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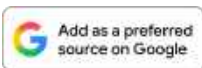
## From private vaults to public view: See million-dollar masterpieces before they disappear again

From an early Walter Spies painting to a Raden Saleh piece unseen for over a century, view these works from Jan 22 to 25 before Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary Art auction



Selected David Hockney iPad drawings and an early painting by Walter Spies (right) will set the tone for a cross-cultural selection of exceptional works on view during Singapore Art Week.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S



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The annual Singapore Art Week often brings global art into public view, but this year, visitors can encounter works that rarely leave private collections – and in some cases, have not appeared on the market for more than a century.

Among the highlights at [Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary Art auction](#) is *Die Schlittschuhläufer* (The Ice Skaters), an early painting by Russian-German artist Walter Spies, who would later become a central figure in the Balinese art renaissance. Best known for his magical-realist depictions of Bali, Spies' early works already reveal the stylised forms, unusual perspectives and cinematic atmosphere that shaped his later practice.

Art lovers will be able to view this rare painting alongside other significant works by artists such as Raden Saleh, Pacita Abad, Marc Chagall, Zao Wou-ki, Mai Trung Thu and David

Hockney. Now in its fifth edition, the auction will see highlights exhibited to the public from Jan 22 to 25 at The Singapore Edition, before the live auction takes place on Jan 25.

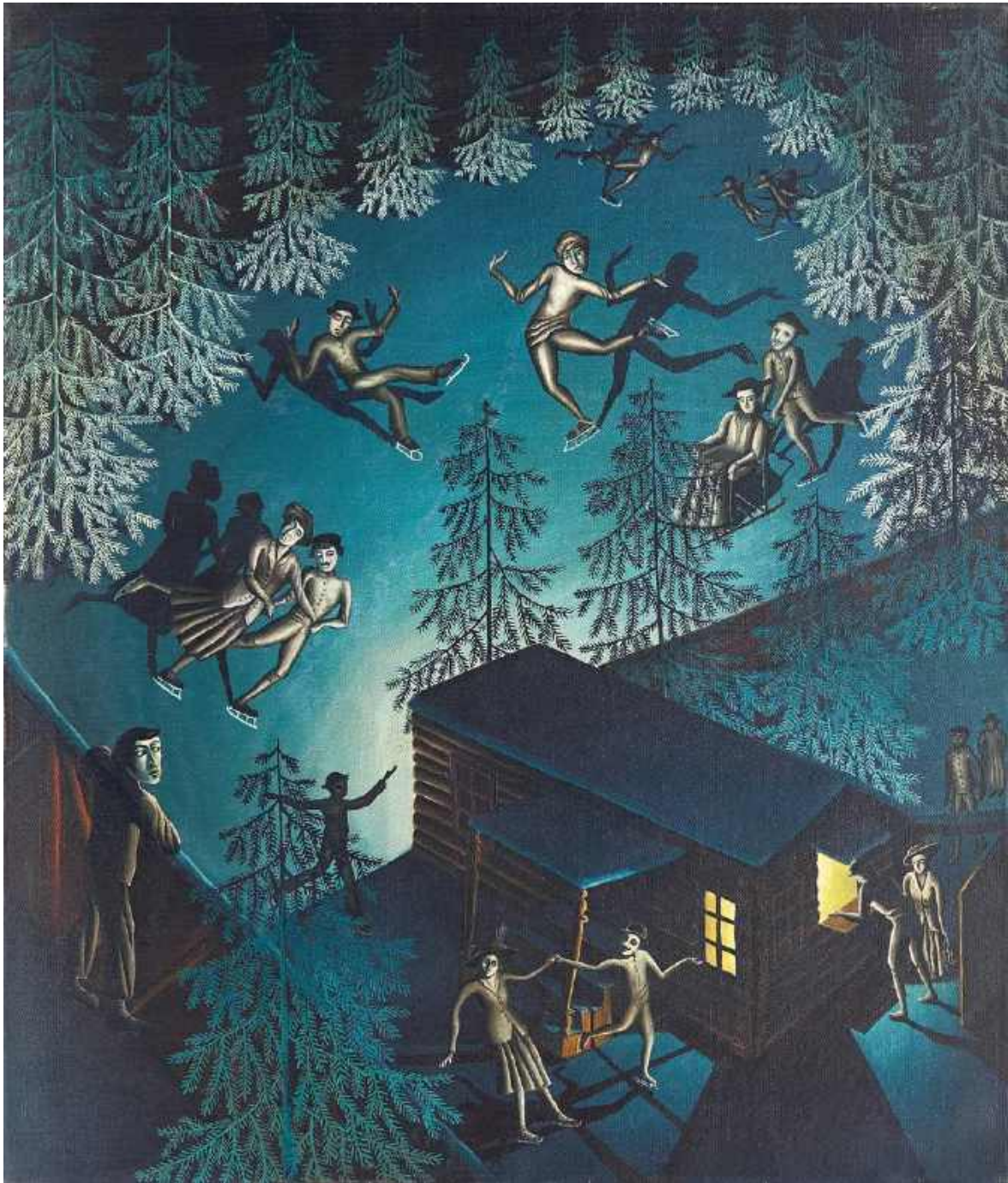
## **Auction highlights that art lovers can look forward to**

### **Die Schlittschuhlaufer (The Ice Skaters), Walter Spies**

Although Spies is best known for works made in the Dutch East Indies, his early 1920s paintings already articulated the core ideas of his later practice. *Die Schlittschuhlaufer* (The Ice Skaters), often read as autobiographical, reveals his interest in naive art and simplified forms.

The unusual viewpoints and poses of the skaters reflect his fascination with primitive art and modernists such as Paul Klee, while the cool blue palette, elongated shadows and cinematic figures suggest the influence of early film and popular culture.

