

## Art Agency, Partners

Art Agency, Partners is a bespoke art advisory firm founded in 2014, and built upon decades of combined experience, to provide counsel to many of the world's leading art collectors and institutions on collection assessment and development, estate planning, and innovative approaches to museum giving and growth.

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### From Quotas to Data



Photo credit: Markus Spiske via Unsplash

By  Allan Schwartzman

publisher of In Other Words, co-founder of AAP & chairman of Sotheby's Global Fine Arts

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To what extent does knowledge equate to power in today's art market? The widespread use of *artnet* data about works of art previously sold at auction, for example, is both an empowering tool and a thief of courage and conviction. While more effectively equipping buyers to understand pricing, it can challenge and even paralyze the market potential of artists who do not perform well or consistently at auction. Favoring the safety of the pack, it can handicap the spirit of foresight and vision which have driven contemporary art collecting for more than a century.

For this issue, the AAP team gathered to do some intuitive forecasting for the new season. Top of my own list is the increasing importance of data and technology in shaping how we work and how the art market will evolve. With increased talk of blockchains and algorithms, it is increasingly obvious that data, advanced technologies and the programs which mobilize them could truly transform how the business of art is conducted and its capacity to sift and grow.

The Orwellian in me finds it frightening; it is not difficult to envision data becoming the enemy of art. I am already thinking about how to nurture the Resistance, to ensure space for true artistic innovation that sees fertility in failure and provides

safe havens for moldy hunches and risky experiments—and in so doing, ultimately result in artistic penicillin, genius and gold. At the same time, much of the innovation that data can make possible is thrilling, its potential only limited by our imagination in how to put it to use. “Knowledge is power” can take on a whole new meaning.

## **An Unprecedented Collaboration**

But set aside the future for a moment. The data we have right in front of us provides a fascinating insight into the ambitions and actions of our field. We are in the midst of a remarkable moment in which an increasing number of museums (though by no means all) are setting as a primary goal to collect more diversely, filling in gaps in our collective culture. In seeking to examine progress through data—where we are and how far we have to go—*In Other Words* is collaborating with *artnet News* on a three-month investigation.


Working together, [Charlotte Burns](#) (senior editor, *In Other Words*) and [Julia Halperin](#) (executive editor, *artnet News*) have gathered and analyzed a decade of data from a cross-section of American museums about the acquisition and exhibition of works by African American artists. In our 20th September issue, they will analyze what those initiatives are thus far yielding, layering the museum data with market data and the insights of museums leaders, collectors, curators, dealers, and academics they have interviewed, all providing history and nuance. This collaboration is the first of several new projects we are developing for this new school year. But, more on that later. For now, our forecasts.

## What's the Forecast?

### This Fall Season



Weather vane. Photo credit: Alamy

By  the AAP team

New York, NY

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## DIY Spirit

There has long been a [disconnect in the system](#) between thriving and struggling galleries. Now, as many dealers take survival into their own hands, the spirit of independence will become ever more important. Especially for galleries working with younger or mid-career artists, collaboration and innovation will be key.



Photo credit: Rawpixel via Unsplash

Expect more initiatives like the [Condo gallery swap](#), whereby dealers from different parts of the world trade places to open themselves and their artists up to new audiences and markets. New models are likely to appear—some radical and previously unimaginable—as dealers try increasingly resourceful ways to reanimate interest. Many others, stuck in an unsustainable past or perhaps simply tired of the fight, will close.

At the top end, experimentation is expressed differently. The largest galleries are aggressively expanding their remit, broadening the framework of what a gallery can do: from Hauser & Wirth's restaurants, hotel and education program to David Zwirner's publications and podcasts.

Meanwhile, with many of New York's most vital leading gallerists of advancing age, and with the rosters of younger mega-galleries boasting more than 60 or 70 artists each (previously, a typical gallery stable consisted of 12 or so artists), is it possible that next-generation powerhouse galleries (or different models) might burst forth? (Thus far, no challengers have succeeded.)

