to online sales, provided staff could safely come into work. Their ability to act swiftly and leverage existing inventory gave them a strong advantage during that time.

Are there global differences between how collectors view multiples?

Yes, there are definitely regional differences in how multiples are viewed and valued, and artists

often perform best in their native countries. For example, British artists like Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon tend to achieve higher prices in London, while American Pop artists usually see stronger results in markets like New York and Los Angeles. Artists who have bridged both geographies, such as David Hockney, who moved from England to the US, tend to do well in both regions. Career trajectory also matters. Where artists have had major exhibitions, especially museum retrospectives and where those shows travel, all play a role in shaping regional and global market interest. That said, the art world is becoming increasingly international in taste and reach. Aesthetic preferences are broadening and collectors are more globally aware than ever. However, one practical challenge is the rising cost of shipping. For large-scale prints especially, sourcing work locally can often be more economical than importing from abroad.

Why are editions a good entry point for new collectors?

Because prints are generally more affordable. Prints offer a way to collect meaningful, high-quality works without the financial barrier of one-of-a-kind originals. Of course, this excludes six-figure works by blue-chip artists. What makes prints especially appealing is the idea of being part of a small, exclusive group — perhaps 50 collectors — who own the same hand-printed edition. Even the Museum of Modern Art in New York began its permanent collection with a donation of prints.

What is the current state of institutional interest in editions?

Institutional interest has evolved significantly, with a noticeable rise in the academic rigour and curatorial quality of museum exhibitions focused on prints. One standout example, though from a few years ago, was "Someday is now: The art of Corita Kent, presented at the Tang Teaching

Museum at Skidmore College in 2013. Exhibitions like this reflect a deeper, more scholarly approach to the medium. In recent years, some museums have merged their prints and drawings departments. While partially a budget-conscious decision, it has also led to a more integrated and holistic appreciation of all mediums on paper. Museums are also actively acquiring prints for their permanent collections. For example, MoMA's Prints and Illustrated Books Department holds four to five acquisitions meetings per year. Publishers can submit their editions for consideration, subject to approval by the curatorial team. This open channel shows a healthy and ongoing institutional interest in contemporary printmaking.

Why are editions by historic artists more affordable than their unique works?

Affordability of editions at auction is due to a combination of factors. In many cases, these artists produced a very high volume of editions over the course of their careers, which naturally dilutes scarcity and, in turn, value. But it is not just about supply and demand. More significantly, the prints market has been flooded with questionable works and outright fakes. With artists like Calder, Dalí, Warhol, Haring, Lichtenstein and Miró, authenticity is a major concern. Unfortunately, some smaller auction houses fail to properly vet editions, allowing inauthentic works to enter the market and drive down overall confidence and pricing. Artist's estates and foundations have also failed at authentication efforts and get embroiled in lawsuits brought on by private collectors who were uneducated in their purchases. For instance, the Andy Warhol Foundation no longer authenticates Warhol works, but does publish the artist's *catalogue raisonnés*. Additionally, platforms like eBay, where works are often not vetted at all, contribute to this saturation and confusion. That is why it is critical to buy from auction houses



La femme arborescente (1974), Joan Miró

Courtesy Heritage Auctions



Heritage Auctions

Courtesy Heritage Auctions

HERITAGE AUCTIONS





Rebecca Lax

Courtesy Heritage Auctions

that have experienced, specialised print departments and a strong track record in Contemporary Art. Expertise and due diligence matter enormously when it comes to editions.

Why are primary market contemporary editions pricier than historic editions at auction?

Well, you could also ask, why is early American furniture from the 1800s no longer fashionable and why is it now so inexpensive at auction? Or why are Depression-era modern sofas selling for under \$2,000? The answer often comes down to shifting tastes. “Historic” is just that, historic. Many collectors today want new, new, new, and creating something new comes with significantly higher production costs. In the world of printmaking, traditional processes are becoming increasingly rare and expensive. Many historic techniques, like photogravure, require specialised inks, chemicals and materials that are no longer being manufactured. As a result, print publishers are under pressure to cut costs wherever they can. While it would be a real loss to see the tradition of the edition fade away, the market is increasingly favouring unique works. Print publishers are adapting, producing more one-of-a-kind prints and charging more for them. Meanwhile, print collector interest in more historic artists has waned and with the rising costs of producing editions for newer, in-demand artists, the economics of print publishing are changing fast.

How does Heritage distinguish itself in the editions auction space?

Heritage Auctions’ strength in the field lies in the accessibility of its offerings online and its commitment to buyer education and transparency. We host 12 Showcase online print auctions annually, one each month, alongside two Signature auctions during the high seasons of fall and

spring, which feature printed catalogs and a live auctioneer. Our Showcase auctions provide accessible entry points starting at just \$100 (€90) per lot. Most of these auctions are No Reserve. We publish reserve prices for every lot during our Showcase auctions and reveal reserves online seven days before our Signature auctions. Our auctions are published online 2 to 3 weeks before the sale date to allow early bidding and unsold lots remain available under the “Bid/Buy” tab. This level of transparency empowers buyers by informing them of the bid amount required to win a lot.

We have also expanded into more specialised areas within the print category. On 20 March, we closed an auction of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints, the traditional art of woodblock printmaking, from the estate of Ruth Sylvia Nelkin. It featured a broad range of price points, with the highest-valued print, *The great wave* by Katsushika Hokusai (c.1830), hammering at €391,000 (with buyer’s premium). The auction achieved a 100% sell-through rate, commonly referred to in the industry as a “white glove” sale. Two more auctions featuring *ukiyo-e* from the Nelkin Collection are scheduled, with the next taking place in June 2025.

Who curates the Olympics art editions?

French illustrator Ugo Gattoni has been under scrutiny for the official posters he designed for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic games. The posters have been lauded by some for their whimsically complex imagery, but derided by others for their resemblance to something for sale in a tourist shoppe. Like them or hate them, Gattoni’s designs are now part of an esteemed tradition of Olympic art editions, some of which are highly prized by collectors. But who is in charge of selecting official Olympic art? The answer, according to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, is complicated. Every Olympics is co-organised by its own committee, called Organising Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs). Individual COGs decide for themselves what the art component of their city’s games will be.

One of the most highly valued Olympic art portfolios was the set of 15 colour lithographs created for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. That city’s COG invited the most famous locally-based artists of the time to contribute poster ideas — a group that included John Baldessari, Lynda Benglis, David Hockney, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg. Rauschenberg’s entry was selected as the “official” poster of the games. The full set of works from all artists was then offered in a limited edition portfolio of 750. In March of 2024, one of those portfolios fetched €21,000 at Bonhams.

