

Hannah O'Leary

Director, Head of Modern & Contemporary African Art, Sotheby's

Hannah O'Leary is a director at Sotheby's auction house, the global market leaders in Modern & Contemporary Art from Africa. She established the Modern & Contemporary African Art department in London in 2016 and spearheaded the first sale of this category in May 2017; she now oversees more sales in this category than any other auction house or fine art platform.

Hannah first joined Sotheby's back in 2005, initially working in the Dublin and Melbourne offices. In 2006 she moved to Bonhams in London, where she helped pioneer the first international auctions of South African Art and Modern & Contemporary African Art, becoming Head of Department in 2010. With 10 years' experience in this field, and having overseen record-breaking sales in both categories, she was delighted to return to Sotheby's in 2016 to further develop this burgeoning market.

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Over the past 5 years she has overseen the highest-grossing auctions of Contemporary African Art ever held and has set almost 90 world record prices for African artists. In this time Sotheby's has consistently dominated this market, holding the record prices for all the top-selling artists from the continent.

Hannah maintains close relationships with private collectors and public institutions alike, often advising on their collections and acquisitions. She has facilitated many private sales and exhibition loans worldwide, including acting as international consultant to the South African National Gallery.

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She has written on the subject of Contemporary African Art for various publications and lectured at events and institutions internationally, including the Royal Academy London, the Haus der Kunst Munich, the Kunsthaus Graz, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea Milano, the Perez Art Museum Miami, Spelman College Atlanta, Ithaca College, the Art Summit Nigeria, AKA A Also Known As Africa art fair Paris, Zurich University, the Sotheby's Institute and the Venice Biennale.

Hannah holds a Master's degree in History of Art with Cultural Anthropology from Glasgow University.



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