## Museum Moves



Klaus Biesenbach: Photo credit: Neil Rasmus/BFA/Rex/Shutterstock

Lots of museums are looking for directors and curators, and there doesn't seem to be a wealth of prime candidates to fill them. Recent moves include Klaus Biesenbach swapping coasts to become the director of LA MoCA, leaving a vacancy at MoMA PS1); Laura Hoptman making the move from curator in MoMA's painting and sculpture department to direct the Drawing Centre in SoHo); Deborah Cullen of the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University becoming the director of the Bronx Museum of the Arts; and Max Hollein, the new director of the Metropolitan Museum, who leaves unfilled the directorship of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. A new generation of museum leaders is beginning to reveal itself; it will be interesting to see who starts to reshape the agenda—and how.

On a random but related note we forecast that one noted American museum director—considered to be among the most influential of our time—will swap art for politics, possibly becoming mayor of a US city within the next few years.

## Well Endowed?

A provocative prediction, but one rooted in lots of quiet conversations with museum leaders, is that current funding models for museums aren't sustainable—something MoMA director Glenn Lowry discussed frankly earlier this year in our [In Other Words](#) podcast.



Guest Glenn Lowry with host Charlotte Burns. Photo credit: Colin Miller

He said: “It doesn't matter whether you're the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art or any number of other institutions in this country. We're all under-capitalized. You can look at the Met's multi-billion-dollar endowment, and that only tells you that they've raised a lot of money for their endowment. But they're still under-capitalized. They still struggle to find funding, as we do at the Museum of Modern Art. No one is unique here, in that respect, except perhaps an institution like the [Getty](#).”

As museums grapple with funding issues, expect more public (and closed-door) dispute about deaccessioning policies, which are currently sacrosanct. Lowry's podcast stirred debate when he suggested that museums “should deaccession rigorously in order to either acquire more important works of art or build endowments to support programming”. He said: “It doesn't benefit anyone when there are millions of works of art that are languishing in storage... We would be far better off allowing others who might enjoy them to have those works of art, but even more importantly, converting that [resource] to... support public programs, exhibitions, publications.”

## New Narratives



Emma Amos, *Flower Sniffer*, (1966) © 2018 Emma Amos/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. Image courtesy the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York. Collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art

Some of the strongest shows we have seen this past season were in the realm of abstraction, by artists with some history behind them, such as [Cecily Brown](#). Consider too [Frank Bowling](#), whose work had previously not been elevated to the level it deserved, which it now seems destined to reach.

People who were not given a voice have stories to tell. Many artists from communities that have historically been sidelined are now making their presence felt. Most of the vital contemporary art today is narrative in nature, particularly that by younger African American artists.

We are now able to go back in time and reconsider the work of leading artists from earlier generations, such as Emma Amos and Faith Ringgold, for whom narrative did not once have as meaningful a frame of reference.

## Hardy Biennials

We had a lot of feedback about the biennials article we published this summer, "[Blame the doctor, not the disease](#)"; it is clearly a sensitive subject. One prevalent theme emerged—a shunning of authoritative visions.

Whether this manifests in letting the art speak for itself (opening tomorrow to the public, the Bienal de São Paulo in which curator [Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro](#) is allowing the artists and their work shape the display) or through collaborations or events with loosely defined themes, many curators are choosing to cede tight control in favor of less carefully constructed visions—after all, these are shows of contemporary art, and that’s rarely easy to wrap up in a bow.

## Auction Action



Kerry James Marshall in front of his painting *Untitled (Studio)* (2014). The artist's 1997 work *Past Times* sold at Sotheby's New York May 2018 contemporary evening auction for \$21.1m. Photo credit: Alamy

Because there is so much competition for the few bona fide masterpieces that come to market, expect them even more to become vehicles for prestige than profit. When supply slows down, so usually does demand. Expect to see more focus by auction houses on works in the \$1m to \$8m range rather than \$80m to \$120m.

