

Art Market

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The collections of some uncommonly interesting individuals are up for grabs in the auction rooms of London and Paris in October, along with one of the greatest evocations of the beautiful game. Old Masters – and quiet virtues – triumphed in the July sales

Preview

The late Oliver Hoare (1945–2018), arguably the most influential Islamic art dealer of his day, was also an extraordinarily engaging personality whose curiosity and passion for all kinds of works of art from across the globe was revealed during the last years of his life in a series of quirky and memorable exhibitions with the title 'Every Object Tells a Story'. Both aspects of his collector persona – knowledgeable specialist and magpie – are reflected in the sale of some 120 pieces from his estate, masterminded by Christie's Islamic art department, which he founded in the late 1960s, the first in any major auction house.

It is entirely appropriate that the adventurous and flamboyant Hoare's most famous professional coup should have been the repatriation to Iran of the most significant part of the celebrated 16th-century Houghton *Shahnameh*, the most important of all illuminated Persian manuscripts. This was no ordinary transaction. After a three-year negotiation, in 1994 the 130 manuscript folios were exchanged for a Willem de Kooning of equal monetary value held in the store of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. The works were swapped, Cold War-style, on the tarmac of Vienna airport.

Making a dramatic debut in the rather more traditional venue of Christie's Great Room on 25 October will be a hitherto unknown Timurid manuscript of princely quality with four illustrations ascribed to the youthful Kamal al-Din Bihzad, the most admired classical Persian painter. Inside its lacquered covers is a text called the *Jam-i Jam* – the 'Cup of Jamshid' – a long mystical poem evoking the mythical early Persian king Jamshid which also treats of social, educational and ethical topics, composed in 1333 by Shaykh Awhadi. This manuscript, transcribed

1. *Jam-i-Jam*, 1459, calligraphy by Mawlana Shir Ali, miniatures by Kamal al-Din Bihzad (c. 1450–c. 1535), watercolour on paper, 31 x 20cm. Christie's London (£1m–£1.5m)



by the calligrapher Mawlana Shir Ali, is dated 1459. Illustrated here is a golden-skied scene of a verdant garden beside a palace, a place where scholars and poets traditionally met (Fig 1). Estimate £1m–£1.5m.

Over half of the sale is devoted to Islamic works of art; the rest ranges from a monumental Roman marble foot after the Antique (£15,000–£25,000) and a ghoulish 17th-century English silver pomander – an apple with tooth marks opens to reveal a skull, the interior of which is painted with Heaven and Hell (£12,000–£18,000) – to lithographs by the surrealist Man Ray and an outsize balalaika.

While the feet of the Roman marble statue of the emperor Hadrian (Fig. 2) offered in the Exceptional sale at Christie's New York on 29 October are dwarfed by the 1.2m-long disembodied foot in the Hoare sale, this figure is still over life-size and the real deal. It is not known when or where the 2nd-century AD antiquity was excavated, only that it was part of the collection in the Roman villa first owned by the 16th-century pope Sixtus V. In 1790, Hadrian – only partially clad and in a heroic, god-like stance – was claimed by the fourth Earl of Darnley for Cobham Hall, in Kent.

When the figure last came to auction in 2008, the head and body were deemed to have come from different statues, albeit ancient and possibly contemporaneous, and the statue was completed with typical 18th-century additions and restorations. It was acquired for the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins, founded by the British collector Christian Levett and opened in 2011. Subsequent research of the correspondence preserved in the British Museum between the art dealer Thomas Jenkins and the renowned collector Charles Townley revealed it as listed in 1787 as one of the antiquities in the Villa Negroni in Rome. The statue was bought for \$902,500 during the period of market paralysis shortly after the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008, and is offered now to benefit the museum: a figure in the region of \$6m is expected.

Jeremy Lancaster was a collector I should have liked to meet. A very private man who lent his works generously, he was by all accounts modest and unfailingly courteous but steely in his determination to spend all that he could afford – and occasionally more – on the wide range of post-war British and American painting that intrigued him. The Anglo-American axis is particularly evident in the collection's core of paintings by Howard Hodgkin, whose early *Tea Party in America* of 1948 (estimate £50,000–£70,000) was complemented by mature, lyrical works such as *Bombay Sunset* of 1972–73 (£500,000–£700,000). From one side of the Atlantic came Bridget Riley's mesmerising Op art curve painting *Orphean Elegy 7* (1979; £1.5m–£2m), from the other the



2. Statue of the emperor Hadrian, c. 117–138 AD, Roman, marble, ht 208cm. Christie's New York (estimate on request)



3. Pouch-shaped vase, Qianlong period (1735–96), China, enameled glass, ht 18.2cm. Sotheby's Hong Kong (estimate on request)

likes of Josef Albers' *Study for Homage to the Square: Red Tetrachord* (1962; £600,000–£800,000). A further high-value lot of this single-owner Frieze Week sale at Christie's London on 1 October is Philip Guston's *Language 1* of 1973 (£1.5m–£2m).

A highlight of FIAC week in Paris is Nicolas de Staël's monumental *Parc des Princes* of 1952, arguably the most extraordinary evocation of a football match. It was the forms and colours of the interacting moving players that excited the artist, who rendered what he saw in great slabs of pigment scraped across the canvas with a palette knife. This much-exhibited work has remained in the artist's family until now, and may well establish a new auction record when offered at Christie's on 17 October. Estimate €18m–€25m.

On 23–24 October, Sotheby's Paris opens a window on to the whimsical private world of Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne in a dedicated sale of more than 250 works drawn from the private collection of the late artistic duo affectionately known as Les Lalanne. On offer is a veritable menagerie of the domestic and wild, not least among them François-Xavier's flock of woolly sheep, *Moutons de Peter*, and *Rhinocrétaire* of 1991, a life-size patinated copper rhinoceros whose side opens to form a desk (€700,000–€1m). This and the likes of the crocodile armchair and settee perfectly encapsulate the couple's predilection for fun, functional sculpture inspired by the natural world. Also included are gifts from artist friends, such as Niki de Saint Phalle's *Une Nana pour Claude*.

A work of art that ought to be whimsical but somehow is precluded from being so by its technical complexity – and the fact that it is expected to fetch a whopping HK\$200m (US\$25m) – is the Beijing-enameled pouch-shaped glass vase that is a highlight of Sotheby's autumn sales series in Hong Kong (Fig. 3). Its conceit is that the glass simulates soft fabric and appears to be tied at the neck with a pink sash. The imperial blue-enamel mark sits on a peony bud. According to the auction house, the 18cm-high vase is arguably the greatest example of Qing Dynasty art in private hands. Taiwanese collector Robert Tsao acquired the piece at auction in 2000 for a record HK\$24m.

Though in an utterly different medium, John William Waterhouse's 1908 canvas *The Soul of the Rose* (the title derived from Tennyson's *Maud*) is similarly executed in an enamel-bright palette. The painting of a flame-haired beauty in a sequestered Tuscan garden, half closing her eyes as she inhales the scent of a bloom, is a glorious literary period piece. It comes to the block in the 28 October European Art sale at Christie's New York with expectations of \$3m–\$5m. **A**

