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artnet News Names the 100 Most
Collectible Living Artists

For the second consecutive year, artnet News and artnet Analytics crunched the numbers to identify the top-selling living artists worldwide.

Our study relies on auction data from the artnet Price Database from the past three-plus years—starting January 1, 2012 and continuing through October 2016—to create two lists. The first runs down the 100 highest-selling lots. Of the 100 highest-selling lots over this time period, nearly 80 made eight-figure prices. The second shows the 100 highest-selling artists by overall sale volume and indicates the number of lots sold.

In terms of prices for individual works, Jeff Koons remains auction king. His Balloon Dog (Orange) (1994-2000) sold for \$58.4 million at Christie's New York in November 2013, a price still not outstripped by any other living artist.

Of those 100 highest artworks, just 10 were sold in 2016 (though November's auctions may improve 2016's standings). These include Cui Ruzhuo's *The Grand Snowing Mountains* (2013), sold at Poly Auction in Hong Kong this past April for \$39.6 million.

Another 2016 addition (at #40) is Maurizio Cattelan's kneeling sculpture of a mini-Hitler, *Him* (2001), which sold at Christie's New York's "Bound to Fail" sale this past May for \$17.2 million.

Also a new arrival to the 100 highest lots is Peter Doig, whose painting *The Architect's Home in the Ravine* (1991) sold for £11.3 million (\$16.3 million) at Christie's London this past February.

The remaining additions are also artists who are already well-represented at the top, including Koons along with Richard Prince, Gerhard Richter, Robert Ryman, and Christopher Wool.

There is just one female artist new to the 100 most expensive lots: Jenny Saville, whose fleshy nude painting *Shift* (1996-97) sold for £6.8 million (\$9 million) at Sotheby's London this past June, earning her a spot at #85. The only other female artist on the list of top 100 lots (at #79) is Cady Noland, for the \$9.8 million sale of *Bluewald* (1989) at Christie's blockbuster "Looking Forward to the Past" sale in New York in May 2015.

Turning to the list of total auction sales by volume, Germany's Gerhard Richter remains at the top, with total sales of over \$1 billion, followed by Koons at a distant second with \$402 million, then Christopher Wool with \$377 million.

Some shifts observed among the top 10. Chinese painter Cui Ruzhuo (now #4) switched places with Zeng Fanzhi (now #5). Yayoi Kusama, one of the few women to appear on the overall volume list, rose to #6 from #8, with recorded sales of \$203 million, compared to \$152 million at our last tally. Other blue-chip artists largely retained their same rankings, including Doig, Prince, and Ed Ruscha.

Cindy Sherman dropped in the rankings, falling to #36 in the ranking of overall volume, from #23 at last analysis; her auction volume fell to \$63 million from \$74 million. Other female artists on the list include Tauba Auerbach, Julie Mehretu, and Bridget Riley.

Romanian artist Adrian Ghenie, whose work is in high demand at the moment, entered the list at #95. The artist had a strong year at market, selling all four of his highest-priced works at auction, for prices ranging to \$9 million. That record was just set at Christie's London on October 6 when his painting *Nickelodeon* (2008) sold for £7.1 million (\$9 million).

Top 100 Living Artists

January 2012–October 21, 2016

22	Liu Wei	79,171,537	216
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