



PINCHED

/pɪntʃt/

*Adjective: to take something without the permission
or knowledge of the owner and keep it.*

NICK SMITH

03.05.19 - 01.06.19

PRESENTED BY RHODES CONTEMPORARY GALLERY LONDON

“The true art in art theft is not in the stealing... It’s in the selling.”

Art clearly has value, both cultural and economic, but the precise measures of this value within the art world are not widely understood. Whilst researching and creating pieces for my previous show ‘Priceless’, my fascination with the economic structures within the art world grew. Some people appreciate an artwork for the image itself, and others for the space it occupies - physically, socially, financially and culturally. I became interested in how art theft alters these equations.

The perceived cultural and financial value of a stolen artwork changes, often dramatically, once something so recognisable is pinched. Reports about art crime tend to glamourise the activity, often highlighting the monetary value loss and negating to factor in the vast cultural losses, which carry a far greater impact on society. Each piece lost represents a partial loss of our heritage. My fascination is not with the artworks themselves, but the stories behind the thefts. What is the motivation? Why that piece? And how does the theft influence the artwork’s place in our current cultural landscape? *Pinched* explores the stories behind the stolen art.

Most things become more interesting once we’ve lost them. An umbrella left on the tube takes on far greater value once the realisation of its absence is noted, particularly in the presence of clouds. Things take on greater significance not because of their worth or value, but because of the possibilities their absence presents. The same is true in the art world.

As explored in ‘Priceless’, the current market provides numerous examples of artworks fetching prices that seem to defy economic principals. Members of the criminal underworld have also noticed this apparent discrepancy in the financial value of art. Contrary to popular beliefs, it’s not all private jets, secret compartments and men in bowler hats. This collection includes: accounts of a broken doorknob and a slight, moustached man in a white smock lurking in a gallery cleaning closet with the Mona Lisa tucked under his garments; some gilet wearing, Axe wielding tourists in sun hats visiting a Scottish highland castle and escaping out a window with another Da Vinci; and two guys posing as policemen, who gaffer taped unexperienced security, then made off with 13 priceless works of art by world-renowned artists such as Rembrandt, Vermeer, Manet, and Degas.

If these pieces were not stolen to order to hang in a Bond villain’s lair, who is stealing them, and why? Art theft has turned into a global industry that experts believe now fuels everything from terrorism to drug-running. At least one art sleuth puts art crime, including stolen antiquities and traffic in forgeries, behind only drugs and arms trafficking as the third-most lucrative criminal activity in the world, at \$2 to \$6 billion a year. Consider that a stolen artwork often only raises 10% of its true value on the black market. The remaining 90% is occupied by the risk of ownership. Why steal something with so little a return on it’s value? It seems that the majority are stolen as collateral for shady underground activities.

But what of the cultural impacts of these thefts? Prior to the much publicised pilfering of 1911, the Mona Lisa hung in one of the Louvre’s many galleries without pomp and ceremony amidst a mass of other artworks relatively unknown to the uninitiated. The notoriety she gained from the heist drew the masses to view the empty wall space. The details surrounding the case captured the curiosity of the crowds catapulting her to international infamy. Much like the umbrella left on the tube, her absence is where her value lay.

So what is it about art theft that holds such magnetism over our current social and cultural landscape, turning audiences into installation pieces, who have no idea that their gathering in the void left by a famous theft is the true work of art? What are they looking for? What is the fascination?

‘Pinched’ aims to shed some light on the often surprising, always colourful wealth of stories behind the heists.





Van Gogh - Sunflowers

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 70cm x 92cm

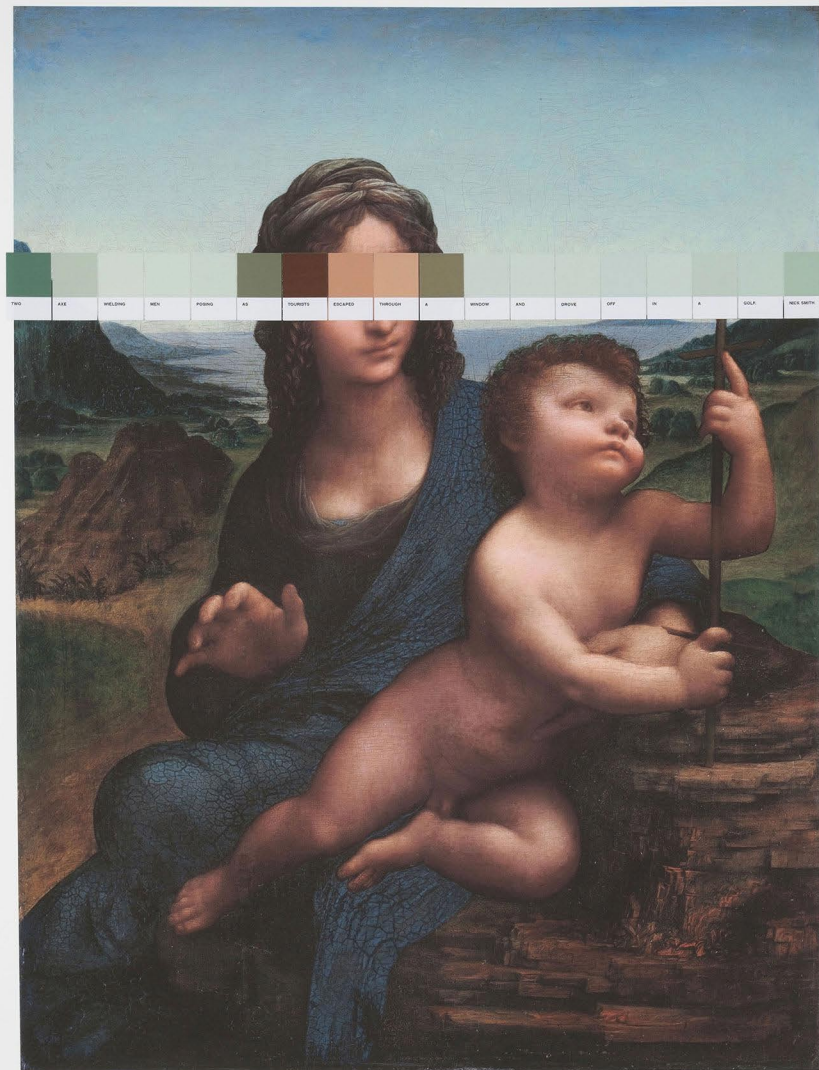
754 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£4,200 Framed

Pinched: 14 April, 1991

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Nick Smith '19

Da Vinci - Madonna & the Yarnwinder - (Strip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 3 + 1 a/p