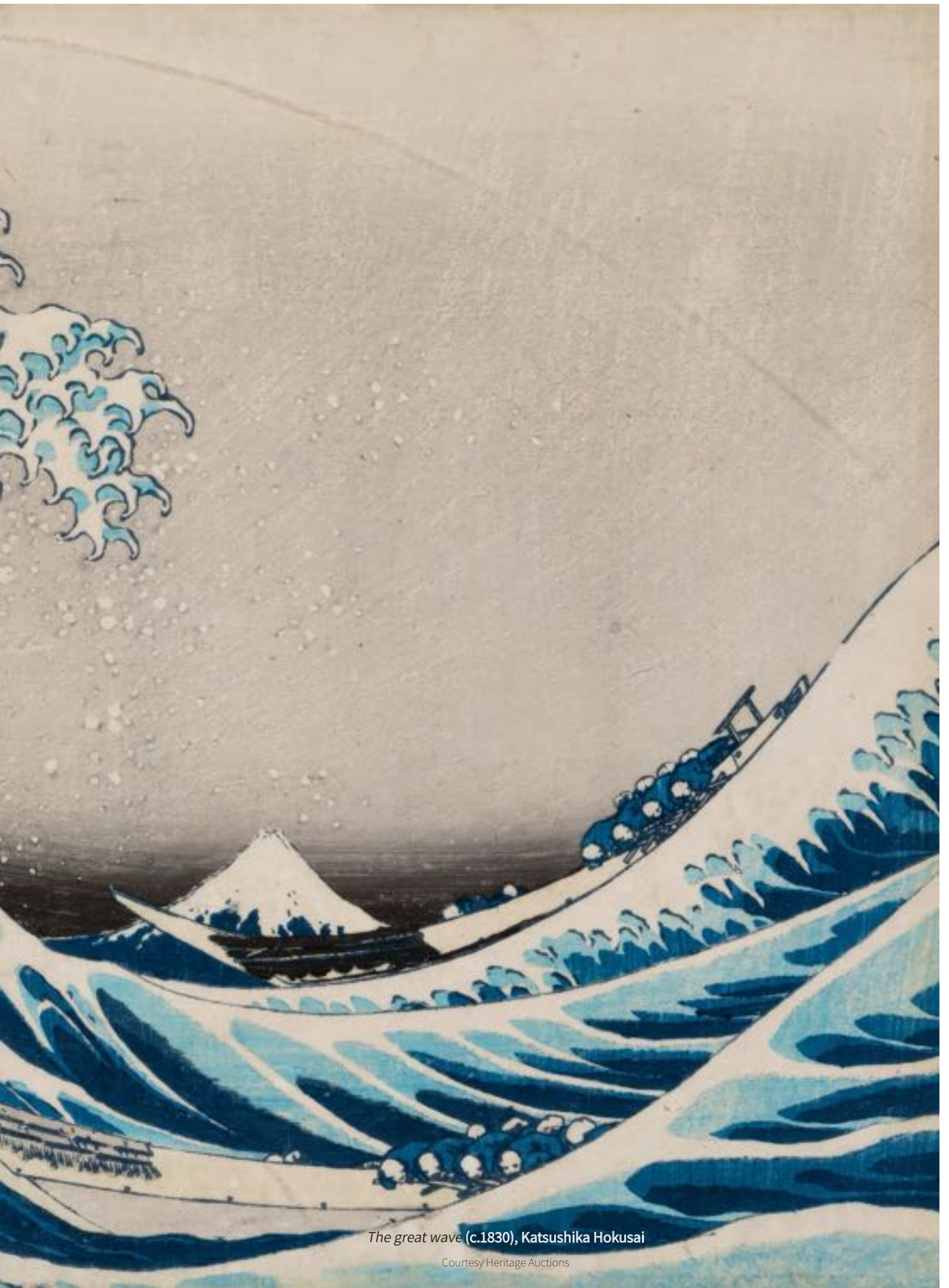
One of the most famous Olympic posters of late, the Rachel Whiteread poster for the 2012 London Olympics, was the result of a collaboration between officials at the Tate and 19 other regional British galleries — a group convened by the London COG specifically to manage the art component of that city’s games. From their initial list of 100 artists, the group selected six artists, including Whiteread, to create posters. Three were former Turner Prize winners.

Those wishing to take the 2024 Paris COG to task could perhaps start with Tony Estanguet, the president of the committee or Étienne Thobois, the director general. Although the complete COG included nearly three dozen individuals, conspicuously missing from the list of names was anyone who appears to be connected in any way to the visual arts.

富嶽三十六景 神奈川沖
浪裏

ついでに富嶽





The great wave (c.1830), Katsushika Hokusai

Courtesy Heritage Auctions

MAARREL



View of Perrotin Editions Everyone is a collector!

Photo Tanguy Beurdeley. Courtesy Perrotin

MULTIPLES PERSONALITY: HOW THE PRINT MARKET IS FUELLED BY FUN

The prints and multiples market is more than just a revenue sector. It is a laboratory, a time capsule and one of the art world's last playgrounds.

Indigenous artist Jeffrey Gibson leads free screen-printing workshops on occasion. He offered his first one in 2017, for school children in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in conjunction with his solo exhibition at the Haggarty Museum of Art, titled "Look how far we've come". "I remember feeling that the phrase was fought, Gibson recalls. I felt like we were stepping back in time in terms of civil rights and equal justice." The screen-printing workshop was a way to remind the students and himself, of art's transformative potential, even in the most difficult times. To drive home that point, Gibson based his curriculum on the free screen-printing workshops that artist and one-time Catholic nun named Corita Kent used to offer to the public in the 1960s.

Kent was anything but an art world insider. She entered Sisters of the Immaculate Heart, a Catholic religious order in 1936 at age 18. Informed by a world at war, her philosophical and theological interests were simple: peace and love. The outlet she chose to express those interests was art. She bought a mail-order screen-printing kit and taught herself serigraphy. To her surprise and delight, the idiosyncratic techniques and unique visual style she developed ended up revolutionising the form. Kent's screen-prints beautifully and whimsically expressed her alternative vision for a society free from violence, inequities and bigotry. Her work's popularity was rooted in its fusion of social awareness and joy.

The free public workshops Kent offered attracted a mix of people from all income levels and walks of life, including accomplished artists like John

Cage, Buckminster Fuller and Alfred Hitchcock. Her teaching included both practical knowledge and guidance on how to address serious content with a sense of beauty and fun. Gibson echoed that approach in his workshop in Milwaukee. He taught the students the practical aspects of how to pull prints and mix colours and demonstrated Kent's signature style points, like reverse imagery, soft focus and layering colours to create interference. Then he chose content that echoed Kent's simple, socially constructive approach with three phrases: "Look how far we've come", "Believe believe" and "Want need". Over four days of work, the workshop resulted in the creation of 80 prints, most of which were given to the students to keep or donated to the museum.

Kent's legacy, and Gibson's response to it, encapsulates several enduring aspects of fine art printmaking — that it is a laboratory that embraces experimentation, where even someone who is self-taught can be a leader in the *avant-garde*; it is a medium that can move



A work by Derek Fordjour drying at PACE Prints' studio

Photo Mickaël Pijoubert. © Art Media Agency



quickly, letting artists document and respond to history with immediacy and wit; and it is a form that is most successful when it is used as a playground, not just a battleground. At the same time, the work of Kent and Gibson also demonstrates something else about fine art prints: that they are part of a booming marketplace. In April 2024, one of Kent's screen-prints, titled *A man you can lean on* (1966), from an edition of 100, sold at auction for €5,540, three times its high estimate of €1,800. Meanwhile, Gibson's collaborative workshop screen-prints have demanded prices on the private market upwards of €8,000.

Price vs. value

Aside from the works of certain blue-chip artists, high prices are hardly the norm for prints and multiples. A lot of collectors come to this segment of the market precisely because they want great works by important artists but have less money to spend. Vanessa Clairét Stern, Director of Communications and Development for Perrotin gallery, says that is why publishing and selling multiples aligns with the gallery's core mission, which she describes as "making art accessible to all audiences by offering a wide range of products and price points."

Multiples help the gallery "reach a broader audience, beyond the gallery's regular visitors and collectors, Stern says. Perrotin aims to make art and fine objects accessible to everyone, regardless of budget. As Emmanuel Perrotin stakes: 'I grew up in a family that could not afford to buy art but my parents had such an appreciation of culture that when we went to museums, we always found something to buy in the shop. Our house was full of posters. This idea has stayed with me throughout the development of the gallery. Art is for everyone!'"

