

# NEXT MOST COLLECTIBLE ARTISTS

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ART+AUCTION'S EDITORS SPOT THE ARTISTS WHO ARE ON THEIR WAY UP IN THE MARKET

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THE TASK OF CHOOSING MOST-COLLECTIBLE ARTISTS is even trickier than it first appears, beginning with a discussion of what the term *collectible* means. To some it may simply be a synonym for *popular*. For certain connoisseurs it may function as shorthand for aesthetic quality. When the editors of *Art+Auction* convened for the first time to discuss the topic several months ago, we each brought our own predilections and biases. Was this an opportunity to laud established artists who had not been given their due? Should we hitch our reputation to our favorites from the up-and-coming generation? Ultimately, this being a magazine of the art market, we decided our aim should be to identify artists who have demonstrated past strength at auction or in primary sales and show promise of continued development. We did not want to merely list the people at the top of the market, but to cite those who might find themselves there in 10, 20, or 30 years. In short, we were looking for artists whose works have room to grow aesthetically and rise in terms of monetary value.

Setting the goal was just the beginning. Conversations with collectors, art advisers, auction house specialists, and dealers followed, as we sought to track who has been selling and who has been buying, which works have been most in demand and which undervalued. Some artists we thought showed potential fell by the wayside. In other instances, the more we talked and the more we learned, the more passionate we became. The short summaries on the following pages barely scratch the surface of fascinating careers filled with ups and downs. We hope that, taken together, they portray some of the complexity of the art market. We also hope that, individually, they lead you to delve more deeply into the work of these compelling, evolving—and collectible—artists. —THE EDITORS



◀ **FRANK THIEL**

Thiel makes formally sophisticated and technically flawless photographs that explore the transformation of Berlin, his home since 1985. Inexplicably, his large-scale color works have been overlooked in recent surveys of contemporary German photography, but he enjoys a committed collector base in North and South America, Europe, and Asia, and he's a steady presence in the art-fair booth of Sean Kelly, his New York dealer. New works are printed in editions of five plus two artist proofs, with smaller formats starting at about \$15,000 and larger ones at \$30,000. Thiel's photographs are solid sellers at auction, with prices generally in the \$10,000-to-\$28,000 range, in line with his primary market. His auction record is \$52,000, achieved by a 1999 photograph sold in 2010 at Phillips de Pury in London; the same print had sold at Christie's New York in 2008 for \$7,500. / **UNTITLED (C50), 2008. FRAMED C-PRINT MOUNTED TO PLEXIGLAS, 96<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> X 71<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> IN.**

✔ **CANAN TOLON**

This Bay Area-based artist's practice is informed by her architectural training at U.C. Berkeley. Large installations like *Emergency Exit*, 2007, with its concatenation of mirrors and ladders, are catnip for institutions, but it is her canvases—with complex planes and matrices that shimmer before the viewer's eye—that have solidified a collector base in her native Turkey and in the U.S. They range from \$5,000 to \$200,000 on the primary market, through her longtime dealers Galeri Nev, in Ankara and Istanbul, and Paule Anglim, San Francisco. David Elliott chose her for the first Kiev Biennial, now on view in Ukraine. / **REFLEX 17, 2011. OIL ON 4 PANELS, 72 X 96 IN.**



▲ **DE WAIN VALENTINE**

"His market was very quiet for 40 years. Then all of a sudden, it was like someone turned a tap on," says Ace Gallery's Douglas Christmas of sculptor Valentine. Often associated with the Light and Space movement of the 1960s, Valentine is experiencing something of a renaissance thanks to his inclusion in the recent "Pacific Standard Time," Southern California's multi-institution initiative devoted to postwar L.A. art. According to Christmas, "very established collectors" in both the United States and Europe are showing interest. Though the L.A. dealer estimates Valentine's prices have doubled in the past year, they remain modest compared with those of many of his Light and Space peers: An eight-foot-wide polyester resin disk costs approximately \$500,000. Smaller pieces are also gaining steam. In October 2011, Los Angeles Modern Auctions set a new record for Valentine's work, selling a tabletop-size luminous teal disk sculpture for \$32,500, well over the \$5,000 high estimate. / **CIRCLE SEPIA DARK-ORANGE, 1971. CAST POLYESTER RESIN, DIAMETER 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN.**



✔ **ROSEMARIE TROCKEL**

Long admired, Trockel is primed to make the leap to blue-chip status later this year, when she will be the subject of three major museum exhibitions. Among them is "Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos," which travels from Manhattan's New Museum to Madrid's Reina Sofia and juxtaposes works by the multidisciplinary artist with objects that have influenced her. The Cologne-based Trockel, who became famous in the 1980s for her knitted pictures exploring gender, politics, and sexuality, works today with found objects, paint, ceramics, and video. In light of a number of recent major exhibitions focused on women, "people are reconsidering how they look at female artists," says art adviser Carmen Zita, noting that Trockel, who shows with Gladstone Gallery in New York, Donald Young in Chicago, and Sprüth Magers in Berlin and London, is among the most respected female artists working today. Her prices, too, are on the rise: Trockel's auction record was set in May 2011, when Sotheby's sold a prime knitted wool piece from 1987 for \$962,500, well above the \$700,000 high estimate. Smaller knitted works sell for \$100,000 and above, and ceramics cost approximately \$150,000. / **BALAKLAVA BOX-UNIQUIM, 1986-90. WOOLEN BALAKLAVAS AND FIVE MANNEQUIN HEADS IN PLEXIGLAS CABINET, 13<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> X 60<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> X 12<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> IN.**