Paper size 56cm x 70cm

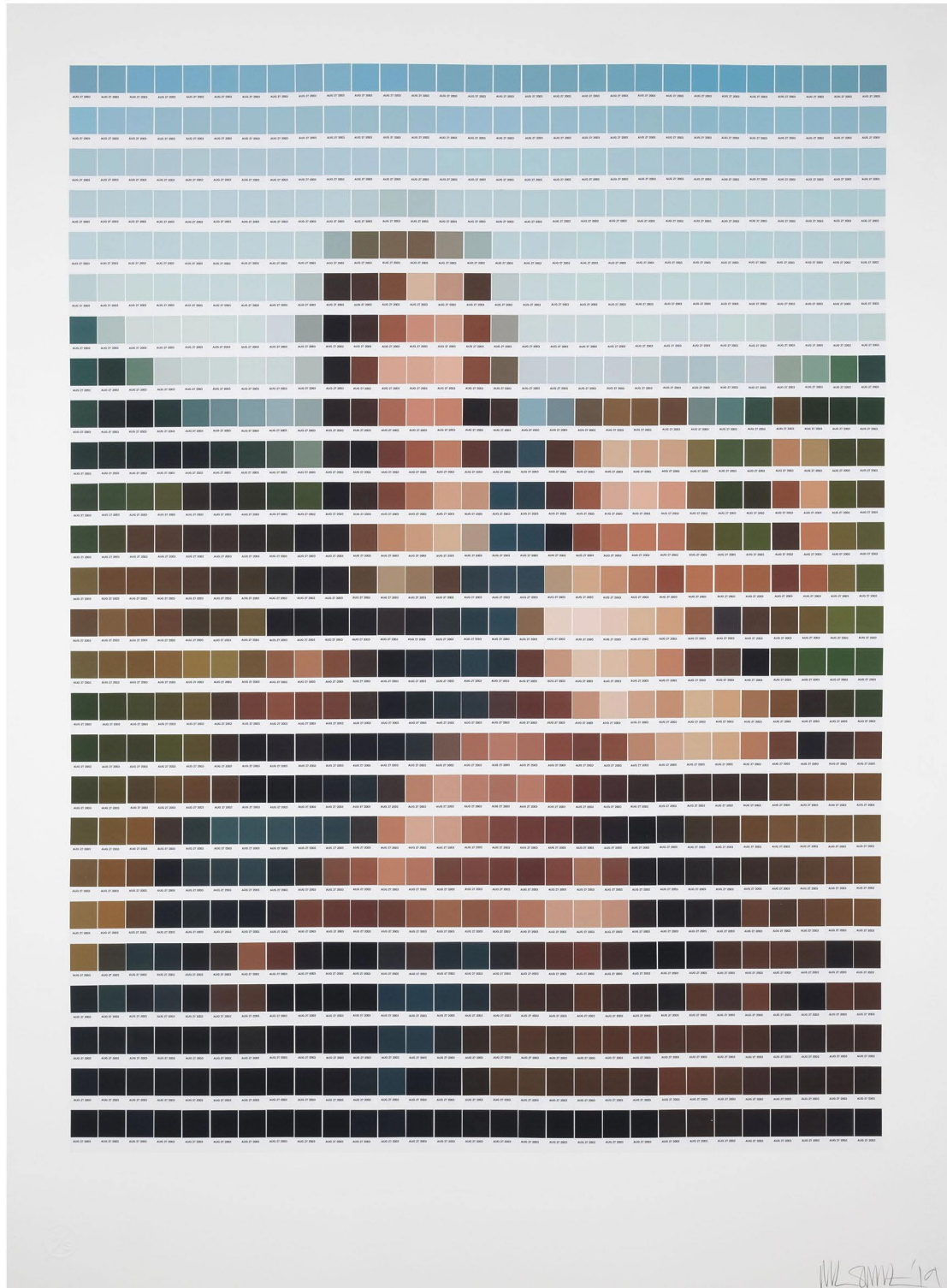
18 colour chip collage on printed Somerset Satin paper

£1,600 Framed

Pinched: August 27, 2003

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Da Vinci - Madonna & the Yarnwinder

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 69cm x 93.5cm

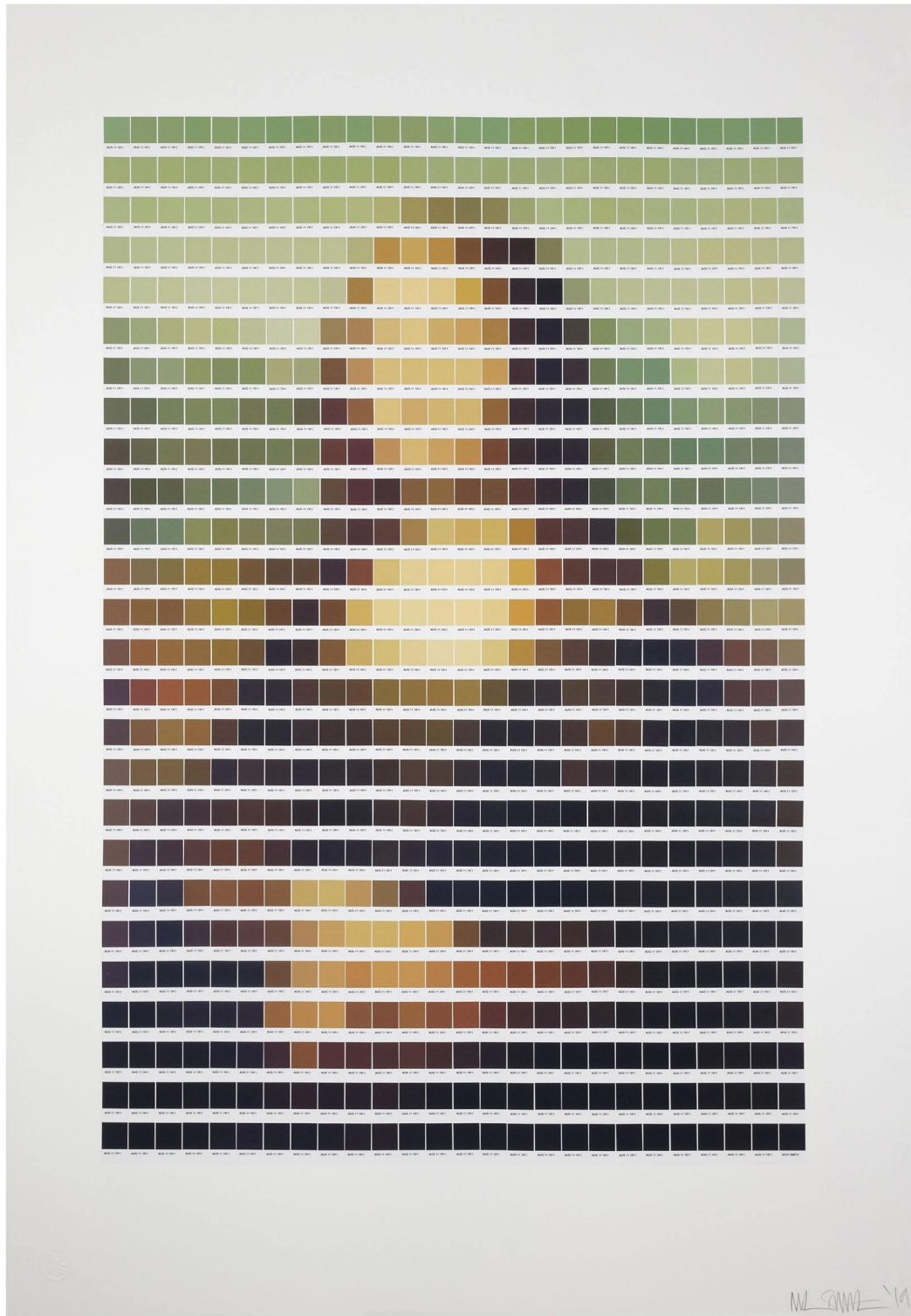
754 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£4,200 Framed

Pinched: August 27, 2003

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Da Vinci - Mona Lisa

Nick Smith 2019
Edition of 1 + 1 a/p
Paper size 69cm x 97cm
676 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£4,200 Framed

Pinched: August 21, 1911
Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Louvre Wall with Door Knob (Mona Lisa)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 7 + 1 a/p

Paper size 27.5cm x 35cm

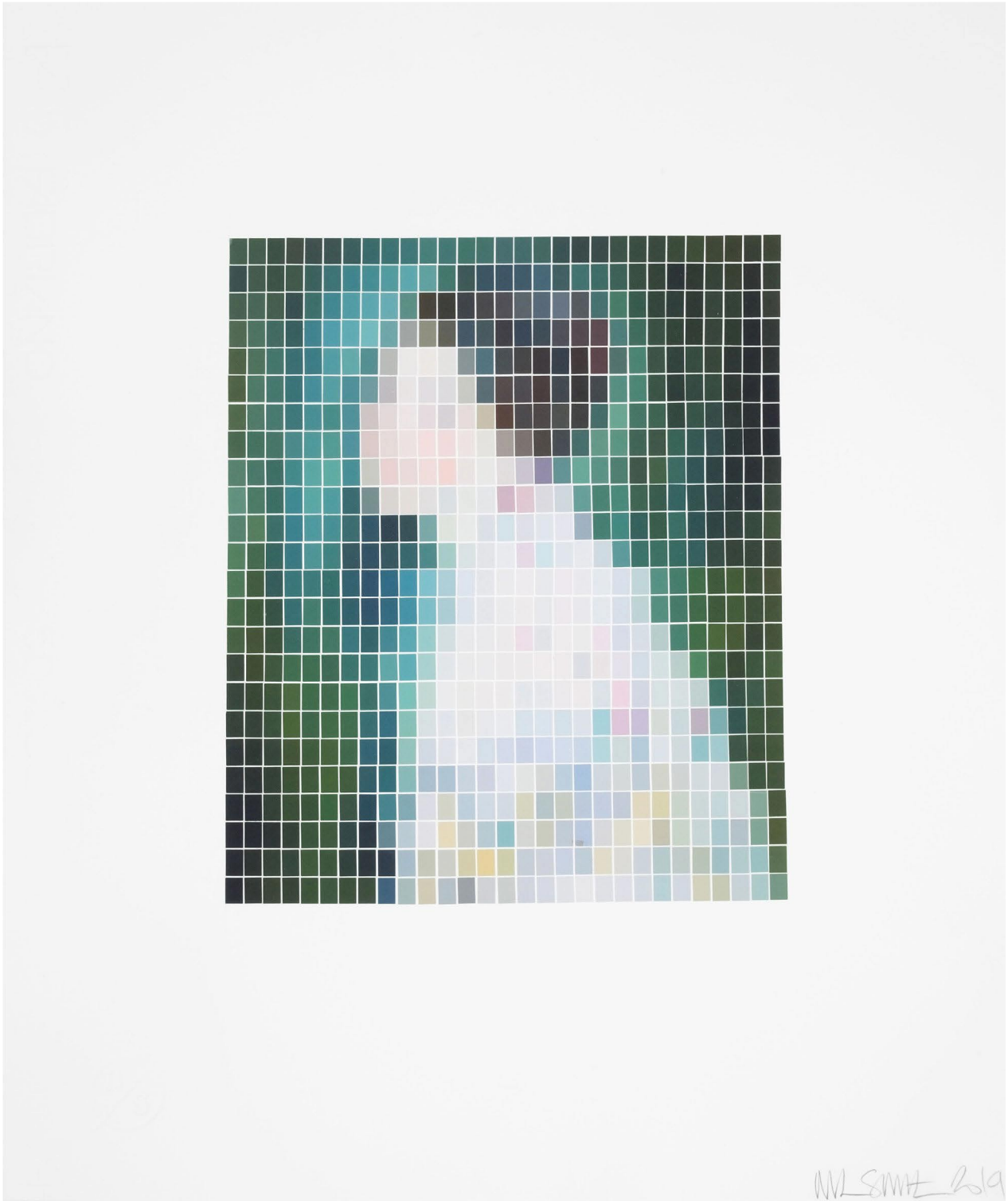
Vintage brass door knob framed on Fabriano 5 paper

