

25 Most Collectible Midcareer Artists: Romuald Hazoume

BY Angela M.H. Schuster, Art+Auction | September 11, 2015



A detail of Romuald Hazoume's "Bidon Armé," 2004.
(© Romuald Hazoume/Courtesy October Gallery, London)

In its September issue, Art+Auction compiled a list of the 25 most collectible midcareer artists working today. This month, ARTINFO will publish one installment from the feature per day. Click [here](#) to read Art+Auction editor-in-chief Eric Bryant's introduction to the list. To see all the installments published so far, click [here](#).

[Romuald Hazoume](#) | b. 1962 | Benin

Since his now iconic "masks" made out of spent gasoline canisters debuted at the Saatchi Gallery's "Out of Africa" show in London in 1992, Hazoumè has continued to appropriate discarded materials to craft his witty yet poignant responses to profound global sociopolitical concerns such as immigration, human trafficking, and the corporate quest for fuel and cheap labor. In his native country, men are forced to ferry contraband gasoline between Nigerian sources and their Beninese customers. "Hazoumè is not afraid to take on the big subjects in a tongue-in-cheek way, through his

photographs, masks, canvases, and installations,” says Elisabeth Lalouschek, artistic director of the London-based October Gallery, which has represented the artist since 2005. In explaining his works, Hazoumè has said, “I send back to the West that which belongs to them, that is to say, the refuse of consumer society that invades us every day.” A winner of the 2007 Arnold Bode Prize at Documenta 12 in Kassel, Germany, Hazoumè has been exhibited at the Guggenheim Bilbao, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the International Center of Photography in New York, and the Victoria & Albert and British Museums in London. In 2007 the latter acquired his installation *La bouche du roi*, 1997–2005, a 30-foot-long “slave ship” made out of plastic gas cans, for what now seems to be a relatively cheap £100,000 (\$150,000). Today, works of that size sell for around €400,000 (\$440,000), while the masks, which have achieved \$16,000 on the block, sell for up to €18,000 (\$20,000) in galleries. Paintings can be had for €20,000 (\$22,000) and photographs from €3,000 up to €35,000 (\$3,300–38,000) for large panoramas.

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