

# Gazette Drouot

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NUMBER 21

JANUARY 2013

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# UPDATE

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W



Gaspar van Wittel, *Veduta di Roma* (detail), gouache on vellum, 1683. Estimate \$30,000 to \$50,000.

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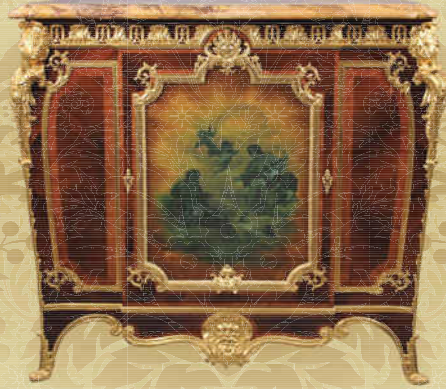
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## INAUGURAL SUCCESS IN HONG KONG

POLY AUCTION (HONG KONG) LIMITED



Chu Teh-Chun (Zhu Dequn, B. 1920)  
*Rough Lourd et Vert Leger (No. 39)*  
81 x 115.5 cm. (31 7/8 x 45 1/2 in.)  
Estimate: HK\$ 8,000,000 – 16,000,000  
(Euro 776,000 – 1,552,000)  
Sold for: HK\$ 40,250,000  
(Euro 3,904,200)

The highest auction record for work by Chu from his early period (1950 – 1960s).



Zao Wouki (Zhao Wuji, B.1920)  
18.3.67  
46 x 50 cm. (18 x 19 1/2 in.)  
Estimate: HK\$ 3,000,000 – 5,000,000  
(Euro 291,000 – 485,000)  
Sold for: HK\$ 5,750,000  
(Euro 557,700)



Lin Fengmian (1900-1991)  
*Chinese Opera Series - Farewell My Concubine*  
64 x 65.5 cm. (25 1/4 x 25 3/4 in.)  
Estimate: HK\$ 3,000,000 – 5,000,000  
(Euro 291,000 – 485,000)  
Sold for: HK\$ 6,325,000  
(Euro 613,500)

**88%**

Poly Auction (Hong Kong) Limited's inaugural sales in Hong Kong achieved a high sales rate of 88% for its "Chinese Modern and Contemporary Art" sale. 41 lots achieved HK\$152 million (Euro 14.74 million) in sale.

**520**  
Million

Poly Auction (Hong Kong) Limited's inaugural sales in Hong Kong fetched HK\$520 million (Euro 50.44 million).

**82%**

400 pieces of works of art achieved a high percentage sold by value of 82%.

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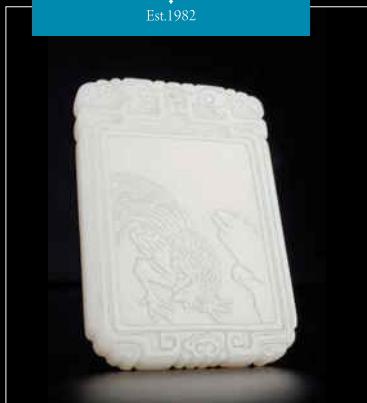
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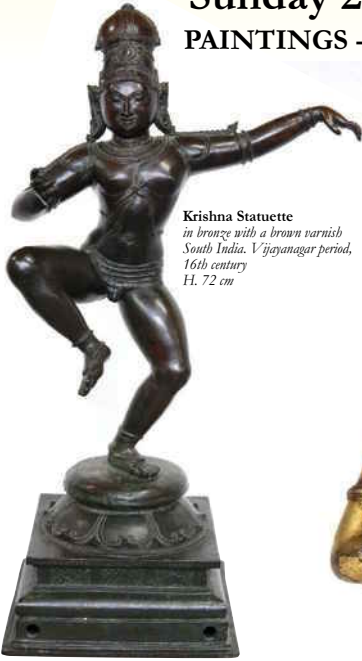
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## Sunday 27th January 2013 at 2 p.m.

### PAINTINGS - ASIAN ART - OBJETS D'ART - FURNITURE



**Krishna Statuette**  
in bronze with a brown varnish  
South India. Vijayanagar period,  
16th century  
H. 72 cm



**Avalokitesvara standing, in gilt bronze**  
Sino-Tibetan Art 16th century - H. 48 cm



**"Meiping" vase in gilt copper and cloisonné enamels,**  
China Ming dynasty 16th century - H. 35 cm



**Monju Bosatsu seated in the padmasana position on the back of his chimera**  
Japan, Edo period,  
18th century, Ink on paper  
165 x 88 cm



**Imperial rug decorated with 5 dragons**  
China 19th century - H. 220 W. 125 cm

A number of photographs are available on the website: [www.interencheres.com](http://www.interencheres.com) - Asian Art Expert: Cabinet PORTIER - + 33 (0)1 48 00 03 41

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On 19 January, the 2013 edition of the Brafra will open its doors in Brussels, bringing in the new season of the fine arts event.

# EDITORIAL



DR

**Stéphanie Perris-Delmas**  
EDITORIAL MANAGER

Assessments at the end of the year are like crackers at Christmas! But more than a ritual, which in a downturn seems rather like a wake, this exercise looks like a wild (and joyous) cavalcade of figures and records in the highly lucrative art market sector. We can immediately see that this year, Paris has once more played a fine game, positioning itself decisively as an international market place, dominated by the Drouot group with auctions sales result of some €430 million, a goodly share of world records and its numerous private collections, the great speciality of the Parisien establishment. And talking of specialities, Paris registered some remarkable bids in two areas during 2012: modern and contemporary art, which in December alone - and solely in specialist sales - totalled €60M. Another speciality, Asian art, which can no longer be qualified as emerging, confirmed its rise in the market. Here again, in December, seventy-five French auction houses included Asian objects in their sales: a speciality that achieved the two highest French bids of the year. So, is France the new Chinese El Dorado... or vice versa?

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# NEWS IN BRIEF



## Save the Date

From 20 February, the Centre Pompidou in Paris will be devoting a retrospective to the Irish-born designer Eileen Gray, whose highly sought-after works sell for a small fortune on the art market.

## MATISSE IN NEW YORK

After the success of the Paris event which brought in 495,000 visitors during the spring of 2012 (making it the sixth most popular exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris), "Matisse, paires et séries" is now on show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, under the title "Matisse: In Search of True Painting".

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

W

## Basel Miami Beach: an assessment

Hurricane Sandy didn't dampen the ardour of art market professionals or collectors. The fair welcomed some 50,000 visitors, to the delight of the 250 gallery owners, who have come out well as a whole from these 11 events. For Pedro Mendes of the Mendes Wood Gallery in São Paulo, the Miami fair "is a junction between the North and the South. It's almost a port where everyone gathers. At the show in Miami, we've connected with collectors and curators from so many different countries and throughout the region that, in a sense, Art Basel Miami Beach becomes a window for Latin American thought, its art dialogue and practice".



Kukje Gallery | Seoul | Courtesy of Art Basel



## £3,84M

This was the price paid by the Getty Museum on 5 December at a London sale (Sotheby's) to acquire a precious illuminated manuscript produced in Antwerp in 1464. It had belonged in turn to Louis de Gruuthuse, Louis XII and François I.

## POWER LIST

There are the happy few, and those who long to be on it ... the famous Power 100 List, of course. Published annually for the last eleven years by the magazine ArtReview, it lists the 100 most influential figures in the art world. Number one in 2012 is the American Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, exhibition curator and the director of dOCUMENTA 13. She is the first woman to reach the top of the ranking.

[www.artreview100.com](http://www.artreview100.com)

W

## Hong Kong Eye

HD

The Saatchi Gallery in London is hosting "Hong Kong Eye", the first major international showcase of Hong Kong's contemporary art talent, launched by the non-profit organisation Parallel Contemporary Art. This is the third and latest addition to the "Eye" series, presenting eighteen emerging artists, some of whom have already exhibited in Europe. These include Amy Cheung, who represented Hong Kong in the Venice Biennial in 2007 (click the link to see Toy Tank, 2006, mixed media). "Indonesian Eye" and "Korean Eye" have together attracted over a million visitors since 2009. The varied collection exhibited at "Hong Kong Eye" reflects the vivacity and growing prosperity of the city, as well as representing and questioning its cultural identity. Hong Kong is recognised as an outstanding platform for art in Asia, and has established a firm place in the global art scene. The exhibition runs until 12 January 2013.

## €1,79

This is the price of the new iPhone and iPad app from the Musée Jacquemart André, available in French and English: a tour lasting 1 hour 15 minutes, with commentary, of this remarkable mansion in central Paris, where husband and wife Nélie Jacquemart and Edouard André built up a magnificent collection including Old Masters, furniture by leading cabinetmakers, and sculptures.

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# UPCOMING AUCTIONS

FIND THE CALENDAR OF UPCOMING AUCTIONS

W

# CALENDAR

## The first dates of the season

Here are some of the sales scheduled for the new year in Brussels, offering an eclectic programme in the wake of the BRAFA; New York, with its traditional Old Masters sales, and Paris, the capital of design and fashion.

### 10 January

#### Owned by McQueen

Here's a chance to become the owner of one of the earliest American motorcycles produced by the American Cycle Company of New York: a 1902 Rambler 2 1/4hp Model 'B', of which there is a similar model in the Museum of Springfield History. It is forecast to fetch \$60,000/80,000. From 1970, a Swedish-made Husqvarna 400 Cross owned by actor Steve McQueen will also be on offer for those looking for a touch of stardom (\$80,000/100,000). The sale will take place at Bally's Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas on 10 January (Bonhams).





## 16 January

### Imperial style

Fans of fine furniture won't miss this sale at Drouot on 16 January (Europ Auction), which features an appealing collection of 18th and 19th century items as well as jewellery and paintings. The Empire, in particular, is magnificently represented with this gilt bronze "corbeille" chandelier decked with a host of crystal drops, which shone like little suns in the salons of the time. For this, you'll need €350,000/400,000... The imperial style is also seen in a number of pieces with the Jacob D.R Meslée stamp, including a set of four mahogany "Etruscan-style" armchairs with elbow rests sporting winged sphinxes (€70,000/80,000). A pair of chased gilt bronze cassolettes formed by two putti holding urns with a bacchanal and goat's head decoration will be on offer at between €30,000 and €40,000. Europ Auction's catalogue tells us that the model is identical to a pair of cassolettes now in Pavlovsk Palace on the outskirts of Saint Petersburg.



## 17 January

### An iconic sports model

Bonhams auction house have scheduled a second Scottsdale Auction to take place at Westin Kierland Resort in Arizona on 17 January. One of the highlights is sure to be a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing: a stylish car and an iconic sports model in automotive history (\$850,000/1M). Another is a 1930 Bugatti Type 46 Faux Cabriolet, also known as "Le Petite Royale", with coachwork by Veth & Zoon and an estimate of \$900,000/1.2M.



## 21 and 22 January

### English school

The "BRAFA effect" is inspiring the Belgian auction house Horta to lay on a two-day sale with a endless flow of antiques. Notable items include a painting by Alma-Tadema, an eminent proponent of the English school, whose "Quiétude printanière" on panel is expected to fetch around €28,000/30,000. Also from the late 19th/early 20th century, Henriette Ronner's painting "Le Retour du bétail" will be offered at between €12,000 and 15,000, as will a "Danseuse russe" by Chiparus, which has the phrase "Etling Paris" on the base.

## 22 January

### African and Oceanic art

For its annual sale of African and Oceanic art (cleverly staged on 22 January during the week when the 2013 BRAFA, the famous Brussels fine arts fair, will be attracting major collectors of the primitive arts), the Lempertz auction house is offering pieces from various provenances. Worth noting: a royal Bangwa figure from Cameroon belonging to a Munich collection. This was used in rituals in the Lefem society when rich notables would gather in the sacred grove, the sanctuary of the realm. Representing Janus standing, this is attributed to the legendary sculptor Ateu-Atsa, active at the end of the 19th century (€20,000/25,000). Other flagship pieces include a Nkisi figure from the Congo (€50,000/70,000) - with one hand on its hip, one arm raising a weapon, and a protuberant stomach - and a Dogon mother and child figure carved in the late 18th century N'duleri style. This maternal figure cradling two children in her arms is expected to fetch between €40,000 and 60,000.







20, 21 and 22 January

## The Russian identity

The Vendôme sale room is hosting a fine sale devoted to furniture from the 18th to the 20th centuries, from a desk stamped by Migeon (€6,000/8,000) to a 1923 mirror by Ruhlmann (€3,000/5,000), with 600 lots in all (Rouillac auction house). These include a number of objets d'art, notably this bronze by the Russian sculptor Eugène Alexandovitch Lanceray, the son of a French officer who settled in Russia after the Napoleonic Wars (€4,000/6,000). This Oprichnik holds himself proudly on his steed, a theme dear to the sculptor (an excellent rider himself), who dedicated more than half his work to horses. Like his numerous Cossack figures, this sculpture extols the Russian identity. Here Lanceray depicts a member of the militia formed by Tsar Ivan the Terrible during the 16th century: the Oprichniki, a organisation of horsemen dressed all in black, inspiring terror and fear.

26 January

**Attributed to Qiuying**

The IEGOR auction house is staging a sale dedicated to the art of China and Japan at the Hôtel des Encans in Montreal. The Chinese section includes numerous pieces in jade, rhinoceros horn and silver, not to mention those famous blue and white ceramics, represented by jars from the Kangxi period and a flask from the Daoguang period (from CAD 1,000 to 15,000). Worth noting: a painting attributed to Qiuying, a Chinese painter active in the first half of the 16th century. A native of the Jiangsu province, Qiuying copied the classics of Tang and Song dynasty painting, and was considered one of the four great masters of the Ming dynasty. This painting on silk attributed to him shows a scholar beneath a waterfall (CAD 20,000/30,000). In the catalogue notice, the auction house indicates similarities with works by Qiuying now in the Beijing Palace museum. The attribution is also based on the presence of several seals of Hsiang Yuan-Pien, the painter's friend and benefactor.

HD



25 et 26 January

**Madonna and Child by Fra Bartolomeo**

The work of the painter Fra Bartolomeo will be the chief attraction in an eagerly-awaited sale of Old Masters at Christie's in New York on 30 January, with the spotlight on the European Renaissance. One work is this tondo with a "Madonna and Child" theme executed early on in the Florentine artist's career, during the mid-1490s. It has a sizeable estimate (\$10/15M) in comparison with its world record, registered at \$4.9M in January 2012. The Antwerp school will also be represented in this rich table of contents by an elegant 16th century triptych, "The Adoration of the Magi", attributed to the Master of the Antwerp Adoration, who painted a remarkable triptych now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp. Anyone who fancies this work in a powerful Mannerist style should expect to pay \$500,000/800,000...

27 January

## From the Palace of Accumulated Excellence

The Forbidden City, a place of residence and power, contains a large number of rooms, pavilions and palaces with enchanting names - at least to Western ears. The Palace of Accumulated Excellence ("*Chu xiu gong bei yong*") is found close to the imperial residences, and there, His Supreme Excellence could bring - or seek - young beauties. The one who became the official concubine was allowed to live there. For ten years, the idyllic dwelling was the palace of the last Empress, the terrible Cixi. And this is the provenance of this imperial carpet in wool and copper thread being sold on 27 January in Mayenne (Pascal Blouet). Its estimate is €8,000/10,000.







## 28 January

### Matali Crasset

Entitled "Young collectors", this Paris sale at Drouot is aimed at all those interested in design. Ever conscious of the prime reason for the speciality - creating a functional, aesthetic environment at an affordable price - the Pierre Cornette de Saint Cyr auction house has gathered together pieces with estimates between €3,000 and €15,000. An occasion for young buyers to acquire some historic pieces by great names in design, or some of tomorrow's classics. The former include lamps by Ettore Sottsass, Saarinen's Tulip table for Knoll and furniture by Jean Prouvé. Meanwhile, pride of place with future classics must go to Matali Crasset, whose singular creations have moved away from the standardisation of original designs. The creator of the famous spare bed "Quand Jim monte à Paris" (also known as the "hospitality column") will be represented in this sale by a Kagooroo Chair, a prototype of 1999, estimated at €800/1,200, and a floor lamp entitled "Arbre à reflets", produced in an edition of eight (€3,000/4,000).

## 30 January

### A private cellar

At its Paris premises, the Tajan auction house is selling a private wine cellar containing 2,500 extremely well-preserved bottles estimated at €400,000 all in all. Vintages range from 1982 to 2008 and unit prices from €30 to €2,000. In other words, a marvellous occasion for a treat, with a list featuring Cos d'Estournel (vintages include 1982, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992; €40 to €180 a bottle), Lafite-Rothschild (1998; €480/520 a bottle), Latour (1985, 1989, 1993, 2001; €220 to €280 a bottle), Mouton Rothschild (1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2006; €180 to €700 a bottle), Château Margaux (1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1998, 1999; €200 to €500 a bottle), and Petrus (1985 magnums: €1,500/1,700; 1986: €1,700/1,800).

HD

31 January

**By the great Pompeo Batoni**

This painting is the sort of gem that every auction house dreams of having in their catalogues, with an impeccable provenance, choice pedigree, famous name and remarkable condition. There is, of course, an estimate to go with it: \$6/9 M, at the Sotheby's New York sale. This picture of Susannah and the Elders was painted in Rome in 1751 by the great Pompeo Batoni. In the Eternal City, the artist was an important painter at that time, much sought after by the elite of Europe - including one Ernest Guido von Harrach, who came from an extremely rich Viennese family. A keen lover of paintings, he commissioned this picture from the Italian artist via the agent Crivelli. The result surpassed all expectations, as Batoni excelled in the art of drawing and the luxuriant use of colour and light. It remained in the family until 1992, when this monumental composition was acquired by the current owner. It has not been seen in public for over forty years.



1 February

**The Marquise d'Aligre's wardrobe**

The Marquise d'Aligre, born Marie Charlotte de Preaulx, was a famous beauty, and one of the most elegant in Paris to boot. One look at her wardrobe will convince you: most of her clothes were made by Doucet and Worth, the two top couturiers of the Belle Epoque. This collection is being sold on 1 February at Drouot by Thierry de Maigret in a sale of antique and fashion textiles. The outfits have been stored in padded trunks and are admirably preserved. Some only know him as a major collector, but Doucet was also a highly successful couturier. He inherited a shop from his mother in the Rue de la Paix, which became one of the most celebrated haute couture houses in Paris. Famous figures flocked to it, like Réjane and Sarah Bernhardt, all ready to spend a fortune on items like this superb hooded evening cape from between 1865 and 1898, ornamented with trimmings and gold chiffon (€600/700), or a salmon pink silk taffeta ball gown veiled with pearl grey gauze and tulle, with appliqué velvet Louis XVI flowers and bows (€1,200/1,500). The enchanting Marie Charlotte also set her heart on an embroidery-trimmed purple silk velvet evening cape (€700/800). One thing we don't know is what the lovely marquise had to pawn to buy these designer glad rags...



## 3, 4 and 5 February

### **Pauline Auzou, a pupil of David**

This delightful picture by Pauline Auzou is part of the sales staged by the Rouillac auction house at Vendôme devoted to Old Master and modern drawings and paintings, together with prints and engravings. It shows a family receiving the portrait of a man accompanied by a missive (€5,000/8,000). The artist Pauline Auzou, born Desmarquets, produced a large number of genre paintings. A pupil of first Regnault, then David, she made an excellent name for herself, regularly exhibiting works at the Salon that were then bought by the State. Here paintings include "L'Arrivée de l'archiduchesse Marie-Louise à Compiègne" and "Les Adieux de Marie-Louise à sa famille, 13 mars 1810", now in the Musée National du Château de Versailles.