£750 Framed

Pinched: August 21, 1911

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Klimt - Portrait of a Woman - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 33.5cm x 39cm

696 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,400 Framed

Pinched: February 22, 1997

Recovered: No

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Klimt - Portrait of a Woman

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 70cm x 90cm

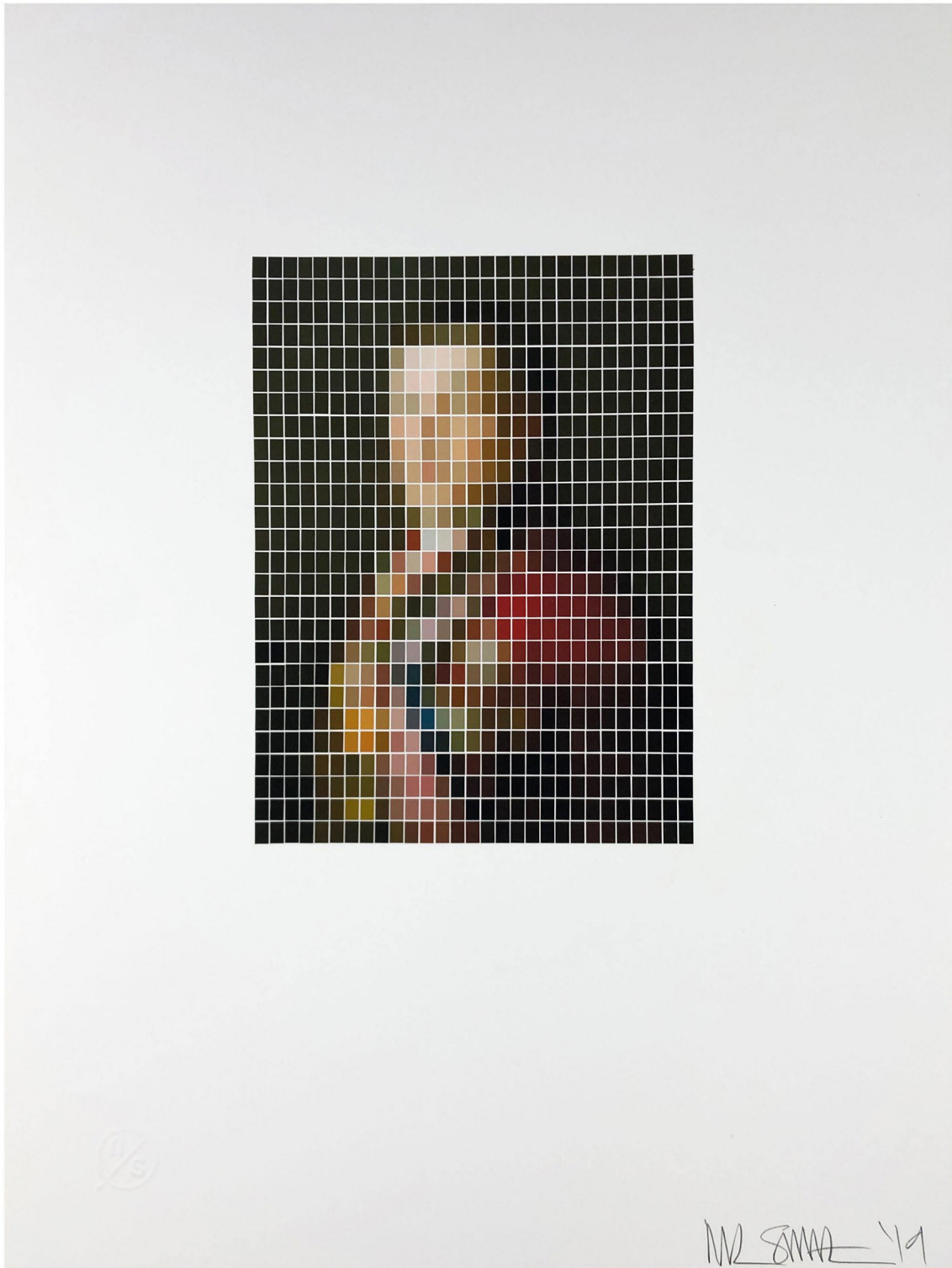
725 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£4,200 Framed

Pinched: February 22, 1997

Recovered: No

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Goya - Wellington - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 37cm x 50cm

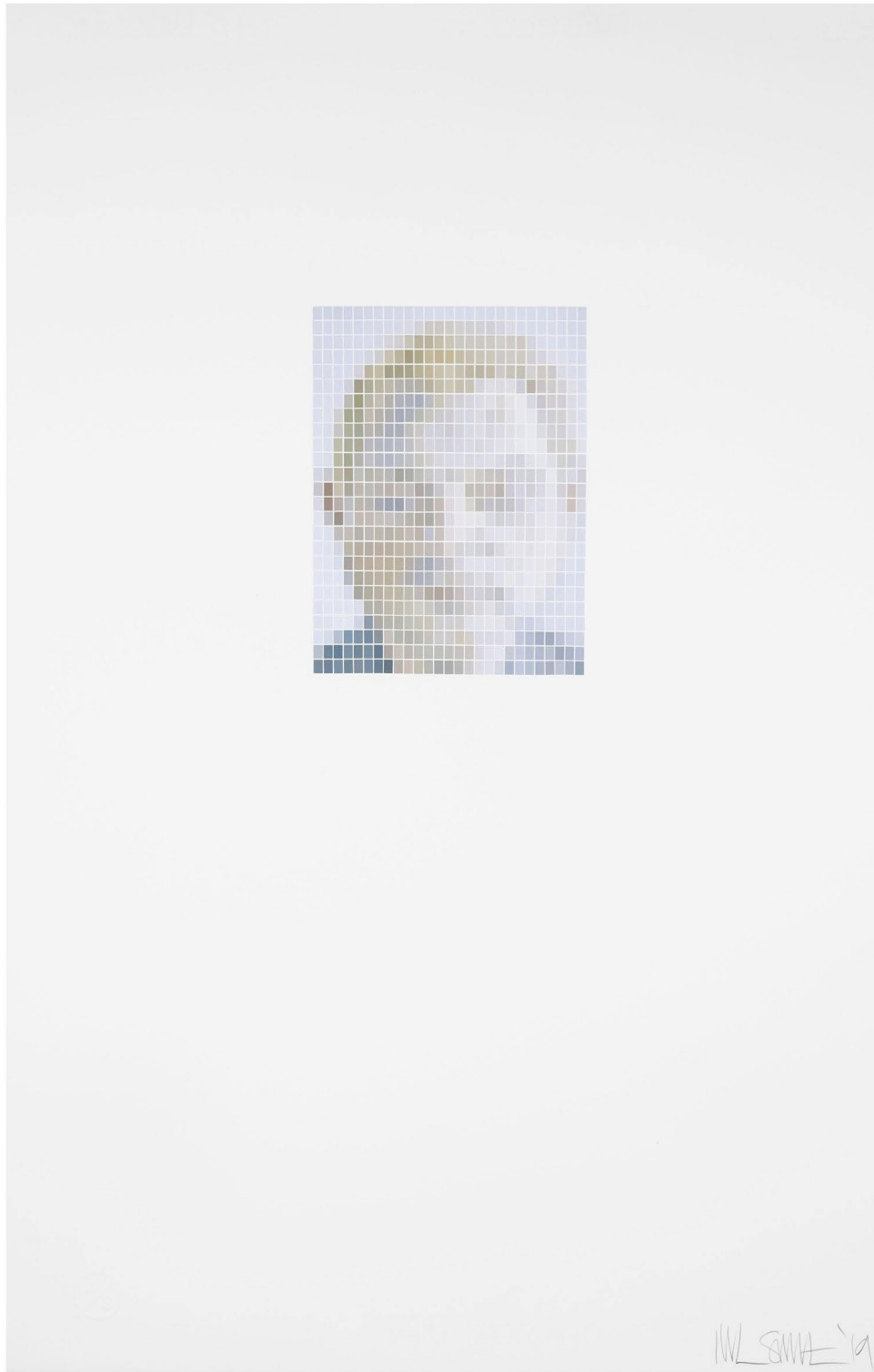
754 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,400 Framed

