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Introducing: The Artnet Intelligence Report, Spring 2020 Edition

From a breakdown of the market's performance in 2019 to a gripping account of how A.I. could transform the art business, here are the highlights.

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Intelligence Report
Spring 2020

Will A.I. Remake the Art Business?

Meet the spring 2020 edition of Artnet Intelligence report.

In the art business, perhaps more than in almost any other industry, information is power—and when it comes to the value of artworks, good information is especially hard to come by. An oft-repeated legend has it that Larry Gagosian rose to prominence in part by securing invitations to collectors' homes, memorizing the trophies on display, and using that knowledge to generate third-party offers high enough to literally sell the artworks off their walls.

So it's not entirely surprising that many of the stories in this issue investigate how data—a lack of it, an abundance of it, or a new, high-tech version of it—has the potential to shake the art market's very foundation.

To examine the dark side of information asymmetry, we spelunk into the murky story of Inigo Philbrick, a former wunderkind dealmaker who capitalized on the market's opacity—specifically the fact that buyers and sellers typically have no idea who is on the opposite end of a deal—to allegedly swindle his clients to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

We also explore how artificial intelligence could rewire the art market as a much more transparent, highly efficient industry—but only, perhaps, if the parties who have historically hoarded information are willing to share it for the good of the whole.

In these pages, you'll also find an eye-opening account of how professionals with a very specialized knowledge of one industry—banking—are trying to break down the traditional walls of the art world. Plus, we have a primer on three dynamic art-market hubs in Asia that deserve a closer look, particularly as China and, yes, Hong Kong are becoming less hospitable to Western business.

And, as always, you'll get an insight-packed account of the biggest moments in the art industry over the past year, with unparalleled data, as well as analysis to explain what it all means. Because, as anyone active in the art world knows, you are only as good as your most up-to-date information—and the times they are a changin'.

[Click here to download the full report.](#)

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- *Expert predictions for what's ahead in 2020*
- *Leading collectors on what they buy (and why)*
- *The top 10 lots of 2019 in every major category—explained*

– Your A-to-Z Guide to A.I. in the Art Market by Tim Schneider

Industries from transportation to entertainment have been transformed by artificial intelligence—we explain how it could change the way the art world does business, too.

– Is This the Greatest Contemporary-Art Swindle Ever? by Eileen Kinsella

Inigo Philbrick allegedly conned the art industry out of tens of millions of dollars. Here's how he got away with it for so long—and why it's a symptom of a larger problem.

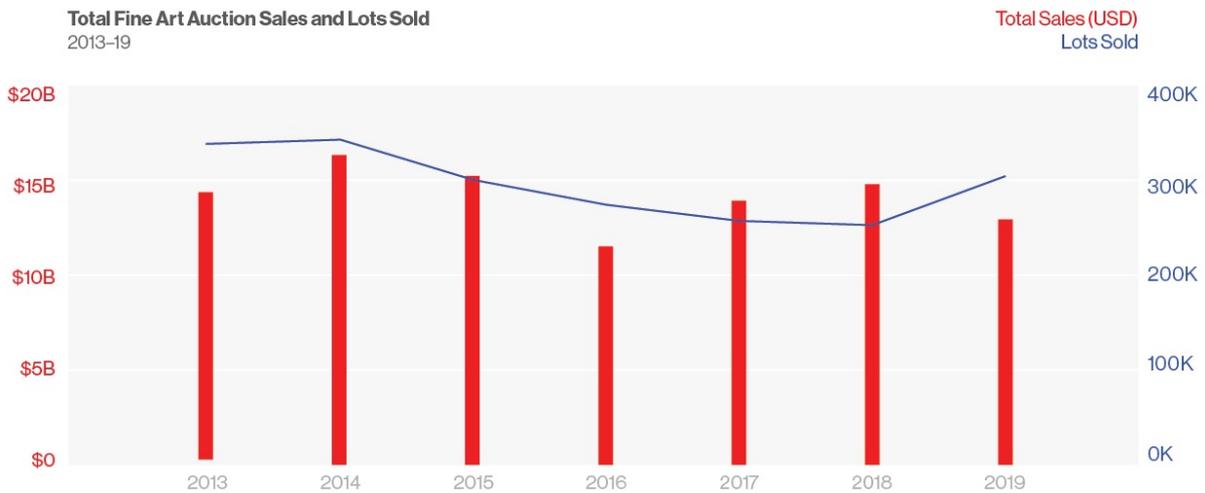
– The Asian Art Market Is More Than Hong Kong (or China) by Vivienne Chow

Beyond the People's Republic, major art markets are blossoming across the region. We break down everything you need to know about three of the most dynamic hubs on the rise.

– How Masters of the Universe Became Masters of the Art World by Nate Freeman

What happens when a market that used to be helmed by patrician connoisseurs is overrun with profit-hungry bankers from Goldman Sachs and J.P. Morgan?

— KEY FINDINGS —



- A grand total of \$17.8 billion was spent on fine art, design, and decorative art at auction in 2019—down 8.3 percent from 2018.
- Weakness at the top of the market is driving this slump: Total auction sales of works worth over \$10 million dropped by 35 percent from the previous year.
- The world’s three largest art markets—the US, the UK, and China—all contracted in 2019. But France was a major success story: the country’s art market grew a remarkable 49 percent last year.
- For the first time since 2016, the gap between Sotheby’s and Christie’s narrowed: the rivals sold \$3.8 billion and \$3.9 billion worth of fine art respectively in 2019.
- Ultra-contemporary art—our term for work by artists born after 1974—remains smaller than any other sector, but it is also by far the fastest-growing, with 65 percent growth year-on-year.
- American artists were more sought-after than those from any other nation at auction last year. They accounted for the largest share—25 percent—of the top 100 best-selling artists in 2019.
- Experts say 2020 is poised to bring at least a modest upturn in the global auction market, as art collections estimated to be worth north of \$700 million combined are expected to hit the block.