

Eight artworks fetch record prices at Christie's auction

An auction chronicling the history of American art from the 19th and 20th centuries set the second highest record with total sales of \$9.6 million at Christie's in New York last Friday. (The highest record, \$10.7 million, was set at

Sotheby Parke Bernet last June.)

Eight record prices for individual artists were paid. William Sidney Mount's "The Trap Sprung" (1844) was the auction high at \$880,000; the second highest price, \$605,000, was paid for Mount's

"Bird-Egging" (also from 1844). Georgia O'Keeffe's "Lake George" (1923) brought \$330,000, tying the previous record. Lilly Martin Spencer's "The Young Husband: First Marketing" (1854) brought \$99,000. Ralston Crawford's "Industrial

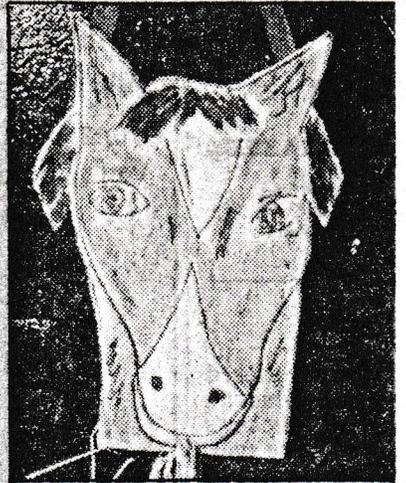
Landscape, Buffalo" (c. 1937) reached \$187,000. A record price of \$104,500 was paid for Eastman Johnson's drawing "The Picture Book" (1855).

It's worth noting that three records were set by New York dealers of American art, who buy for investment and resale. A pair of 1814 paintings by John Lewis Krimmel, "Blind Man's Buff" and "The Blind Fiddler, After Wilkie," was sold in one lot for \$308,000 to Berry/Hill Galleries in New York. That gallery also paid \$220,000 for Joseph Decker's "The Greenings," which had been estimated to sell for \$15,000 to \$25,000. Hiram Powers' popular sculpture "The Greek Slave," one of several conceived in 1840, was sold to the Hirschl/Adler Galleries for \$262,000.

And so it continues, unabated, the skyward spiral of the art market.

As the political situation heats up in Central America, artists are increasingly involved in protest actions. A nationwide demonstration identified as Artists Call will take place next month, centered around Jan. 22, the "International Day of Solidarity with El Salvador." The events scheduled include art exhibitions, lectures, films and performances in Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C., and other cities around the country. In Los Angeles, the events will take place primarily on Jan. 21 to avoid conflicting with the Super Bowl broadcast the following day. Artists Call is soliciting artists who want to stage performances, street art or other protest events, asking them for donations to take out advertising against U.S. involvement in "another Vietnam," and urging them to write to President Reagan and their representatives in Congress. More details about events planned for that weekend, or on how to become involved with the demonstrations, can be obtained from Artists Call, 10631 Butterfield Ave., Los Angeles, 90064, or from Susan King at 559-1849. Information is also available at the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) at 822-9560.

Political sensitivity extends to art historians as well. After the U.S. invasion of Grenada last month, respected British art historian



Tomata du Plenty's "Old Paint" is one of several works at Zero One.

ART NEWS Hunter Drohojowska

Douglas Cooper protested by withdrawing two works on loan to the National Gallery's Juan Gris Retrospective. Cooper, a leading cubist scholar, had lent "Cup and Glass" and "Houses in Paris — Place Ravignan" (both 1911) to the show. In a letter to the National Gallery director, J. Carter Brown, Cooper wrote, "I am so outraged and disgusted by the behavior of the American Government and its idiotic, vengeful and irresponsible President Reagan that I cannot any longer tolerate the idea of being associated with a cultural manifestation in your barbaric country."

The National Gallery returned the pictures, after receiving this unprecedented request.

Zero One, an after-hours club and sometime art gallery, in the belly of Hollywood at 1648 N. Wilcox Ave., is the site of "Best of the West," an exhibition of 15 artists associated with the club scene as selected by singer-poet Tequila Mockingbird. Among the artists are Tomata du Plenty, lead singer for the now-defunct Screemers; Barry Fahr, lighting designer for the now-defunct Wall of Voodoo; Richard Duardo, printer of posters for new wave musicians; Fred Tomaselli, illustrator for No Mag; and Gary Panter, creator of the Jimbo comics. The work is funny, challenging, crude, bizarre and reasonably priced, and in time for the holidays. In fact, the closing

party is Christmas Eve, from 7 to 9 p.m., when a drawing will be held to choose the winner of a contest matching the artists' comments about their work to their names. One of the artist-signed works goes to the winner. (And two signed works go to the losers?) Call John at 462-9248 for further details.

Speaking of Gary Panter, he'll be showing his recent works in Richard Duardo's second-floor studio at 800 Traction St., across from Al's Bar downtown. The reception is from 7 to 11 p.m., on Dec. 22.

Lydia Lunch, singer-founder of the band Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, star of the film "Vortex" and who published her poems with Exene Cervenka in a volume titled "Adulterers Anonymous," will be reading from her plays and short fiction at Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd., on Dec. 16, at 8 p.m., for a \$4 donation. Call 822-3006 for information.

It's out. For all fans of Exene Cervenka, lead singer of X (not to mention artist Michael Hyatt and 53 Mail Artists from around the world) the 1984 Calendar of Olympic Games, Music and Orwellian Dates has arrived. The spiral-bound date book keeps track of key dates in rock and other sorts of history as compiled by Cervenka. For example, on Jan. 1, 1953, Hank Williams died. Tomorrow's date was both the Boston Tea Party and Beethoven's birthday in 1770. Such invaluable information is juxtaposed to pages of mail art, drawings, photos and Xerox collages. Copies are available at the bookstores of the L.A. County Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Craft and Folk Art Museum at the suggested retail price of \$7.95, or by calling Hyatt at 392-6616.

Short takes: The Palm Springs Desert Museum has received a \$50,000 grant from the James Irvine Foundation. It will be applied to improving storage areas for art and artifacts and upgrading humidity control systems.

The university art museum at UC Berkeley has announced the appointment of Sidra Stich as senior curator. Currently, she is a visiting fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.