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# Object lessons: from a political work by Ayman Baalbaki to photo albums of Bonnie and Clyde

Our pick of highlights from upcoming auctions

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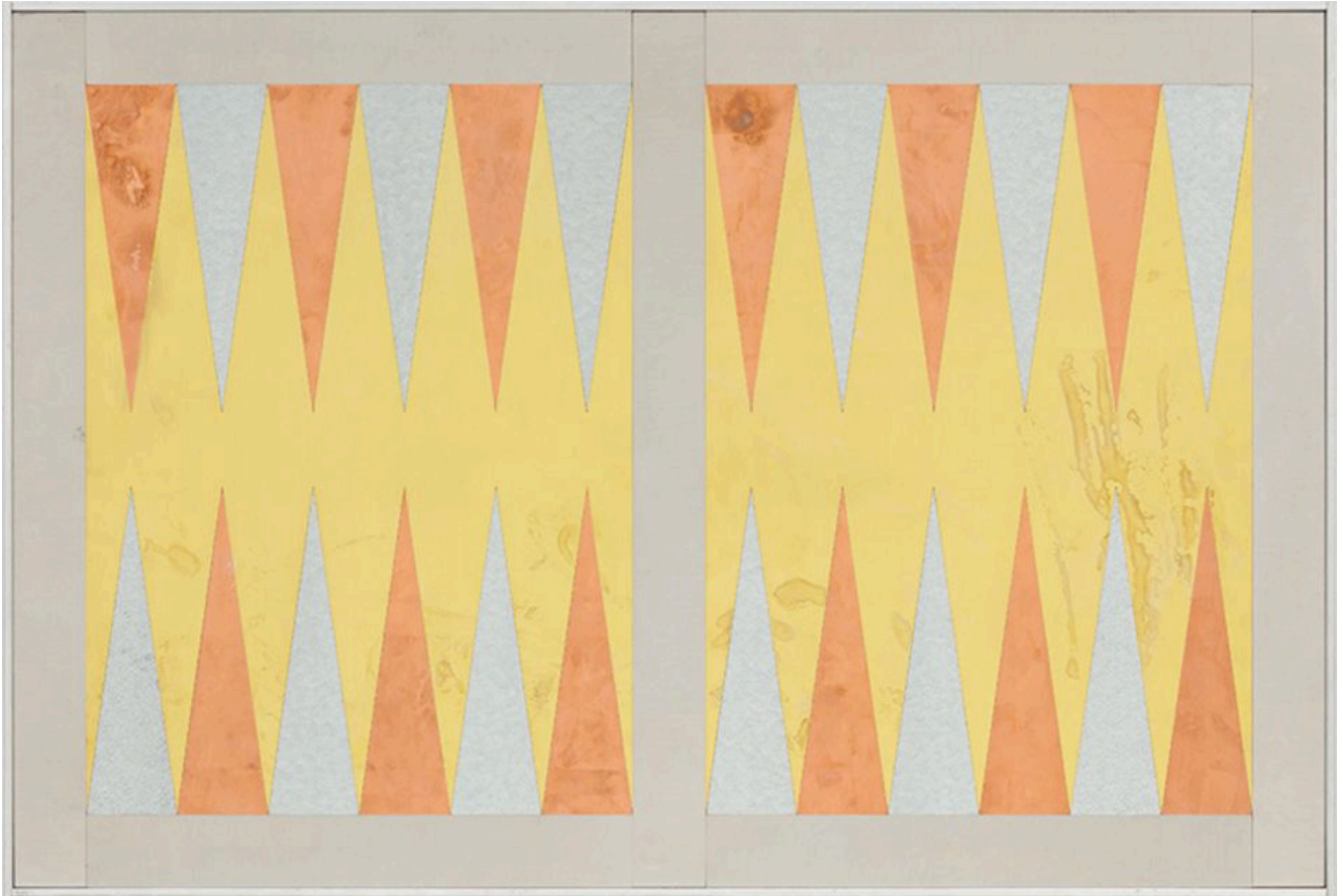


Bonhams

Ayman Baalbaki, *American Embassy* (2011). Bonhams, Modern and Contemporary Middle Eastern Art, London, 1 May. Estimate £70,000–£100,000. This visceral work by the Lebanese painter Ayman Baalbaki depicts the 1983 destruction of the American Embassy in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war—at the time, the deadliest attack on a US diplomatic



mission. Baalbaki, whose own Beirut house was destroyed by Israeli forces in 2006, often addresses the aftermath of war in his work and this painting shows the embassy razed to the ground with only the American flag unscathed. Nima Sagharchi, Bonhams' head of sales, says Baalbaki uses "the destruction of buildings as a metaphor for strife", but also "to provide a glimmer of hope". A similar Baalbaki canvas sold at Christie's Dubai in 2015 for £233,000—but perhaps that sum was a one-off.



#### Clearing Gallery

Zak Kitnick, Metal-inlaid backgammon tables (2019). Clearing Gallery at Object & Thing, New York, 3-5 May. \$13,000 for the board, \$15,000 including table and game pieces. The inaugural edition of the Brooklyn-based fair Object & Thing not only dissolves the usual hierarchy between art and design, but also tosses out the traditional fair model by showing all works included in the event as part of one large exhibition rather than in individual gallery booths. According to the fair's founder and director Abby Bangser, there is a lot of object-based work that does not get exhibited in existing commercial art contexts. Zak Kitnick's game tables "perfectly address the boundary between art and design in that the work literally can function as a painting hung on the wall or as a functional, beautifully designed backgammon table", she says. All four editions of the games are available for play during the the fair.



Christie's Images Ltd

Hans Baldung Grien, *Lot and His Daughters* (around 1530). Old Masters, Christie's New York, 1 May. Estimate \$700,000-\$900,000. Scholars have long surmised that Baldung Grien produced two versions of this composition and that both had been cut up and dispersed. In 2003, one of these wayward pieces, depicting Lot's daughter reclining nude on a bed, surfaced at auction where a cleaning revealed it was two separate fragments joined together and overpainted. The owner of the work went on a years-long search to find the missing pieces, finally acquiring the snippet that showed Lot drinking wine through a Paris-based dealer. The painting offered at Christie's has reincorporated these fragments; however, the final fourth piece is still at large.





#### Heritage Auctions

Bonnie and Clyde Photo Archive, late 1920s-40s. Americana and Political Signature Auction, Heritage, Dallas, 4 May Estimate. \$15,000. This group of five photo and scrapbook albums of the infamous Depression-era robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow contains nearly 180 photographs of the dangerous duo. Consigned directly by Barrow's nephew, the archive has never surfaced on the market prior to this. Photos included range from the intimate, such as the couple kissing and posing with their pistols, to the macabre, like the moment when the duo was killed in a police ambush in Louisiana, as seen in two photographs that show the couple's bullet-riddled bodies and car. The archive also contains newspaper clippings, such as the "Officers Who Brought Down Bonnie and Clyde," flyers for their biography and later photographs that show Barrow's home as a tourist attraction.



#### Magnin-A

Malick Sidibé, *Untitled (Musician)* (28 June 1969). Magnin-A at 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, 3-5 May. €3000-€6000. The Paris-based André Magnin gallery is presenting an exhibition of vintage West African photographs that includes this unique print by the celebrated Malian artist Malick Sidibé who captured the post-colonial climate of Mali. A leader in contemporary African art sales, Magnin organised Sidibé's first solo exhibition outside of his native country in 1995 at the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain. Decades later, this print was included in the museum's 2017 retrospective of the artist's work, who has been called "the eye of Bamako" for his piercing insight into the culture and atmosphere of the mid-century Malian capital.

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