

ART SHOWCASE

Biennale des Antiquaires: The event

INSIDERS' VIEW | Biennale des Antiquaires

What sets this event apart from the others?

When the cognoscenti of the art world talk about the Biennale des Antiquaires, which kicks off Paris's fall season every other year in the dramatic setting of the Belle Epoque Grand Palais, the words that spring to almost everyone's lips are "glamorous" and "prestigious." What is it about this event that distinguishes it from the hundreds of art and antique fairs held all over the world? For starters, Paris.

"How could you not go to Paris?" asks Torkom Demirjian of Ariadne Galleries in New York, who has been exhibiting at the Biennale (to be held Sept. 15-22 this year) since 1994. He is often surprised to see visitors there who do not attend other fairs but come to the Biennale from as far away as Mexico City or South America because it is in Paris. "The distances are not insurmountable," he says.

Jacques de la Béraudière, a Geneva-based dealer in 20th-century paintings and a member of the Biennale's board, agrees that "the attraction of Paris is superior to that of other places," adding that he wishes that the fair were held annually rather than every two years. "It's a very important event," he says. "If we had more high-quality events like it, more buyers would come to Paris to buy art. Until World War II, Paris was a breeding ground for artists. It should remain an important center for art."

Thomas Faerber of the Faerber Collection observes: "The Biennale takes place in the cultural capital of the world, as the French say. It's extraordinarily beautiful. I think it represents the highest level of art fairs."

Art fairs are the main showcase for the Faerber Collection's fine jewelry. While it exhibits at around 12 fairs a year, the Biennale

holds a special place on its calendar. Faerber especially appreciates the high level of connoisseurship of visitors to the fair. "We see many museum curators and collectors," he says, "experts who know as much or more about our pieces as we do." He recalls how one visitor was able to provide the exact provenance of a piece from Turkey whose origins they had been unable to determine. "And people ask much higher-level questions at the Biennale," he adds.

Demirjian agrees and hopes that his stand, with its display of antiquities that illustrate the close links between Eastern and Western cultures, will provoke reactions and questions from visitors. "That's one of the pleasures of the Biennale," he says. "Generally speaking, the French and European public have an extraordinary awareness and knowledge of history and art history compared with other parts of the world. I can tell by the type of questions people ask me."

Pierre Dumontell of the eponymous art gallery in Paris, who deals in 20th-century works of art and is returning to the Biennale for the 11th time this year, says, "It is to other fairs what haute couture is to ready-to-wear." He exhibits at a number of fairs around the world every year and says: "The Biennale is the fair with the strongest personality on the international circuit. It's a commercial event, but is always exceptional for the high quality of works, presented by the best international dealers, and in terms of the setting and the presentation of works. It has a festive air. It's unique."

Daniel Boulakia of Galerie Fabien Boulakia in Paris notes the prestige, the international character of the visitors and the top quality of the exhibitors, and mentions



Chagall's "The Village and the Violinist" will be shown by Galerie Le Minotaure of Paris.

another element of utmost importance to buyers: the vetting committees, which ensure that every object shown is authentic and has a solid provenance. "And the setting is magnificent," he adds. "It's important for Paris to have a strong event like this. It rejuvenates the art scene and gives it an image of quality and diversity, while strengthening France's role as an artistic center."

Sandrine Chadelaud of the Galerie Michel-Guy Chadelaud, Paris-based specialists in 19th-century French furniture and decorative arts, considers the Biennale one of the most important events in Paris. "It's part of the world of art in general," she says, "more like a cultural event than an art fair.

For us, the Biennale offers an opportunity to renew the image of our specialty."

François Laffanour of Galerie Downtown in Paris, who specializes in 20th-century design by architects, notes that the Biennale, characterized by its luxury and prestige, is the "major art-world event in Paris."

For Hervé Aaron, president of the Syndicat National des Antiquaires (French National Union of Antique Dealers), the fair's organizer, the importance of the Biennale is simply the quality of the objects being shown and the quality of the dealers showing them. He says: "The only way to make the fair an interesting meeting place for clients is to show them wonderful things." ■

Prix SNA 2010: Art book award

On Sept. 16, the Syndicat National des Antiquaires will award the Prix SNA 2010 for the best art book published between Oct. 1 and June 1 at the Middle Ages, evaluating and restoring ceramics, understanding contemporary art, industrial furniture, Matisse's book "Jazz," paintings of Napoleon, the painter Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, French sculpture of the Romantic period, a history of female nudes, the painter James Ensor, the sculptor Rembrandt Bugatti, Nevers faience and enigmas in paintings.

The subjects of the nominated books include contemporary artists like Gérard Garouste and Zao Wou-Ki, Art Nouveau, Buddhist art, heraldic art in the Middle Ages, evaluating and restoring ceramics, understanding contemporary art, industrial furniture, Matisse's book "Jazz," paintings of Napoleon, the painter Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, French sculpture of the Romantic period, a history of female nudes, the painter James Ensor, the sculptor Rembrandt Bugatti, Nevers faience and enigmas in paintings.

The jury is made up of Philippe Bidaine, former publications director at the Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou; the writer Dominique Bona; Geneviève Bresc, curator for the Musée du Louvre's sculpture department; Frédéric Castaing, an expert on manuscripts and former president of the Syndicat de la Librairie Ancienne et Moderne; Serge Lemoine, former president of the Musée d'Orsay and professor of the history of contemporary art; Anne Pingot, honorary curator for the Musée d'Orsay; and Pierre Rosenberg, honorary president of the Musée du Louvre and member of the Académie Française.

WORKS ON PAPER

Sept 15 – Oct 6, 2010



Odilon REDON - Eve - 61,5 x 45,5 cm.

