

Arts

The Art Market | End-of-year comings and goings; new fair for Paris; Middle Eastern specialists shut up shop; 'Mango Sashimi' on a roll at Miami. By Georgina Adam

Hello and goodbye

The end of this year has brought a lot of surprises on the art market. Foremost is the hunt for a new head for Sotheby's, plus a restructuring at Christie's after the auction house owner François Pinault's trusted "right hand woman" Patricia Barbizet took over as chief executive following Steven

Murphy's sudden departure this month. Barbizet has already made changes: its US president Doug Woodham is leaving, while Christie's top auctioneer Jussi Pylkkänen is named "global president" and Stephen Brooks, currently chief operating officer, becomes "global COO". Many think Barbizet, who has other roles elsewhere, may not stay in her position for long, so it is possible that Christie's will be searching for a new head as well.

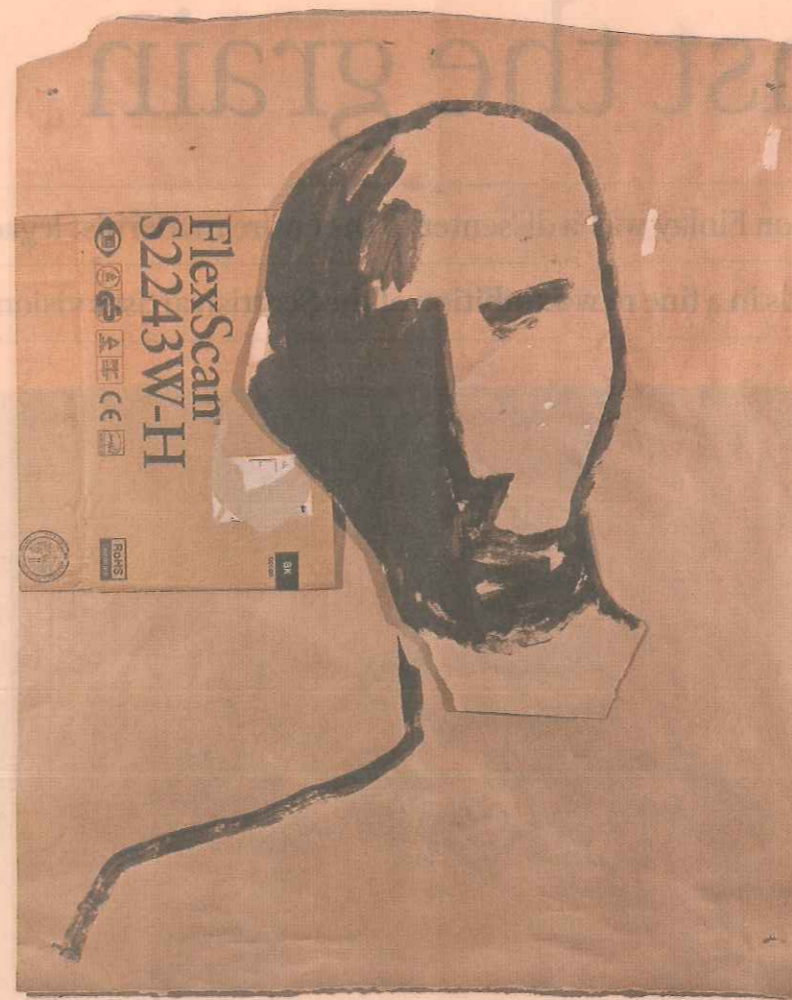
Phillips, meanwhile, has made a flurry of notable hires: the popular Matthew Carey-Williams, formerly with White Cube, has been recruited as deputy chairman, Europe and Asia. Note his title, which anchors the firm's determination to push into Asia in the coming year. Phillips has also bagged Lauren Gioia from Sotheby's as



worldwide head of communications for the firm from next summer. Finally, Damien Whitmore, formerly director of public affairs and programming at the Victoria and Albert Museum, becomes creative director at the auction house.

