

Square mile

Five modern artists to invest in

Investing in modern art can be a great way to turn a profit – but which artists are worth your money? Our art expert Melissa Scallan has picked out five of the best. Indeed, these pieces are so good, you might not want to sell them...

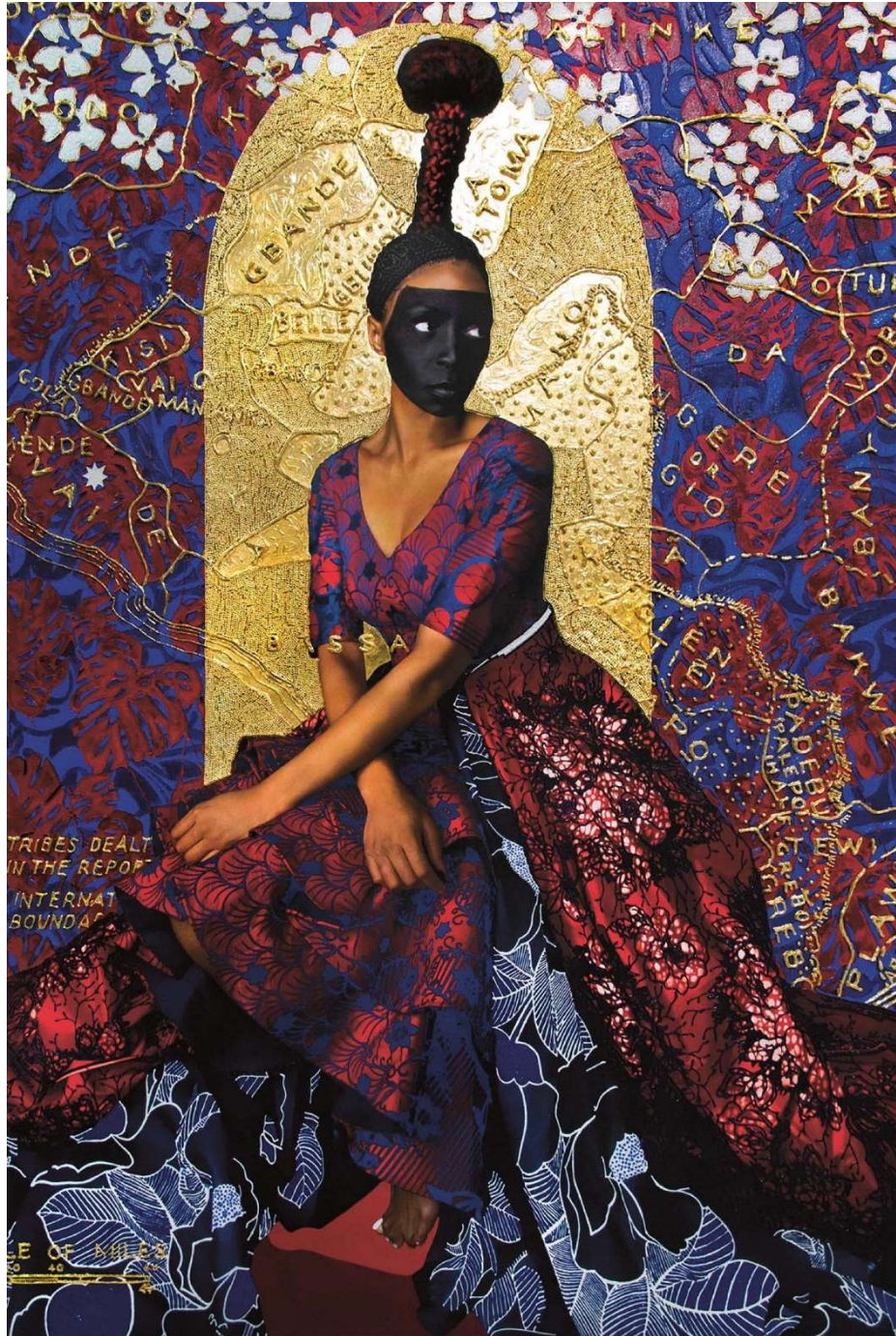
BY [MELISSA SCALLAN](#)



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- COLLECTING ART IS a lovely ambition but a difficult practice.
- Investing in modern art is harder still – whereas a Van Gogh, say, should never depreciate in value, it's harder to judge the fate of contemporary work.
- Our best advice?
- Opt for quality over quantity, and trust that good taste will endure (admittedly a tough ask in the current climate, but keep the faith).
- To make life a little easier, our resident art expert Melissa Scallan has picked out a selection of modern artists and spotlighted a particularly fine example of their artwork.
- You'll want to buy – but you might be reluctant to sell...

LINA IRIS VIKTOR



Eleventh (2018)

Pure 24 karat gold, acrylic, ink, gouache, copolymer resin, print on matte canvas 127cm x 165.1cm. Unique. Courtesy of the artist and Mariane Ibrahim. Lina Iris Viktor.

