

TRUE COLORS

Inside the MoMA Succession Sweepstakes

One of the world's preeminent art institutions is in need of a new director. So who are the early contenders to land perhaps the plumpest perch in all of museum-dom? Plus more in this week's column.



BY NATE FREEMAN

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

wealthiest museum board on earth, by combined net worths. The current chair, **Marie-Josée Kravis**, helped MoMA PS1 board chair **Sarah Arison** to be president, an explicit overture to a newer generation of arts patrons. Arison, the 39-year-old granddaughter of the founder of Carnival Cruise Line, is perhaps the city's greatest arts philanthropist under 40. The old guard of Kravis and the new guard of Arison will work together with the board to find a consensus candidate. Former board chair **Agnes Gund**'s legacy as a longtime mentor to Arison lingers as well.

At dinner, one attendee said it was "Rondeau's job to lose." Another wondered about the influence of one of the board's newest members, LVMH heir **Alexandre Arnault**, amid all this.

Regardless, the board is deliberating, and the rest of us will have to keep guessing until the cardinals send white smoke out of the Vatican of high culture on 53rd Street.

The Rundown

Your crib sheet for the comings and goings in the art world this week and beyond...

...Here's a fun anecdote that got left out of my [story from this week about the Artists for Kamala fundraiser](#). I mentioned that communications exec **Andrea Schwan** is on the advisory committee. I didn't explain how she secured a consignment from none other than... **Leonardo DiCaprio**? Earlier this month, Schwan went to an intimate dinner to celebrate **Firelei Báez**'s opening at Hauser & Wirth in LA,

held in the garden area near gallery restaurant Manuela. She found herself seated with the art adviser **Ralph DeLuca** and DiCaprio, who is one of DeLuca's clients and close friends—DiCaprio, as we all know, is a massive collector of contemporary art, fossils, comics, you name it. The three of them stayed long after dinner talking, and as soon as DiCaprio heard about the Artists for Kamala sale, he immediately offered to help, and then he had the idea to consign a work from his collection to be sold, with all the proceeds going to the campaign. He really meant it—and that's how a **Josh Smith** painting called *Demme*, from the collection of Leonardo DiCaprio, ended up in the Artists for Kamala sale.

...Speaking of online auctions, there are some real gems in the on-sale collection of the late curator Kasper König, who passed away in August. Remarkably, nearly 100 lots are currently bidding at 500 euros or lower. My personal [favorite](#) is a pencil-on-paper self-portrait doodle by Richard Serra. Under the rendering of his own face, Serra wrote, "Don't exclude too much." It's got six bids and is currently at 300 euros.

...Prada co-creative director **Raf Simons** put a bunch of his rare furniture and design objects for sale [through the Italian auction site Piasa](#)—though, from what I know about his [pretty sick art collection](#), this is barely a dent in his holdings. Still, there were some nice editioned Picasso ceramics and this extremely chic Nakashima chaise, plus a Persian floor lamp by Jean Royère that was estimated to sell for 90,000 euros—but the Raf-heads went nuts on this one and [pushed the bidding up to 221,000 euros](#).

...A highlight from the November sales in New York will certainly be the estate of interior designer Mica Ertegun, wife of music executive Ahmet

Ertegun, on sale at Christie's. Included are a number of topflight Magritte paintings, such as one from the Empire of Light series, which contains a dozen or so works, most of which are in museum collections. It's estimated to sell for more than \$95 million. I had *thought* that George W. S. Trow mentioned the Ertegun-owned Magritttes in his [legendary *New Yorker* profile of Ahmet](#). Turns out that he actually didn't, but there is a fascinating party report from **Mick Jagger's** 29th birthday on the roof of the St. Regis.

...Looking ahead to Frieze Week in London, one highly anticipated bash is the party that Loewe and its creative director, **Jonathan Anderson**, are throwing for Studio Voltaire, to celebrate the 30th birthday of the beloved south London nonprofit housed in a former Methodist church. Since 2021, [the Loewe Foundation / Studio Voltaire Award](#) has given seven artists a two-year residency at the SV HQ, and an international artist a one-year residency that comes with a 25,000-British-pound stipend for living costs.

...In addition to fouling up traffic in Midtown, President Biden managed to do some museumgoing while in Manhattan. On Wednesday, he hosted the [annual reception for the General Assembly at the Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), with string quartets and uniformed guards greeting guests who arrived on the red carpet. He [addressed the crowd](#) in the European Sculpture Court, giving a special thanks to attendee **Michael Bloomberg**, who gave \$20 million to the president's campaign in June. "I should start off by saying we owe a special thanks tonight to Mayor Bloomberg," Biden said. "He's not the mayor right now, but he's still the mayor."

Have a tip? Drop me a line at nate_freeman@condenast.com. And make sure you [subscribe to True Colors](#) to receive Nate Freeman's art-world dispatch in your inbox every week.

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