

# Gazette Drouot

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DROUOT

NUMBER 22

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# UPDATE

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W



Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian, Portfolio One*, complete with 39 photogravures, 1907. Estimate \$70,000 to \$100,000.

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## Fine Photographs

### **FEBRUARY 26**

*Specialist:* Daile Kaplan • [dkaplan@swanngalleries.com](mailto:dkaplan@swanngalleries.com)

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Sonia Delaunay, *Rayonist Composition*, watercolor, gouache and pencil.  
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# CONTENTS

ART MARKET - MAGAZINE



## 18 UPCOMING

Are you interested in fashion, photographs, designer furniture or collectors' cars? The Paris market is offering a wide range of specialities this month. In Brussels, the focus is mainly on photographs and design; in London, on Impressionist and Modern paintings.

## RESULTS 46

Nineteenth century furniture and Impressionist paintings provided the highlights of the last auction in Paris, together with Asian art.



## MEETING 66

Giuliana and Tommaso Setari are figures very much involved in contemporary art, even if, in their eyes, the only real players are the artists.







## 76 DESIGN

A breath of the dolce vita wafts over Paris, delightfully reminiscent of the post-World War II economic boom (known in French as the "Trente Glorieuses"), thanks to Molteni & C's production of furniture by Gio Ponti - accompanied by a small exhibition.



## 70 INTERVIEW

The exhibition "Jordaens and the Antique" in Kassel presents an original portrait of the Antwerp artist Jordaens.



## 80 EXHIBITIONS

Was Hollywood the inventor of the epic? Not necessarily! The archaeological museums of Lyon-Fourvière and Saint-Romain-en-Gal in France invite us to explore behind the scenes of the genre.

## 84 INSIDE MUSEUM

In its issue no. 16 of December 2012, the anthropology and art history review *Gradhiva* published a study of the museum and heritage policies in the People's Republic of China. An occasion to get a picture of China's development in terms of heritage.

# EDITORIAL



DR

**Stéphanie Perris-Delmas**  
EDITORIAL MANAGER

February is a relatively tough month for an art market currently suffering from a certain nervousness. We have given this issue a resolutely international touch, in view of knocking quite a few preconceived ideas on the head. Take the tenacious image of Jordaens as a painter of bons vivants wafting us to the heart of Flanders and its splendid banquets. Thanks to an exhibition at the Kassel Museum, analysed for us by the specialist Joost Vander Auwera, this is superseded by the image of an erudite artist imbued with Antique cultures. Did you think that Hollywood gave rise to the epic? Two French exhibitions show that all the ingredients for the genre were already present in 19th century theatre and opera... Another received idea concerns contemporary art collections, often judged in the light of their speculative yields. In bringing together works by Pistoletto, Spalletti and Fabro, the Italians Giuliana and Tommaso Setari show that today a collection can be both social and committed... So, here you have 100 pages with a completely new angle on the art scene!

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# NEWS IN BRIEF



## Art Stage Singapore

For Art Stage Singapore (from 24th to 27th January), several Paris galleries made the journey to Asia, including not only the Galerie Perrotin, which opened a Hong Kong branch in 2012, but also the Galerie Pièce Unique, Polka Galerie and Visionairs Gallery. Among other things, the latter is exhibiting works by Korean photographer Ahn Sun Mi (photograph).

## 480,000

More than 480,000 visitors flocked to the Musée d'Orsay to admire works by Monet, Courbet, Bazille and Manet, among others, brought together in the exhibition "L'Impressionisme et la mode" (Impressionism and fashion).

SEE THE VIDEO

## €7,8M

This was the top price registered at Drouot in 2012, for a Chinese imperial roll (Christophe Joron-Derem); the Parisian address also registered no fewer than 36 world records that year, including one for a bust by the sculptor Bouchardon, pre-empted by the Musée du Louvre for €3,750,630 (Aguttes).



The Top 10 bids for December 2012 drawn up by Artnet included seven Chinese artists, including Wang Zhenpeng, a painter at the imperial court of the Yuan dynasty. One of his rolls, sold by the Chinese auction house Poly International Auction on 4 December 2012, garnered a record bid of CNY101,200,000 (US\$16,252,850).

© Maurizio Cattelan's Archive.  
Mauricio Guillen © Fondation Carmignac

## Carmignac Foundation

The Carmignac Foundation, created in 2000 by asset manager Edouard Carmignac, is constantly enriching its collection, which already contains nearly 150 contemporary works. In 2012, twenty-four new acquisitions, including works by the Argentine artist Miguel Rothschild and the Colombian photographer Marcos Lopez, were added to the ensemble begun twenty years ago by the collector Edouard Carmignac. With a focus this year on emerging art scenes, these buys also targeted superstars like Italy's Maurizio Cattelan, whose work here was bought at auction.

# +15%

Increasing numbers of visitors at the Musée Guimet, the Asian arts museum in Paris, which posted a rise of 15% more than in 2011, on a par with its best performances. The exhibition "Le thé" (Tea) received no fewer than 50,000 visitors during its four months on show. Works exhibited included one by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei: "A Ton of Tea".

Paris is celebrating the work of Salvador Dali at the Centre Pompidou, bringing together flagship works from the world's greatest collections, like that of the Dalí Museum at Saint Petersburg, Florida, based on the collection of Reynolds and Eleanor Morse.

[www.thedali.org](http://www.thedali.org)

W

## Rebirth of the magazine Camera

Photography fans will be delighted that the legendary magazine, Camera, has returned to the shelves after an absence of 32 years. A genuine rebirth. This "first" new issue features an interview with photographer Françoise Huguier and a focus on the Galerie Paris-Beijing, which spotlights the rising generation of Chinese photographers. On the auction side, there is an analysis of a work by Jacques Henri Lartique and the 19th century photography market. The new layout remains faithful to the golden days of the magazine, revamped by Allan Porter in the mid-Sixties: matt paper for the texts (French/English), and glossy for the photos. A real treat for lovers of the eighth art, who were short of a handsome magazine dedicated to photography. Have a good read!

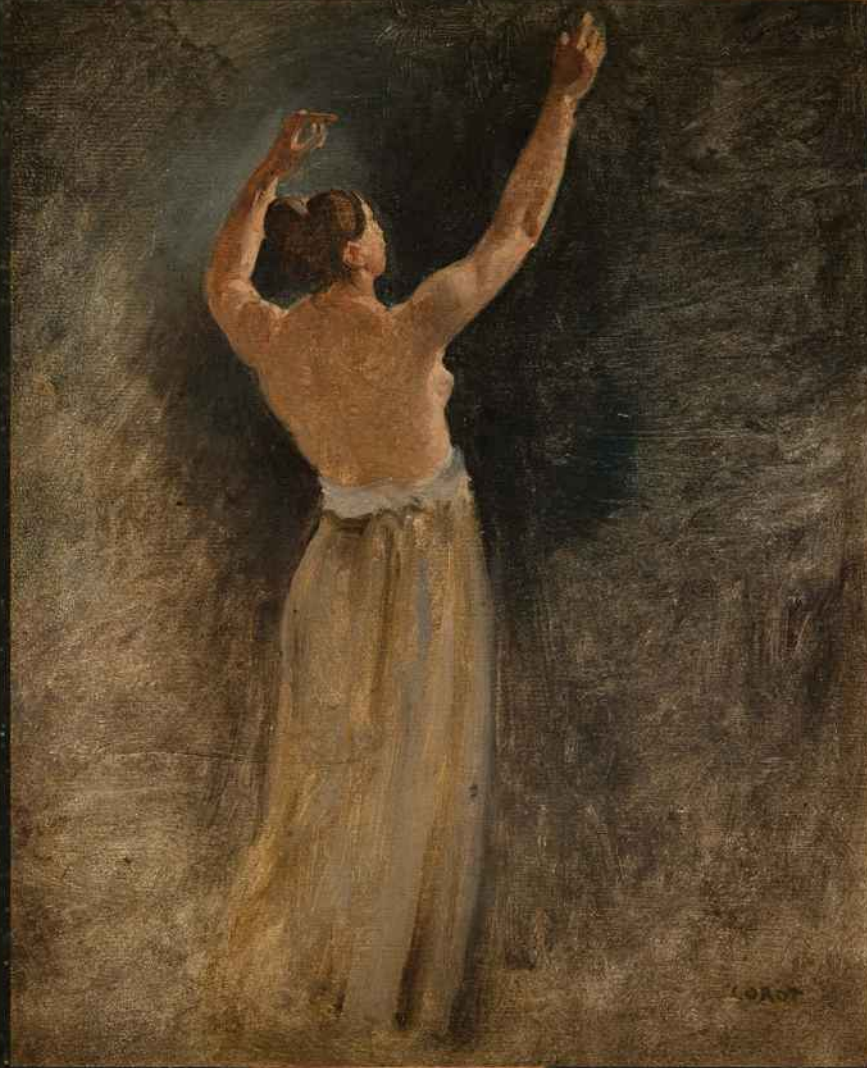
SEE THE  
VIDEO

## Video: 3.53 minutes

There are only a few days left to see the exhibition "Buddhism along the Silk Road" 5th-8th century at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.



## Jean-claude renard



Jean-Baptiste Corot, "nude woman raising her arms", oil on paper glued on to canvas, 33 x 26 cm, signed bottom right. This work was executed between 1835 and 1840. This painting is cited and reproduced in the sixth supplement of "The Work of Corot" by Alfred Robaut, Ullan Press editions (2012) entitled "Sketch of nude raising her arms, for a personage of the painting 'The concert'", (listed n.º 461 in the catalogue raisonné, the work of Corot, Loury éditions, Paris, 1905). Photography expertise by Martin Dieterle and Cláire Lebeau as of 5th February 2010.

# Jean-claude renard

objets d'art, mainly from 18th century,  
Louis XVI clocks, 19th century glass objects,  
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Wednesday 20th February at 2 p.m.  
drouot richelieu, room 1



**D**  
rouot



1) Max Carlier (1872-1938) *Elegant in her boudoir*. Oil on mahogany panel. Signed bottom left; 110 x 73 cm. 2) *Clock with canons*. Chiseled bronze gilded and with a brown patina presenting an army ship with canons at sea level. La Fortune holds a phylactery on which is engraved "I will sail with fortune and protected by the god Neptune". Model close to that of the former Doucet collection. 3) *Exceptional commode from the Régence period*. Height: 86.5 cm; Length: 146 cm; Depth: 63.5 cm. Baguettes with pierced framework, rosette handles, espagnolette leg decoration... (more gilding). 4) 18th century *École française*. *Venus and love*. Oil on canvas signed and dated 1755 with initials P.J. Sainte-Croix. Woodwork from 18th century. Height: 106 cm; Length: 180 cm.

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# UPCOMING AUCTIONS

FIND THE CALENDAR OF UPCOMING AUCTIONS



## CALENDAR

France



4 February

### A socially committed photographer with a poetic soul

In this photo, Louis Stettner shows us a sailor probably sitting in front of a cup of coffee, in a cheap restaurant such as you find by the thousand in the United States. And that's all. The date and place are written on the back: 1951, Times Square. Stettner was a young photographer, and a member of the Photo League: a cooperative of amateurs and professionals founded in 1936 and dissolved in 1951. McCarthyism was in full swing, and the Cold War and Korean War were galvanising opinion against Communist propaganda. The artists of the Photo League, often first generation Americans, were sensitive to the lives of the people around them and to what was going on in the streets. This photo illustrates his "concern for showing the ordinary folk he photographed, labourers or homeless people, with an eye that exalts them," as Claire Guillot wrote in her report on the last exhibition dedicated to the photographer by the National Library of France. The "Sailor" here will be sold at Drouot (€7,000/8,000) by the Paris auction house Cornette de Saint Cyr during its sale of photographs.

A. F.

Courrèges. Unforgettable three-piece suit in yellow jersey, flared trousers, sleeveless top with white knit stripes, short-sleeved zip jacket and asymmetrical collar, around 1970; size 38. Estimate: €190/220.



HD

# Courrèges silhouette

## 6 February

At 27, André Courrèges decided to become a couturier, first of all working for Jeanne Lafaurie, then in for Balenciaga, the master who defined style as "the harmony between technique, aesthetics and finish." A curious idea for an engineer! He opened his own couture company in 1961, launching it with a white dress and a trouser suit. Shortly afterwards, in 1964, he produced a "Space Age" collection on the catwalk; the clothes were designed with as much precision as a rocket. Every garment was based on a geometric structure: the circle, trapezium, square and triangle. Materials even included PVC and metal. Everything was produced in lively colours, starting with white, rapidly joined by yellow, pink and red. He shortened skirts, and invented the jumper, overalls and unisex garment. Here is a fine example of a three-piece suit in jersey created circa 1970, will be sold at Drouot by the Paris auction house Coutau-Bégarie during a fashion sale.

Anne Foster

American Moth Corporation DH.  
60GMW Gipsy Moth, 1929, two-seater touring  
biplane. Estimate: €140,000/160,000.



## 7 February

# On earth as it is in heaven

Make a date for 7 February at the Grand Palais for the Bonhams sale, where the total, for cars alone, is expected to be between €17 and 22M. At 4.30 pm, the posters, models and motorcycles will be wheeled out as the spotlight swings onto the big-engine cars, where the star is a Bugatti type 54, the prototype for a now rare short series of Grand Prix Formule Libre cars originally built by the famous Molsheim factory in Alsace in the autumn of 1931. In the hands of Achille Varzi, this racing car took part in the Monza circuit Grand Prix before being bought the following year by the Czech Prince of Bohemia, Georg Christian Lobkowitz (1907-1932). Its price range is €2.5 to 3.5 M. Other jewels of the afternoon include the 18 cars in the collection of Charles H. Brown, an architect fascinated by automotive design. Apart from a 1953 Jaguar XK 120 Drophead coupé (70,000), there is a fine example of one of the hundred Bentley 8-litre Tourers of 1931 (€500,000/600,000), a "star of Art Deco design", namely a 1927 Torpedo Renault with a body designed by Kellner (€120,000/160,000). We leave the tarmac for the trails of the Dark Continent at the controls of the De Havilland Gipsy Moth, star of Sidney Pollack's film "Out of Africa" (photo). This 1929 two-seater touring biplane is the very one lent by its owner of the time to the film production department in 1985. After flying around 120 hours in East Africa, the plane was bought during the Nineties. You should plan on at least €140,000/160,000 if you hope to reach seventh heaven on board this plane as elegant as that legendary couple, Meryl Streep and Robert Redford. **C. P.**

## 8 February

### Types, prototypes and archetypes

1936 was a particularly fertile vintage. It saw the Queen Mary, the British liner, crossing the Atlantic in three days, the construction of Fallingwater in Pennsylvania by Frank Lloyd Wright, the invention of the pocket-sized book "Livre de poche", the first paid holidays, the inauguration of the Paris-Dakar line by Air France... and the birth of the Talbot-Lago "T1 50C", the star of this Paris sale on 8 February (Artcurial, where it will be offered at €1.2/1.6M in an overall total expected to reach €13/15 M (for the cars). These fine mechanics are part of a collection that includes both touring and competition automobiles from Europe and America. One of them, in fact, a 1962 "250 GT" Ferrari cabriolet in exceptional condition - with its extremely rare hard top - estimated at €550,000/850,000, is raring to get back into service. In its period grey livery, this beauty has never left Marseille, has 15,000 km on the clock, has only had two owners, and as the ultimate feature, is being offered with stereo 8 cassettes of Cerrone, Georges Brassens and "Sexy show with Veronica".