"In my opinion, prints serve as an entry point to the art world, says Jacob Lewis, Director of PACE Prints. Printmaking has enabled the collecting community to fulfil their artistic aspirations without incurring substantial financial burdens. Prints provide accessibility at various levels, allowing collectors to acquire the unique creations of deceased artists, such as Keith Haring, whose works are primarily housed in institutions. Or, collecting works by artists that have become so established that their 'unique' works have become cost prohibitive. Many collectors begin their journey by acquiring an edition and as they gain knowledge,

appreciation and enthusiasm for art collecting, they expand their horizons to include other mediums such as sculpture and paintings."

David Zwirner opened a dedicated print publishing imprint in 2021 out of a similar appreciation for the approachability of multiples. Zwirner's first job in the art world was working for a print shop: the now defunct Brooke Alexander Editions, which collaborated with many blue-chip artists, including Jenny Holzer, Kiki Smith, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Richard Tuttle. Operating under the name Utopia Editions, Zwirner's publishing arm creates original editioned print

LA fires spotlight philanthropic print market

A photo by Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth titled *Democracy*, showing hands reaching through prison bars to take a picture on a phone of what looks like a war zone. A still shot by Sofia Coppola from the set of her 2010 film *Somewhere* in Los Angeles. A photo by filmmaker Spike Jonze of three startled looking wild deer on the lavish patio of a mountainside home overlooking downtown Los Angeles. These are three of the 161 photographic prints recently offered in a "10-day open-edition print sale" organised by the California Picture Project (CPP). All proceeds from the sale were donated to the California Community Foundation (CCF) Wildfire Recovery Fund to help victims of the recent Los Angeles wildfires.

Niki Robertson, founder of IAMSOUND and an executive at RCA Records, said she was inspired to contribute a work to the CPP photo sale out of a sense of desperation. "We were all shell-shocked. It displaced friends, parents at our daughter's school had lost their homes. We were desperate to find a way to volunteer." That was a common feeling throughout the community, said a spokesperson for CPP. "We identified a print sale as the most immediate way to leverage our collective skills and networks. The response from the photographic community was extraordinary. Over the course of the 10-day sale, we raised €110,000 for wildfire relief efforts. The €140 price point (for a single print) made exceptional photography accessible while maximising our impact."

Charity sales of editioned works have exploded in recent years, with dozens of high profile philanthropic sales offering prints and multiples from international blue chip artists to support causes as diverse as COVID relief, the Australian wildfires, Ukrainian war relief, Palestinian Relief and the NAACP. According to recent research published by Deloitte Private and ArtTactic, more than two-thirds of art collectors under age 35 prioritise art investments with a philanthropic component. Photographs, prints, multiples and other editioned works are ideal for this space because their price point tends to be more accessible for a wider market.



PAMUL (detail, 2023), Gerhard Richter

Courtesy David Zwirner

series in partnership with contemporary artists and Master Printers around the world. Uniquely, Utopia does not only work with artists on the David Zwirner roster. They also work with unrepresented artists and artists represented by other galleries.

Obviously, Utopia's prints need to be commercially viable, which is increasingly complicated as many print processes are becoming more expensive and rare. But price point is only one of the factors the Utopia team considers when choosing their projects. Experimentation is becoming more important than ever to the market as more collectors come to appreciate the diversity of print techniques and the range of possibilities they offer an artist to express their core ideas. "The profile of the print collector is continually evolving, says Elleree Erdos, Utopia's Director of Prints and Editions. Gone are the days of the 'old school' print collector who collects exclusively prints. Increasingly prints and editions are recognised as an important and transformative part of many artists' practices that deserves attention."

Erdos says that a variety of factors come into play when she decides which artists to collaborate with. "The first and most important question I consider is whether and how their work will translate into the print medium. Learning about each artist's own process is very important, because the way they approach painting ultimately helps dictate what printmaking techniques will feel most natural to their practice. At the same time, we also have collaborated with artists who already consider printmaking a natural part of their practice. With those artists, we always discuss how they might want their print with us to be different in terms of scale, colours, technique, etc."

"As printmakers, our mission is to redefine the boundaries of printmaking, elevating it from a mere reproduction tool to an art-making instrument," says Lewis at PACE Prints. Several members of Lewis's team are breaking new ground in their medium, including printmaker Yasu Shibata who is reviving and preserving the traditional Japanese technique of *ukiyo-e* woodcuts; printmaker Justin Isreal, whose team is experimenting with unconventional materials in relief prints, such as a collaboration with artist Chase Hall using coffee as ink; and printer Sarah Carpenter who is advancing plate techniques in the field of etching. PACE also has a paper making studio led by Rachel Gladfelter, where breakthroughs are being made in creating dimensional and image-rich works with artists like Kennedy Yanko, Derek Fordjour and Leonardo Drew. "While we acknowledge the ability to create editions, Lewis says, our primary focus remains on producing art."

The artist's hand

One innovative way a lot of artists add uniqueness to their print projects is by finding ways to modify the print with hand additions after it is made. "This hand finishing can range from the simple addition of a mark or a line to varied and elaborate drawing," says Erdos. "In recent prints published by Utopia Editions, the inclusion of hand additions has arisen from the artist's desire to add something to the image that was not easily achievable in print." Another benefit to hand additions, of course, is that they potentially increase the future market value of an editioned print, since hand additions add a level of uniqueness to a work that is also part of an editioned series.

Stern also notes that two-dimensional editions are not the only products of importance to the multiples market. Limited edition printed matter such as artist books are also vital. "There are specificities depending on the cities in which we operate, Stern says, however, France has a historical attachment to books, which naturally makes them the majority of our sales volume there. Books are a lasting medium. Collectors are highly sensitive to the quality. We have always taken great care in producing our limited editions, working with the best manufacturers and closely overseeing the entire process."

Erdos agrees that quality is essential in the multiples market, as is the practice of upholding historical standards. "Printmaking is deeply rooted in tradition, she says and I really believe that the most profound innovations in the medium stem from a deep understanding of historical techniques and a willingness to push the boundaries of those processes or integrate them with new media." Even within tradition, experimentation is also key. Erdos points out that the print lab functions not just as a production venue but as a laboratory. "It is important to keep the prints and editions market focused on work that is made with the idiosyncrasies of the medium in mind, as opposed to reproductive prints produced based on image alone."