Pinched: August 21, 1961

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Lucian Freud - Francis Bacon portrait - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 45cm x 70cm

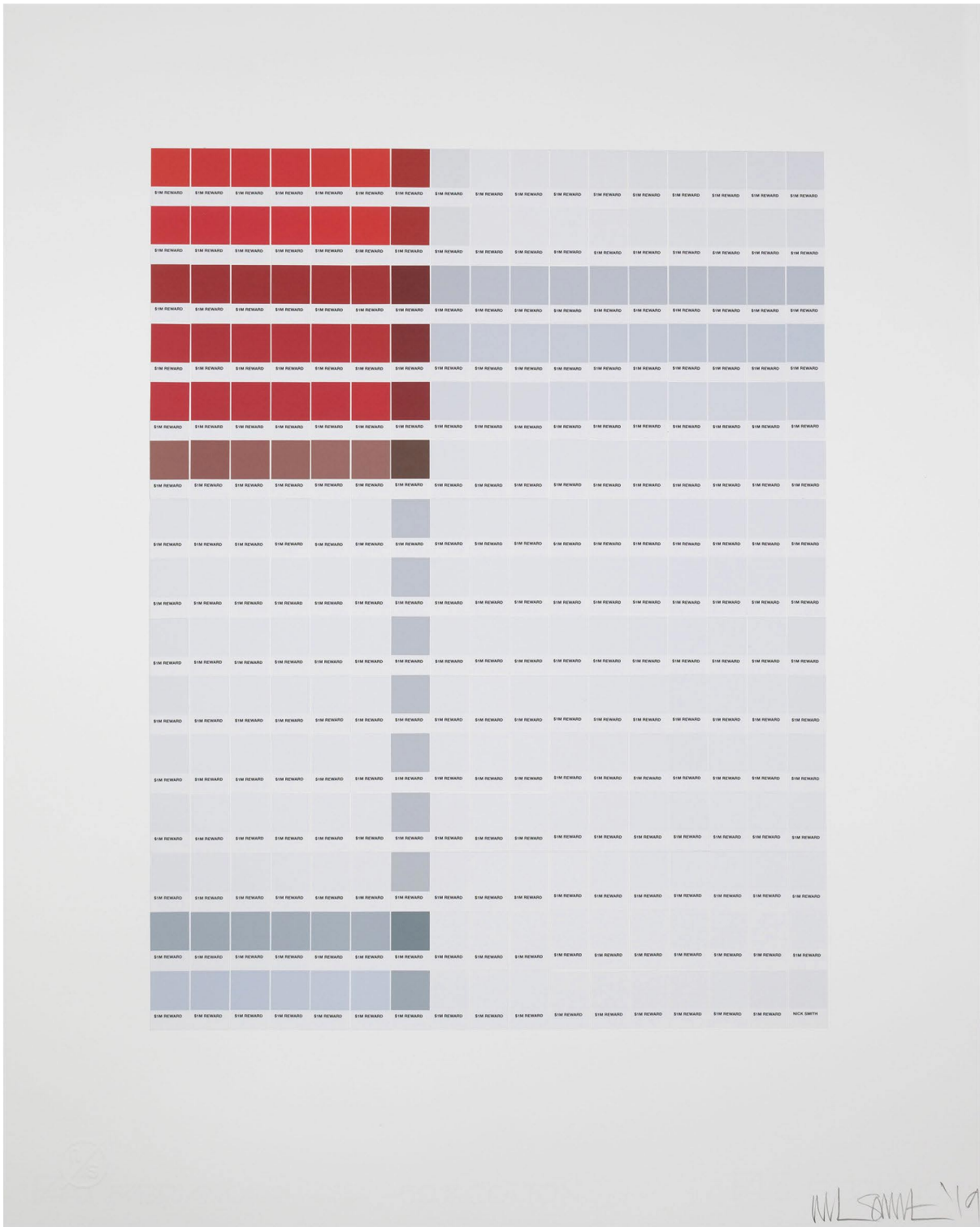
675 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,600 Framed

Pinched: May 27, 1988

Recovered: No

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Mondrian - Composition (A) En Rouge Et Blanc

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 50cm x 63cm

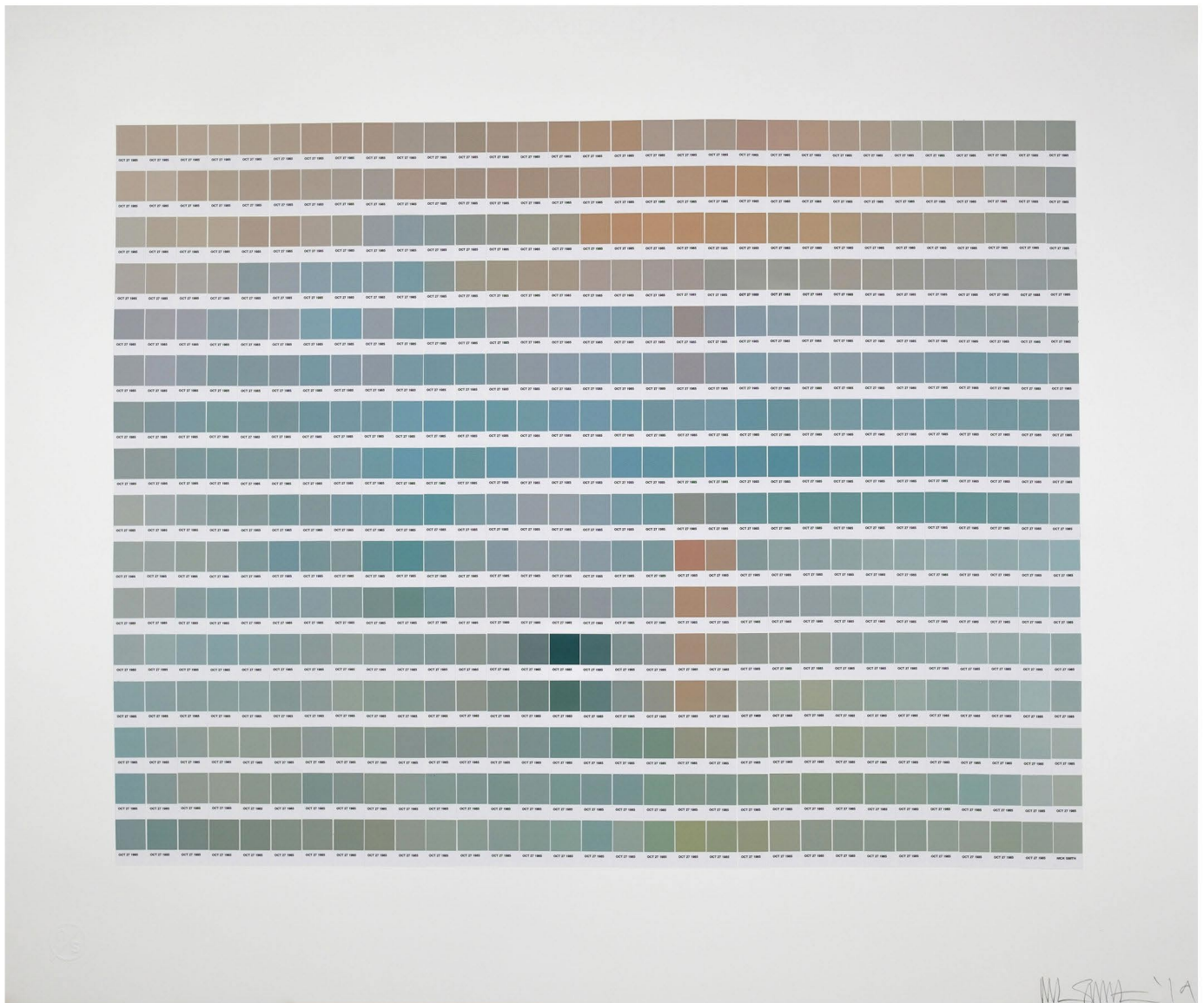
225 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,600 Framed