Claire Papon





## 13 February

### A century of the decorative arts

If you are interested in 20th century decorative arts, then stop off at the Drouot Paris sale room on 13th February, where the Aguttes auction house is dispersing over 350 lots, including glasswork, lighting, furniture and sculptures. The latter speciality, which is particularly well-stocked, contains works by Armand Pierre-Louis Quenard (an oriental woman with a mirror: €16,000/18,000) and Louis Ernest Barrias, "La Nature se dévoilant devant la science" in bronze and marble: €15,000/20,000, of which the main subject in marble and onyx can be found at the Musée d'Orsay. Female beauty also features in the work of another artist from around 1900, Alphonse Mucha: you can acquire a lithograph poster of his muse, Sarah Bernhardt, in the role of Gismonda at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. Printed by Lemercier in Paris, it will be on offer at between €20,000 and 25,000 (photo). Animal beauty, this time, follows on in the catalogue, with works by Georges Lucien Guyot: a Pyrenean bear in bronze from around 1930-1935 (€11,000/12,000), and notably a drawing of two bears from around 1930 (€18,000/20,000). Furniture is also on the cards: you can choose from some fine samples of the work of Maurice Dufrene, a French interior decorator who from 1921 directed the Maîtrise des Galeries Lafayette, a decorative arts workshop formed to distribute furniture to a wider public. You will need between €500 and €3,000 for various items including chairs, sideboards, and showcases. Lastly, the eye will linger on figures in the Modernist movement, such as Charlotte Perriand (a mahogany bench edited by Steph Simon and produced by Métal Meuble in around 1959-1963 is expected to raise some €9,500), and Le Corbusier, to whom the sales expert has attributed a helical steel staircase with gilt bronze fittings and slabs of Saint-Gobain glass as steps (€15,000/25,000).

S. P.-D

HD



Porcelain plate with a central decoration of a woman with a parasol feeding birds, after Cornelius Pronk, China, c. 1735, dim. 23 cm. Estimate: €2,000/3,000.

HD



# Far countries

## 13 February

The Far East and tribal art will be the two specialities of this sale staged at Drouot by Pierre Bergé & Associés auction house. The programme includes no fewer than 322 lots for the first, and 166 for the second, with relatively affordable estimates ranging from €500 to €25,000. As you'll have gathered, it consists of an entry range with a few choice pieces, like this porcelain plate with a central scene inspired by the celebrated German engraver Cornelius Pronk, from whom the Dutch East India Company commissioned a series of subjects designed to adorn dinner ware produced in China, then sold for a fortune in Europe. This plate, dated c. 1735, will be on offer at around €2,500. Plan for ten times that amount if you want to acquire a 17th Chinese table in wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with a decoration of flowers, fruit and butterflies in round medallions. Also worth noting: an 18th century six-panel Japanese screen by Shoju, imitating rolled up shutters decorated with soft furnishings (€15,000/20,000). We now move on to the tribal art session, which features a collection of ivory bracelets from Burkina Faso, Sudan and Nigeria (€500 to €1,500). Enthusiasts will be sure to linger on a pair of Jonyeleni statuettes from the Bambara ethnic group, in the ancient Segu style (€15,000/20,000) and an Ivory Coast Dan mask belonging to the racing mask category (€8,000/10,000).

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas

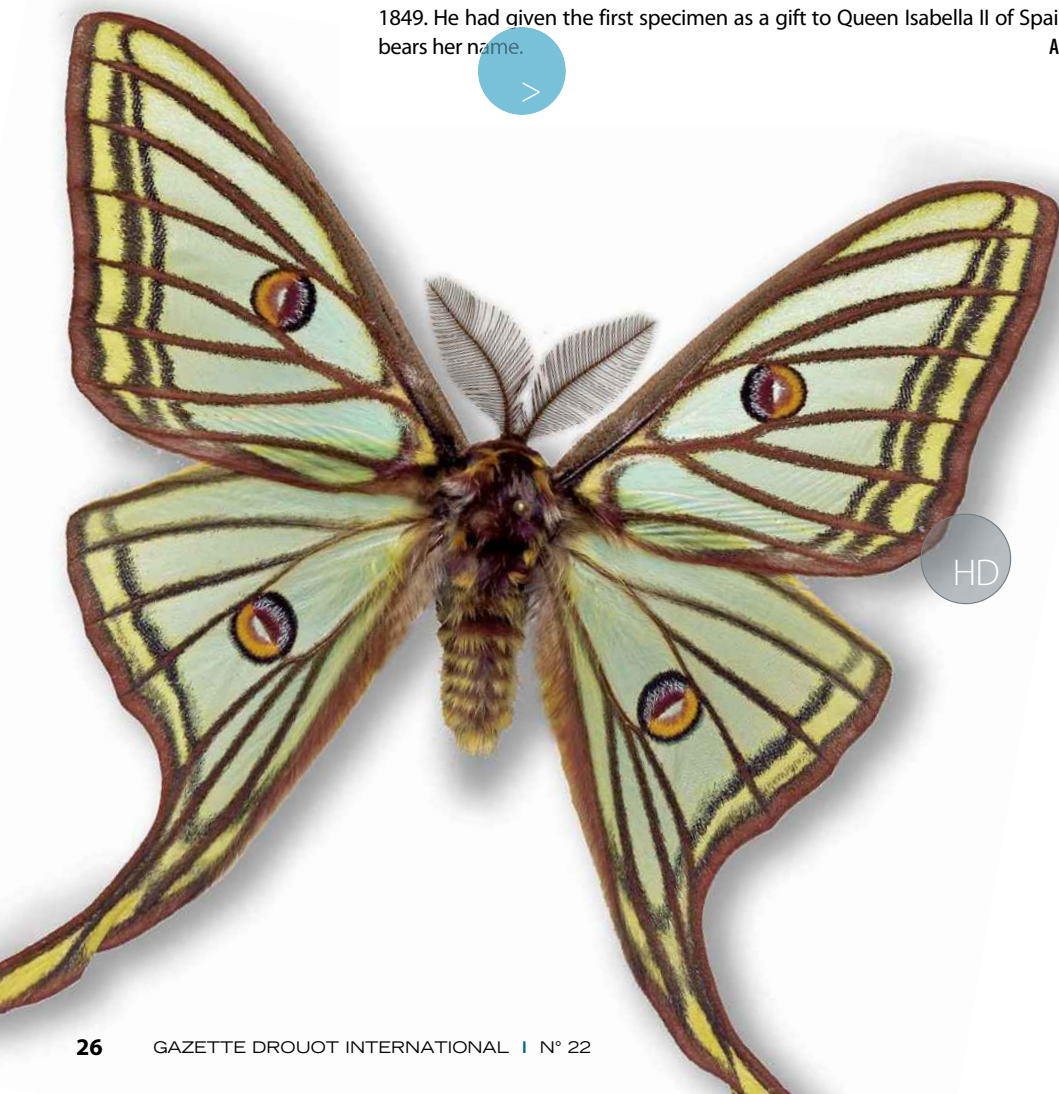


15 February

**Natural history**

The Saturniidae family contains a sub-family called "Saturniinae", and within this is found the genus *Graellsia*, which includes *Isabellae isabellae*. This moth lives in the pine forests of Spain and France, where it is a protected species. This specimen from the Spanish species, which comes from a breeding farm, features with eleven other fellow creatures in a box (€250/300), offered at a Paris sale dedicated to natural history (Rieunier & Associés). The name of this moth pays tribute to Mariano de la Paz Graells y de la Aguera (1809-1898), the first person to have depicted this moth in 1849. He had given the first specimen as a gift to Queen Isabella II of Spain, and it bears her name.

Anne Foster



&gt;

HD

Enamel, diamond and  
baroque pearl brooch,  
by René Lalique, circa 1890.  
Estimate: €100,000-120,000

# Former collection of the Garden Museum of Japan

## 16 February

Paris is preparing for a real event on 16 February, when Art Nouveau masterpieces from the former Garden Museum in Japan will be going up for sale: at the auction house (Sotheby's), they are saying that a collection like this has not been seen for twenty years. And the choice of Paris is no accidental, because historically, this is where Art Nouveau has registered some of its finest bids. 1989 was a memorable year with several million-plus bids at Drouot, notably for furniture by Gallé. More recently, in March 2011, Paris saw a collection of Jacques Majorelle go under the hammer: a bed with two bedside tables "Aux Nénuphars" (with water lilies) for €1,162,600. The collection brought together by the Japanese Takeo Horiuchi for his Nagoya museum is staggering. It includes one of the only three known versions of the "La Mort du Cygne" model piano produced in collaboration with Victor Prouvé in around 1903 (€500,000/700,000), his "Orchidée" desk with glasswork by the Daum Brothers (€250,000/350,000), a piece of furniture by Émile Gallé, the "Les Chemins d'Automne" dresser decorated with grape harvest scenes (€500,000), the balustrade of the René Lalique stand at the Universal Exhibition of 1900 (200,000/300,000), and numerous items of jewellery by the artist, including the "Baiser" necklace from the same exhibition (€200,000/250,000). In some twenty years, Takeo Horiuchi, with help from Alastair Duncan, succeeded in building up the "most important collection of Art Nouveau" in the world, which he then exhibited at the Louis C. Tiffany Garden Museum Collection. In 2012, he sold 130 pieces to an American collector, who is now selling them in Paris. That year, in November, Horiuchi also parted with his collection of Tiffany pieces through the American auction house Michaan's. The result came to over \$4M...

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas



20 February

**French Regency Commode**

If you like the 18th century with all its gold, curves and lustre, then this sale is for you. On 20 February at Drouot, the Paris auction house Renard is bringing together a fine collection of pieces, like this French Regency commode, expected to make €150,000/200,000. Its rich gilt bronze ornamentation, with its espagnolette corner swags - these Watteau-style women's busts embodied the smiling art of this century - invariably evoke the work of the great Charles Cressent. Though a sculptor by training, his preferred medium was bronze work. He was cabinetmaker to the French

Regent, and also helped to popularise this model of curved commode containing two drawers with no crosspiece. Connoisseurs will also linger on a pair of large 17th century cloisonné vases with 18th century mountings (€60,000/80,000), together with a painting of "Venus and Cupid", framed in elegant woodwork. Dated 1755, and bearing the initials P.J Sainte-Croix, this will be offered at between €8,000 and 10,000, as will a clock with gilt bronze canons. As the sale catalogue tells us, this "corsaire" model is similar to one in the former Doucet collection.

S. P.-D



HD

21 February

**Artists' correspondence**

Letters from Baudelaire to his mother, Berlioz to his son, Flaubert to Louise Collet, and Stendhal to his sister... Collected with great dedication by a couple of enthusiasts, this collection of autograph letters to be sold in Paris at the Salle Favart (Ader) contains 194 lots, where the guiding theme is that of having inspired these two collectors with the pleasure of reading them. In a letter from Verlaine to his friend (see photo), the journalist and poet Edmond Lepelletier, the writer describes his stay in London in the spring of 1873, giving "French lessons" to kill time and make a bit of money (€7,000/8,000). In another estimated at €10,000/12,000, again to Lepelletier, he describes his house at Strickney in Lincolnshire. On 16 October 1816, Théodore Géricault wrote to his friend, the architect Pierre Anne Dedreux, that he was getting ready to join him in Rome (€8,000/10,000). Meanwhile, we find a letter from Marcel Proust to his mother dated 15 June, 1905, about an exhibition by the painter Whistler he has seen at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (€5,000/7,000).

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas

# 22 February

Held between 6 and 18 February 1968, the 10th Winter Olympics at Grenoble saw Jean-Claude Killy win three gold medals for downhill skiing, and the only gold medal won by the United States carried off by the graceful skater Peggy Fleming. Opened by Général de Gaulle at precisely 15.39 before 70,000 spectators, the ceremonies were broadcast live - a novelty for the time - in colour to millions of television viewers. Another first was the appearance of a mascot named Schuss the skier: an idea taken up again officially for other Olympic Games. And finally, a shower of rose petals was scattered down from helicopters onto the delegations from the 37 participating countries and the public. During the closing ceremony, women from the Dauphiné in traditional costume handed over the Olympic flame to Japanese women from Sapporo, where the Games took place in 1972. Made by a Paris wrought-iron craftsman in 1967, commissioned by the Olympic Games organising Committee, the roman style sheet metal torch covered in copper was issued in an edition of only 33, hence its rarity. On 11 October 2012 in Paris (Vassy - Jalenques), one of these examples obtained the tidy sum of €228,000. On 3 February 2011, again in Paris, a torch (this time in silver) from the 1952 Helsinki Games garnered €348,000: a world record. So we shall follow this specimen with interest when it goes up for sale on 22 February Beussant & Lefèvre auction in Paris.

Anne Foster



# Olympic flame

Official torch from the 10th Winter Olympics at Grenoble, 1968, copper-gilt sheet metal, handle in lightweight felt, three silver-gilt insignia featuring the official emblem of the Games by Roger Excoffon (1910-1983), H. 76 cm. Estimate: €25,000/30,000.



25 February

**Sarver collection: contemporary ceramics**

Daniel and Michèle Sarver are fine connoisseurs of contemporary ceramics. Between 1976 and 2003, the most demanding collectors flocked to their Paris gallery. They were also responsible for a large number of exhibitions celebrating this type of work, at that time very little known to the general public. Their considerable expertise enabled them to expand the collections of the Sèvres Musée National de la Céramique. The Sarvers also collected the object of their passion. On 25 February, the auction house Camard et Associés is dispersing the collection they built up over the years. An occasion to acquire some pieces by top contemporary artists like Jean-François Fouilhoux (porcelain stoneware bowl glazed in celadon: €1,200/1,500), Alain and Marisa Begou (plane vase: €2,000/3,000), Bernard Dejonghe (tortoiseshell carapace in glazed chamotte stoneware: €800/1,000) and Pierre Bayle, one of whose works is this Canope Mana piece in turned, sigillated, modelled clay (€8,000/10,000).

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas



HD

&gt;

25 February

HD

**The Campana Brothers**

The charm of Paris sales also lies in the variety of the possible venues, like the Passage de Retz, in Rue Charlot in the central Marais, close to the Musée Picasso and international contemporary art galleries. After the former mansion burnt down, it was rebuilt in 1839, and the buildings were entirely renovated between 1989 and 1994. One of them, the Passage du Retz, hosts temporary exhibitions and auctions. The one on 25 February is presenting a collection of furniture and designer objects associated with works by contemporary artists (Pierre Bergé auction house). The programme features eleven creations by the Campana brothers, Fernando and Humberto, Brazilian designers who have set off a Baroque tempest on the world of design. As can be seen from their layout for the Café de l'Horloge at the Musée d'Orsay, the twosome are particularly sensitive to venues, throw outs and sophisticated techniques. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris is hosting them until 24 February. Fernando, the architect, and Humberto, the lawyer, began working together in 1983 to produce pieces that are unusual to say the least; like these "Panda Puffs" and "Mickey Chairs", seats entirely upholstered in their plush effigies, examples of which feature in this collection and for which you should plan on around €15,000. If you fancy a "Mono Sushi Sofa" of 2010, two carpet-covered benches will be on offer, with a matching estimate of around €30,000.