## 6 and 7 February

### Racing cars to Paris

A year after its completion in 1900, the Grand Palais hosted the first automotive fair, thus becoming the cradle of the automobile for the next sixty years. Reviving its past as a temple of modernity since its inauguration, the huge glass house will be the setting for an auction of vintage cars on 7 February. For the occasion, the

British auction house Bonhams is bringing some exceptional racing cars

to Paris: a 1938 Bugatti Type 57C (€800,000/1M), a 1953 Bentley R-Type Continental (€550,000/750,000) and a 1928 Rolls-Royce Playboy Roadster from the former Jerry J. Moore collection (€290,000/370,000). However, the real star is this Bugatti Type 54, which sports a tidy estimate of €2.5/3.5M. At the wheel of this racing car, which put out 300 hp, the Italian driver Achille Varzi dominated the race in the fourth Monza Grand Prix on 6 September 1931; two unlucky flat tyres meant that he only came third.



## 11 February

### Lady Gaga's shoe

For its fifth edition of "l'homme et son univers" ("*man and his world*"), the Cornette de Saint Cyr auction house is proposing fashion clothing and accessories at Drouot. Some of them have belonged to show-business stars, like this Emporio Armani platform shoe thrown into the crowd by Lady Gaga at her 2010 Paris concert at Bercy, "The Monster Ball Tour", for which the Italian couturier designed some futuristic outfits for the famous American singer. The estimate for this sculptural shoe is €6,000/9,000. Another relic, this time for Michael Jackson fans, is his black felt Fedora bearing the inscription "Made expressly for Michael Jackson". Worn during the American "Victory Tour" in 1984, it was given by the singer to Jonathan Davis during the concert at the Rich Stadium in Buffalo on 25 August 1984. Its estimate is €4,000/5,000.











# AUCTION RESULTS

FIND AUCTION RESULTS ON THE INTERNET

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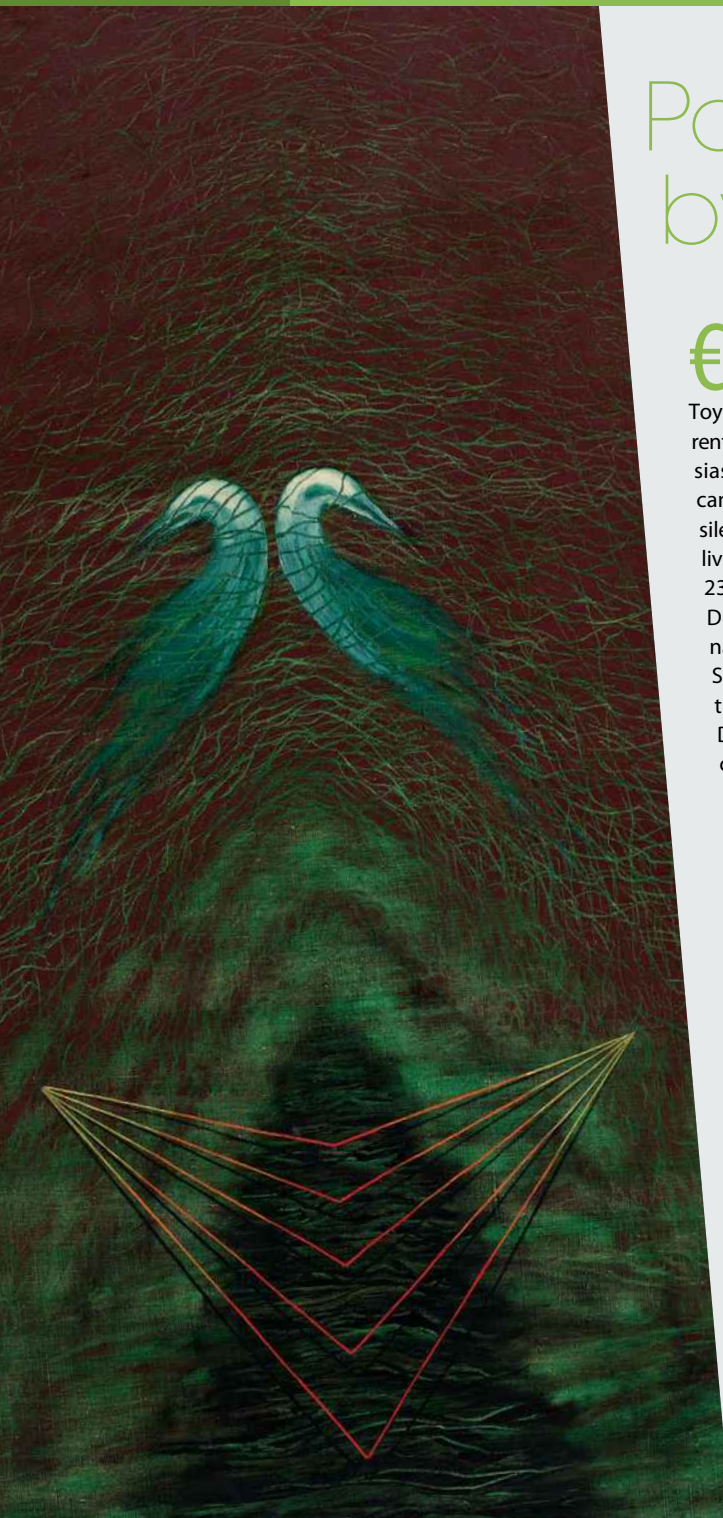
# Painting by Toyen

## €173,396

Toyen is an artist whose works have many different faces, and are always sought-after by enthusiasts. Estimated at €80,000, this 1954 oil on canvas with its mysterious title, "À l'entrée du silence" (*at the entrance of silence*), provoked a lively battle up to €173,396 at the Paris sale on 23 November at Drouot (Christophe Joron-Derem). The Czech-born Toyen (whose real name was Marie Cermínová) was part of the Surrealist group whose rating was revived by the 2003 sale of the André Breton studio at Drouot. In 1925, Toyen settled in Paris with her companion, the painter, poet and photographer Jindrich Styrsky. In Paris, as a member of the Czech avant-garde movement, she was naturally attracted to the Surrealists, while never becoming dogmatic. She had already produced Cubist paintings inspired by Purism, then abandoned these in favour of a series of Naïf pictures with exotic subjects. In Paris, the artist perfected a new style with Styrsky, qualified as "artificialist". This featured more lyrical elements, with the use of dripping techniques and the appearance of figurative details. In the sale of the Breton studio, a 1954 painting entitled "Si loin, si ancien", which sold for a hammer price of €58,000, uses part of this vocabulary. Painted the same year as the picture here, it demonstrates Toyen's creative freedom.

Sylvain Alliod

**Marie Cermínová**, known as Toyen (1902-1980),  
"À l'entrée du silence", 1954, oil on canvas.



€34,375

**Olmec origins**

On 26 November at Drouot (Binoche & Giquello), during a sale of Costa Rican jades from the Carlos Balsler collection, a high point was achieved at €34,375 by these two pendants from the Guanacaste region in the Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica, dated between 300 BC and 500 AD. These are based on a minimalist and potentially utilitarian blueprint, as they are in the form of spoons... They come from the same blue-green jade axe, separated into two, then carefully polished. Jade objects, already produced in Mesoamerica for a long time, were probably introduced to the Guanacaste region by the Olmecs or peoples with similar traditions.



€9,434,400

**Max Ernst, Fernand Léger and Jean Arp**

On 28 November in Paris, modern art made a total of €9,434,400 (65% by lot; 71% by value) at Christie's. The sale included twenty-three six-figure bids and one of over a million. International collectors proved particularly active. Max Ernst was the star of the sale, when €1,521,000 went to a painted plaster from 1967, "La Plus Belle" (h. 186 cm), for which the estimate had been no higher than €300,000. This was the second highest price recorded for a plaster by the artist. In this medium, we can also note the world record posted at €157,000 by Jean Arp with "Torse" executed in 1931, after an estimate of only €80,000. However, at €913,000, a 1942 oil on canvas by Fernand Léger, "Composition en noir et jaune", did not achieve its estimate.

S. A.

€390,348

## Watteau's Allegory of Spring

During a classical sale totalling €1,711,137 on 23 November with the Paris auction house Auction Art Rémy Le Fur & Associés, Antoine Watteau's painting was acclaimed by a six-figure bid: €390,348. "Le Printemps" painted in c. 1710-1711 belongs to a series known as the "Saisons Julienne".

Sylvain Alliod



€206,400

## A stylish woman of the Third Republic



Estimated at around €140,000, one picture certainly whetted the appetites of art lovers at the Nancy sale on 24 November of the Nabecor auction house, which finally sold it for €206,400. While a bold Impressionist, Gustave Caillebotte was also a realist whose art reflected the contemporary world. As city dweller, he would often observe urban scenes, and in 1877 decided to depict house painters in their daily work, taken from life. The portrait in this sale, painted two years earlier, shows a young woman seated in an interior. Who she was remains an enigma to this day, but this distinguished young lady certainly put on her finest for posterity. Caillebotte skilfully sets off his model to full advantage while keeping the picture true to life.

Chantal Humbert



# Archaeology sale

## €2,75M

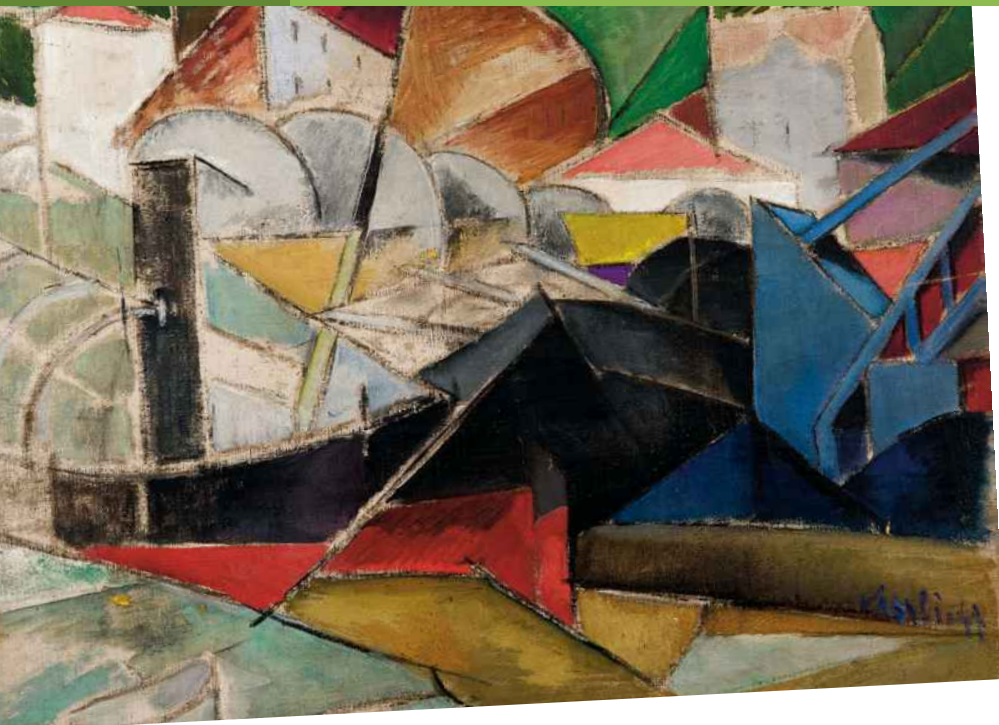
This archaeology sale, which totalled €2,751,383 on 29 and 30 November at Drouot (Pierre Bergé & Associés), was dominated by the Pharaonic civilisation. The top result, €725,000, went to the statue in the photo. This sculpture, representing a dignitary, the "chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, director of the pure place" is known as naophorus, because the subject holds a naos containing an effigy of the god Ptah. The back pillar presents a column with the description of the figure. Padiheka - "gift of the god Heka", Heka being the personification of vital energy and magical powers - was a term used mainly in Lower Egypt. The dignitary performed various ceremonial roles, some of which dated back the Old Kingdom. This "director of the wabet" oversaw the place of embalming: an important and respected position, because the holder was in charge of the proper functioning of rituals for the god Apis. €450,000, above the estimate, went to the papyrus Tamerit 1 written in red and black ink, from c. 210 BC. Consisting of an assembly of eight plates and one fragment (around 350 x 20.5 cm), it contains two ritual texts concerning the mysteries of Osiris, the Lagids being fervent proponents of his worship. While the first, a "decree implemented with regard to the region of Igeret", is known by way of a copy now in the Metropolitan Museum, the second, "ritual for the day of the touring of the walls", has no equivalent. This papyrus text was published in German in 2009 by Horst Beinlich.

**Sylvain Alliod**

**€725,000** Egypt, Memphite region, Lower Egypt, second half of the 26th dynasty. Naophorus statue of the "director of the pure place", Padiheka, in green grauwacke slate, h. 51 cm.

HD





€177,500

### Le Port d'Espagne by Marie Vassilieff

At €177,500, this painting by Marie Vassilieff stayed within its estimate range on 30 November at Drouot (Pestel-Debord), thus entering the artist's international Top Ten. The work was executed in around 1913: the year of the Romanovs' tercentenary, Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, not to mention the seething Futurist movement, which made Old Russia one of the spearheads of the European avant-garde. Meanwhile, Marie Vassilieff had decided five years previously to settle in Paris, where she had an academy bearing her name. By 1913, her studio had become such an epicentre of Parisian artistic life that Fernand Léger decided to give two conferences on modern art there. The Cubo-Futurist composition of this painting reflects the creative effervescence of this transitional period on the eve of the First World War, when all experiments in the visual arts endeavoured to capture the essence of a rapidly-changing civilisation.

S. A.



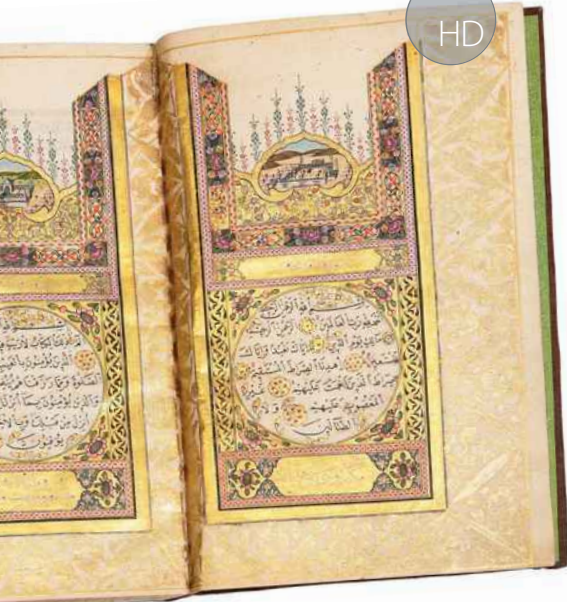
€122,400

## Necklace by Wièse

Estimated at around €40,000, a set of thirteen pieces of jewellery by Wièse finally fetched €392,500 on 24 November at Villefranche-sur-Saône (Enchères Rhône Alpes E. R. A). The enchanting necklace here, which pocketed the highest bid, €122,400, is signed "WIESE" on the back. Apprenticed in Berlin to Hossauer, jeweller for the Duke of Prussia, Jules Wièse moved to France during the July Monarchy. He settled in Paris in 1839, and joined the workshop of François-Désiré-Froment Meurice, one of the finest proponents of historicist style jewellery. After working as foreman for Meurice, Wièse set up his own workshop in 1858 and presented historicist jewellery with great success at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1855, then at the London Exhibition in 1862, establishing himself as one of the masters of artistic jewellery under the Second Empire. After 1880, he handed over the running of his jewellery company to his son, Louis, who carried on the family tradition. Inspired mainly by the Gothic and Renaissance styles, Wièse designs are also faithful to the aesthetic of antique jewellery, as with this necklace. **Chantal Humbert**



HD



€128,750

## Ottoman Korans

Four Ottoman Korans and a religious manuscript, all in Naskh script, elicited some fierce bidding on 30 November at Drouot (Kapandji & Morhange), resulting in a total of €128,750. Bidders fought for a Koran from 1763 (*reproduced*) up to €47,500, after a high estimate of €13,000. Its double frontispiece shows the harams (sacred territories) of Medina and Mecca. Their representation is truly extraordinary, as they were usually reserved for copies of Al-Jazūlī's *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*. Another Ottoman Koran, this time from the late 18th/early 19th century, tripled its estimate at €37,500. Its 300 pages by Safi Zadeh are illuminated with gold-studded rosettes and blue and gold mandorla medallions in the margins. Its borders, embellished with flowers and foliage on a gold background, contain benedictions inscribed in broad triangles.

Sylvain Alliod





# €1,530,000

## Imperial scroll

A further warning of strong winds from the Chinese steppes, with the €1,530,000 fetched on 7 December at Drouot Paris by this painted imperial scroll of 1752, estimated between €300,000 and 500,000 (Aguttes auction house). This result was obtained even though the painting is missing its right-hand section. It belongs to a series of three scrolls commissioned by Qianlong in praise of various divinities, whose birthdays were celebrated in Taoist style. This one depicts the stellar divinity on a sumptuous litter, escorted by fairies, armed men, generals in armour and ivory horn players. As we can see, the Chinese gave their pantheon a hierarchy and grandeur that was imperial. It could easily be Qianlong sitting on the throne instead of the god! The Shangyuan celebration honoured the Tianguan heavenly official or “great emperor of purple subtlety”, “Ziwei dadi” corresponding to the Ziwei constellation. He conferred blessings fifteen days after the New Year. This painting also carries the seal of Qianlong’s successor, the Jiaqing emperor (1796-1820), as well as a short colophon: “By your servant, Zhang Weibang, copying with respect the style of Lu Huang, on the ninth moon of year XVII of the Qianlong era”. The author of this scroll, Zhang Weibang, specialised in the representation of figures, birds and small animals. He also excelled in depicting larger, fantastical animals, like the dragons pulling the celestial divinity along here. Lu Huang himself was a active painter during the southern Tang dynasty (937-975). S. A.

Zhang Weibang, after Lu Huang. Fairies and divine officers surround the stellar divinity mounted on a carriage pulled by dragons and escorted by officers in armour, 1752, scroll painted on paper, 54 x 304 cm.





€334,795

## Islamic illuminated manuscripts

In nineteen lots, the collection of Islamic manuscripts belonging to M. S. totalled €334,795 on 3 December at Paris-Drouot (Millon & Associés). €126,910 went to this anthology of poems by Attâr, Sa'adi, Nizami, Jami, Hâtefi and Helâli, commissioned and compiled by Ni'Matullah al-Mushtahir bi-Khalifa. It was calligraphed in 1564, early in the reign of Khan Shaybanid Iskandar, by Ali Reza al-Kâtib for a Sufi prince of Bukhara, probably in the city's royal workshops. Meanwhile, the twenty-three miniatures illustrating it are by the school of Bukhara. During the 16th century, this city became a flourishing centre of miniature painting, marked by the work of Kamal al-Din Bihzad, one of Persia's greatest artists in the field.

