

Artprice: the Top 10 of Surrealism

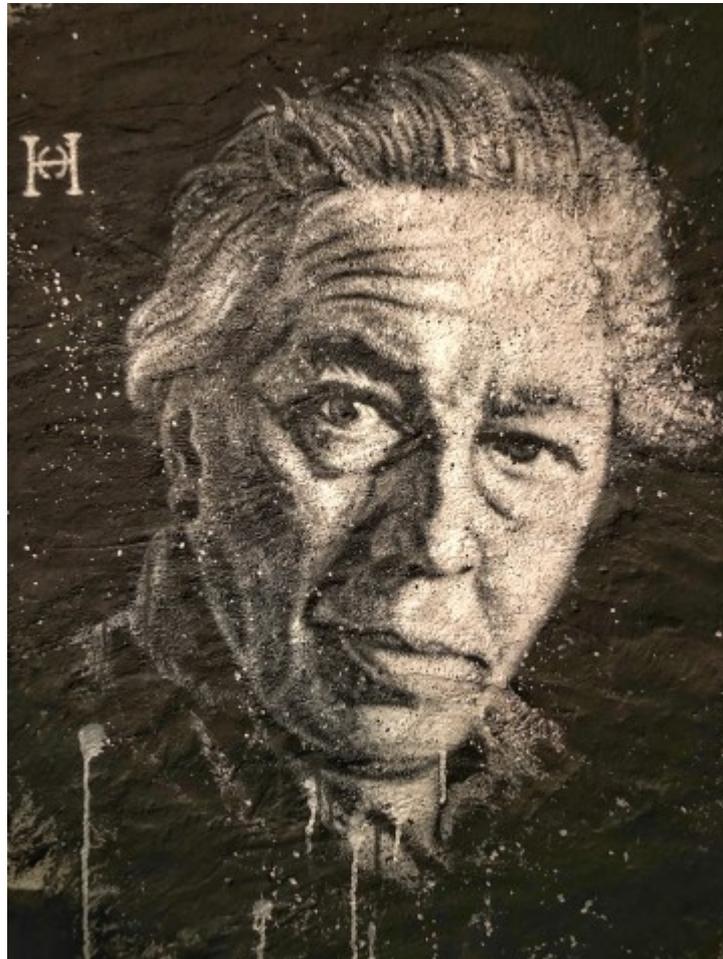
Artprice posts an auction ranking to help you apprehend the Art Market's leading trends. This week, Artprice takes a look at the 10 most expensive Surrealist artworks ever sold at auction... A ranking very clearly dominated by Miro.

Thierry Ehrmann: "The Catalan Surrealist artist Joan Miro, the subject of a major retrospective at the Grand Palais in Paris (ended February 4, 2019), is also very clearly the leading Surrealist artist on the auction market with seven out of the Top-10 results. The other three places are currently occupied by René Magritte and Salvador Dali". Awaiting the next Surrealist Auction next week in London (read further).

The Top 10 of Surrealism by artprice.com

Rank	Artist	Hammer Price (\$)	Artwork	Sale
1	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	36,955,821	Peinture (Etoile Bleue)	19/jun/2012 Sotheby's London
2	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	31,461,029	Femme et oiseaux	21/jun/2017 Sotheby's London
3	René MAGRITTE (1898-1967)	26,830,500	Le principe du plaisir	12/nov/2018 Sotheby's New York
4	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	26,590,650	Painting Poem	07/feb/2012 Christie's London
5	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	23,413,412	Painting (Women, Moon, Birds)	04/feb/2015 Christie's London
6	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	23,375,000	Peinture	13/nov/2017 Christie's New York
7	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	22,590,000	Femme dans la nuit	15/nov/2018 Phillips New York
8	Joan MIRO (1893-1983)	21,687,500	Femme entendant de la musique	15/may/2018 Christie's New York
9	Salvador DALI (1904-1989)	21,673,806	Portrait de Paul Eluard	10/feb/2011 Sotheby's London

Rank	Artist	Hammer Price (\$)	Artwork	Sale
10	René MAGRITTE (1898-1967)	20,562,500	L'empire des lumières	13/11/2017 Christie's New York
Copyright © 2019 artprice.com				



[<https://imgpublic.artprice.com/img/wp/sites/11/2019/02/andre-breton.jpeg>]

André BRETON,

Portrait by thierry Ehrmann , courtesy of Demeure du Chaos/Abode of Chaos, HQ Artprice.

