



BLOUIN ARTINFO

Art Site Auctionata Nabs \$20.2 Million in Venture Capital, Is Selling a Schiele

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It appears that the online auction house winning the startup funding war is the one you've never heard of: Auctionata. The Berlin-based startup, which has only been in business for a year, just raised \$20.2 million in second round funding from five different Russian and German VC firms. This round comes just four months after Moscow-based Bright Capital pledged \$2.5 million last December.

Funding-wise, this infusion of cash puts Auctionata miles ahead of its art startups like Artsy (\$7.25 million) and Artspace (\$12.2 million), as well as Paddle8 (\$4 million), which as an online auction site, is theoretically a direct competitor. With so much money, it seems like the company might be attempting to align itself more with a model like Heritage Auctions, which does \$800 million in annual sales, much of which comes from Internet bidding.

The company was cofounded by web-company veteran Georg Untersalmberger and former eBay powerseller Alexander Zacke. Zacke told the website Benzinga, "I come from a family of art collectors and auctioneers that goes back to the late 19th century. I started my first antiques business when I was 18, so that was 29 years ago." He went on to become the largest antiques powerseller on eBay.

Auctionata sells in three different ways: weekly auctions on Fridays, sporadic theme auctions, and an online shop where items can be purchased for a fixed price anytime. While sales are made online, the action unfolds in a TV studio set up as a "sales room," which is broadcast via live feed. Auctionata has representatives on five continents and says it has 250 specialists worldwide. The company's website boasts that "there's no item of value our experts can't value."

Perhaps more interesting is the authenticity guarantee that comes with each purchase. Auctionata's website notes, "If arbitration proves a purchased item is not genuine, the buyer can return it to Auctionata within a period of 25 years (starting from the date of delivery) to receive a full refund." (The fine print, however, notes that in the case that you think your work might be a fake, the auction house will commission a "certified, impartial expert" to rule on authenticity, a practice which seems not all that favorable to the buyer.)

According to the company, it "will be the first German online fine art and auction house to sell an original watercolor by Egon Schiele (his famed Reclining Woman)" on June 21, and bids will start at \$1.5 million.



PRESS RELEASE

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Auctionata Raises \$20M for Global Expansion of Online Live Auctions -- Art, Antiques & Collectibles

Online fine art and auction house, Auctionata, raises \$20.2M (EUR 15.5M) for global expansion, recruiting and technology platform growth. One year after its founding the Berlin-based Startup adds the venture capital firm Earlybird to its prestigious team of investors including Bright Capital and Kite Ventures (in December 2012) as well as HV Holtzbrinck Ventures, eVenture Capital Partners and the Raffay Group.

As the first patented online producer of live auctions, Auctionata covers the entire spectrum of an auction house; from expert curation to its unique, HDTV-production quality, fine art online auction events. Auctionata's vision is to open the international art, antiques and collectibles markets to consumers, making it accessible to everybody through the Internet.

For the buyer, Auctionata brings the auction thrill into the living room and offers a wide selection of significant objects in an online shop. Auctionata exclusively offers a 25 years guarantee of authenticity on all sold objects. For the seller, Auctionata offers a proven, trusted and highly-produced online selling experience. The company has approx. 250 internationally renowned specialists (who appraise and curate all objects for sale), the largest network of experts worldwide. With its full service, Auctionata reaches millions of private sellers, collectors and dealers, who find it difficult to sell in regional and highly fragmented, old-style auction houses.

Dr. Christian Nagel, co-founder and partner of Earlybird states, "We look for companies with the potential to be global market leaders. Auctionata sells objects that attract interest worldwide -- up to and including the level of Egon Schiele. No other online vendor serves this market segment. Auctionata's business model was developed by two founding figures with decades of experience in both the art market and online business."

On 21 June 2013 Auctionata will be the first German online fine art and auction house to sell an original watercolor by Egon Schiele (his famed Reclining Woman) in an online live auction from its own TV studio, with a starting price of \$1.5M (EUR 1M).

"Unlike traditional auction houses, where the excitement naturally falls off after each auction, the combination of online auctions and online shop generates a high experience factor for potential buyers and sellers alike," said Alexander Zacke, CEO of Auctionata. "We are very pleased that our team of investors now includes another highly experienced global player like Earlybird bringing expertise in ecommerce and technology platforms."

About Auctionata As the first online producer of live auctions, Auctionata covers the entire spectrum of an auction house.

Source: Marketwire