

W W I S S E

B U Y \$





# 50 WOMEN ARTISTS WORTH WATCHING

ART+AUCTION PEGS THE MAKERS, BOTH ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING, THAT THE MARKET IS BUZZING ABOUT

● Wouldn't it be nice to think that a gender-delimited list is no longer relevant? It's true that to be a practicing woman artist today is hardly the struggle it would have been in Mary Cassatt's era. Women artists are actively acquired by museums and honored with major surveys and retrospectives; recent names in the spotlight include Julia Margaret Cameron, Rineke Dijkstra, Zarina Hashmi, Sarah Lucas, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Rosemarie Trockel, Carrie Mae Weems, and Francesca Woodman. Collectors pounce on new inventory by Marlene Dumas, Julie Mehretu, and Dana Schutz. Many women artists are doing well, even very well, thanks to committed galleries and ecumenical collectors. Dealers boast of higher private sale prices than public ones for their female artists. Yet there remains a glass ceiling in the salesroom.

Time and again, the specialists and dealers we spoke to emphasized that the prices commanded on the block were by no means a measure of the works in question in terms of critical acclaim or artistic value. Connoisseurs in search of excellence, they say, would be wise to ignore gender outright—especially if considering works of the 50 artists we have highlighted here, whose critical reputations outstrip their value in the marketplace.

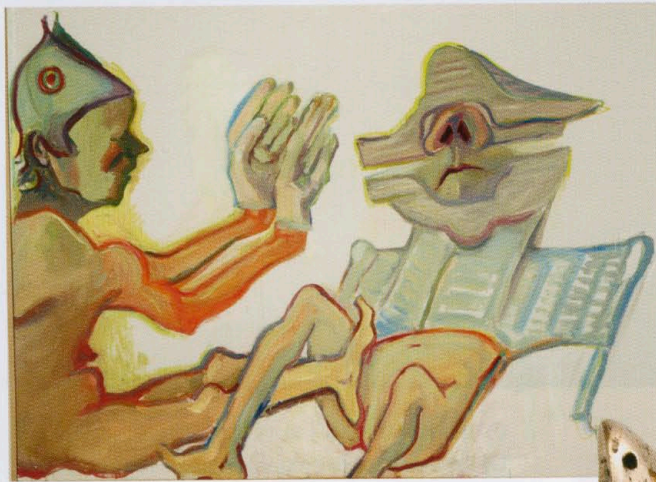
The women in this group, ranging from deceased to emerging, were selected because their contributions seem not to have been fully registered by the market. Many of the artists we chose have either a challengingly conceptual practice or a very wide-ranging one that resists easy categorization. Some were simply ahead of their time. To the extent that dollar value has come to determine the actual worth of these objects in circulation, it is our hope that with visibility, more value will accrue to them. **—THE EDITORS**



☛ **MARIA LASSNIG | 1919–2014 | AUSTRIA**

Opening the artist's MOMA PS1 survey this past March was *Du oder Ich (You or me)*, 2005, an unnerving nude self-portrait in which the contours of Lassnig's aging body, rendered in sensuous peach hues, are arched in an aggressive pose: The subject points a gun straight at the viewer while holding another to her temple. Lassnig's opus stands apart from other narrative work because of her proclivity to create compositions that extend beyond observation to deliver a visceral sense of the body. Her paintings seem to emanate emotions such as excitement and anxiety as well as physical sensations like pressure. "The result was a psychologically charged style of mark making, unlike anything of its time," says Andrea Teschke, a partner at Petzel Gallery, where paintings such as *Du oder Ich* have sold for \$250,000. Although Lassnig's prolific career spanned seven decades, the MOMA PS1 exhibit was the most significant survey of her work ever shown in this country. It was not her only recent triumph; at the 2013 Venice Biennale she won the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. Sadly, the spotlight again turned to Lassnig when she passed away in May. "Upon her death, there was a feeling in the art community that she was just getting started," says Teschke. "There was a sadness in knowing she undoubtedly had so much more to give." —SM |

**FRATERNITE, 2008. OIL ON CANVAS, 59 X 78¾ IN.**



☛ **SHERRIE LEVINE | B. 1947 | UNITED STATES**

Few artists beyond Duchamp receive the kind of credit for game-changing that Levine does among critics and curators, so it's fitting that her record at auction is for a bronze urinal after Duchamp's own *Fountain*: one from a 1991 edition of six, which fell just shy of \$1 million at Christie's in 2012. "She's one of the most admired artists in the gallery," says Paula Cooper, who has represented her for 15 years (the artist also shows with Simon Lee in London and Hong Kong, and Jablonka Galerie in Cologne). Ticking off iconic Levine works like her "Newborns" (after Brancusi) and her pool tables (after Man Ray), distinguished for their intellectual rigor and execution, Cooper adds, "There's so much one could cite that's outstanding." Despite vigorous demand from collectors and institutions, particularly in Europe, for decades Levine's prices paled in comparison with appropriationist peers like Richard Prince; however, the tide is turning. Newer works, like Aleksandr Rodchenko-inspired monochrome canvases shown at the gallery this past spring, are starting higher than they used to. Notes Cooper, "People seem to become absolutely obsessed with Sherrie's work after they live with it. They come back and buy three, four." For the time being, that's still possible. —SPH | **BIRD MASK, 2014. CAST BRONZE, 16 X 6¾ X 5 IN.**



☛ **BLANCHE LAZZELL | 1878–1956 | UNITED STATES**

The West Virginia-born, early American Cubist trained in Paris, where she was a student of Albert Gleizes, Fernand Léger, and André Lhote, and went on to be a founding member of the Provincetown Painters and an integral member of the artist colony. The market is most active for her woodcuts, which proved to be an ideal medium for her formal experiments, although her Cubist paintings can fetch more than \$100,000 at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, which has shown her work since 1989. "She holds a unique position historically," says gallery director Halley K. Harrisburg. "She was a leading exponent of woodblock printing in America, an early advocate of abstraction, and a pioneer of modernism. As a woman during the early 1900s, this was quite extraordinary." Although Lazzell's work is in the collections of the Whitney and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Smithsonian, and many others, it's only recently that her market has seen a surge. A color woodcut, *The Flaming Bush*, 1933, one of only two known prints, sold last September at Swann Auction Galleries for \$87,500, far above its \$10,000-to-\$15,000 estimate. —JULIET HELMKE | **ABSTRACT COMPOSITION, 1924. MIXED MEDIA, 9 X 8 IN.**