As thierry Ehrmann recalls, André Breton (then a medical student), father of surrealism, declared: "Madness is the first material of Surrealism".

Miro, the most sought-after Surrealist

Miro is undoubtedly one of the leading artists on the Western Art Market, first because his unbridled imagination made him one of the most interesting artists of the Surrealist scene, "*the most Surreal of us all* » according to André Breton, and secondly, because he was particularly prolific: among the approximately one thousand Miro works that change hands at auction each year, there are always a couple of treasures that deserve a place in the world's top museums.

In concrete terms, Joan Miro is known to have produced at least 2,000 paintings, 5,000 drawings, 500 sculptures, a few hundred ceramics and a large quantity of prints which represent 91% of his lots sold at auction every year. The prices of his canvases are extremely variable, depending on the historical and artistic importance of the work. Among the 17 Miro paintings sold so far this year, some smaller works (roughly 30 cm) have fetched around \$250,000 whereas others with similar dimensions have fetched well over a million dollars.

A good quality work by Miro will fetch a high price... but **when quality combines with size... the prices rocket**. His best works sell for over \$20 million, a threshold crossed eight times so far with a notable acceleration in the last 12 months. Indeed four of those results above the \$20 million line have been hammered in the last year for *Peinture* (1933), *Femme dans la nuit* (1945) and *Femme entendant de la musique* (1945), all three in this Top 10, as well as for *Mural I / Mural II / Mural III* (1933) which fetched \$ 20 million last May at Christie's in New York.

His turnover total for the year 2018 is therefore outstanding (so far \$ 107.6 million since January) placing him among the world's most successful artists. In our provisional ranking for 2018 Miro currently occupies 13th place. Considered universal, his work has appealed to Western and Japanese collectors, but it has not yet penetrated the world's largest marketplace... China.

Magritte, two new records in 12 months

Magritte's double appearance in this ranking is all the more remarkable because his two latest records were hammered in the past 12 months. The first in November 2017, for a painting from his emblematic series *L'Empire des Lumières*. It's interesting to trace the series' price history: in 1996, a major canvas from this famous series reached \$3.5 million in London. In 2002, another, dated 1952, fetched \$12.6 million in New York. That was a new peak for a Surrealist artist at the time.

In 2017, that peak was almost doubled when *The empire of lights* (1949) sold for \$20.5 million in New York. That record, coming just after two other new records during the same year 2017, marked the most successful year in the Belgian Surrealist's auction history, with an annual turnover of \$77.8 million. The strong demand was almost certainly fanned by 'cultural news', particularly by the exhibition *La trahison des images* at the Pompidou Center in Paris and the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (2016-2017).

The effervescence has continued this year. In February, Magritte elicited the highest bid during London's Surrealist sales (Christie's and Sotheby's) ahead of Miro, with a pioneering 1926 work *Le groupe silencieux* that fetched \$10 million. Then, on 12 November, Sotheby's set a superb new record for the artist at \$26.8 million.

The most expensive Magritte ever sold, the work bears the poetic and enigmatic title *Le principe du plaisir* and is a portrait of Edward James, an English heir to an American

railroad fortune turned eccentric poet and influential patron of Surrealist art who invited Magritte to reside and paint in his London residence for two years.

Le principe du plaisir exceeded its low estimate by more than \$10 million. The painting was acquired by the seller 40 years earlier for just \$74,000.

Surrealist love...

The third Surrealist in this ranking is none other than the great Salvador Dali with a work whose price might seem excessive compared to its modest size: 33 x 25 centimeters. The *Portrait of Paul Eluard* is a small oil-on-cardboard whose price went from \$2 million in 1989 (Christie's New York) to \$21 million in 2011 at Sotheby's (against an estimate of just \$5-8 million!).

The price of this work therefore multiplied by 10 in twenty years, setting Dali's all-time auction... and it still stands. Painted at the same time as the Great Masturbateur, *Portrait of Paul Eluard* condenses the Dalinian iconography of the time, especially with the roaring lion's head symbolizing desire.

It was 1929 when Dali painted this delirious portrait of the poet who came to visit him in Cadaquès with his wife at that time.. a certain Gala. Dali immediately fell in love with Gala, who become his principal inspiration. The work is not only the portrait of Paul Eluard, it also marks the beginning of the most famous couple in Surrealism. Faced with such a powerful love story, the bidding escaped from the limitations of the work's format...