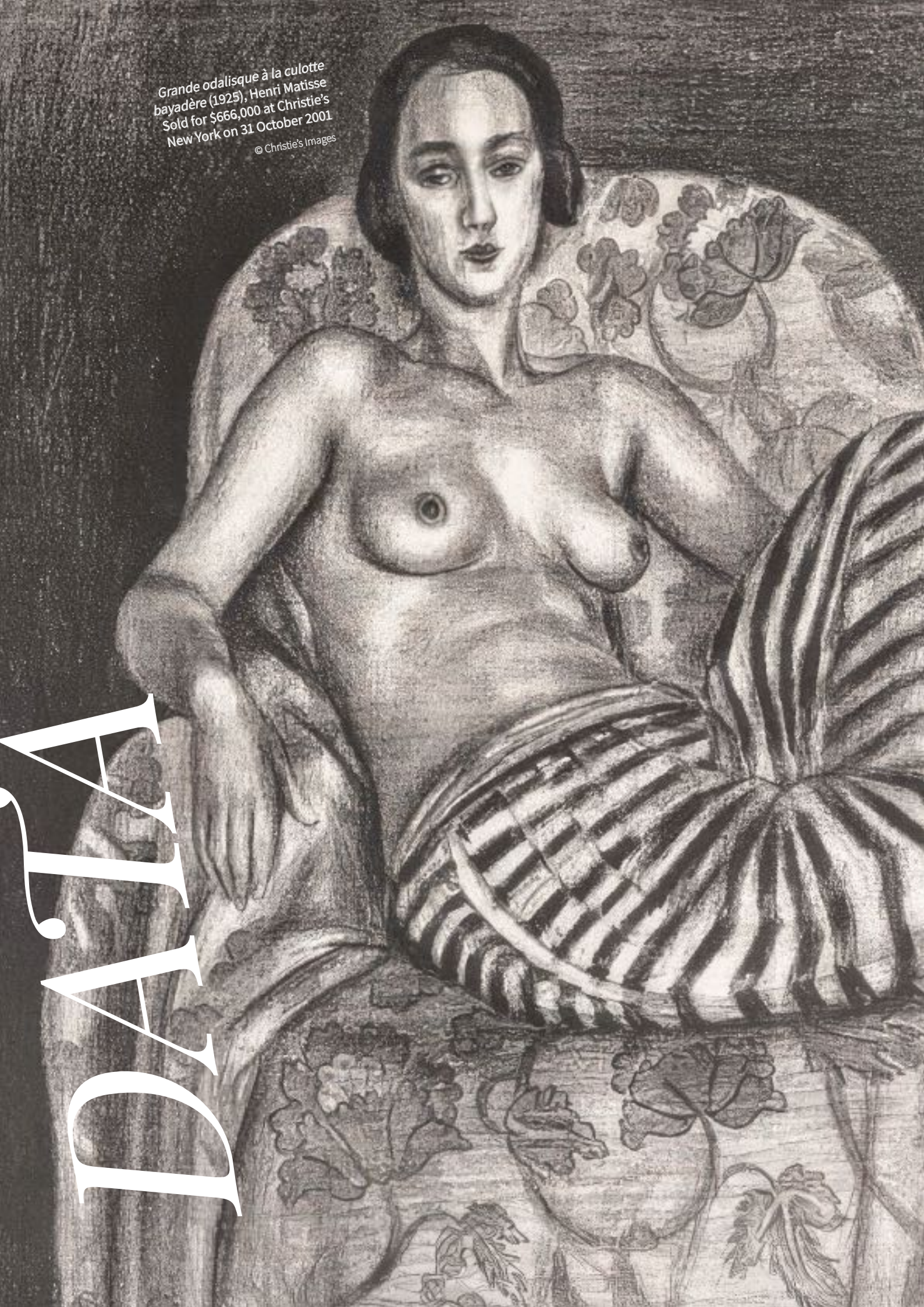


Kennedy Yanko and Rachel Gladfelter at PACE Prints' studio

Photo Mickaël Pijoubert. © Art Media Agency

Grande odalisque à la culotte
bayadère (1925), Henri Matisse
Sold for \$666,000 at Christie's
New York on 31 October 2001
© Christie's Images

ODALISQUE





HENRI MATISSE'S EDITIONS

A central figure in Fauvism, the work of Henri Matisse goes far beyond his colourful paintings. Nonconformist and at the forefront of the avant-garde movement, the French artist elevated the value of artistic prints and books in the 20th century.

Born in France in 1869, Henri Matisse is a key artist to understand the beginning of the avant-garde movement. While he is now recognised as one of the foremost painters of the 20th century, his unique approach to colour and shape led to the emergence of Fauvism, an artistic movement characterised by strong colours and fierce brushwork. His style not only redefined modern painting, but also influenced his contemporaries and generations of artists that followed.

Many of Matisse's finest works were created after 1906, when he developed a rigorous style emphasising flattened forms and decorative patterns. A decade later, he relocated to Nice and the more relaxed style of his work gained him critical acclaim as an upholder of the classical tradition in French painting. Beyond the brush, his artistic curiosity led him to explore various mediums, producing significant works in sculpture, collage and printmaking. His innovative approach to print techniques, particularly in lithography and stencil printing, redefined the artistic potential of editions, transforming them into independent works of art rather than mere reproductions. Developed during the final years of his life, his cut-paper compositions exemplified his pursuit of artistic evolution. Through this diverse body of work, Matisse cemented his reputation as one of the most influential and versatile French artists of the modern era.

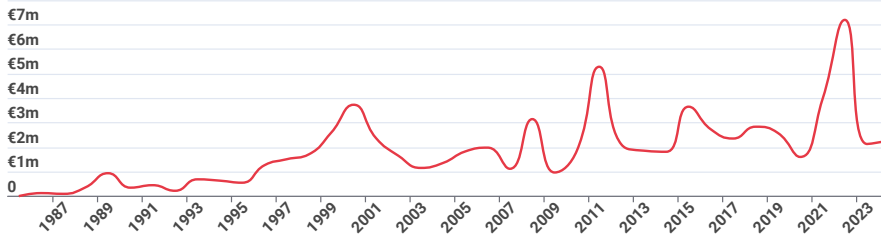
Spanning multiple techniques and periods, Matisse's editions continue to be highly sought after in the art market, achieving record-breaking auction sales and securing a lasting presence

in major museum collections. His ability to reinvent his artistic practice while maintaining a distinctive visual language, has ensured that his prints and artist books remain central to discussions on modern art. With a turnover for editions of €75.2 million, collectors and art historians continue to recognise his editions as essential works that exemplify the radical innovation and expressive power that defined his career.

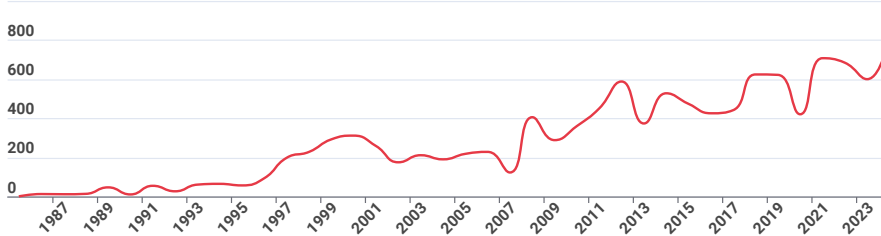
Technique freedom

Matisse's work in printmaking began early in his career and evolved over time. From 1900 until his death in 1954 he completed more than eight hundred *intaglios*, lithographs, woodcuts, linoleum cuts and monotypes. As his printmaking practice developed, he explored different methods — including etchings, aquatints and screen-prints — with many of these works serving as illustrations for books. Lithography allowed him to create fluid, expressive drawings with a crayon or brush directly on a stone or plate. It was ideal for capturing the grace of human

