

# Who is considered the Trophy Artists in the 21st Century?

Art has always been a symbol of luxury. While collecting art was once the purview of the super-rich, with globalization and the introduction of new media in art, the scope of the collector base has broadened. More and more young collectors are making name with their latest art purchase. Unlike the past, collecting art is now appeared to be a race in global scale, with the most expensive and rare art carrying the distinction of “trophy art”.

**TROPHY ARTIST OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

Dikancangan (2007) by I Nyoman Masriadi  
Acrylic on Canvas  
200 x 150 cm  
Photo courtesy of rogermcilroy.net

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

Abstraktes Bild (1986) by Gerard Richter  
Oil on canvas  
300.5 x 250.5cm  
Photo courtesy of Sotheby's



**Works of contemporary art produced after**

1945 has substantially increased in volume and value. According to Art Price, the French database for art, works by contemporary artists born after 1945 generated \$17.2 billion in worldwide auction sales last year, a 39 percent increase from 2012. This can primarily be attributed to the rise of “trophy art”. Trophy art is defined as art that creates such an iconic image to the general public, and has a style that is easily recognizable, it is rare and of such a high price that only a very few can actually possess it.

Now the question is what constitutes “trophy art” in the new millennium? One way to look at it is reviewing the recent world record prices achieved by living artists. In February 2015 Sotheby's sold a vibrant Abstraktes Bild by Gerhard Richter for £30.4 million (\$46.3 million), marking a new record for any living European artist. A magnificent canvas, measuring 250cm x 300cm, Abstraktes was created by layering, erasing and smudging tubes of oil paint directly on the canvas. The painting is a strict departure from the traditional abstract

expressionist works from the 1950's -1970's. Dominated by the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, Richter created a painting with no structure or order, but the effect is like a window looking to the landscape of the world. Richter's paintings of this “Abstraktes Bild” period, from large canvases to small diamonds represent his most iconic works. On the American shores, works by Jean-Michel Basquiat would be considered as the ultimate trophy. This New York graffiti artist's life ended with his tragic death in 1988 at the age of 27, but not his works. His colorful



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In this Art in Design section of Indonesia Design, **Deborah Iskandar** shares her knowledge and love for art. Regarded as a pioneer in the auction world in South East Asia, she knows how to navigate the current evolving market trends of the Art World.

After more than 20 years' experience collectively, within the art world, she founded her own advisory firm, ISA Art Advisory® in 2013. Being widely respected in Indonesia and Singapore ISA Art Advisory®, aims to aid buyers, sellers and collectors to approach the art world with ease and to build collections that will retain value over time.

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scribbled canvases stand up straight in the echelons of the art world as one of the most expensive works of art. In 2014, Basquiat’s “Dustheads” set a world record price at Christie’s for \$48,8 million. Basquiat’s work is a representation of complexities in life, he appropriated text and images, merged abstraction with figurative to create his own language in painting. It is rumored to have been acquired by a 32 year old Malaysian financier which brings it closer to South East Asia.

You are wrong if you think the trophy is limited to the two-dimensional medium. With the advent of technology and globalization, three dimensional works and mixed media have also secured a now secured a place in the hierarchy art forms. American artist Jeff Koons’ holds the world record price for a living sculptor. Known for his iconic “puppy series”. Jeff Koons’ “Balloon Dog (Orange)” fetched \$58.4 million at Christie’s 2013 Post-War and Contemporary Evening Sale. According to the Christies catalogues, it is one of the “most recognizable artworks in the canon of art history.” A relatively simple concept brilliantly executed Koon’s balloon

dogs were created to take our childhood experiences to a universal level. In South East Asia, the international art usually seen in clients homes as the ultimate trophy art is Fernando Botero’s voluptuous sculptures, or Anish Kapoor’s disks. Anish Kapoor, a British artist of Indian descent, creates highly engineered works in concave or convex shapes that adapt and reflect the environment around us.

**TROPHY ARTIST OF THE 21ST CENTURY**  
FROM TOP

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Dustheads (1982) by Jean-Michel Basquiat  
Acrylic, oilstick, spray enamel and metallic paint on canvas  
182.8 x 213.3 cm  
Photo courtesy of pursuitist.com

—  
Balloon Dog (Orange) (1994-2000) by Jeff Koons  
Mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent color coating  
307.3 x 363.2 x 114.3 cm  
Photo courtesy of Christie’s



Indonesian artists are also included in this pyramid of trophy art. With diverse cultures constituted by geographical-driven variation, Yogyakarta, located in Central Java has long been the center of contemporary art. I Nyoman Masriadi, an artist of Balinese heritage in number one in the canons of contemporary Indonesian art. His painting, “The Man From Bantul (The Final Round)” sold for a world record price of \$1,000,725 at Sotheby’s Hong Kong in October 2008, marking him as the most expensive living Indonesian artist. Masriadi creates approximately 8 paintings a year, which makes them extremely rare. Every painting is unique, so with trophy art, it is not about being able to afford it, as many people have money. It is the daringness and thrill of being able to possess something that no one else has that raises it to the status of trophy art.

Trophy art is one of the factors driving the growth in the market but is it a bubble? According to Allan Schwartzman, the New York-based art adviser, “there are many players in the market as such high levels, that enable it to sustain, rather than a bubble.” We can see that the race is still running and the key is to look at the trends and try to ascertain who is the next artist to ascend to the highest levels. **ID**



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