

Art for sale



Smoky petals, shiny peepers and shimmering pastels. By Josh Spero



FLORAL TRIBUTE
(£132,000–£151,000*)

CONVOLOTUS ALCHEMELIA (QUIET-WILLOW WINDOW) (1998) BY DOROTHEA TANNING

WHY BUY Dorothea Tanning was one of the leading surrealists, and in the Forties her work included pictures of sunflowers climbing up stairs. This painting, made when the artist was 87, is part of a series of 12, and the bloom is an invented one, almost made of smoke, glowing from within, curving gynaecologically. It is, as surrealism set out to be, unsettling – all those lobster telephones and melting clocks were expressions of irrational desires, fears and doubts, and Tanning's work kept that unnerving quality until the end.

WHEN 2 September–1 October.

WHERE Alison Jacques Gallery, Berners Street, W1 (alisonjacquesgallery.com).



EYE SPY (£15,000)

LUCIDA (2016) BY SUKI CHAN

WHY BUY Science and art are always put in opposition to one another, as if art is never rigorous and science never creative. Suki Chan doesn't say that: in her mesmerising three-screen video, she shows there is much more to our perceptions of the world than the mechanics of the eye-brain train. Artists have long been fascinated by the eye (an essential for their trade), be it in Leonardo's anatomical drawings or Bridget Riley's wavy-line experiments in optical illusions. Chan is another link in the visual chain.

WHEN 16 September–22 October.

WHERE Tintype, 107 Essex Road, N1 (tintypegallery.com).



DEATH BECOMES HER
(£12,000 for the pair)

PORTRAITS OF CHARLES ELLIOTT AND HIS WIFE ELING VENN (1789) BY JOHN RUSSELL

WHY BUY Mr Elliott, in John Russell's pair of charming pastel portraits, looks like a decent sort: a furniture-maker by trade, he has a smart coat, a fine wig... and a hint of a drinker's nose. Meanwhile, Mrs Elliott, who was to live another 54 years after this picture, seems to have been drawn from beyond the grave, judging by her extreme pallor. Perhaps she was aghast at her husband's fondness for the claret. Or perhaps Mr Russell had left the flesh-coloured Crayola at home that day. Still, they make an endearing couple.

WHEN 13–18 September.

WHERE Arthistorical at the LAPADA Art & Antiques Fair, Berkeley Square, W1 (lapadalondon.com).

Josh Spero writes for the Financial Times.