

Rory Mitchell, "Paddles Up: Five Prized Paintings at London's Spring Sales," *Ocula*, March 1, 2025

OCULA



Advisory Perspective

Paddles Up: Five Prized Paintings at London's Spring Sales

By Rory Mitchell

London, 1 March 2025

Market

As major London auction houses like Sotheby's, Christie's, and Phillips prepare for this spring's modern and contemporary marquee sales, Ocula Advisory identifies our must-see works and the lots that could achieve prices with a wider impact on the market.

For the first lots across this year's evening auctions, faith has been placed in hot artists Danielle McKinney and Royal College of Art graduate Ding Shilun, for whom early bidding will serve as a litmus test for prices at this level.

At the top end of the market, Sotheby's are offering a 2005 Yoshitomo Nara. Meanwhile, Christie's is bolstering its 20th and 21st century and Surreal evening sales with impressive works by Francis Bacon and René Magritte, each carrying a top estimate of £9 million.

Looking back at last year, combined sales of the three auction houses reflected a cautious sentiment, totalling approximately £317.7 million—a 15 percent drop from 2023, softened by the sale of a £29 million Magritte at Christie's. But with strong offerings across the board, we wait to see what next week says for the year.



Joseph Yaeger, *Silent Treatment* (2023). Watercolour and gesso on linen. 179.6 x 150.3 cm. Courtesy Sotheby's London.

2. Joseph Yaeger, *Silent Treatment* (2023) at Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary Evening Auction

Superstar painter Joseph Yaeger was due to be back in the top spot for Sotheby's Evening Auction with a striking large-scale work encapsulating the best of his celebrated practice: his penchant for the figure, the uncanny intimacy of his tight cropping, and his mastery of light and shadow. Now withdrawn from sale, *Silent Treatment* featured in Yaeger's 2023 solo exhibition of the same title at East London gallery Project Native Informant, underscoring its significance within the artist's oeuvre.

Gladstone Gallery and Modern Art recently announced their representation of Yaeger, and his *Sphinx without a secret* (2021), which is significantly smaller than *Silent Treatment*, sold for over £200,000 at Phillips last October—more than six times its high estimate.

Read Will Hine's interview with Yaeger in his East London studio [here](#).