

# HOW THE NEXT GENERATION OF ART AND DESIGN SPECIALISTS ARE TACKLING THE MARKET

CHLOE ASHBY, FINANCIAL TIMES, JUNE 21, 2019



## Dealers are finding innovative ways to attract new audiences

How do you compete in a landscape where small and midsize galleries falter while big names flourish? How do you gain the necessary connoisseurship to be trusted by new clients and taken seriously by your peers? How do you persuade collectors who dip in and out of different mediums, periods and parts of the world to pay attention to your carefully chosen niche? These are the kind of questions the next generation of art and design specialists are asking themselves — especially ahead of an international art fair such as Masterpiece.

“I remember the prints collector,” says Lyndsey Ingram, who started out in the Sotheby’s prints department at the age of 19. “Slightly geeky but charming, very focused. A specific kind of collector who is now few and far between — people have a much broader approach today.” From Sotheby’s, Ingram moved to the London-based prints gallery Sims Reed before setting up her eponymous dealership, concentrating on modern and contemporary prints, in 2016. The biggest challenge: “Understanding a business, which is different from understanding pictures or how to buy, sell and make a profit.”

Ingram focuses more on sourcing than selling, suggesting that if you acquire high-quality works and present them well, purchases will follow. “With Masterpiece, you have an opportunity to make a whole environment, a mini-world,” she says. In fact, this year she’ll have two. One booth, a dark-panelled space resembling a Tudor living room, will present contemporary prints created with traditional techniques: Grayson Perry’s intricate map etchings, for example, which nod to historical cartography, and Glenn Brown’s wily reproductions of older works by artists such as Rembrandt.

The adjacent booth will be taken over by one of Ingram’s contemporary artists, Georgie Hopton, whose collages range from mini to mammoth. “There’s a lot of visual noise at art fairs so you want to give people something consistent for their eyes to rest on,” adds Ingram. “I think that’s how you get people’s attention.”

The question informing the presentation of the family-run Galerie Chenel’s booth is: how do you attract a young audience to old art? Ollivier and Adrien Chenel grew up in a family of antique dealers, surrounded by art and accompanying their father — who specialised in Art Nouveau and Art Deco furniture — to auctions. The brothers founded the Paris-based Galerie Chenel in 1999 and focus on archaeological objects, especially Roman art (keep your eyes peeled for a marble head of Hermes from the late 1st century AD). Ollivier’s wife Gladys is in charge of design, which often takes on a distinctly modern look. “We want to create a setting that corresponds to our way of living,” says Ollivier. “We’re dealing with very old material so a modern presentation helps.” At Masterpiece, that presentation will involve plenty of black and white.

From old to Old Masters — paintings and sculpture, to be specific. Andreas Pampoulides and Andrea Lullo met while studying art history at Christie’s Education. After going their separate ways — Pampoulides gaining experience first as a specialist in the European sculpture department at Christie’s, then as director of the Coll & Cortes/Colnaghi galleries — they reunited and founded their own business in 2016. Lullo Pampoulides made its debut at Masterpiece last year and returns with several fine pieces of 19th- and 20th-century art, including two charcoal drawings by a late 19th-century Italian academician called Andrea Gastaldi.

“It’s a market we’re trying to develop because there’s so much quality out there and so many artists who people haven’t really heard of outside, say, Italy,” says Pampoulides, who sold another drawing by Gastaldi to the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC last year. “It goes to show that you don’t need to buy a big brand in order to sell to an important museum.”

For any emerging art gallery, selling to museums boosts credibility — something Parisian dealer Oscar Graf swiftly learned when

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## LYNDSLEY INGRAM

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he opened his first gallery, specialising in late 19th and early 20th-century decorative arts, in 2011. Of course, he'd grown up with an art dealer grandmother and a celebrated decorator father, who sparked his interest, but he was 24 years old with zero clients. It was only when he began to meet "the right people" (international collectors and curators) and work with museums on a regular basis that things fell into place for him. In addition to his space on Paris's gallery-studded rue de Seine, Graf will open a London outpost in time for Masterpiece. "Many of my clients are either British or live in London, and 80 per cent of what I sell is British Arts and Crafts furniture and objects, so being in London makes sense," he says. Incidentally, more than half of his sales now go to prominent museums in the US.

Graf has sold only a handful of pieces online, contrary to what you might expect from the next generation. And he's not alone. "Our website is a tool, it's not the platform on which we do business," says Pampoulides. "I think people still need to see objects, they need to handle them." For his gallery and others, retailing online isn't an option — viewing a piece in the flesh remains important to both private clients and museum buyers.

"Ironically, I think physical galleries are becoming more important in terms of selling," says Ingram, while admitting that more people will pass by her Masterpiece booth in 10 days than will visit her Mayfair gallery space over the following five years. "An artist isn't going to say, 'Here are 10 new paintings — can you put them on the internet and sell them?' They're going to give them to you for an exhibition in your gallery and then, when you have them all in the gallery, you'll sell them through the internet." It seems counterintuitive but apparently it's the way it works, at least some of the time.

"I think galleries are still really important," adds Ingram, "but I think what they do for a business is changing."