

MARKET REVIEW

February's Impressionist and Modern sales in London saw German expressionists take their turn to break records. Meanwhile, the inaugural Art and Antiques Dubai fair got off to a good start and Banksy did unexpectedly well in New York.

Dubai was once familiar to the art and antiquities trade as a place where one bought works of art rather than sold them. These days the reverse is true, with the contemporary Art Dubai now in its second year and Houghton International Fairs staging the



5 *Concetto Spaziale/La Fine di Dio* by Lucio Fontana (1899-1968), 1963. Waterpaint, oil and glitter on canvas, ht 123 cm. Sotheby's, London, Property from a Private European Collection (5 February). £10.32m

6 *Ran/Rin – Passion/Dispassion* by Maio Motoko (b. 1952), 2007. Gold foil antique fabric, sumi, gofun and soil. 401 x 180 cm. Sold by Lesley Kehoe at Art and Antiques Dubai (21-24 February)

Emirates' first high-quality art and antiques fair. The inaugural Art and Antiques Dubai, held at the Madinat Arena, 21-24 February, was a fascinating affair, not least because none of the 41 international exhibitors knew quite what to expect. A big draw was the Mathaf Gallery, Orientalist specialists who have been doing business in the region for almost

30 years; it sold around 10 pictures, with Franz Wilhelm Odermark's 1894 *Mosque of Sultan Hassan, Cairo* being one of a group of items snapped up on the opening night and transported off by a princely private plane the following day.

Indeed, the new fair was surprisingly well attended by members – or representatives – of royal or prominent families, not only from the UAE but also Saudi Arabia, Oman, Brunei and Kuwait. Expatriates of various nationalities also proved enthusiastic. Significant sales were rare, although Koopman, for instance, sold a royal silver-gilt tray by Joseph Preedy of 1802, a gift from George III to a godson, the Duke of Dorset, and Lesley Kehoe of Australia sold a striking contemporary Japanese screen by Maio Motoko, *Passion/Dispassion*, a lustrous surge with antique fabric remnants set against gold foil (Fig. 6). (Maison Gerard also sold a contemporary white plaster and resin screen designed by Marc Bankowsky.) Most of the sales were for pieces priced up to \$100,000. The Ayyam Gallery of Damascus did well with contemporary Syrian art, as did Samina with Indian jewellery and Georg Jensen silver specialist Alastair Crawford also sold to various residents.

Significantly, a number of dealers reported that they had made extremely important contacts, not least English furniture specialists Ronald Philips, the Metal Gallery and Maison Gerard. The latter met a major Dubai-based Indian collector who arranged to fly to Paris to view a fabulous Leleu cabinet priced at over \$500,000. The fair attracted an audience that, while not large, seemed interested and intelligent, and one suspects that it is an event that will go from strength to strength.