Anne Foster

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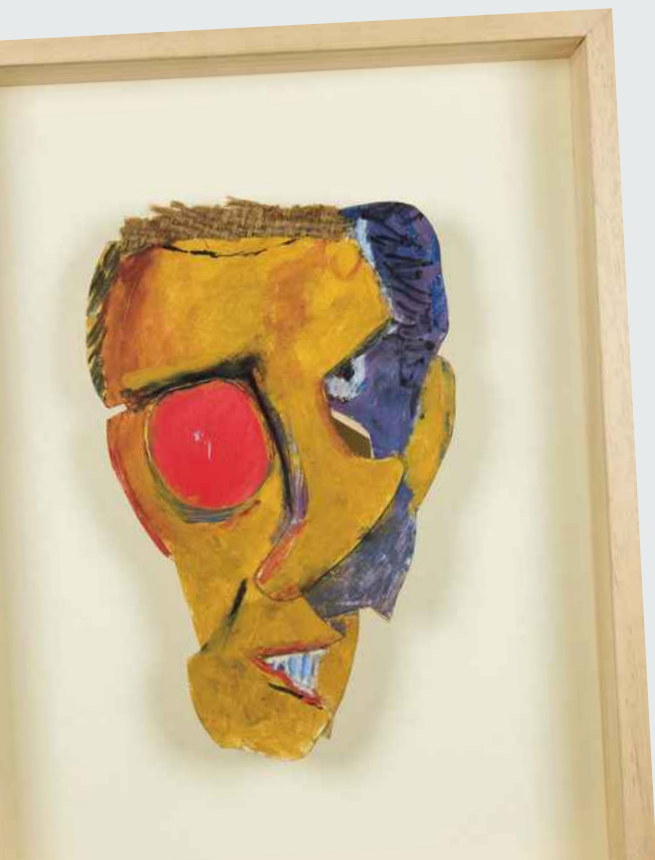
# 25 February

This sale by the auction house Binoche & Giquello is mainly given over to the Dada movement, which as we all know was at the origin of the Surrealist movement, recently in the limelight in museums and the marketplace alike. This Paris sale also makes an incursion into the first Surrealist period, notably with works by Paul Eluard, including his "Chanson complète", a book from 1939 illustrated by Marx Ernst (€20,000/30,000). But the sale is chiefly focused on the personalities of Marcel Janco and Tristan Tzara, Dadaists from the word go. The two men, who had been friends from childhood, met up in Zurich in 1915 and began working together, with Janco illustrating several works by Tzara. Not only have paintings of his come down to us, but also and above all these famous masks inspired by the arts of Africa and Oceania, made from bits of string and cardboard and intended to be worn during performances at the celebrated Cabaret Voltaire. The Centre Pompidou in Paris has a number of examples, including a portrait of Tzara dated 1919. In the example here, being sold on 25 February with around fifty lots, including a "Mona Lisa" and a composition of 1917, the poet is recognisable from his red monocle. Among the twenty or so lots, and by Tzara this time, we can mention some autograph manuscripts, original editions and the famous number 4/5, "Anthologie Dada" from the Dada review: a luxury copy signed by Tzara and illustrated by Jean Arp and Christian Schad (€10,000).

S. P.-D



## Dadaist duo: Janco and Tzara



Marcel Janco (1895-1984), "Portrait de Tristan Tzara", collage of paper, cardboard and string, gouache and oil. Estimate: €12,000/15,000.



Indo-Portuguese cabinet, wood (Sheesham, teak and other exotic woods), ivory, brass, copper mountings, India, Sindh or Gujarat, late 16th/early 17th century, Mughal dynasty, 47.5 x 86 x 48 cm.



25 February

## A taste for things oriental

Apart from its intrinsic qualities - rich materials and a sophisticated decoration - this piece of furniture tells an appealing story: that of a man passionate about Islamic art. We are in the second half of the 19th century, when Orientalist enthusiasts used to meet up in small committees. One of them, a Prefect working in Cairo, gave free rein to his passion by building up what was to be the main part of his collection of Islamic objects. On his return to France, he asked his friend, the architect Ambroise Baudry (whom he had met in Egypt) to restore his château du Bot in Brittany as a setting for his objects. Baudry renovated the ground floor in a totally pure, Orientalist style. He had considerable experience in this field, having been the head architect to the Khedive Ismâ'î in Cairo. As he did for his benefactor, Baudry also designed some Orientalist salons for rich collectors, like Edmond de Rothschild. But to return to this item, the star of a sale staged in Morlaix by Dupont & Associés auction house. Enhanced with ivory, brass and copper mountings, it has twelve drawers on the façade. Its base is of a later date, from the 19th century. Typical of work produced in India (possibly the Gujarat region in the north-west of the country) designed for the Portuguese market, it sums up the history of a certain taste - as do other pieces proposed in the same sale, in a programme mingling several styles, such as a pair of crystal ewers with silver mountings made in Saint Petersburg in the 19th century (€4,000/6,000), a ravishing gold snake bracelet made in England in around 1840 (1,800/32,000) and a Chinese rhinoceros horn libation cup decorated with lotus leaves (€40,000/50,000). **Stéphanie Perris-Delmas**

27 February HD

## The workshop of Antwerp artist Frans Van Dael

At the very beginning of the 19th century, the Chapelle de la Sorbonne, sacked during the revolutionary upheavals, contained workshops for artists for whom there was no room at the Louvre. One of these was the Antwerp artist Frans Van Dael, whose reputation as a still life master attracted a well-born female clientele to his studio (including the Duchesse du Berry and the Empress Josephine, among others). In this painting presented at the Salon of 1817

by his compatriot, the painter Philippe Jacques Van Brée, we see the female sex at work. Trained by the great Girodet during his years in Paris, the artist Van Brée had also made the journey to Rome, seeking inspiration in the beauty of Italian landscapes. This painting, which illustrates Van Brée's taste for architecture, belonged to the David-Weill collections. It will be the star (€20,000/30,000) of a Paris sale at the Hôtel Drouot (Daguerre auction house). S.P.-D

28 February HD

## Stage door

Stars, artists, acquaintances and close friends: all those who knew Jean-Claude Brialy remember his Paris apartment on the Ile Saint-Louis, on the top floor of a 17th century building overlooking the Seine: a living space groaning with bibelots, paintings and furniture from every period. The actor lived in the midst of this theatrical setting made up of a thousand sudden passions. A figure of the Nouvelle Vague, he made films with the top film directors. The unforgettable François in Claude Chabrol's "Beau Serge", and winner of the César award for the best supporting role in Bertrand Tavernier's "Juge et l'Assassin", Jean-Claude Brialy had a gargantuan filmography. On 28 February, in the Espace Cardin, the Fraysse & Associés auction house is selling the entire contents of the actor's apartment: some 620 lots (including numerous paintings, character studies, portraits and views of Paris) for an overall estimate of €300,000 to 500,000. An occasion for admirers to carry off a souvenir of their idol from the many watches, cufflinks, opalines and dedicated books...

S.P.-D

1 March

## Bwete reliquary figure

This sale of tribal art staged by the Paris auction house Binoche & Giquello is presenting, in almost equal proportions, works by North American Indians (such as a Kachina "Eagle Dance" doll from the Zuni tribe, Arizona, estimated at €10,000/15,000), Touareg art (including a Hoggar Ahrer or Arar shield from southern Algeria: €4,000/6,000) together with African, Oceanian and Amazonian pieces. In this third part, many will linger on a so-called Bwete reliquary figure from Gabon. It belongs to the group of large models. These stylised portraits represent the symbolic image of an ancestor who founded the tribe, whose bones are guarded carefully in a basket, surmounted by a figure whose role as a guard is materialised by prominent eyes, while the body is reduced to a lozenge. A large number of these objects have been found in caches, where they had been placed to escape the burnings carried out by Catholic missionaries. Characterised by their ogive form and copper and brass strip ornamentation, these Mahongwé effigies, which draw on an abstract vocabulary, are far rarer than Kota-Obamb statues. They attracted the keen eye of the major dealer and collector Charles Ratton, who assembled some of the finest examples, including the one in the Musée Dapper in Paris. The ancient specimen here with its delightfully archaic characteristics boasts an excellent pedigree because it comes from the former collection of the administrator Aristide Courtois: the very person who brought back the finest objects from Gabon for Charles Ratton. This reliquary also passed through his hands before joining the collection of the American actor Edward G. Robinson, and then the artist Arman. Last but not least, this figure has a base made by the Japanese cabinetmaker Kichizô Ignaki, who worked for Paul Guillaume and Charles Ratton.

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas



HD

So-called Bwete reliquary figure, Mahongwé ethnic group, 19th century, wood, copper and brass, h. 50 cm. Estimate: €100,000/150,000.



## 8 March

### Women's Day

In 1791, Olympe de Gouges published the "Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne". However, women's status did not change very rapidly after that. Since 1977, March 8 has been International Women's Day, the anniversary date of the Saint Petersburg women workers' strike in 1917. Women painters struggled to achieve recognition, even Berthe Morisot with the Impressionists, and the artists/icons of the Surrealists. The Tajan auction house, owned by a woman, Rodica Stewart, has decided to pay tribute to these painters, sculptors and photographers of the other sex: the future of mankind. The elders are featured (including Suzanne Valadon and Mary Cassatt) and also great figures of the early 20th century, like Tamara de Lempicka represented by a "Portrait de femme", a panel painted in around 1924 (€150,000) and Sonia Delaunay, represented by "Rythme coloré", a picture from 1952 (€400,000 photo). And our contemporaries are not lagging behind, either: there is a painted wood relief by Louise Nevelson, "Silence-Music II", 1979-1982 (€60,000) and a work by Sophie Calle consisting of a photograph and a text: "Autobiographical Stories (El Rehen)", 1989, expected to fetch around €30,000.

Anne Foster

# SO USEFUL

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# CALENDAR

International

## 6 February



**Max Ernst** (1891/1976), "Les Coquilles",  
oil on canvas, 31.8 x 46 cm.  
Estimate: 100,000/150,000

9 February

**Diamonds, rubies, sapphires...**

The catalogue of this Monaco sale is full of variety, embracing several specialities from jewellery to paintings, and from Hermès bags to Asian objects. We shall focus on the first, by far the best-stocked section of this sale staged at the Hôtel de Paris by the Accademia Fine Art auction house, with a noteworthy river necklace in platinum and white gold set with a cascade of 31 diamonds linked by 30 diamond baguettes. For this Fifties gem of around 21 ct, you should plan on €68,000/70,000. If you fancy setting it off, an Art Deco platinum and white gold brooch forming a comma set with diamonds would be perfect. Just add a further €6,500 to your bill. In a different style, that of Cartier, we find a set consisting of a necklace, ring and earrings in yellow gold set with rubies (€16,000/20,000). Also worth mentioning: an oval cut "vivid bluish violet to vivid purple" Ceylon sapphire ring of around 11 ct, which you can have for around €16,000/18,000.

S. P.-D

**Surrealists!**

In terms of numbers, the trio of Ernst, Magritte and Miró dominates this top-level London sale on 6 February (Christie's) devoted to artists connected with the Surrealist movement. But many others are involved as well, including Hans Arp ("Tête - Nez", 1925-1926, £100,000/150,000), Yves Tanguy ("L'Arc volant", 1945, £900,000/1.2 M), Salvador Dalí ("Ampurdanese Yang and Yin", c. 1934 (£500,000/700,000) and Wifredo Lam ("Untitled", double-sided gouache of 1942, £400,000/700,000). Max Ernst's paintings come from various times in the artist's thirty-year career, from "Forêt rouge et soleil" (1927, £400,000/600,000) and "Chant de la grenouille" (1957, £1.2/1.8 M) to "À l'intérieur de la vue" (1929, £1/1.5 M). Meanwhile, the Magrittes cover the period 1928-1966, with "Les Reflets du temps" (1928, £300,000/500,000), "Le Plagiat" (1940, £2/3 M), "À la rencontre du plaisir" (1950, former Harry Torczyner collection, \$1.2/1.8 M), "Ceci n'est pas une pomme" (1964, £1/1.5 M) and "Tous les jours" (1966, £1.8/2.5 M). The same broad period of time applies to Joan Miró with "Signes et figurations" (1936, £600,000/900,000), "Deux Personnages" (1938, £250,000/350,000 for this painting, which despite its small format – 37 x 32 cm – could produce a pleasant surprise for its seller), "L'Échelle de l'évasion" (1939, £5/8 M) and "Le Sourire nacré devant l'azur" (1972, £1.5/2 M). The same day, the Impressionist and Modern sales will be offering plenty of temptations, from Matisse's "La Danse" (£2.2/3.4 M for this gouache of 1938) to two Renoirs of 1878 and 1882: "Jeune Femme à l'ombrelle" and "Baigneuse accoudée" (£4/7 and £1.5/2 M respectively) - not to mention the splendid "Jeanne Hébuterne au chapeau" (large painting of 1919, £16/22 M) by Amedeo Modigliani.

Xavier Narbaitz

16 February HD

## Spanish pistols for an Asian market

Lovers of ancient weaponry will have to mount a siege to get to the end of this gigantic sale: some 1147 lots! But as we know, collectors are capable of the most astonishing patience when it comes to winning the objects of their desire. That day, they will be truly spoilt for choice, as the Italian auction house Czerny's - hardly a beginner, as it sold a Russian sabre belonging to Grand Duke Michail Pavlovich in November for the tidy sum of €220,000 - has brought together some high quality items. Among the stars of this sale staged in Sarzana is a pair of 19th century Spanish percussion pistols designed for the Asian market (€10,000), a pair of mid-18th century flintlock shotguns made in Germany, and a casket containing a pair of French pistols made in around 1800 by the Bertheas Fils factory, offered at €15,000. Among the thousand or so lots of this sale of military items, you will also find more "affordable" pieces, like a pair of 19th century Japanese presentation dishes for €900. English-speaking enthusiasts will be glad to know that the catalogue is available in English.

23 February HD

## Banksy

Since 2008 and the record sale - over a million dollars - of one of his works in New York, Banksy has joined the circle of troublemakers in art and its market. Now a key figure in Street Art, the British artist, born in 1974, expresses himself through stencils, brilliantly handling humour, derision and subversion. In 2005, he hid some dummy works in the collections of leading museums like the MoMA and the Met; that year, he also painted nine images on the Israeli West Bank barrier. The artist takes possession of topical events, which he denounces or criticises through images with a certain poetic touch, staging celebrated figures, animals, rats, monkeys or children, as here in *Slave Labor (Bunting Boy)*, being offered for sale on 23 February at Miami by the FAAM auction house. This "unique street work", estimated at €500,000/700,000, will be accompanied by a "Wet dog" in stencil and spray paint, Bethlehem, 2007 (\$600,000/800,000).





**Emile Claus** (1849-1934), "Fenaïson, juillet 1906", oil on canvas dated 06 on the back, 42.5 x 59.5 cm. Estimate: €70,000/80,000.



## 25 and 26 February

### Young peasant girl

The works of Émile Claus have a slightly old-fashioned charm, their flowery landscapes dotted with the diaphanous silhouettes of young peasant girls. Throughout a varied career, the Belgian painter remained faithful to these pastoral themes, echoing the subject matter of Bastien Lepage and Léon Lhermitte. After studying at the Antwerp Academy, he worked in conventional realism for the first ten years of his career, with social overtones reminiscent of Bastien Lepage's work. After various stays in Paris, where he even set up his studio from 1889 to 1892, he adopted the style of the Impressionists with whom he was in contact. He painted the landscapes on the banks of the Lys in the open air, and became the pioneer of Belgian Luminism. In this painting of July 1906, i.e. a year after the major exhibition of the Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles, contours have disappeared, and strokes are fragmented in a spring-like range of blue and green monochromes. A joyful palette also found in "Les Asters", painted the same year, and now in the Royal Museums of Belgium. The star of the next Brussels sale by the Horta auction house, this painting was presented at the Émile Claus exhibition in the Ostend Museum of Modern Art, in 1997. Its estimate, €70,000/80,000, reflects the artist's rating. But some of his works, particularly those from the 1890s, achieve six-figure bids.

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas

HD



## 27 February

### Murano Glass sale

What's the connection between Munich and the Serenissima? A sale by the German auction house Quittenbaum - because this is dedicated to Murano glass. The island, a ten-minute vaporetto ride from Venice, is famous for its glasswork, a very old tradition that continued to be brilliantly successful up to the 20th century, as witness this vase by Fulvio Bianconi, made in 1953 for Venini & Co, an Italian company he worked for (€7,000/9,000). Ercole Barovier was the other major figure in the revival of glasswork in the 20th century, represented in this sale with a 'dorico' vase, also expected to fetch between €7,000 and 9,000. But this might well inspire optimism - as was the case on 25 September with a similar model, knocked down by Quittenbaum for €20,000.

