

EXHIBITIONS



Germany

Just why was Albrecht Dürer the most famous artist of his age?

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How the middle class fed the rise of portraiture in 20th-century Vienna

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A playful theme runs through the 2013 Carnegie International

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ANCIENT ART

Rome. The "youth who owed everything to his name" was Mark Antony's cutting description of Octavian, his ally turned bitter rival in the scramble for power after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44BC. Octavian, who later took on the name Augustus (reigned 27BC-AD14), was Caesar's great-nephew and adopted heir. Young, inexperienced and physically unimposing, he overcame seemingly insurmountable odds to trounce his adversaries, including the seasoned Antony, lead Rome's transformation from republic to empire and usher in a period of peace and stability to a nation previously marked by 100 years of rebellion and civil war.

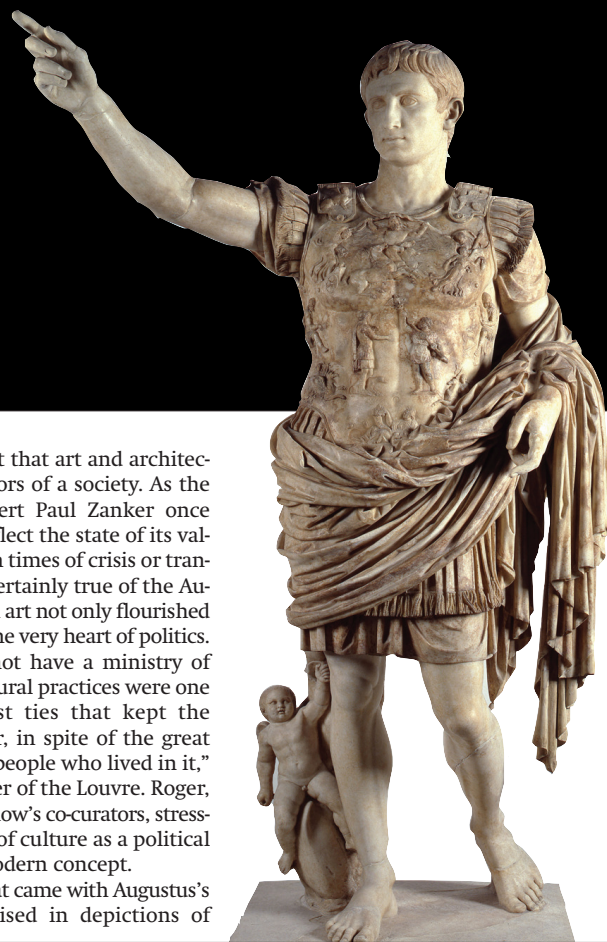
"In the years immediately after Caesar's assassination, Augustus's connection to the Julian bloodline [Julius Caesar's family] was his only trump card," says the scholar Annalisa Lo Monaco. However, she credits his "exceptional charisma and a consummate sense of

"He is one of the most extraordinary figures of the ancient world"

political opportunity" for making him "one of the most extraordinary characters of the ancient world and a figure that is still very relevant today". Lo Monaco is one of five curators behind "Augustus", a major show marking the 2,000th anniversary of the death of Rome's first emperor. The show, which was conceived and co-organised by the noted archaeologist and former director of the Capitoline Museums, Eugenio La Rocca, opens this month in Rome before travelling to the Louvre, Paris, in the spring. Rome is also celebrating the anniversary with the restoration of Augustus's mausoleum, which he built in the Campus Martius in 28BC – three years after defeating Antony at the Battle of Actium. The tomb has been closed to the public for almost 80 years.

The art of imperial power

An exhibition in Rome celebrates the 2,000th anniversary of the death of Augustus, Rome's first emperor



Augustus as Pontifex Maximus (above) and the Hellenistic-style "Prima Porta" sculpture

lush vegetation and animals nursing their offspring like those found on Rome's famous altar of peace, the Ara Pacis (9BC), or those on the first-century AD Grimani reliefs, which will travel from Vienna and Palestrina to be reunited for the show.

