

GLOBAL BRIEFING

Top stories from the world of art and heritage

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→ Charlie Hebdo reprints caricatures of Prophet Muhammad

The French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* reprinted the same caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that provoked a deadly terrorist attack on its offices in 2015, which left 12 people dead. The cartoons were republished on 2 September, the day that 14 alleged accomplices to the attack went on trial in Paris.

"Reproducing these caricatures

this week... seemed essential to us," *Charlie Hebdo*'s editors wrote in explanation of their decision. "All the reasons that could be opposed to us relate only to political or journalistic cowardice. Do we want to live in a country that prides itself on being a great free and modern democracy, and which, at the same time, gives up on asserting its deepest convictions? For [us], it is out of the question."

The reprinting of the cartoons was widely condemned by Muslim countries. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry

said on Twitter that "such a deliberate act to offend the sentiments of billions of Muslims cannot be justified as an exercise in press freedom... such actions undermine the global aspirations for peaceful co-existence as well as social and inter-faith harmony." Egypt's top Islamic authority, al-Azhar University, said that while it "strongly condemned" the 2015 attack on *Charlie Hebdo*'s offices, re-publishing the "offensive cartoons" is a "criminal act", which "reinforces hate speech and will whip up the feelings of believers".

The terrorist group Al-Qaeda also reacted to the reprinting of the cartoons; in one of its English-language publications it warned that *Charlie Hebdo*'s editors are wrong to think the 2015 attack was a "one off". It also said that it had the "same message" for the president of France, Emmanuel Macron.

On 7 January 2015, French Muslim brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi gunned down cartoonists, editors and other staff members in the *Charlie Hebdo* offices as well as a policeman outside the building. Survivors

say that the brothers shouted "we have avenged the Prophet" as they left the building at the end of the massacre. The siblings, who pledged their allegiance to Al-Qaeda, were eventually killed by French security forces after a manhunt. In a related attack two days later, jihadist gunman Amédée Coulibaly murdered four people in a Jewish supermarket in the east of Paris. He was killed when security forces stormed the building and freed the hostages trapped inside. The alleged accomplices to these attacks stand accused of terrorist conspiracy and complicity to murder; their trial is expected to last till November.

✕ Brooklyn museum auctioning its collection

The Brooklyn Museum in New York is selling 12 works from its permanent collection at Christie's in October. They include a 16th-century



Lucretia by Lucas Cranach the Elder (around 1526-27) is one of 12 works in the Brooklyn Museum that is to be sold at Christie's this month

painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Lucretia*, the only work by the artist in the museum's collection, which is expected to sell for up to \$1.8m. An 1868 landscape by Gustave Courbet, an 1820s portrait by Camille Corot and a full-length 15th-century *Scint Jerome* by Donato de' Bardi, who was active in Lombardy and Liguria, will also be sold.

Anne Pasternak, the Brooklyn Museum director, told *The Art Newspaper* that the money generated from the sale will be put in a new \$40m fund planned by the institution to pay for the care of its collection; this could generate \$2m a year. Additional works will be sold in the future to help the museum reach its \$40m goal. Pasternak said, "The curators have been very careful to select works [to sell] that... will

unless the funds raised were used to pay for other acquisitions.

✕ Everson Museum sells works to diversify

Meanwhile, the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York announced that it will sell an early Jackson Pollock drip painting, *Red Composition* (1946) at Christie's to fund the purchase of work by women, artists of colour and other marginalised groups. It is expected to make up to \$18m.

"By deaccessioning a single artwork, we can make enormous strides in building a collection that reflects the amazing diversity of our community," museum director Elizabeth Dunbar told the *Los Angeles Times*. The newspaper's art critic, Christopher Knight, was not convinced. "It's shocking that the Everson has chosen to sell off an irreplaceable artefact—a rare formative work by the first American painter with profound international impact," he wrote, concluding that the decision to "privatise public assets as a solution for social ills [which] took off with the rightward shove of the Reagan era is 'inevitable'."

The Everson Museum is the third US institution to sell art by blue-chip artists to raise funds for the diversification of their collections. In 2018, the Baltimore Museum of Art disposed of seven works by Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and other 20th-century white male artists so that it could buy contemporary work by women and artists of colour. The following year, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art sold a \$50m painting by Mark Rothko for the same reason.

→ Banana goes to the Guggenheim

A banana taped to a wall, which inspired countless memes and debates about the stupidity of the very rich when it was unveiled at Art Basel Miami Beach last December, has been donated to the Solomon R.



The 2015 killing of staff at the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* by terrorists sparked protests around the world under the slogan "Je suis Charlie"