S. P.-D

27 February

## French expertise: furniture

This sale by the Bruun Rasmussen auction house in Copenhagen celebrates the excellence of French furniture, and more precisely that of 18th and 19th century Parisian cabinetmakers. At that time, the capital was famous throughout Europe for the work it produced, which was sought after by crowned heads. For example, Guillaume Grohé, the creator of two corner tables estimated at €40,000 (to see the photo click on HD), and whose furniture regularly won awards at universal exhibitions showcasing the know-how of the great nations, had King Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Aumale, as one of his customers. He was rightly considered the worthy heir to the King's great cabinetmaker, Charles André Boulle. The vogue at that time was the revival of the 18th century, which provided direct inspiration to cabinetmakers, who even went so far as to improve on ancient production and decoration techniques. Less spectacular but nonetheless interesting, a pair of Louis XV armchairs by Louis Cresson symbolises the influence of 18th century French cabinetmaking (€8,000/10,500). S.P.-D

2 March

## Blue heritage

In the AGB (Avant-garde Bleu) family, I'm looking for the son... the line has been established between Yves Klein and Jan Fabre, hasn't it? Twenty years after the monochrome riots of the famous inventor of IKB, the Belgian plastic artist performer with an international name could certainly boast of flying high the colour of an art constantly in movement. A blue of necessity saturated, to the point of force-feeding... The blue darkness reveals itself in the meticulous strokes of his ball-point pen, as in this 1988 drawing for "Prometheus Landschaft" offered by the De Vuyst auction house in Lokeren. Plan for €170,000/240,000 if you want to chain it up. Unless cautiousness takes you, among the 600 lots, more towards Wifredo Lam's oil on canvas (€140,000/180,000) entitled "Nous attendons" (We wait). Should we see some ironic presage in this? Cécile Camille



4 March

**20th and 21st century design**

This is a first for the Paris auction house Pierre Cornette de Saint-Cyr, which is organising a sale in Brussels entirely dedicated to 20th and 21st century creations. Italian design, like its equivalent in America, has the spotlight in this selection, which brings together creations by Serge Mouille (a Vrillée model low table from 1962 at €35,000) and the highly contemporary Philippe Michael Wolfson, associated for a long time with the designs of architect Zaha Hadid (prototype of the Line Curve model console: €8,000/12,000). Of particular interest is the bookcase/bar by Osvaldo Borsani (€8,000/12,000), the leader of the Italian school. During the Fifties, this architect, one of a family of small-scale furniture producers, developed a rational design within the Techno company he founded with his brother Fulgenzio. His creations, of which the D70 divan and the P40 armchair are among the most famous, made use of new materials. In terms of American design, the sale is proposing this "Soft Pad" model chaise longue by Charles Eames, edited by Herman Miller (€4,000/6,000).





5 March

HD

## Henry Cartier Bresson - Bruxelles

For its inaugural sale, the photographic department of the auction house Pierre Cornette de Saint Cyr in Brussels is summoning a number of top names in the speciality: Jean-Loup Sieff, Robert Doisneau, Helmut Newton and the pioneer of photojournalism, Henri Cartier Bresson. As a taste of this inaugural sale, this photo entitled "Bruxelles", which HCB took in 1932, shows two men in hats trying to steal images of a show through the holes in a fence - peeping Toms caught red-handed... This is a late silver halide collector's print on baryte paper bearing the photographer's signature (€12,000/14,000). Also worth noting: a series by the Belgian photographer Willy Kessels, mainly known for the pictures he took in 1933 during the shoot of the film "Misère au Borinage" by Henri Storck and Joris Ivens.

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas



# AUCTION RESULTS

FIND AUCTION RESULTS ON THE INTERNET

W

# €368,750

With 38 lots sold, this classic programme totalled €2,734,750 on 17 December at the Hôtel Le Bristol (Kohn Marc-Arthur auction house). There were eight six-figure bids, with the highest, €368,750 ringing out for a clock attributed to André-Charles Boulle (photo). This features Day and Night, after the figures sculpted by Michelangelo for the tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, and has a movement by Étienne I Le Noir. Note that the base is from a later period. The sculpture distinguished itself first of all, with €243,750 for a late 18th century Italian marble (123.5 x 100 x 40 cm) attributed to John Deare. This shows Icarus after his fatal fall, held up above the waves by a stylised dolphin twisting around his back. Deare, a rare and little-known sculptor, worked in Thomas Carter's studio in London before moving to Rome, where, imbued with the work of Antique masters, he died at the age of 38. Legend has it that he died from a delirious fever caused by spending a night on a cold marble block, hoping to find inspiration. Several of his contemporaries concur that his talent could have made him a rival of the great Canova. The strangeness of this sculpture evokes the style of the French painter, Girodet, characterised by an interest in the immaterial and dreams, a taste for poetry and an eccentric classicism which subtly drove him to distort the iron rules of Neoclassicism.

Sylvain Alliod

## Attributed to André-Charles Boulle



HD

### Attributed to André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732)

and his workshop, movement by Étienne I Le Noir (1675-1739), Paris, c. 1715-1720, "Le Jour et la Nuit" (Day and Night) clock in ebony veneering, tortoiseshell, copper, mother-of-pearl and patinated gilt bronze, 73.5 x 91 x 17 cm.



HD



€53,000

## Magic and the Baroque

This painting, bearing the inscription "Iarcas Phvs./Brachmanorum Rex", illustrates the art of Luca Giordano, a prolific painter nicknamed "Luca fa presto". He enjoyed an international reputation, and worked in Italy, where his masterpiece was the Galleria Riccardiana. Summoned in 1692 by Charles II of Spain, he spent a decade producing impressive decorative paintings for the Escorial and the Casòn del Buen Retiro in Madrid. Apart from these huge ornamental frescoes, Luca Giordano also painted a large number of easel pictures, like the painting here, knocked down for €53,000 on 20 December in Cannes (Cannes Enchères auction house). Making reference to a work by Philostratus the Elder, it transcribes an episode in the life of Apollonius of Tyana, set in Ancient India. This Neopythagorean philosopher was presented with a gift of seven rings by Iarchas, a great astronomer and king of the Brahmins. Imbued with magical powers and producing marvellous effects, they bore the names of the seven planets corresponding to the days of the week.

Chantal Humbert

€105,332

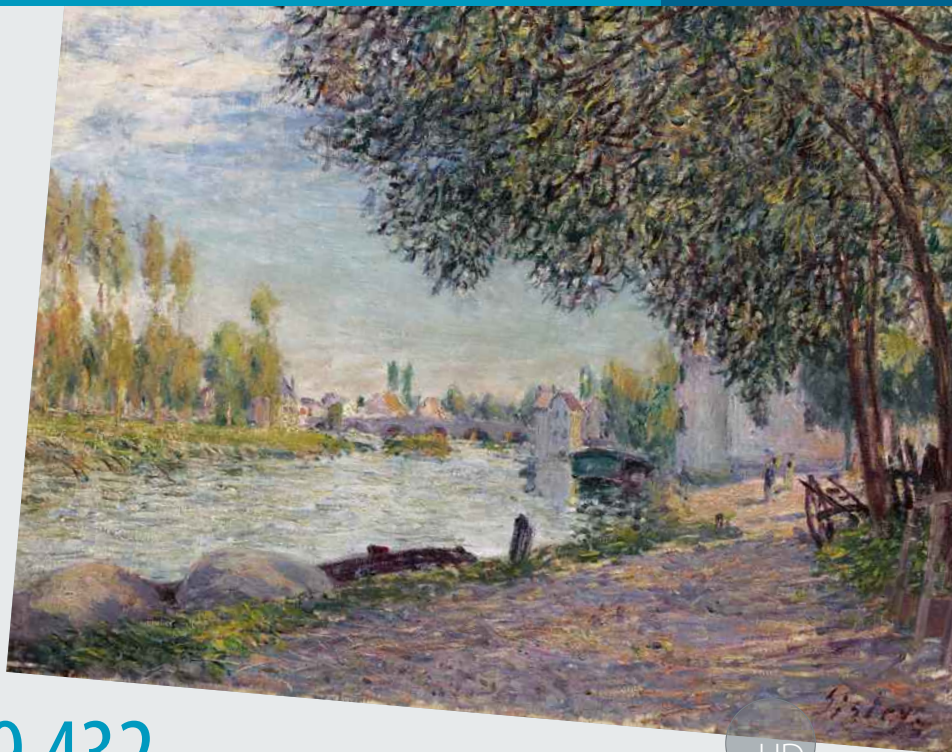
## Le Manège by Ferdinand du Puigaudeau

Estimated at €60,000, this oil on canvas by Ferdinand du Puigaudeau, "Le Manège la nuit à Pont-Aven" was knocked down for €105,332 on 19 November at Drouot with the Ader auction company. In 1899, it appeared in the Salon de la société des amis des arts de Nantes, under the title "Chevaux de bois". On 16 December 1998, at Drouot, it fetched FF400,000 (€72,800 at today's values). The Nantes-born self-taught artist painted his first picture in 1886, at the age of 22. He then left for a stay in Pont-Aven, where he met Charles Laval and Paul Gauguin. Gauguin was still very influenced by the art of Pissarro and Cézanne. Du Puigaudeau did not follow the Pont-Aven school's path towards Symbolism. Fascinated by light, he preferred the Impressionists' approach, and concentrated on the rendering of chiaroscuro effects. During a second stay at Pont-Aven between 1895 and 1897, he painted nocturnal festivals. His merry-go-rounds and processions ?

S. A.



**Alfred Sisley** (1839-1899), "Le Port de Moret-sur-Loing - Le soir", 1884, oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm.



€1,499,432

HD

## Sisley, guaranteed success

And to think that while he was alive, the works of Sisley didn't sell! Things have certainly changed, as we can see with this 1884 oil on canvas, auctioned on 19 December in Paris for €1,499,432 (Beaussant Lefèvre auction house). The same year that this composition was painted, the famous art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel exhibited works by the artist in London, Boston and Paris. As we can see, globalisation is not such a recent phenomenon for the art market... And yet in 1883, the exhibition devoted to him by the gallery owner in June was a flop. In a letter to Monet, Pissarro complains of the mediocre results of his own exhibition, and adds, "As to Sisley's exhibition, it's even worse - nothing at all." This picture went through Georges Petit's gallery before featuring in Petit's collection. This was because the painter had left Durand-Ruel and, disappointed by Boussod-Valadon, now put his trust in the Galerie Petit, which dedicated a major retrospective to him in 1897. Unfortunately, the press ignored it, and sales were again non-existent. In Paris, on 4 and 5 March 1921, this picture appeared in the sale of Georges Petit's collection, where it was described in the most flattering terms. This was enough to win over one Monsieur Simonson, who bought it for FF20,100 (around €20,500 at today's value). Subsequently, the work joined the collection of the great art lover Moïse Lévy de Benzon (1873-1943) where, alongside three other Sisleys, it rubbed shoulders with works by Ingres, Corot, Degas, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec and Pissarro. In March 1947, the sale of the collections adorning the collector's villa in Zamalek, Egypt, lasted for several days. Benzon also possessed the Château de la Folie, at Draveil in France. Halfway between light and shade, this picture gives a vibrant view of life in Moret-sur-Loing, one of Sisley's favourite subjects. And this time, it was a real success!

Sylvain Alliod

# Athéniennes

## €129,900

This pair of athéniennes (or tripods) stand out for their mythological theme, one totally appropriate for this type of furniture embodying Neoclassicism to perfection. Jean-Henri Eberts was a Swiss banker who lived for a while in Paris, and was also a collector and publisher of prints. In 1773, he decided to have a piece of furniture made based on the one appearing in a painting by Joseph-Marie Vien. Executed in 1762 and exhibited at the Salon the following year, this was one of a series of four paintings on the theme of the seasons produced for the celebrated Mme Geoffrin. "Winter" shows a priestess burning incense on a tripod. There is a copy of this in the Musée des Beaux-arts in Strasbourg. Better known as "La Vertueuse Athénienne", the composition gave its name to the antique tripod updated to current taste. With a mainly domestic and votive function under the Greeks and Romans, the use of the athénienne diversified in the second half of the 18th century, when it would also serve as an occasional table, console, drink-warmer, washbasin, goldfish bowl or jardinière. This pair, sold on 16 January by the Paris auction house Europ Auction, opts for a function more in keeping with its origins, as the openwork lids suggest that they could have been used as potpourri holders or perfume burners.

Sylvain Alliod



Early 19th century. Pair of chased gilt bronze athéniennes, h. 118 cm.

€75,000

## Attributed to Georges Jacob

HD

The model of this armchair is taken from a drawing attributed to the Percier & Fontaine agency, from projects for seats for the Jacob company probably dating from before 1795. These are reproduced in Denise Ledoux-Lebard's book on 19th century cabinetmakers. It also bears the stamp "rue Meslée": the address of the Jacob workshops. In addition, an identical chair attributed to Georges Jacob, with a grid back rather than a lattice back, is now in the Château de la Malmaison. This is reproduced in Jean-Pierre Samoyault's book on French Consulate and Empire furniture. All factors that account for the result registered on 21 December by the Gros & Delettrez auction house: €75,000, after an estimate of a sixth of that sum. We should add that the Mobilier National has an armchair of the same type, stamped by another great name in cabinetmaking: Jean-Baptiste-Claude Sené (1748-1803).



€204,000 HD

## Indian Songs

A portrait by Alexandre Jacovleff, a mixed media on paper mounted on canvas, belonged to a female cousin of Nyota Inyoka (to see photo click on HD), a famous dancer born in Pondichery to an Indian father and a French mother. Shown at the height of her art, the dancer is disguised as Vishnu, god of the world's stability. The young woman made her debut at the Oasis Theatre, where she gave accomplished performances of reconstructed sacred Hindu dances. Nyota Inyoka, wearing costumes designed by Paul Poirer, embodied Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma and Nartaki to splendid effect. The portrait proposed on 1 January at Saint-Valery-en-Caux (Roquigny) certainly enflamed enthusiasts. At €204,000, five bidders were still in the lists. Nyota Inyoka was finally carried off by a major Russian collector, multiplying estimates by twenty.

Chantal Humbert



€145,500

HD

### Bidding diamonds

Diamonds opened the 2013 season in glittering style at Drouot, when on 16 January the Europ Auction house garnered some fine bids for three of them. Presented on paper, one radiant cut stone (5.05 ct - HRD: F, VS1) achieved €145,500 (to see photo click on HD). Two other diamonds on paper obtained €93,528 for a brilliant cut (5.03 ct - HRD: I, VVS2) and €92,229 for a pear cut (4.15 ct - HRD: E, VS2).

HD

### €18,738 French-style dress

On 16 January, a specialist sale totalled €261,795 (Coutau-Bégarie auction house). It was dominated at €18,738 (triple the estimate) by a French-style dress of c. 1740 in lampas with a yellow satin background, with brocaded polychrome silk decoration of bushes and flower bouquets. The coat has pagoda sleeves with two flounces, and the taffeta skirt and apron are made from the same lampas. The quality of the weaving enables it to be attributed to Venetian workshops.



**Evgeny Alexandrovich Lanceray**  
(1848-1886), "Oprichnik or Prince  
Vyazemskii", bronze with brown  
patina, signed, 36.5 x 32 x 14 cm.

