

# Art Sales: celebrating the art of Finland and capitalising on Monet mania

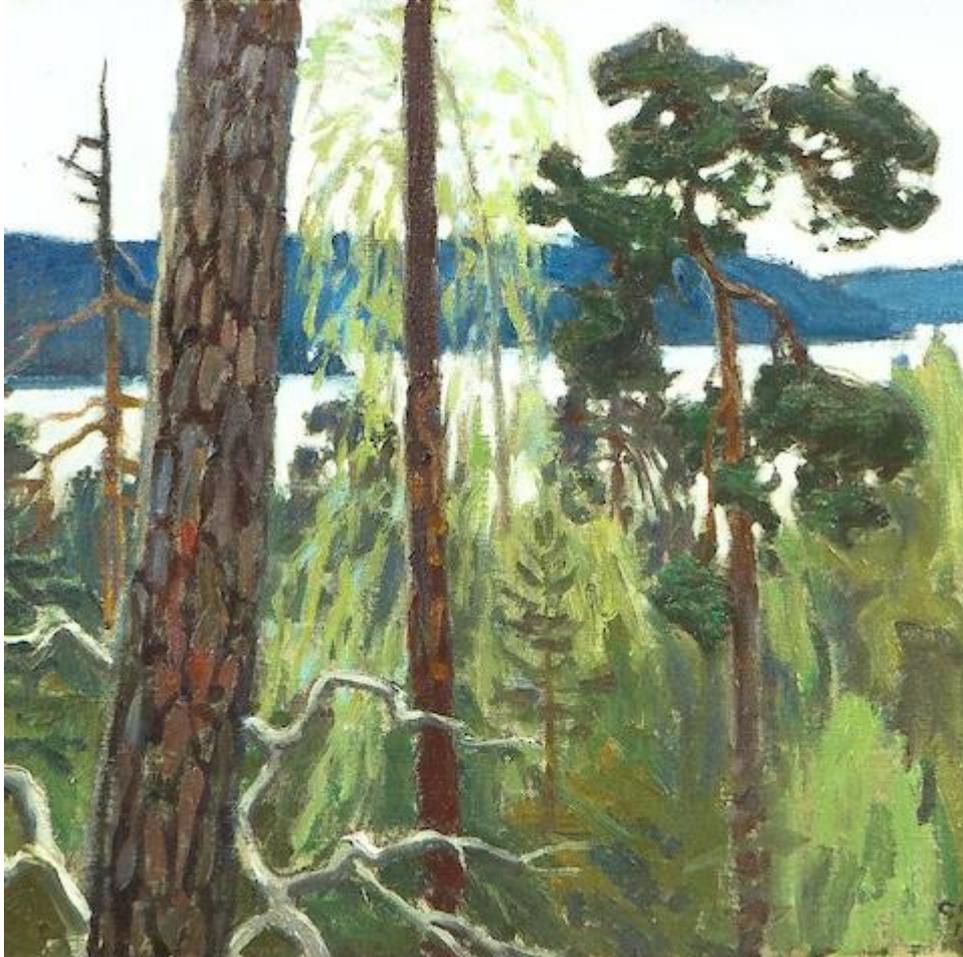


An Antonio Canova bust

By [Colin Gleadell](#)  
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## Celebrating the art of Finland

Anyone who has enjoyed the National Gallery's current exhibition devoted to Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela's turn of the century paintings of Lake Keitele should head to Duke Street, where an exhibition featuring Gallen-Kallela and his Nordic contemporaries celebrates the centenary of Finland's independence.



Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Pine Tree

Some 50 works by 30 artists display the influences of impressionism and post-impressionism. The exhibition has been organised by Scandinavian art specialist Anna Grundberg, together with Adrian Biddell, formerly head of 19th century European art at Sotheby's. Prices range from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

*Exhibition of Nordic art, 27 Nov - 2 Dec, 8 Duke St, St James's, London SW1*

## Two chances to own a Canova

Sculptures by the Italian neoclassical artist Antonio Canova, a favourite of Napoleon, are not that common on the market. How unusual, then, that two busts of members of the same family by Canova appear for sale separately within days of each other.



Canova's Bust of Caroline Murat

This evening, at Christie's Paris, a marble bust of Napoleon's brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, which has belonged to the sitter's family ever since it was commissioned in 1812, is to be auctioned with a €1 million (£894,000) estimate.

Then, later this week, as part of the new winter incarnation of London Art Week, Mayfair dealer Robilant + Voena unveils an original plaster cast of Murat's wife, Caroline, sister to Napoleon, which belongs to another branch of the same family (the marble version is lost). Because it is in plaster, Caroline's bust is priced at €850,000 (£760,000).

### Christie's capitalises on Monet mania

Christie's hunch that budding Monet mania in Asia would justify staging a sale in Hong Kong for 53 paintings, drawings, props and memorabilia from the artist's descendants paid off on Sunday. Each of the lots were sold; the majority for multiple-

estimate prices as bidders from Europe, America and the South Pacific competed with Asian trophy hunters.



Monet's spectacles were up for sale at the Hong Kong auction

While the often quite slight paintings and drawings by Monet and his contemporaries sold well enough, it was the Japanese prints - which he was among the first in France to collect - that excited the most competition. One of these, *The Monkey Bridge in Kai Province* by Utagawa Hiroshige, is thought to have influenced the creation of Monet's water lily gardens at Giverny. Estimated at \$12,000 HK, it sold for \$562,500 HK (£54,000 ).

Among the few items from his studio was a 19<sup>th</sup> century biscuit sleeping cat that was estimated at \$25,000 HK (£2,400) with a request that the buyer lend it to the Monet Foundation at Giverny in return for which their name would be engraved on a plaque next to it.

This clearly excited bidders who took the price up to \$525,000 HK (£50,000 ). The sale ended appropriately enough, with the artist's spectacles which he needed increasingly as he got older and blinder, estimated at \$8,000 HK and selling for \$400,000 HK (£38,400).