


# ART+AUCTION

## WISE BUYS: 50 Women Artists Worth Watching

By The Art + Auction Editors

September 2014



# 50 WOMEN ARTISTS WORTH WATCHING

ART+AUCTION PEGS THE MAKERS, BOTH ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING, THAT THE MARKET IS BUZZING ABOUT

● Wouldn't it be nice to think that a gender-delimited list is no longer relevant? It's true that to be a practicing woman artist today is hardly the struggle it would have been in Mary Cassatt's era. Women artists are actively acquired by museums and honored with major surveys and retrospectives; recent names in the spotlight include Julia Margaret Cameron, Rineke Dijkstra, Zarina Hashmi, Sarah Lucas, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Rosemarie Trockel, Carrie Mae Weems, and Francesca Woodman. Collectors pounce on new inventory by Marlene Dumas, Julie Mehretu, and Dana Schutz. Many women artists are doing well, even very well, thanks to committed galleries and ecumenical collectors. Dealers boast of higher private sale prices than public ones for their female artists. Yet there remains a glass ceiling in the salesroom.

Time and again, the specialists and dealers we spoke to emphasized that the prices commanded on the block were by no means a measure of the works in question in terms of critical acclaim or artistic value. Connoisseurs in search of excellence, they say, would be wise to ignore gender outright—especially if considering works of the 50 artists we have highlighted here, whose critical reputations outstrip their value in the marketplace.

The women in this group, ranging from deceased to emerging, were selected because their contributions seem not to have been fully registered by the market. Many of the artists we chose have either a challengingly conceptual practice or a very wide-ranging one that resists easy categorization. Some were simply ahead of their time. To the extent that dollar value has come to determine the actual worth of these objects in circulation, it is our hope that with visibility, more value will accrue to them. **—THE EDITORS**



⊕ **NANCY GRAVES | 1939-1995 | UNITED STATES**

Lucy Mitchell-Innes's decision to represent Graves's estate earlier this year was spurred by a 2013 retrospective at the Ludwig Forum Aachen. "Seeing her work, I realized her range," says the New York dealer. "We're all familiar with the powerful sculptures from the late 1970s, but there was so much more to her practice. She has these extraordinary, demanding paintings." The Ludwig show featured 70 paintings, drawings, films, installations, and sculptures revolving around Graves's eclectic scientific investigations: sculptures comprising heaps of ceramic bones and fossils based on paleontological studies, acrylic canvases, NASA satellite images, and paintings centered on the cartography of the Indian Ocean, to name just a few. The artist also experimented with environmental, conceptual, and performance art, keeping a hand in the artistic movements of the moment. Although Graves—the first woman to solo at the Whitney—is not yet a household name like her peers Chuck Close and Richard Serra (to whom she was married for five years), her works have hit the \$250,000 mark in the primary market. —SM | **EXCLOSE, 1982. OIL ON CANVAS, 72 X 64 IN.**