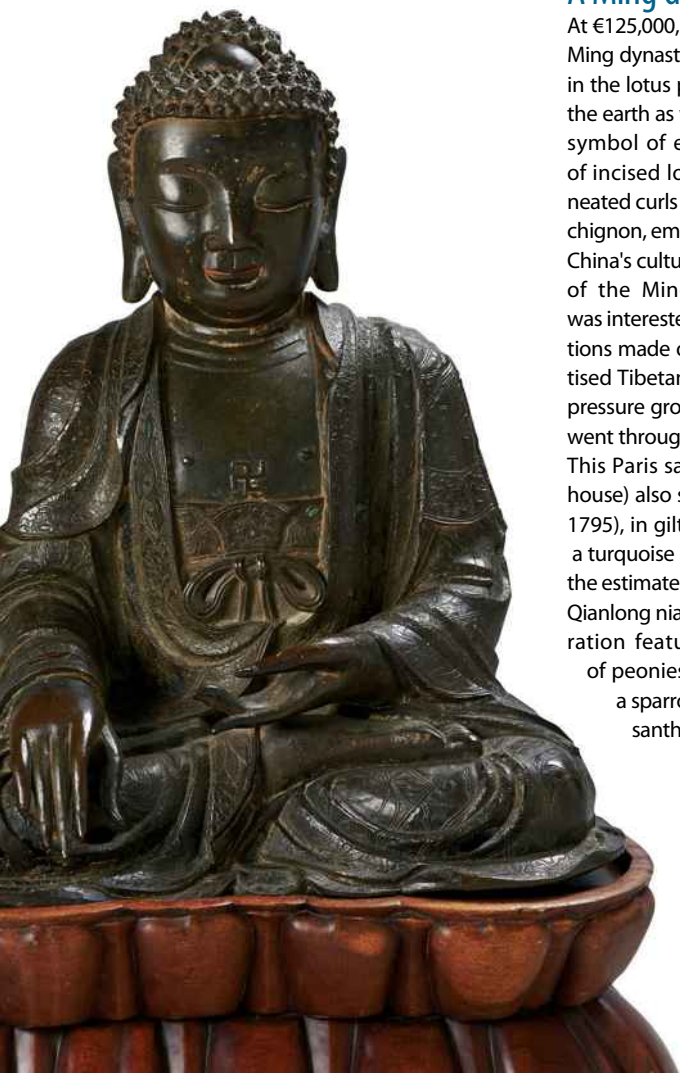
€26,400

## Prince Vyazemskii

In the 19th century, under the influence of Anglomania and the sporting life, animal art flourished in Europe, and many artists made it their speciality, like Evgeny Alexandrovich Lanceray. The grandson of an officer in the Grande Armée who had remained in Russia, the young man received his first lessons from his sculptor father, then attended the Imperial Academy in St Petersburg. An excellent rider himself, he specialised in equestrian bronzes. He was a fine connoisseur of the horse's anatomy, and could capture the animal's attitude and movement on the spot. With equal skill, Lanceray took inspiration from Russia's traditional and folk art, and drawing on the realism of the Ambulant movement, sculpted Cossacks and their steeds in their daily actions. "A Fourrageur Cossack halts" aroused the admiration of American sculptor Frederic Remington, who bought it during a trip to Russia. When Lanceray became extremely successful, he had his bronzes cast by the Fonderie Suisse. The high-spirited horseman here once belonged to a family of White Russians who had emigrated to France, before prancing off to a private collection in Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire. He represents Prince Vyazemskii, and is wearing the uniform of an oprichnik. Taken from the minor Russian nobility, this organisation of archer horsemen was formed in the 16th century by Ivan the Terrible to be his personal guards. The formidable warriors were recognisable from the dog's head and broom they wore on their saddles. Multiplying estimates by six on 20 January in Vendôme (Rouillac action house), this one was finally conquered by a major collector from Moscow.

**Chantal Humbert**

# SPECIALITY



## A Ming dynasty Buddha €125,000

At €125,000, this Chinese bronze with a brown patina from the Ming dynasty respected its estimate. It portrays Buddha sitting in the lotus position, his hands adopting the gesture of taking the earth as witness. His torso is decorated with a swastika, the symbol of eternity. Worth noting: the refined decoration of incised lotus flowers on his clothing, and the finely-delineated curls in his hair, set off further by the smoothness of the chignon, emblematic of spiritual powers. A great admirer of the China's cultural riches, and undoubtedly the most brilliant ruler of the Ming dynasty, the Yongle emperor (1403-1425) was interested in both Taoism and Buddhism, and had compilations made of their canonical texts. The emperor himself practised Tibetan Buddhism, which conflicted with the Confucian pressure groups of the court. Under the Ming dynasty, bronze went through a new golden age, as witness the sculpture here. This Paris sale on 17 December (Pescheteau-Badin auction house) also saw a bianhu flask of the Qianlong dynasty (1736-1795), in gilt bronze with polychrome cloisonné enamels on a turquoise base (h. 56 cm), knocked down for €121,250: triple the estimate. The other side of its base bears the mark "Da Qing Qianlong nian zhi" and, on a background of swastikas, its decoration features a pair of sparrows perched on branches of peonies and wild apple trees on one side, on the other, a sparrow flying over rocks through which blooming chrysanthemums grow.

China, Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Statue of Buddha seated in padmasana, hands in bhumisparsa mudra, bronze with brown patina, wooden base in the form of an inverted double lotus, h. 50 cm.



## Figure of Guanyin €9,025,000

On 19 December in Paris, the Asian art sale at Christie's made a total of €18,446,525. The most expensive work sold in France in 2012 was this wooden 18th century sculpture from North China containing traces of polychromy and gilding (h. 175 cm). Representing Guanyin sitting in lalitasana, it inspired a final tussle between the London dealer Anthony Carter and Giuseppe Eskenazi, the latter winning the day at €9,025,000. Estimated at no more than €300,000, it had been acquired from Étienne Ader, at Drouot, on 11 March 1947 for FF257,000 (around €13,300 in today's money). Shown in a supple, relaxed position, the goddess is dressed in a pleated dhoti, a scarf and a coat. She also wears a necklace and a tiara. A comparable example is now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. The other lots in the top ten of the sale were borne off by Asian collectors and galleries. We know how much the Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) admired Chinese antiques. A pair of archaic hu vases carrying his stamp, in enamelled porcelain imitating bronze (h. 41.5 cm), soared up to €1,073,000 after a high estimate of €150,000. These are decorated in several registers, with Taotie mask motif reserves on a leiwen background, and brown enamel embellished with green and lavender blue marks imitating the oxidation of bronze vases. A perfect illusion!

Large wood figure of Guanyin, North China, circa 13th century, h. 175 cm.



Tibet, early 17th century, white Jambhala mounted on a dragon, gilt bronze, h. 42.5 cm.



### A rich divinity worth a fortune €1,327,433

Asian art, a leading speciality at the end of 2012 in Paris, garnered another million-figure result with this Tibetan group in chased gilt bronze. Described as early 19th century and estimated at no more than €6,000 in the catalogue of the Paris sale on 17 December at Tajan, it was presented at the auction itself as 17th century, with a new estimate of €12,000 to €18,000. Regardless of the restoration of both legs of the dragon, previously broken, the bidding battle was furious, driving this white Jambhala up to the giddy heights of €1,327,433: a very fitting result for this divinity in the wealth-bestowing form of Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Multiform, she is often represented with a mongoose in her left hand and a jewel in her right. She was better known by the name Vaishravana, “she who hears all”, and was one of four Lokapalas, Guardians of the world: Vinaraja (“the king who plays the vina”), Virudhaka (“the great man”), Virupaksa (“he who has the evil eye”) and finally, Jhambala, the leader of the Lokapalas overseeing the four cardinal directions and the four seasons. Integrated into the Buddhist iconography, these originally came from India. Their chief task was to preserve the Buddha and the world from the invasion of demons.

## The explorer Zhang Qian sailing on the Yangzi river €950,789

The Hôtel Marcel Dassault in Paris hosted a new round of Asian art on Monday 17 December, which recorded a total of €3,372,917, including two six-figure and twenty-three five-figure bids. The top price, €1,122,317, went to a spinach green jade imperial stamp from the Qianlong dynasty (1736-1795) (l. 4.45 cm). Oval-shaped, it features an archaic chilong (hornless dragon) entwined with its young, and the seal is engraved with six characters signifying "great seal for works selected for conservation in the emperor's library". Also used under the Jiaqing Emperor (1796-1820), it was employed in the south library in the Palace of Celestial Purity, one of the four places in the Forbidden City housing the works listed in the first edition of the imperial catalogue, compiled from 1744 to 1745. The second six-figure bid, €950,789, went to a 17th/18th century Qing pouring vessel in rhinoceros horn (344 g - l. 25.7 cm). Its rarity lies in its form: a hollowed log, showing the explorer Zhang Qian sailing down the Yangzi river. It carries two stamps, You Qi and Zi Leifu. Only around twenty examples of this type are known today; three of them are now in the Palace Museum in Beijing.

## Imperial ink 1772 €29,325

Appearances can sometimes be deceptive... This writing case in Japanese lacquer is also an imperial Chinese object. Sold on 7 December last year (Aguttes auction house), it contains a cake of ink bearing inscriptions, two of them on its obverse. The first, "yubi" (from the imperial paintbrush), is in cursive script surrounded by two five-toed dragons facing each other. The second consists of four characters meaning "Yunming yungu" (entrusting famous names as a deposit; receiving the Elders). Under these inscriptions, a square contains the image of a belvedere on a willow-shaded lake. The other side carries the name of the ink cake, "yuxiang" (aroma of the emperor), also framed by two five-toed dragons. It is highlighted with a long text alluding to the calligraphy models preserved in the imperial treasury during the Chunhua period (990-994) and their engraving on 144 stela on the orders of the Qianlong Emperor in 1769. This inscription, written by the Emperor, dates from the summer of 1772. The Palace Museum in Taipei has an ink cake that is very similar, at least on the reverse side. Two other examples of imperial Chinese ink cakes contained in Japanese lacquer boxes feature in the imperial collections. And this makes perfect sense, for the finest Chinese inks are those that imitate the black glossiness of lacquer.



Sino-Tibetan work, Ming dynasty,  
Yongle period (1403-1424). Statuette  
of dharmapala Vajrabhairava in gilt  
bronze and gold-lacquered bronze,  
h. 20 cm.



## Tantric Buddhism €806,000

The extremely dense composition of this Sino-Tibetan bronze of the Yongle dynasty in no way scared off the bidders. Estimated at €25,000, this dharmapala gesticulated up to €806,000 on 20 December in Paris (Piasa auction house). Likewise, no wear and tear or missing parts (base and wings) dampened the ardour of enthusiasts. It has to be said that despite these flaws, the statuette still has plenty to impress, since it has nine heads, sixteen legs and twenty-two arms... Its principal hands hold the kartika - a knife symbolising the severance of material and earthly bonds - and the kalasa, which contains the primaeval water carried by Brahma, the creator. The dharmapalas are the defenders of Dharma; these beneficial deities take on a terrifying appearance to protect Buddhism and its believers. The role of Vajrabhairava ("adamantine terror") is to keep the non-enlightened away from the tantric mystery. It is one of the facets of Yamantaka, the wrathful form of Manjushri, the great bodhisattva of wisdom. He belongs to the pantheon of Vajrayan Buddhism, or tantric Buddhism, of which Tibet is one of the most favoured lands. As we know, tantric Buddhism reached China in the 8th century. In the Tang period, the Suzong (756-763) and Daizong (763-779) emperors were so taken by it that they placed the Empire under the protection of the bodhisattva Manjusri. But in 845, the Wuzong Emperor banned all foreign religions. Tantric Buddhism reappeared under the Mongol Yuan dynasty. Though chosen officially by the court, it was not imposed on the rest of the country. It remained in favour under the Ming, notably thanks to Yongle, and, naturally, under the Manchu dynasty of the Qing.

## Imperial Amitayus €816,750

A further seven-figure total for Asian art in Paris was harvested by Sotheby's France on 18 December: €8,316,625 (72.6% by lot; 90.7% by value), with fourteen six-figure bids. Asian collectors bore off eight of the lots in the sale's top ten. At €816,750, the estimate was doubled for an imperial sculpture from the Kangxi dynasty (1662-1722) in gilt bronze enhanced with coloured stones (h. 41.4 cm). This depicts Amitayus sitting in dhyanasana on a double lotus pedestal; his hands, together in front of him, originally held the vase of immortality. With a bare torso, he is dressed in a robe and a shawl, and is richly decked in jewellery, including a tiara. He shares stylistic similarities with a Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Sadaksari commissioned by the Kangxi Emperor in 1686 for his grandmother's birthday.

Sylvain Alliod

# What you could have bought for under €10,000



€6,435

**Paul Jenkins** (1923-2012), "Phenomena - Prism Anvil", 1985 Acrylic on canvas, signed on the bottom right. Countersigned and dated on the back. Titled and located at Saint-Paul-de-Vence on the back, 46 x 38 cm. Paris-Drouot, 17 December 2012, Cornette de Saint Cyr auction house.



€4,687

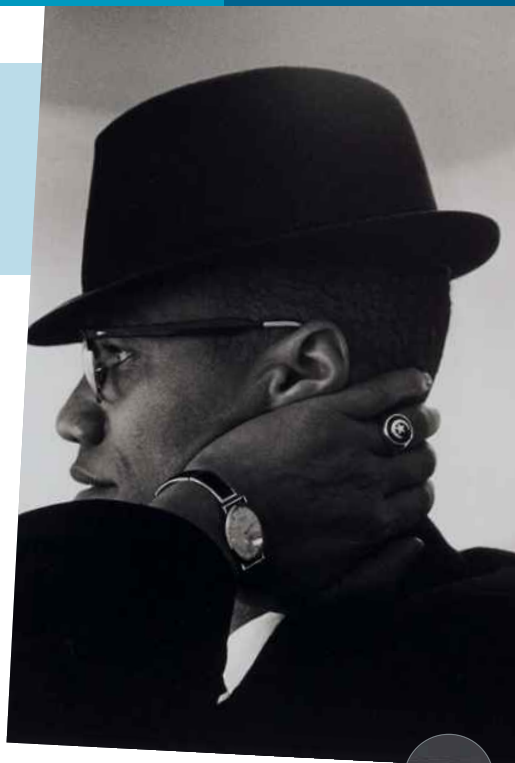
**Georges Mathieu** (1921-2012), "Composition", 1967, Red ink and black ink, signed, dated and dedicated "Pour Albert Achdjian en amical hommage de Georges Mathieu (19)67" on the bottom right, 24 x 47 cm. Paris-Drouot, 10 December 2012, Gros & Delettrez auction house.





€700

**Antoni Tàpies** (1923 - 2012), "Pro Abolició pena de mort", Lithograph in several inks. Signed and numbered 14/75. Produced in 1975. Reference literature: Mariuccia Galfetti, "Tàpies. Obra gràfica Graphic work 1973-1978", Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1980, p. 126, no. 511, 89.5 x 67 cm. Barcelona, 19 December 2012, Balclis Barcelona auction house.



€1,982

HD

**Eve Arnold** (1912-2012), "Malcolm X", Chicago, 1960. Printed on resin coated paper in 2004, signed, titled, date in pencil on the back. Image: 28.1 x 18.9 cm; sheet: 30.3 x 23.9 cm. Paris-Drouot, 9 November 2012, Yann Le Mouel auction house.

€3,717

**Lillian Bassman** (1917-2012), "Margy Cato (Junior Bazaar)", c. 1950. Silver halide print (c. 2000), signed by Lillian Bassman, and numbered one of 25 copies in pencil on the back, 50.5 x 40.5 cm. Paris, 18 November 2012. Ader auction house.