There are other shifts taking place at public auctions, too. Unlike seasons of the past decade, in which the early lots in evening sales often included works by young artists—which in the past 10 years or so also tended to result in a quick rise followed by a sharper crash and burn—we are now seeing that many of these early lots deserve broad recognition, whether by artists such as Philippe Parreno, Kerry James Marshall, Laura Owens, or Njideka Akunyili Crosby. Buyers are becoming more conservative in their speculation: expect more of this. And that's a good thing!

## Small Can Be Beautiful

Until a couple of years ago a majority of collectors seemed to think that bigger was better: those were the works that sold fastest and for which there was greatest demand. Now more collectors, shorter on wall space, are recognizing that biggest isn't always best.

## Wider World

Certain established art centers are now looking a little less, well, interesting. Meanwhile, there are places not commonly on the list of major hubs to which one could travel at almost any time in the year and be sure to see great exhibitions.



Installation view of *Fonti di energia, soffitto al neon per "Italia 61", a Torino,, (1961/2017)* as part of "Lucio Fontana: Ambienti/Environments" at the Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, in Milan, Italy (2017-18). Photo credit: Luca Bruno/AP/Rex/Shutterstock

Top of the list: Milan. The Palazzo Reale, the Fondazione Prada and the Pirelli Hangar Bicocca are three major venues staging ambitious shows year-round. The Middle East continues its ascendance: from Abu Dhabi to Sharjah there is increasing interest in artists from this region.

Closer to home, Detroit is increasingly a magnet for artists, while Mexico City remains as vibrant as ever (not just in art but also in design, food, and architecture). South Africa and Seoul are becoming ever more interesting as cultural destinations.

## Trading Places

We wrote in January about the [fragmentation of the geographic gallery hubs](#), as dealers defected from areas including Chelsea and the Lower East Side while others have doubled down. The sense of dispersal noted at the beginning of the year was a prelude to what we're now seeing happening with greater momentum. This is a potentially exciting moment of experimentation on several fronts, with location being just one factor. Such repositioning is not without risk: business has not been so great for some who have migrated; a few have sadly closed.

## Fair Exchange

We have entered the beginning of a rocky period for art fairs. While previous years have been characterized by expansion, we are now witnessing contraction (many dealers have been openly complaining about falling sales and are reducing the number of fairs they will partake in). Expect flatter shoes as collectors dress less to impress.



Season of flats. Photo credit: Wayne Tippetts/Rex/Shutterstock

While some more established fairs might face challenges, other newcomers or more niche events could seize an opportunity to satisfy dealer and buyer desire for distinct experiences. Geographic shifts are taking place, too, as power begins to move: Hong Kong now seems more energetic than several of the European and American destinations.

## Tighter and Tougher

Supply is only becoming tighter and tougher. The next phase of the art market depends on what businesses do to combat that.

## Data Days

Tech will play an increasingly important role in the sourcing and selling of art, while data analysis will become even more significant in defining value (at the same time, it will never fully displace connoisseurship: not all five-foot-square white paintings by Robert Ryman, for example, are created equal). Data will also change the stories we tell: look to our upcoming collaboration with artnet News —a major piece of research which will be published on 20 September.



## America Great Again!

### A French Photo Festival Takes on the US



Raymond Depardon, *Sioux City, Iowa*, (1968). Courtesy of Raymond Depardon/Magnum Photos

By  Christian House

freelance arts and books writer for the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph

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Arles is to photography what Cannes is to film. Since 1970 this Provençal city has hosted a world-class photography festival, [Les Rencontres de la Photographie](#), and, this summer, a group of shows collectively titled “America Great Again!” looks at the US through the lenses of five foreign-born photographers. Some are famous—Robert Frank, Raymond Depardon—others, such as Laura Henno, are emerging talents. All show America in a sober light.

## Alone, Together



Raymond Depardon, *Manhattan*, New York (1981). Courtesy Raymond Depardon/Magnum Photos.

