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The Art Market

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Nervous art market waits on make-or-break New York sales

Phillips celebrates ceramicists; Japan’s commercial scene gears up;

Jussi Pylkkänen bids farewell to Christie’s

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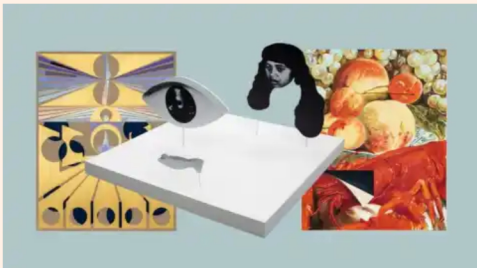
Albrecht Dürer’s ‘Coat of Arms with a Skull’ (1503) © Courtesy David Tunick, Inc

Art-fair season is truly in full swing and the pre-pandemic issue of too many fairs on the circuit is hard to avoid. This weekend is the 30th in-person edition of New York’s IFPDA print fair (26-29 October), while next week marks the 30th edition of Turin’s Artissima fair for contemporary art (November 3-5). Other fairs around the world include Art X Lagos (November 2-5) and the ADAA’s 35th The Art Show in New York (November 2-5).

Jenny Gibbs, executive director of the IFPDA fair, concedes that “there are definitely too many fairs in the fall” and has moved its dates for next year, when the IFPDA will run February 15-18. Having a niche offering helps in a crowded field, she says: “We are a must-attend event for prints and editions curators and collectors around the world.”

The 90-plus exhibitors this year bring works that range from Old Masters, such as Dürer and Rembrandt at David Tunick, Inc (booth prices up to \$1mn), to the brand-new — Hauser & Wirth brings a 60-layer screen print by Mark Bradford, “Rona” (2023, edition of 25, \$185,000).

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And finally . . . Christie’s star auctioneer and global president, Jussi Pylkkänen, has announced he is leaving the business after 38 years to turn his skills to independent art advisory. The Finnish-born specialist, who turned 60 this year, will conduct his last auction in London on December 7.

Pylkkänen’s rostrum highlights include selling Leonardo da Vinci’s “Salvator Mundi” (c1500) for \$450.3mn in 2017, still by far the most expensive work ever at auction. Art-market regulars will also long remember some of Pylkkänen’s persuasive patter, such as “Are we all done?”; “You’ve come a long way”; and “It’s a beautiful thing.” The salerooms won’t be the same without him.

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