

50 under 50. The Next Most  
Collectible Artists  
ART + AUCTION Magazine


50  
UNDER  
50

# THE NEXT MOST COLLECTIBLE ARTISTS

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WHO AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS WILL HAVE THE STAYING POWER TO RULE THE MARKET OVER THE LONG HAUL?

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 LAST YEAR WE SET OUT ON WHAT SOME MIGHT CALL A FOOL'S ERRAND by selecting the 50 most collectible living artists. Hoping to elevate this sort of list-making beyond a parlor game, we defined the parameters and embarked on research to find those artists who have a proven record in the market and also show promise of the continuing innovation and devotion to craft that will warrant attention for decades to come. The result was a list that peered beyond the headlines.

A year is no time at all in the long game that is serious collecting. For this second outing we decided to add to the challenge by focusing on artists under the age of 50. For such a group, auction stats can be erratic, and artists may just be adding a major museum solo to their exhibition history.

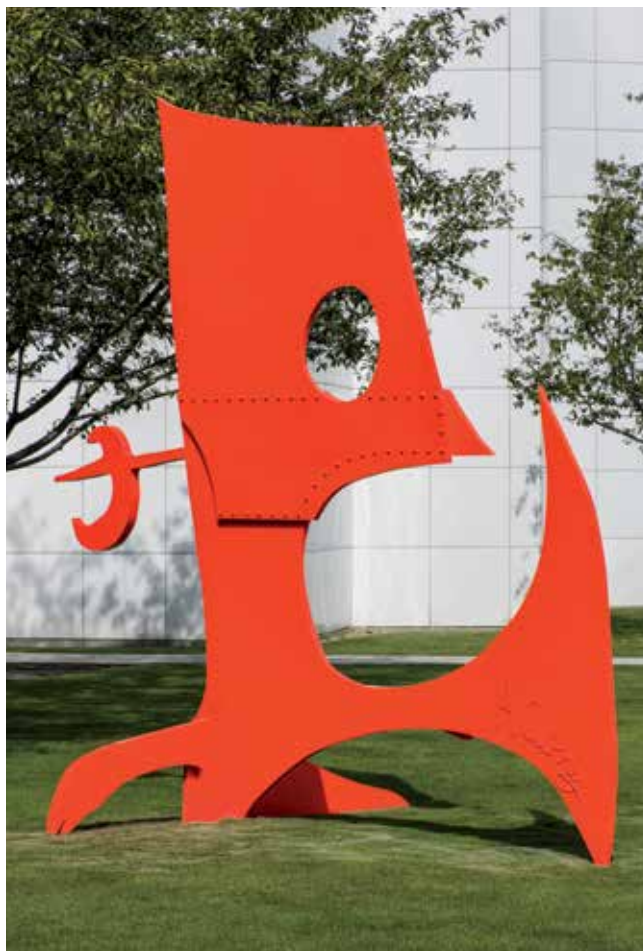
But what follows is not an "emerging" artist list in the style of many art magazines, naming favorites from the latest MFA graduating class. Most names will be familiar to readers from years of gallery shows and even awards. The vast majority among the final selections are in their 30s, because the reality is that artists are still coming into their practice through their 20s, and only after that begin to build a committed collector base. Readers will also note the preponderance of painters. In the discussions during which we hashed out the list, two reasons for this emerged. First, there is a genuine resurgence of nonrepresentational painting as artists under 50 reexamine that key modernist pursuit. Second, collectors perennially favor painting because it is understandable within an established tradition and is comparably easy to display and conserve.

Diversity is the other big trend seen in this list, in terms of geography as well as in the individual artists' practices. The language of contemporary art is global, and collectors are increasingly interested in seeing differences in dialogue. Today artists may be born in the Middle East, live in Europe, and sell to collectors in Asia and America, and our list reflects that ubiquitous internationalism. Just as pervasive, it seems, is the desire among artists to operate free of the constraints of medium. Even as recent years have seen a return to a focus on craft and the object and, sometimes, beauty, it seems that the ultimate triumph of Conceptualism has come in the form of younger generations who embrace the artist's role as that of universal creator. Photographers sculpt, sculptors bridge the divide between two and three dimensions, and painters make films. Innovation is everywhere. —THE EDITORS

# **MATT CONNORS**

For those looking for fresh takes on painting, spending some time with an exhibition of Connors's meticulously executed representations of abstraction is required. Fortunately, fans have had ample opportunity to do just that with solo shows at the Museum of Modern Art's PS1 and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in the past two years, along with his inclusion in "Painter Painter," the Walker Art Center's first survey of abstract painting in more than 10 years, up through October. Somewhat reluctant, however, to be pigeonholed as a herald of the new abstraction, Connors "has a broader interest in representation and expressiveness; the art object, how we experience it, and how it is made," says Cherry and Martin director Philip Martin, who currently sells the artist's thinly painted (almost scrubbed) canvases and perceptual constructions to L.A.-based and international collectors for prices in the range of \$5,000 to \$25,000. The gallery will also feature a freestanding three-dimensional object by Connors in its booth at Art Basel this month. Although the 2012 Guggenheim Fellow currently has no auction record, renewed interest in nonrepresentational painting will likely boost his primary market.

—DEBORAH WILK | **FALSEPROP, 2011. ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, WOOD, AND CARDBOARD.**



# **AARON CURRY**

The artist's appealingly eccentric, frequently fluorescent figures, created from flat interlocking cutouts of metal or wood, effectively transform two dimensions into three. And devoted collectors, including Donald and Mera Rubell, Rosa de la Cruz, and others from Germany, France, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S., have happily whisked these goofy-yet-brainy compositions off into their homes. Large sculptures range from \$75,000 to \$125,000 at Michael Werner Gallery, Curry's representative in New York and Berlin, and at David Kordansky, in Los Angeles, where the artist is based. Collages can be purchased for \$8,000 to \$30,000. The artist's prices at auction, evidenced by the \$75,000 sale of *One*, 2006, at Sotheby's New York this past March, remain in line with his primary market, where he continues to be supported. In May, Curry's sculpture stood alone in Werner's Art Basel Hong Kong booth, which was clad entirely in Curry-created wallpaper. The 14 large-scale aluminum pieces to be unveiled in New York's Lincoln Center courtyard this month, on view through September, will form an impressive installation of the artist's outdoor sculpture.

—DM | **DEADHEAD, 2012. PAINTED STEEL, 11½ X 13¾ X 6¾ FT.**



# **JOSE DAVILA**

Trained first as a sculptor and then as an architect, Dávila has a varied practice that stems from his investigation of urban and interior spaces. In exhibitions from Vienna to Valencia and in his galleries (which include Galería OMR, Mexico City; Figge von Rosen, Berlin; Travesía Cuatro, Madrid; and Galleria Gentili, Florence), the Guadalajara native has displayed a knack for playful geometries that expose the ways in which our built environment orders movement, as in his Joseph Albers squares reimagined in three dimensions. This inside-out approach is also seen in site-specific installations that demarcate a room's architecture and in his series of altered photographs in which well known images of artworks or artists have been removed. Works from these have been acquired by the Albright-Knox and the Colección Jumex, among others. According to Rebecca Gremmo of London's Max Wigram Gallery, where Dávila's first solo show in a U.K. gallery, "Shadow as Rumor," is currently on view through July 13, "he has had considerable success with us at various art fairs." The cutout series is among the most popular, with prices starting at \$25,000 and going up to \$100,000.

—SPH | **UNTITLED, 2008. INTERVENED SHIPPING CONTAINER, CAR PAINT, 8½ X 8 X 39½ FT.**