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FINE ARTS & CRAFTSMANSHIP

Sotheby's NY Presents its First 'Contemporary Realism: Important 21st-Century Works' Online Sale

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It's a first for Sotheby's NY. From July 16 through to July 26, the prestigious auction house will host an online sale titled "Contemporary Realism: Important 21st-Century Works." A total of 28 realist paintings are included in the auction, with each lot having been selected from the award winners and high-ranking finalists of the 15th International Art Renewal Center (ARC) Salon Competition (2020–2021).

The ARC is a New York-based non-profit that champions realist art. Its annual international salon competition and accompanying exhibition are some of the key activities it undertakes to promote realist art worldwide.

Nearly 5,000 artists from 83 countries entered the [15th International ARC Salon Competition](#). Of those competition entries, 91 will be on view in the 15th International ARC Salon Exhibition at Sotheby's NY, during the same period as the auction.

An Important Moment for Representational Art

ARC co-chair and chief operating officer Kara Lysandra Ross believes the Sotheby's auction is a key moment for representational art. "This is our chance to show the world that there is already a strong demand for contemporary works utilizing traditional [painting](#) techniques," she said in an email.

If contemporary representational art is to thrive and reach its full potential, major auction houses need to regularly sell works by living representational artists, she said.

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Apart from the obvious promotion of representational art, she explained another reason why the sale is important: Artists who have sold works at auction will find it “easier to sell their works, because public auction records are a transparent sale history that define fair market value.” Ross has seen a steady surge in the value of contemporary representational art and she expects prices to rise rapidly after the auction.

A Few Choice Lots

The themes of the 28 lots vary. Below is a small selection that highlights beauty and our shared humanity.



“Daapir,” 2017, by Iranian painter Marjan Abedian. Oil on canvas; 29 3/4 inches by 20 1/4 inches. Recipient of the Portraiture Award (second place) at the “15th International ARC Salon Exhibition (2020–2021).”
(Courtesy of ARC)

Iranian artist Marjan Abedian has gracefully captured an old woman gazing off into the distance. There’s no hint in the painting as to what’s on the lady’s mind. It doesn’t matter, because her deep gaze is something that many of us can relate to when we’ve been lost in our own thoughts. In her online artist’s statement, Abedian explains that the painting is her student’s grandmother, and she’s named the painting “Daapir,” which is both a region in Iran and also Kurdish for grandmother.

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“Promise of a Rainbow,” 2019, by American painter D. Eleinne Basa. Oil on linen; 24 inches by 36 inches. Recipient of The Artist’s Library Award at the “15th International ARC Salon Exhibition (2020–2021).” (Courtesy of ARC)

In the landscape painting “Promise of a Rainbow,” American painter D. Eleinne Basa has also depicted a fleeting moment: “The time before you see the emergence of a rainbow,” she said, in her online artist statement. Deep brown and purple hues dominate the rich canvas as the land recovers from a recent storm, and the sun is about to emerge again.

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“The Resurrection,” 2018, by American painter Peter Adams. Oil on panel; 96 inches by 48 inches. Recipient of an Imaginative Realism Award (honorable mention) at the “15th International ARC Salon Exhibition (2020–2021).” (Courtesy of ARC)

Sunlight, no doubt merged with divine light, dazzles Mary Magdalene in American artist Peter Adams’s painting, “The Resurrection.” He explains, in his online artist statement,

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that he's depicting the moment that Mary leaves the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre when she's overwhelmed by light. Unable to see properly, she mistakes Christ for the gardener. But as soon as He says her name, she recognizes Him. In the painting, Christ is beautifully backlit as Mary kneels in reverence.



“Red Rhododendron,” 2020, by American painter Jim McVicker. Oil on linen; 60 inches by 54 inches. Recipient of the Still Life Award (third place) at the “15th International ARC Salon Exhibition (2020–2021).” (Courtesy of ARC)

Several rhododendrons surround American artist Jim McVicker’s home in Eureka, California, he said in his online artist statement. A huge branch of red rhododendron blooms are the focal point of his still life painting “Red Rhododendron.” He depicted the branch in a large vase in front of a carefully placed selection of vases, tables, and a rug, creating a rich painting full of interest and vitality.

Bidding in the Sotheby’s NY ‘Contemporary Realism: Important 21st-Century Works’ sale begins on July 16 at [Sothebys.com](https://www.sothebys.com)