

**Right:** Oliver Hoare acquired this 3rd century Gandhara grey schist head of the Buddha from Afghanistan in the 1960s from Oxus, David Lindhal's legendary antiques shop in the King's Road. In the '60s, while Oliver was still working at Christie's, David would ask him to clear the finds from his travels through UK Customs for him. In the very first shipment was this fragment of a head and Oliver was transfixed: "I knew little about Gandhara art at the time, but it seemed the perfect incarnation of Greek ideals of beauty, entwined with the Indian embodiment of spiritual beauty as reflected in human beings." The head is currently reserved.



## Hoare displays his diverse hoard spanning 5000 years of history

THE collection of an enthusiast with a truly eclectic eye is something to behold.

One such collector is **Oliver Hoare**, who founded Christie's Islamic art department, leaving in 1975 to become an independent art dealer specialising in Islamic art.

Now he puts his own diverse collection of 250 objects and works of art from the past 5000 years on display, in an exhibition titled *Every Object Tells a Story*, from May 6 to June 26 at 33 Fitzroy Square, in London's Bloomsbury.

"The point of the exhibition, as its title announces, is to celebrate the fascinating and often peculiar stories attached to works of art," says Oliver.

"The criterion for what is presented has little to do with the value of objects, and therefore it differs from the more conventional 'Cabinets of Curiosities'. Nor does it necessarily reflect the current canon of what is seen as beautiful or culturally significant, although there are significant and beautiful works of art by anyone's standards. The objects will be displayed like a private collection in the magnificent Robert Adam rooms at 33 Fitzroy Square, once home to the Omega Workshop."

He hopes that "anyone with an interest in history, art, or a good and unusual story" will visit the show and each piece in the catalogue is accompanied by often amusing anecdotes from Oliver. Though he resents talking about prices, describing them as "like the pornography of the art market – understandable but unhealthy", most items are for sale, at prices from £500 to over £1m.

Broadly, the show encompasses antiquities, musical instruments, natural history specimens, items relating to the history of magic and a mix of paintings, works of paper and other objects, ranging from opium tweezers and a marble baboon from the Barberini Cinema in Rome to engravings by Dürer, Hollar and Rembrandt and a portrait of the Begum Samru by an Indian pupil of Zoffany.

Highlights include the 3rd century Gandhara head of the Buddha, **above**, the 13th Dalai Lama's double bass, a 16th century anthology of poetry that belonged to the Mughal emperors and an Eskimo baby's blanket.