Sylvain Alliod





€446,112

### Provenance: Jean Prouvé

Three lots from the Jean Prouvé collection, which had remained with his descendants until now, totalled €557,640 on 3 December at Paris-Drouot (Rieunier & Associés). The 1947 "Présidence" desk in the photo is undoubtedly the quintessence of this model, since it is the one that Prouvé used himself in his workshops in Maxéville. Enthusiasts had good reason to push it up to €446,112: the highest price realised for this model, after a high estimate of €150,000 (source: Artnet). On 26 November 2010, Christie's sold an example that stood out for its ivory-lacquered sheet metal and oak-veneered pedestal, for €170,000 in Paris. Concerning the desk here, the sliding shelf on top of the pedestal is missing, but this in no way dampened the ardour of the bidders. The "Présidence desk", also called "H" for "haricot" (bean) because of the shape of its top, is naturally listed in the catalogue of the complete works of Prouvé drawn up by Peter Sulzer and published by Birkhäuser. The author explains that the Maxéville desk is "equipped with a few distinctive details, like a small pivoting metal sheet with telephone numbers"

S. A.

€85,400

### Ram Kumar

This sale in the Var region (Arnaud Yvos) on 1 December included two pictures by the contemporary Indian painter Ram Kumar, one of the most popular artists of the post-colonial period. His figures, often treated in dark tones, standing out against monochrome backgrounds. Coming from a private collection, the two paintings were both estimated at around €50,000. "The Couple", knocked down for €69,540, was overtaken comfortably by the 1955 painting here, which went to a foreign enthusiast for €85,400. Chantal Humbert



€575,000 Peru, between the Jequetepeque and Zana rivers, Chavin culture, 400-200 B.C. Ornamental gold plaque (with traces of cinnabar), decorated with the god of weavers and cotton in rich vegetation, 46.1 x 40.3 cm, weight: approx. 1.162 kg. Castor-Hara auction house.



## €1,3 M Rudolf Wagner Collection

The pre-Columbian art collection of Swiss art dealer Benditch Rudolf Wagner (1928-2012) totalled €1.3M on 3 December at Drouot Paris, exceeding estimates by 30% (Castor-Hara). In addition, 92% of the lots found buyers. One result that clearly stands out is the €575,000 that went to the Chavin ornamental plaque in the photo, carried off by a French collector. This piece probably embellished the front of a coffer belonging to a shaman. According to Robert Sonin of the Concordia University of Canada, one of the world's top pre-Columbian metalwork specialists, it is the biggest and heaviest gold Chavin plaque known to date. This culture lay at the heart of the collection assembled by Benditch Wagner, devoted to the ancient art of Peru. His early passion for the pre-Columbian American arts led him to become an art dealer in this field, and he worked as such in Geneva from 1972 onwards. Some thirty items from the Chavin culture, considered the birthplace of the Andean civilisation, were up for sale. They were bought by Swiss, American and French collectors, not forgetting the European trade.

Sylvain Alliod



# Diamond mounted by Cartier

## €1,572,800

On 3 December at Paris-Drouot, this stone realised €1,572,800 (Mathias auction house, Baron-Ribeyre & Associés auction house, Farrando-Lemoine auction house. Maître Stetten). It thus boasts a more than respectable price per carat: €116,073 precisely. Its Cartier setting is definitely a bonus, but its value is mainly due to its intrinsic qualities. Its substantial weight, 13.55 ct, goes well with its cushion cut. Next, its white colour is the very best: D, or "exceptional white +", whilst its purity tolerates some very small inclusions (VS1) mainly on the outside, according to the French Laboratory of gemmology certificate that accompanies it. Finally, it is type 'Ila', indicating an absence of nitrogen characteristic of stones that are chemically very pure. This qualification refers to a legendary standard, that of the diamonds extracted in the Golconda region of Southern India, the origin of most of the diamonds produced between the 4th century B.C. and 1730, after which the mines dried up. Type 'Ila' stones do not necessarily come from India, but their quality puts them at the top of the diamond hierarchy - as reflected in the bidding. S.A

Cartier, platinum ring set with a cushion-cut diamond, LFG: 13.55 ct, D, VS1, type Ila.



€353,172

### Diamond mounted by Cartier

The certificate of the Laboratoire Français de Gemmologie stipulates that the colour of this diamond mounted by Cartier is E, or exceptional white, and that its purity is VVS2, implying miniscule inclusions requiring a jeweller's magnifying glass to detect them. The certificate also indicates that it is type Ia. Diamonds are classed as four types - Ia, Ib, IIa and IIb - depending on the presence of nitrogen in the crystal as well as certain other properties. Weighing 8.15 ct, this jewel, sold on 13 and 14 December in Paris (Drouot - Beausant - Lefèvre) earned a magnificent bid: €353,172.

Sylvain Alliod

€185,880

### Pair of emerald pendants

On 6 December, at Boulogne-Billancourt, not far from Paris, the Jonquet auction house sold a collection of jewellery, which this pair of articulated platinum and white gold drop earrings realised €185,880. They sport a motif of round and baguette-cut diamonds, and a pear-shaped emerald of around 20 ct. Two other creations, probably by Suzanne Belperron, also sparked the desire of enthusiasts: there was a battle up to €151,200 for a wide platinum bracelet in three parts, set with three lines of antique-cut diamonds, while a pair of yellow gold lapel clips with rubies set in a foliage decoration garnered €99,140.



€123,920

**By Henry Moret**

This bid went to the oil on canvas by Henry Moret, after an estimate of no more than €60,000, on 30 November at Drouot (Néret-Minet - Tessier & Sarrou). Dated 1908 and entitled "Gros temps, Finistère", it belongs to a series of paintings dedicated to seaweed harvesters. We see them waiting for low tide so that they can go and gather seaweed.



€446,112

**Yours satirically...**

Rabbits didn't wait for Lewis Carroll to start engaging in some highly human occupations. The proud and elegant one here hails a stagecoach approaching at a gallop. It certainly set a marvellous pace for the bidding, this oil on canvas by the circle of Jean-Baptiste Le Prince, estimated at €35,000 to 40,000, shot up to €446,112 on 7 December at Paris-Drouot (Thierry de Maigret). Its subject is not only humorous but is also duly documented. Our beast is a great aristocrat: the Marquis de Boissy et du Coudray, who was a captain in the regiment of the Languedoc-dragons in 1789, a Chevalier de Saint-Louis, then a peer of France in 1815 and a hereditary marquis in 1817. Family tradition reports that he was as mean as he was rich. He frequently travelled by stagecoach, and would sit on the roof with the luggage to pay less. This was known as "monter en lapin" - "riding rabbit". All becomes clear...

Sylvain Alliod



# Exceptional Iznik

## €601,200

On 6 December a group of thirty ceramics assembled by a great Saint Étienne collector more than fifty years ago went up for auction at the Marais sale room in Saint Étienne. Iznik pottery inspired the most competition among enthusiasts. This type of ceramic really took off at the end of the 15th century thanks to the underglaze painting technique and the faithful, unflinching patronage of the court of the sultans, first and foremost Suleiman the Magnificent. This splendid dish, estimated at around €25,000, caused a stir when it achieved the highest bid of the sale.

Fought over by those in the room and several telephone bidders, it mobilised twenty enthusiasts and two pages of absentee bids! At €400,000, eight of the bidders were still in the running. Its chief virtue is its rarity: to this day, we only know of one other like it, now in the Omer M. Koç collections at the Sadberk Hanim Museum, Istanbul. Proposed in good condition, it dates back to the reign of Suleiman I the Magnificent, one of the most eminent European monarchs of the 16th century. It features truly exceptional decoration: instead of being coloured in red and blue polychrome, the ornamental motifs are intensified by a brilliant cobalt blue and a bright turquoise, and stand out from a vivid background. Such assets certainly whetted the appetite of collectors, multiplying the initial estimate by fifteen. After a tough bidding battle, it finally ended up in the home of an English buyer.

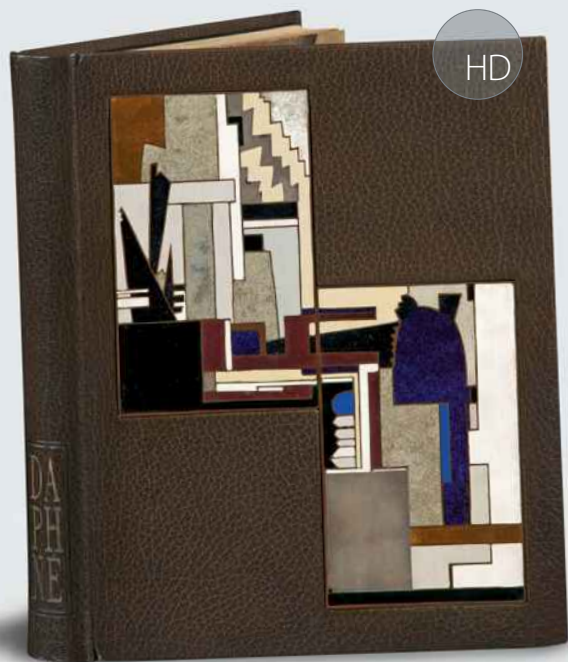
**Chantal Humbert**



Ottoman Art, Iznik,  
Cintamani dish,  
first half of the 16th century, diam. 42 cm.

# Félix Marcilhac library

## €1,867,581



€157,820 Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863), "Daphné", Paris, published by F.L. Schmied, 1924, in-quarto, illustrated with 49 coloured woodcuts by Schmied, grey morocco binding by Georges Cretté containing two plaques in silver and champlévé enamel by Jean Goulden on the front cover.

The library of Paris specialist Félix Marcilhac gloried in bindings from his favourite period, Art Deco. Totalling €1,867,581 with the 72 lots sold, it was a "tribute to the Dunand-Goulden-Jouve-Schmied group", as confirmed in part by the bids garnered on 5 December in Paris-Drouot (Binoche & Giquello). We should add the name of binder Georges Cretté, associated with no fewer than fifteen decorative bindings (for a total of €885,613). Many of them featured lacquered plaques by Jean Dunand, whose name appeared nineteen times in the proceedings (for a total of €1,005,192). Jean Goulden achieved €188,170 in only two lots. Pierre Legrain's work on four bindings boasted €179,186, while François-Louis Schmied personally produced five (for a total of €292,574). A wood engraver, typographer, printer, publisher and binding designer, Schmied's was the name that came up first, reflecting his standing as a magnificent restorer of illustrated books. A copy (the one in the photo) of Schmied's first major book, an edition of "quatre lettres de Daphné" by Alfred de Vigny, commissioned by Dr. Amédée Baumgartner, glittered brightly in the firmament of the Marcilhac library at €157,820. Numbered "79", this was bound by Cretté and includes two joined plaques by Jean Goulden in silver and champlévé enamel. In December 1993, this had obtained F610,000 (around €120,000 at today's value) in the sale of the Manoukian collection.

S. A

€868,000

## Master of the Hartford Still-Life

The catalogue of this Parisian sale on 5 December only contained 128 lots, but cited some major French collections as provenance. The result of €2,408,762 confirmed the high quality of the pedigrees (Frayssé & Associés). The top price, €868,000, went to the painting in the photo by the Master of the Hartford Still-Life. New on the market, it now takes second place in the short record of this uncommon painter, who owes his name to a still life now in the Hartford Wadsworth Atheneum in America. S. A.





# €129,900

## A stamp, some marks, some theories...

This commode by Roger Vandercruse, knocked down for €129,900 on 12 December in Paris (Europ Auction), possesses many evident qualities. Nevertheless, one of its main features is the rare scene from antiquity on its central inlaid projection. To see a comparable work, you would have to go to Waddesdon Manor across the channel, which holds the sumptuous cylinder-top desk owned by Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, executed by Riesener or Leleu. Some examples of his marquetry were based on views by Panini, engraved by Pierre François Tardieu. The scene on the commode here, of which the source is not identified, depicts an opulent fountain dominated by the figure of Neptune, with the pyramid of Gaius Cestius at Ostia and Rome port in the background. In terms of gilt bronze, the bearded mask motif decorating the lower crosspiece is found on other pieces of furniture by the cabinetmaker, including the commode delivered to the Comtesse de Provence at Fontainebleau in 1771. Two other royal commodes can be compared to this one, both made in 1769. The first, by Gilles Joubert, is in the Paul Getty Museum; the second is from Madame Victoire's bedroom at the Château de Compiègne, also made in 1769 and featuring bronzes comparable to those of the commode here. A closer look at this piece reveals two identical hot iron stamps, a crowned "C", an inventory number, unfortunately illegible, and a label marked "Krongrut". This "Krongrut" is a German reference indicating all the property used by the king and queen after each accession to the throne. In the 19th century, this commode could have belonged to the Wurtemberg royal collections. But in any case, it was certainly part of the Sichel collection. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris has a chiffonier stamped by Riesener from this famous provenance.

Sylvain Alliod



€212,364

## World record for Pieter Huys

On 28 November at Drouot (Coutau-Bégarie), this panel by Pieter Huys, "La Naissance d'Adam" (*The Birth of Adam*), set a world record for the artist at €212,364 (source: Artnet). It toppled a "Tentation de Saint Antoine" (*Temptation of St Antony*) on canvas (45 x 62 cm) sold for \$206,500 (€141,000) on 9 June 2011 in New York at Sotheby's. Pieter Huys was an Antwerp-born Mannerist strongly influenced by Hieronymus Bosch, as we can see in this "Birth", surrounded by devilries that augur no good for the future of the human race...



HD



**Roger Vandercruse Lacroix** (1727-1799), Louis XVI period. Half-moon commode with rosewood, kingwood and amaranth marquetry, with three drawers in the apron, two drawers with no crosspiece and two side doors. Gilt bronze ornamentation, moulded white marble top. 87 x 145.2 x 59.5 cm.

€969,000

## World record for Hendrick Van Balen

On 7 December at Paris-Drouot, this oil on copper by Hendrik Van Balen, "Moses striking water from the rock" (50 x 65 cm), estimated at no more than €80,000, inspired a bidding battle up to €969,000 (Claude Aguttes): a world record for the artist (source: Artnet), and a long way ahead of the previous one, £156,500 (€219,620), obtained on 5 December 2007 at Christie's in London for another oil on copper, "The Preaching of St John the Baptist" (46 x 66 cm). Its warm tones and precise drawing betray the influence of Rotthenhamer, who introduced Venetian art to the Netherlands. The composition here stands out for the presence of the artist's self-portrait on the far left - probably the only one we know. S. A



HD



Attributed to the Master of Saint-Sang (active in the first quarter of the 16th century), "Virgin and Child" flanked by "Saint Elisabeth of Hungary" and a "Patron carrying the cross of Saint Andrew", "Angel" and "Virgin" on the reverse in grisaille, three oak panels forming a triptych, 73 x 106.5 cm.

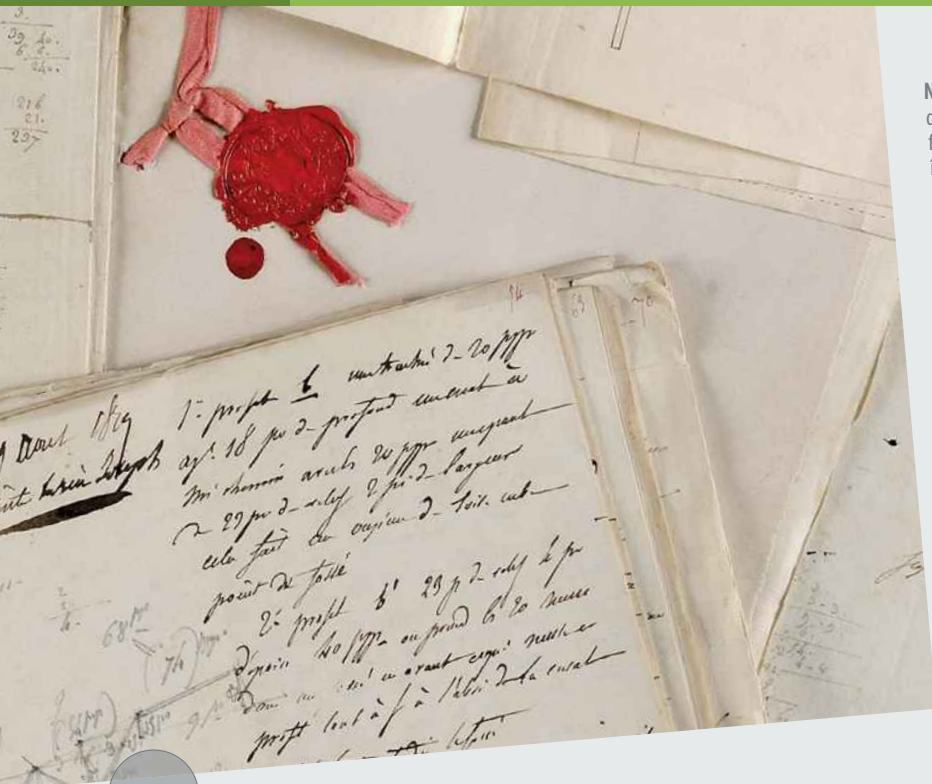


# €372,478

## World record for the master of Saint-Sang

Estimated between €70,000 and 80,000, this triptych attributed to the Master of Saint-Sang was proposed during a Paris sale on 12 December (Tajan auction house). Decidedly whetting the appetites of enthusiasts, it fetched €372,478: a world record for the artist. The previous record, dating back to 14 December 1990, was rather more modest at £28,600 including the buyer's premium (around €59,000 in today's money) for a panel depicting "The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine" (57.2 x 44.4 cm), sold in London by Christie's. The Master of Saint-Sang was a follower of Gérard David; around thirty paintings are attributed to him. The work that gave the master his name is a triptych of a "Pieta" now in the chapel of Saint-Sang in Bruges, probably given to the eponymous friar in 1519. The master also borrowed elements from the works of Hugo Van der Goes and Quentin Metsys. In this triptych, Saint Elisabeth of Hungary is identifiable by her three crowns, interpreted as symbols of her holiness as virgin, wife and widow, or of her three kingdoms: Hungary, Thuringia and Hesse. The beggar at her side evokes her good works, and she wears the garments of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

Sylvain Alliod



**Napoleon I.** Manuscript draft for his "Essai sur la fortification de campagne, île de Sainte-Hélène, juillet 1818-août 1819"; around 180 in-folio pages, with additions and corrections in Napoleon I's hand, and 42 drawings, including two folding fortification profiles drawn up by the Emperor, the whole forming six bundles.

HD

## The Saint Helena dictations

# €375,000

Entirely devoted to the Empire, the programme of this Fontainebleau sale on 2 December (Osenat) made a total of €2 M and inspired three six-figure bids. Letters and handwritten notes immediately aroused the competitive instincts of a large audience, present both in the saleroom and on the telephone. Estimated at no more than €80,000, "L'Essai sur la fortification de campagne" was the subject of a fierce battle up to €375,000: a world record for a Napoleon manuscript. Nearly two hundred years after his weary exile, the Emperor's lines have come down to us virtually intact. It must be said that they provide a moving testimony. The manuscript comes from the archives of the Bertrand family, and represents the largest part of the "Saint Helena dictations" in private hands. The dates show that it was written between 1818 and 1819. The Emperor reiterates the principles of fortification, states that they need to be improved and calls upon the technical skills of the engineer Bertrand. This reading copy brings to light around 90 autograph lines by Napoleon and 42 drawings, including two folding fortification profiles drawn up by the Emperor. In another dictation inserted into this manuscript, Napoleon tells of his Russian campaign: "This should not be called a retreat because the army was victorious".

