

## Expert eye: Julia Peyton-Jones

The director of the Serpentine Gallery chooses Leon Golub as a breed apart at the fair

By Anny Shaw | 14 Oct 11



Leon Golub, "Bite Your Tongue", 2001, (\$750,000), Anthony Reynolds Gallery, H3

This fantastic painting was in the [recent] Reina Sofía exhibition of his work at the Palacio de Velázquez, and it encompasses so many aspects of his work. Golub [1922-2004] was highly politicised. He was an activist and a campaigner, and this work combines some of the things he is best known for: the slogans, the texts, the graffiti element. There's a head that reminds me of Basquiat.

Of course, the dog is a central part of the picture; in the mid-1990s, he did a book about dogs called *Beware of Dog*. The dog always seems to feature in his work. I am a dog lover, but that's not why I chose the work.

The first time I recognised him for the extraordinarily astonishing artist that he was came at a collaborative show he did at the Eli Broad Art Foundation; the [Madrid] show was also simply amazing. It's wonderful to find an important work by this artist at a fair—I particularly wanted to choose this work.

In these uncertain times, and particularly at a fair, where it's all about sales and commerce and this incredible display of so many things, it's fantastic to have something that really is grounded in gravitas and weight. It's a kind of mark in the sand. It's a great example of the artist's late work and was shown at Documenta in 2002, so it really is a museum work. It's all to do with somehow creating a patina.