

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 April 13, 2018

Contact: Alexandra Nelson
 Communications Director
 212-254-4710, ext. 19
 alexandra@swanngalleries.com

Delaney, White & Woodruff Set Records at Swann Norman Lewis Painting Sells for \$725,000



New York—Swann Galleries held their highest-grossing auction to date on **April 5**, totaling \$4.5M—more than \$1M over the high estimate of the sale. The 160 works that made up the highly curated offering of **African-American Fine Art** represented auction debuts, recent rediscoveries and masterpieces from some of the most influential movements of the twentieth century. Of the nine lots that exceeded \$100,000, four were new artist records and a further two represented the second-highest price achieved by that artist.

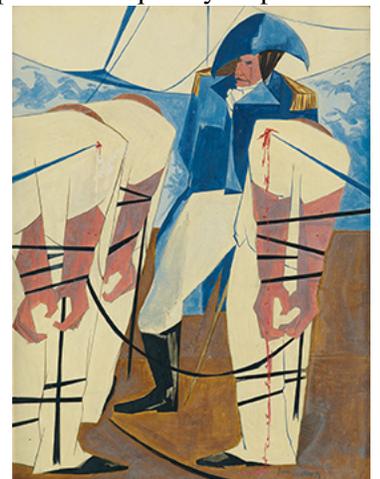


An untitled abstract painting of a city scene by **Norman Lewis** led the sale, finishing to applause at \$725,000, above a high estimate of \$250,000. It was the second-highest price ever paid for a work by the Abstract Expressionist; that record, \$965,000, was set by Swann in December 2015.

Another abstracted city scene brought a record for Beauford Delaney at \$557,000, well above the high estimate of \$250,000. *Untitled (Village Street Scene)*, 1948, is a thickly impastoed oil painting of one of Delaney's preferred subjects: the bustling streets of Greenwich Village in Manhattan. It was purchased by an institution.

Charles White's inspiring life-size charcoal drawing *O Freedom*, 1956, had not been seen publicly in more 60 years before the auction's preview. It quickly surpassed its high estimate of \$300,000, selling to a bidder on the phone for \$509,000, a record for the artist.

One of the most exciting pieces in the sale was a recently rediscovered canvas from **Jacob Lawrence**'s important series, *Struggle... From the History of the American People*. The work, *19. Tension on the High Seas*, was one of five missing panels from the series that was intended to chronicle the history of the United States from 1776 to 1817. It was purchased by a collector for \$413,000, more than four times its high estimate. Nearly all works by Lawrence offered in the sale found buyers, including a pen and ink drawing of *A Negro Woman*, 1958, which sold for \$8,125.



The second oil painting by Elizabeth Catlett ever to come to auction, *Head of a Woman (Woman)*, 1942-44, dates from the artist's early period in New York. It was purchased by an institution for \$209,000, the second-highest price paid for a work by Catlett, above a high estimate of \$120,000.

Additional records were achieved throughout the auction. Highlights included \$93,750 for Ed Clark's significant untitled abstract canvas, which went to a collector, and \$245,000 for *Primordial Landscape*, 1967, a postwar abstraction by Hale Woodruff, double its high estimate. Two important works by William H. Johnson, *Jitterbugs II* and *III*, circa 1941, set consecutive records for the artist. Neither work had ever appeared at auction and few prints are known of either. *Jitterbugs II* quickly surpassed its high estimate of \$40,000, selling to a collector for \$112,500, briefly a record, before *Jitterbugs III*, at the same estimate, peaked at \$118,750. Records were also set for Camille Billops, May Howard Jackson, Louise Jefferson, William Majors, Richard Mayhew, Robert Neal, Merton Simpson, Vincent D. Smith and Hartwell Yeagans.

Nigel Freeman, Director of African-American Fine Art at Swann Galleries, was pleased with the sale. He said, "We are just beginning to see the potential of the African-American Fine Art market." Swann Galleries is the only major auction house in the world with a department dedicated to this important field.

The next auction of African-American Fine Art at Swann will be held October 4, 2018. The house is currently accepting quality consignments.

Additional highlights can be found [here](#).

Captions:

[Lot 45](#): Norman Lewis, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 1956. Sold April 5, 2018 for \$725,000. (Pre-sale estimate: \$150,000 to \$250,000)

[Lot 50](#): Charles White, *O Freedom*, charcoal with crayon and wash, 1956. Sold April 5, 2018 for \$509,000, a record for the artist. (Pre-sale estimate: \$200,000 to \$300,000)

[Lot 55](#): Jacob Lawrence, *19. Tension on the High Seas*, tempera on board, 1956. Sold April 5, 2018 for \$413,000. Pre-sale estimate: \$75,000 to \$100,000)

Specialist: Nigel Freeman • nfreeman@swanngalleries.com • 212-254-4710 x 33

Press: Alexandra Nelson • alexandra@swanngalleries.com • 212-254-4710 x 19

Please credit all images *Courtesy of Swann Auction Galleries* or @swanngalleries on social media.

#

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE, ADDL. IMAGES & COMPLETE PRICES REALIZED ON REQUEST

Swann Auction Galleries is a third-generation family business as well as the world's largest auction house for works on paper. In the last 75 years, Swann has repeatedly revolutionized the trade with such innovations as the first U.S. auction dedicated to photographs and the world's only department of African-American Fine Art. More than 30 auctions and previews are held annually in Swann Galleries' two-floor exhibition space in Midtown Manhattan, and online worldwide. Visit swanngalleries.com for more information.