

# STYLE INVESTING

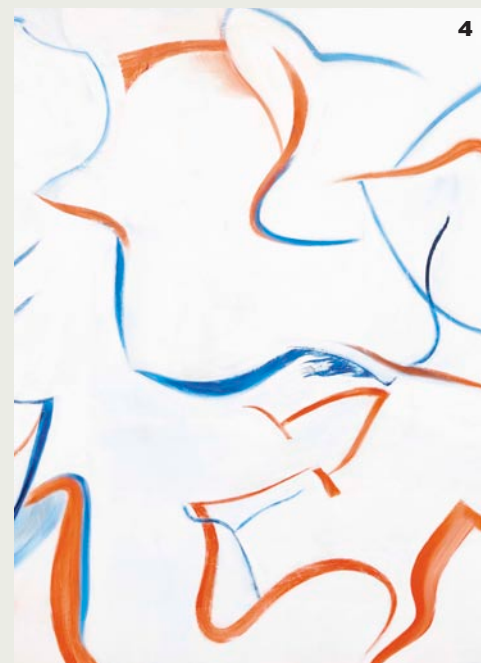
How does modern and contemporary Asian art stack up against other styles when it comes to return on investment? We decided to find out by comparing an index of the auction sales of paintings from that category—comprising art from China, Japan, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia—with those for Old Masters, Impressionist and modern, postwar and contemporary, and American. Each index is compiled from sales data for the 100 hottest artists in the style, gleaned from dozens of auction houses worldwide, and based at 100 in 1985. A quick glance at the data shows that Asian art performed phenomenally until 2008. While the average annual return generated by the postwar and contemporary index is 19 percent and between 10 and 15 percent for the non-Asian styles, that for Asian art is a spectacular 27 percent.

BY ROMAN KRAEUSSL

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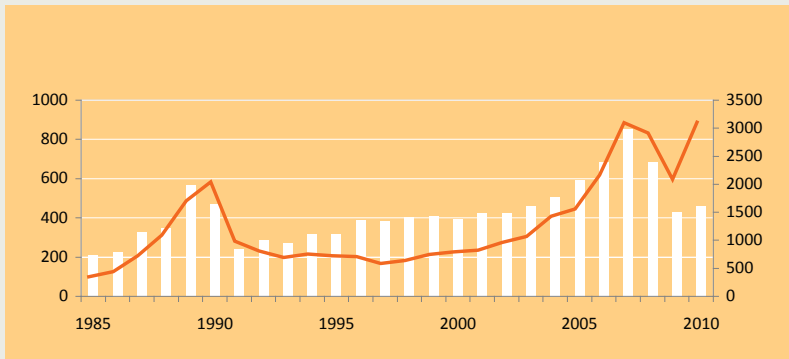
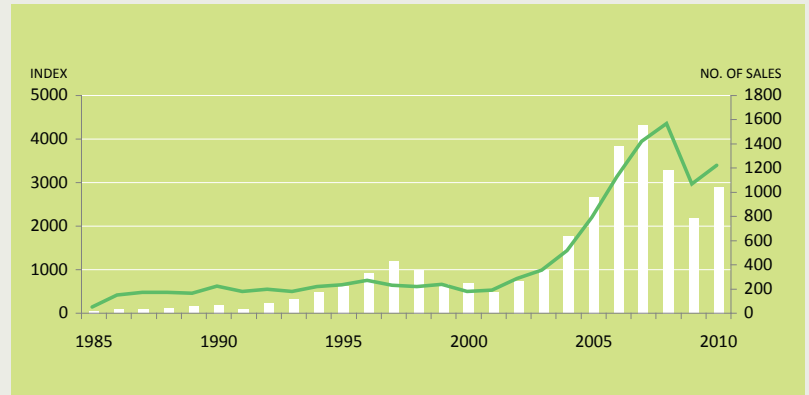
**1.** Paul Cézanne's *Maisons dans la verdure*, circa 1879-1882, brought \$7.7 million at Christie's London in June 2006. **2.** Sayed Haider Raza's *Prakriti* is estimated at \$500,000 to \$700,000 in the Sotheby's New York Indian Contemporary Art sale on March 25. **3.** Vasudeo S. Gaitonde's *Untitled*, 1987, is expected to bring \$300,000 to \$500,000 in Christie's New York South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art sale on March 23. **4.** Willem de Kooning's *Untitled*, 1984, brought \$5.5 million at Phillips de Pury in London in June 2008. **5.** Pieter Brueghel the Younger's 16th- to 17th-century *The Alchemist* sold for \$1.4 million at Lempertz, in Cologne, in November 2010.