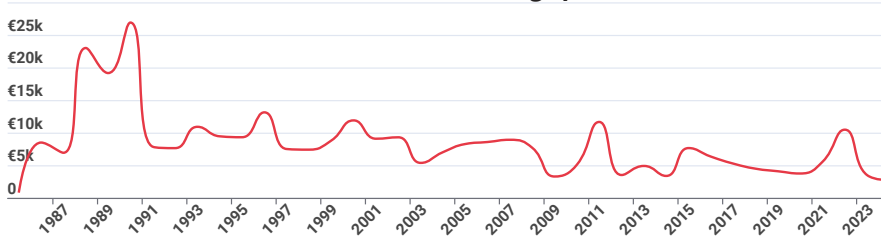
Evolution of the annual turnover



Evolution of the number of lots offered for sale



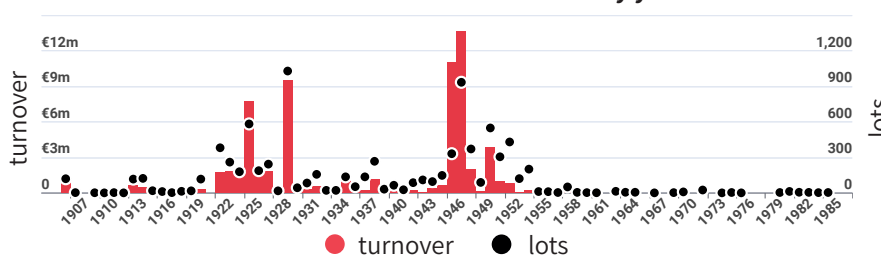
Evolution of the average price



Evolution of the bought-in ratio



Evolution of the number of lots and turnover by year of creation



figures, which was a central theme in his work. He used lithographs extensively for portraits and nudes, simplifying forms to their most essential outlines. This printing method represents the majority, comprising 56.6% of all lots and generating 38.6% of total turnover, amounting to €29 million. Stencilling allowed him to apply vibrant colours with precision, especially in his later cut-out works. Stencils, although making up only 3.9% of lots, contribute significantly with a 16.3% share of turnover, totalling €12.3 million. Screen-printing allowed him to experiment with flat, vibrant colour fields, a natural extension of his love for bold hues. Numbering less than 300 lots, screen-prints account for 15.6% of turnover, reaching €11.7 million. Engraving allowed him fine, intricate lines and deep textures, useful for his explorations of light and shadow. He used dry-point etching to create detailed portraits and book illustrations. Engravings, at 13.6% of lots, generate €8.3 million of the turnover, while aquatints, though fewer in number, contribute €5.9 million to the total market. The distribution of technique highlights the strong preference for Matisse's lithographs and screen prints, which remain the most highly valued among collectors and institutions.

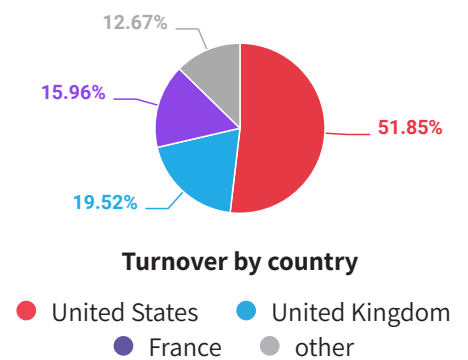
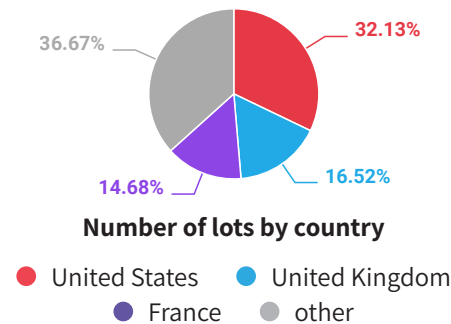
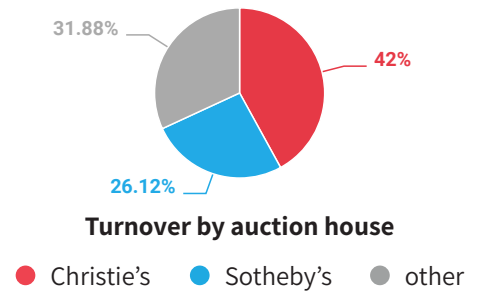
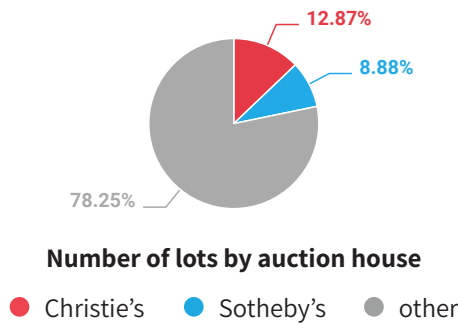
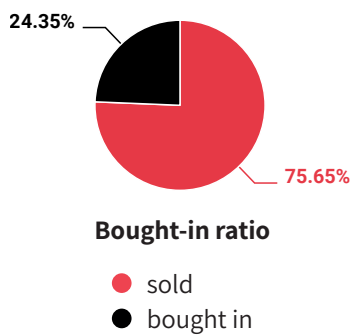
Artist books

At the end of his career, Matisse struggled with illness and printmaking became an easier alternative to traditional painting. In 1906, 1914 and during the 1920s he was particularly active in the medium, making in one year more than a hundred etchings and dry-points. It was after becoming disabled because of a surgery in 1941, that Matisse dedicated



Henri Matisse

Photo Henri Manuel



his practice to collages with painted papers. He would scissor-cut the curvy shapes and display them in lively compositions. Editor Tériade encouraged him to create a book with those dazzling creations. The artist chose the *pochoir* graphic technique, notable for the possibility of creating saturated and shiny colour zones by applying gouache inks with stencils. His artist books showcase his mastery in merging text and image, participating in thirty-eight such projects throughout his career. His first book, *Poésies* (1932) included mythologically inspired images based on texts by Stéphane Mallarmé. Notable examples include *Jazz* (1947) and *Pasiphaé, Chant de Minos* (1944), both considered the most important illustrated books of the modern period. The energetic colours that these examples represent create nature-like motifs and a dreamy atmosphere, translating his signature style across multiple mediums: “The images with happy and violent tones, resemble circuses, popular tales and trips”.

Jazz has been sold multiple times at auction, consistently increasing

in value. The first major price surge occurred in 1988 when the book exceeded €100,000 for the first time at Christie's New York. The record was broken in 1996 when it sold for €331,000 at Sotheby's New York. A particularly notable period for *Jazz* in the auction market occurred in 2015 when multiple copies reached record-breaking prices. In November 2015, a complete *Jazz* portfolio of 20 stencils sold for \$900,000 (€830,000, \$1.1 million or €1 million with premium) at Sotheby's New York. Later that same month, another copy achieved \$900,000 (€870,000, \$1.1 million or €1.1 million with premium) at the same auction house, setting a new benchmark for the valuation of Matisse's most celebrated artist book. The following year, *Jazz* was sold in Christie's London

for €562,000. More recent sales have continued this upward trend, with a copy selling for \$700,000 (€625,000, \$860,000 or €770,000) at Sotheby's New York in 2019. Another *Jazz* edition was sold for \$620,000 (€532,500, \$774,000 or €665,000 with premium) at Christie's New York in October 2021. The *Jazz* series remains highly prized, with individual prints and complete portfolios regularly selling for over €1 million.

Skyrocket evolution

The first recorded editions of Matisse at auction date back to March 1985, when three of his prints found buyers at Christie's New York: *Visage à la frange* (1913) was sold for the equivalent of €740, *Teeny* (1938) for €1,200 and *Frontispiece* from Jules romain's *Pierres levées* for €650. The following year,

two lithographs were sold at Drouot for the equivalent of €430 and almost €5,000, *Le repos du modèle* (1922) and *Petite Aurore* (1923) respectively. In summer of the same year, the first sales in London significantly increased the prices, when Christie's sold selling *Odalisque au magnolia* (1923) for €19,200 and the next day, Sotheby's sold *Arabesque: plate 58* (1926) for €11,200. Since then, his editions have consistently performed well, with increasing demand from collectors worldwide, crossing the €500,000 threshold in 2000 with *Grand Odalisque à la culotte Bayadère* (1925), which sold for €530,000. The work demonstrated a remarkable auction performance, highlighting the diverse appeal of Matisse's edition work.

for €1.7 million. Among the most remarkable sales in recent years, *Oceania, the sky* (1946), a serigraph, achieved a staggering €3.3 million at Christie's Paris in 2022, setting a new benchmark for Matisse's prints. The market for Matisse's editions has experienced steady growth, reflecting the enduring appreciation for his work. With 11,860 lots offered at auction, 8,856 of which have been sold, the artist maintains a strong presence in the market. His total turnover for editions has reached €75.2 million, an average price of €8,490 and a median price of €3,600. This data highlights the accessibility of Matisse's editions to a wide range of collectors while also indicating the presence of high-value works that continue to command significant prices.

