

## WHY WE CHOSE THIS MASTERPIECE

### **George Condo (b. 1957)**

George Condo is an American contemporary artist, born in 1957 in Concord, New Hampshire. He is known for blending classical European painting with American pop and street culture, a style he calls "Artificial Realism." After studying art history and music theory at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Condo moved to New York City in the early 1980s. There, he became part of the East Village art scene, connecting with artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Andy Warhol, with whom he briefly worked at the Factory. Condo's work often features distorted, surreal figures—a style he refers to as "psychological cubism." Influenced by Picasso, Goya, and Velázquez, he fuses classical techniques with modern psychological intensity. His art has been exhibited internationally and is held in major collections, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum. He also gained wider recognition for creating the cover art for Kanye West's *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* (2010).

### **2008-2018**

The Top 30 best-selling works by Condo all stem from the same decade, 2008-2018, underlining a clear market preference for these years. The irrefutable pole-position of works from 2008-2018 also reflects in the significantly high sell-through rate: Over 84% of works from this decade sell when offered at auction, compared to a 78% sell through rate for Condo's entire market.

Interestingly, the auction record for a work by Condo ('Force Field' from 2010) was made in July 2020 showing the crisis resilience of Condo's market despite global insecurity amid the pandemic.

### **Oil on canvas**

In the works on paper category the prevalence for 2008-2018 works persists and even intensifies: here the sell through rate for works on paper from this decade rises to 90% at auction and highlights its market appeal. The record for a Condo work on paper lies at 852'500 USD, namely from 2008, and also all other Top 14 lots stem from the famed decade. Finally, over 83% of comparable works on paper to the present piece sell above their high estimate and advocate for this investment case.

### **Abstract head**

The present work is a prime example of Condo's later "Abstract Head" paintings from the last two decades and shows a fascinating evolution of his earlier work, while retaining his unique approach to psychological cubism. In comparison to his first "Abstract Head" works from the 1980s, his later pieces lean even further into color, abstraction, and emotional distortion, but with added layers of complexity and playfulness. The present work exemplifies Condo's typical style that combines elements of cubism, surrealism, and expressionism, where human heads and figures are fragmented or distorted. The exaggerated proportions and disjointed features aim to evoke intense feelings and reactions and are contrasted by the soft color palette of mostly pastel tones that add another layer of emotion to the effect of the work on the beholder. This "Abstract Head" is the pair to another work, "Abstract Face (2)", which sold for 516'600 USD at Christie's New York in 2023.

(Sources: Artemundi 2025, Artprice 2025)