

CLASSIC DRIVER

Phillips de Pury & Company: Contemporary Art London



Method: take two inflatable swimming pool toys and two wire wastepaper baskets; inflate toys; insert one in each basket through pre-cut holes. Now add price tag of £2 - 3 million.

Yes, that's apparently all it takes to become a contemporary artist, although your home-made effort might not make quite as much as 'Seal Walrus Trashcans' by Jeff Koons. This piece is set to top the bill at Phillips de Pury & Co's forthcoming contemporary art evening sale, which features 36 lots and could gross up to £10 million.

It's a funny old world, that of contemporary art. While we all think such frivolous works are the sort of thing we could perfectly easily create ourselves, it takes the cachet of a name such as Koons, Damien Hirst or Jake and Dinos Chapman to persuade true aficionados of the genre to part with serious amounts of cash.





Now, for the same money paid for a 1932 Duesenberg Model J at [Gooding & Co's Pebble Beach auction in August](#), you might be able to secure Damien Hirst's 'Observation - The Crown of Justice' which will be offered at Phillips de Pury with a pre-sale estimate of £700,000 - £1 million. Based on the look of an arched church window, the pattern is created not from stained glass but from a tasteful array of butterfly wings and dates from 2006.

A classic Hirst spot painting meanwhile - '5-Aminoursil' - is up for grabs at £600,000 - 800,000, about the same as Gooding achieved for a Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Spider.

And almost as racy as the Daytona is Richard Prince's 'My Life as a Weapon', a collage of soft porn photographs overlaid with flecks of acrylic paint and block lettering - all yours for £500,000 - 700,000. A similar amount could also buy you Paula Rego's large-scale pastel 'The Servant', which, according to the catalogue, 'depicts a butler engaging with a vomiting maid'. The background of the work is allegedly filled with metaphors, such as a rocking horse (representing childhood innocence) and a majestic stag (male virility, of course).

See, it's not as straightforward as you think, this contemporary art.

Part one of Phillips de Pury's Contemporary Art sale takes place at 7pm on October 12, with part two (256 lots with a low estimate of £4.3 million) starting the following day at 2pm, at Howick Place, London SW1. The catalogue is online at phillipsdepurysale.com. By invitation only, the company is hosting a preview brunch on Sunday, 9 October 2011 from 11.00 am - 2.00 pm at Howick Place.

For further details, call +44 20 7318 4010 or email ctabrunch@phillipsdepurysale.com.

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