

Postwar & Contemporary Art On Offer At Bonhams March 7

LONDON — Works by School of London artists are featured in Bonhams' postwar and contemporary art sale on Wednesday, March 7. Prominent among them is "Nude on a Red Bed No 3" by Leon Kossoff (b 1926), one of the leaders of the group.

The term School of London was first used in 1976 in the foreword to the catalog for the Hayward Gallery's exhibition "The Human Clay." The show celebrated the exploration of figurative painting by a group of 35 artists based in London. At the time, abstraction and conceptualism were the dominant trends in the Western art world. Two of the leading lights of the movement, Frank Auerbach (b 1931) and Kossoff, are represented by two works each in the Bonhams sale, which also features a watercolor by David Hockney (b 1937), another of the "The Human Clay" exhibition artists.

Bonhams global head of postwar and contemporary art Ralph Taylor said, "Kossoff and Auerbach are the two artists most closely associated with the School of London. The former has lived and worked in the capital all his life; Auerbach



"Reclining Model, Back View" by Frank Auerbach (b 1931), 1960-61, charcoal, crayon and pencil work on paper.

since he was sent to the UK from Germany to escape the Nazi regime. Friends as well as artistic colleagues, they — with Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon — defined figurative painting in the UK in the second half of the Twentieth Century; these important examples are absolutely typical of the very best of this tradition."

Kossoff's "Nude on a Red Bed

No. 3," dates from 1968 and was originally in the artist's personal collection. He then gave it to his sister Ashley Kossoff, from whom it passed to the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo. Since 2003 it has been in private hands.

Other School of London works in the sale include Auerbach's "Reclining Head of E.O.W. II," painted in 1969 and once in the



"Nude on a Red Bed No. 3" by Leon Kossoff (British, b 1926), 1968.

collection of Lucian Freud, who bought it in 1971. He was a great supporter of Auerbach and owned more than 40 of his friend's paintings.

Another highlight is "Birth, Marriage, Death," also by Auerbach, executed in 1951. It was bought directly from the artist in the same year and has been in a private family collection ever since.

Other featured works include: "John Asleep" by Kossoff, 1987; "Reclining Model, Back View" a charcoal, crayon and pencil work on paper by Auerbach exe-

cuted in 1960-61; and "Ianthe Cornwall-Jones" a watercolor portrait on paper by David Hockney, 1967, and inscribed Carrenac — a château in the Lot Department in southwest France where the work was executed. It was a gift to the present owner, a friend who had joined Hockney on holiday there.

Bonhams is at 101 New Bond Street. The March 7 sale will begin at 5 pm.

For additional information, www.bonhams.com or +44 20 7468 8210.

American Folk Art Museum Acquisitions On View In Self-Taught Genius Gallery

LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y. — "Holding Space: The Museum Collects," an exhibition of recent acquisitions by the American Folk Art Museum, will open on March 5 at the Self-Taught Genius Gallery in Long Island City. The exhibition brings together artists and visionaries — singular artists sharing formal and conceptual concerns that cut across cultural and generational divides. The exhibition explores ways in which self-taught artists expand the traditional artistic toolkit, cultivating unique forms of creativity that offer new paradigms of understanding the world and our place within it.

It is the first show organized by Sarah Margolis-Pineo, assistant curator for the Self-Taught Genius Gallery, who, in addition to curating exhibitions from the museum's holdings, develops education and public programming for the gallery.

"Holding Space" is also a tribute to Anne-Imelda Radice, who is stepping down from her posi-

tion as executive director at the museum in March. The works in the exhibition were acquired for the museum during Radice's five-year tenure by Stacy C. Hollander, deputy director for curatorial affairs and chief curator, and Dr Valérie Rousseau, curator, art of the self-taught and Art Brut. Margolis-Pineo has selected more than 40 new acquisitions — many never before on view — including textiles, furniture, ceramics, works on paper, sculpture and portraits.

Since the colonial period, portraiture has been a fixture of American visual culture. Created to commemorate and memorialize lives well-lived, portraits are gestures of American identity, testaments to loved ones whose features might otherwise fade from memory, and expressions of social identity — a vehicle for the subject to present a carefully crafted image to the world. Over ensuing centuries, artists have continued to create portraits that engage the conceptual and aesthetic traditions

articulated by their predecessors; however, many have adopted new media and creative processes to critique and expand the meaning of the genre.

The exhibition examines this dialogue by positioning portraits by significant early American painters, including J. Brown (dates unknown), Sheldon Peck (1797-1868), Ammi Phillips (1788-1865) and William Matthew Prior (1806-1873) with Twentieth Century portraiture by Thornton Dial Sr (1928-2016), Elizabeth Layton (1909-1993) and Mary Tillman Smith (1904-1995).

Decorated forms that populated domestic, commercial and community spaces reveal intricacies of the evolution of American social, cultural and religious life. "Holding Space" features quilts whose imagery guards sleep or testifies to the democratic process, pottery that introduces innovative techniques or comments on the political scene and furniture that illustrates the hybrid aesthetic of Germanic origins influenced by assimilation into American culture at large.

Diversity, sanctuary, freedom and opportunity — ideals upheld from the burgeoning nation — become prominent themes in the works of numerous artists, including Clementine Hunter (1886-1988), Melvin Way (b 1954), Agatha Wokciwchowsky

(1896-1986) and Malcah Zeldis (b1931). Employing creativity as a tool to bring light to invisible worlds, these artists depicted everyday realities of their lives and communities, as well as self-constructed cosmologies — interior ideas and systems — inspired by mystical possibilities perhaps beyond our world.

With roots in spirituality and healing, the notion of "Holding Space" draws reference to our capacity for self-reflection, mindfulness and empowerment. In the context of this exhibition, the title becomes a three-fold

proposition: first, it alludes to the gallery and archive as a physical repository for museum collections; second, it expresses the American Folk Art Museum's ongoing dedication to the art and ideas of self-taught artists; and third, it suggests that the practice of making art is a means of holding space — a way to explore, perform and proclaim individual and collective identity.

The Self-Taught Genius Gallery is at 47-29 32nd Place. For more information, 212-595-9533 or www.folkartmuseum.org.



"Heavenly Children" by William Matthew Prior (1806-1873), circa 1850, probably Massachusetts, oil on board, 20 by 22 1/4 inches. Gift of Valerie and Robert Goldfein. —Adam Reich photo

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