Surrealism

Surrealism* is a cultural movement that began in the early 1920s, and is best known for its visual artworks and writings. Artists painted unnerving, illogical scenes with photographic precision, created strange creatures from everyday objects, and developed painting techniques that allowed the unconscious to express itself. Its aim was to "resolve the previously contradictory conditions of dream and reality into an absolute reality, a super-reality".

Works of surrealism feature the element of surprise, unexpected juxtapositions and non sequitur; however, many surrealist artists and writers regard their work as an expression of the philosophical movement first and foremost, with the works being an artifact. Leader André Breton was explicit in his assertion that Surrealism was, above all, a revolutionary movement.

Surrealism developed out of the Dada activities during World War I and the most important center of the movement was Paris. From the 1920s onward, the movement spread around the globe, eventually affecting the visual arts, literature, film, and music of many countries and languages, as well as political thought and practice, philosophy, and social theory.

(*Source: wikipedia.org)

Upcoming auctions

February 26, 2019: *Surrealist Art Evening Sale* - **Sotheby's London**

<https://www.artprice.com/sale/292467/surrealist+art+evening+sale>

February 27, 2019: *The Art Of The Surreal Evening Sale* - **Christie's London**

<https://www.artprice.com/sale/296145/the+art+of+the+surreal+evening+sale>

Copyright ©2019 thierry Ehrmann – www.artprice.com

Try our services (free demo):

<https://www.artprice.com/artist/23640/baishi-qi>

Subscribe to our services:

<https://www.artprice.com/subscription>

About Artprice:

Artprice is listed on the Eurolist by Euronext Paris, SRD long only and Euroclear: 7478 - Bloomberg: PRC - Reuters: ARTF.

Founded by thierry Ehrmann (see Who's who certified Biography) (c)

<https://imgpublic.artprice.com/img/wp/sites/11/2018/10/bio-2019-whos-who-thierry-ehrmann.pdf>).

Discover Artprice in video: <https://www.artprice.com/video>

Artprice is the global leader in art price and art index databanks. It has over 30 million indices and auction results covering more than 700,000 artists. Artprice Images® gives unlimited access to the largest Art Market resource in the world: a library of 126 million images or prints of artworks from the year 1700 to the present day, along with comments by Artprice's art historians.

Artprice permanently enriches its databanks with information from 6,300 auctioneers and it publishes a constant flow of art market trends for the world's principal news agencies and approximately 7,200 international press publications.

For its 4,500,000 members, Artprice gives access to the world's leading Standardised Marketplace for buying and selling art. Artprice is preparing its blockchain for the Art Market. It is BPI-labelled (scientific national French label) Artprice's Global Art Market Annual Report for 2017 published last March 2018: <https://www.artprice.com/artprice-reports/the-art-market-in-2017>

Artprice is associated with Artron Group the Chinese leader in the Art Market, its solid institutional partner.

About the Artron Group:

“Artron Art Group (Artron), a comprehensive cultural industrial group founded in 1993 by Wan jie, is committed to inheriting, enhancing and spreading art value. Based on abundant

art data, Artron provides art industry and art fans with professional service and experience of quality products by integrated application of IT, advanced digital science and innovative crafts and materials.

Having produced more than 60,000 books and auction catalogues, Artron is the world's largest art book printer with a total print volume of 300 million a year. It has more than 3 million professional members in the arts sector and an average of 15 million daily visits, making it the world's leading art website."

[Artron's Web: www.Artron.net](http://www.Artron.net)

Artprice's Contemporary Art Market Annual Report for 2017 - free access at:
<https://www.artprice.com/artprice-reports/the-contemporary-art-market-report-2017>

Artprice's press releases:

http://serveur.serveur.com/Press_Release/pressreleaseen.htm

<https://twitter.com/artpricedotcom>

Artmarket News:

<https://twitter.com/artpricedotcom> & <https://twitter.com/artmarketdotcom>

<https://www.facebook.com/artpricedotcom> 3.7 million subscribers

<http://artmarketinsight.wordpress.com/>

Discover the Alchemy and the universe of Artprice <http://web.artprice.com/video>, which headquarters are the famous Museum of Contemporary Art, the Abode of Chaos:

<http://goo.gl/zJssd>

<https://vimeo.com/124643720>

The Contemporary Art Museum The Abode of Chaos

<https://www.facebook.com/la.demeure.du.chaos.theabodeofchaos999>

3.5 million subscribers

Contact: ir@artprice.com