

# Smith&Singer

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## NEW AUSTRALIAN AUCTION RECORD FOR BANKSY AS *LOVE IS IN THE AIR* (2003) REALISES \$184,091 IN INAUGURAL STAND-ALONE SMITH & SINGER ONLINE AUCTION

*Acquired in 2003 for Less than \$300 from the Museum of Contemporary Art Store, Sydney, Work Doubled the Previous Australian Auction Record for Banksy As Protests Take Place Globally for May Day, the Record Sale of 'Love Is In The Air' Illustrates its Ever-Greater Relevance to Society*



BANKSY born 1974

### **Love Is In The Air (2003)**

screenprint on paper, edition 450 of 500

stamped and inscribed 'banksy / 450/500' lower right

46.7 x 67 cm (image); 49 x 69.3 cm (sheet)

Estimate \$100,000–150,000

Sold for \$184,091

AUSTRALIAN AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

**MELBOURNE, 14 May 2021** – Following a hotly contested battle in the closing minutes of the 10-day *SMITH & SINGER ONLINE* auction, Banksy's *Love Is In The Air* (2003) has sold for an Australian auction record of \$184,091. With a hammer price of \$150,000 – over double the previous Australian record for the artist – and when taking into account both the 22.72% Buyer's Premium and the additional 5% Invaluable.com transaction fee, the final figure paid for this remarkable work was \$191,591.

Acquired in 2003 from the MCA Store at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney for less than \$300, the work was offered with a pre-sale estimate of \$100,000–150,000, which was comfortably exceeded as local and international bidders competed for the stamped and inscribed screenprint.

## FROM PARIS TO PALESTINE: AN IMAGE OF PROTEST

*Love Is In The Air* (2003) is part of a larger series of paintings and prints also known as Flower Thrower. It is one of Banksy's most recognisable images and one that has been widely appropriated. Perhaps the most influential placement of the work was the large stencil that Banksy painted on a wall near Beit Sahour, a Palestinian town on the West Bank.



BRUNO BARBEY 1941-2020

**Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, 6 May 1968, 1968**

© Bruno Barbey | Magnum Photos

*Love Is In The Air* is prefaced also by Andy Warhol's Riot series of prints and paintings. A screen print, *Birmingham Race Riot* (1964, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York) was sourced by Warhol from a *Life* magazine photograph by Charles Moore. Similarly, the student protests of May 1968 in France provide impetus for *Love Is In The Air*. The demonstrations were born from discourse, but the principals were argued on the streets by marching and occupying sites. *Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, 6 May 1968*, is one of the many images photo-journalist Bruno Barbey took of the riots. Barbey's image finds a

symmetry within a random moment. The frieze of figures that foreground the scene are sculpted into place; their arc, a procession, captures a figure to the right throwing a rock.

This is the moment of *Love Is In The Air*. Banksy's masked figure is not sending a missile. His intent is assured, as is his cause, but in isolation, the gesture is one of love. His hand holds a bouquet of flowers: it is the soft revolution, that of reason and sense, and not the bombast and bomb-blast of an authoritarian regime.

*Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer commented: 'We are thrilled with last night's result for Love Is In The Air by Banksy. A pioneer and disruptive force in so many aspects of the traditional art world, it is more than fitting that an online-only auction resulted in a new record for Banksy's work in Australia. We would like to thank the consignor for their trust, and each bidder for competing in this inaugural stand-alone SMITH & SINGER ONLINE auction.'*

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## AT A GLANCE

SMITH & SINGER ONLINE

BANKSY: *Love Is In The Air* (2003)

OPEN 4 May 2021, 10 am (AEST)

CLOSE 13 May 2021, 10 pm (AEST)

BANKSY born 1974

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[Click here to view the flipbook catalogue of \*Love is In The Air\* \(2003\)](#)

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Smith & Singer's buyer's premium is 22.7% of the hammer price not including GST. A further 5% transaction fee is applicable by Invaluable.com. \*\* Estimates do not include buyer's premium\*\*

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