artnet Auctions Presents the Political Pop sale

artnet Auctions is celebrating the upcoming presidential election with Political Pop, a special sale featuring over 30 artworks with political subjects by renowned Pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, James Rosenqust, Robert Indiana, and Robert Rauschenberg.

Andy Warhol
Bald Eagle, 1983 (from the Endangered Species portfolio)
Screenprint
38 x 38 in.
Est. US$65,000–75,000

New York / Berlin, October 15, 2012—Political Pop will feature Andy Warhol’s images of every president from 1968 to 1986. One of the highlights of the sale is JFK (1968), a haunting silkscreen portrait of the assassinated president, estimated at US$10,000 to 12,000. Kennedy’s younger brother, the late Senator Ted Kennedy, is featured in a silkscreen that was published to raise funds for the senator’s presidential primary campaign. Estimated at US$27,000 to 32,000, the piece shows the presidential candidate draped in red, white, and blue, and sparkling with diamond dust. In his 1985 portrait of Ronald Reagan, Warhol chose to remind viewers of Reagan’s past as an actor by showing the president as a young pitchman selling shirts. Van Heusen (Ronald Reagan) is estimated at US$27,000 to 32,000. In Vote McGovern (1972), estimated at US$30,000 to 32,000, Warhol offers a fiendish depiction of Richard Nixon. The artist remembers Teddy Roosevelt’s military triumphs by showing the young Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt in his Rough Rider uniform, in a print estimated at US$15,000 to 20,000.
Many of the works in the sale examine the familiar tropes of patriotism that are associated with US elections, such as American flags and even Uncle Sam, as portrayed in a print by Andy Warhol, estimated at US$33,000 to 35,000. James Rosenquist’s masterful composition *Stars and Stripes at the Speed of Light* (2004) shows the flag as a spinning vortex of red, white, blue, and silver, and is estimated at US$6,500 to 7,500. Roy Lichtenstein’s mysterious, Abstract composition *Inaugural Print* (1977), estimated at US$25,000 to 30,000, shows a raised hand reminiscent of the swearing in of a new president in the foreground, as well as the artist’s Pop version of the Masonic Eye of Providence. Warhol’s *Bald Eagle* (1986), from the *Endangered Species* portfolio, is estimated at US$65,000 to 75,000. This piece captures the magnificence of the wild bird as well as the proud symbol of American freedom.

One of the rarest prints in the *Political Pop sale* is *Raw War* (1971) by Bruce Nauman, estimated at US$18,000 to 20,000. This work is the artist’s first print to feature words. It was initially created as a neon sculpture to protest against the Vietnam War, with the word “War” and then “Raw” blinking in red neon. Another piece that features words is Ed Ruscha’s 1975 *America Whistles*, estimated at US$3,000 to 4,000, and created for the 1976 bicentennial. Now, however, over 35 years later, the words may convey a more nuanced message for the nation.


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