Formerly part of the esteemed collection of Hans Rhodius, among the earliest scholars to publish books on Spies, the painting is expected to fetch between \$980,000 and \$1.8 million (US\$760,000 to US\$1.4 million).



Die Schlittschuhläufer by Walter Spies reveals the stylised figures, unusual perspectives and cinematic atmosphere that would later define his work.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **The eruption of Mount Merapi, by day, Raden Syarif Bustaman Saleh**

Occupying a pivotal place in global art history as the first Asian artist to receive formal training in Europe, Saleh's work forges a powerful synthesis between Western Romanticism and Javanese themes and perspectives.

Appearing on the market for the first time, *The Eruption of Mount Merapi, by day*, has been held in a private European collection for more than a hundred years, with provenance documented back to the early 1920s.

As Saleh's sole known daytime representation of Mount Merapi's 1865 eruption to ever be offered at auction, the piece is estimated to sell for between \$700,000 to \$1.3 million. Only one nighttime version has been seen in the public market, highlighting the rarity of the subject.



The only known daytime depiction of Mount Merapi's eruption by Raden Saleh will appear at auction for the first time.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **Assaulting the eye with ecstasy, Pacita Abad**

Filipino-American artist Abad's signature trapunto works are a vibrant celebration of global cultures and indigenous traditions. Merging painting, textiles and found objects into large-scale pieces, her work has earned her international recognition, underscored by major museum acquisitions and solo exhibitions across the world. During the last year of her life, Abad completed painting the Alkaff Bridge over Singapore River in 2004.

Assaulting the Eye with Ecstasy, which is expected to fetch between \$120,000 to \$380,000, belongs to her pivotal Oriental Abstractions series – developed after her 1983 immersion in Korean artistic traditions, where she studied ink painting with a Buddhist monk. While her original experiments were rooted in the motif of rice stalks, Abad pushed the form into full abstraction, using layered colour and reflective objects to create a spirited, glimmering work of art.



A vibrant example of Pacita Abad's signature trapunto technique, combining painting, textiles and objects like buttons.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **The arrival of spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire, David Hockney**

Three works from Hockney's landmark iPad series, *The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire*, will make their regional debut, underscoring his early and influential embrace of digital technology.

Just a month after Apple first launched the iPad in January 2010, Hockney began using it to draw. Valuing the device for its portability, versatility and capacity for large-scale output, he used it to chronicle the daily unfolding of spring along Woldgate, near Bridlington. The project culminated in a series of more than 50 works, which filled the Royal Academy's largest gallery in 2012 – marking a decisive moment, both in his practice and in the evolving role of digital technology in contemporary art.



David Hockney's digitally drawn spring landscapes highlight his early embrace of the iPad as an artistic tool.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **Couple dans les mimosas (Nice et la Cote d'Azur), Marc Chagall**

With his groundbreaking work having been exhibited in some of the most prestigious museums in the world, including the Louvre and the Grand Palais in Paris, Chagall is one of the most renowned figures in modern art. His oeuvre – featuring lovers, musicians, circus performers, and both landscapes and cityscapes – is distinguished by its emotional intensity and keen visual imagination, often shaped by his Russian roots and Jewish heritage.

A romantic portrayal of lovers set amid the sun-drenched scenery of southern France, *Couple dans les mimosas* served as the basis for a 1967 lithograph edition of 150 for the acclaimed *Nice et la Cote d'Azur* suite, produced with master printer Charles Sorlier. Among Chagall's final works, the suite reflects his enduring attachment to Nice and the surrounding coast. The painting, which originated from the artist's estate and was later offered at a dedicated auction in Bern in 2014, is expected to sell for between \$420,000 and \$600,000.



A depiction of lovers set against the sunlit landscapes of southern France reflects Marc Chagall's recurring themes of love.  
PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **Sans titre, Zao Wou-ki**

After relocating from Shanghai to France in 1948, Zao gained recognition for his inventive and nuanced explorations of oil painting, Chinese ink, watercolour and printmaking. His international prominence helped pave the way for later generations of artists of the Chinese diaspora.

Expected to fetch between \$500,000 and \$1 million, Sans titre belongs to a period of peak recognition in Zao's career, following his election to the Academie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and a landmark retrospective at the Jeu de Paume. In it, hues of golden yellows, soft blondes and emerald greens come together in a radiant composition that exemplifies Zao's mature synthesis of Impressionist colour with the spatial traditions of Chinese ink painting.



This abstract work by Zao Wou-ki combines his lyrical fusion of Western modernism and Chinese ink traditions.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

### **Coquetterie (Coquetry), Mai Trung Thu**

Considered one of Vietnamese master Mai Trung Thu's rarest and most significant works, *Coquetterie* reimagines an iconic portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrees and one of her sisters, originally created by the Fontainebleau School in 1594.

Expected to fetch between \$500,000 and \$800,000, the work encapsulates the hallmarks for which Mai Trung Thu is best known, from his distinctive handling of colour — layered through a vibrant interplay of orange and green across scarves, ao dai and jewellery, to his evocative portrayals of domestic life in Vietnam.



Mai Trung Thu reimagines a Renaissance courtly scene through his distinctive palette and refined brushwork.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S

Together, the works on view offer a cross-cultural snapshot of art history, spanning continents, movements and generations – from early modernism to post-war abstraction and diasporic expression. For many visitors, the public exhibition presents a rare chance to encounter these works in person before they return to private hands.

Catch these exceptional works up close at Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary Art auction from Jan 22 to 25 at The Edition Singapore, [and explore the full catalogue online ahead of the live sale on Jan 25.](#)

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