Camille Pissarro, he went to London to study the paintings of J.M.W. Turner. Matisse would not put "step" onto the city until 2014, when Tate Modern's exhibition "Henri Matisse: The cut-outs" was exhibited. The United Kingdom comprises 19.5% of turnover, totalling €14.7 million and an average price of €9,460. In the autumn of 1917, Matisse travelled to Nice and eventually settled there for the rest of his life. As his birthplace and final home, it is no surprise that France is the third country leading the Matisse edition market, with a turnover of €12 million, representing 16% of the market, with an average price of €9,270. While Germany, Switzerland and other countries contribute smaller shares, their average prices remain significantly lower.

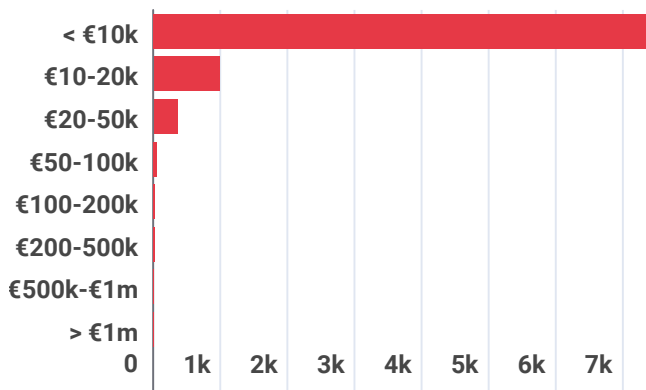
An artist must never be a prisoner even of himself, a prisoner of a style, a prisoner of a reputation, a prisoner of good fortune.

— *Henri Matisse*

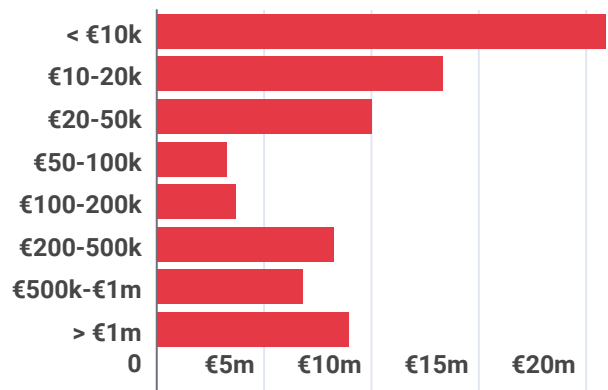
The French artist also enjoyed the sensual pleasures of life, the beauty of the models that posed for him and the exuberance of nature. Painting was his way of sharing enthusiasm for the life of people and he especially enjoyed painting the green pines and the elegant white villas of the French Riviera. His screen-print *Oceania, the sea* (1946) was sold several times and became the first print to exceed €1 million in 2011, selling for €2.9 million at Christie's London. In June 2021, it sold for €1 million and in 2022 the print's value further climbed, when it was sold again at Christie's Paris

Matisse's edition market is predominantly led by three key regions: the United States, the United Kingdom and France. In 1930, when the Museum of Modern Art was not even a year old, Matisse travelled to America to visit Albert Barnes and see the future site of the *Dance Mural* he had commissioned. American collectors played a crucial role in his early career and American museums own many of the painter's iconic works. The United States accounts for 51.9% of his total turnover, generating €39 million and maintaining a strong average price of €11,910. In 1898, on the advice of

Over the decades, more than 800 auction houses have presented Matisse editions, with 715 successfully selling his works. After he passed away in 1954, his works became highly sought after at major auction houses and his editions gained significant traction in the art market. Christie's and Sotheby's, the two dominant forces in the art auction industry, have auctioned numerous Matisse pieces, including paintings, sculptures and paper cut-outs, often reaching record-breaking prices. While Matisse did not work directly with Christie's or Sotheby's,



Price distribution by number of lots



Price distribution by turnover

many of his key collectors and dealers were later involved with these auction houses. Matisse's dealer, Paul Rosenberg, handled many of his works, which later surfaced at major auctions. Jacques Doucet, a major collector of Matisse, had his collection dispersed at auctions, including at Christie's and Sotheby's. Thus both powerhouses dominate the auction landscape for Matisse's edition sales, accounting for 68.1% of total turnover while handling only 21.8% of the lots. Christie's alone represents 42% of the turnover, generating €31.6 million from 1,530 lots. Sotheby's follows closely, with €19.6 million from 1,050 lots. Other auction houses such as Swann Galleries, which specialises in editions, and Piasa, also contribute to the market, though at significantly lower volumes. Swann Galleries auctioned Matisse lithographs, etchings and illustrated books, particularly *Jazz* series, while Piasa has occasionally auctioned Matisse drawings, sketches and prints. Since Piasa operates in France, it has seen sales of his lesser-known works and personal items.

The commercial evolution of Matisse's editions over several decades has shown a clear upward trajectory. The global art market expanded significantly, with record sales at Sotheby's, Christie's and other major houses. The rise of private sales, hedge fund collectors and billionaire buyers pushed auction prices higher. Major art fairs like Art Basel and growing museum acquisitions increased Matisse's market visibility. The first notable increase occurred in 2000 when the total turnover of his editions reached €3.7 million for the first time. A decade later, in 2011, this figure rose to €5.3 million, when collectors shifted focus from Old Masters and Impressionists toward Modernist pioneers like Matisse, Picasso and Modigliani. The most recent peak occurred in 2022, surpassing €7 million. Despite these fluctuations, the general trend suggests a consistent appreciation of Matisse's editions, particularly those produced in the second half of the 1920s. Works from 1924 to 1929 have seen an average price 38.8% superior to the general average price, reaching €11,785.

With consistent price appreciation and increasing global demand, Matisse's editions are expected to remain highly sought after. Far beyond simple reproductions, his editions are masterful works in their own right. As his legacy endures, Matisse's influence on the art world remains undeniable and his visual expression continues to attract collectors and institutions worldwide.

Number of bought-in lots or sold below, within and above estimate





Jazz (portfolio, 1947), Henri Matisse
Sold for \$774,000 by Christie's New York on 22 October 2021

© Christie's Images



Oceania, the sky (detail, 1946), Henri Matisse
Sold for €4,002,000 by Christie's Paris on 13 April 2022

© Christie's Images



FECCOGL



Cleaning detail

Courtesy MNH



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“CONSERVATION-RESTORATION REQUIRES A HOLISTIC APPROACH”

For years, D^r Balázs Lencz of the Hungarian National Museum has championed the concept of “eco-restoration”, a practice that benefits artworks, the environment and people alike. Here, he discusses the European GREENART project and its key challenges.

As Head of the Conservation and Restoration Department at the Hungarian National Museum (HNM), D^r Balázs Lencz stands out as a leading figure in the field of metal restoration and the preservation of delicate lacquer objects. His expertise is reflected in numerous scientific publications on Japanese art and its conservation techniques. But his role as Chief Conservator goes beyond safeguarding artworks. He is equally committed to protecting museum staff, who often face exposure to harmful substances during preventive conservation or restoration activities.

