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## The Art Market: Bad apples and big bucks



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APRIL 22, 2011 by: Georgina Adam

After Alma-Tadema's lush recreation of antiquity, "The Finding of Moses" (1904), [sold for an astonishing \\$35.9m](#) in New York last year, it was inevitable that more works by the Victorian painter would come on to the market. Now Sotheby's is offering "The Meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, 41 BC" (1883), showing Antony spying a languorous, leopard-skin draped Cleopatra, in a Nile barge. But "The Meeting", carrying the same pre-sale estimate as "Moses" (\$3m-\$5m) is half its size, and is a darker and more confined work, lacking the lighter palette and "Cecil B DeMille" quality of "Moses".

"Remember, just because one painting by an artist does exceptionally well does not mean the next one will ... it all comes down to what is on the canvas," says the New York 19th-century specialist Howard Rehs, who points out: "One of the buyers for these works has now got his painting, so he or she may not be bidding." An insider says that the buyer of "Moses" "has been wondering if it can be hung on his yacht" – which I conclude must be huge, as "Moses" measures over 2m x 1.3m. "The Meeting" comes up for sale on May 5 in New York.