As his Parisian contemporaries were covering the student riots of 1968, French photographer Raymond Depardon was in Chicago taking photographs of anti-Vietnam protesters. But the pictures by Depardon on view in Arles ("[Depardon USA, 1968-1999](#)", until 23 September) largely focus on the America of the early 1980s, when he was sending pictures back to the French newspaper *Libération*. He photographed pedestrians on Manhattan sidewalks, consumed by their thoughts or their newspaper, scowling and suspicious of passers-by. These figures are alone, together. In White Sands, New Mexico, he finds a family eats in a drive-in picnic shelter—one party, one car, one bench. It shows no society, only the nuclear family in isolation. In Colorado, a diner eats on his own, casting a wary eye at an old man in a hat: it's an image of distrust across the years. In the background a neon sign reads: "Home-made chilli". But in Depardon's pictures we see a country of roads, not homes.

## Whitewashed or Shimmering



Paul Graham, *New Orleans*, from the *a shimmer of possibility* series (2003-06). Courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York; Carlier | Gebauer, Berlin; Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London

In the late 1990s and early 2000s English photographer Paul Graham completed three projects in America, brought together in Arles as *"The Whiteness of the Whale"* (2 July-26 August 2018). The exhibition's curator emphasizes Graham's interest in "racial and social inequality, the texture of everyday life, and the nature of sight, perception, and photography itself". His large-format prints of the less salubrious streets in New York are often deliberately over-exposed. This bleached—or whitewashed—palette references racial tension but also highlights the elemental harshness, the sun beating down on those living on the streets.

Graham blends a jagged *vérité* with artistic allusions. This is street photography with an angle. Neighborhood corners become loitering grounds for the hopeless. Sequences of photographs are taken of the same spot, highlighting the repetition in urban life and the different experiences—and options—of citizens. Graham uses consecutive frames to highlight social schisms. And yet he remains positive that his images also capture "a shimmer of possibility".

## A Frank Look



Robert Frank, *New York City*, (1951-55). Collection Fotostiftung Schweiz, Winterthur. Gift of the artist

Few photographers are as synonymous with America as Robert Frank; the writer Jack Kerouac celebrated “the humour, the sadness, the EVERYTHING-ness and American-ness” of his pictures. But Frank was born in Switzerland in 1924, where he began taking pictures during the Second World War. He arrived in New York in his early 20s, taking commissions for *Harper's Bazaar*, but continued to travel overseas on assignments. The Arles show, “*Sidelines*” (until 23 September), brings together many works that are little known, taken both in and outside of America during the post-war years.

In Europe, Frank snapped solitary chairs in Parisian parks and horse-drawn carts on cobbles. In London, he spotted top-hatted figures in the City. The tone is tranquil. But in America the volume and tension is turned up: cars barrel down streets in New York; aging cowboys cluster around bars in New Mexico like work horses at a water trough; a snapshot taken at a Detroit bus stop hints at the unremarkable nature of racial division. He photographs a hard land.

## Off-Grid Humanity



Laura Henno, *Ethan*, Slab City USA, (2017). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire

In Slab City, French photographer Laura Henno found a pocket of America that is lost and raw. This makeshift camp in the Sonoran Desert in California is home to some 150 permanent residents, while several thousand come for the winter. The slabs in the name refer to the ruined remnants of a 1940s Marine Corps barracks, around which people have set up lean-tos and caravans. The site has no running water or electricity. Henno's bittersweet photographs in "[Redemption](#)" (2 July-26 August 2018) are humanistic and non-judgmental. Her subjects—living off-grid in feral conditions—are pictured within the context of a community, albeit an unlikely one. They are all named and photographed with a painterly sensibility: Connie in the rosy light of a shack doorway; Annie asleep on an abandoned sofa, Rubenesque and peaceful; Raven and Michael sitting proudly in front of their broken-down bus. Henno's Slab City is precarious, playful, desperate and beautiful in equal measure.

