



Victoria Valentine | March 4, 2018

## Auction Results: A Review of African American Art Featured in Sotheby's Fall 2017 Contemporary Auctions—Several Never Exhibited, Unseen For Decades

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE SPRING 2018 SALES at major auction houses in London this month, Culture Type is taking a look back at recent results at Sotheby's. One of the benefits of observing auctions is the opportunity see works long held in private hands away from public view. The November 2017 Contemporary Day and Evening Sales at Sotheby's New York offered a wide-range of works by African American artists, several acquired decades ago and never exhibited, others produced recently by some of the most acclaimed artists working today. Spanning three generations, featured artists included Alma Thomas and Elizabeth Catlett, as well as David Hammons, Frank Bowling, and Jack Whitten, plus Mark Bradford, Glenn Ligon, and Wangechi Mutu. Notable lots are featured below:

### CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING AUCTION (NOV. 16, 2017)

Lot 120: FRANK BOWLING (b. 1936), "Untitled (Mother's House)," 1966 (oil and silkscreen ink on 2 stapled canvases, 47 1/8 x 31 1/8 inches). | Estimate \$100,000-150,000. **Sold for \$112,500 (including fees)**

Guyanese-born Frank Bowling moved from London to New York in 1967, the year after he made the above painting. The new base marked his transition from figuration to abstraction, the style for which he is known today. The lot's catalog note provides some background about the image of the house in the painting, which is also referenced in the title. The citation comes from an essay by Mel Gooding ("Frank Bowling," London 2011, pp. 35-37):

"At Camberwell sometime in 1964, not yet knowing how he would use the image-motif (or how often!), he amassed a stockpile of canvas pieces bearing the image of his mother's emporium – always referred to by Bowling as 'mother's house' – screenprinted in red or green. For Bowling the image clearly had a powerful emotional resonance: it would become a recurring thematic reference point, a motif that carried the allusive charge of a memory of home, a signature intimation of origins." (Bowling taught at Camberwell College of Arts in south east London.)



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