

Modern & Contemporary African and Middle Eastern Art - a celebration of cross-cultural creativity in tandem with African Art Exhibitions in London and the announcement of Frieze Abu Dhabi



Oluwale Omofemi (Nigerian b. 1988)
I See It
£15,000 - £20,000

London, October 2025 — At a time of unprecedented global interest in Middle Eastern and African art, Olympia Auctions presents an opportunity to buy into this dynamic new market. Its sale of [Modern & Contemporary African and Middle Eastern Art](#) on **Wednesday, 29 October 2025** brings together an exceptional selection of works tracing the evolution of artistic expression across Africa and the Middle East from early postcolonial pioneers to today's most exciting contemporary voices.

The 66-lots have been curated by two of London's foremost experts in the field, Head of Sale Janet Rady, and Elikem Logan who recently joined Olympia Auctions as Sub-Saharan African Art Consultant. Both will be happy to offer insight and guidance to anyone wanting to explore this hugely significant new area of scholarship and collecting.

The Olympia Auctions sale is set against the backdrop of **Nigerian Modernism** at **Tate Modern**, **Kerry James Marshall's** powerful paintings of Black Americans at the **Royal Academy**, and the **Serpentine Gallery's** large-scale mural by celebrated South African Dr Esther Mahlangu. Frieze, opening this week, is likely to include more modern and contemporary African art than ever before and the recent announcement that **Abu Dhabi Art** will be transformed into **Frieze Abu Dhabi** from 2026 means that artists from Africa, the Middle East, and the Global South will become known to an even larger international audience.

From public display to private collection

Olympia Auctions provides the opportunity to engage with established and emerging artists (some included in these major public exhibitions) on a more intimate level – and to take them home. Sale highlights include **Ben Enwonwu MBE's** 19 'Untitled (1945)' (estimate: £20,000 - £25,000), which uses the classical European tradition to depict an everyday scene of rural Nigerian life, **Oluwale Omofemi's** 'I See It', (estimate: £15,000 - £20,000) representative of the new wave of Afrocentric portraiture, and Lady with the Branches by **Johnson Ocheja**, a

self-taught Nigerian painter with his own distinct style in the emergent tradition of black figuration (estimate £8,000-£12,000).

South African Highlights

A lyrical watercolour by one of South African's most celebrated landscape artists **Jacob Hendrik Pierneef (1886–1957)**, *Kahn Rivier, SWA* (estimate £5,500–£7,500), dates from his first trip to Namibia in 1923. The journey marked the beginning of Pierneef's enduring engagement with the Namibian landscape which he portrayed as vast, pristine, and largely untouched by human presence. **Cecil Skotnes (1926–2009)**, is revered for pioneering new techniques that used earth pigments and indigenous wood and referenced the rich body of African precolonial visual culture. Also known for his teaching, he fostered creative potential in marginalised communities and inspired successive generations of young artists. His *Still Life with Fruit* is estimated at £1,000–£1,500.

A strong showing of South African women artists includes weavers from the **Rorke's Drift Art and Craft Centre** who, during the 1960s, produced tapestries both for income and as a means of coded resistance under apartheid. *Boys Challenge* (estimate £1,500–£2,500) shows how they wove allegory and protest into richly coloured narratives now recognised as landmark achievements of African modernism.

Sculptor **Maureen Quin (b.1934)**, whose bronze *Animal Bird Man on Bench* is estimated at £2,200–£2,800, uses dynamic forms to explore human emotion, empathy and resilience. Her six-decade career has earned her numerous awards and representation in major South African museums. Also to be found in major public and corporate collections is **Gail Catlin (b.1948)**. Here, *Totem Figures* (estimate £2,000–£3,000) evidences her determination to capture the iridescent colours of Nature and her conquering (after many years and with the help of scientists at Imperial College London) of liquid crystals – “painting with diamonds”.

Completing the South African selection is **Dr Esther Mahlangu's (b. 1935) Untitled (Tray with Ndebele Pattern)** (estimate £1,500–£2,500). Famed for transforming Ndebele mural traditions into a contemporary visual language, Mahlangu's vibrant geometry — applied to village walls, a BMW Art Car and here a humble tray — has brought her worldwide acclaim and her mural for the Serpentine Gallery can be seen until March 2026.

Wider African Perspectives

Malian painter **Famakan Magassa (b.1997)** (estimates £1,000–£3,000), is represented by two works that balance satire and allegory through his signature elongated figures — a visual language rooted in West African folklore yet alive to global themes. **Steve Bandoma (b.1981)** is among the leading voices of a new generation of Congolese artists whose work interrogates identity, power and consumerism. His *Posers (from the Ecstasy Series)* (est. £2,500–£3,500) are a vivid collision of fragmented bodies, advertising imagery and gestural abstraction. **Theophilus Tetteh (b. 1991)**, a figurative Ghanaian artist profoundly shaped by the principles of Impressionism, has two works in the sale which, typical of his style, capture the daily movements and subtle interactions of local people in his home city of Accra, drawing attention to the vibrancy of urban life (estimates £1,500–£5,000).

