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Ibrahim El-Salahi's Oxford Tree, 2001

ART

Market News: Sudanese showcase

First selling show for Sudan's Ibrahim El-Salahi; Brazilian works soaring in value; Gursky's twin dealers; and Bonhams rumours rumble on - Colin Gleadell with this week's art market news



BY COLIN GLEADELL
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London dealer Toby Clarke has secured the first selling show of works by the Sudanese artist Ibrahim El-Salahi, whose exhibition at [Tate Modern](#) last year was widely applauded by the critics. Billed by Tate as “one of the most significant figures in African and Arab Modernism”, Ibrahim is in his eighties, and his work has been acquired not only by the Tate, but also by the Guggenheim, the Mathaf Museum in Qatar, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

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Clarke's exhibition opens at his Vigo Gallery on July 6, and prices will range from £15,000 to £200,000, though 12 of the 19 works have already been snapped up by collectors.



Ibrahim El-Salahi, The Tree, 2008

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Brazilian gallerist Luisa Strina, who is about to celebrate 40 years in business, was not at all perturbed by Brazil's managing only to draw against Mexico in the World Cup. "The government spends all that money on building football stadiums but does not look after the poor," she said.

Of more concern was the fate of some of her star works destined for Art Basel last week, which were being held by Brazilian customs. The works by Cildo Meireles have soared in value since she bought them, riding the wave of revaluation that has affected the Brazilian art market. Meireles's auction record, which was \$40,00 10 years ago, is now just over \$500,000. But officials with no understanding of the market thought she must be money-laundering, she says, and forbade their export.

Last month, two galleries in London were showing photographs by Andreas Gursky. His long-term dealers, Spruth Magers, were exhibiting smaller early works in their smaller gallery, while White Cube was showing the much bigger, latest works in its sprawling Bermondsey, south London, gallery.

One can see why the two galleries were needed, but wasn't there a rivalry between them? As if to assert their earlier claim to the artist, Spruth Magers had one of the very big Gursky photographs shown at White Cube, on its stand at Basel, and sold it for €500,000.

The latest rumour on the circuit concerning the possible sale of Bonhams auctioneers is that Chinese investors have been courted. Bonhams rarely announces its sale figures but did so for 2013 (£127 million) adding that it was in profit (£25 million). Earlier this month, Reuters reported that Bonhams was being valued at £200 million.

A bid from China is entirely plausible. Bonhams deputy chairman, Colin Sheaf, is a world expert in Chinese art, and for a company such as China Guardian, China's biggest auctioneer and the third largest in the world, buying Bonhams would give it a toe-hold in the West from which it could expand still further.



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