**Chantal Colombier**

€355,526

## Collection of drawings by Charles Antoine Coypel

Completely new to the saleroom, a set of preparatory studies by the first painter to Louis XV, Charles-Antoine Coypel, garnered the lion's share during this Rouen sale on 9 December staged by Normandy Auction. Remarkably well-preserved, these had been discovered in an artist's portfolio under a sofa. After a vigorous fight between the saleroom and fourteen telephone bidders, they finally went for €355,526. Some were purchased by knowledgeable French amateurs, while others went to major overseas collections in America, Germany and Britain. The drawings, glued onto blue Canson paper, are a valuable illustration of the various techniques Charles-Antoine Coypel used before taking to the easel. Some drawings are squared up, such as a helmeted figure holding a sword (which obtained €34,700): a preparatory study for Coypel's painting of 1737, "Achille poursuivant des Troyens dans les eaux du Scamandre", now in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. Meanwhile, this sketch of an angel, expected to fetch around €5,000, was actually knocked down for €61,960. It is a preparatory study for the painting "La Destruction du palais d'Armide" executed in 1737, whose cartoon, painted on canvas, is in the Musée des Beaux-arts in Nancy.

**Chantal Humbert**


 HD




€124,950

## Head of Hamadryad by Camille Claudel

"L'Hamadryade" was created by Camille Claudel in around 1895. Inspired by Greek art, it represents a tree nymph who is simultaneously wild and faithful. In the guise of ancient mythology, Camille Claudel was in fact evoking her break-up with Auguste Rodin. Also known as "Jeune fille aux nénuphars" (*girl with water lilies*), the work was created in an Art Nouveau spirit where it unites the female body with plant elements. Also sculpted in plaster, it was so much admired that Eugène Blot made a cast iron version of it in 1908. A Lyonnais enthusiast bought number 1 (the example here), at the beginning of the 20th century, and it remained in his family. The quality of the patina and the emotional power of the subject led to a fierce joust between the trade and various enthusiasts on 13 December in Lyon (Aguttes auction house). Knocked down for €124,950, this "Tête d'Hamadryade" was finally borne off by a major French collector, beating a museum.

C. H.



HD



€273,460

## A Louis XIV bronze

On 16 December, the sale of Comte Renaud Doria's estate, organised at Senlis (Senlis auction house; Maître Le Coënt), was followed by well-informed enthusiasts. It recorded €796,180 in 179 lots, and this bronze created a surprise, after an estimate of around €5,000. Attributed to a 19th century artist, the sculpture in fact turned out to be the work of the 17th century French school, probably by François Girardon (1628-1715), who took Louis XIV art to its zenith with his remarkable naturalism and decorative, elegant sensibility. In charge of the team of sculptors at Versailles, Girardon dotted the château and park with works inspired by antiquity. And this is precisely the vein of this sculpture, which evokes an episode in Greek mythology. Minerva tries to play the flute and is laughed at by her companions when they see her puffed-out cheeks. She throws the flute away in disgust, and it is picked up by the satyr Marsyas, also a musician. Enchanted by its sound, he challenges Apollo to a music contest with his lyre, where the loser will be at the mercy of the victor. The Muses judge in favour of Apollo, who then immediately binds Marsyas to a pine tree and flays him. The victim's blood flows into a river and in remorse, Apollo breaks his own lyre and names the river Marsyas.

Chantal Humbert

# The Saint-Phalles of Roger Nellens

## €863,750

At the end of the year, Niki of Saint-Phalle lit up the Paris auction scene with her brilliantly coloured creations. On 6 December, a mermaid from 1983 frolicked up to €349,990 at the Palais d'Iena. At Drouot, she totalled €863,750 on 10 December in three lots from the former Roger Nelles collection (Gros & Delettrez). The highest price, €600,000, went to one of the three proofs in the group, a polychrome sculpture in polyester resin produced by the Haligon workshop. The "Adam and Eve en pique-nique" group, also known as "Les Amants", belongs to the series of 22 monumental sculptures designed by the artist between 1979 and 1993 for the Tarot Garden in Capalbio, Tuscany. The artist herself financed the project, which was based on the 22 arcana of the tarot cards. Some sculptures are big enough for people to get inside. In 1973, Niki de Saint-Phalle had built a dragon-shaped house in the garden of her friends Roger and Fabienne Nellens in Knokke-le-Zoute, for their children to play in. At €225,000 the high estimate was respected for one of the three copies of "Le Rossignol", a polychrome sculpture in polyester resin, created by the artist in collaboration with her companion Jean Tinguely. One of a larger edition (150 to be precise), the "Nana, 1984" vase in polyester resin, also produced by Haligon, doubled its high estimate to €38,750.

Sylvain Alliod

**€600,000** Niki de Saint-Phalle (1930-2002), "Adam et Eve", sculpture in polychrome polyester resin, numbered 1/3. Mark of R. Haligon. Around 190 x 165 cm.



## INTERNATIONAL

HD



£29,72M

**Study by Raphael**

On 5 December in London, it took all of seventeen minutes to decide between four enthusiastic bidders and knock down this drawing for the record price of £29.72 M (Sotheby's)... But what a drawing! Nothing less than a "Head of a Young Apostle": a study by Raphael for his celebrated "Transfiguration", now in the Vatican Museum. Only two other drawings of this importance by the Master have come up for sale in the last fifty years, and each achieved a record price, the last being a "Head of a Muse" sold for £29.2 M in 2009. The one here provided the bonus of an incomparable pedigree, as it came from the collection of the Dukes of Devonshire at Chatsworth, one of the most famous in the world. This exceptional work was part of an Old Masters sale, where the 51 lots made a total of £58.06M (74.5% and 86.8% by number and value). It broke no fewer than seven records for various artists, including Jan Steen with his "Prayer Before the Meal", which fetched £5.64 M.

£11.47M

**Russian paintings: highly rated**

This highly specialised sale in London on 26 November (Sotheby's) only involved 27 works, which raised a total of £11.47 M: dazzling proof that Russian paintings continue to attract a broad public, whatever anyone may say. For example, Ivan Aivazovsky garnered £825,250 for "View of Constantinople by Moonlight", and £205,250 for a pair of paintings of boats in Naples and Holland. Lado Gudiashvili, who seems to evoke some lost Eden in his "By the black stream", obtained £937,250; the nude woman in this painting was decently "dressed" when the artist returned to Russia in 1934...



€297,922

## Say it with flowers

Colette once described Monaco as: "the country whose borders are flowers"... Some remarkably precious flowers to judge by this orchid, knocked down for a trifling €297,922 on 8 December at the Monte-Carlo Hôtel des Ventes! We should add that it is made of gold, with petals in enamel "à fenestres", embellished with a large baroque pearl, and adorned with a tourmaline and small pearls forming its pistil. In addition, the brooch, which can be worn as a pendant, bears the signature of Georges Fouquet. This flower was the undisputed star of a sale mingling moments of satisfaction with a few of disappointment - the latter somewhat understandable, as not many buyers will make a trip to the Principality to seek what they can get elsewhere. However, the lots as a whole were appreciated, and the genuinely interesting items found takers, starting with the diamonds. Mostly mounted in rings, several of these were sold as follows: €47,176 (7.54 ct); €48,948 (3 ct); €20,571 (pear-cut, 3.06 ct); €58,970 (princess cut, 5.02 ct, in a setting by Pellegrin); €70,764 (yellow, brilliant cut, 8.80 ct); €73,113 (9.50 ct) and €74,352 (5.11 ct).

X. N.



€17,23

## Steven A. Greenberg's collection

In the early Seventies, three little crystal birds by Lalique proved to be Steven A. Greenberg's road to Damascus when the American businessman found them in a flea market in Paris. He decided on the spot to become a "serious collector" of Art Deco, and kept his word, as recently proved by the 200 lots of his collection, sold on 12 and 13 December at Christie's New York for a total of \$17.23 M (85% and 86% by number and value). Having started his collection relatively early, Greenberg was able to acquire a number of major pieces, mainly in leading American galleries, but also at auction (notably in the Warhol sale of 1988), and these caused some fierce fighting between dealers and collectors. Eileen Gray came out the winner of this sale with a screen (sold for \$1.87 M) originally acquired by Madame Labourdette and then owned by J.C. Brugnot. A few lots further on, a record was broken for Dupas, when "Allégorie du tissu", a large preparatory painting for the mosaic panel executed for the Pavillon du Textile at the 1937 Exhibition, went for \$1.65 M. From Dupas we move to the celebrated dinandier Dunand, whose works were greeted with huge enthusiasm - like these vases of 1925, which sold for \$902,500 and \$386,500. We surely need no further proof that Art Deco creations continue to be very highly rated...



\$4,67 M

## Oscar and Rosa Gruzenberg by Serov

What an excellent idea to lay on an auction during the Miami Fair! And on 6 December, enthusiasts gave it a warm welcome indeed, as witness the overall result for the sale: \$20.28M (Fine Art Auctions Miami). As often happens, the lion's share of this result was down to a few works - the most desirable ones. For example, a Monet went for \$8.81 M: this "Bords de la Seine au pont d'Argenteuil" (54 x 73 cm) from 1874, thus two years earlier than the famous "Impression, soleil levant", which gave its name to Impressionism while allowing all the charms associated with this school to shine through. However, the second highest price of the sale was a surprise, for nobody expected a double portrait of Oscar and Rosa Gruzenberg by Valentin Aleksandrovich Serov, modestly estimated at £150/200,000, to soar up to \$4.67 M - registering a new world record for the artist on the way! Although reproduced in all the old books on the artist, the painting had disappeared from the market for over 70 years, as it was hidden away with the models' descendants.

Xavier Narbaits

# SO USEFUL

[gazette-drouot.com](http://gazette-drouot.com) the benchmark site for auctions of cultural items including sale dates and digital catalogues [drouotlive.com](http://drouotlive.com) bid online in real time [drouot.com](http://drouot.com) all the news from Drouot and daily tours in pictures of the auction rooms [mobile.gazette-drouot.com](http://mobile.gazette-drouot.com) sales schedule in your pocket [drouotonline.com](http://drouotonline.com) buy exclusively online [moniteur.net](http://moniteur.net) No . 1 for public auctions of industrial goods and equipment





# SPECIALITY

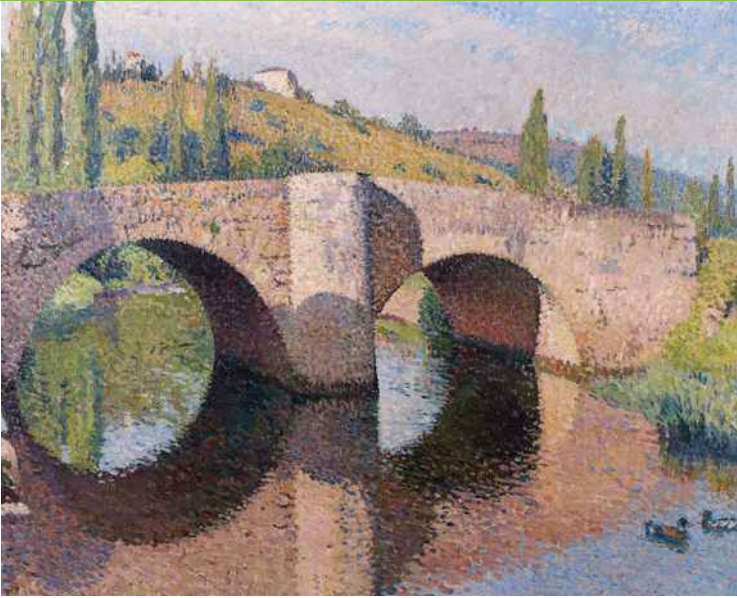
December has been an auspicious month for modern and contemporary art on the Paris scene. Between specialist sales and the works dispersed in more general interest programmes, the speciality totted up a little over €60M. With modern art, the Surrealists carried the day, with Tanguy scooping up a French record, Max Ernst a record for one of his plaster sculptures, and Wilfredo Lam his second highest price worldwide. In other areas, there were noteworthy bids of over a million for Alfred Sisley and the Brazilian artist Candido Portinari. On the contemporary side, Louise Bourgeois dominated the speciality in France during 2012 with €3.12 M, Jean Dubuffet attracted keen international demand, François-Xavier Lalanne's rating continued to climb, and Karel Appel, Yolande Fièvre and Bernard Rancillac all garnered world records along with various other artists.



## Henri-Georges and Inès Clouzot collection €1,521,000

The sale of the collection of French film director Henri-Georges Clouzot and his wife, on behalf of the Secours Catholique association, achieved a resounding success on 1 December in Paris when it totalled €4,412,550 (Christie's). €1,521,000 went to a 1950 oil on canvas by Jean Dubuffet, "Femina dulce malum" (*Corps de dame taché de rouille et de lilas*) (116 x 89 cm). This will join a European collection. Now we turn to two mixed media by Antoni Tàpies. The European trade produced €433,000 for the "Relief gris. N° V" of 1956, while a European collector spent €223,000 on a 1958 "Sans titre". €277,000 went to a 1952 oil and sand on canvas by Georges Braque: "Le Grand Vase". At €271,000, the estimate was doubled for a painted piece on wood by Louise Nevelson of 1960, "Royal Tide II" (150 x 140 cm), containing fourteen elements. It's impossible to talk of Clouzot without thinking of his film "Le Mystère Picasso". Two drawings in soft lead pencil on paper executed in Cannes in 1956 by the painter went for firstly €56,200 ("Bouquet de fleurs" dedicated to Véra Clouzot, the film-maker's first wife), and secondly €37,000 ("Femme nue couchée" dedicated to Clouzot).

S. A.



### "Pont languedocien" by Henri Martin €246,000

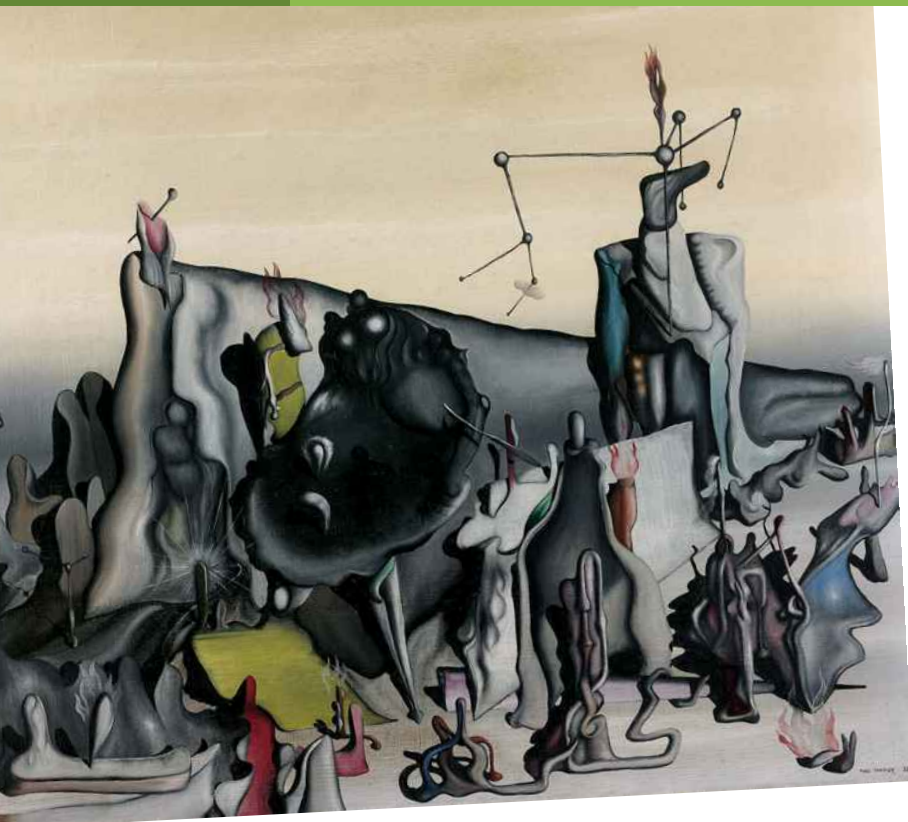
Seven paintings by Henri Martin from the Henri Bousquet collection and another private collection were the main attraction of this Saumur sale on 1 December (Xavier de La Perraudière). At the end of the 19th century, the painter abandoned the academic style of his mentor and compatriot Jean-Paul Laurens, and adopted the Post-Impressionist technique of separate, parallel strokes. A skilful decorator, he painted a huge ornamental frieze for Paris City Hall in 1895. This led to numerous official commissions that enabled him to remain independent and to refuse commercial contracts. Martin often resided at Marquairol, where his property overlooked Labastide-du-Vert. He painted the poplar-lined meadows of the Lot in the Pointillist style, and his pictures often featured the surrounding countryside of Marquairol, as in the one here. It was estimated at €60,000, but in fact quadrupled this, garnering the highest bid of the sale at €246,000. From the Lot, Martin often went on holiday to Collioure, where he bought a house in 1923, much drawn to its picturesque port. Once there he made the most of it, painting several views of the port and the old part of the town. A painting from 1926, "Collioure", fetched €151,200. Following on its heels at €138,000 came "L'Église de Labastide-du-Vert". All in all, some fine examples of Henri Martin's art, which celebrate the peaceful, rolling landscapes of the Lot.

**Chantal Humbert**

### Max Ernst, Fernand Léger and Jean Arp €9,434,400

On 28 November in Paris, modern art made a total of €9,434,400 (65% by lot; 71% by value) at Christie's. The sale included twenty-three six-figure bids and one of over a million. International collectors proved particularly active. Max Ernst was the star of the sale, when €1,521,000 went to a painted plaster from 1967, "La Plus Belle" (h. 186 cm), for which the estimate had been no higher than €300,000. This was the second highest price recorded for a plaster by the artist. In this medium, we can also note the world record posted at €157,000 by Jean Arp with "Torse" executed in 1931, after an estimate of only €80,000. However, at €913,000, a 1942 oil on canvas by Fernand Léger, "Composition en noir et jaune", did not achieve its estimate.

**Sylvain Alliod**



## Tanguy, Basquiat, Dalí: million-plus bids €12,084,339

These two days of sales on 3 and 4 December in Paris totalled €12,084,339 (Marcel-Dassault. Artcurial-Briest-Poulain-F. Tajan). Modern art accounted for €6,543,895, including two bids of over a million. The first, at €2,117,200, concerned this 1933 oil on canvas by Yves Tanguy; this was also a French record for the artist, and takes fifth place in his world ranking. It was given by the artist to a Parisian entrepreneur in exchange for minor work in his studio in 1939, shortly before he left for America in November, and has remained in the family ever since. It had the ineffable flavour of the brand new, having never been exhibited in public or published, and finally went to the international trade, which pipped a French collector at the post. The second bid, €1,841,200, went to a small landscape by Salvador Dalí: an oil on canvas painted in America in 1941, which was actually a project for Fritz Lang's film "Moontide". Contemporary art garnered €5,540,444 with a bid of over a million for Jean-Michel Basquiat: €1,769,900 for a 1982 acrylic and oilstick on canvas: a result illustrating how much the American artist's rating has risen. This painting had already been through the auction room three times. On 9 November 1989, it fetched \$165,000 (€208,170 in equivalent terms today) at Sotheby's in New York. On 27 June 2002, it changed hands for £226,650 (€397,230) at Christie's in London. Lastly on 10 September 2007, again at Christie's but in New York, it crossed the million threshold at \$1,161,000 (€1,183,760). So in five years its price has risen by €586,140, i.e. a return of 10% per year... Much better than the Stock Exchange for the same period. Is contemporary art a safe or a speculative investment? A question that's hard to answer. What's certain is that this painting belongs to a period when Basquiat had begun to gain recognition, and was at the height of his creative power.

