

AUTHENTICATION
IN ART

AiA news-service

artnet[®] news

Banking on Banksy, Sotheby's and Christie's Will Hold Dueling Online Sales of the Street Artist's Prints This Fall

The unrelated sales will offer some of the anonymous street artist's most famous images, including the one that self-destructed last fall.

Taylor Dafoe, August 9, 2019



Banksy, *I can't believe you morons actually buy this sh*t*. Courtesy of Christie's Images LTD. 2019.

Last fall, Banksy's self-shredding painting *Love Is in the Bin* garnered about as much media attention as a work of contemporary art possibly can after it sold for \$1.4 million (and promptly self-destructed) at Sotheby's London. Now, Sotheby's and Christie's are both hoping to ride that buzz to the bank with dueling online sales of Banksy prints and multiples this fall.

The sales are unrelated, but both seek to capitalize on the anonymous street artist's mass popularity by offering prints at a variety of price points.

Sotheby's two-week sale, "Banksy/Online," will go live on September 6, bringing together some of the artist's most recognizable prints, including *Girl With Balloon* (estimated at £60,000–80,000), *Welcome to Hell* (£18,000–22,000), and *Pulp Fiction* (£12,000–18,000).

The final lineup of the sale is still being worked out, but Kirsteen Davidson, a specialist in Sotheby's prints department, notes that with some works produced in editions of up to 600, "there's something for everyone."



Banksy, *Pulp Fiction*. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

She notes that the sale was already in the works before *Love Is in the Bin* was sold last fall, but the media frenzy certainly reaffirmed they were on the right track. “Over the last couple of years, we have seen Banksy’s print market go from strength to strength in its own right,” she says. “It therefore seemed like a natural progression for us to harness this strength, and worldwide interest in Banksy, and present a sale solely of his works.”

Christie’s own sale, cheekily titled “I can’t believe you morons actually buy this sh*t,” will go live Wednesday, September 11. Named after a screenprint of the same title, which appropriates a photo of Christie’s auction floor in 1987 at the then-record-breaking sale of Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers*, the sale includes another lineup of Banksy hits, including signed versions of *Choose your weapon* (estimated to go between £30,000–50,000), *Stop and search* (£20,000–30,000), and *CND Soldiers* (£15,000–25,000).



Banksy, *Girl with Balloon (Gold)*. Courtesy of Christie's Images LTD. 2019.

The top lot is a rare artist's proof of *Girl With Balloon (Gold)*, a variation on the famous painting that became *Love Is in the Bin*. It carries an estimate of £150,000–250,000. “It is not known exactly how many artist's proofs were made in the varying colorways, but this is the first time that a color variant has been offered at auction,” says James Baskerville, Christie's head of prints and multiples.

Christie's sale is still taking consignments, so the lineup isn't set in stone. The low estimate for the entire sale currently stands at \$500,000.

The auction record for a multiple by Banksy is £344,750 (\$478,819), set for one of 25 editions of the classic *Girl With Balloon* at Bonhams last year. The next highest price was set in Hong Kong in April for *Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, an acrylic on canvas in an edition of 10 that fetched \$382,185.

The auction houses are marketing the print sale as an opportunity for Banksy's many fans to own a piece of the myth. “Banksy's prints are an opportunity to become a part of something bigger,” Davidson says. “Street art is in the public forum, but prints provide a way for people who love his work to bring it home with them. Some people will pay more for the signature, whereas others just want to own a piece of Banksy's work.”