



## Sotheby's courts new buyers with an assist from Drake



Tracey Samuelson/Marketplace

National art critic Ben Davis of ArtNet News samples music selections by Drake at Sotheby's "I Like It Like This" exhibition.

by ***Tracey Samuelson*** (</people/tracey-samuelson>)

***Friday, May 15, 2015 - 13:48***

A Jean-Michel Basquiat painting hangs on a wall in Sotheby's S2 gallery in New York — two black and red faces in profile on a gray background. On a stand in front of it, an iPad with a pair of Beats by Dre headphones plays a song by [ILoveMakonnen](https://soundcloud.com/ilovemakonnen/rumor-acoustic-version) (<https://soundcloud.com/ilovemakonnen/rumor-acoustic-version>).

The pairing is part of a recent show, “[I Like It Like This](http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2015/i-like-it-like-this-s2-drake-n09373.html) (<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2015/i-like-it-like-this-s2-drake-n09373.html>).” While Sotheby's is best known for its high-end auctions, it sells through gallery exhibitions as well. For this one, curators tapped an unexpected partner: Drake, the Canadian TV actor turned Grammy-winning musician. He selected [songs to go with roughly 20 works of art in the show](http://on.beatsmusic.com/playlists/pl306987419658486272?) (<http://on.beatsmusic.com/playlists/pl306987419658486272?>

[utm\\_content=&utm\\_term=pl306987419658486272&awesm=beats.mu\\_tobYF&utm\\_medium=playlist&utm\\_source=direct&utm\\_campaign](#)).

The idea is to look at the dialogue between black American art and music, says S2 Director Jackie Wachter.

“You have [Takashi] Murakami doing Kanye West albums ([http://www.vulture.com/2007/08/kanye\\_west\\_meets\\_takashi\\_murak.html](http://www.vulture.com/2007/08/kanye_west_meets_takashi_murak.html)), you have Jay Z rapping about Picasso (<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/videos/jay-zs-picasso-baby-a-performance-art-film-makes-its-debut-20130803>),” Wachter says. “There obviously is this intersection and overlap between the two art forms.”

So what is the dialogue? What do the pairings say? Wachter says they’re just Drake’s interpretations; she didn't ask for explanations, and he didn't say.

“I sort of think it’ll come out organically here and there,” she says.



To accompany this 2014 painting by artist Kehinde Wiley, “Ferdinand-Philippe-Louis-Henri, D’Orléans,” Drake chose the song “[Multiply](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v6JUzxWoGw) (”<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5v6JUzxWoGw>”) by A\$AP Rocky.

Tracey Samuelson/Marketplace

But Wachter is very clear on why Drake makes sense for Sotheby’s: The company is hoping its association with Drake might bring new, younger people in the door.

“We’re just a business that’s trying to grow,” Wachter says. “It’s interesting to look at our numbers and see ‘Wow, we really have the same clients every single year.’ ”

Plus, Sotheby’s is eager to be seen as cool, says [Ben Davis](https://news.artnet.com/ben-davis/) (<https://news.artnet.com/ben-davis/>), the national art critic for ArtNet News.

“I really view this as an experiment,” he says. “It’s a little bit of a freakish experiment, like throwing stuff at the wall at seeing what sticks. In this case, like literally just throwing up iPads with music on them and seeing if that amuses people.”

Price tags for the show range from \$10,000 to \$10 million — songs not included.