SOFT POWER, WALL POWER, PURCHASING POWER, POWER ALLIANCES, PERENNIAL POWER, EMERGING POWER, POWER PLAYS: THERE ARE AS MANY DIFFERENT WAYS TO WIELD INFLUENCE IN THE ART WORLD AS THERE ARE PERSONALITIES WHO DO SO. HEREWITH, ART+AUCTION’S ANNUAL LIST OF THE TOP PLAYERS—FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY CUTTING EDGE—IN AUCTIONS, GALLERIES, COLLECTING, PATRONAGE, MUSEUMS, FAIRS, AND MORE. READ ON TO FIND OUT WHO MADE THEIR MARK THIS YEAR.
Lobster prices were low in 2013—unless the lobster in question was one of the monumental polychromed aluminum variety by Koons, going for a reported $7 million in the Gagosian booth at Frieze London in October. The art star’s turn in the fair spotlight was a victory lap following a year of blockbusters, including much-buzzed-about dual exhibitions at Gagosian—and a one-off with David Zwirner—in New York. Koons also designed the cover for Lady Gaga’s latest album, showing that his reach extends well beyond the often hermetic confines of the art world. The artist isn’t planning to take any time off: In June 2014 his retrospective will fill the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the institution’s pointed swan song before it relocates to new downtown digs. As the market for contemporary art soars to nosebleed heights, Koons’s inimitably slick Pop is, perhaps, proof that every age gets the artist it deserves.