D^r Lencz is also deeply concerned with the disposal of chemical waste generated during restoration processes. The Hungarian National Museum, where he works, has earned a reputation as a trailblazer in “green conservation”, a practice that safeguards both people and cultural heritage. Today, the Budapest-based institution is recognised as a European leader in the field and plays an active role in GREENART, an EU-funded project exploring innovative, eco-friendly materials and sustainable methods for preserving, conserving and restoring cultural heritage. D^r Lencz shares insights into the ongoing case studies, his involvement and the challenges the project faces.

How did the Hungarian National Museum and yourself become involved in the GREENART project? What drew you to it?

Over the past few decades, our institution has focused on replacing harmful and toxic materials used in conservation with safer alternatives.

Previously, we were part of the APACHE project,

which developed smart, active packaging materials and display cases. [This was another Horizon-funded EU project, completed in 2022, which introduced new tools to monitor and prevent the degradation of artworks caused by unstable climatic conditions, light and pollution, editor’s note] Through this experience, we built strong connections with research institutions and museum partners, which eventually led us to join GREENART. The issues addressed by GREENART are critical for the conservation field. Over the years, we have identified serious health problems among conservators, often linked to exposure to toxic materials. Initially, our goal was to replace these substances to protect our staff — particularly those working directly on objects — and to develop new solutions that shield them from solvents, coatings and other harmful chemicals. We are honoured to participate in GREENART. Conservation is often underrepresented in cultural communication, so this project gives us the opportunity to showcase the work of conservation

— *Carine Claude*

and engage with society on a broader scale — not just the general public, but also stakeholders and policymakers. If we want to provoke a significant shift in thinking, we must start with decision-makers, convincing them of the importance of conservation and environmentally friendly approaches. The research results from this project provide evidence that can help them support these changes financially and politically

You mentioned health issues among staff members. Could you provide examples? Are we talking about allergies or respiratory problems?

Without going into specific cases, I can say that we have observed respiratory problems caused by exposure to harmful solvents. When working on small objects, we do not use large quantities of these substances. However, for larger projects — such as chandeliers, cars or industrial heritage objects — we end up using much more toxic materials. That is when alternatives really need to be considered. Of course, we use protective equipment, such as masks, to safeguard respiratory health. But there are situations where it is not possible to wear them or to keep them on all day. This is why it is essential to reduce the impact on our staff, the objects themselves and the environment. Additionally, many people do not realise that conservation work generates a significant amount of waste. When we use acids and bases, we try to neutralise them before disposal, but we still feel uneasy about their environmental impact.

Which Work Packages within the GREENART project are you most involved with?

Conservation requires a holistic approach — everything is interconnected. That is why we are involved in Work Packages 2, 3, 4 and 5, as well as dissemination activities. We work with solvents,

coatings, consolidation materials and packaging materials. We also use sensors in our storage areas to monitor conditions both inside the museum building and in external storage facilities. It is a very complex system that we are currently renewing, so the project is extremely valuable to us.

What types of products are you currently testing?

Since we are involved in several Work Packages, we are working on multiple fronts. We are testing solvents, various gels and combinations of gels and solvents, comparing them with traditional solutions and materials. We start with sample testing, but we have also proposed using real-life scenarios with authentic artworks. After the sample tests, we move on to testing these new materials on actual works of art, always with the utmost care. Recently, we received packaging materials for our case study objects, made from different materials. We are also participating in the measurement of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted either by the objects themselves or by storage and exhibition materials. These harmful substances can originate from the objects due to their degradation or from the materials used in storage and exhibition setups. We aim to measure and compare them so that, together with our development partners, we can find effective solutions for long-term preservation. While standard storage boxes can sometimes be used, special objects often require customised storage solutions tailored to their specific needs.

Is it the same for transportation?

Yes, for both transport and storage. Another important aspect of this project is the development of new absorbents for VOCs — materials that can absorb harmful substances in the environment surrounding the objects.

You specialise in metal and lacquer objects. Do these present specific conservation challenges?

How might GREENART products address these issues?

Absolutely. GREENART has significant potential to protect these types of artworks. Japanese lacquer, which I have been studying for decades, is highly sensitive to fluctuations in humidity, dry environments and temperature changes. Proper storage is crucial for these objects. In Central and Eastern Europe, our climate differs from Japan's — it is drier and storage facilities often lack adequate equipment to maintain appropriate humidity levels. Suitable storage and packaging are essential. Even if the surrounding environment is not ideal, you can protect an object by creating optimal conditions inside its storage box. GREENART focuses on developing packaging materials that do not release harmful gases.

Can you tell us more about the artworks you are currently testing with GREENART products?

We have selected a diverse range of objects made from very different materials for our case studies. One notable example is the *Handstein*, a mining model created in Körmöcbánya or Selmecebánya (now in Slovakia) in the 18th century. It depicts a small hill with figurines illustrating all stages of the mining process. The object is composed of various minerals and crystals (pyrite, quartz, amethyst, etc.) and decorated with painted organic ornaments, all mounted on a gilded silver pedestal with lion-shaped feet at each corner. It is a rare and complex piece, a true masterpiece of craftsmanship, chosen for testing because of its heavily contaminated surface. Over the years, it has been treated multiple times with different materials — waxes, epoxies and more. It also shows signs of dirt and impurities that have darkened its appearance.

- Visual observations with microscope (completed with)
- Observation and 3D documentation of surface charac
Keyence digital microscope, before corrosive exposure

