

Leading artists come together for United Artists for Europe, an exhibition and auction that celebrates European culture, inspired by Bernard-Henri Lévy

- 21st May, 6.30pm Exhibition Private View
- 22-23rd May: Public Exhibition at Galerie Thaddeus Ropac
- 22nd May, 5-6pm: Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries, in conversation with novelist Adam Thirlwell
- 22nd May, 6pm: One-off performance of *Looking For Europe*, a play by Bernard-Henri Lévy
- 23rd May, 12-4pm: Talks programme at Galerie Thaddeus Ropac
- 3rd June: Auction at Maison Assouline led by auctioneer Simon de Pury

[@artistsforeurope artistsforeurope.org](https://www.artistsforeurope.org)



Left: Grayson Perry, *Marriage Flag*, 2018, Textile, 97 x 143 cm, Edition of 45 plus 5 artist's proofs, © Grayson Perry, Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Right: Elmgreen & Dragset, *Anger Management*, 2018, Punching bag, leather thread, stainless steel, 189.2 x 100 x 83 cm, © Elmgreen & Dragset, Courtesy the artists and Victoria Miro

Based on an original idea by renowned French intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy and produced by the Franco-British think tank The Hexagon Society, *United Artists for Europe* will demonstrate artists' devotion to European ideals, values and culture, with all committed artists signing a manifesto written by Lévy.

Over 30 artworks by leading contemporary artists will be exhibited at Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, Ely House from 21-23 May and then auctioned at Maison Assouline on June 3, in aid of projects that support an undivided Europe. The initiative is timed to coincide with the European elections, and invites the public to consider Europe as one democratic whole.

On the evening of 22 May, Bernard-Henri Lévy will perform his new one-man play, *Looking for Europe*, adapted specifically to address the European Elections and London. Staged at Ely House, Bernard-Henri Lévy will be surrounded by the exhibition of works, providing a unique backdrop for the public to see. This will be preceded by a conversation between Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, Serpentine Galleries, and novelist Adam Thirlwell about literature as a multilingual art form, créolisation, portable Europes, and the construction of multiple identities

During the exhibition, artists, thinkers and actors will create a forum for debate and discussion on the state of Europe today, and the place of art and culture within this context. These open discussions will take place on Thursday 23rd May at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac.

The public exhibition and auction is an opportunity to buy art by international artists who practice in Europe such as Grayson Perry and Marina Abramović, whilst benefiting European cultural initiatives. The auction will be led by celebrated auctioneer Simon de Pury at Maison Assouline. Funds raised will benefit European cultural projects including Europa Nostra, the main European NGO defending and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage, and Artagon, who support the careers of young emerging artists, exhibiting their work in venues throughout Europe.

Committed artists to date:

Adel Abdessemed, Marina Abramović, Claire Adelfang, Jean-Marie Appriou, Ron Arad, Daniel Buren, Shezad Dawood, Richard Deacon, Marlene Dumas, Valie Export, Elmgreen & Dragset, Jan Fabre, Sylvie Fleury, Douglas Gordon, Morgane Tschiember, Julio Le Parc, Ross Lovegrove, Yan Pei-Ming, Giuseppe Penone, Grayson Perry, Marc Quinn, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Juergen Teller, Luc Tuymans, Xavier Veilhan, Bernar Venet, Francesco Vezzoli, Erwin Wurm

Bernard-Henri Lévy, initiator of United Artists for Europe, said: *'The European identity that we share, from Dublin to Budapest, is also an artistic identity. Art is the cement of Europe. From Mozart to Picasso, from Leonardo to Francis Bacon every European shares the same passion for the same great artists. We all admire Mona Lisa and think of it as a glorious symbol of European culture. There is no border when it comes to art, especially in Europe, the homeland of great painters, sculptors and architects. This is United Artists for Europe's aim : to show that through art and culture Europe can be rebuilt.'*

Tancrède Hertzog & Léopold Legros, Co-curators of United Artists for Europe, said: *'Works of art allow us to clearly realize things that we do not understand well: Elmgreen & Dragset and Francesco Vezzoli have produced works which are worth much more than a long speech, and can make us open our eyes. For us, before we talk about the common market, treaties, rules, Europe is above all a shared culture. Art is king in Europe, everywhere there are museums, monuments, an artistic scene, a cultural harmony. By creating borders again, this is what we will impoverish.'*

Sophie Wiesenfeld, founder of The Hexagon Society, said: *'I strongly believe that the current situation in Europe is due to a misunderstanding between people of Europe and Europe; people do not feel European. And this democratic deficit was due to a cultural deficit. This is the mission statement of my foundation: to raise awareness through cultural events. With United Artists for Europe, we wish to try to change, to a small level, the perception of a Europe still much perceived as a political and economical entity, and rarely as a shared cultural heritage for millennia.'*

Simon de Pury, Auctioneer, said: *'Since I was born seventy years ago, Europe lives in peace and growing prosperity. For the first time in my lifetime, this harmony seems threatened. I think that the artists can be guides in this troubled epoch.'*

-ENDS-

PRESS INFORMATION

Sophie Reid | sophie.reid@flint-culture.com | + 44 (0)203 463 2086

PRESS PACK

Please get in touch with Sophie Reid for more information and high res images.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Exhibition:

Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, Ely House, 37 Dover Street, London, W1S 4NJ

Opening times: 10am-6pm

Auction:

Maison Assouline, 196A Piccadilly, St. James's, London W1J 9EY

NOTES TO EDITORS

About United Artists for Europe

United Artists for Europe is an exhibition, cultural event and auction based on an original idea by Bernard-Henri Lévy, hosted by Galerie Thaddeus Ropac in London and produced by The Hexagon Society with Tancrède Hertzog and Léopold Legros. The auction will be conducted by Simon de Pury.