Pinched: September 14, 2012

Recovered: Yes

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Monet - Impression

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 78cm x 65cm

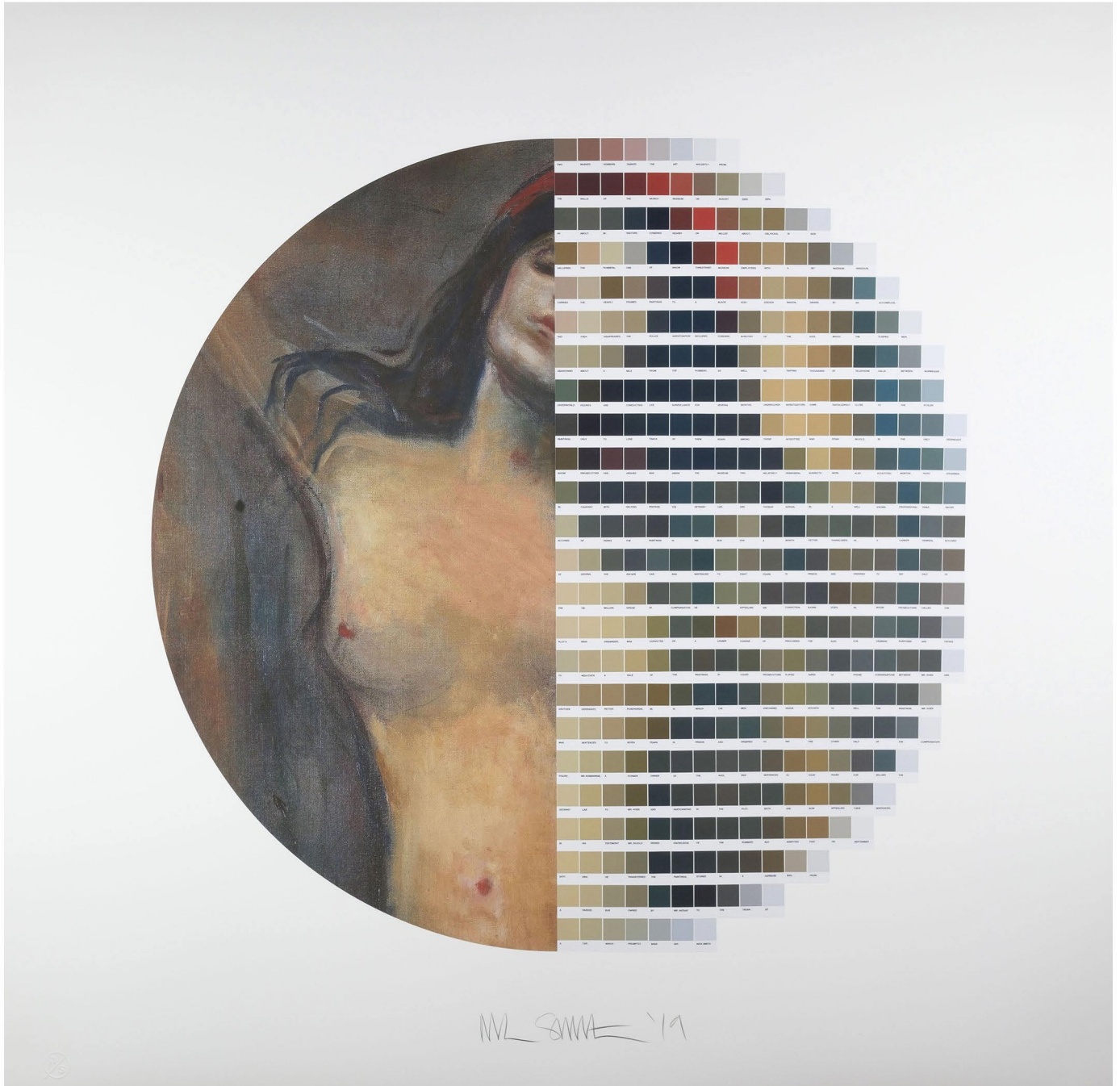
496 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£3,200 Framed

Pinched: October 27, 1985

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Munch - Madonna

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 100cm x 100cm

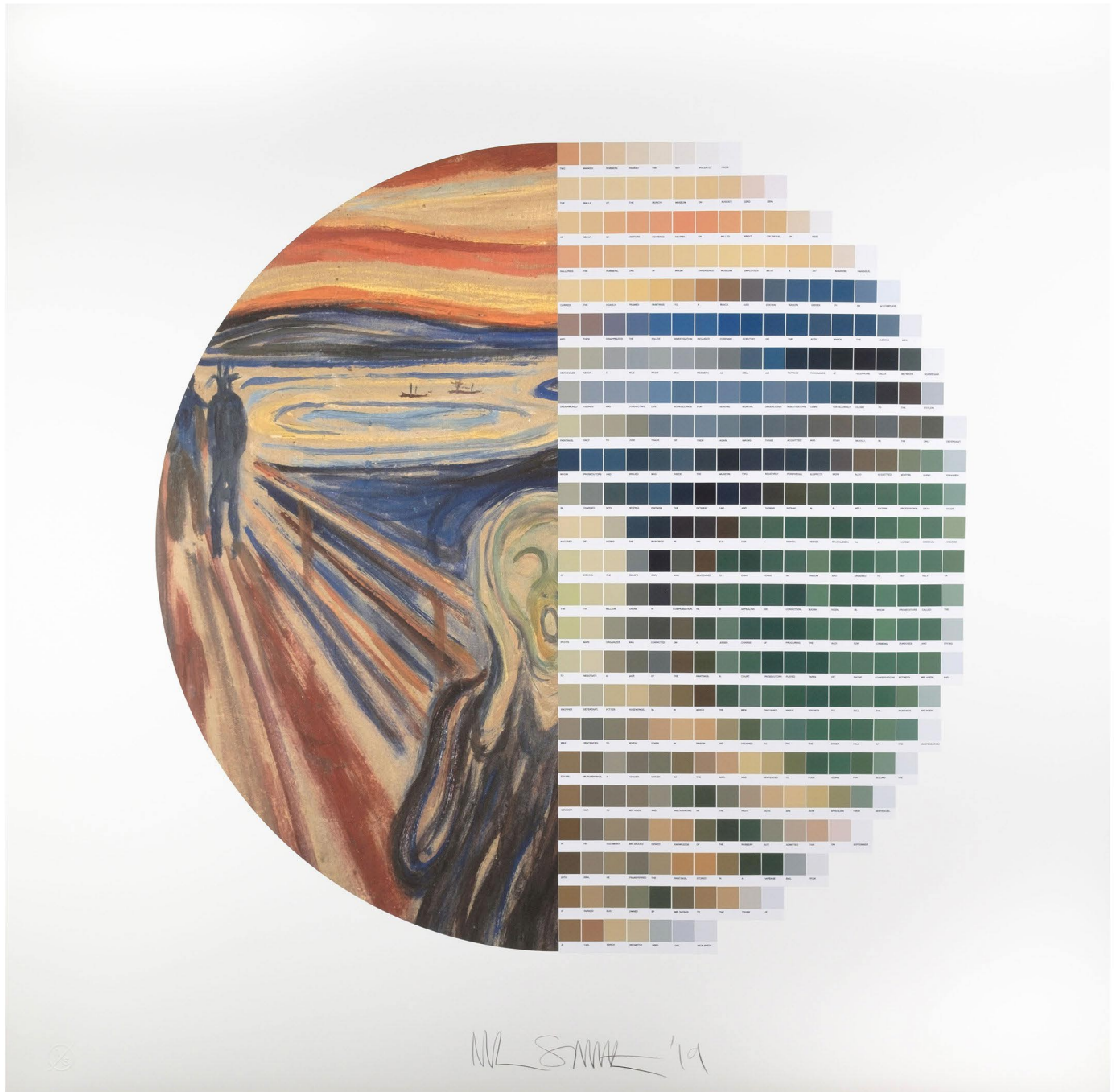
474 colour chip collage on Somerset Satin print

