

Uproar over proposed auction of Banksy mural removed from wall

Written by CATHERINE SAUNDERS-WATSON, Auction Central News International
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LONDON (ACNI) – It’s not the first time an artwork attributed to stealth muralist Banksy has been removed from its place of origin and sent to auction, but the latest such incident is sparking a furor in England. A report has gone viral throughout the British media that a Banksy mural painted on the side of a London shop last May was ripped off the wall and consigned to an auction in Miami.

Titled “Slave Labour (Bunting Boy),” the stencil and spray paint artwork with additional Golden Jubilee bunting is entered in Fine Art Auctions Miami’s Feb. 23 Modern, Contemporary and Street Art Sale with a \$500,000-\$700,000 estimate. The 48 by 60-inch painting depicts a grim-faced young boy on his knees, presumably in a sweatshop, stitching up Union Jack flags on a sewing machine. The auction catalog describes it as a “unique street work.”

Residents of North London’s Wood Green neighborhood are up in arms about the removal of the mural, which wasn’t discovered missing until yesterday. Apparently the wall from which it was removed last Wednesday was covered with scaffolding and a tarp. A published report in *The Guardian* said the mural is in storage in Europe, awaiting sale.

Frederic Thut, owner of Fine Art Auctions Miami, spoke with *Auction Central News* and confirmed that the consignor is “a well-known collector,” but declined to provide their name or identify where they are located. Thut said the collector had signed a consignment contract with Fine Art Auctions Miami and that the deal is legal.

“There is always a controversy when a Banksy is sold,” Thut told *Auction Central News*, “but everything is clear and correct, and the owner has the title and right to sell [the mural]. If a judge gives an order to stop its sale, then we will be more than happy to comply, but I am very sure that the sale is legal.”

London daily newspaper *The Sun* quoted Wood Green councilor Alan Strickland as saying, “Banksy gave our community that painting for free. Someone has taken it and plans to make a

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huge amount for themselves, which is disgusting and counter to the spirit in which it was given.”

The mural, which adorned one of the exterior walls of a store called Poundland -- the British equivalent of a dollar store -- had become a popular tourist attraction in Wood Green. There were even signs at the local Underground station to direct visitors to the artwork. A Poundland representative said the store was not responsible for the removal of the mural.

Click to view the online auction listing for the Banksy artwork:

http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/15778020_banksy-slave-labor-bunting-boy-london-2012

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ADDITIONAL IMAGE OF NOTE

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