Bernard-Henri Lévy

The French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy is among the leading European intellectuals. In January 2019, he initiated a Manifesto signed by thirty European writers, to warn of the dangers incurred by the rise of nationalism in Europe. Simultaneously, he began a European tour for his play Looking for Europe, a plea for a united Europe, and a remedy against populism and extremism. Curator of the exhibition The Adventures of Truth in 2013, and author of publications about Mondrian and Frank Stella, he is one of the initiators of the United Artists for Europe Manifesto.

The Hexagon Society - The Organiser

The Hexagon Society is a pro-European Franco-British foundation that creates meaningful cultural content in order to promote European values and impact decision-making process, through the creation and production of a range of cultural projects. President and founder Sophie Wiesenfeld, a French legal expert established in London, initiated the United Artists for Europe project. The funds raised by the auction will be centralised by The Hexagon Society, which will allocate them between the beneficiaries.

www.hexagonsociety.com

Tancrède Hertzog & Léopold Legros - The Curators

Tancrède Hertzog and Léopold Legros are two young Paris-based gallerists, curators and art critics, contributing to various art reviews. They organise gallery shows as well as exhibitions in institutions such as the Donjon de Vez, with a particular focus on postwar art and emerging European artists.

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac - The Host

Founded in 1983, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac has galleries across Europe, in London, Paris and Salzburg, and an expanding team in Asia. Specialising in contemporary art and representing over 60 artists, the gallery supports and showcases the careers of some of the most influential artists today with a wide-ranging programme of over 40 exhibitions each year across its five extensive and historic gallery spaces. Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac also represents a number of renowned artist estates and continues to build on their legacy, as well as providing curatorial expertise, acting as consultant to major museums and public institutions and advising private and corporate collections. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, Ropac also represents its artists at all major international art fairs. The gallery runs its own publishing house that produces catalogues and books to accompany its exhibitions, contributing to new scholarship and a wider art-historical discourse by inviting prominent art historians, curators and writers to collaborate.

Simon de Pury - The Auctioneer

Simon de Pury is one of the most celebrated auctioneers worldwide. Sometimes called the 'Mick Jagger of Art Auctions' he applies his incisive and cheerful style to his auctions. An expert on the art market, he was the Director of Sotheby's Europe and of the auction house Philips. He is today the head of de Pury de Pury and wields the gavel for the most prestigious charity auctions around the world. Committed European and Europeanist, he is one of the initiators of United Artists for Europe, and will be the auctioneer of the sale.

Artagon

Artagon is a French association for the promotion of young creators and contemporary art. Each year Artagon organises an ambitious exhibition presided over by a prestigious jury, gathering recognised personalities in the world of culture, such as Hans Ulrich Obrist or Jean-Jacques Aillagon. This allows graduates from European art schools to show their work to a large audience.

Under the ambit of United Artists for Europe, part of the results of the auction will be allocated to the new Artagon's project: the Artagon Museum and its opening exhibition, Constellation. The Artagon Museum is an immaterial institution whose collection of works by young artists will be shown in venues throughout Europe. Constellation will present the work of fifty emerging artists operating in Europe and selected by an international jury, including artists from United Artists for Europe. The exhibition will travel between London, Naples and Kiev, three major cities in western, southern and eastern Europe, in order to promote European ideals and values with a new generation of European artists.

Europa Nostra

Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra is the main European NGO defending and enhancing Europe's cultural and artistic heritage. Bringing together 250 national associations, Europa Nostra acts as a lobby group pressuring governments and European Institutions in order to protect Europe's heritage. It promotes different fundraising and initiatives such as the 'Seven most endangered sites of Europe' and the prestigious EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, given annually in

collaboration with the European Commission. Europa Nostra is recognised as an NGO partner of the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. In this regard, It has actively contributed to the success of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. Its current president is the Spanish opera singer Plácido Domingo.

Under the ambition of United Artists for Europe, funds raised from the auction will be allocated to the rehabilitation of the famous Temple of Apollo on the island of Delos in the Cyclades. This temple, one of the main hellenic sanctuaries, dedicated to the god of Arts and Music, is a symbolic birthplace of European culture. At the very heart of an extraordinary UNESCO-world heritage site, it is one of the oldest Greek temples ever preserved. This unprecedented rehabilitation project will be carried out by the Ephorate of Antiquities Cyclades and funded by United Artists for Europe through Europa Nostra and its national delegation in Greece, Elliniki Etairia. It consists of an anastylosis – the re-erection of the antique columns of the temple that have lain on the ground for centuries, allowing the sanctuary of Apollo to be reborn from its ashes.