

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
<https://oversight.house.gov>

September 7, 2021

Mr. Georges Bergès
Georges Bergès Gallery
462 West Broadway
New York, New York 10012

Dear Mr. Bergès:

The *New York Times* recently profiled your gallery regarding its sale of paintings by Hunter Biden, who overnight has become an artist and member of the avant-garde.¹ As you are undoubtedly aware, the president's son selling artwork has generated numerous questions surrounding the ethics and propriety of such actions. The Committee has previously requested documents and information from the White House, and as owner of the art gallery selling Mr. Biden's work, we write to request documents and information from you.

The Georges Bergès Gallery, described by the *Times* as “a relatively little-known newcomer” to New York's art scene, will sell fifteen works from the “fledgling artist,” Mr. Biden, who “happens” to be the president's son.² Though the White House has attempted to allay concerns about the appearance of selling access to the president by developing guidelines for your gallery, these guidelines actually create *more* obscurity for the buyers of Mr. Biden's compositions, each of which—at their *lowest* prices—exceeds the median annual income for the American household.³ According to the *Times*, the prices, ranging from \$75,000 to \$500,000, are an “eyebrow raiser” and involve sums that other artists—with “real careers”—may not even “sell . . . cumulatively over 10 years.”⁴

The prices your gallery has set for these pieces by a new, untrained, celebrity artist are unprecedented. One New York art adviser said such prices are “sort of insulting to the art ecosystem, as if anyone could do it.”⁵ Mr. Biden himself admitted that he would be “amazed if [his] art had sold for \$10.”⁶ The prices your gallery will be charging for Mr. Biden's work are thousands of times greater than the artist's own valuation of his work, underscoring the prices

¹ Graham Bowley and Robin Pogrebin, *A Gallery Sells Hunter Bidens. The White House Says It Won't Know Who's Buying.*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 13, 2021).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

you chose and raising further questions about possible influence-seeking by those purchasing the art.

Mr. Biden made clear his opinion of those who would evaluate his motives, saying “f--- ‘em” on a recent podcast.⁷ This is an insult to all other artists—those who have trained and worked for years to establish themselves in the art world. Given Mr. Biden’s previous roles as lawyer, lobbyist, and ill-defined executive for an international fossil fuel corporation, the latest chapter in—as you describe it—his “heroic journey” is subject to skepticism.

It is the Oversight Committee’s responsibly to scrutinize Mr. Biden’s business activities because he chooses to conduct them in the most murky and corrupt corners of international affairs. Moreover, he has chosen—in the latest iteration of his career—to sell commodities of fluid and opaque value to anonymous benefactors. Mr. Biden acknowledges it is “a hell of a lot easier to get noticed” as an artist due to his family name.⁸ Given Mr. Biden’s connection to the White House, his network of foreign associates,⁹ your efforts to become the “lead guy in China” for art,¹⁰ and history of foreign nations that have “used transactions involving high-value art to evade sanctions imposed on them by the United States,”¹¹ the extent and nature of your dealings with Mr. Biden must be subject to the same scrutiny.

Therefore, to assist the Committee with its investigation of possible undue White House influence, please produce the following information, from November 3, 2020 to the present, to the Committee by September 21, 2021:

1. All documents and communications between you, the Georges Bergès Gallery (or agents thereof) and the White House, including a copy of the ethics guidelines;
2. All documents and communications between you, the Georges Bergès Gallery (or agents thereof) and Mr. Biden;
3. All guidelines, agreements, contracts, or other documents executed by you or the Georges Bergès Gallery (or agents thereof) in connection with Mr. Biden;
4. All documents and communications pertaining to setting the prices for Mr. Biden’s art;

⁷ Nick Niedzwiadek, *Hunter Biden to Critics of His Art: ‘F--- ‘em,’* POLITICO (Jul. 30, 2021), available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/30/hunter-biden-art-501766>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ See, e.g., *Hunter Biden: What Was He Doing in China and Ukraine*, BBC NEWS (Apr. 6, 2021), available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-54553132>.

¹⁰ George Wayne, *Modern Eye for Modern Art*, RESIDENT (Mar. 2, 2015), available at <http://residentpublications.com/modern-eye-for-modern-art/>.

¹¹ The Art Industry and U.S. Policies that Undermine Sanctions, Staff Report, S. Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations (2020), available at <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-07-29%20PSI%20Staff%20Report%20-%20The%20Art%20Industry%20and%20U.S.%20Policies%20that%20Undermine%20Sanctions.pdf>.

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5. A copy of the ethics guidelines, created in conjunction with the White House, pertaining to Mr. Biden's art;
6. Documents sufficient to show who attended the opening of Mr. Biden's shows; and
7. Documents sufficient to show who purchased Mr. Biden's artwork.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Comer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight and Reform