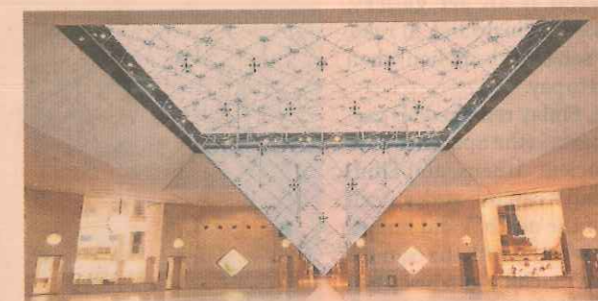
In another significant hire, former Christie's specialist Guy Jennings has been nabbed by Qatar Museums as director of collections and acquisitions. Jennings has been buying for Qatar for a number of years but this formalises his role. According to The New York Times, he is moving to Doha in September. Much speculation has swirled around the art-buying policy of Qatar since the change of emir last year but the recruitment of Jennings implies that the country intends to acquire art, though not perhaps at the frenetic pace we had seen in previous years.

Changes are also afoot in the fair world – Julien Frydman, director of Paris Photo and its Los Angeles offshoot, is leaving his post, meaning the search is on for his replacement; meanwhile, Art Basel has still not announced a new director for its Hong Kong offshoot, due to start in March.



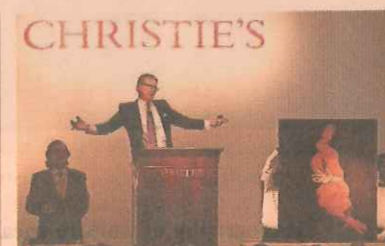
one of the city's biggest art spaces. "It was a great opportunity for my projects but was unmanageable and took all my time," she says. Heller is now looking for a space on Madison Avenue as well as keeping her existing Chelsea gallery.

Polish art is getting ever greater exposure and, next month, L'étrangère, a new gallery founded by Polish-born Joanna Mackiewicz-Gemes, opens its doors in London's Shoreditch. "The name of the gallery refers to my own identity as a foreigner but also to the Camusian notion of displacement within one's own country," she says. She opens with a show by Polish painter Marek Szczesny but Mackiewicz-Gemes says she will have a broad programme of artists of all ages. "It will not be exclusively Polish but I do want to explore relationships between their work and other artists –



In Paris the Syndicat National des Antiquaires (SNA), the trade body that organises the Biennale des Antiquaires, has announced a new art-and-antiques fair to be held annually in the Carrousel du Louvre, starting on April 1 2015. No doubt roused by its new president Dominique Chevalier (former president Christian Deydier was sacked this year amid much controversy), the foggish SNA is now shaking things up: the 80 exhibitors will be chosen by drawing lots (no, that's not an April Fool's joke) and the fair will mix all specialities, from contemporary to ancient art. The new event will be less grand than the Biennale, with price points starting at €1,000.

In the dealer world, Rose Issa, the specialist in Middle Eastern art, has just closed her gallery in New Portland Street, London. "The block I am in is being revamped, so I had to go, but I am seriously considering what is the



purpose of having an art gallery today," she says. "I want to focus more on publications, documentaries and special projects."

Issa acknowledges that times are tough for anyone selling Middle Eastern art. "The instability and chaos is inevitably affecting buyers in the whole region, and bank sanctions are having a major impact on Iranian collectors in Dubai," she says.

Meanwhile, Leila Heller in New York, also a specialist in Middle Eastern art, has closed her huge 57th Street gallery,

Clockwise from top: 'Emigrant 2' by Polish artist Marek Szczesny; art fair venue Carrousel du Louvre; Jussi Pylkkänen, Christie's global president; Christie's chief executive Patricia Barbizet with its owner François Pinault in Paris last month — Getty Images; Alamy, Hindustan Times

the contrasts, the similarities." The philosophical, political and social aspects of identity are the ideas she wants to tap into.

And finally... As well as FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), there's also FOAS – Fear Of Appearing Stupid. At least, that's what one must conclude from a prank played by the US-based Complex Media site, which targets "twentysomething males". It recently scrambled a reporter to Miami Beach Art Week to interview visitors about a fictitious artist called "Mango Sashimi". Even the absurd name didn't ring alarm bells among the interviewees, who claimed not only to love his work – "It's very influential"; "The spray thing is really cool" – but in one case also to be going to buy a "Sashimi" that very day.

Georgina Adam is art market editor-at-large of The Art Newspaper