



Scholarships

New Auction Platform Will Contribute to HBCU Art History Scholarships

Early bidding has opened for the inaugural sale at Greenhouse Auctions. This new auction house model only accepts consignments from artists and galleries directly and contributes to art historical scholarship at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The sale, which is titled *Sourdough*, goes live on December 2 and features works by 17 emerging and established artists working across media, including 88-year-old photographer Duane Michals and Abstract Expressionist Vernon O’Meally.

All of the works featured in the auction were made during the pandemic. Some were inspired by household objects and domestic landscapes, such as Nick Farhi’s painting “Homes That Morph” (2020), which depicts four translucent vessels perched on a stovetop. Others instead zeroed in on the desire for intimacy amid isolation, such as Amanda Genty’s “Proximity” (2020), a sculpture of two forms that nearly — but don’t quite — touch, fabricated from terracotta and reclaimed crushed Chicago brick. The estimates for the works on offer range from \$3,000-4,000, for a vinyl and acrylic piece by California-based artist Aaron Elvis Jupin, to \$12,000-15,000, for a set of four portraits by Israeli multimedia artist Michal Helfman. The bulk of the consignments were made by individual artists selling their work, though some pieces were also consigned through several galleries, including DC Moore Gallery in New York, Inman Gallery in Houston, and Gallery FIFTY ONE in Antwerp.

In the United States, due to a lack of sweeping resale royalty protections, artists rarely see funds from sales of their work at auction. Greenhouse Auctions only accepts consignments from artists and galleries directly so that the artists themselves or their estates benefit financially from the sale. This model precludes sellers from “flipping” works — reselling undervalued works quickly at a profit — or otherwise gaming the market. A percentage of all sale commissions from *Sourdough* will go toward the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) to create scholarships for students studying art history at over 50 HBCUs, laying groundwork for more diverse art historical scholarship in the future.

Participating artist Soephy Naess, who consigned a self-portrait that draws upon Maria Lassnig’s “body awareness painting,” told Hyperallergic about the platform’s appeal. “I like that the transparency of the platform is meant to create similarly sustaining artist-collector relationships,” Naess said. “That part of the proceeds from sales go towards Art History scholarships at HBCUs also appeals to my desire for structural change in my field.”

Greenhouse Auctions was founded by Schlom Rabi, who has worked in auction houses for two decades and formerly headed the Photographs Department for the America’s at Christie’s. “From day one, it was vital that Greenhouse Auctions empower all participants, from the artists selling their artwork to the collectors looking for new ways to directly support them, and in a larger sense, for the entire next generation of diverse writers, critics and curators,” Rabi told Hyperallergic. “In that regard, Greenhouse is about nurturing a more holistic and inclusive art ecosystem that lifts up the entire community.”