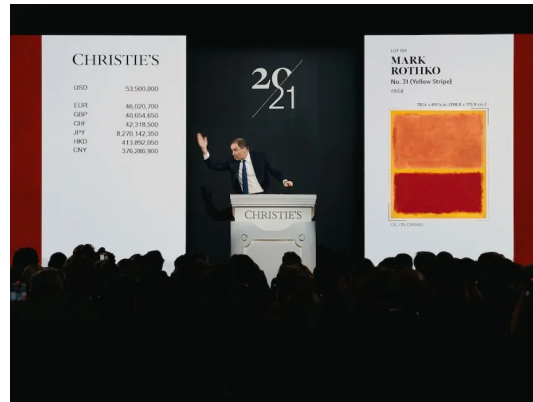


Christie's Opens Marquee Auction Week with Double-Header Sale Totaling \$690 M. Amid Deep Bidding



Auctioneer Adrien Meyer sells the top lot of the Collection of Robert F. and Patricia G Ross Weis, Mark Rothko's "No. 31 (Yellow Stripe)" for \$62,160,000 with fees. *Courtesy Christie'snormal*

On Monday night, Christie's kicked off its fall marquee auctions with back-to-back auctions in a packed house full of collectors and advisers ready to bid. The sale, which saw at least a dozen lots spark bidding wars, brought in a combined \$690 million with fees. That total was well above the pre-sale low estimate of \$534.7 million, though it did come in just over 5 percent below the pre-sale high of \$731.5 million.

The Robert and Patricia Ross Weis sale, composed of 18 lots from the collection of the late former chairman of the supermarket chain Weis Markets, started the night with works spanning some of the 20th century's most important movements, from Cubism to Abstract Expressionism, including pieces by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, and Mark Rothko. The grouping offered on Monday was just a small, high-value amount of the Weis material Christie's is selling this week, with [more than 60 additional lots](#) still to come across several more sales.

Adviser Ralph DeLuca (who is also Sotheby's vice chairman for popular culture), seated near the front of the room, was at the center of several of the longest bidding wars on behalf of a client, including a seven-minute contest between him, Christie's CEO Bonnie Brennan, and deputy chairman Conor Jordan for Henri Matisse's 1937 painting *Figure et bouquet (Tête ocre)*. The work from the Weis collection ended up going to Jordan's bidder for \$32.3 million on a \$27.5 million high estimate. (All prices are with buyer's premium unless otherwise noted.)





Lot 3A, Henri Matisse's 1937 painting *Figure et bouquet (Tête ocre)*. It sold for \$32.3 million with fees.

DeLuca got his revenge just a few lots later, beating out Alex Rotter, Christie's global president, for the Max Ernst chess sculpture *Le roi jouant avec la reine* (1944/61) for \$20.2 million on a \$18 million high estimate. (For reference, [another edition](#) of that work sold for \$24.4 million at Christie's Paul Allen sale in 2022.)

He also came away the victor on the most intense auction battle of the evening, for Marc Chagall's *Le songe du Roi David* (1966), from the collection of the Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art. After sparring with Rotter, senior London-based specialist Michelle McMullan, and Cyanne Chutkow, deputy chairman of Impressionist and modern art, DeLuca won the work for \$26.5 million with fees on a \$12 million high estimate.

"There was a lot of money waiting on the sidelines [before tonight]. More a lack of confidence than a lack of capital. Tonight I felt confidence has returned to art," DeLuca told *ARTnews* after the sale. DeLuca confirmed that the Ernst and the Chagall were purchased for clients. Of the Matisse, he said, "Can't win them all!"