# MAGAZINE

# MEETING

## The Setaris collectors of "work in progress"

What collector hasn't longed to witness the creative process of a work of art? Giuliana and Tommaso Setari don't seem to have known greater happiness: one infinitely superior to that of collecting. Living with artists and contributing in practical terms to the birth of a work

beats the pleasure of possessing. Their Italian chattiness takes wing in an inexhaustible account of their meetings, inseparable from an almost family-like notion of sharing. As witness a video in which the Austrian artist Franz West creates a sculpture on the terrace of their house in Capri. These images are not only the memory of a work (which Giuliana and



Tommaso Setari do not own, moreover); they take on a crucial importance, because they represent a "moment of truth", says Giuliana - in this case the act of creation, to which they were privileged witnesses. Today, more than ever, their commitment to projects they support through their foundation is primordial. Everything began with their first acquisition: an abstract painting by Gerhard Richter, which has travelled with them to their various homes in New York, Italy and now Paris. They may have left their native country, their anchorage point, but they never forgot it. Michelangelo Pistoletto, Ettore Spalletti, Giulio Paolini and Vettor Pisani ring out like the names of Italian provinces, representing their geographical, artistic and even emotional roots. For over thirty years, Giuliana and Tommaso Setari were keen to convert their host country to Mediterranean sensibilities. As soon as they arrived in New York, they established links with Italian companies and American institutions, in particular the Guggenheim and Metropolitan museums. In 1998, Giuliana Setari began supporting the Pistoletto foundation, of which she is president. These were already the early beginnings of their own foundation, created in 2001, which was to make a hands-on investment in artistic projects through awards, grants, artists' residences and, above all, aid in production. Through their desire to be stakeholders in the creative process, Giuliana and Tommaso Setari gave a new dimension and meaning to the collector status.

**La Gazette Drouot: What sparked your interest in contemporary art?**

**Giuliana Setari:** My knowledge of the artistic scene began with the galleries in Pescara, where I come from, and where I discovered Joseph Beuys and Ettore Spalletti. Early on, we started buying Mario Merz,

From left to right: Marco Bagnoli (b. 1949), *Janua Coeli*, 1988; Vettor Pisani (1934-2011), *Ritratto di artisti*, 1971-1999; Gino De Dominicis (1947-1998), *Zodiaco*, 1970, during the exhibition at La Maison Rouge, Paris, in January 2013, Giuliana and Tommaso Setari collection.



Giuliana and Tommaso Setari in front of *Uomo col panchetto*, 1962-1980, by Michelangelo Pistoletto (b. 1933).

© Elio Germani



**Luciano Fabro** (1936-2007),  
"Italia dell'emigrante", 1981, Giuliana and Tommaso Setari collection.

© Attilio Maranzano

Luciano Fabro and Alighiero Boetti, artists with whom we forged links that have always endured.

**Tommaso Setari:** Arte Povera forms the basis of our collection, because these were the first artists we met - some in New York, like Luciano Fabro and Alighiero Boetti - at a time when they were beginning to arouse interest in the United States.

### **Can you put your finger on what guided your choices?**

**G. S.:** Both a philosophy and a similar way of thinking. We didn't have the same affinity with the Transavantgarde movement, which was much in the limelight at that time. The work of Pistoletto had social implications and cast a critical gaze over society and consumerism at the end of the Sixties. Pop Art was also very much in evidence in New York, with the problems that went with it, but we remained loyal to a more Italian-oriented vision.

**T. S.:** Our collection maintained very strong links with Italy, even through the colours, including those of Sol LeWitt, who lived in Spoleto for a long time, and was married to an Italian.

### **Is meeting the artists a decisive factor?**

**T. S.:** For me, it would be unthinkable not to meet the artists. The Pope met Michelangelo, after all! As Pistoletto said, we are the collectors of artists we've had the good fortune to be involved with.

**G. S.:** Nearly all our works are linked to our experiences with each of them.

**T. S.:** In each place of residence, we commissioned a work, including from Sol LeWitt, Ettore Spalletti and Vettor Pisani. The first, Luciano Fabro's "Italia dell'emigrante", was created for us when we were pretty much emigrants living in New York. Meanwhile, Pisani produced "Viaggio nell'eternità" with its blue corridor in our house in Italy. These works were conceived for us, with our entire confidence, and we never interfered.

### **How did you collaborate in the creation of the Museo della Catastrofe, the "philosophical house" designed by Vettor Pisani?**

**G. S.:** At the end of the Nineties, Pisani had discovered a travertine quarry near Siena, which in his view resem-

bled Böcklin's "Isle of the Dead". He literally fell in love with this tragically eroded landscape, where he wanted to create a "museum of catastrophe" devoted to a Europe devastated by the tragedies of the 20th century. The museum consisted of a real house, which was the materialisation of a mental projection in real space. We bought this quarry. It was a dynamic participation that corresponded to our way of assisting the artist in his creative approach.

### **How did the Dena Foundation for Contemporary Art, created in 2001, come about, and what was its purpose?**

**G. S.:** Dena was the first name of my mother, who made its existence possible, and to whom I wanted to pay tribute. The foundation's activity started in America, where patronage is more widespread than in Europe. We contributed to some donations, in particular that of a mirror picture by Pistoletto given to the Metropolitan by an Italian company. Those American years were an apprenticeship. In setting up this structure, we were thinking mainly of young creation and how difficult it was for Italians to make a name outside Italy. Its purpose is to provide opportunities in the form of residences, grants or aids to production. Since 2001, it has awarded a prize to artists whose work has social implications. Fabien Vershaere, who had created a work in a hospital in Rome, was the first to win it. Social commitment was already the leitmotiv of our collection, and the foundation is now an extension of this aspect.

### **What has given you the most pleasure from creating this foundation?**

**G. S.:** It helped a project in Australia by the American artist Michael Rakowitz to get off the ground. Thanks to his work, some aborigines were able to keep their territory in a district targeted by property speculators. This modus operandi corresponds to our way of being collectors, where our constant aim and reward is to participate in works that reflect society.

Interview by Geneviève Nevejan

[www.denafoundation.com](http://www.denafoundation.com)



# INTERVIEW

## Jordaens in a new light. . .

SEE THE  
VIDEO

The exhibition "Jordaens and the Antique" being staged at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique until the end of January, then moving to the Fridericianum-Museumslandschaft Hessen in Friedrichsplatz, Kassel, presents a surprising portrait of the Antwerp artist. Joost Vander Auwera, one of the exhibition curators, sketches a new image of the painter for *La Gazette Drouot*.

**La Gazette Drouot: For the last twenty years, some art historians have been bent on restoring Jordaens to his true standing, a long way from the clichés that have clung to him for more than a century...**

**Joost Vander Auwera:** Yes: Jordaens was traditionally relegated to the role of an artist painting for the bourgeoisie, in contrast to Rubens, the cultivated painter and diplomat who rubbed shoulders with the great and the good, or Van Dyck, the court painter. The criti-

cism of Hippolyte Taine adopted this angle, and in the 19th century, it was thought that the nature of a people could be discovered or explained through its culture. Belgium, created in 1830, needed to construct a history for itself, like the Flemish movement after that. Jordaens was thus the ideal artist to embody the festive, exuberant nature of Flanders. With paintings like "Le roi boit" (The King Drinks), he was considered the champion of Flemish bon-vivants...

**Now, as demonstrated by the exhibition, we find that Jacob Jordaens was not an entertainer but a scholar...**

The references to Antiquity found in his work bear witness to his knowledge of the arts in Antique times. It is true that, unlike Rubens, he made no artistic pilgrimage to Italy, but he had access to other sources: indirect ones, but reliable. In the 16th century, Antwerp was a city of global importance, and after the religious troubles, the town refocused on luxury commerce - in this case diamonds and art. The international trade that became established there functioned according to a family set-up: one member of the family stayed in Antwerp, while another was in Florence, another in Cordoba, and another still in Paris. All these trading posts needed to communicate. Education in Antwerp in the 17th century took serious account of this economic reality, and no fewer than seven languages were taught in its schools. We also know that Jordaens spoke French. The Plantin printing works made it



© W. Fuhrmannek, HLMD

**Jacques Jordaens** (1593-1678), "Male Nude Seated", c. 1615-16, black and some red chalk, heightened with white, 26.3 x 42.8 cm. Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum, Graphische Sammlung.

**Jacques Jordaens** "The Triumph of Bacchus",  
c. 1640-45, canvas, 204 x 163 cm (with later additions)  
Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel,  
Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (detail).





© Museo Nacional del Prado

**Jacques Jordaens**, "Homage to Ceres", c. 1624-25, oil on canvas, 165 x 112 cm, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

possible to spread a large number of works from Antiquity, originally in Latin, by publishing them in French translations.

**So Jordaens was a scholar, then, but did he experience success on the scale of Rubens in his lifetime?**

Never while Rubens was alive. However, after he died, Jordaens also began to receive prestigious commissions, which made him a wealthy artist - at the time of his death in 1659, he was listed as one of the four hundred most highly-taxed people in Antwerp -, which enabled him to go far beyond his purely Antwerp character. We can thus assume that he had a sustained interest throughout his life.

**Which sources did he have access to in order to perfect his knowledge of Antiquity?**

He had visual sources, like François Perrier's famous collection of engraved reproductions of Rome's most famous sculptures. He also had many drawings of Antique architecture. In addition, he possessed some figurines, in plaster or terracotta, reproducing sculptures on a reduced scale. A description of a visit to his studio by the Prince of Orange makes mention of these, and we decided to show some of them in the exhibition: something made possible by the moulding department of the Royal Museums of Art and History. These statuettes were frequently found in collections of the time, as can be seen in a painting by Hieronymus Francken II of an art collector's cabinet.

**The exhibition has a number of works that provide convincing illustrations and demonstrations of this idea of an erudite Jordaens...**

We were lucky in being able to borrow several works, often masterpieces, which have a connection with those of Jordaens we are exhibiting. This is the case with the half-clothed Venus Pudica, which can be compared with the main figure in the Allegory of the Earth's Abundance. Another part of this work can be compared with a Roman sarcophagus, the Procession of Bacchus and Ariadne, which we could not exhibit as it weighs two tons, but we show a photo montage of it alternating with the corresponding fragments of Jordaens' painting. Meanwhile, the front of a sarcophagus, whose composition inspired another of the artist's paintings, "Bacchus et les quatre saisons" (Bacchus and the Four Seasons), is incorporated into the exhibition.

**This is a thematic circuit, not a chronological one...**

Given the accent on the artist as a historical painter, we felt it was more interesting to do it this way. We also made the decision to mingle techniques. A single condition guided the choice of works: the fact that they were by his own hand. We avoided all studio works, because we wanted to emphasise the great quality of Jordaens' painting, a quality also found in his drawings. These bear witness to the master's interest in



the Antique, with his models adopting similar positions. The exhibition is also an occasion to appreciate Jordaens' mastery of watercolour and gouache, probably linked with his family origins - because his father was a successful textile trader, and fabric patterns were generally designed using his techniques. When Jordaens was very young, he was sure to have contributed to the family business through his artistic talents.

### After Brussels, the exhibition is travelling to Kassel ...

Kassel Museum (Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel) is our partner in this scientific project, which has been four years in the making. This is no accident, as this

institution has the largest collection of works by Jordaens in Germany. The landgrave William VIII of Hesse-Kassel, after making a tidy fortune as an arms trader, acquired an impressive collection of art works, including numerous works by Jacob Jordaens. No fewer than ten, actually - five of which have Antique themes...  
**Interview by Charles-Arthur Louis**

"Jordaens and the Antique", Fridericianum-Museumslandschaft Hessen, Friedrichsplatz 18, 34117 Kassel, from 1 March to 16 June. Catalogue: *Jordaens et l'Antiquité (Jordaens and the Antique)*, edited by Joost Vander Auwera and Irene Schaudies, Fonds Mercator, 2012, 320 pp. Price: €44.95. [www.ezine.codart.nl](http://www.ezine.codart.nl)



**Jacques Jordaens**, "The artist with the family of his father in law", about 1616, oil on canvas, 116,3 x 148,2 cm, MHK, Old Masters Gallery.

© Ute Brunzel, Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel

# FREEZE FRAME

History in miniature by **Huang Yong Ping**

SEE THE  
VIDEO

**H**uang Yong Ping's works raise questions in the viewer while never abandoning a certain beauty: the type that is not always obvious where contemporary creations are concerned. For example, there is great appeal in the extraordinary 130 metre-long metal snake skeleton emerging from the waves as the sea comes and goes, installed by the artist on a beach in Saint-Brévin near the Loire estuary in France. Through his monumental works and installations, Huang Yong Ping questions us on the meaning of life, the place of the individual and national identity. He turns our certainties upside down, inciting us to reflect about our acts and their consequences. In his 1993 "Theatre of the World", he brought together live insects, grasshoppers, lizards and other creatures in a kind of "microcosm of world conflict", their predatory behaviour demonstrating the impossibility of living together. The heir to Marcel Duchamp, and strongly influenced by his subversive character, the Chinese-born artist came to prominence in the Eighties with the Xiamen Dada group, which provided his passport to Europe as part of "Les Magiciens de la Terre", the legendary Centre Pompidou exhibition initiated by Jean-Hubert Martin in 1989. Huang Yong Ping then settled in France, which he represented at the Venice Biennial ten years later. Today the artist is a

Until 17 February at the Centre Culturel Hôtel de Gallifet, Aix-en-Provence. [www.hoteldegallifet.com](http://www.hoteldegallifet.com)

The adventures of artist Huang Yong Ping continue at the Lyon Contemporary Art Museum, where the exhibition "Amoy/Xiamen" is on from 15 February to 14 April.

[www.mac-lyon.com](http://www.mac-lyon.com)

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key figure on the international contemporary scene. He was exhibited at the Walker Art Centre in Florida in a major retrospective in 2006, and at the Cartier Contemporary Art Foundation in Paris. For the events celebrating Marseille Provence as the 2013 European capital of culture, the artist has produced this work, "Abbottabad", in the courtyard of the Hôtel Gallifet in Aix-en-Provence. The title comes from the Pakistan city infamous for sheltering the most sought-after man in the world: Osama

Bin Laden. This installation of miniature terracotta buildings overrun with vegetation follows on from the "Colosseum" and "Pentagon" presented at the Barbara Gladstone gallery in New York in 2007. Huang Yong Ping says: "Nature has no intention of getting involved in the history of mankind. Grass continues on its way, growing where it can. It might just win and take over everything." The aim of this work, then, is to show the futility of history in life's long progress... **Stéphanie Perris-Delmas**



© Céline Laurent

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Gio Ponti and his family in the Via Dezza apartment, Milan.

© Gio Ponti Archives

# DESIGN

## Living "à la Ponti"

Everyone knows Gio Ponti - well, nearly everyone... At the inaugural conference of the exhibition "Vivere alla Ponti" presented at the Italian cultural institute in Paris, Frédéric Migayrou, assistant director and head curator of the Centre Pompidou, observed that no theses have ever been written about the designer, and his bibliography is rather succinct. A situation largely explained by a 'complex and prolific body of work'. With each of his many hats, Ponti evinced a drive that enabled him to set the tone for an Italian culture of architecture and design. Apart from these two fields, he was also an author and opinion leader via the *Domus* magazine and the famous Triennale di Milano, which he founded. Frédéric Migayrou's judgement is irrevocable: 'Even the greatest, like Albini, were influenced by this extension of the field of architecture constructed by Ponti.' The Italian designer Molteni & C thus made no mistake in seeking out models from the Ponti repertory with the particularity of having furnished the designer's last apartment at 49 Via Dezza in Milan. His daughter Lisa says: 'We lived "à la Ponti", in rooms without doors, surrounded by his paintings and books; it was all totally fascinating.' She also stresses the fact that there was no dining room, as the space was entirely adaptable to each person's needs and fancies. Some pieces have been produced for the first time: for example, a low round table (1953-1954) with a glass top resting on a large metallic grid with edges enhanced by bright colours; the armchair (see photo), available in its

original upholstery in blue and white leather or with a Rubelli fabric designed by il maestro for the Venice Biennial. Also produced for the first time: two bookcases (1956-1957) full of refinement and elegance, with streamlined uprights, contrasting natural elm with matt white paint. Two other models should be mentioned. Firstly, in two sizes, a chest of drawers from 1952 with a white-lacquered façade enlivened with panels in various woods forming handles. At the time, this was produced by Giordano Chiesa. A gleaming polished aluminium chair, designed in 1935 to furnish Montecatini's headquarters in Milan, rounds off Molteni's offer. It illustrates Italian inter-war rationalism, Ponti having designed his first architectural master-

**Gio Ponti** (1891-1979), armchair designed in 1953, frame in satin-finish brass, Rubelli Punteggiato Velvet fabric designed by Gio Ponti in 1934.



