



Art + Auction

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ART AUCTION

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LONDON

AN AFFAIR FOR THE AGES

Between the last week of June and the first week of July, London will be overrun with Old Masters—plus a few modern and contemporary offerings for good measure



MASTERPIECE LONDON June 27–July 3

This fair's fourth edition, held on the grounds of the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, proffers the cream of the crop in an ever-broadening range of goods from wine and jewelry to custom-designed safes in which to store them. The art likewise spans a vast swath from a circa-320 B.C. Greek marble statue of a maiden, tagged at £450,000 (\$687,000) at the booth of New York's **Ariadne Galleries**, to a mid 16th-century portrait of Queen Mary I via London dealer **Philip Mould** for £75,000 (\$114,000). London's **Tomasso Brothers** will attempt to bridge the centuries with a presentation keyed to the concept of the Antique, the ideal of Greek and Roman sculpture toward which artists in the 15th and 18th centuries strove. The centerpiece is a bust of the emperor Caracalla by the 18th-century German master **Joseph Claus**, copied from a famous original that is now in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. "It is one of the iconic images of Roman sculpture," says gallery director **Dino Tomasso**, who acquired the piece years ago and recently discovered a "fascinating prior provenance": a place in the collection of **Stephen Tennant**. It is priced at around £400,000 (\$610,000).

LONDON ART WEEK

June 28–July 5
This year, Master Paintings Week and Master Drawings and Sculpture Week have joined forces, bringing some 50 dealers in the West End together under the **London Art Week** umbrella. "We are stronger together," says **Jonathan Green** of the **Richard Green** gallery and a cofounder of the Master Paintings event. "We're both doing more or less the same thing—encouraging people to enjoy the experience of viewing specially curated exhibitions in our galleries, as opposed to organizing a fair." The settings will allow close encounters with such gems as *Apollo and Marsyas*, a small ink drawing by 16th-century Flemish Mannerist **Johannes Stradanus** straight from a private collection in France, on offer at **Didier Aaron** for £100,000 (\$153,000). Green himself has organized a show of European portraits and conversation paintings that features **Augustus John's** ravishing portrayal of **Baroness Baba d'Erlanger** and **Paula Gellibrand**, which hasn't been displayed in public since 1923, shortly after it was painted. It is priced at £250,000 (\$382,000).

OLD MASTER AUCTIONS

Old Master painting sales at Christie's, Sotheby's, and Bonhams will present a series of multimillion-dollar lots jockeying for attention. The action begins the evening of July 2 at Christie's, where the offerings include pieces by **Canaletto**, **Nicolas Poussin**, and **Jan Steen**, whose *Easy Come, Easy Go: The Artist Eating Oysters in an Interior*, 1660, is a cautionary scene about fortune's fleeting nature. That it has been ensconced in the same English collection since the 18th century and exhibited only twice contributes to the £7–10 million estimate (\$10.7–15.3 million).



"These are all big-name painters, and that's what's appealing to buyers at the moment," says specialist **Georgina Wilsenach**.

The next day, **Jean-Baptiste Pater's** idyllic undated hunting scene *Hoïte de chose* leads the **Bonhams** sale with an estimate of £250,000 to £350,000 (\$382–534,000), though the sleeper may be a series of landscape drawings by **John Constable** that haven't been on the market for more than three decades. Also on July 3 is the **Sotheby's** evening sale of Old Masters, which features the late **El Greco's** undated *Saint Dominic in Prayer* (est. £3–5 million; \$4.6–7.6 million), from the estate of collector **Gustav Rau**, and a stunning view by **Claude Joseph Vernet** of his hometown of Avignon from across the Rhône (£3–5 million; \$4.6–7.6 million). "You really feel that he put his passion into this picture," says the house's director of Old Master paintings, **Andrew Fletcher**.

—BENJAMIN SUTTON



Clockwise from top left: **Augustus John's** *Portrait of Baroness Baba d'Erlanger and Miss Paula Gellibrand*, 1919–21, at **Richard Green Gallery** during **London Art Week**; a unique **Regency** reclining chair patented by **William Pocock**, priced north of \$150,000 at **Ronald Phillips**, a founding gallery of the **Masterpiece** fair; **El Greco's** undated *Saint Dominic in Prayer*, estimated to crack \$4.6 million at **Sotheby's** on July 3; and *Easy Come, Easy Go*, **Jan Steen's** 1660 parable of shifting fortune, pegged to surpass \$10 million at **Christie's** on July 2.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RICHARD GREEN GALLERY; LONDON; RONALD PHILLIPS; LONDON; SOTHEBY'S; CHRISTIE'S