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NEW EXHIBITORS | 20th-century specialists

Presenting a baker's dozen of new participants in this year's Biennale

While many buyers return to the Biennale des Antiquaires year after year to see their favorite dealers, they also hope to discover new dealers who have received the fair's imprimatur. This year presents 13 new exhibitors.

Galerie Alain Marcelpoil has two galleries, one in Lyon, focusing on 20th-century decorative arts, and another in Paris, opened in 2006, devoted to the work of

André Sornay. A highlight of its stand will be a desk in red-lacquered wood and polished aluminum with its original Saint Gobain-glass top, plus a matching bridge armchair and two chairs for visitors.

Galerie Dansk Møbelkunst, founded in Copenhagen, also has galleries in Paris and Zurich. This specialist in furniture by architects and lighting from 1920 to 1970 will show an elegant one-off semicircular desk

(1953-54) in solid walnut with two drawers, designed and made by Peder Moos. Another piece is a brightly colored painted-metal hanging lamp (1959) by Poul Henningsen.

Galerie Michel Giraud of Paris has created a "period room" for its stand in which to feature Art Deco works, including a portrait of the dancer and poet Boris Kochno by the painter Christian Bérard (1902-49), an elegant vase by Eugène Feuillâtre (1870-

1916) and a handsome bedside table by André Groult (1884-1966) with two drawers and a compartment with sliding door.

Galerie Zlotowski of Paris specializes in early-20th-century art, with an emphasis on Cubism. It will put on a one-man show of artworks by the architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965), among them "Les Trois Grâces" (1948) and "Femme en Buste" (1949), collages with painting and drawing.

Tornabuoni Arte, which has several galleries in Italy and recently opened a Paris branch, will present 20th-century paintings "in dialogue with" Old Master paintings. A gold painting by Lucio Fontana will be contrasted with an Old Master painting with a gold background, and a still life by Picasso with a 16th-century painting with the same theme. The gallery will also show works by Giorgio de Chirico, Vassily Kandinsky, Alberto Giacometti and Pablo Picasso.

Galerie Marcihac of Paris will feature 20th-century decorative arts, including a handsome dresser (1922) by Pierre Charreau (1883-1950) with rounded sides and pivoting drawers.

Galerie Jean-Christophe Charbonnier, specialist in Asian art and particularly Japanese art and armor, will spotlight an opulent suit of armor worn by Maeda Toshiyasu, a 19th-century feudal lord from one of Japan's richest and most powerful families.

Finch and Co. of London will present an array of curios, including an erotic snuffbox (1810-20) from England. A gouache painting on vellum showing the naked Adam and Eve getting very intimate in the Garden of Eden is hidden under the tortoiseshell lining, which unscrews to reveal the scene.

James J. Lally of New York has 12 rare Tang dynasty (618-907) sculptures from a private American collection, including a sancai-glazed figure of a wine carrier, a large striding camel with a foreign rider and a sancai-glazed courtier in Persian costume, plus a group of ancient bronze objects, gold and silver objects, early jade carvings and a pair of Tang dynasty gilt bronze dragons.

Marlborough Gallery of New York is bringing 19th-century, modern and contemporary paintings and works on paper to the Biennale, notably a triptych by Francis Bacon, "Three Studies of the Human Body" (1970).

The highly specialized Jason Jacques Gallery of New York, which deals in European art pottery made between 1875 and 1925, will present a dramatic blood-red vase (c. 1893) with a crab crawling on it, which shows the influence of both the 16th-century French ceramist Bernard Palissy and Japanese pottery.

Richard Nagy, an independent dealer, will show works from his specialties: German Expressionism, Symbolism and masters of Modernism. He also specializes in the work of Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt. ■

The Biennale at a glance

- When: Sept. 15-22
- Where: Grand Palais, Avenue Winston Churchill, 75008 Paris
- Hours: Open 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and until 10 p.m. on Sept. 16 and 21
- Exhibitors: 87 leading art and antique dealers from France and beyond
- Organizer: Syndicat National des Antiquaires. Tel.: (33 1) 44 51 74 74
- Web: www.bdafrance.eu

Biennale des Antiquaires: The event was produced by the International Herald Tribune's Creative Solutions Department and did not involve the newspaper's reporting or editorial departments. Text by HEIDI ELLISON. For information on the IHT Creative Solutions program: www.nytimesglobal.com/pages/advertising

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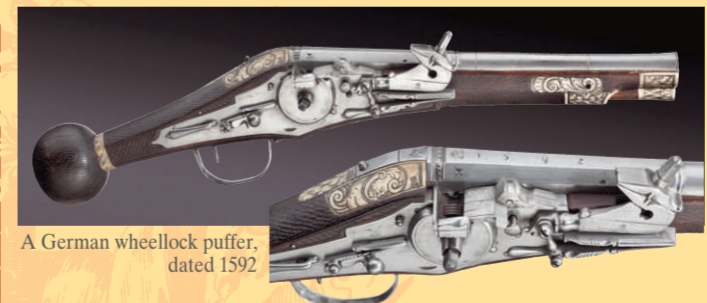
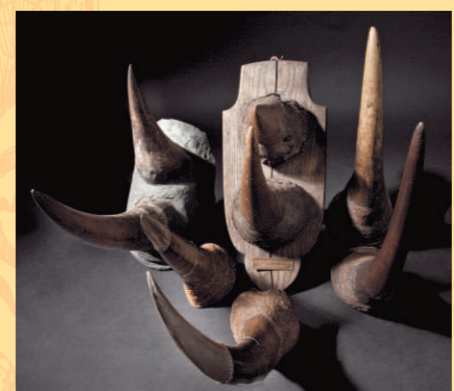
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