© édition Molteni & C.

piece for the chemicals giant, where he took care of every element, including the washbasins. It was for this building that he dreamed up the modular grid of the façade, a system that he would use all through his work, and which took on a schematic, geometrical shift after the war - as witness the chest of drawers. These pieces, accompanied by a tricolour pony skin carpet from 1954, can be seen not only in the manufacturer's Paris showroom, naturally, but also at the Italian cultural institute. This is because Francesca Molteni researched not only the Gio Ponti Archives but also talked to the family, collecting first-hand accounts and documents then used for the information panels (in Italian and English only) at the small exhibition presented in the Neoclassical splendour of the Hôtel de Galliffet. And in the Rue des Saints-Pères and Rue de Grenelle, pieces of silverware made by Christofle and designed by Ponti demonstrate yet another facet of his talent. Prolific is indeed the word. **Sylvain Alliod**

"Vivere alla Ponti", Institut Culturel Italien (Italian cultural institute), 73, rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris, until 17 February. [www.iicparigi.esteri.it](http://www.iicparigi.esteri.it) "Collezione Gio Ponti", Molteni & C, 6, rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris, [www.molteni.it](http://www.molteni.it)



Collection of Gio Ponti designs produced or re-produced by Molteni & C.



**Gio Ponti** (1891-1979), chest of drawers, elm, walnut, mahogany, rosewood, satin-finish brass. L. 185 or 102 cm. Designed between 1952 and 1955.



© Molteni & C

# EXHIBITIONS

## The archaeology of **the epic**

Who has not fallen under the spell of the indomitable Elizabeth Taylor in Joseph Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1963), the virile Charlton Heston in William Wyler's majestic *Ben Hur* (1959) or the enigmatic Yul Brynner in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*? All top-billing names that belong to the history of cinema and embody a unique genre: the epic, whose golden age bears the mark of Hollywood and Italy. Here screenplays are a skilful mix of essential ingredients in various doses according to the desired effect: a tale inspired by ancient history or the Bible (hence the name "peplum", which comes from the Greek "peplos": a woman's tunic, used by many film-lovers in the early 1960s), a hero facing a situation of injustice, a love story, circus games with an oppressed people who get fed to the lions, chariot races or gladiator fights, all spiced up with sophisticated Oriental dancing, plots and plenty of extras. In short, violence, cruelty and passion against a background of ancient history on an epic scale. So what's the link with the Gallo-Roman museum of Saint-Romain-en-Gal and the archaeological museum of Lyon-Fourvière? The interpretation of the subject by the two institutions in the light of current scientific knowledge, reconstructing a kind of archaeology of the epic. Although the two exhibitions are intended to be complementary – Antiquity as entertainment at Lyon; the history of the genre at Saint-Romain-en-Gal – , the one at Lyon-Fourvière seems more of an interlude. The circuit of the permanent collections is dotted with structures showing excerpts of films or exhibiting costumes and cinema posters, linking each theme (the Roman army, Roman and oriental gods, navigation

and trade, circus games, wines and banquets) with archaeological pieces displayed in the showcases alongside. This dialogue does not flow very smoothly, as visitors are not clearly guided though the permanent collections. In contrast, the Saint-Romain-en-Gal museum has a structured, organised approach that looks back at the 19th century sources of the genre, and explores parallel interpretations and how the cinema reached its apogee in the 20th century.

### Nero: the founding father of the genre

Visitors enter via a kind of rotunda that directs them to the different themes. In the centre, there is a showing of one of the earliest films in the history of the epic: Nero trying out poisons on a slave. Shot in 1897 by a Frères Lumière cameraman in Lyon, this 45-second film is based on an episode described by Suetonius in the second century AD. Nero calls on the service of Locusta, celebrated for poisoning Claudius, to kill the latter's son, Britannicus. After her first attempt fails, Locusta tries out the formidable efficiency of her new potions on some animals (a kid and a piglet). However, this historical tale had other versions before that of the Frères Lumière studio. In 1669, Racine replaces the test animal by a human being in his play *Britannicus*, and Nero yields his place to his counsellor, Narcissus. This episode was the subject of a painting by Xavier Sigalon in 1824, but the film here is inspired by Noël Sylvestre's version in his painting of 1876, where Locusta, in the presence of Nero, tries out the poison prepared for Britannicus - with Locusta carefully replaced by Nero's counsellors. So, here we have the first liberties taken with history! Film directors did not always have the

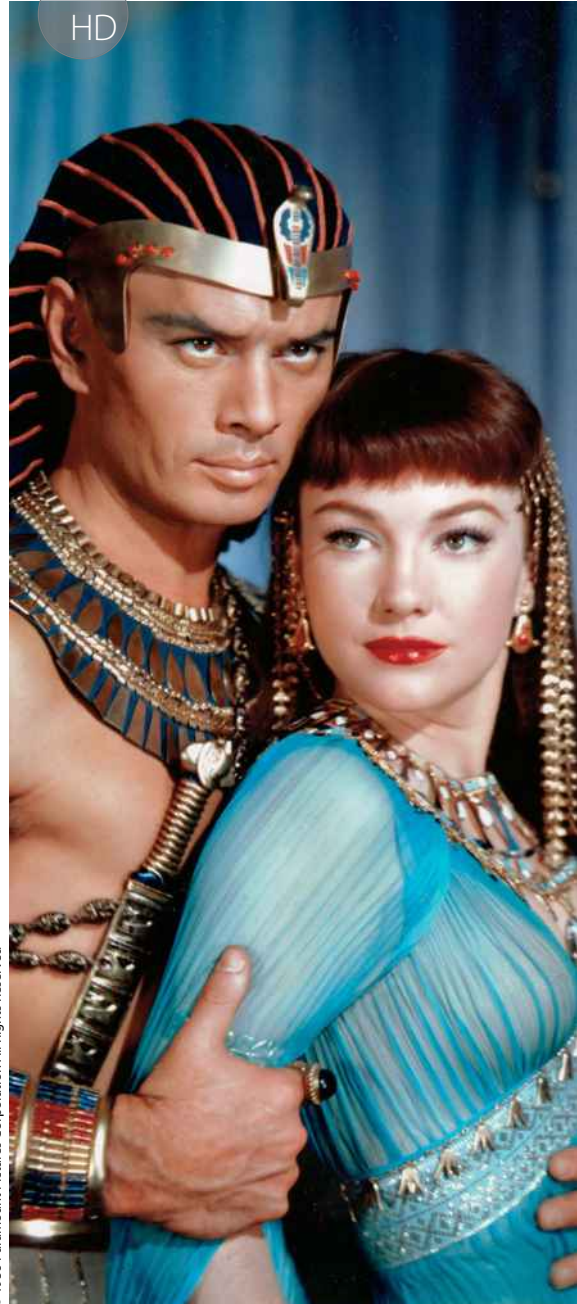


"The Ten Commandments", 1956, film directed by Cecil B. DeMille with Anne Baxter and Yul Brynner, 1956, photograph: Paramount

distance and scientific knowledge needed to be faithful to reality, but that's not the issue here. There is much talk of Christians, while during the first century AD it was a matter of Judaeo-Christians; architectural reconstructions and costumes are imbued with fantasy and kitsch; gladiators are gaily sacrificed when in fact they were valuable professionals in no way condemned to die after saluting the Emperor with an "Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant" (not recorded in combats); and combatants are condemned or reprieved with a simple thumb sign that would be invisible from the centre of the arena. In *Samson and Delilah*, Cecil B. DeMille decorates the temple of Dagon with Minoan and Sumerian frescoes - because the Philistines, assimilated with "peoples of the sea", were supposed to have come from Crete. The main concern is to make the audience dream, and it works. Rodin, when he discovered the seventh art, wrote: "I recently saw *Quo Vadis?* Nero and Agrippina on the screen - well, I must say, it was magnificent; I would never have believed the cinema capable of constructing the events of Antiquity with such extraordinary care! I was simply astounded."

### Everything began in the 19th century!

And yet cinema was not a forerunner: theatre and opera were at work all through the 19th century. The heroes of ancient history could deliver messages otherwise unacceptable to censure (for example, the enslaved Hebrews in Babylon in *Nabucco* symbolised the Milanese population under the yoke of the Austrian occupant). Librettists were inspired by the Bible, as witness Rossini's *Moïse et Pharaon* (1827) and Verdi's *Nabucco* (1842), and by colourful figures: Joseph Weigl's *Cleopatra* (1808), Dumas' *Caligula* (1837), Verdi's *Aida* (1871) and Paul Vidal's *Ramsès* (1900). These shows were already synonymous with overblown "Pharaonic" sets, an abundance of extras



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Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), "Pollice Verso", 1872, oil on canvas, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, USA.

and the deployment of pomp and splendour, as can be seen in engravings. Dumas used over a hundred extras (with a total of more than 160 costumes) and six sets, but he was not allowed horses for Caligula's chariot. Budgets were colossal: over 40,000 francs for *Aida*, i.e. four times more than for a normal production! The genre was also treated to comical parody by Jacques Offenbach in *Orphée aux Enfers* (1858-1874) and *La Belle Hélène* (1864). This enthusiasm for Antiquity was largely driven and inspired by numerous archaeological discoveries peppering the 19th century, like Champollion's deciphering of hieroglyphs in 1822, Auguste Mariette's first digs at Tanis in 1860, and Heinrich Schliemann's at Mycenae in 1876. The context also stimulated creation in literature and painting. And as regards grandiloquent presentations of the Antique world, one name immediately stands out: Jean-Léon Gérôme. With his "Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant" and "Pollice Verso", he is hailed today as the archaeologist of "cinematographic narration", reviving David's Classical and heroic vision with a painting that triumphed at the Salon. Cinema carried on directly in this line. In the end, it continued a tradition that began in the 19th century, repeating the grandeur and excess associated with the epic: Cecil B. DeMille only made five films in forty years, and the producer Samuel Bronston went bankrupt with *The Fall of the Roman Empire*. The spotlight falls particularly on one character, Cleopatra, embodied by Claudette Colbert in 1934 in an Art Deco setting, and by Elizabeth Taylor in 1963. Fiction then joined reality in this blockbuster costing \$62 M: the scene of the consuming passion between Taylor/Cleopatra and Burton/Mark Antony. While the late 20th century went through a slack period, the epic now seems to have risen from its ashes, with *Gladiator* (2000) and *The Immortals* (2011). But are there others to take over from those legendary actors? That's not so sure...

Stéphanie Pioda

"Péplum", Gallo-Roman museum of Lyon-Fourvière, 17, rue Cléberg, 69005 Lyon - Until 7 April.

Gallo-Roman museum of Saint-Romain-en-Gal - Vienne, R.D 502, 69560 Saint-Romain-en-Gal, [www.musees-gallo-romains.com](http://www.musees-gallo-romains.com)

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# MUSEUM

## China the State in the museum



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Museum and heritage policies are taking over, adopting the approach of a long history of State intervention in the realm of culture. However, they are assuming a singular aspect in the context of the past few decades: in the People's Republic of China (PRC), that of economic reforms and openness; in Taiwan, that of democratisation and repositioning in the face of its neighbour, China, together with the search for an identity. These transformations are going hand in hand with a gradual change in the relationship between the State and society, particularly through policies designed to promote museums and heritage. In the PRC and Taiwan alike, these are re-establishing the local presence of the State and reshaping the national imagination. They result from an about-face full of paradoxes, and are rife with ambiguity.

### Thirty years of a museum and heritage boom

A Western invention introduced to China at the end of the 19th century, the term "museum" was translated for the first time in 1867, and the first Chinese museum was opened in 1905 by the scholarly industrialist Zhang Jian. At its establishment in 1949, the PRC contained around twenty museums. Today, there are more than two thousand three hundred, mainly created since the early Eighties. After a period of stagnation brought about by the Cultural Revolution, the era of reform and openness initiated by the PRC in December 1978 was accompanied by a spectacular boom in museums and heritage. This initially consisted of restoring ancient remains and monuments damaged in the wave of iconoclasm unleashed by the

Cultural Revolution. Now the blossoming of a consumer society and the development of tourism within the country, fostered by the appearance of a new middle class with increased purchasing power and longer holidays, is contributing to the creation of museum and heritage sites designed to receive an ever-rising number of visitors. In this field, the PRC has adopted a voluntarist policy with quantified objectives: the goal is to achieve a total of three thousand museums by 2015. This museum and heritage fever developed just as the Chinese Party began defining itself (in 2000) no longer as a "revolutionary" but as a "government" party. While conversion to the market economy weakened the ideological legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, it was rubber-stamped by a patriotic justification: that of national advancement and progress. In complete opposition to the clean slate policy adopted during the Maoist era, the nationalistic discourse conferring legitimacy on current reforms is largely based on the country's dynastic past (pre-1911). Measures for protecting and safeguarding heritage have given new value not only to the elements of an imperial past relegated to the backwaters of history in the Maoist era, but also what is officially called the "traditional folklore cultures of national minorities". Historical figures from minorities, like Genghis Khan, have thus been raised to the status of heroes, and ritual practices long forbidden and perceived as antinomic with modernity have been reinstated in the form of official celebrations, despite the occasional resistance of the minorities themselves. The latter thus find themselves grappling with the paradoxical discourse of an era of reform and openness that prolongs the Maoist period in its assertion of



Road linking the Eternal Flame Square (Shenghuo Guangchang) to the China Millennium Monument (Zhonghua Shiji Tan) in Beijing.



© Adam Chau

Yangge dancers parading through the main street of Zhenchuan on their way to the Valley of the Dragon King, where the festival of the temple takes place, 1998.

modernisation and economic progress, while moving away from it in terms of cultural and religious practices, hitherto condemned as bourgeois or "feudal". When the Chinese State turns religious cultural centres into heritage venues, it often focuses on the architectural and ecological preservation of these sites rather than their religious role. But the new tolerance for religions and the protection of the edifices does not apply everywhere in China. In cities, the urban authorities have an ambiguous relationship with relics from more remote epochs, which they perceive as both obstacles to the development of a "civilised" town and potential sources of income from tourism. This ambivalence sometimes leads to the construction of entire heritage sites in the place of run-down working-class districts. In rural areas, villages are destroyed to make way for urban development and the construction of large road or industrial infrastructures. Sometimes entire towns are condemned to disappear, like those engulfed by the waters of the Three Gorges dam. In Taiwan, the first wave of museum construction began in the Thirties.

After 1949, for the Taiwanese political entity standing out against the Communist regime on the continent, culture was both a support and an expression of this opposition. After its defeat by the Communists and its withdrawal to the island of Taiwan, the Kuomintang government made itself the guardian of traditional Chinese culture by preserving imperial treasures in the Museum of Taipei. However, since the Eighties, a policy imposing a homogeneous Chinese culture has gradually been giving way to Taiwan's assertion of its uniqueness. This takes the form of encouraging research into local history, rediscovering local cultural and religious traditions and building museums, whose numbers rose from ninety to four hundred during the Nineties.

### Culture policies

In Taiwan and the PRC, central government and its local outposts plan the cultural infrastructures and decide on their content. Culture offices at various poli-

tical and administrative levels classify sites as "cultural treasures" and historical figures as "living treasures", and give them an order of importance, also indicating their grade (local or central level museums; national, provincial or district level cultural treasures). State officials also drive the reinvention of tradition when they promote works from "folklore" status to "State tradition" status. In the PRC, propaganda still operates in this era of the socialist market economy, and museums are a major vector in this respect, being considered as "bases for patriotic education".