£4,800 Framed

Pinched: August 22, 2004

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
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Munch - Scream

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 100cm x 100cm

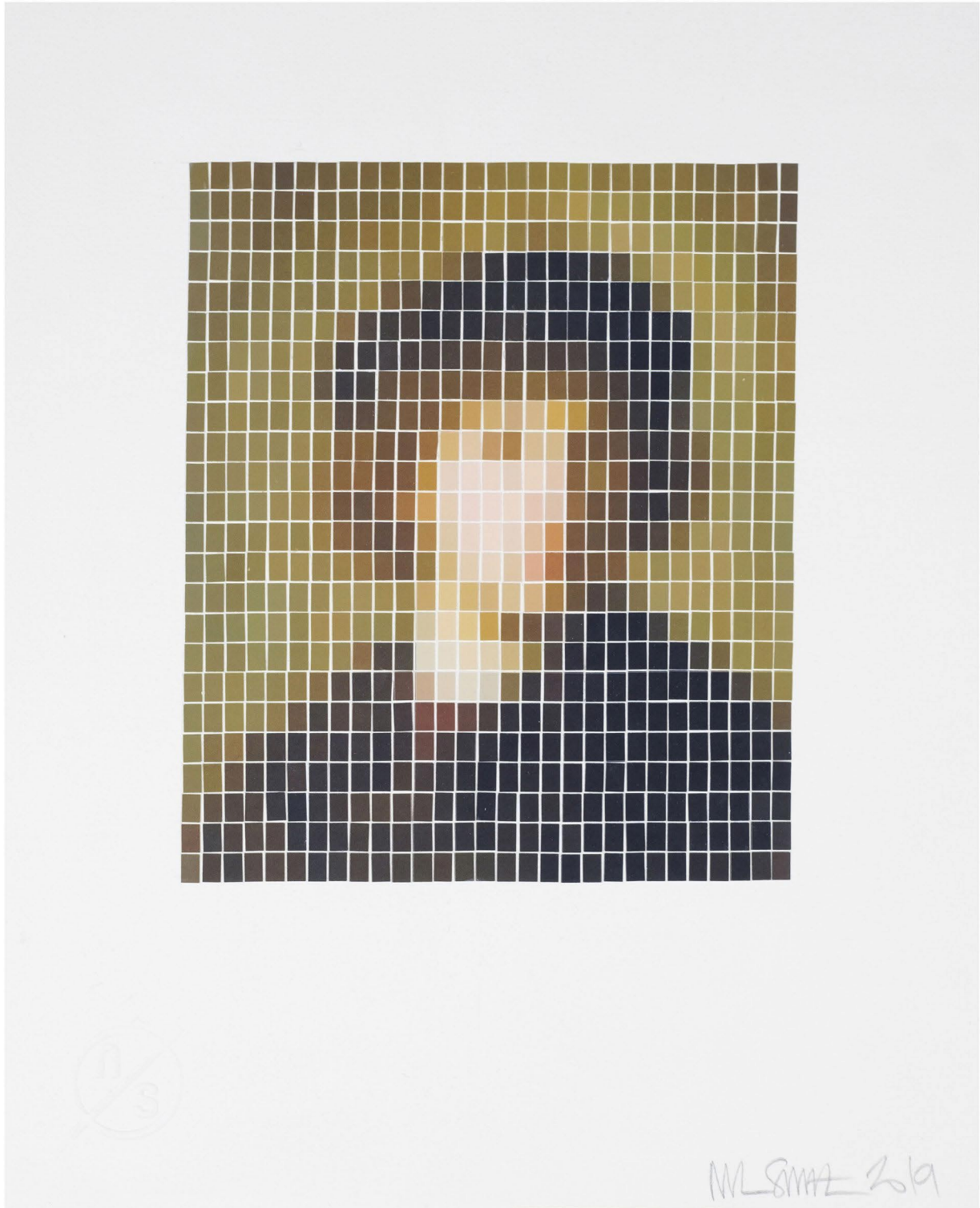
474 colour chip collage on Somerset Satin print

£4,800 Framed

Pinched: February 12, 1994 & August 22, 2004

Recovered: Yes / Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Rembrandt - Self portrait - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 22cm x 27cm

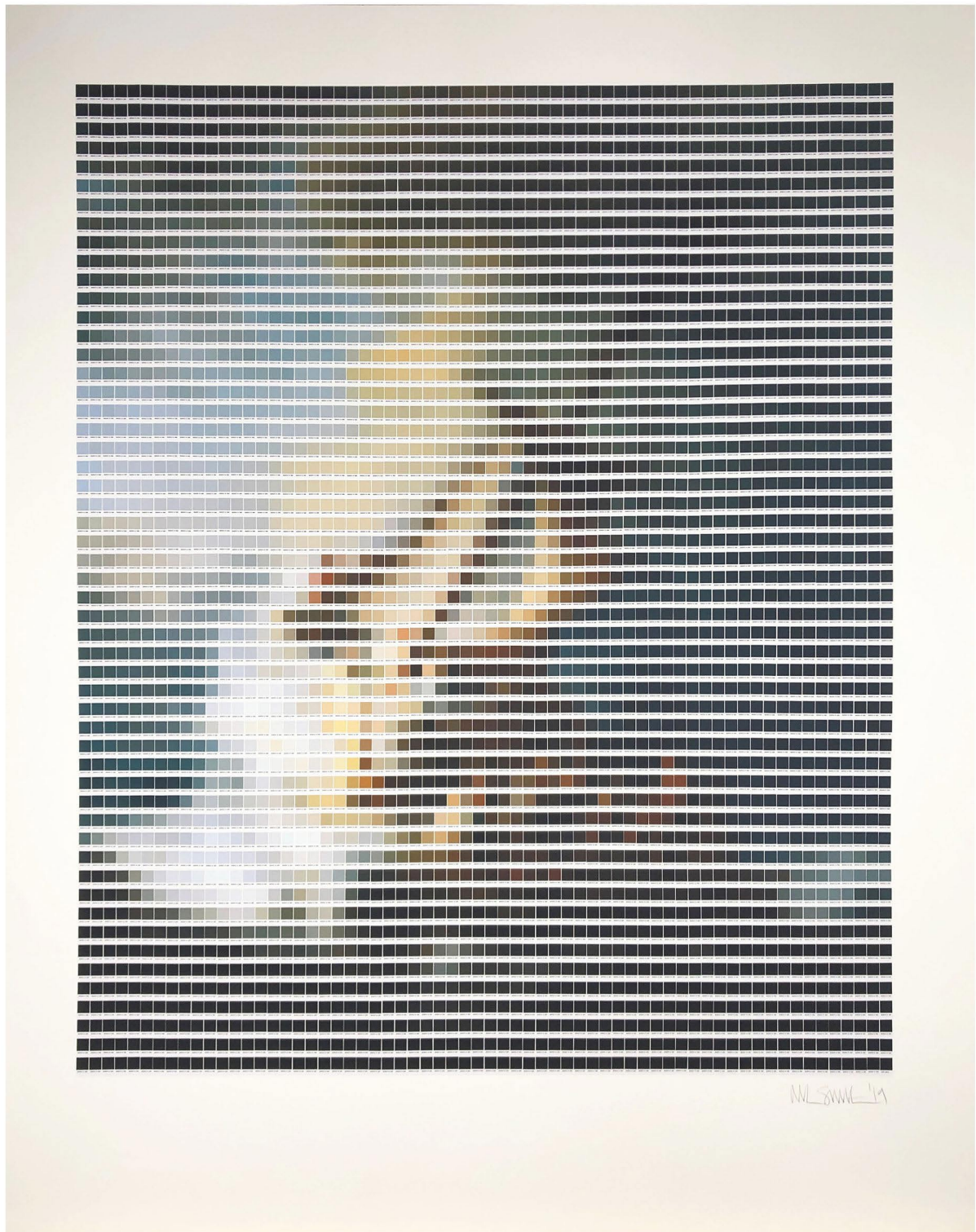
696 colour chip collage on Fabriano paper

