

ART BY NUMBERS

A weekly analysis of the Indian and global art market

Why works by women artists sold better in 2018 than in 2017

₹55.5 cr

The sum raised from the sale of 152 works by 50 women artists last year, compared to 2017's tally of ₹22.9 crore raised from the sale of 151 works by 49 of them, according to Artery India's 2018 Performance Review. The turnover has more than doubled, despite the relative parity in the number of works sold in both years. So, what explains the jump?

A year's performance depends primarily on the quality and significance of the works on offer. Consider, for instance, that the top two works sold in 2018, both small format canvases by Amrita Sher-Gil, fetched ₹30.6 crore—well above the collective amount raised by all works by women artists in 2017. The top spot (by turnover) was claimed by Sher-Gil in 2018—nine of her works sold for ₹33.2 crore. Over the past decade, she has held the top spot thrice, sharing this tally with Bharti Kher and Arpita Singh. 2018 also saw the sale of the most expensive work by a woman artist. This honour, too, went to Sher-Gil. Her *The Little Girl In Blue* (pictured) was sold for ₹18.68 crore by Sotheby's, displacing her own previous best of ₹18.28 crore for an untitled self-portrait sold in 2015. The strongest year on record for women artists was 2015, when 122 works by 42 artists fetched ₹73.4 crore. This was on account of three significant canvases by Sher-Gil collectively realizing ₹52.9 crore, over 60% higher than the tally of the top three in 2018.



Compiled by Arvind Vijaymohan, CEO of Artery India—an art intelligence and sales advisory firm.