S.A



## Large format contemporary art €4,486,267

This Paris sale at Drouot on 3 December, which totalled €4,486,267 (Digard-Pestel-Debord) with 84 lots sold, took place after the seizure of a contemporary art collection at the request of Total Lubricants. The identity of the collector has not been revealed, but in view of the size of the works dispersed, he or she had a decided taste for the monumental, and the space to go with it... Eight six-figure bids were registered. While French artists were in the majority, the highest bid, €560,325, went to a painting by James Rosenquist: "Flowers Before Flames", an acrylic on canvas (*see photo*). This large format was a French record for the artist, and in greenbacks (\$730,490) gained fourth place in his world ranking, naturally enough largely achieved in New York. César was the other big winner in the sale, thanks to several monumental pieces. In nine lots, he totalled €1,497,096, including €480,300 for one of the eight bronze proofs by Bocquel of the celebrated Pouce (*Thumb*), 1965-1982 (h. 250 cm). This was the second highest price recorded for the artist (source: Artnet).

Sylvain Alliod





## World record for Rancillac

€291,215

Two world records were registered on 16 December at Versailles (Versailles Auctions) for two artists of the same generation. A work by Bernard Rancillac harvested the most spectacular bid, at €291,215, while Peter Klasen obtained €80,548 for a 1968 acrylic. The two artists were leading figures in narrative figuration, whose work was mainly produced during the Sixties. This was a period of prosperity and times of plenty with an undertow of political instability, as Europe tried to find a position between the two dominating giants, the United States and the U.S.S.R. So, utopia is only a dream, and the purpose of artists is to bring out the underlying tensions? They show us what we are unable to make out. With "Mélodie sous les palmes" a 1965 acrylic on canvas, Rancillac speaks out against the fallacious promises of an icon evoking an exotic world and blissful holidays. The reality that surrounds us is not perhaps the one we see... Peter Klasen tries to make order out of chaos; "Grand lavabo + 3 interrupteurs" shows us an uncluttered, clarified vision of a familiar, domestic environment - and invites us to think about it. It's up to each of us how we interpret it.

Chantal Colombier



## World record for Appel €841,000

In two days, on 3 and 4 December in Paris, contemporary art produced a total of €18,420,200 (Christie's France), closing a series of three modern and contemporary art sales, which made €32.3M in all, with four bids of over a million, and twenty-four six-figure bids. The highest sale for contemporary art this year, €3,425,000, was obtained by a unique piece in steel by Louise Bourgeois dating from 1995: "Spider" (45.7 x 152.4 x 100.3 cm), whose estimate was no more than €1.5 M. This impressive arachnid is designed to be fixed to a wall. As we know, the spider is a recurring motif with Bourgeois, and has autobiographical connections, reflecting the maternal qualities she hailed in her mother. François-Xavier Lalanne featured twice in the top ten, first and foremost, at €1,745,000, with a herd of "Moutons" in wool, produced in 1968 and 1969, consisting of five sheep and nine ottomans in bronze and wool. Also worth noting: a world record obtained by Karel Appel with the €841,000 fetched by an oil on canvas "Two Birds and a Flower" (114.5 x 120 cm) from 1951.

## La Sirène by Niki de Saint Phalle €349,990

This monumental mermaid by Niki de Saint Phalle frolicked up to €349,990, on 6 December in Paris, at the Palais d'Iéna, where the Pierre Bergé & Associés auction house held its sale. It served as a model for the mermaid in the famous Stravinsky fountain in Paris created by Niki de Saint Phalle and her companion Jean Tinguely.

Sylvain Alliod







### A new Wifredo Lam €2,976,750

Two days of sales dedicated to modern and contemporary art produced a final total of €22,323,350 (Sotheby's France) at the Galerie Charpentier in Paris. On the Tuesday evening, the spotlight was on modern art. With 44 lots sold, this achieved a total of €10,683,475 (78.6% by lot; 62.3% by value). Wifredo Lam achieved his second world record, €2,976,750, with an oil on paper mounted on canvas executed between 1958 and 1961, "Peinture nous t'attendons" (240.3 x 209.3 cm). It was the first time this very large painting had been through the saleroom, having belonged to the same family since its acquisition in the Sixties. Lam began it the year he left Cuba for an extended exile: he was only able to return to his country in 1963. During those years, he devoted himself to the creation of monumental pieces, some executed on paper, like the one here, then later mounted on canvas. This composition is a variation on the theme of the iconic horse-headed woman often found in his works of that period: an evocation of the devotees of the Afro-Cuban Lukumi religion. For Lam, these women were "hallucinating figures with the power to surprise, to disturb the dreams of the exploiters"...

### Alfred Sisley, landscape of 1880

€346,976

One of the specialties of the month, modern art, marked a fine performance at Drouot with €1,726,484 (Auction Art Rémy Le Fur & Associés). There were three six-figure bids; the first for €346,976 (in line with its estimate) went to an 1880 oil on canvas by Alfred Sisley, "Vue des hauteurs de Saint-Mammès, effet de printemps". The Musée des Beaux-arts in Lille has an oil on canvas painted the same year by Sisley, "Après la débâcle, la Seine au pont de Suresnes". The one here was executed afterwards, in early spring, on the hills of Saint-Mammès. In 1880, the painter had moved to Moret-sur-Loing, only a few kilometres away.

Sylvain Alliod





## World record for Candido Portinari €1,115,280

The typically Brazilian poetry of this guitarist carried the to the top of the best-ranking works by artist Candido Portinari, who obtained his world record at Argenteuil auction house on 11 December (source: Artnet). Keenly sought after by Brazilian, American and European connoisseurs alike, this 1961 picture inspired a memorable bidding battle, easily crushing the estimates to return to its home country at €1,115,280. This “Musician”, given by the artist shortly before he died to a French diplomat, whose family have kept it ever since, is one of Portinari’s last works. After studying in Rio de Janeiro, he went to Europe in the 1930s, where he experimented with different pictorial styles, including Cubism and Surrealism. With portraits, still lifes and landscapes, his compositions evoked the works of Picasso, Gris and Chirico, while reflecting his multiple cultural influences. In 1939, Portinari created three panels for the Brazilian pavilion of the international fair in New York. Here he offers us a guitarist of multiple facets, in the style of a kaleidoscope. This vibrant work, in which voice and music mix in a multitude of split elements, ranks him as one of the greatest Brazilian painters of the Neo-Surrealist movement.

**Chantal Colombier**

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



€6,000

Two Liberation flags, Union Jack, 147 x 78 and starred banner, 100 x 145 cm. Tour, 19 February 2012. Rouillac auction house, in the presence of Me Monmarché.



€5,375

Cartier, American Tank N°8172984/00703 circa. 2000. Gold watch bracelet. Rectangular box. Crown set with a sapphire cabochon. Hands in blue-stained steel. Automatic movement. Crocodile bracelet with a folding gold clasp signed Cartier, 24 x 40 mm. 50g. Paris, 25 June 2012. Gros & Delettrez auction house.





€1,239

André de Dienes (1913-1985),  
Marilyn Monroe, Tobey Beach,  
Long Island, New York, 1949,  
digital reprint 121/200 with  
a certificate of authenticity,  
47 x 37 cm. Pontoise,  
23 September 2012. Aponem  
Deburaux auction house.



€9,295

Traffic light Walk. Don't Salk,  
cast iron, metal, h 235 cm.  
American work, around 1955.  
Marseille, 28 January 2012.  
Damien Leclere auction  
house.



€9,840

Moustiers, circular powder  
box, polychrome faience,  
Oléry's workshop, h. 9 cm,  
diam. 14 cm. Avignon,  
29 September 2012.  
Hôtel des ventes d'Avignon  
auction house. M. Peyre.





# MAGAZINE



## EVENT

**Louvre-Lens** the (Zen)paradise of Northern France

The Louvre-Lens Museum.



So, where's the Louvre-Lens? It's in the middle of nowhere, among delapidated little Zola-style houses. It's in this city made up of housing estates with numbers, which for some might embody the cultural desert of the destitute. It's in this region with a reputation as the poorest in France, which has weathered many a war and crisis. In short, this is where one of France's flagship institutions, the one and only Louvre, has decided to set up an outpost! But Lens is not in the middle of nowhere. The architects and Henri Loyrette, President-Director of the Louvre, were all inspired by the wild beauty of this abandoned indus-

trial site and to give it new life. We love the sensitivity of the architects, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of the Sanaa Group, who have designed the entire Louvre-Lens complex, and say, with typical Japanese reserve: "This area has a very special light." The whole project, which evokes the harmonies of several contemporary museums in Tokyo, has been planned around light, both to structure the internal layout and, intelligently, to make the most of the fabulous space outside: a wide plateau; a former industrial territory within a working class housing estate; a wasteland abandoned at the foot of two slag heaps, the tallest in Europe. The 20-hectare site includes a huge land-



© SANAA/Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa - IMREY CULBERT/Celia Imrey and Tim Culbert - MOSBACH PAYSAGISTE/Catherine Mosbach. Photograph: © Hisao Suzuki

scaped garden, a living area designed by Catherine Mosbach, which will eventually become a genuine link between the housing estate and the museum: the green infrastructure of a town that used to be all coal. You will be able to wander around in it, picnic with the children, and enjoy a view of the museum from the outside. And that will surely make you want to go in... The project is also a huge challenge imposed on the Louvre teams by its President. In what could be called its ninth department, the museum not only presents a kind of "best of" in its 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space, but will be doing this in a totally new way that is regularly rethought: the Louvre-Lens will have no collection of

its own; the exhibition will be partially renewed every year, and given a total overhaul every five years. A challenge indeed. Here, with Henri Loyrette's blessing, curators Jean-Luc Martinez and Vincent Pomarède bring a certain conception of art history into question. It's no longer a matter of compartmentalising works, classifying them by region and period, as generations of art librarians did before, but of creating resonances and opening out perspectives. From the very first pieces, going back over 3,000 years BC, we really sense the creative spirit that inspired Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, not only in their religious representations, but also in celebrations of daily life and beauty. There is









© 2013 Musée du Louvre/Erich Lessing

**Eugène Delacroix** (1798-1863), "La Liberté guidant le peuple", 28 July 1830, 260 x 325 cm, Musée du Louvre, department of Paintings, RF129.

no break in this lavish space, a kind of enormous shed bounded by simple aluminium walls, soberly bearing the inscriptions of years and times, where reflections of the works float in mid-air, and those of ourselves as we pass by. You feel you are starting a journey, where a museum finally treats itself to the luxury of abolishing the borders between time and place. You navigate like an explorer through Adrien Gardère's uncluttered, carefully-designed staging. Of course you aren't going to Africa, South America, South-east Asia or Russia - areas little present in the Louvre's collections. There are three chronological stages in this voyage through two hundred and five works: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times. As Vincent Pomarède says, "Our idea was to do away with barriers." In every respect. The exhibition thus juxtaposes paintings and sculptures with the same themes in a highly apposite way:

you can appreciate the difference in Diderot's perception between the painter Fragonard, whose sensitive touch evokes the philosopher's shimmering wit, and the sculptor Houdon, who fixes his subject, like an antique sage, in marble. Decorative flat objects, like sketches in ceramic, rub shoulders with the paintings of great masters like Botticelli, Delacroix, Poussin, Raphael, Rembrandt and Rubens. The top-quality presentation at the Louvre-Lens invites you to move freely around between periods and techniques. It abolishes the hierarchies between one kind of art and another, sometimes to the point of creating a visual shock. The last part dedicated to the expression of power brings together, side by side, Mihr Ali's flashy painting of the Shah of Iran from 1805, Ingres' portrait of the powerful and influential journalist Louis-François Bertin from 1832, Jean-Louis Jaley's statue of the

elegant Duc d'Orléans, a lanky dandy in marble, from 1844, and Eugène Delacroix's resounding "Liberté guidant le peuple" from 1830. Speaking symbols...

### Land of the future

After the success of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the region also hopes to play its cards well. Lens lies on the route of British visitors landing at Calais, and is not far from Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. As we were told by the combative Daniel Percheron, chairman of the regional council, they are currently working on setting up synergies by offering multi-museum passes and discovery trails. The Louvre-Lens would thus be a kind of bridgehead inspiring people to explore the forty-eight museums of a region that gave birth to Bellegambe, Watteau, Carpeaux and Matisse; where, a lump of coal's throw away, you can find the Chartreuse museums in Douai and Valenciennes, the Beaux-arts in Lille, the Piscine in Roubaix, not to mention Arras, currently exhibiting carriages from Versailles. The association of Northern museums is also well-known for its dynamic energy. Human memory is much to the fore as well, with the Mine Museum in Lewarde, and memorials of the butchery at the Battle of Arras, where over 160,000 men from all over the world were killed in 1917. This region, which has seen so many wars and crises, is now determined to rise from its ashes like a phoenix. Let's hope that its infrastructures, particularly hotels, will keep up with Louvre-Lens' ambitious goal of 500,000 visitors each year - and of broadening people's prospects: "I can really see myself becoming an artist," we were told by a young Lens-dweller. Beneath the pavement... hope.

Molly Mine

Louvre-Lens, rue Paul Bert or rue Georges Bernanos,  
Lens, [www.louvre-lens.fr](http://www.louvre-lens.fr)

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## The Renaissance: a whole symbol

There is an area in the Louvre-Lens designed for large-scale temporary exhibitions. The first of these has the Renaissance as its theme. Here again we find barriers melting away, with major works shown side by side with decorative objects. Leonardo da Vinci's "Saint Anne" faces a portrait of his patron, Francis I. Not far away, we discover a staggering triumphal arch produced by Dürer for Maximilian. This piece, at nearly 3.5 meters high, which is practically impossible to exhibit at the Louvre-Paris, is a genuine treasure. It took the engraver three years to compose this paper castle from some two hundred plates. We can only explore its first floors with our own eyes, probably because the great Majesty remains inaccessible... Comprehension of the self, the body and vanity are some of the powerful themes of this exhibition, which focuses largely on technical revolutions and their implications for mankind's future. It illustrates a laudable concern: making a collection available to the public, not just to the gaze of a certain elite. We like it!



Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne", oil on panel, 168 x 130 cm (detail), Musée du Louvre, Paris.

© RMN/Musée du Louvre/René-Gabriel Ojéda



# MEETING

## Hubert Looser curator of his own collection

A collection is the expression of a temperament. Hubert Looser's reflects the rigour that guided his acquisitions. No sudden fancies - at least, seemingly none; only well-reasoned choices in the light of intelligent research. This has defined criteria of excellence that the collector has always adhered to. Nor is there any compulsive instinct in the businessman, who declines to comment on the extent of his collection. "If 50% of a person's collection are masterpieces, he's a champion," he says. And there - that's the word. "Masterpiece" sums up precisely what Hubert Looser has been seeking unremittingly for forty years. His eye has been trained not only by contact with the museums he has searched through all over the world, but also by the negative experience of aesthetic deviations, like the acquisition of a gigantic installation that neither the artist nor the gallery owner wanted to take back, and which the collector eventually destroyed for lack of storage space. Mistakes forge the temperament, often fuel pride, and sometimes engender an ambition for perfection: no other goal than the best. Born in 1938 and now living in Zurich, Hubert Looser has made constant journeys between Europe and the United States, where he studied. His collection, which celebrates post-war American and European art, expresses this personal map of experience and memory. He has managed both his collection and the two family businesses (in heating and office IT) - which he floated - according to the same inflexible standards. Yet he has always treated art and business as two parallel worlds. In his Zurich house, he wanted to create an "informal" world, as he describes art, in

contrast to the business world where everything is assessed in figures. Hubert Looser belongs to the line of great collectors who consider that their collections will naturally end up in a foundation or a museum. The Zurich Kunsthaus, the happy recipient of his largesse, is already exhibiting several works from his donation. They will eventually be housed in the museum extension designed by architect David Chipperfield, planned for completion in 2017.

### **La Gazette Drouot: What place does art have in your life?**

**Hubert Looser:** From the age of 25, art has been the exact opposite of a professional life strictly organised at every turn. Poles apart from this structured framework, art for me was informal - the poetry and musicality suggested by the paintings of Cy Twombly, for instance. When I began to build my collection, it gave me a second life, from which I have drawn a balance and intuition that has stayed with me ever since.

### **What drew you to contemporary art?**

I wanted to explore the art of my exact contemporaries. I concentrated on the period from the arrival of the Surrealists in America to their influence on the generation of Ellsworth Kelly and De Kooning. Up to the Nineties, these artists were still affordable. So I was able to buy nine works by De Kooning, which is the biggest collection devoted to the artist in Europe.

### **What is the guiding principle behind your collection?**

I have kept to a few artists for forty years because my goal was not quantity, but quality. I focused chiefly on

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Hubert Looser.

*"I have kept to a few artists for forty years  
because my goal was not quantity, but quality."*

© Christian Scholtz Zürich

**John Chamberlain**, "Archaic Stoooge (No. 21555)", 1991,  
**Fabienne Verdier**, "Paysage de flux", 2007.



Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism and Arte Povera. I could have bought Sigmar Polke or Gerhard Richter, but I preferred to concentrate on De Kooning, who was little-known and appreciated at the time. This choice also gave more sense and consistency to my collection, which mainly featured the Americans Donald Judd, Arshile Gorky, Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, Ellsworth Kelly and Richard Serra, who were little represented in European museums. I also

included European artists like Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, Giuseppe Penone and Sean Scully, whose art is in the same vein.

**You have also given a particular identity to your collection through the highly personal arrangement of the paintings you have used.**

I wanted my house to be worthy of my collection. So I rethought a dozen rooms. A true collector learns





© Gaechter+Clahsen, Zurich

with each acquisition, and develops to the point where he becomes the curator of his own collection. Creating a dialogue between Giacometti's "Annette assise" and Picasso's "Sylvette" makes these two personalities, with such different lives, the expression of sadness with Giacometti, and the joy of being a free woman with Picasso. I can also give new value to artists - for example, by hanging the Swiss painters Serge Brignoni or Marcel Schaffner opposite Gorky or

De Kooning. These confrontations show the power of works that are nonetheless worth twenty times less on the market.

### **Did a life divided between both sides of the Atlantic foster the dialogue between Europe and America?**

It's true, I did an MBA at Columbia University, and then returned about a hundred times to the United States. I appreciated how the museums there were enriched through the generosity of American collectors. Like them, I want my private passion to become public wealth. When you are rich you have a responsibility, and I wanted to give my life a new direction by creating a humanitarian foundation in 1988 that helped to create training centres. I've had a lot of opportunities over the years, and I want others to have the same chance. Sharing is part of my life philosophy.

### **Isn't it painful to part with some of your collection?**

Well, I won't be taking my works of art with me when I go... But private passion is not over - my passion will continue to live in the museum. The seventy-four works I am donating will now live in a dialogue with the museum's collections, and enhance them through the presence of American artists. This act of patronage accomplishes something the institution could not achieve on its own. I have had several phases in my life: one absorbed by my professional life, one where I decided to give meaning to my money by devoting it to my collection and humanitarian causes - and now a third phase is beginning, expressed through my collaboration with museums. I no longer have to crisscross art fairs, buy overvalued works or nourish a market no longer inspired by art but by money. I prefer moving in the sphere of museums and the public. I really revel in being on the other side; in having the privilege of experiencing a new life diametrically opposed to the previous ones.