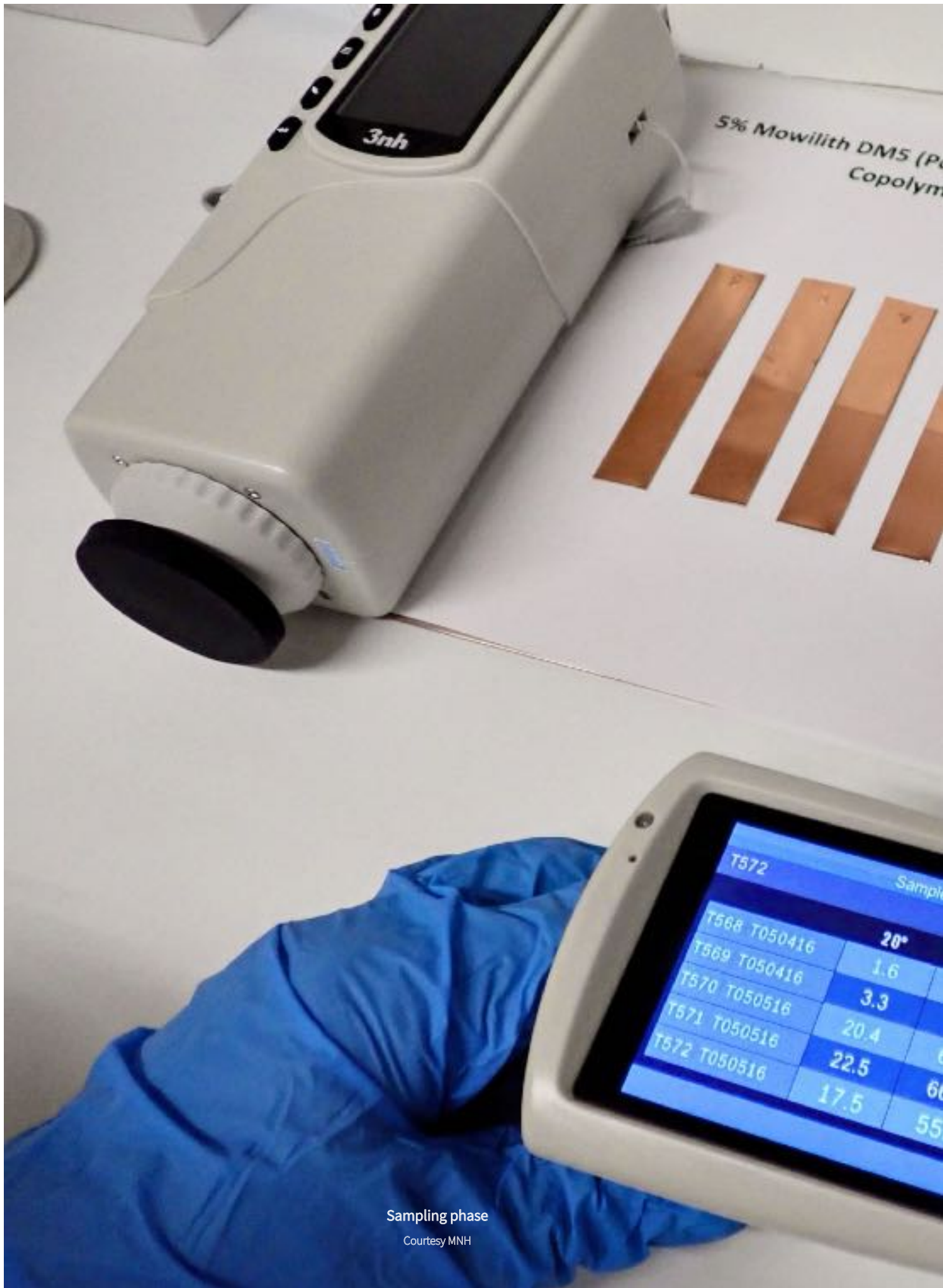


Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are those of the European Research Executive Agency (REA), neither the European



Dr Balázs Lencz during last GREENART presentation

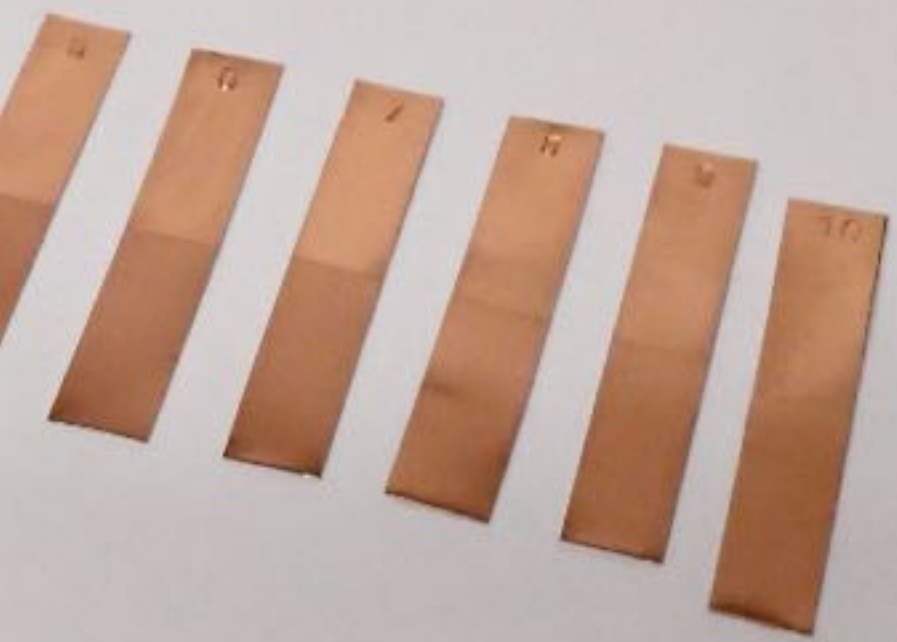
Photo Pierre Naquin. © Art Media Agency



Sampling phase

Courtesy MNH

polyvinyl acetate) : Paraloid B72 (Ethyl-Methacrylat
er) = (50:50) in acetone:toluene=5:2



Measure

23:44 2024.11.20

60°	85°
14.1	18.6
20.9	20.1
50.4	28.0
6.8	26.1
7	23.2



“Over the years, environmental protection has also become increasingly important on a global scale. We have focused on finding eco-friendly and sustainable materials and technologies that would have less impact not only on the environment but also on the artworks themselves. These three factors — protecting staff, protecting the environment and protecting the artworks — are our main motivations. — *Dr Balázs Lencz*

Our goal is to find an effective cleaning solution and then stabilise its components. The object has an internal wooden structure with minerals and crystals glued onto it using animal glue and the entire piece is beginning to deteriorate. There are cracks and areas where components are detaching, so we need to clean and stabilise it simultaneously. This project offers cutting-edge technology that could be instrumental in its conservation. We have also working on other objects, such as a modern-era faux leather bag in poor condition, Austro-Hungarian soldier insignias from World War I from the MNH's Coin Collection. These items represent characteristic materials of the time, made from zinc-based alloys, bronze, copper, enamel and more. Another example is a stunning 19th-century belt that belonged to a nobleman, crafted from leather, velvet, linen, gilded silver, silver, brass, iron and glass. We have tried to provide artworks with the most diverse range of materials possible for the case studies.

What are the next steps for testing the products on these artworks?

We are continuing with sample tests and case study object tests. We are considering presenting the *Handstein* at the Osaka World Expo, although we are extremely busy and I am not sure we will be able to meet the deadlines. Soon, we will receive innovative coatings to test, starting with samples. We are also developing packaging materials and have already received boxes from ZFB in Leipzig. I will be travelling to the University of Ljubljana, where

they will conduct VOC measurements for the storage boxes and objects. Collaboration with our GREENART partners is essential, as we have limited access to analytical equipment. Working with partner institutions is therefore highly beneficial. We are also planning dissemination activities. As the Hungarian National Museum is a central institution in Hungary, we have a responsibility to share our knowledge about conservation and environmentally friendly approaches. We have presented at conferences and are planning a workshop this summer with colleagues from the project.

The GREENART project involves institutions from around the world, including the United States and Asia. How does your museum collaborate with all these institutions?

During our conservation meetings, it is very helpful to see the development work and test results from the various partners. As end users of these materials, it is important for us to communicate with other museum partners facing similar challenges. It is impossible to work directly with all the conservation partners, so we primarily focus on the end-user institutions. When we have direct contact with specific research institutions, it is usually because we are dealing with a particular object or issue that we cannot resolve on our own.

The Hungarian National Museum is also involved in other EU-funded projects to protect cultural heritage. Do you exchange knowledge internally about these different European projects or are they completely separate?

We try to integrate the results, ideas and key findings from all these projects. The conservation department is also involved in the AURORA project and other proposals outside the EU's Horizon framework. [The AURORA project, Artwork Unique Recognition and Tracking through Chemical Analysis, uses encoded data, miniaturised devices and blockchain technology to combat looting, trafficking and illicit trade of cultural goods, editor's note] We see this as a knowledge network, interconnecting different aspects of conservation to generate meaningful insights into how to treat objects in general. Everything is connected, whether we are talking about storage, corrective conservation or preventive conservation. All these projects are pieces of a larger puzzle. When we put them together, we can create a comprehensive system to protect cultural heritage and preserve it for future generations.



Consolidation detail

Courtesy MNH

Testing GREENART cleaning gels
Courtesy MNH







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