

American wins US\$1m Picasso in online tombola

PARIS, FRANCE: A US ticket-holder in a worldwide online charity raffle walked away with an exquisite US\$1m Picasso after paying a mere €100, Sotheby's said after organising the first-of-its-kind tombola.



This painting by Pablo Picasso - worth US\$1m - was won in an online Raffle organised by Sotheby's. Image: [Art Timeless](#)

The perfectly preserved Cubist artwork had been bought by an anonymous donor from a New York gallery and given to a charity working to save the ancient city of Tyre in southern Lebanon.

The UNESCO-registered charity issued 50,000 tickets at €100 each for the tombola at Sotheby's in Paris, hoping to raise US\$5m.

The lucky winner was 25-year-old Jeffrey Gonano from Pennsylvania, who works for a fire protection company.

The charity wants the money to develop a traditional handicraft village giving young people, women and the disabled jobs in Tyre and to set up an institute for Phoenician studies in Beirut.

Olivier Picasso, Pablo's grandson, was among those drumming up interest to sell the tickets.

"Buy a ticket and enjoy a double pleasure," Olivier, whose grandmother Marie-Therese Walter was Picasso's mistress, had told AFP.

"The first one will be to help a really interesting project and the second one is, hey, maybe to get a Picasso on your wall," he said.

People from all over the world went online to buy just one or a handful of tickets from the website [Picasso Online](#)

Infidelities

Picasso is almost as famous for his chronic infidelities and succession of beautiful women as for the genius of his work that makes his masterpieces some of the most expensive on the planet.

Although Olivier never met his grandfather, he has written books about the life of the 20th century art genius and is convinced that Picasso would have approved of the pre-Christmas tombola.

"In many ways he was excited about exploration, so for sure being the first one to be in a raffle would be exciting but more seriously he was really concerned by other people's problems.

"In the '50s for example he was receiving something like 100 requests a day for money, for participation in a project or for a gift. I've been told most of the requests were answered," he said.

Olivier, who says he has many Picassos of his own, described the signed "L'Homme au Gibus" or "Man in the Opera Hat", painted in 1914, as a "masterpiece" of museum standard in perfect condition.

The International Association to Save Tyre (AIST) says it is the first time that a top-level piece of art has ever been raffled.

Their publicity drive began in Paris, moved to London and finished in New York. The website functioned in Arabic, English, French and Russian to widen the net of potential buyers.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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