



Christie's Pulls One Basquiat Work From Auction After Authenticity Challenge

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After a lawsuit by the estate of late New York City artist Jean-Michel Basquiat suggested some of the works may be fakes, Christie's auction house has removed one piece for review.

Christie's is handling the auction of more than 40 items supplied by Alexis Adler, Basquiat's former lover and roommate.

But his estate said in a lawsuit filed Tuesday that Christie's failed to submit the catalog of works up for auction for a review of authenticity and the estate suspects Christie's "knows or has reason to believe that many of the catalog items are of questionable authenticity."



This artwork has been pulled from an auction of the works of the late Jean-Michel Basquiat, following a lawsuit questioning some of the works' authenticity. (Credit: Christie's)

Christie's said in a statement Wednesday that the auction house has been in "direct and amicable contact" with the Basquiat estate about the authenticity concerns.

"As a result of those talks, Christie's is moving forward with Thursday's First Open sale as planned, with the exclusion of a single lot to allow for further review and research," the statement said.

The work that has been pulled is titled "Milk," and is composed of an acrylic covering with the word "milk" covering a steel radiator.

In the lawsuit, Basquiat's estate said the auction catalog contains a copyright notice referencing Basquiat's estate, but claimed the notice is false because the estate denied Christie's request for permission to reproduce Basquiat's works in the catalog. The Christie's statement did not address that claim.

The lawsuit alleged false endorsement, false advertising, unfair competition and other claims, and sought unspecified damages and an injunction forbidding the use of Basquiat's name without the estate's permission.

Basquiat's creations were described as a famous fusion of multicultural symbols, distinctive graphic style and biting social commentary.

He died back in 1988 at the age of 27 from a drug overdose. Adler is now selling more than 40 works, including paintings, fashion and scribbles.

Basquiat started painting as a teenager, primarily as a graffiti artist. He became world-famous in his 20s, and dated Madonna for a short time in the early 1980s before she was famous.

His works collectively have reportedly sold for more than \$150 million.

The online Christie's auction for the Basquiat works began on Monday, and will continue through March 17. As the auction house noted in its statement, a live auction will be held Thursday.