## Contradictions and Consolations



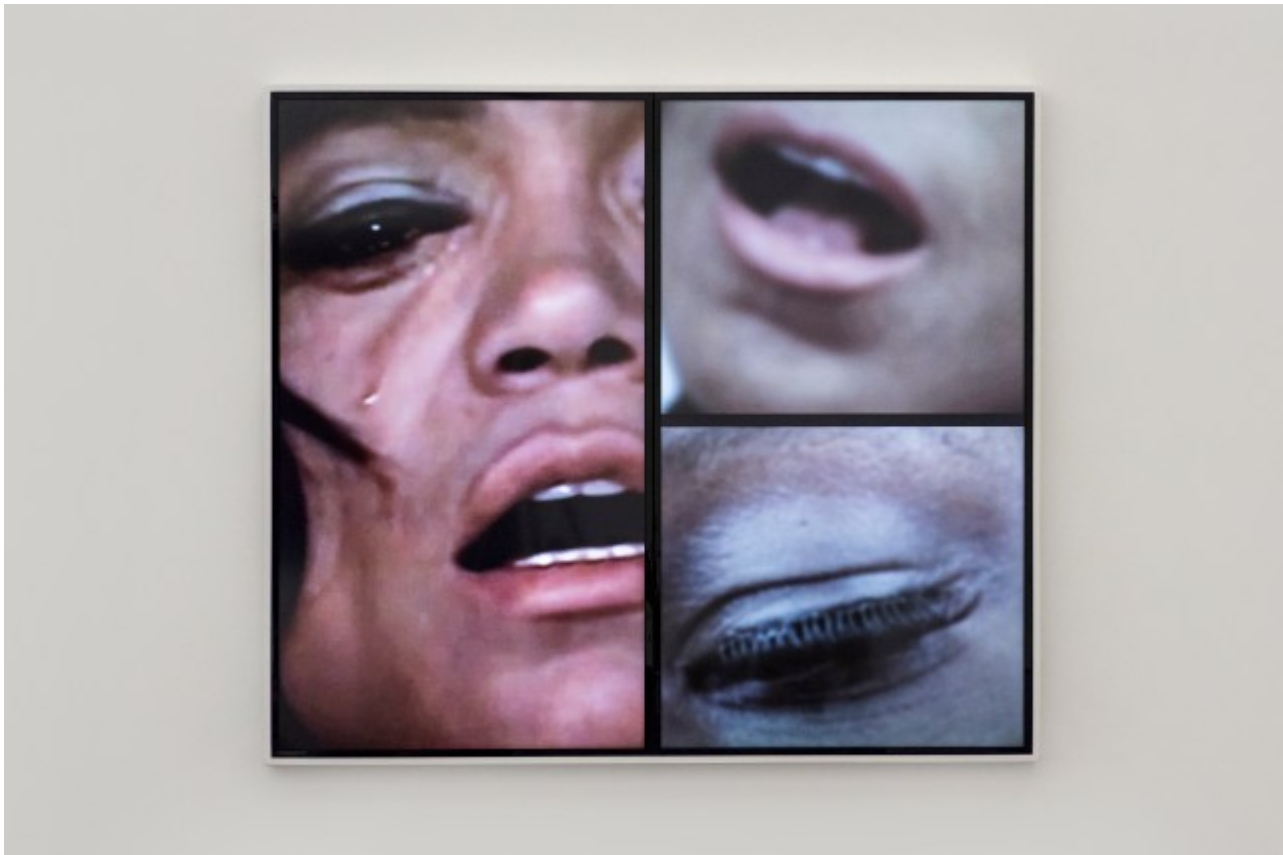
Taysir Batniji, from *Home Away from Home* (Aperture/Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, 2018) © Taysir Batniji

"I'm a physician first of all, and I'm Palestinian by birth and I'm American by choice," says Dr. Kamal Batniji of Newport Coast, California. In "My American Cousins", Palestinian photographer Taysir Batniji looks at the lives of several relatives who left Palestine for America in the 1960s. He photographs the domestic and work environments of cousins who became doctors in California and deli owners in Florida, pictures that form part of a larger presentation entitled "[Gaza to America: Home Away From Home](#)" (until 23 September). Batniji has a fine eye for an illuminating detail: the handgun behind the deli counter; a tray of mint tea; the joy of feeding birds on the beach; a Reagan/Bush 1984 campaign hat. His photographs record a small family diaspora and all the contradictions and consolations inherent in émigré life. They illuminate, notes Batniji, the "dislocation between the past that haunts us and the present that inhabits us". It is his cousin Kamal's "choice" that reverberates through the five exhibitions that make up "America Great Again!": the choice to be American and the perseverance and endurance it can often require.

