

Smith&Singer

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BANKSY'S ICONIC *LOVE IS IN THE AIR* (2003) TO BE OFFERED IN
INAUGURAL STAND-ALONE ONLINE AUCTION AT SMITH & SINGER

*The Instantly Recognisable Image Will be Offered in a Single-Lot, Timed,
Online Auction This May*

*Acquired in 2003 for Less than \$300 from the Museum of Contemporary Art
Store, Sydney, Work is Set to Eclipse Current Australian Auction Record for
Banksy*

*As Protests Take Place Globally for May Day, 'Love Is In The Air' Takes on Ever-
Greater Relevance to Society*



BANKSY born 1974

Love Is In The Air (2003)

screenprint on paper, edition 450 of 500

stamped and inscribed 'banksy / 450/500' lower right

46.7 x 67 cm (image); 49 x 69.3 cm (sheet)

Estimate \$100,000–150,000

MELBOURNE, 4 May 2021 – Bidding is now open on the inaugural, stand-alone SMITH & SINGER ONLINE auction, offering a signed and inscribed screenprint of Banksy's iconic, *Love Is In The Air* (2003). The auction will be open to bidding for 10 days, concluding at 10 pm on Thursday 13 May. Offered over 17 years since the original image was created, *Love Is In The Air* is now imbued with the struggles and protests of our society since that time – from Black Lives Matter to Women's Justice, Environmental and Climate Crisis to Brexit – and will continue to be one of the artist's most enduring images. Acquired in 2003 from the MCA Store at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney for less than \$300, the work is set to eclipse the Australian auction record for Banksy.

FROM PARIS TO PALESTINE: AN IMAGE OF PROTEST

The right to protest is considered one of the hallmarks of democracy. From the American War of Independence to the Berlin Wall, protest represents discourse, dissent, change. Embodying this, Banksy's paintings, prints and political gestures are subtly on point, with a hammer blow to authority and middle finger to art-world pretension.

Banksy's irresistible ascent is a matter of hit and run. Choosing walls and locations whose meaning he will invert is part of his iconoclasm. His strike into these spaces is about change and movement. Life is beautiful, but Banksy's drift and the free-floating thought of his imagery, point to the costs that freedom brings. For every gesture and step forward, there is a counter movement, a reaction.

Love Is In The Air (2003) is part of a larger series of paintings and prints also known as Flower Thrower. It is one of Banksy's most recognisable images and one that has been widely appropriated. Perhaps the most influential placement of the work was the large stencil that Banksy painted on a wall near Beit Sahour, a Palestinian town on the West Bank.



BRUNO BARBEY 1941-2020

Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, 6 May 1968, 1968

© Bruno Barbey | Magnum Photos

Love Is In The Air is prefaced also by Andy Warhol's Riot series of prints and paintings. A screen print, *Birmingham Race Riot* (1964, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York) was sourced by Warhol from a Life magazine photograph by Charles Moore. Similarly, the student protests of May 1968 in France provide impetus for *Love Is In The Air*. The demonstrations were born from discourse, but the principals were argued on the streets by marching and occupying sites. *Boulevard Saint Germain, Paris, 6 May 1968*, is one of the many images photo-journalist Bruno Barbey took of the riots. Barbey's image finds a

symmetry within a random moment. The frieze of figures that foreground the scene are sculpted into place; their arc, a procession, captures a figure to the right throwing a rock.

This is the moment of *Love Is In The Air*. Banksy's masked figure is not sending a missile. His intent is assured, as is his cause, but in isolation, the gesture is one of love. His hand holds a bouquet of flowers: it is the soft revolution, that of reason and sense, and not the bombast and bomb-blast of an authoritarian regime.

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Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer commented: 'We are delighted to be offering Banksy's Love Is In The Air in our inaugural stand-alone SMITH & SINGER ONLINE auction. A pioneer and disruptive force in so many aspects of the traditional art world, it is more than fitting that we offer Banksy's iconic image as a single work within this online-only auction. In recent years across Asia, Australia, Europe, the United States of America, and the world, we have seen a surge in activism that has brought our prejudices to the fore and illustrated that the tradition of protest is as relevant as ever in our society. From the 'rebirth' of the American Civil Rights Movement in the form of the Black Lives Matter marches – which struck a chord across the world – to the #metoo and women's rights protests, Love Is In The Air evokes myriad moments in the eyes of each viewer. We look forward to engaging with our clients over the next ten days and thank the consignor for entrusting Smith & Singer with this iconic work.'

AT A GLANCE

SMITH & SINGER ONLINE

BANKSY: *Love Is In The Air* (2003)

OPEN 4 May 2021, 10 am (AEST)

CLOSE 13 May 2021, 10 pm (AEST)

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Bidding will be exclusively online via our trusted partner, Invaluable.com.

[Click here to register to view the work and register to bid.](#)

[Click here to view the flipbook catalogue of *Love is In The Air* \(2003\)](#)

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Smith & Singer's buyer's premium is 22.7% of the hammer price not including GST. A further 5% transaction fee is applicable by Invaluable.com. ** Estimates do not include buyer's premium**

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