**Interview by Geneviève Nevejan**

"Sammlung Collection Hubert Looser", Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern  
[www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch) - [www.fondation-hubert-looser.ch](http://www.fondation-hubert-looser.ch)



## EXHIBITIONS

**Hopper** the silence and the waiting

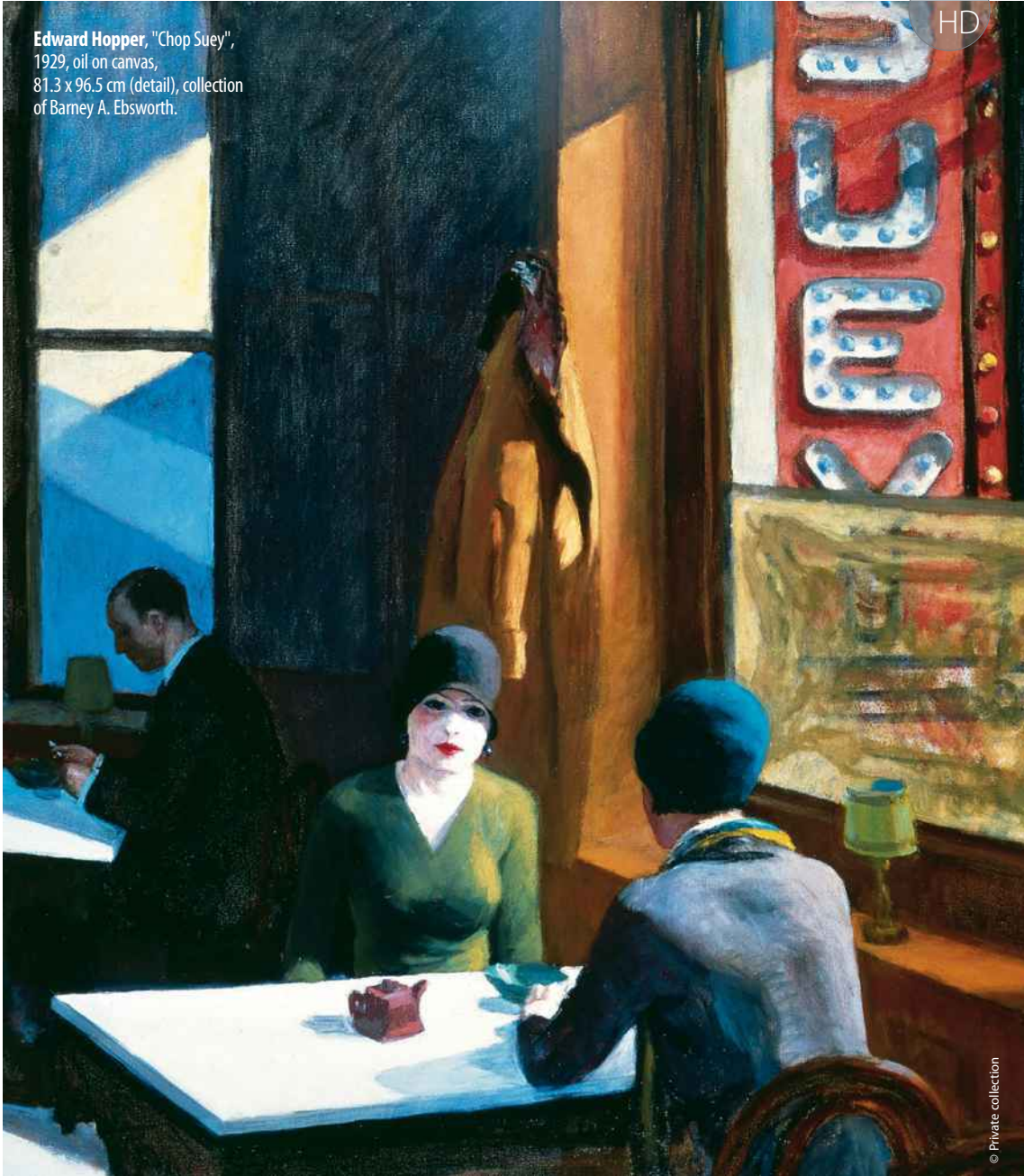
Well-known for his profound silences, Edward Hopper often used to say to journalists who interviewed him: "If you could say it with words, there'd be no point in painting." Maybe a few other artists should take inspiration from this shrewd observation to communicate about their art with more restraint... It was precisely the soberness of the setting, free from all extraneous waffle, that we found so appealing in this retrospective. The circuit, which falls into two main sections, makes us realise how many gaps there are in our assumed knowledge of the painter, his life and his career. The main reason for this is the excessive use of spin-off products based on Hopper's pictures! Many people – ourselves included – take the attitude that the painting of the master of American Realism...revisited, has a melancholic streak: a view vigorously refuted by Didier Ottinger, the exhibition curator and one of the leading specialists in the artist, and by Alain Cueff, though less fiercely. Cueff sees more of an error in interpretation, preferring the idea that Hopper showed "human figures alienated by the modern world, which changes their imagination, and deprives them of a private existence." If only we could have talked about all this to the artist in person... The first – distinctly enlightening – sequence is devoted to the years of development, from 1900 to 1924, when Hopper was studying at the New York School of Art. This opening section to the exhibition is crucial, even if some visitors find it a little long, because it gives us a better grasp of the "Hopper" style. So we see rows and rows of the etchings and illustrations produced at a time when this giant had not yet achieved success, which came a few years later. We can immediately appreciate the

importance of his mentor, Robert Henri, just as we can see the influence of painters like Albert Marquet, Edgar Degas and Félix Vallotton (compare the Swiss artist's 1905 "Femme cousant dans un intérieur" with Hopper's "Girl at Sewing Machine" of 1921). Then came the trips to Paris in 1906, 1909 and 1910, which made a lasting impression on the artist. Numerous works immortalised his stays in the French capital, like "Pont à Paris" (*Bridge in Paris*) and "Statue près du Louvre" (*Statue near the Louvre*) of 1906, "Notre-Dame no. 2" of 1907, "Le Pavillon de Flore" and "Le Louvre par temps orageux" (*The Louvre in a Thunderstorm*) of 1909. Meanwhile, pictures of houses or architectural constructions (paintings that have inspired many major film directors) show isolated scenes that produce a disquieting effect, like "La Phare sur la colline" (*Lighthouse Hill*) of 1927 and the equally famous "Maison près de la voie ferrée" (*House by the railroad*) painted two years earlier.

**Mature period works**

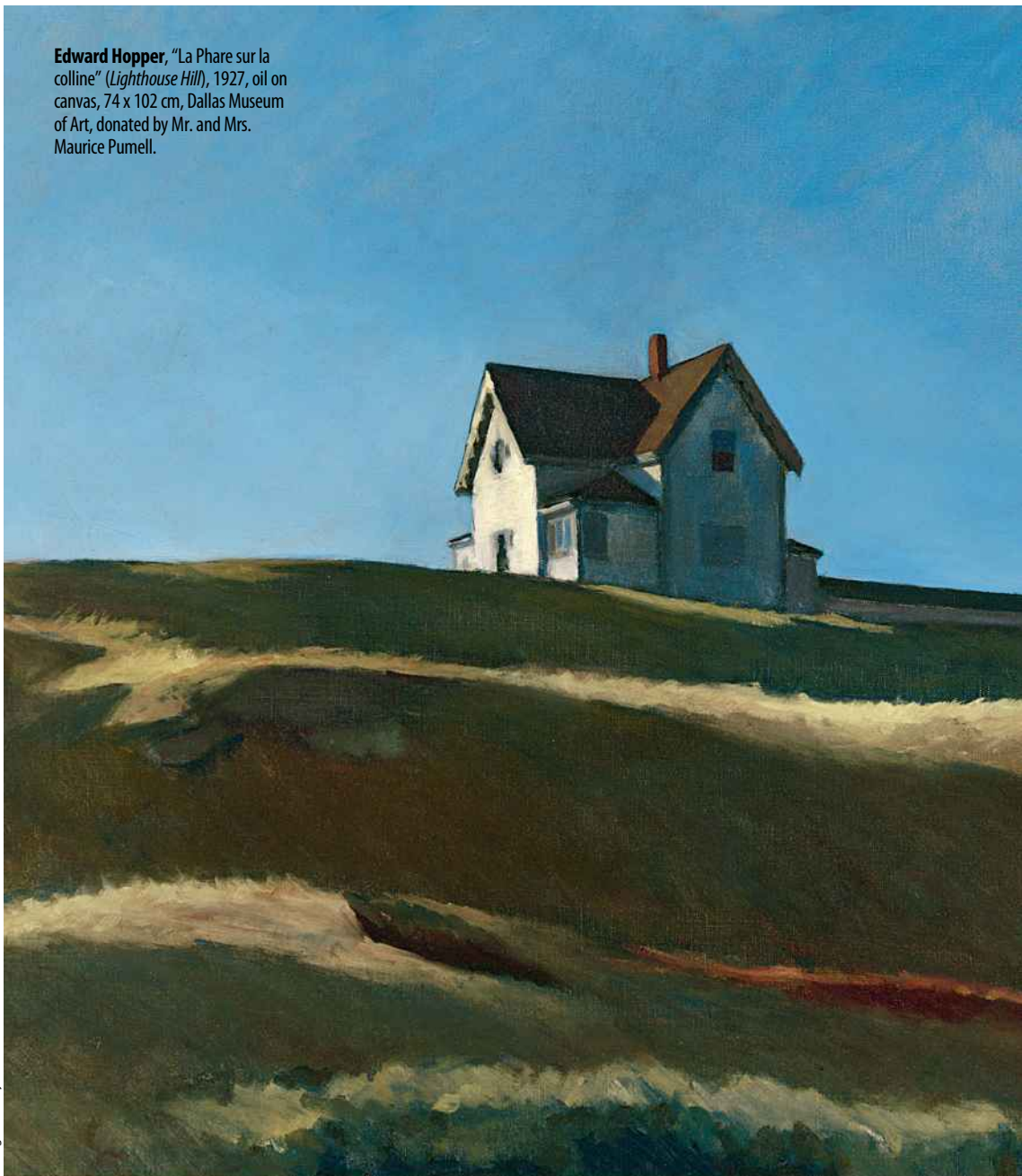
After making the acquaintance of Hopper the etcher and Hopper the illustrator – the artist 'constantly expressed his contempt for the illustrator's trade, which he considered degrading to his artistic vocation' – we come to the glorious years when the artist produced his true masterpieces. We cannot be insensible to his genius, which in few details recount stories of waiting, things unsaid, or the indifference between several players in the same painting. Whether in twos ("Summer evening" of 1947) or groups ("People in the sun" of 1960), human beings seem enclosed within their solitude. Their gaze is directed towards windows where there is nothing to see, as in "Onze heures du matin"

**Edward Hopper, "Chop Suey",**  
1929, oil on canvas,  
81.3 x 96.5 cm (detail), collection  
of Barney A. Ebsworth.





**Edward Hopper**, "La Phare sur la colline" (*Lighthouse Hill*), 1927, oil on canvas, 74 x 102 cm, Dallas Museum of Art, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Pumell.



© Image courtesy of Dallas Museum of Art



(*Eleven a.m.*) of 1926, "*Matin dans une ville*" (*Morning in a city*) of 1944, and "*Soleil matinal*" (*Morning sun*) of 1952. We see a man reading a newspaper, taking no notice of the woman sitting at an open piano, her finger barely touching a key, not playing a note ("*Chambre à New York*" (*Room in New York*) of 1932) or a woman absorbed in her reading, not paying the slightest attention to the man standing at the window looking out at some vague horizon, in "*Hôtel près d'une voie ferrée*" (*Hotel by a railroad*) executed twenty years later. In his outdoor scenes, no action or noisy activity disturbs the pervading silence. When he paints snapshots of offices, the effect of extreme solitude is obvious yet again, as though any notion of communication were totally absent. Hopper depicts the most commonplace activities, the most ordinary situations, without ever moving away from the sublime range of solid colours that makes him recognizable at first glance. Despite this palette, where muted tones predominate, he makes subtle use of light, and pays great attention to the geometrical aspect of his compositions. With each picture, you can appreciate his consummate skill in wielding all these elements. Scenes in bars ("*Cafétéria*" of 1927, "*Noctambules*" (*Nighthawks*) of 1942), theatres or auditoriums ("*Deux personnages au parterre*" (*Two on the aisle*) of 1927, "*Premier rang d'orchestre*" (*First row orchestra*) of 1951 and "*Entracte*" (*Intermission*) of 1963), through to the last painting, "*Two Comedians*" of 1966, all narrate stories where viewers can imagine themselves in the protagonists' shoes. You can gaze at these pictures for hours, and invent your own scenarios. So, to stay with Hopper a little longer and soak up the ambiance of this highly impressive exhibition, we recommend that readers prolong the experience with a selection of works, and waste no time in getting hold of a book called "*Soleil dans une pièce vide*" ("*Sunlight in an empty room*") by Claude Esteban - winner of the France Culture prize in 1991, Farrago, published by Léo Scheer, 2003: an excellent way to immerse yourself in the world of Edward Hopper. As you'll have gathered, this exhibition is worth seeing more than once.

Marie C. Aubert

"Edward Hopper", Grand Palais, 3, avenue du Général-Eisenhower, Square Jean-Perrin entrance, Paris 75008, Until 28 January 2013. [www.grandpalais.fr](http://www.grandpalais.fr)



## DESIGN

"À fleur de peau" **skin-deep**

Leather may be thick-skinned, but it's a sensitive medium too - as proved by the new experience initiated in Paris by Valérie Maltaverne in her forward-looking gallery, Ymer & Malta, with its firm focus on talent-spotting. Last year, as we remember, she proposed a programme called "Marbre poids plume" (*feather-weight marble*), for which Cédric Ragot, Benjamin Graindorge and two collectives, Normal Studio (Jean-François Dingjian and Eloi Chafaï) and A+A Cooren (Aki and Arnaud Cooren), came up with a range of varied and inspired responses. For 2012, she has decided to put the spotlight on a noble material rooted in tradition: leather. "I wanted a unifying material: one which was familiar, but which also offered new and interesting possibilities to designers," she explains, adding that "leather is a natural material, but it's luxurious as well. While a symbol of strength and power, it is also soft and sensual. It can have a firm or a silky touch; its smell can be evocative and present. It has a living grain. As time goes by, it gains a patina, becomes creased and acquires character." In short, leather is a traditional material that was already used in the most ancient Egyptian dynasties to provide suppleness and comfort to couches and seats. But we should also note that many avant-gardistes of the 20th century promoted it as a modern, highly practical material. At the Bauhaus, Marcel Breuer stretched leather over the chrome metal structure of his "B3", armchair, called the "Wassily", as did Mart Stam in 1926 with his revolutionary cantilever armchair. In 1928, the trio formed by Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret chose it as the chief material to upholster the legen-

dary line of tubular metal chairs produced by Thonet the following year. Going one step further, their two most ground-breaking pieces, the swivel-backed chair and the continuously adjustable lounge chair, would be beautifully upholstered in pony skin, reflecting an essentialist approach. In 1929, leather - this time firmly padded - covered the cushions of chairs designed by Lily Reich and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe for the German pavilion at the Barcelona exhibition. In the Fifties, Jacques Adnet created a range of furniture covered in leather by Hermès or Pinchon with impeccable saddle-stitching: more traditional, but still a faithful reflection of the times. In 1977, Mario Bellini developed the Cab series for Cassina: a structure in lacquered steel entirely covered in saddle leather assembled with zips. Over the years, these seats acquired a patina and comfort entirely due to their leather upholstery. Currently, at the Dutko Gallery on the Ile Saint-Louis, Éric Benqué proposes a poplar wood desk that can be taken apart, featuring a leather top simply mounted with a clip system.

### Several designers, one woman and a craftsman

Today, does leather interest designers, who are supposed to interpret the mood of the moment? Do we find an answer at Ymer & Malta? This year, five of them have tackled the issue: Benjamin Graindorge, A+A Cooren and Normal Studio, as well as Sebastian Bergne and Sylvain Rieu-Piquet. In this venture, we should remember one crucial man: saddle maker Michel Pochon from the Selaneuf workshop at Ivry-sur-Seine, who made Benqué's writing desk. Closely following the production of the prototypes, Valérie



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**Benjamin Graindorge**  
(b. 1980), "SofaScape"  
divan, wooden structure, foam  
cushions, calfskin in 6 shades,  
250 x 81 x 70 cm.



© YMER&amp;MALTA

Maltaverne has spent a great deal of time on the other side of the Paris ring road. She takes her role as an interface between designer and craftsman very seriously. And the result shows that the game is definitely worth the candle! The calfskin used adapts perfectly to the individual identity of the pieces produced, from the luxurious yet poetic definition of Sebastian Bergne's "Mirror Mirror" looking glass to the highly virile "Victory" seats by Sylvain Rieu-Piquet. The "sofaScape" divan and "smoothWriter" secretary desk by Benjamin Graindorge are based on a Japanese wood structure with invisible assembly, which holds indispensable leather-covered accessories forming real, adjustable landscapes that can be varied as their owners wish. The duckboard seat of the divan holds a large number of narrow cushions of

different heights, whose bottoms fit into the gaps. To prevent the volumes being marred by the seams, the leather pieces were soaked for three days before being stretched out on forms, a process that pushes the seams onto the sides. They were air-dried, then finished off with a hairdryer to reduce the small roll appearing at the end of the seam... Finishing that is totally in line with the designer's argument: "Suspended from a few traces, a few signs - almost nothing, I take my ease..." Jean-François Dingjian and Eloi Chafaï of Normal Studio provide a highly successful contemporary reinterpretation of classic padded leather furniture with the "Blister" bench. The whole technical achievement here involved fixing the leather exactly to the alveolate or perforated metal sheet, with softness provided by a sheet of foam. The

**Sylvain Rieu-Piquet** (b. 1981),  
"Victory" seats, calfskin, long  
model: 37.5 x 160 x 42.5 cm.

© YMER&MALTA



collage shaping is reminiscent of a vacuum pack, while transforming the piece into an airy, delicate creation in refined leather. Sebastian Bergne's mirror is like a full moon making play with the ambiguity of a reflection. You need to look behind the mirror, sheathed like an exquisite art deco object, to discover the impeccable cross-stitching of its seam - nothing less than haute couture. The "Tatou" stools by Aki and Arnaud Cooren stand out for the treatment of the leather, suggesting scales, that covers their zoomorphic curves. Last but not least, the three "Victory" seats by Sylvain Rieu-Piquet seem like minimalist sculptures evoking the world of boxing accessories. They employ much thicker leather, also soaked for three days, then stretched over the foam covering a fin-shaped structure, so as to be both light and stable.

Michel Pochon has used wide leather lacing to bind leather pieces together with a stitch beautifully harmonising with creations that are both masculine and sensual. As so often with experimental design, these pieces are produced in series of twelve, including two prototypes and two artists' proofs. The outstanding aspect of the work initiated by Valérie Malta-verne lies in its exploration of a traditional material's potential in formal contemporary projects combined with impeccable quality of execution. We greatly look forward to the next material she chooses as an experimental area. Look out for it in 2013. **Sylvain Alliod**

"À fleur de peau", Ymer & Malta, 44, rue de la Condamine,  
Paris 75017 - Until 25 January 2013. [www.ymeretmalta.com](http://www.ymeretmalta.com)

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## INTERVIEW

Vincent **Van Gogh**

Auvers-sur-Oise, June 1890. The artist, in very poor health, receives us in a room bathed in light. Dr. Gachet, who is just leaving, begs us to be brief.