£2,200 Framed

Pinched: December 22, 2000

Recovered: Yes

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Rembrandt - The Storm on the Sea of Galilee

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 118cm x 144cm

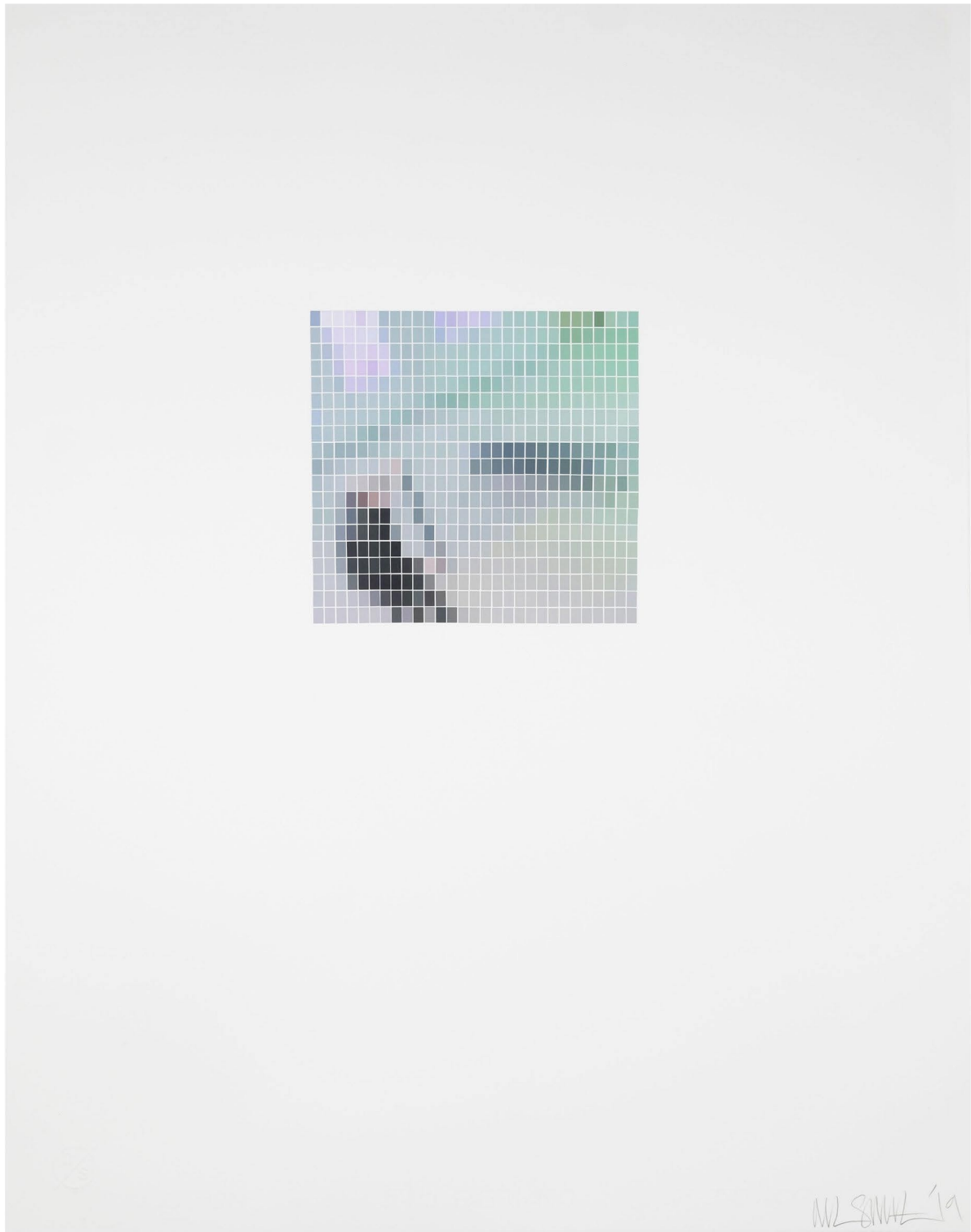
3,392 colour chip collage on Rag Mat Museum board

£9,500 Framed

Pinched: March 18, 1990

Recovered: No

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Theft of a Banksy CCTV - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 55cm x 70cm

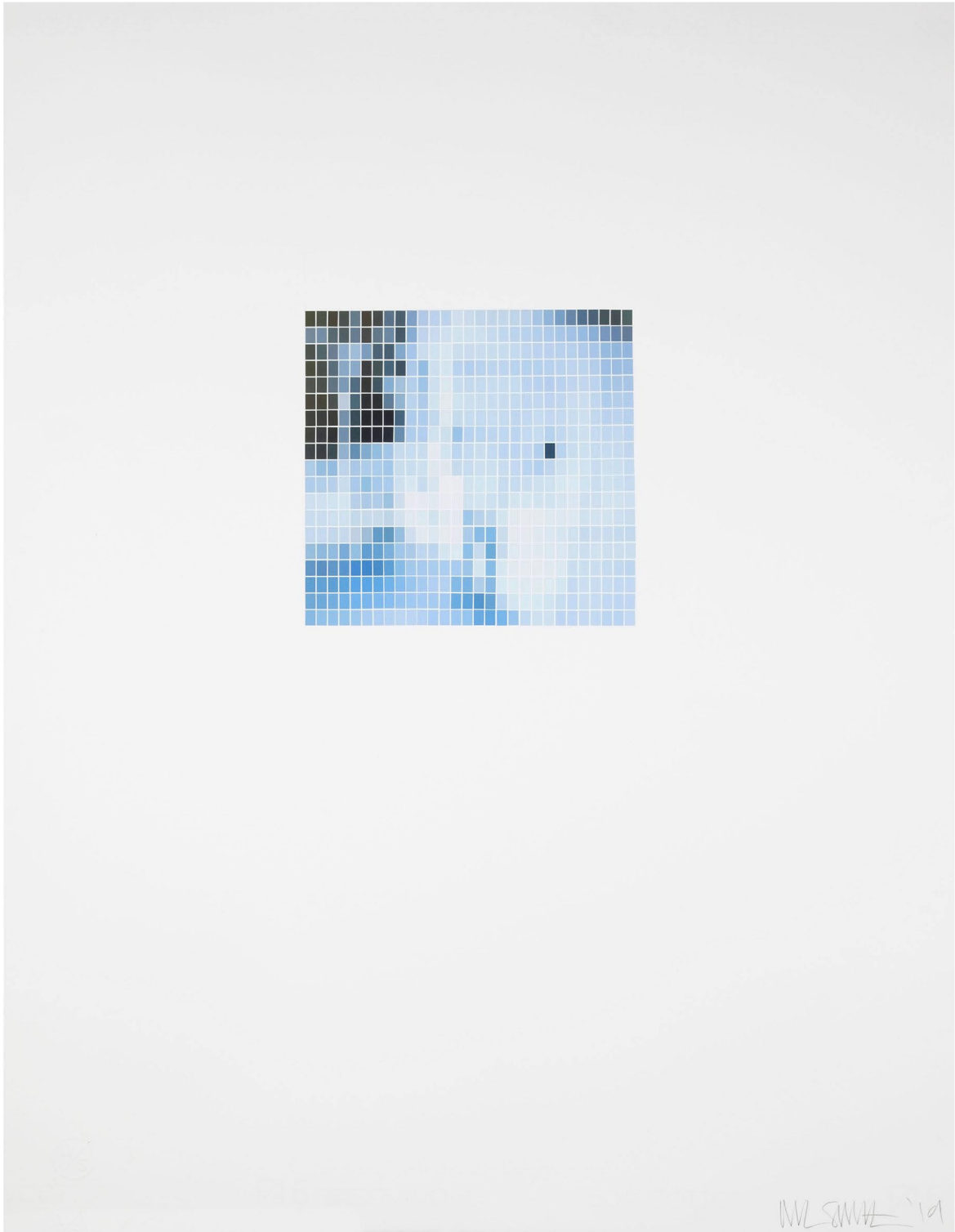
551 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,400 Framed

Pinched: June 11, 2018

Recovered: No

R H O D E S
CONTEMPORARY ART



Theft of a Hirst CCTV - (Microchip)

