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Art Market *International*

Market revs up for racing car artist Salvatore Scarpitta

As the Italian-American's historical importance is reassessed, curators play catch-up with his later works

20TH CENTURY

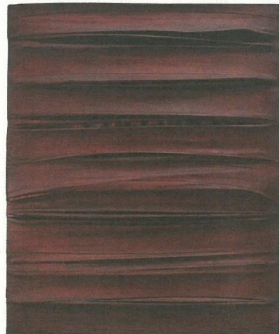
London/New York. Italian artists have been enjoying their moment in the sun, and the Italian-American Salvatore Scarpitta is the latest to emerge from the shadows, thanks to big gallery shows and an increased presence at auction this season.

Luxembourg & Dayan in New York is presenting an exhibition of works from his most sought-after period, the late-1950s to the mid-1960s. The show, which opens on 13 October (until 23 December), contains 20 mixed-media works – wall pieces made with torn

He embraced an art form that is typically American

bandages and canvas. Not all are for sale; those that are available are priced between \$300,000 and \$4m. London's M&L Fine Art was the first gallery to show his work this year, in June. Tornaabuoni Art also presented a solo stand of his work at Art Basel.

Although Scarpitta, who died in 2007, is not a household name, his work is in



Forager for Plankton (1959) could set a record for Scarpitta this month. **Right, the artist with racing cars** at Leo Castelli's gallery



important private collections in the US and Europe. "Alfred Barr bought his work and so did the Menil family, for example, but not the wider public," says Daniela Luxembourg, of Luxembourg & Dayan. "But his market is going to change this season. In 2005, the prices for his important works were in the low six figures – now he's on the catalogue cover."

Scarpitta's *Forager for Plankton* (1959) is indeed the cover lot of Sotheby's Italian sale this month (7 October). With an estimate of £1m-£1.5m, it could set a new auction record for the artist, which now stands at \$1.4m (with fees) for *The Corn Queen* (1959). Christie's also has two works in its Italian sale (6 October): a smaller bandage piece, *Isola* (Bedroom

Wall) (1958) (est. £300,000-£500,000), and *Chalice* (1979) (est. £200,000-£300,000). Provenance notes for all three cite Leo Castelli's New York gallery. The US dealer helped Scarpitta become a New York art world fixture after visiting his studio in Rome in 1958, and gave him his first show in New York the following year.

In the current market, collectors are

looking for historically proven artists. "Prices are so high for Anglo-American contemporary art – people look for value elsewhere," Luxembourg says. Scarpitta's work appears to possess a combination of old-world historicism and American market approval. Simply put, Scarpitta is still good value for money, though "the beautiful pieces are very, very rare", according to Mariolina Bassetti, who heads the Italian sale at Christie's.

But why the interest now? Michele Casamonti, the director of Tornaabuoni Art, says that "among the contributing factors are a rigorous catalogue raisonné, the rarity of his top work and its historical importance". Luigi Sansone, who wrote the catalogue in 2005, says the artist is "finally getting more attention, and rightly so". He also says that a very small number of fakes has been in circulation, but that the rigorous research he conducted with Scarpitta while he was alive, means "it's very hard to introduce them into the market".

Luxembourg believes rising interest in his bandage works will encourage people to discover the rest of his catalogue: "It was the same with Alberto Burri – first, collectors just wanted his burlap sacks, then they discovered his combustions."

The Contemporary Art Museum St Louis, Missouri, is organising a show of Scarpitta's later works, which revolved around (and included) racing cars. It is due to open in January 2018. "Scarpitta's exhibitions in the US have focused heavily on the wrapped and bandaged canvases. But with the cars, the artist embraced an art form that is typically American," says the museum's director Lisa Melandri. "His market is growing, but I feel that the museological perspective must catch up."

Ermano Rivetti

IN THE TRADE

THE AUCTION HOUSES

• **Martin Klosterfelde**, who founded the Berlin gallery Klosterfelde, has joined **Sotheby's** European Contemporary Art team as a senior director and senior specialist, based in London.

THE FAIRS

• London art fair **Art16** has announced that it will not be organising a 2017 edition but plans to relaunch early in 2018.

THE GALLERIES

• **Yares Art Projects (YAP)** will open its first New York gallery this autumn at 745 Fifth Avenue. The 5,800-sq.-ft fourth-floor space was previously the McKee Gallery.

• London's **Skarstedt Gallery** has moved from its previous location on Old Bond Street to a larger, 5,000-sq.-ft space on Bennet Street, with the Ritz Hotel as a neighbour. The space was formerly occupied by the Portland Gallery.

• **Ibid Gallery** has opened a new space in Los Angeles at 670 S Anderson Street. The 13,000-sq.-ft gallery is made up of connected warehouses converted into three exhibition spaces.

• **Olivier Malingue**, formerly of the Paris-based Malingue gallery, is opening a space in Mayfair, London, on 5 October. The gallery will focus on post-war and contemporary art.

• **Kamel Mennour** is opening a small London gallery in Mayfair this month, while **Almine Rech** opens a second, much larger space in the UK capital. Rech also launches in New York this month.

• The design gallery **Demisch Danart** has just moved its New York gallery from Chelsea to Greenwich Village, doubling its space. "Our collector base has also far more than doubled," says Suzanne Demisch, who specialises in French design dating from the mid-20th century to the 1970s and later.

• New York's **Anton Kern Gallery** is heading to Midtown. "Since construction just started yesterday, I really can't say when it will be

completed," says the architect **Markus Dochantschi**, of studioMDA, but he says it could be in November.

• London's **Seventeen Gallery** is opening a Lower East Side outpost next month. "When I saw that we could take on a space directly opposite the New Museum, the venue seemed perfect to showcase artists I admire," says the dealer **Dave Hoyland**.

Aimee Dawson, with additional reporting by **Brook Mason**



ARTIST MOVES

Sophia Contemporary Gallery in London has added its first artist estate to its roster. It now exclusively represents the estate of the Lebanese Modernist sculptor **Alfred Basbous** in the UK. London's **Carroll/Fletcher** now represents the New York-based artist **Joshua Citarella**, and **Tiwani Contemporary** in London represents the Angolan photographer **Délio Jasse**. **Dominique Lévy** in New York and London now represents the estate of **Carol Rama**. **Carlos Bunga** is now represented by New York's **Alexander and Bonin**. A.D.

Alfred Basbous, and **Joshua Citarella** in his studio

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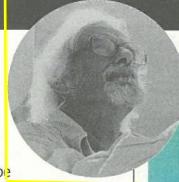
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