Images of the emperor were particularly effective tools in which to communicate Augustus's political might. Portraits of him in various guises graced the far corners of the Empire and several of the most important surviving examples form the centrepiece of the exhibition. Visitors

will have the chance to see marble works such as the Hellenistic-style "Prima Porta" portrait (Vatican Museums) and Augustus as Pontifex Maximus (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme) next to bronzes such as one from Meroe, Nubia (British Museum), and an equestrian statue, which is travelling from Greece to Italy for the first time. Also on display are portraits of Augustus and his wife Livia found in Neuilly-le-Réal, France. Recent tests at the Laboratoire de restauration et de recherches des musées de France have shown the pair of portraits, long thought to be fake, to be authentic.

Emily Sharpe

• *Augustus, Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome, 18 October-9 February 2014*

Qatar hosts Hirst mega-show

CONTEMPORARY

Doha. Damien Hirst's first solo exhibition in the Middle East opens this month in Qatar at the Al Riwaq Art Space, Doha. The exhibition, entitled "Relics", is billed as "the largest collection of [the artist's] work ever assembled". It incorporates pieces spanning 25 years from every major series Hirst has ever made, such as the "Spot" and "Spin" paintings, the natural history sculptures, and the medicine cabinets, and will also include his 2007 diamond-encrusted skull *For the Love of God*, as

well as art fresh from the studio.

This will be "a great introduction to the artist's work in the region", says Jean-Paul Engelen, the director of public programmes for the Qatar Museums Authority. The authority sponsored Hirst's retrospective at Tate Modern, London, last year – a move that was surely designed to facilitate loans from the artist for this show, although Engelen denies this.

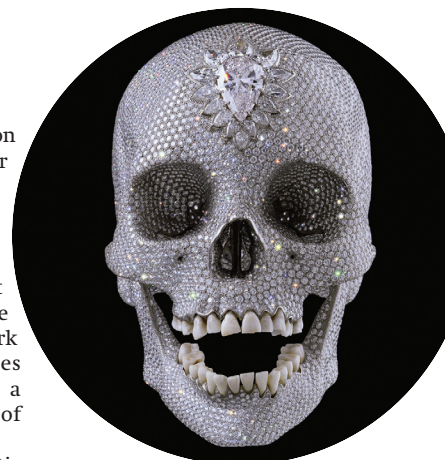
The Qatari royal family have long been supporters of Hirst, not least because the artist's work has never shown much interest in sex or nudity. In 2007 they bought his 2002 medicine cabinet

Lullaby Spring at Sotheby's in London for £9.7m, then an auction record for the work of a living artist.

Reduction

For Hirst, the Qatari exhibition comes at an opportune time as his market in the West continues to decline due in large part to the oversupply of work and the lack of new ideas. Prices have declined by around 30% with a steep reduction in the volume of auction sales.

Hirst's transformation from artistic powerhouse to commercial enterprise was perhaps summed up best by the

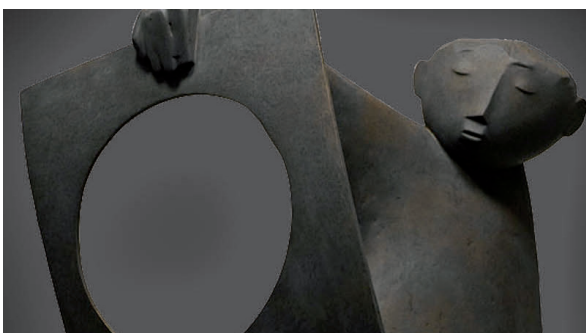


Damien Hirst's diamond encrusted *For the Love of God*, 2007

independent curator Francesco Bonami, who is the curator of this exhibition. In his 2010 book *Si crede Picasso* (He thinks he's Picasso), published in Italian, Bonami writes: "[Hirst] transforms shit into gold... having made works which... will enter the history of art, from the shark to the diamond skull, he has now decided to make the occasional good work in the name of art, and many bad works for money." Bonami declined to answer questions for this article.

Cristina Ruiz

• *Damien Hirst: Relics, Al Riwaq Art Space, Doha, 10 October-22 January 2014*



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