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 55cm x 70cm

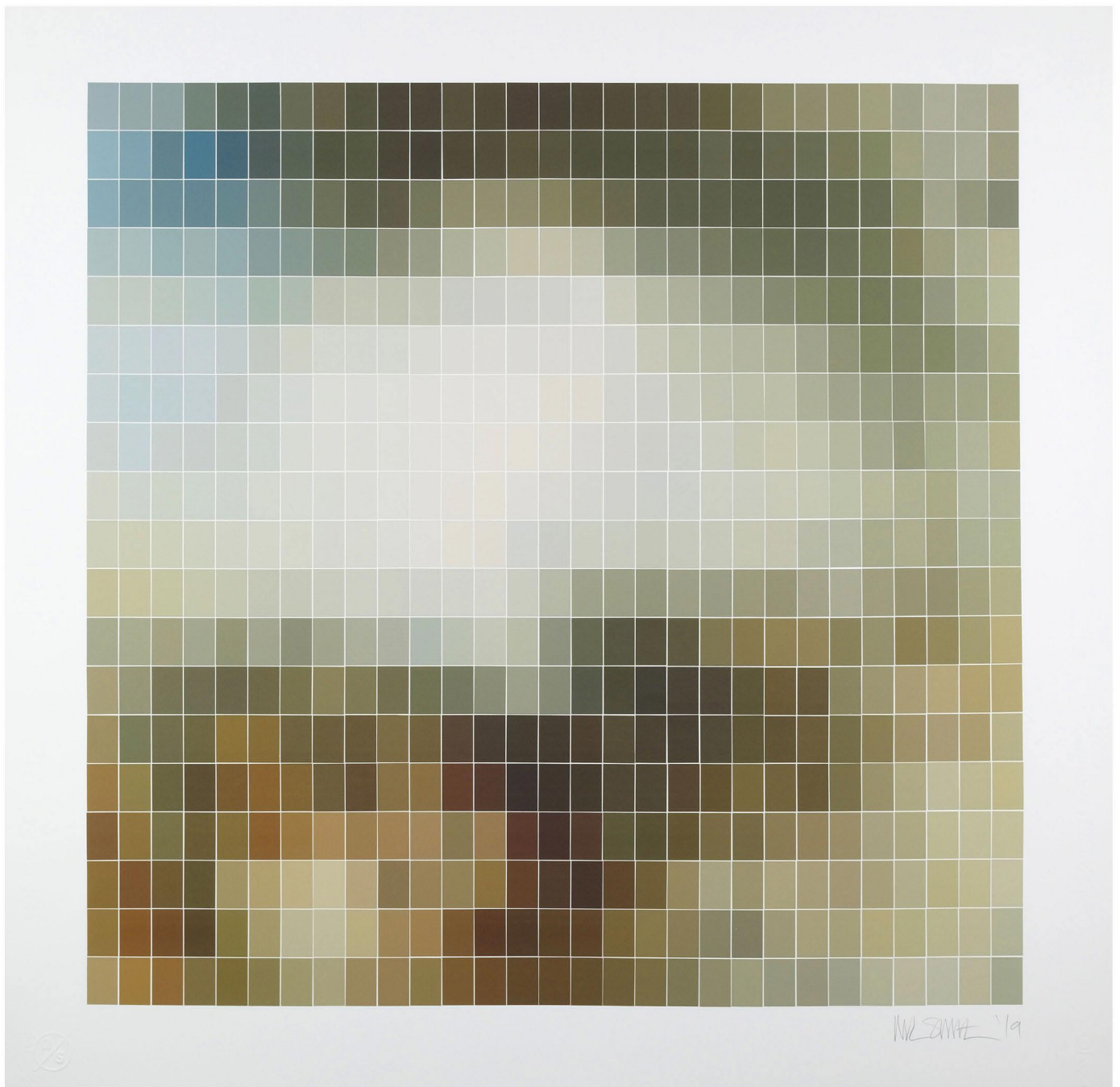
551 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£2,400 Framed

Pinched: December 9, 2013

Recovered: No

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Turner - Shade and Darkness

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 71cm x 69cm

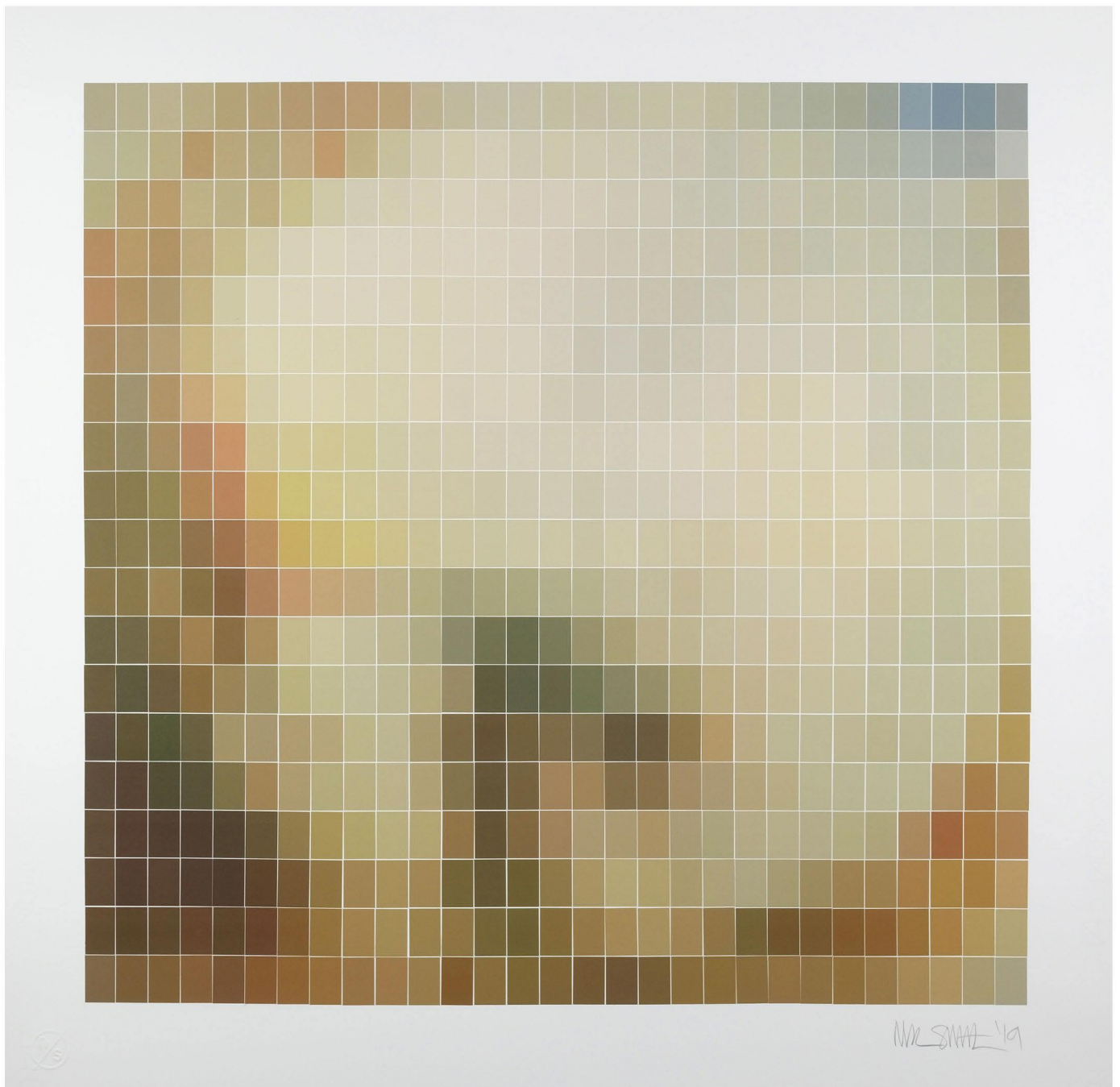
551 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£3,400 Framed

Pinched: 28 July, 1994

Recovered: Yes

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Turner - Light and Colour

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 1 + 1 a/p

Paper size 71cm x 69cm

551 colour chip collage on Fabriano 5 paper

£3,400 Framed

Pinched: 28 July, 1994

Recovered: Yes

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1/50



NLSMML '19

Vermeer - The Concert

Nick Smith 2019

Edition of 50 + 5 a/p's

Paper size 40cm x 46cm

17 colour Screen print on 400gsm Somerset paper

£450 Unframed

Pinched: March 18, 1990

Recovered: No

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If you require more images or details of Nick Smith's work
please contact the gallery.

ENQUIRIES

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