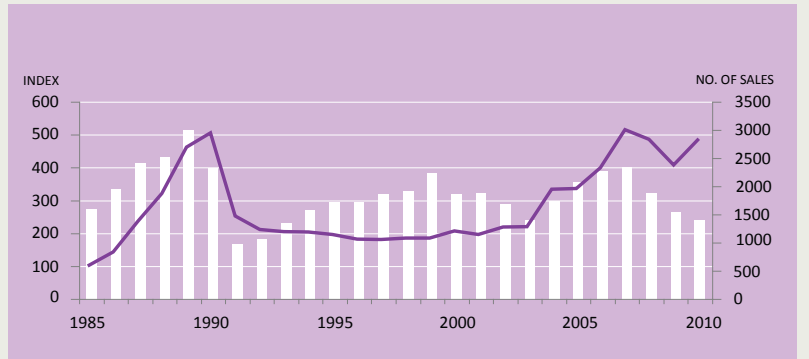
GUTTER: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRISTIE'S; SOTHEBY'S; CHRISTIE'S; PHILLIPS DE PURY & COMPANY, LONDON; LEMPERTZ, COLOGNE

► **MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART**

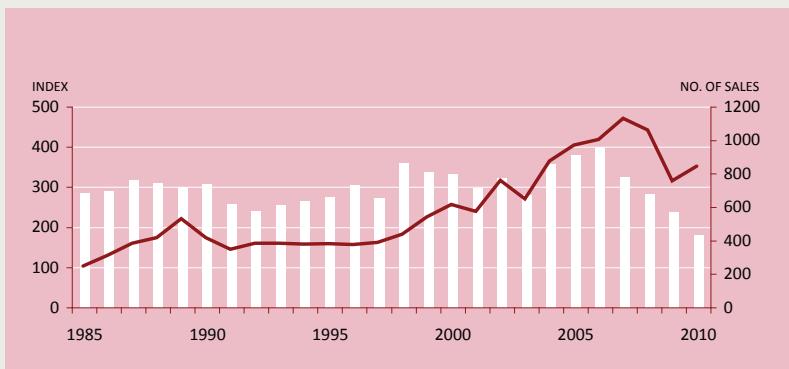
This index resembles that of a high-return tech stock. Chinese painters Zao Wou-Ki, Zhang Xiaogang, and Zeng Fanzhi, are some of the best performers in the overall category, in terms of prices earned and volume sold, while Francis Newton Souza, Maqbool Fida Husain, and Sayed Haider Raza are three of the titans of 20th-century Indian art. Japanese talents Yayoi Kusama and Yoshitomo Nara are among the dozen or so artists that cross categories, selling in dedicated Asian-art sales and general contemporary-art ones. It should be noted that very few records were available for contemporary Asian art before the mid 1990s.



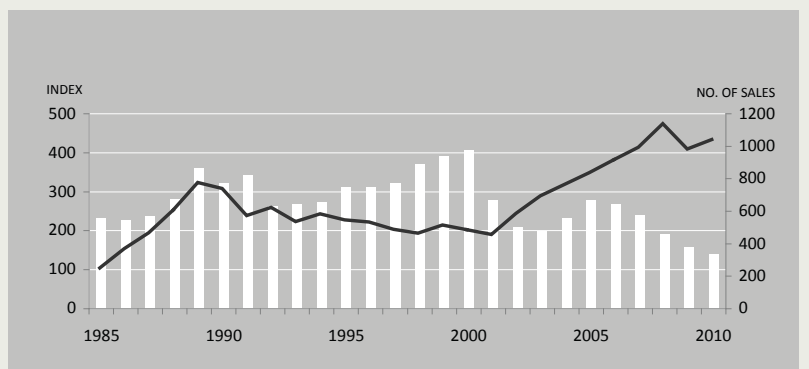
▲ **POSTWAR AND CONTEMPORARY** The index for this high-profile category, led by Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon, and Mark Rothko, shows the most similarities with that of Asian art: Both perform spectacularly from 2005 to 2008, decline steeply in 2009, and make strong recoveries in 2010.



▲ **IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN** With such top earners as Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, and Henri Matisse, this category is a perennial powerhouse, but it did particularly well in the late 1980s and early '90s, and like all of the indexes here, generated positive returns in 2010.



▲ **AMERICAN** Comprising 17th- through early 20th-century art and starring such names as Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent, and Georgia O'Keeffe, this style took off modestly in the early 2000s and is recovering slowly since 2008.



▲ **OLD MASTERS** Canaletto, Pieter Brueghel, Peter Paul Rubens, and Rembrandt top this group, which performs most like safe blue-chip stocks, with modest average annual returns and relatively low volatility.