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Ballerina Natalia Osipova Puts First-Ever NFT Ballets Up for Sale

The auction in London will run until Dec. 10.

November 30, 2021



bonhams.com

At noon in London on Nov. 29, the first non-fungible tokens (NFTs) for ballets went on sale at Bonhams auction house. Three ballets performed by Natalia Osipova, a principal dancer at The Royal Ballet, will be up for auction until Dec. 10.

The performances on sale, called "Natalia Osipova: Triptych," consist of two pieces from "Giselle," and one from the contemporary piece, "Left Behind," which she performs with her partner and fiancé Jason Kittelberger. The performances are being sold through Bonham's program "Encore! Modern Art on Stage."

The two short pieces from "Giselle" are expected to sell at up to $16,000, and "Left Behind" is may reach as high as $67,000.

NFTs are any kind of data preserved in digital form, such as photographs, videos, and audio

files. NFTs can be copied, reproduced, traded or the rights sold for other uses, but there is only one original. Proof of ownership is fixed using blockchain technology.

While other NFT art has been sold, this is the first time ballets are being auctioned. The head of Bonhams digital art, Nima Saharchi, said in an interview that the house was "proud to be a pioneer in the NFT field," and that "through NFTs we are able to crystallize unique performances and own and collect what would otherwise be intangible."

Interest and prices are expected to be high for performances by Natalia Osipova, considered one of the finest ballerinas performing today. She was born in Russia and trained as a dancer there from the age of nine. When she was 18 years old, she joined the Bolshoi Theater's *corps de ballet*. In 2010 she was made one of the Bolshoi's principal dancers, but left the company that year in search of greater "artistic freedom." After several years of celebrated performances in some of the world's most prestigious and varied dance companies, she joined The Royal Ballet as a principal dancer in 2013.

She explained her decision to perform and sell digital performances as a way to earn money to establish a dance company with Kittelberger. She also said that given the short careers of dancers, this was a good time to record her performances. She said, "These performances are extremely significant for me, and I am delighted that global audiences can appreciate them in a way that has never been possible before."

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