- America's role in the formation of Liberia – a settlement for freed slaves and free-born black people – serves as the inspiration for a series of fascinating artworks by British-Liberian Lina Iris Viktor.
- Ordinarily restricting her palette to black, blue, white and gold, in this series Viktor adds red. All colours of America's – and therefore Liberia's – flag are thus represented. However, red also signifies the many traumas associated with the ill-conceived 'repatriation' movement: the slavery that predates it, deaths in transit and from disease, violent confrontations with the indigenous tribespeople, and civil wars and coups that followed.
- Patterns and symbols are regular motifs in Viktor's artworks. Built up and gilded in gold – spiritual, luxurious, glowing – the reliefs introduce a sculptural element to her work. In the background of 'Eleventh' is the Liberian map: the gold leaf highlighting names and locations of tribes impacted by the imposition of Liberia. In the foreground is 'Liberian Sybil', a riff on the Libyan Sybil, she's foretelling the many disasters that will follow Liberia's creation.
- Suffused with colour, detail, and literal and metaphorical layers, Viktor's artworks are a pleasure to behold but the narrative – of history, race and socio-politics – demands deeper reflection.
- For more information, see linaviktor.com

ASPENCROW



Atlas (2019)

Epoxy fibreglass/ marble powder, natural hairs, silicone 208cm × 110cm × 140 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Benjamin Eck.
ASPENCROW

- This monumental life size sculpture of mixed martial art UFC world champion Conor McGregor is by Lithuanian sculptor Edgar Askelovic, AKA ASPENCROW.
- Choosing to work in the genre of hyperrealism for its authenticity – “You cannot lie” – Askelovic’s skill is more than simply replicating the likeness of an individual: his interpretations are dynamic and exciting. ‘Atlas’ was inspired by classical sculptures of perfectly proportioned athletes and the heroic, confident poses of Michelangelo figures. In the hands of Askelovic, however, it is a

contemporary depiction of a modern day warrior.

- Askelovic was drawn to McGregor's strength of character, his bravery, his success and that he's largely self-taught. He respects McGregor for creating a life far different from what it might have been and discovered that he and McGregor share a credo: that success is achieved, not through talent, but through hard work and an obsessive dedication to their art. Given his admiration for McGregor, it comes as no surprise that he gave the sculpture to him as a gift on his 30th birthday.
- Askelovic is inspired by strong characters and successful people. If this sounds like you – and you fancy being immortalised – he's inviting people to apply to be sculpted via Instagram @aspencrow.
- For more information, see aspencrow.com

CODERCH & MALAVIA



The Flight of the Swan (2018)

Patinated bronze. 79cm × 47.5cm × 47.5 cm. Edition of 8 and 4 artists' proofs.

Courtesy of Galerie Benjamin Eck and Galerie Alain Daudet.

Coderch & Malavia

- Working in partnership, Valencia-based Joan Coderch and Javier Malavia create dynamic, thought-provoking figurative sculptures based on the human form.
- Coderch and Malavia believe that working as a duo empowers the final result. However, they also acknowledge that to work effectively in a partnership there has to be a meeting of minds: “Sharing the creation of a work of art is complicated, there must be a predisposition to fit together artistically.” Egos have to be put to one side, frank conversations must be had, complete trust is required and full commitment to the end-result must be made.
- The pair work from live models – dancer Minor Chaves was the sitter for ‘The Flight of the Swan’ – producing sketches on paper, followed by a detailed clay model, which enables them to cast the finished bronze. Taking inspiration from Swan Lake and, in particular the transformation of the human, the sculpture illustrates the duality in life, which exists for many people.
- The casting of Chaves, with his dynamic stance, the diamond head pattern and the feathered haunches collectively transform what could have been a regular sculpture of a perfectly proportioned man into something far more interesting and exciting.
- For info: Instagram
coderch.malavia.sculptors

MARTIN STRANKA



Dreamers and Warriors (2018)

Fine art print on archival paper. Size, editions and prices vary. Price: \$1,900-\$55,000. Courtesy of Martin Stranka.

Martin Stranka

- The fine art photographs by Martin Stranka appear like stills from a film, the composition leaving viewers unsure whether they're looking at fantasy or reality.
- Beautifully composed and shot, 'Dreamers and Warriors' is an intriguing work and one that can't be assigned to a particular place or time. The material and design of the pilot's uniform suggest either an historic or, conversely, post-apocalyptic time period; the absence of any background and only a bronze

reflection in the visor removes any environmental cues; and the presence of the birds suggests this is Earth but are they attacking, attracted to, or attempting to communicate with the pilot? Mirrored throughout the work is a limited palette of appealing colours – bronze, white, brown and gold.

- Stranka, a native of the Czech Republic, believes people should never stop following their dreams, fighting for their ideals or protecting their visions. In this image, the birds have the ability to fly – a quality the pilot dreams of and an aspiration that he or she should never stop striving to attain.
- Winner of more than 80 major international photography awards – including two 2019 Sony World Photography Awards – Stranka has been commissioned and exhibited worldwide, and with work like this, it's easy to see why.
- For more information: martinstranka.com

GILLIAN HYLAND



Forget Me Not (2017)

Lambda fine art print. Size, editions and prices vary. 45 x 60 inches, edition of 6, £5,500. Courtesy the artist and After Nyne Gallery.
Gillian Hyland

- London-based Irish photographer Gillian Hyland is known for her compelling, meticulously styled, timeless works. Detailed, rich in colour and theatrical, her images are composed in such a way as to suggest a larger narrative within a single moment.
- Having worked across film, television, fashion and advertising, Hyland has amassed a collection of valuable skills that she employs in her photographic work. She designs interesting sets, sources exciting props and costumes, scouts unusual locations, makes thoughtful choices concerning colour and lighting, and casts compelling subjects. She allows them space to lose themselves in thought, whilst she watches for subtle changes in their expression to capture on film.
- A trip to India – with its vibrancy and rich traditions – inspired the styling and setting of ‘Forget Me Not’. In particular, Hyland was drawn to the way flowers are used in celebrations and to express emotion: a perfect prop for her since she seeks to create psychologically images.
- With his top knot and plaited beard, exquisitely embroidered, perfectly cut jacket, direct gaze and the colourful petals around his eye – drawing the viewer into his soul – Hyland’s work is captivating.
- For more
info: afternynegallery.com; gillianhyland.com