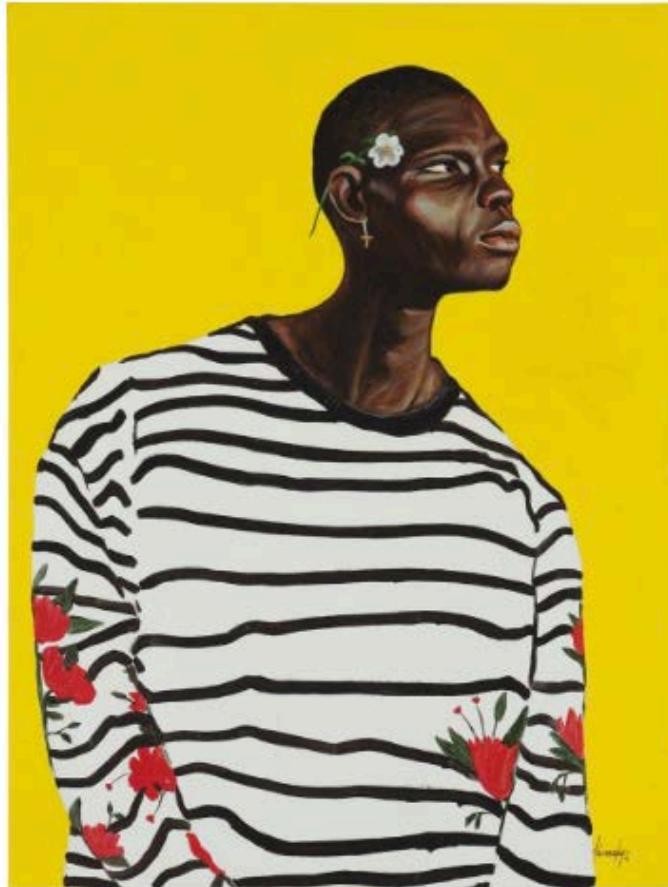


8 Artists Who Had Breakout Moments at Auction This Fall

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By Benjamin Sutton

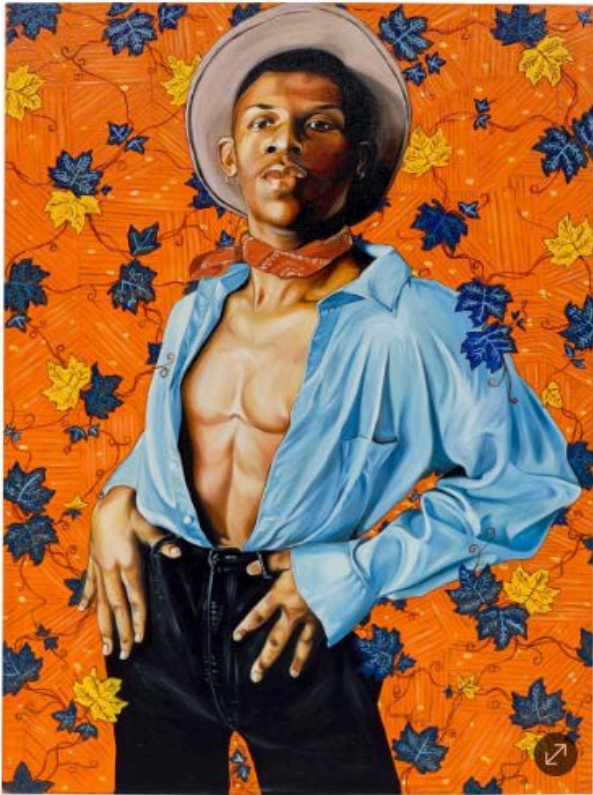


Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, *Black Stripes on White*, 2019.
Courtesy of Phillips.

This fall auction season has been anything but business as usual. Unmoored from the usual calendar of sales by the pandemic, resulting economic downturn, and unease in anticipation of the United States presidential election, auction houses Christie's, Phillips, and Sotheby's packed most of their contemporary art auctions across Hong Kong, London, and New York into a single month starting in late September, with mixed results.

Major lots tagged with seven- and eight-figure estimates routinely struggled to reach them, with notable exceptions including Banksy's take on Claude Monet's water lilies and a 67-million-year-old T. rex named Stan. On several occasions, consignors got cold feet and pulled works by proven market stars mid-sale. And guarantors took home their fair share of big-ticket works after bidding stalled. Amid a prevailing mood of unease, many collectors opted to forgo major art purchases. But at lower price points, works by emerging and resurgent artists were setting off bidding wars that sent them well beyond their estimates. Below, we look at some of the artists who made a splash during the fall sales.

Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe



Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe. *Old Town Boy*, 2018. Courtesy of Phillips.



Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, *Flower Boy*, 2019. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

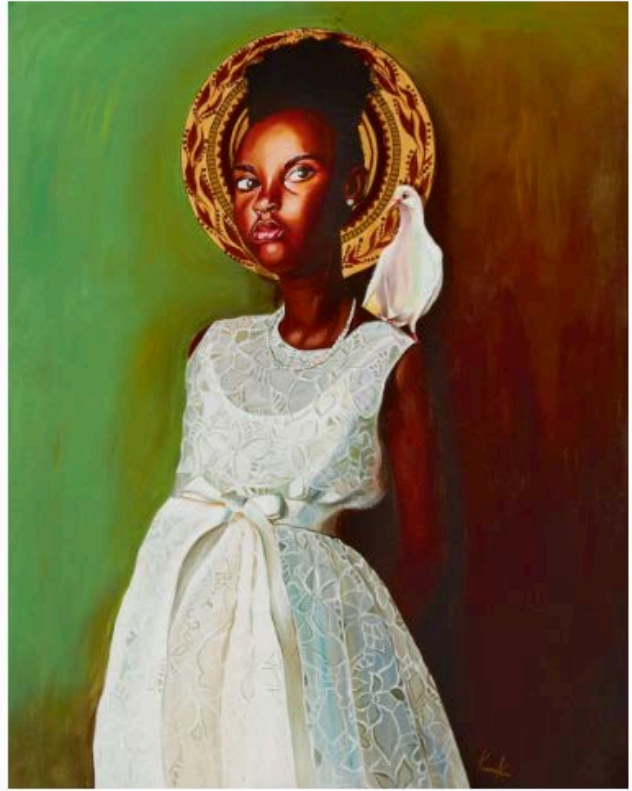
Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe's work entered the secondary market with a bang just four months ago—and just six months after he opened his first solo show in the U.S.—when his superb portrait painting *Shade of Black* (2018) blasted past its high estimate of \$30,000 to eventually sell for \$250,000 at a Phillips evening sale. That startling result, still the record for his work at auction, has opened the floodgates. The Ghanaian painter's works have come to auction six times since, selling for at least twice their high estimates each time, and often much more.

On October 8th, for instance, Bonhams offered *Bold and Vibrant* (2017), a portrait painting with collage elements, in its sale of modern and contemporary African art with a high estimate of £10,000 (\$12,000). The work surpassed that estimate six times over, selling for £65,062 (\$83,000), a huge overperformance that is nonetheless Quaicoe's lowest auction result. On October 2nd, Sotheby's offered his 2018 portrait *Girl in White Dress* during its "Contemporary Curated" sale with a high estimate of \$60,000, which it more than doubled before selling for \$138,600, good for his second-highest auction result to date.

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Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, *Just Do It*, 2019. Courtesy of Christie's Images Ltd. 2020.



Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe, *Girl in White Dress*, 2018. Courtesy of Sotheby's.