**La Gazette Drouot: Let's get to the nub of the matter. Why did you become a painter?**

**Vincent Van Gogh:** You don't become a painter; you are born an artist. It's a temperament, not just a skill. I could have been an art dealer, like everyone else in my family, but no. I was tempted by theology: I abandoned that pretty quickly. Too restrictive for my taste. After that I vaguely tried to be a teacher, then a preacher, but it meant enduring too much poverty on a daily basis. I will remind you that at the time, I was living in the mining region of Borinage in Belgium. (Filling his pipe with difficulty). No, no, those sorts of things were not really my cup of tea.

**So how did you earn a living?**

(Embarrassed silence) I used to live off my brother, Théo. There are people like me who are not made to find happiness. I could only express myself through art. Théo could have held it against me, but no. Quite the contrary - he pushed me to become what I was, and gave me unflinching support. When I went to live in The Hague in 1882, he was the one who financed my studio. What a place! Some weeks we had nothing but storms and rain.

**A town just like you, in short!**

Perhaps... The music of the north resembles my use of colour. As your Baudelaire puts it so well: "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent..." (*the perfumes, colours and sounds answer each other*).

For me, solitude rapidly became a refuge. The rest of my family never rejected me, although I had always rebelled against any form of authority. And yet I had been brought up according to academic rules. Only my canon of beauty was that of authenticity: I like the folk of the people, artisans or farmers. To my great despair, they were always afraid of my taciturn, impulsive side. When my father died, I went to live in Antwerp. No more of the Protestantism or "Joie de vivre" as Zola wrote (*The Joy of Living*; novel published in 1884 - Ed.) in which I had believed. My new and only religion was art.

**So was Antwerp the anteroom to Paris?**

Let's say it was a short but decisive stay. I lived in a tiny, charmless room which I decorated with the Japanese prints I unearthed at booksellers and antiques dealers at the port. My paintings had been pretty dark until then. The Japanese opened my eyes with their clean, intense light. Their works seemed as simple as bird-song. A few months later I landed in Paris, without warning, which created a bit of friction with Théo. He introduced me to Gauguin and to Pissarro also, who was no longer that young. We certainly livened up the little bistros and cheap restaurants of disreputable neighbourhood. (Nostalgic) I dreamt of a great community of artists where we would work with each other and for each other. How naive I was...

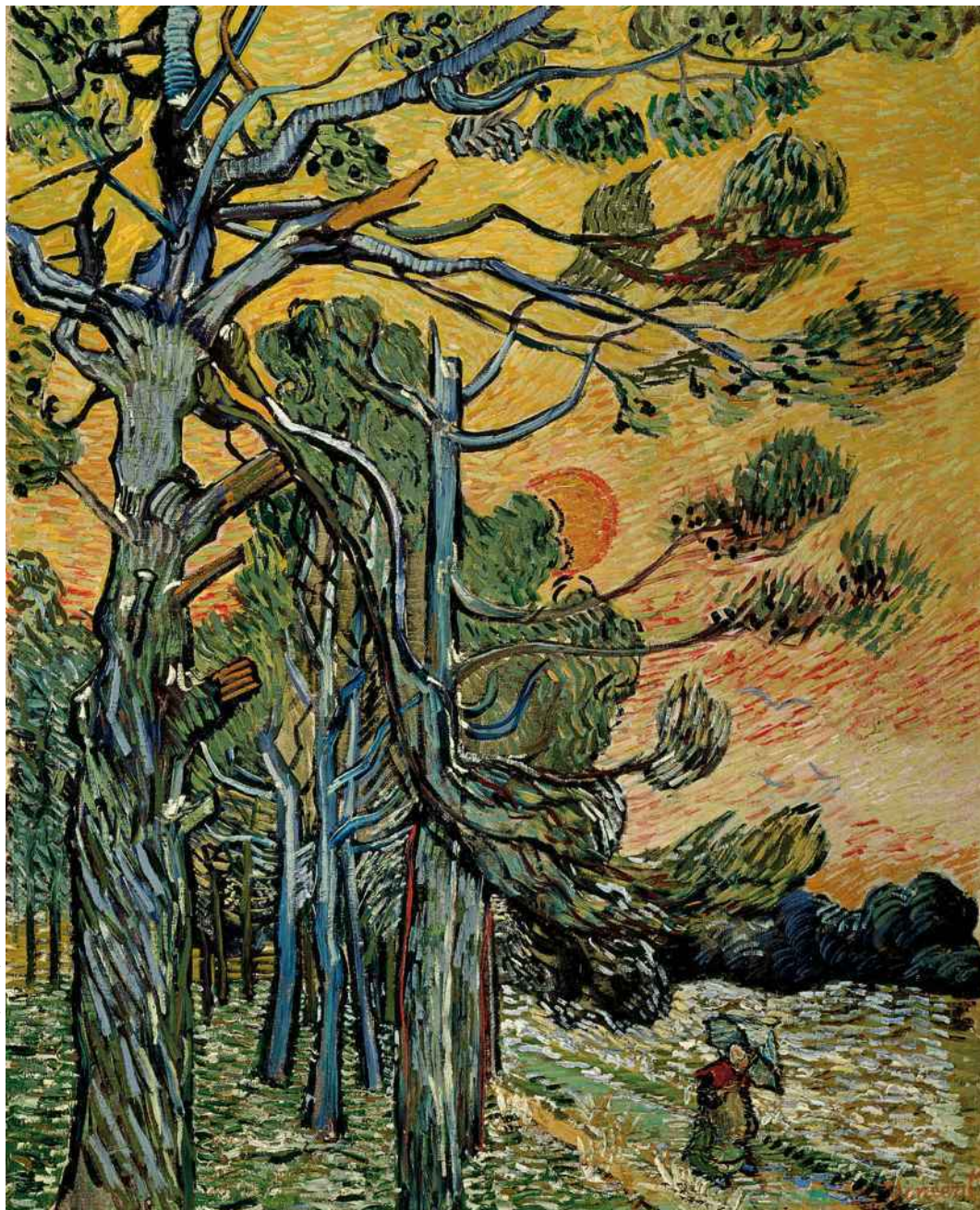
**Vincent Van Gogh** (1853-1890),  
"Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear", 1889,  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 49 cm.

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© Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London





© Kröller-Müller Collection Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands



**Vincent Van Gogh** "Pins au coucher du soleil" (*Pine trees at sunset*), 1889, oil on canvas, 91.5 x 72 cm.

### How did your painting develop at that time?

I was waiting for the Impressionists to say something else about my way of painting, because I was far more influenced by Delacroix's ideas than theirs. Instead of representing what my eyes showed me, I made a more arbitrary use of colour, to express myself intensely. But you know, when I got to Paris, the Impressionist era was already over. And then I far preferred painting people's eyes than cathedrals. In 1887, I exhibited alongside Toulouse-Lautrec, Bernard and Anquetin. That was in a restaurant on the Boulevard de Clichy. Not a single sale, but a marvellous discovery for each of us. We ended up exchanging paintings (little laugh). And sometimes we made a trip to Asnières to sketch a few views of the Seine. But I only aspired to one thing: to go to the south, where the countryside seemed more welcoming, the light clearer and the colours more vibrant to me. It was the right moment: I was ready. Especially as Théo was beginning to get tired of my little trips outside Paris, which caused problems for him.

### And in 1888, off to Arles!

As soon as I saw the sea, I realised how important it was to stay in the south. I felt I ought to make use of colour to the very limits. The art of Japan was no longer necessary to me; all I had to do was to open my eyes and take what was offered to me. I also found a little of my native Holland there, with this canal and these bridges. Anyone who doesn't believe in the sun here is an atheist... And then, I found the most extraordinary model: a Zouave, a boy with a bull's neck and the eyes of a tiger.

### Why did you begin to sign your works "Vincent" at that time?

Oh, I was already considered to be the eccentric chap of the neighbourhood, with my red hair and no real job, always living from hand to mouth. No one could pronounce my name properly, so signing "Vincent" seemed simpler for everyone. So you see, I'm not just a bear in its cave: I can sometimes adapt to the world

outside! Does it really make any difference? I get the feeling that none of my efforts have been rewarded. In the end I'm only really at home in bistros, those dens of iniquity and madness propitious to wrongdoing... Where you can lose yourself, drink far more than is reasonable and spend your last centime. Bistros have a dark power when they are bathed in an ambiance of hellfire and pale yellow sulphur.

### What were your relations with Gauguin like?

Just when I left for Arles, he was going to bury himself in Brittany. Go figure ... Because I knew he was as broke as I was – he borrowed a lot from Théo as well –, I tried to persuade him to live with me. Poverty is already a little less dire if there are two of you. But it wasn't an easy matter. Do you know what he called me behind my back? The eccentric! What a rascal, when I think about it... Well, eventually he joined me, and it was a total disaster. He annoyed me with his tactical, rational side. And where painting was concerned, he hated what he called my "mess". When he left, my hopes and the trust I had in him were destroyed forever.

### And what about the story of the cut-off ear?

I don't want to talk about it - go and ask Gauguin himself if you run into him. It was an ideal opportunity for him to tell everyone I was mad. Since then, I have stopped seeing other people, for good. Otherwise they risk losing their reason, like me. Conformists have always found it strange that, in my work, I put my life on the line. Because even death and its turmoil are explosions of colour. One day, you'll see, people will realise that I was right, despite everything.

Interview by Dimitri Joannidès

"Vincent Van Gogh, rêves de Japon", Pinacothèque de Paris, 8, Rue Vignon, Paris 75009 - until 17 April 2013.

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



TO READ

Van Gogh (biography), by David Hazzot, published by Gallimard, 2007.

# PORTRAIT

## Jules Wabbes the elegance of materials



The Palais des Beaux-arts in Brussels is devoting a retrospective to the Belgian designer. We talk to the expert Michelle Feiner, who specialises in his work.

### La Gazette Drouot: How did you get to know the work of Jules Wabbes?

**Michelle Feiner:** It's a long story, which began with an isolated incident. In 1974, when I was a student journalist, an interior design review asked me to write

an article on office furniture in Belgium. I knew nothing about it, obviously, so my father talked to one of his friends, who suggested I meet Jules Wabbes - which is what I did. At the time, I didn't know he was very ill and would die a month later. When I learnt this, I was very affected, because he had made a big impression on me. My article never appeared, in the end, as the review went bankrupt. At that point, I had no plans to go into the art market. And yet it happened very quickly, and I began to work as an art dealer at the end of 1976. A few years later, I started to specialise in post-war furniture through my gallery, "Les années 50". In Belgium this was a new niche; in other countries, people had already begun to take an interest in the period.

### And so you once again came across Jules Wabbes...

Yes; and that's how I came to really know and understand him. Wabbes was a self-taught man who had several jobs before becoming a designer. The last was as an antique dealer, which was right up his street. He was a great antiques hunter, and had a gift for spotting beautiful objects. Then, while talking with his customers, he realised that the furniture of past times couldn't meet all the requirements of modern life. So he knuckled down to the task, first of all creating "Wabbes" designs which weren't quite the real thing, yet, and this sometimes casts doubt on the authenticity of certain pieces. Everything changed in 1957 when he founded his company, "Le Mobilier universel". He began working with talented craftsmen: Guillaume Van Achter for wood, and Antoine Callebaut for metal. In my view, Wabbes furniture represents this threefold collaboration: Jules

**Jules Wabbes (1919-1974)**,  
large model wall light, brass,  
30 x 35 x 19 cm.



HD

**Jules Wabbes** presents a prototype of a lamp in stainless steel at the XIth Triennale di Milano in 1957.



© BOZAR





**Jules Wabbes** desk drawer, 1957 (detail: handle and metal runner).

© Serge Vandercam

## The Foncolin building: a fruitful collaboration

At the exhibition, you can (re)discover around sixty unique pieces providing a comprehensive overview of Wabbes' career. His most popular designs were entirely hand-made with top quality materials, like the furniture for the Foncolin building in Brussels. Designed by Belgian architect André Jacquain – responsible for a number of remarkable buildings, now considered some of the finest in the city –, the Foncolin building was the first one in Belgium to be made with prefabricated elements in the Fifties. This was all the more astounding in that its creator made no attempt to disguise this fact. Jacquain thus transformed what might have been considered a weak point into a virtue, and this legibility became the main aesthetic principle. A principle also found in the office furniture produced by Jules Wabbes for the building. The architecture of the object was no longer hidden, and the exhibition provides clear evidence of the designer's approach. Like the pre-war Modernists, he liked to emphasise the obvious simplicity of furniture, but in quite a different spirit. For while the former saw the simplification of forms as the way to cheap mass production, Jules Wabbes used the purity of his designs to bring out the beauty of raw bronze, chrome-plated metal or precious exotic woods.

Wabbes' refinement and taste, and the masterly craftsmanship and technical skills of these two men, who are somewhat forgotten, sadly.

**Were there any noticeable changes in his style between 1957 and 1974?**

Not fundamentally. The Wabbes style is timeless. If you want to pinpoint differences in his work, it would be more in terms of production - because there is a range of small-scale, hand-made pieces and another more industrial range, mainly consisting of office furniture in laminated wood. The design is very attractive and the proportions are always elegant, but this type of furniture was mass-produced for big companies. All this still reflected the Belgian market; it was a long way from the quantities produced by Knoll, for example.

**And what about the "top-end"?**

This consisted of hand-made items designed for private individuals, or even the senior executives of companies for whom he provided mass-produced office products. It must have been very costly to produce these sort of pieces made in precious woods like wenge, padouck or mutenyé, because they required a great deal of labour and time, including for drying the wood. And in addition, they involved solid wood, not veneering. This kind of furniture was mainly bookcases, dressers and coat-stands with exposed metal structures. Moreover, Jules Wabbes had a licence for Benelux from the American firm Dunbar, and so could produce and distribute their designs - which he wasn't slow to do in American Embassies.

**The designer has undergone a spectacular return to favour in Belgium...**

Yes, that's true. Nowadays, and for the last half-dozen years, every major Belgian antiques dealer has to be able to offer at least one piece by the designer. And prices have shot up as a result. For my part, I have always tried to promote him, starting in the Eighties. At the time, many companies were moving, having their offices redecorated or worse still, going bankrupt. When it wasn't too late, i.e. if the furniture wasn't already in a container, it was possible to acquire pieces

and restore them. When I started out, a clerk's desk cost €600. Restored, it's now worth ten times as much. An item of furniture comes up at a public auction from time to time, or in a specialist design sale abroad, but prices are still a long way from achieving those of designers considered international.

Interview by Charles-Arthur Louis

Palais des Beaux-arts, 23, rue Ravenstein, 1000 Brussels -  
 Until 13 January 2013, every day except Monday, 10.00 a.m.  
 to 6 p.m. [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)



© Photocom sprl, Brussels, 2013

**Jules Wabbes**, mobile drawer unit, plywood, chrome-plated steel frame, 68 x 47 x 58 cm.





# ART FAIR

## Brafa 2013



The life of a collector can sometimes require a level of devotion and sacrifice akin to that demanded in the priesthood. The most committed collectors will, for instance, undertake long pilgrimages so as not to miss a key event. In the litany of arty fairs and shows that make up the collectors' calendar, one of the most important is Brafa – the BRussels Antiques and Fine Arts Fair, formerly known as the Belgian Antiques Fair. Now an event of international significance, the fair is still going strong 58 years after its first edition. Its Maastricht-based rival, The European Fine Art Fair (Tefaf), is seen as the continent's pre-eminent fine arts event, but has been going twenty years fewer, and in this field, age is a valuable asset. After all, knowledge breeds renown. With 128 exhibitors, half as many as Tefaf, Brafa places greater emphasis on dialogue between gallery owners and visitors, priding itself on a degree of proximity that is often missing from competing events. Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke, who took over as Chairman of Brafa's Board of Directors in June 2012, has no plans to introduce wholesale changes. Rather, he intends to consolidate the event's existing strengths, particularly its eclecticism. He wants the fair to appeal to experienced collectors of archaeological artefacts, as well as tribal arts and contemporary works, to expand its offer to include more "niche" fields such as autograph collecting, and to open up new collection opportunities by supporting the collection of items such as comic books and original drawings. The aim, in short, is to bring objects from a wide range of periods and origins together in a single place. This approach, embodied by the newly-opened Louvre-Lens, is very much in vogue at present. One venue to have embraced diversity in this way is Paris's Jacques Barrère Gallery, whose exhibition "A Contemporary Interior", staged in association with the Magda Danysz Gallery, boasts some of the most beautiful Asian pieces currently on the market, with famous works from the 20th century (see illustration), a period that is particularly well-represented this year. Another objective of the new chairman is to make the event accessible to a wider audience. "BRAFA is not aimed solely at the more affluent segment. We also cater for amateur enthusiasts who want to come and admire some beautiful objects," explains Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke. "I would like BRAFA to be opened up to as many potential visitors as possible, while maintaining its high level of quality". It is safe to say he has succeeded!

Stéphanie Perris-Delmas

19-27 January 2013 - Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 86 C 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

[www.brafa.be](http://www.brafa.be)

W

## ART FAIR

**Original Miami Beach** Antique Show

They say winter is the best season to visit Miami; it's warm but not yet too hot, and you enjoy a good dose of daily sun. As we know, Florida is a bit like France's Côte d'Azur: a destination that mingles tempting idleness and the delights of exploration. For the idyllic sands of Miami Beach are not the only attractions of a bathing resort that has a host of international events of all kinds: for example, only a few days after the famous Art Deco week-end, from 31 January to 4 February, the highly sought-after Original Miami Beach Antique Show, considered one of the top antiques fairs in the world. Since 1961, it has brought together a remarkable selection of furnishing specialties in a single venue (the Miami Convention Centre, host to

the American version of Art Basel): Fifties furniture, paintings, textiles, perfume bottles, Meissen porcelain - all in all, some 35 collectors' fields, largely dominated by jewellery. The fair organisers also provide conferences on the theme at the same time, like the talk by Diane Warga-Arias on "Buying and investing in quality antique and Vintage Jewellery". With 800 exhibitors from 22 countries, this American-style fair is a real marathon for anyone starting out on a great international event season that offers both abundance - and quality.

31 January to 3 February 2013

Miami Beach Convention Centre, United States

[www.originalmiami-beach-antiques-show.com](http://www.originalmiami-beach-antiques-show.com)

W



Striking chloromelanite jade geometric bracelet featuring five rectangular panels with canted corners, each with a circular cut-out centre, joined with fluted white gold spacers, by Jean Fouquet, Paris c. 1927.



Desk clock of Oriental inspiration; circular dial inlaid with tessellated mother-of-pearl, with royal blue enamel details and diamond-set hands; rock crystal bezel set with diamond Roman numerals; jadeite frame enhanced with sugarloaf lapis lazuli, by Cartier, Paris c. 1925.



"The Dove", Alfred Augustus Glendening Jr., circa 1895.

HD



Oscar Gundlach-Pedersen  
1937 sterling silver  
Candelabra design #623B  
for Georg Jensen.

A selection of high-karat gold Victorian cuffs embellished with enamel, natural pearls and coral.





