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**1960s-70s Abstraction Shines as Part of  
African-American Fine Art Auction at Swann Galleries**  
*With Important Paintings by Sam Gilliam, Norman Lewis & Al Loving*

New York— On **Thursday, October 6**, Swann Galleries will hold an auction of **African-American Fine Art**, featuring a variety of media by artists spanning the last 150 years.

The top lot in the sale is a recently discovered Norman Lewis painting titled *Birds in Flight*, oil and metallic paint on canvas, 1953, estimated at \$150,000 to \$250,000. The artist is also represented by the first work on canvas from his *Seachange* series to come to auction, *Block Island*, 1975, a monumental blue oil painting estimated at \$120,000 to \$180,000, as well as a fine selection of works on paper. Swann Galleries remains at the top of the market for Norman Lewis after setting the auction record for his work in December 2015 with an untitled circa 1958 oil painting at \$965,000.

*Block Island* is part of a run of late 1960s and early 1970s abstraction that sets this auction apart. Other highlights include a triptych of hexagonal canvases by Al Loving, Jr. titled *Three Solid Questions*, 1969. The work was featured in his first solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the same year and is estimated at \$120,000 to \$180,000. Also crossing the block is a stunning beveled-edge canvas by Sam Gilliam titled *What Did You in London Town?*, circa 1973 (\$120,000 to \$180,000). From the same year comes Frank Bowling's *Shut Up*, estimated at \$60,000 to \$90,000. At more than nine feet long, the painting epitomizes the artist's groundbreaking exploration of paint application, with stained and poured surfaces in green and red hues.

Another star of the sale is a watercolor by celebrated painter Alma Thomas: her 1966 *Genesis* is expected to bring \$20,000 to \$30,000. A rare abstract oil painting by Aaron Douglas titled *Creation*, 1969, is estimated at \$25,000 to \$35,000. Bordering on abstraction is David C. Driskell's *Black Crucifixion*, painted after the artist's trip to Europe and showing the influence of the Old Masters. The Biblical scene, nearly life size, is the first of his large figurative works from the 1960s to come to auction.

**MORE**

It is expected to bring \$35,000 to \$50,000. Further midcentury highlights include works by Elizabeth Catlett, Felrath Hines and Charles White.

The earliest material in the sale includes a mid-career oil painting by Edward M. Bannister, *Untitled (Cow Herd in Pastoral Landscape)*, 1877. The work, in its original frame, is expected to sell for \$35,000 to \$50,000. Collectors of early photography will be pleased by a rare collection of 18 silver print photographs by James VanDerZee, 1905-38 (\$35,000 to \$50,000).

Also on offer is a run of works by Romare Bearden spanning his career, including the jazz-themed 1988 watercolor with collage titled *All The Things You Are*, estimated at \$120,000 to \$180,000. A rare early collage by the artist, *A Land Beyond the River*, 1957, is a study for a set design for an off-Broadway play of the same name, and is expected to fetch \$75,000 to \$100,000. Other musically-inspired works include the jubilant 1973 acrylic and metal foil collage on canvas *Untitled (African Rhythm, Our Heritage)*, the earliest of Wadsworth Jarrell's significant 1970s paintings to come to auction, estimated at \$25,000 to \$35,000.

Rounding out the sale are four previously unrecorded woodcut prints by William H. Johnson discovered in an estate in Denmark: these include *Night Birds*, circa 1935, estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000 and a portrait of the artist's wife *Holcha Krake*, circa 1930-35 (\$12,000 to \$18,000).

The auction will be held Thursday, October 6, beginning at 2:30 p.m. The auction preview will be open to the public Saturday, October 1 from noon to 5 p.m.; Monday, October 3 through Wednesday, October 5 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m; and Thursday, October 6 from 10 a.m. to noon.

An illustrated auction catalogue is available for \$35 from Swann Galleries, Inc., 104 East 25th Street, New York, NY 10010, or online at [www.swannalleries.com](http://www.swannalleries.com).

For further information or to make advance arrangements to bid by telephone during the auction, please contact Director of African-American Fine Art Nigel Freeman at 212-254-4710, extension 33 or via e-mail: [nfreeman@swannalleries.com](mailto:nfreeman@swannalleries.com).

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