Further south, Zimbabwean artist **Brett Charles Seiler (B.1994)** continues to push boundaries with his emotive mixed-media works exploring love, identity, and Queerness, while **Soly Cissé (b.1969)**, one of Senegal's foremost contemporary artists, captures the rhythm and vitality, the music, fashion and exuberant social gatherings of postcolonial Senegalese society while alluding to tensions that lie beneath (estimate £2,000–£3,000).

Egyptian and Middle Eastern Art

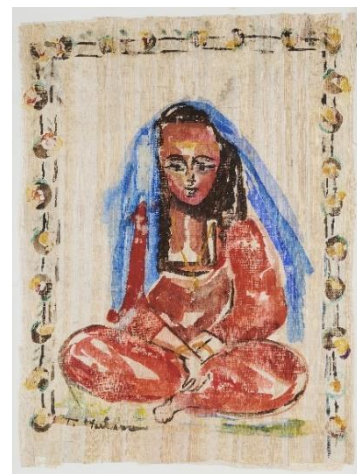
The Middle Eastern section is equally rich with one highlight being a series of works by Saudi Arabia's **Abdulhalim Radwi (b.1939)** a prominent sculptor, curator and poet whose artistic practice was shaped by both his cultural heritage and modernist influences and whose international success paved the way for the development of modern Saudi art. His *Untitled (Fish)* of 1996 is estimated at £13,000-18,000).

A focus on Egyptian art includes *Untitled (from the Alexandria Series)* (est. £4,000–£9,000) by the much-travelled Egyptian Canadian artist **Anna Boghiguian**, whose work is currently showing at **Turner Contemporary, Margate**. Four works by **Chant Avedissian** (est. £2,500–£8,000), two of mosques, show the influence of his long-term partnership with the architect **Hassan Fathy** while two delicate watercolours by **Inji Efflatoun** (est. £6,000–£8,000) typify her “white light” period following her release after imprisonment for political activism under Nasser. **Tahia Halim** has several pictures in the sale including a lyrical *Figures on a Boat* (est. £4,000–£6,000), inspired by her return to Nubia during the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Typical of Halim, the painting is a visual diary, using vivid colours, earth tones, bold figuration, and impasto techniques inspired by both Coptic and Ancient Egyptian styles to depict scenes of daily life.

Beyond Egypt, the sale includes Canadian Libyan **Arwa Abouon's** lightbox work *Jnan Nuwarr* (Estimate £1,500–£2,500), reflecting the late artist's meditation on faith, tradition and identity. And, from the father of Syrian Impressionism, **Nasser Chaura**, there is notable landscape of 1949 in his impressionist style before his abstraction of the mid-1960s (estimate £8,000-£12,000).



Ben Enwonwu MBE (Nigerian 1917-1994)
Untitled
£20,000 - £25,000



Tahia Halim (Egyptian 1919 – 2003)
Cross-legged female figure
£6,000 - £8,000

Janet Rady, Head of Sale at Olympia Auctions says “This sale underscores the incredible momentum behind African and Middle Eastern art. From early postcolonial pioneers to the current generation of international trailblazers, these artists have redefined the global art narrative—and the market is responding with unprecedented enthusiasm.”

Elikem Logan comments “It is both innovative and refreshing to see African art presented alongside work from the Middle East, creating a platform that reflects the shared dynamism and global resonance of these regions. The African highlights span the breadth of modern and contemporary practice — from revered modernists such as Ben Enwonwu to the singular voices of artists like Malangatana. Together, these works speak to the strength, diversity, and enduring influence of artistic production across the continent.”



Esther Mahlangu (South African b. 1935)
 Untitled (Tray with Ndebele pattern)
 £1,500 - £2,500

With estimates ranging from £700 to £25,000, the auction offers opportunities for both new and established collectors. **Please see sale images in the [catalogue](#), lots 1-66. High res images immediately available on request.**

Public Exhibition will be held at Olympia Auctions, 25 Blythe Road, London W14, on the following dates:

Friday 24th October: 10am – 5 pm

Sunday 26th October: 12pm – 4pm

Monday 27 October: 10am – 8pm including:

Drinks 5pm- 8pm

Guided Tour of the Sale with Janet Rady and Eikem Logan, 7pm

Tuesday 28 October: 10am – 5pm

Wednesday 29th October, Live Auction, 12pm

Live online bidding will be available through www.olympiaauctions.com, The Saleroom, Invaluable, and Drouot Online.

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Editor's Notes:

Olympia Auctions - London's expert auctioneers at Kensington Olympia

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