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Art Market

Blue and red paintings make the most money at auction, according to a study.

Nate Freeman

Mar 14, 2019 11:59AM, via [artnet News](#)



Norman Wilfred Lewis

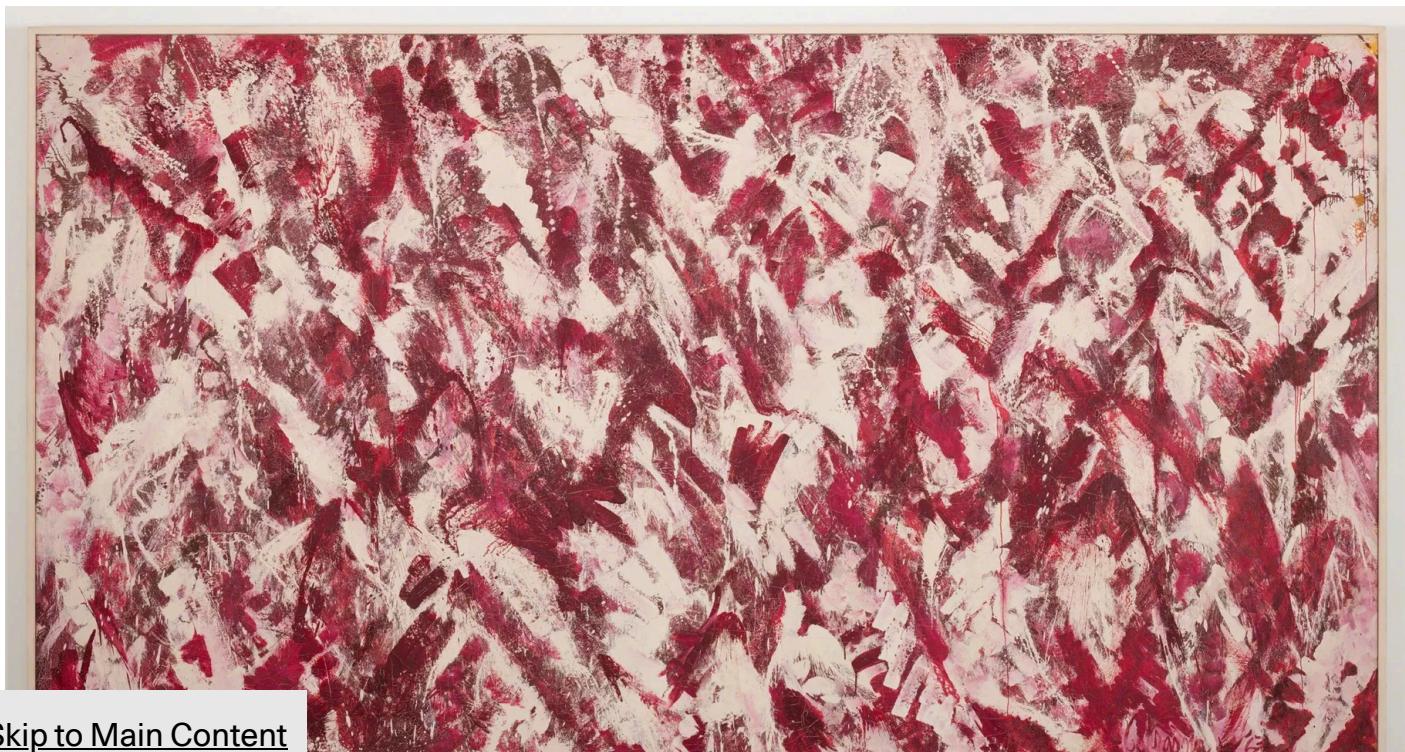
Change XV, 1977

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desirable?

The answer is as simple as it gets. According to a study that was picked up by artnet News, blue and red, the two primary colors that have been staples of everything from national flags to high-end fashion, are indeed the most popular colors when it comes to what sells at auction. The study began in 2013, when a specialist at Sotheby's wrote an essay that claimed that red and blue can only help sell a painting. Treating that as a jumping-off point, the researchers Marshall Ma, Charles N. Noussair, and Luc Renneboog analyzed 5,500 abstract works that had sold at auction, according to the Blouin Art Sales index, and found that blue and red works sold for prices 10.6% higher.



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Lee Krasner



The study attempts to determine why these two colors are the most popular, while acknowledging that “the psychological effect of color is complex.” According to a number of experts, red is “associated with being adventurous, aggressive, social, powerful, protective, brave, arousing, passionate, sexy, and exiting (sic).” Blue is associated with “dignity, conservatism, poise, and reserve but also with being relaxed, comfortable, soothing, and intellectual.”

Aspiring artists: Choose your hues accordingly. ■



Nate Freeman

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