In Taiwan, political liberalisation in the late Eighties has in no way changed State intervention in the realm of culture. Indigenisation has not marked a fundamental break with previous cultural policies, since it is always used to strengthen the assertion of a national identity. However, the museum and heritage fever is also connected with the competition of territories with the means to attract investors and tourists. In this respect, the phenomenon reflects what is happening on the

other side of the strait. Generally speaking, in both the PRC and Taiwan, museum and heritage policies contribute to a merchandising process and the "marketing" of the local territory. They crystallise around a site whose celebrity still reflects on this territory, ensuring it a symbolic base at the same time as a marketable brand. "Museumised", "heritagised" and "marketised" sites do not only represent sources of direct income for the territories hosting them. They act as signals and increase the reputation of a place - and thereby that of the local elites, Party executives and politicians who institute them and produce them.

Created in 1986 by Michel Leiris and Jean Jamin, the anthropology and art history review *Gradhiva* has been published by the Musée du Quai Branly since 2005. *Gradhiva* no. 16, "Chines. L'État au musée" (*China: from State to Museum*), coordinated by Anne-Christine Trémon and Brigitte Bapandier, Musée du Quai Branly, December 2012, 264 pp., €20.

Festival of the Temple of the Black Dragon King, in the sixth month of the lunar calendar, 1998.



© Adam Chau

# DISCOVERY

## Aalto's house a shining light of functionalism

It's unthinkable to go to Helsinki without scheduling a visit to the Villa Aalto. Here, in Finland, the architect is a national figure with a legacy of numerous buildings in the centre of the capital, including the Union Bank of Finland, the chic Savoy restaurant (which has kept its original interior decoration from 1937) and the impressive Finlandia building, which for once is in white marble. He embodies the pride and force of a country that only gained its independence in 1917 after centuries of Swedish and Russian domination, giving this somewhat outlying northern territory global visibility and a key position in the history of design and architecture. Alvar Aalto worked on giving the country a more beautiful, more functional living environment, without Le Corbusier's dryness. Finland owes Aalto a large part of its modernity. Travelling to the Munkkiniemi district not far from Helsinki centre is not only making a pilgrimage, but also seeing for yourself whether this modernity, so revolutionary at the time, and this highly Scandinavian functionalism with a human face has survived the test of time. From the terrace on the upper floor of this unpretentious villa with its clean lines, you used to look out on a stretch of sea in the distance. Today, what you mainly see is a former military academy from the Art Nouveau period built by Eliel Saarinen, the father of the designer Eero: almost like a classical, old school counterpoint to Aalto's private residence. A case of ancient - gifted though he was - and modern. Alvar Aalto lived in this house for around twenty years. Before constructing a building devoted to his work (also open to the public) in the same lush neighbourhood of detached houses, he had his workshop, which has remained as

it was, next to the sitting room. His wife Elissa was given a little office right next door. We owe the Finnish master's first wife, Aino, the sofa in the workshop. On the wall we see his pictures, which he did not sign, as he painted for relaxation. Le Corbusier, in contrast, did sign his works. In the sitting room, we can see a collage mixed with gouache by the Swiss architect (who took French citizenship in 1930), dedicated to Elissa Aalto. The two great men respected each other, conscious that they were dealing with many of the same problems. On the piano in the sitting room, there is a paper lamp: a gift from another great man, the Danish master of lighting, Poul Henningsen, produced during his Swedish period. All evidence of the friendship and esteem that existed between these important European figures of functionalism. Adjacent to a landing that looks like a mini-reading room, the master's bedroom has aged little. His main principles still endure: a long work surface against the window to get maximum benefit from the daylight; rounded corners; large bay windows; furniture in light-coloured wood. Everything is appropriate and precise, with more generous proportions than with Le Corbusier, though with no loss of space. The archetype of a philosophy of well-being and permanence.

Alexandre Crochet

Villa Alvar Aalto, Riihitie 20, 00330 Helsinki, [www.alvaraalto.fi](http://www.alvaraalto.fi)  
-Visits should be booked. [www.alvaraalto.fi](http://www.alvaraalto.fi)

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Alvar Aalto's house in Helsinki, built in 1936, the year in which the famous Savoy Vase was created (detail).

# TRENDS

## A spot of **natural history**

**P**alaeontology, botany, entomology, mineralogy, conchology and natural history drawings are all fields that enable enthusiasts to combine scientific and aesthetic interests. Palaeontology is probably the most spectacular speciality because at regular intervals, whole dinosaurs take over the sale rooms. This type of

event has been going on in the US for around fifteen years, and began to appear in France in 2007. That year, Christie's Paris knocked down a mammoth skeleton for €312,000 to a contemporary art collector. As good a way as any of updating the 17th century cabinet of curiosities to current taste! Since then, other auction houses like Artcurial and Cornette de Saint-Cyr have followed suit. It must be said that the sums involved make it worth the candle, as you can judge for yourselves: a giant 2.20 metre-long jawbone of a Carcharodon megalodon shark is worth €150,000 at the very least, and the skeleton of an Ophthalmosaurus (a five metre-long sea reptile with big eyes) €180,000. Meanwhile, as for complete skeletons of Tyrannosaurus rex (the famous T-Rex), a genuine celebrity among dinosaurs and star of the Jurassic Park films, a specimen sold in New York in 2000 crushed all records at \$8.3 M. It was bought by McDonald's and Disney for the Field Museum of Chicago. But what are collectors looking for when museums and scientists are not involved? Evidence of our origins, a fragment of the distant past which made them dream as children or a piece of mythology? There may be a thousand answers, but there is one common denominator: rarity. Dinosaur specimens likely to turn up on the market aren't that numerous. France protects them and prohibits their sale.

Countries like Algeria,



€7,500 Jianguo Sui (b. 1956), "Blue dinosaur" (made in China), 2002, resin, signed sculpture numbered 109/1000 under the base, 35 x 61 x 87 cm.  
Paris, Drouot-Richelieu, 12 March 2008. Boisgirard auction house. Mr. Brument.

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€148 Entomological collection box  
containing three Morpho butterflies.  
Paris, Drouot-Richelieu, 12 November  
2012. Ève auction house. Mr. Geneste.



€6,020 Hippopotamus amphibius,  
70 x 80 x 55 cm. Bruxelles, 16 December  
2012, Millon & Associés auction house.

Mongolia and China prevent them from being exported. Morocco authorises the exit of small pieces under a number of conditions, as do the US and Canada, which remain the uncontested Eldorados for collectors. In areas where this is permitted, palaeontologists and archaeologists themselves don't hesitate to sell their finds at high prices to finance increasingly costly digs. You can imagine the endless debates that ensue among the scientific community, especially in France. With buyers, the latest trend is to install a dinosaur skeleton by a swimming pool or at the entrance to a palace, as a privileged few have already seen in the Gulf States. But if they are unable to sow their wild oats in the remains of beasts of a venerable age, contempo-

rary art collectors could turn to artists who have turned back to the Manga years, like China's Sui Jianguo, whose red and blue "made in China" T. Rexes are offered at far more affordable prices.

### Warning... a bone of contention!

The skeletons presented, though seemingly complete, are practically never entirely fossilised. Fossilisation is a lengthy and complex process that depends on several factors and chemical reactions. After several million years, the sedimentary layer enclosing them may be altered or restructured. In short, when you discover a skeleton, you only find fragments of bone. The logical

deduction is that the overwhelming majority of complete specimens put up for sale at auction are reconstituted. The missing bones are replaced and substitute parts are made according to various theories about their shape and precise position within this giant puzzle. It can sometimes happen that parts of completely different fossil skeletons are used to hoodwink the punters! So the price is also determined by the quality of preservation and amount of restoration, as the consultant *Éric Mickeler*, who launched this speciality in France, will readily explain. It is thus very hard for a novice to take everything into consideration objectively. But in the end, that's the fate of any collector: before becoming a specialist, you have to go through the apprentice stage first.

### Collectors all in a flutter...

Just because dinosaurs hog the limelight doesn't mean that natural history sales at Drouot are limited to these alone. In this respect, enthusiasts are right on the ball. Take entomologists, for instance: collectors who can be counted in their thousands, all fired by a passion for butterflies and rare insects. More often than not, it's an invasive and individualistic love that excludes other members of the family. And when collectors die, their

heirs get rid of their collections - which explains why entomological objects, whether at Drouot or elsewhere, are usually sales of estates. Furthermore, while many buyers are British or American, most sales take place in France. In the 19th century, the most sought-after specimens were worth an absolute fortune. But since it has become easier to access tropical countries, the prices of butterflies and spiders have dropped considerably. If the Rothschild family now had to invest the same sums as those of one and a half centuries ago, they would be worth the equivalent of several Paris buildings today! Fortunately, enthusiasts can now expect to pay far more democratic prices: something like thirty euros for a fine example of a common but popular species of butterfly. It's impossible not to make a comparison with orchids, which are now sold by any self-respecting florist. But you have to remember that in the 19th century, yet again, these plants brought in from faraway countries were traded at extraordinary prices. As for natural history drawings, these are also a safe investment, followed with close attention and keenly fought over, as we are reminded by *Anne Doridou-Heim* in her article devoted to the speciality (see Gazette no. 22 of 4 June 2010). The same goes for hunting trophies and stuffed animals. But (naturally), that's another story... **Dimitri Joannidès**

€8,758 *Psittacosaurus meileyingensis* (Cretaceous period, China) dating from 115 million years ago: 90% complete specimen, l.115 cm. Paris, Drouot-Richelieu, 6 February 2012. Artcurial, Briest-Poulain-F.Tajan auction house.



# INTERVIEW

## Good day **Monsieur Courbet !**

Paris, 1873. The bearded, glittering-eyed artist Gustave Courbet, visibly agitated, fulminates at the window against the man who has been there before us.

**La Gazette Drouot: Hello Monsieur Courbet! Is everything all right? Would you rather I came back later?**

**Gustave Courbet:** No, no, stay since now you're already here - it would be silly for you to go now. Look at what I've just been given by that boor of a bailiff. Come approach the window - you see that rogue? He's crossing the road... (Showing us a document) The State is ordering me to pay for the restoration of the Vendôme Column - what a farce! A little over 320,000 francs, can you believe it! It's certain, those fellows want to make me carry the can... because I'm the best known and they think I'm rich. (Grumbling) The decision has been made by prominent figures, that's for sure, by all those debased kinglets. They want to make me pay for my stand against the war, the army and the government. I'm the grandson of a sans-culotte and they never forget it, it seems. They've already made me spend six months in the clink, those savages. And they don't seem to have swallowed my refusal of the Légion d'honneur three years ago, either...

## TO KNOW

The new Musée Courbet opened to the public on 2 July 2011, after three years' alteration work. With these facilities covering a total surface area of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 21 permanent and temporary exhibition rooms, the Doubs District Council, which has launched an ambitious cultural project for the territory called "Pays de Courbet, pays d'artiste", pays tribute to the painter, a native of the region.

**But how did you get into this situation?**

Where on earth have you been - don't you read the newspapers? The Communards, the Prussian siege, Napoleon III - does none of that mean anything to you? I'd have done better to break my leg when they elected me to City Hall under the Commune... (putting his head in his hands) I was happy, damn it, painting quietly by myself without bothering anyone. All this for the stupid "dismantling" of the column in the Place Vendôme, as they call it. I'm not the sort of person to grovel, please know that. If need be, I'll go and bury myself in Switzerland for the time it takes for all this to die down and be forgotten. I grew up not far from the border, so I know how to go about it. (With an abrupt change of tone, distraught) They are going to seize me, take away everything I have, put my studio up for sale... It's a disaster!

**They told me about your unshakeable confidence and your indomitable tenacity. Surely this is not the moment to give up!**

(With blank eyes) I should have stayed in Ornans rather than seek the success that has now led to my ruin. I originally came to Paris to study law, not to become a painter. (Raising his hands) But there you go - my struggle, my true vice, was Titian, Tintoretto and all those Spanish painters in the Louvre. They instilled in me the pride that made me want to play a role in the history of art. I got completely caught up in them.

**And yet you started to really stand out from the rest quite late, at nearly 40.**

It's true that I fell flat on my face several times at the Salon. But in 1848 - a year of revolution: it's a recurring

theme in my life – I was finally recognised when the State bought my painting "Après-Dîner à Ornans" (After Dinner at Ornans). (Pause) My "Enterrement à Ornans" (A Burial at Ornans), two years later, flung those criminal jurymen into the depths of confusion. They only approved of large formats when they featured Hercules and Thomas Couture-style nonsense. But historical art is contemporary by nature. And that's precisely why contemporary history deserves to be shown in large format, even if it's only the history of humble people. I've spent my life battling the status quo.

**So at that time, what did you live on if nobody followed you, as you seem to be saying?**

(Somewhat solemnly) On my entire knowledge of tradition, and my reasoned feeling, independent of my own individuality.

**That's all well and good, but in practical terms, how did you earn a living?**

I sold my paintings, of course! I have always had collectors, real connoisseurs who liked my work, like Alfred Bruyas. (Mockingly) You seem to forget that from 1854 onwards, from Vienna to Berlin, people had a tough time getting me to exhibit my work. When the Salon rejected my famous "Atelier" (*Artist's Studio*) in 1855, on the pretext that it was too big, I staged my own exhibition on the fringe of the Exposition Universelle. I had a structure built at my own expense, and I called it "the Pavilion of Realism". It was amazing publicity for me...

**And yet, although you had achieved the peak of fame, the Salon regularly rejected your works afterwards.**

Quite so. And believe it or not, even the Salon des Refusés rejected me in 1863 - that's going a bit far, don't you think? On reflection, I must admit I'm quite proud of that (laughs). That year, the official Salon refused me on the grounds of "an outrage to religious morality", no less! But for goodness' sake: all those people who pray are wasting their time. I prefer to paint human eyes rather than cathedrals, even the eyes of a pitiful beggar or a woman of the streets. (After a pause) We need to stick to the truth in all circumstances, even if we are all ugly.



© Musée Courbet, dépôt de la ville d'Ornans.

**Gustave Courbet** (1819-1877),  
Selfportrait at Sainte-Pélagie", oil on canvas.



© Musée Courbet





**Gustave Courbet**, "Le château de Chillou",  
the Courbet departmental Museum,  
an Ormans city deposit.

**Painting from life is truly your trademark.**

I really know nothing about all that; I'm not a theorist. But what I do know is that when you look at a shadow in the snow, it's blue. And those who paint snow in their rooms don't know this. (Gesticulating on his chair). I have studied, away from all systems and without any bias, ancient and modern art. And there is a great deal to learn from both. Painting is an entirely physical language, whose words are all visible objects. An abstract, invisible, nonexistent object does not belong to the realm of painting. I could have gone on painting like my contemporaries. But no: I wanted to get the atmosphere of the hunt, the smell of wet leaves and mossy forest rockfaces into great painting.

**Is there any parallel with your "Origine du monde" (The Origin of the World)?**

(Bursts out laughing) Oh, I like you a lot! You're much funnier than you seem. I predict a great future for my "Origine du monde", even if it's quite possible that one day some crazy collector will hide it behind a curtain and only reveal its mystery to a few initiates... I painted it with the humility proper to this kind of exercise; I know that many people who have seen it have been shocked. But you see, simplicity is always disconcerting; it can only be acquired through detachment. (Abruptly) Now, if you will be good as to leave: I have to pack my bags and scarper.

Interview by Dimitri Joannidès

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1, place Robert-Fernier, 25290 Ormans,  
until 25 February 2013.  
[www.musee-courbet.fr](http://www.musee-courbet.fr)