\**Les Recontres de la Photographie* is on in Arles until 23 September

## Angelitos Negros

### The Must-See Show in New York



Installation view of Mickalene Thomas, *Angelitos Negros* (2016) at the International Center of Photography. Courtesy ICP

By  Christian Viveros-Fauné

art and culture critic

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Once upon a time, women were not artists but muses, the word in Greek mythology for the female deities who inspired the creation of works of arts and sciences. Today, the term still applies overwhelmingly to white women who have served to inspire straight male artists throughout history. For the artist [Mickalene Thomas](#) the term is neither conventional nor attached to the male gaze. Instead, her muses are active collaborators—models, friends, girlfriends, family members and other artists, many of them black and LGBTQ.

Take Thomas's genre-busting contribution to the [International Center of Photography Museum's](#) portrait exhibition "[Multiply, Identify, Her](#)"— a show that sought to visualize "selfhood as manifold" by presenting works that have been created by an intergenerational group of women artists who "challenge patriarchal ways of looking that define narrowly while presuming broadly" (curated by Marina Chao, which recently closed on 2 September). While the exhibition included strong pieces by artists including [Roni Horn](#), [Wangechi Mutu](#) and [Lorna Simpson](#), Thomas's soaring eight-channel video mounted on four screens, *Angelitos Negros* (2016), was clearly best-in-show.

**This once anti-racist hymn is now a triumph of lip-synch kitsch and a pointed rebuke to the bigotry of America's current cultural politics**

A piece of time-traveling, cross-disciplinary, videotaped karaoke that combines [Eartha Kitt's English-language rendition](#) of

the popular Latin-American song *Angelitos Negros* with re-performances by the artist and two of her muses (one is the artist's partner, the art advisor Racquel Chevremont, the other is not named), Thomas's multi-layered version updates a largely forgotten ditty with urgent new meanings. Once hailed as an anti-racist hymn, Thomas's choral video work turns Kitt's theatrical interpretation of the 1942 ballad into a #MeToo anthem, a celebration of otherness, a triumph of lip-synch kitsch and a pointed rebuke to the bigotry of America's current cultural politics.

Fittingly, the song Thomas samples also contains multitudes. First penned as a poem by the Venezuelan bard Andrés Eloy Blanco which was set to music by Manuel Alvarez Renteria, it was later popularized by the Cuban singer Antonio Machín and featured in a 1948 film starring the Mexican actor Pedro Infante. The song has been adapted by interpreters as varied as Celia Cruz, Chavela Vargas, Buddy Richard, Roberta Flack and Cat Power. These artists and others have intoned lyrics that demand to know why churches only display images of white angels, why "painters painting in our time" don't remedy these narrow-minded representations and, crucially—from the vantage point of the history of art and religion—how we "know our Lord was white"?

Thomas's installation also implores painters and artists of all stripes to "paint" themselves into a less xenophobic present. By integrating footage of Kitt's performance with that of herself, Chevremont and a third muse, Thomas mirrors, updates and actively reinterprets Kitt's gestures and emotions. When Kitt sings, her fellow interpreters trill along; when she tears up, they do too, with differing depths of feeling. Repeated, split and combined across four screens, the women's images are collaged together, remixing their identities, desires and histories. As an artwork centered on identity, *Angelitos Negros* is all about multiplicity. Its swooning, intertwined images embody the words of feminist critic Gayatri Spivak: "One is not just one thing."



## Fake News

### Artoon



By Pablo Helguera

By Pablo Helguera

artist

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