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# Houston Museum's Vaunted Art Auction Goes Virtual — Buying Art is Easier Than Ever With New Era CAMH Auction

A PaperCity Video Exclusive

BY CATHERINE D. ANSPON // 06.24.20



*Houston artist Dana Frankfort, a Yale MFA grad, Skowhegan School resident, and MFAH Core Fellow, paints adroit text-based abstractions. Up for acquisition, "And and," 2020. (Courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston)*

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**W**hen a global pandemic forces the cancellation of a museum's largest fundraiser, how does the art space go on?

In the case of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, a vaunted 70-plus year old institution — one of America's oldest devoted to advancing the dialogue of art of our times — the answer was going to a Plan A.

As in the CAMH Auction, always a component of the museum's spring soirée — CAMH Gala — now becomes the main attraction when the planned April party became a victim of the coronavirus-addled times.

This summer's silver lining: As you read this, the 2020 CAMH Auction has been reconfigured digitally and is in full sway online — and there's still time for an acquisition, from now through this Saturday, June 27 at 9 pm Central Standard Time.

Recent CAMH director hire Hesse McGraw tells *PaperCity*: “We are thrilled to bring the museum's beloved annual art auction to an expanded audience this year by offering the entire event and auction online.”

McGraw then gives a shout out to the participating international, national and Texas-based artists, who stepped up (as well as their gallerists) to donate all proceeds from the auction sales to the museum.

“Now more than ever, this auction provides critical support to advance CAMH's mission,” McGraw says. “We are deeply heartened by the acts of generosity of the donating artists — we cannot thank them enough for their trust and support of CAMH in the midst of the pandemic.”



Elizabeth Murray's "Study for 'Kind of Blue,' " 2004. The late American artist's work melds abstraction and figuration, nods to cartooning, and possesses a buoyant color palette. The artist is the subject of the upcoming two-person show, "Wild Life: Elizabeth Murray & Jessi Reaves," unveiling at the CAMH when the museum reopens. (Courtesy the Murray-Holman Family Trust)

For many artists, it was personal.

Talents like Nari Ward, David McGee, The Art Guys, Derek Boshier, Joe Havel, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Melissa Miller, and currently on view Karen Navarro (in the CAMH's "Slowed and Thrown" riffing upon Houston's late music icon, DJ Screw) have all been in seminal one-person or group exhibitions at the non-collecting museum that was founded in 1948.

Invited by the CAMH curatorial team, the artists and their creations — painting, sculpture, photo-based works, and those involving craft and design — reflect racial diversity and gender inclusivity, and span multi-generations. The estimated gallery-retail price points also make it possible for beginning-to-advanced collectors to get in on the art action.

Drum roll. In alpha order, here's the prestigious list for the 2020 CAMH Auction artists: Reed Anderson, The Art Guys, Leilah Babirye, Derek Boshier, Steven Charles, Dana Frankfort, Francesca Fuchs, Joseph Havel, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Lisa Lapinski, Eva LeWitt, David McGee, Bucky Miller, Melissa Miller, Elizabeth Murray, Karen Navarro, Mike Osborne, Eduardo Portillo, Jessi Reaves, Michael Sean Kirby and Patrick Renner, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Jay Shinn, Anthony Sonnenberg, Ann Stautberg, Erick Swenson, and Nari Ward.

To make bidding seamless, the museum has tapped the platform Qtego, which updates collectors on the status of lots. If a fresh bid comes in over theirs, they will be alerted via text message, and asked if they wish to bid again. Register to bid [here](#).

**The CAMH Auction is live now through this Saturday, June 27, at 9 pm CST.**

*For more info, or to schedule a private walkthrough to view auction artworks in person, contact Beth Peré, at [gala@camh.org](mailto:gala@camh.org).*

While the CAMH remains closed for now, McGraw tells *PaperCity*: “We look forward to our re-opening [date to be announced] and to sharing the essential role of artists in the post-COVID recovery and re-imagining of our society.”