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Damien HIRST



Theodora (The Empresses H10-03), 2022

Laminated Giclée print on aluminium composite, screen printed with diamond dust

Edition of 3315

100 x 100 cm (39.4 x 39.4 in)

Numbered and signed

In mint condition



Extraordinarily complex and dynamic, Theodora is named for the great Byzantine empress who used her intelligence and savvy to create lasting change in the empire. Born into the lowest class of Byzantine society, Theodora (497-548 CE) rose to power in 527 CE following her marriage to Emperor Justinian. She left a significant impact on the region, namely through implementing new religious and social policies. Indeed, Theodora's power over the empire left many to wonder if it was her and not Justinian that ruled.

In *Theodora* various hues of red and black butterfly wings assemble into an intriguing asymmetrical pattern, the only of its kind from the series. The composition is defined by lines of glittering red, noticeable only at proximity, which symmetrically sections the print horizontally into thirds and vertically in half, as well as establishes a circle in the upper half of the print.



Mosaic of Theodora - Basilica of San Vitale (built A.D. 547), Italy. UNESCO World heritage site.

The lower horizontal band, the circle and the vertical line are the most prominent, creating a formation reminiscent of the female gender symbol. Such recalls some of Theodora's landmark policies that benefited women, including prohibiting the trafficking of girls and amending divorce laws to give women more rights. With the wings arranged in pairs or singularly across the work, *Theodora* stands out for its degree of organized chaos. The result of the carefully composed asymmetrical composition is the visual sensation that these wings are not lifeless specimens arranged for the viewer's aesthetic pleasure but insects vibrating with life, captured zooming across (and perceivably beyond) the picture plane.





“Great art – or good art – is when you look at it, experience it and it stays in your mind. I don’t think conceptual art and traditional art are all that different. There’s boring conceptual art and there’s boring traditional art. Great art is if you can’t stop thinking about it, then it becomes a memory.”

– Damien Hirst





Damien Hirst. Photographed by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2021

Damien Hirst is a British artist whose name has become synonymous with contemporary art. Since his generative work as a student at Goldsmiths School of Art, Hirst's production has been boundary redefining in nature. Working primarily in installation, painting, sculpture and drawing, Hirst explores the complex relationships between art, beauty, religion, science, life and death. He constantly returns to his foundational interests and themes, which he reworks to develop an innovative visual language. Since the beginning of his career Hirst has interacted with the butterfly, one of his best-known motifs. Inspired by a chance encounter in his studio and the intricate patterns found on Victorian tea trays, in *The Empresses* Hirst develops on the complex compositions he invented in his *Kaleidoscope Paintings* and *Mandalas* series.

The Empresses prints are symmetrical, asymmetrical, and spiral patterns of meticulously organised butterflies that nonetheless exude hope and life – the butterflies feel as if they are taking flight. Hirst has consistently used butterflies for their associations to freedom, religion, life and death. *The Empresses* illuminates and sheds light on these themes. Through this new series, these themes become intertwined with glory, female power and the development of nations, visible through the entrancing twists and turns of these five dazzling and vital visual celebrations.



Damien Hirst, *'Mantra' Butterfly Wing Kaleidoscope with Diamond Dust*, 2011



Damien Hirst, *Subservience*, 2019

DAMIEN HIRST

The Art Market

Auction record:



Eternity, 2002-2004
Butterflies and gloss household
paint on canvas.
213.4 x 533.4 cm (84 x 210 in.)

Phillips London, October, 2007, (lot 239)

Estimate: £2,500,000 – 3,500,000

Sold for: £4,724,000

Price increase of 88.96% from lowest estimate



Eternity – Damien Hirst's record auction result - shares much resemblance with *The Empresses*. In both series, the vibrant colours combined with butterflies of different sizes and shapes arranged in a Kaleidoscope effect, offer an overarching sense of balance and symmetry, a tribute to the artist's vision and the complexity of the endeavour.

DAMIEN HIRST

The Art Market

The series of *The Elements* created in 2020 by Damien Hirst is a great comparison to *The Empresses*, 2022 due to its similar subject matter (Kaleidoscope butterfly wing arrangements-or *Mandalas*). In addition the scale of both editions is the same. Due to the small edition number of *The Elements* there are restricted opportunities to see price appreciation, as fewer editions are offered on the secondary market in comparison to the bigger edition size of *The Empresses* (see comp. between *The Virtues* series of bigger edition size series).



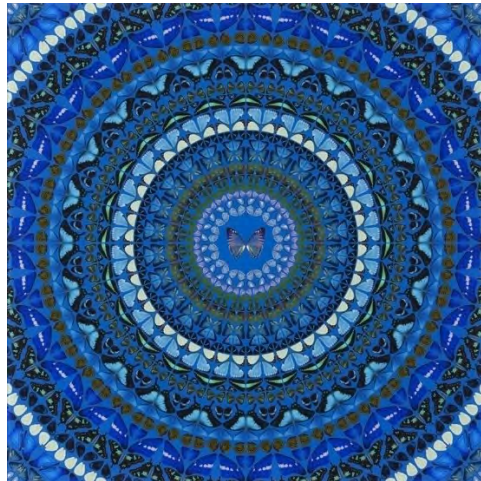
The Elements, Earth (H6-6)
Sotheby's London September 2021
EUR 22,410



The Elements, Air (H6-7)
Christie's London London 2021
EUR 17,618



The Elements, Fire (H6-8)
Phillips London, April 2021
EUR 21,420



The Elements, Water (H6-9)
Sotheby's Milan, July 2021
EUR 47,880

*All editions are from *The Elements* series, 2020
Diasec-mounted Giclée print on aluminium composite panel
Edition of 60, Each is 100 x 100 cm (39.4 x 39.4 in), Numbered and signed

DAMIEN HIRST

The Art Market

The series of *The Virtues* has showcased a high secondary market value appreciation over the past year.

*All editions are from *The Virtues* series, 2021. Diasec-mounted Giclée print on aluminium composite panel
Edition size varies, Each is 120 x 95 cm (47.2 x 37.8 in), Numbered and signed



The Virtues, Justice
Edition of 1005
Phillips New York March 2022
EUR 21,134



The Virtues, Courage
Edition of 760
Bonhams London March 2022
EUR 18,287



The Virtues, Mercy
Edition of 817
Phillips New York March 2022
EUR 22,022



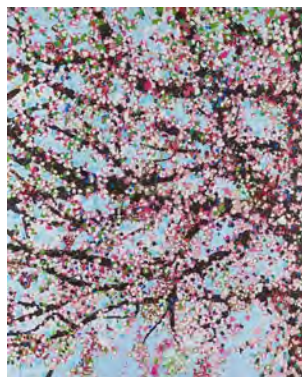
The Virtues, Politeness
Edition of 1549
Bonhams London March 2022
EUR 25,782



The Virtues, Honesty
Edition of 728
Sotheby's London March 2022
EUR 24,175



The Virtues, Honour
Edition of 693
Christie's Online March 2022
EUR 22,664



The Virtues, Loyalty
Edition of 1067
Sotheby's London March 2022
EUR 42,306



The Virtues, Control
Edition of 862
Bonhams London December 2021
EUR 18,824

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