# ARCHITECTURE

## Temporary drama at the Théâtre français...

At the Comédie-Française, a venerable institution several centuries old, the requirement to bring the air treatment vents in the Richelieu section up to standard forced the theatre management and the French Ministry of Culture to find an alternative solution for continued performances while the work was going on, under the supervision of the inspectors of the Monuments Historiques. Remember that it is in the heart of Paris, squeezed between the Ministry of Culture, the Constitutional Council, the Council of State, the Buren columns, the Pol Bury fountains and the Palais-Royal gardens. "But aren't the most complex situations the very ones that inspire the most creativity? Jérôme Lamy, the general manager, says that he considered several ideas: 'But had we taken our shows elsewhere, as in the past, to the Mogador theatre at the Porte Saint-Martin, or set up a marquee in the Tuileries, the public would probably not have followed us. And we would have lost the use of the Comédie-Française technical installations, which are in the basement beneath the Buren columns.'" So, what was the answer? To stay close by and build a temporary theatre right in the

middle of the Palais-Royal gardens. On paper, the project was win-win: controlled costs, minimum inconvenience, a short building schedule and any social discontent avoided. All it needed was the go-ahead from the Ministry of Culture. It was decided that an all-wood theatre would be built. The construction was easy, adaptable and light, and provided optimum quality in terms of acoustics, visibility and insulation. And there were other assets: environmental friendliness, reflecting current trends; low cost, and above all, the fact that it could be re-used. The Comédie-Française teams set to it in 2010, with help from a research consultancy and a stage designer. Work began on 20 August 2011 and ended on 15 January 2012. In other words, in only five months, a theatre - temporary, maybe, but worthy of Europe's greatest stages - was ready to welcome the public.

### All Is Well That Ends Well

At the end of 2012, after almost a year of service, the venture has been deemed a success. The temporary theatre, with its appealing scent of spruce, has had excellent audience figures. It has attracted the curious, who, impressed by this structure in exposed wood, promise to be loyal fans in future. And as proof that it is a fine theatrical tool: not a single complaint from the professionals. Quite the opposite in fact! The stage, for instance, is strictly identical to the Italian-style theatre, and there is an overall ambiance that would surely have pleased Molière. The floor, into which are fixed the 746 seats (compared with 876 in the theatre undergoing renovation), creaks slightly under the feet, and the 12-metre high walls in light-coloured wood give the place a touch of the forest. Yes, there is something Shakespearean



The temporary theatre,  
February 2012.

The temporary theatre  
auditorium

© Christophe Reynaud de Lage, Comédie-Française collection

about this venue. There is even better visibility for audiences compared with the Italian-style set-up, where the cheapest seats only have a partial view of the stage. In short, to quote Patrick Belaubre, the secretary general of the Comédie-Française: "Here we have a theatre of far higher quality than many other modern facilities that are built to be permanent and cost a lot more!"

### Temporary elsewhere?

The temporary theatre of the Comédie-Française was thus designed to last from the outset: an outdoor theatre, yes, but not a "travelling" theatre, according to Patrick Belaubre, who adds that "it is only temporary in terms of attachment to the Théâtre Français (another name for the Comédie-Française), and its set-up between the colonnades of the Palais-Royal". It could just as well become a permanent high-quality facility for a town or community that has to watch its budget. But wherever it ends up, this pioneering venue will always glow with the aura and memories of the outstanding institution that gave it life. It's certainly not the first wooden theatre in France, as

witness Robin Renucci's La Forge in Corsica, but it will always remain an oddity as a public building. Believe it or not, this temporary theatre will be up for sale in February 2013, dismantling and transport costs to be paid by the buyer. Take note, enthusiasts: while the theatre was put together in only eight months in Paris, its dismantling and reassembly elsewhere is estimated at six. When you consider that in normal conditions, the construction of a permanent facility takes several years (or even longer!), it makes you think. At this stage, neither the Ministry of Culture nor the Comédie-Française management have made a decision on the final outcome, even if several potential takers have already appeared. The Comédie-Française has been contributing to France's influence for four centuries, and has long been a formidable tool in cultural diplomacy. Could this mean possible interest from foreign countries in this temporary theatre, the only one of its kind? The Louvre and the Ecole Militaire de Saint-Cyr have been successfully exported to the Gulf: why not the Comédie-Française? In any case, more than one hammer would dream of knocking down a theatre for Drouot...

Dimitri Joannidès

# COLLECTION

## The largest collection of cognacs in the world

When Michel Pasquet, now an auditor, leafed through the Guinness Book of Records ten or so years ago, he discovered that the owner of the largest collection of cognacs was from neither Cognac nor France but Quebec: restaurant-owner Michel Gillet, with 367 bottles. "Seeing that his collection was less than 400 bottles, I set myself the target of beating this record in Cognac, with the people of Cognac and the region, while I was Rotary chairman from 2010 to 2011," says Michel Pasquet. On the initiative of the Rotary Clubs of Jarnac and Cognac, a collection was built up over two and a half years with contributions from large- and small-scale wine-makers, distillers, traders and private individuals. In the end, 1008 bottles by 437 different brands were assembled. An extremely respectable figure, but still a long way from the 3,384 bottles of whiskies gathered together over more than 35 years by a Brazilian enthusiast, Claive Vidiz: a collection now owned by the Diageo group and exhibited at the Scotch Whisky Experience in Edinburgh. The tremendous collection here is both a showcase for cognac and a reflection of the product's history and region. Nearly all the existing cognac producers are represented. There are some 46 top-of-the-range V.S., V.S.O.P. and X.O vintages, including some eaux de vie from before 1875, the year marking the appearance of phylloxera (an insect which attacks the vine). The oldest dates back to 1850. Certain bottles contain assemblages from Paradis, the nickname for the storehouse containing the most prestigious brandies. For example, the Golden Vintage by Roland De Meriac is an assemblage of 36 brandies, where the oldest dates back to 1922.

Other treasures include a glass sphere by Prunier resting on its stand, like a globe. Of the five examples produced, only two still survive. A number of lots have never been up for sale before, or come from brands that no longer exist, like an X.O. from the Hector Wine vineyard. When this collection was being built up, a magnum gilded with fine gold was especially packaged by De Luze for the 2012 Record Cognac Collection.

### "What matters the bottle, if intoxication be within"

Alfred de Musset's saying may be celebrated, but it has no currency in the world of cognac, because producers have always provided containers whose splendour rivals the content. Courvoisier's L'Essence, Rémy Martin's Centaure and Martel's Création stand out with their Baccarat crystal bottles. Some, like Bisquit Dubouche's Extra Vieille No. 10, are etched in gold. Also noteworthy is Courvoisier's No. V, from a series of eight Art Deco-inspired decanters designed in the 1980s by the artist Erté. Another curiosity: a cylindrical flask by Rémy Martin made for experiments in space, and never marketed. Exhibited until 20 January at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Cognac, the collection will first be officially recognised by the Guinness Book of Records, then sold as a single lot to raise funds for the Rotary's charity work. For the moment, the Rotary Clubs of Cognac and Jarnac have not put forward any estimates: 'There's no point in giving a figure because the total value is the sum of the individual values, plus the added value of being the largest collection in the world with nearly 200 rare and exceptional bottles, several dozen of which are no



longer obtainable. For a collector, that's priceless,' says Michel Pasquet, who will thus leave it to collectors to put forward their offers, knowing that the collection of Canadian Michel Gillet is estimated at €550,000. As for the nationality of potential buyers, Michel Pasquet thinks they will probably be American, Russian or Chinese: 'The Americans because they often mark their success with large donations to charity, thus gaining tax advantages. The Russians because they always love the biggest, the smartest, the rarest and thus the most expensive. The Chinese because cognac is becoming more and more popular over there [China is the leading market: Ed.]. And for a successful Chinese person, having a magnificent collection of cognacs would really be something to show off.' It remains to be seen if the fortunate buyer of this formidable "cognac library" will have the ludicrous idea of drinking it.

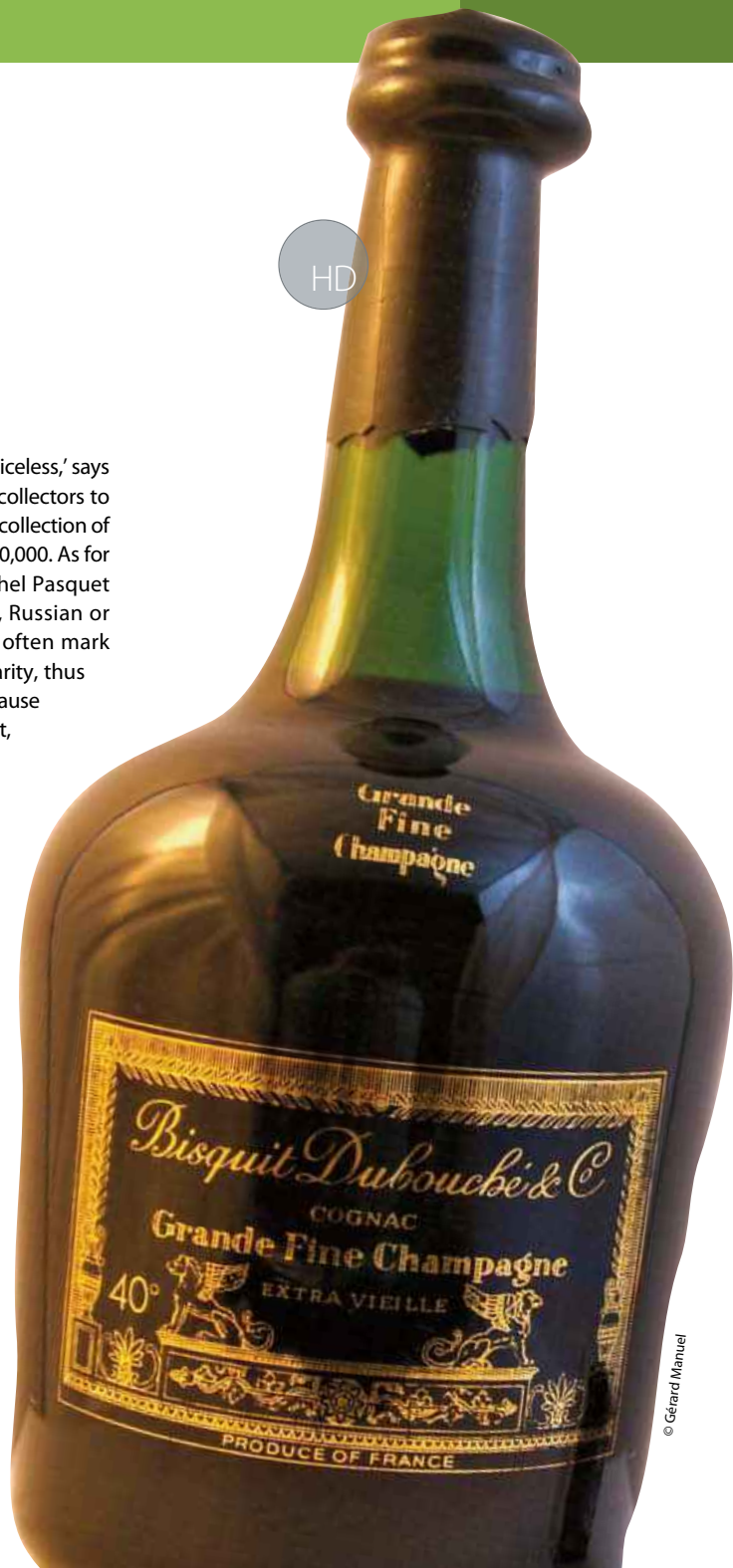
Camille Larbey

Catalogue available at

[www.rotary-cognac-record.org](http://www.rotary-cognac-record.org)

W

Extra Vieille No. 10 by Bisquit Dubouché: magnum etched in fine gold. This comes from a batch discovered in the Charente.



## MUSEUM

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
**Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet**  
 Paris - Métro Léna

## "I Went"

### Collections of the Centre national des arts plastiques

Continuing the partnership they started in 2010 around the artist Chen Zhen, the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, a collection with no museum "home", and the Musée Guimet, a genuine knowledge centre for Asian arts and civilisations, have once more joined forces to present "I Went", an exhibition of works from the CNAP collections. Ideas, thinking and real or imaginary journeys can be works of art.

The work becomes the place of the experience, and this is where the voyage or displacement is situated. The work, as movement, gesture, transformation or mutation, becomes the link between the artist and "elsewhere". The pieces shown here evoke in numerous ways these ideas of displacement, itineraries, experience and travel. A far cry from copies or re-uses, they bear witness to a re-reading of Asian traditions, always with the same fascination for the sacred, the absolute, philosophies and religions. These meditative strolls take place mainly within the museum's Japanese collections, and are based on three main approaches: expression and calligraphy; rituals, imagination and memory; architecture and volumes. A series of photographs by Werner Bischof and Pascal Pinaud's "Moulin à prières" (*prayer mill*), presented as an introduction, reveal and question our knowledge of civilisations and the representation of the universal and religious, while challenging the hierarchy of genres in Western art. These first works evoke the "clichéd" images we have of Asia, while creating a form of incantation to creation, and inciting us to leave our Western references behind. In the next part of the exhibition we find variations upon this fascination for Asia, with a particular focus on Japan. The first exchanges with Japan go back a long way, and to begin with mainly took the form of trading in ceramics from the early 17th century onwards. At the time, this fascination was intensified by the total closure of Japan's borders. Today, Japanese society continues to exert this fascination, by constantly symbolising a kind of fluctuation between tradition and progress in our eyes. The next section of the exhibition presents two works by On Kawara, a Japanese-born conceptual artist: "I Went" of 2007 and the "Date



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**Xavier Veilhan** (b. 1963), "Le Film du Japon", 2002, DVD, silent colour film, 8'30", Centre National des Arts Plastiques, FNAC 03-313.



**Werner Bischof**, "A pleasant sleeping. Island of Kau Sai", 1952. Gelatin silver print, 40.1 x 50.5 cm. Centre National des Arts Plastiques. FNAC 03-1243.

Paintings" series of 1993, in the heart of the museum's historic library. This area, with its neoclassical architecture, was designed by Émile Guimet as a study centre and contains the hundreds of books he collected, mainly during his world tour between 1876 and 1877. The library brings together documents written in all languages from prestigious collections, together with a number of maps. This place for archives, with its systematic accumulation of tools to aid the comprehension, knowledge and appreciation of travel and distant or recent history, helps us grasp the systematic, repetitive and mental nature of On Kawara's work. The aspect of

archiving and roaming nature of the artist's expression thus finds a home in this place devoted to memory, knowledge and discovery. The space-time ritual is symbolised here by the stroke and the use of painting, the latter being presented in its pure conceptual state, and the stroke as an itinerary or the act of roaming: a graphic representation of the road travelled. Like Asian painting, the conventional and ritual aspect of On Kawara's expression makes it possible to approach the real, the distance travelled and the moment experienced: there is far more to the "journey" than its figurative representation. The rooms of Japanese paintings





**Hans Hartung** (1904-1989), "P 1967 A 38", 1967, pastel, 104.5 x 74.8 cm, Centre National des Arts Plastiques, FNAC 31205.

provide a framework for this perception of the real as an instant, and for the reinterpretation of pictorial expression in Asian painting as a source of inspiration. Christian Boltanski's "Paysage Japonais" (*Japanese landscape*) of 1982 and two works by Hans Hartung, "P1967 A 23" and "P1967 A 38" of 1967, make us aware of how the construction of an Asian landscape through painting or technique can be sources of creation for artists. The pictorial description, calligraphy and composition become the expression of a balance. Their rhythm offers the viewer a way of walking around, of moving forward, that is recomposed by the artist's imagination or his physical involvement. Here Christian Boltanski's work offers not a real landscape to our gaze, but an imaginary construction featuring figurines from the

world of childhood: the recomposed memory of a world. It does not involve a specifically figurative art based on a model, but much more one that enables the unfettered emergence of what the memory has assimilated in terms of knowledge, the idea you may have of a subject, and the free expression of an image the artist may have in his mind, which is created through expression, writing or construction. This creativity also comes into play through meditation and our current understanding of ancient ideas like eternity and universality. The journey also symbolises the possibility of understanding and developing an art. Asia – and more specifically Japan – becomes a workshop, a place for outlining the artist's personal line of development. For example, Jean Clareboudt, through a quest, a

collection of fragments or clues symbolising the journey, and in particular his journey to Japan, pursues his own project in a new understanding of space and forms. His 1984 sketchbooks, which are works in their own right, are a kind of workshop for his thinking, which then enables him to create his monumental sculptures. The 1999 "Pillows for the Dead" by the Japanese artist Rei Naito are all small, ephemeral, delicate structures made of organza. These works explore a universal idea of the afterlife, and question the fragility of existence. Here again, the observation and understanding of civilisations and what they have consisted of since far-distant times helps us think about what ancient peoples and civilisations were like. It's not a matter of understanding everything; much more of offering a path to meditation. Architecture and design are also means for questioning the comprehension and interpretation of forms found in Asia. Asian and Japanese traditions, spirituality, volumes, forms and techniques are all elements enabling artists to illustrate a construction; a mythical, fantasised architecture of Asia. The works in this other part of the exhibition are displayed within collections of Japanese objets d'art typifying traditional forms and techniques. The graphic and geometrical simplicity of the constructions by Helmut Federle evince his interest in Asian spirituality and philosophies. Forms become functional and essential: ideas that are illustrated in this exhibition by the "Maquette du Temple de la Sérénité" of 1999. Philippe de Gobert reconstructs the mythical image he has of traditional Asian architecture, the tea house, by creating models of unreal spaces, recomposing them with all sorts of materials, and then producing large format photographs to give the illusion of space. The artist invites you on a kind of mythical journey, starting from the idea a Westerner might have of Japanese architecture without ever having visited the country. The photographic print presented in the exhibition, "Voyage à Cipango" (2002), blends in with the museum's rooms in an amazingly natural way. The modifications of scale, the play on volumes, the movement and the rhythms of ritual, similar to the martial arts, are staged in the work of Xavier Veilhan, "Le Film du Japon", 2002. Produced while the artist was residing in Japan, he reconstructs a world through

visual effects and tricks produced directly, not post-produced digitally. The idea of making and reconstituting an object considered symbolic of a civilisation's history also permeates the work of designers Ian Stalard and Patrik Fredrikson: precisely their "Ming Vase" of 2004. These two vases are displayed in the middle of Chinese ceramics from the museum's collections. Halfway between handicraft and mass production, porcelain is combined by the artists with PVC in a confrontation of original tradition with innovation, reflecting the creative approaches of the Ming dynasty. Past and present are superimposed. The circuit ends with a presentation of "Salon de transformation blanc" (*The White Transformation Parlour*), a work from 1998 by Marie-Ange Guilleminot. This is installed in the rotunda of the fourth floor of the museum, with its outstanding view of Paris: a place that fosters interplay between the work and the public, and the participatory approach sought by the artist. Visitors are invited to make origamis in the form of "Tsuru" (*cranes*) with the help of a video - an activity introducing people to the practice of the art. This entire work, and the artist's approach as a whole, is influenced by her experience of Asia, and especially Japan. She was particularly moved by seeing the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima, and here, garlands of "Tsuru" made by the visitors to decorate this monument, remind us, like a ritual, of the original tribute to Sadako Sasaki. This young girl, a victim of the atomic bomb, had practised the art of origami in the hope and expectation of being healed. Experience, forward movement, transformation, sensorial memory and the imagination are all roads leading to inspiration, to an Asia that is imagined, envisioned or experienced. The artists enable us to feel these modes of experience, and the dialogues between heritage objects and contemporary works are like keys for the visitors, opening the way for these journeys to Asia.

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