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ANTIQUES



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The Biennale

Paris's *Biennale des Antiquaires* celebrates its twenty-fifth year this September. With a reputation for high glamour, the show has sometimes been criticized for being "too French." This year, however, the fair can pride itself on having expanded the numbers of foreign exhibitors to include six from the United States and seven from the United Kingdom, many of whom are making their Biennale debut. Pierre Lexai, president of Marlborough Gallery, who is exhibiting at the Biennale for the first time, explains its appeal. "There are clients at the Biennale des Antiquaires that you don't see at any other fair and we are bringing important work to show them," he says. In exhibiting works by Francis Bacon and Andy Warhol, as well as by Manolo Valdés, Marlborough is in tune with the growth of interest in contemporary work at the Biennale. Here is what other American and British participants say about exhibiting alongside the French. *Biennale des Antiquaires • Grand Palais, Paris • September 15–22 • www.bdafrance.eu*

Jason Jacques *European ceramics, 1875–1925*
New York-based dealer Jason Jacques who specializes in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European art pottery, describes his inclusion in the Biennale as "a dream come true."

What he calls his "love affair with French ceramics" began when he was a high school student in Chicago with a summer job cleaning the gallery owned by a friend's

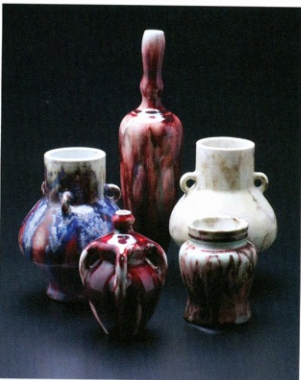
recently as two years ago when he mentioned his Biennale dream he was advised by a French dealer to "give it up; you have no chance."

He did not give up, however, and when interior designer François-Joseph Graf, who admires Jacques's ceramics and has close ties to the organizers of the fair, encouraged him to apply this year he did. Word came back that, regrettably, there was no room at the proverbial inn. Only after someone canceled in April did Jacques gain admission.

Ebullient, he immediately commissioned Graf to design a lavish booth re-creating the stand that celebrated designer Georges Hoentschel made for the seminal Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900. This elaborate backdrop showcases Hoentschel's *Marine Life*, a monumental stoneware vase that was one of a pair flanking the entrance to the pavilion of the Union centrale des arts décoratifs at the 1900 exposition. The booth also features numerous other examples by Hoentschel, Jean Carriès, and other Japoniste ceramists.

Jacques is especially excited to be bringing this art back to Paris and to be showing it across the street from the Petit Palais, where Hoentschel's own collection of Carriès pieces are on permanent display.

The Biennale is also the debut for the first one hundred copies of Jacques's new book, *Exotica: Exotic Influences on European Decorative Arts, 1875–1925*, a companion to the exhibition of the same name that he will host at his New York gallery from October 8 to November 12. www.jasonjacques.com



father. He was enchanted by the objects on display there. Eventually he dropped out of school "with four hundred dollars and a dream," to become a picker. He lived in Paris from 1992 to 1995 where the Biennale seemed both palpably close and unattainably distant.

Since then Jacques has established a formidable reputation for himself and for his somewhat neglected field, and yet even as



Finch and Company *Ethnography, European works of art, natural history, and antiquities* London-based dealers Craig and Jan Finch of Finch and Company are also heading to the Biennale for the first time. They specialize in an eclectic mixture of high-end objects from myriad places and periods, that share a totemic capacity to mesmerize. Recent stock includes an ancient Egyptian prophylactic charm; an Amazonian Jivaro Indian imitation shrunken head; a Renaissance cast-bronze wine tap with a mermaid-shaped spigot; the skeleton of an extinct New Zealand moa; and a silver-rimmed carved coconut drinking cup made by shipwrecked English sailors about 1857. A highlight at this Biennale stand is a seventeenth-century model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, carved from olive wood and inlaid with ebony, ivory, and engraved mother-of-pearl, which will be sold with eight separate models of other important pilgrimage sites. These meticulously constructed models can be disassembled to reveal the interiors as well as the relics contained within them.

Such objects demand a sophisticated audience with a knowledge of history and the confidence to invest in the quirky and the esoteric. With no public gallery, the Finches publish a biannual catalogue known among connoisseurs for the thoroughness and wit of its descriptions. They rely on fairs to draw a wider clientele to their objects, which they present in dramatic modern-day cabinet-of-curiosity installations. www.finch-and-co.co.uk

Ariadne Galleries Antiquities New York antiquities specialist Ariadne Galleries is exhibiting at the Biennale for the fourth time. Gregory Ara Demirjian notes that they too have seen a "healthy growth in business among our European clientele," and that "as a result we have been gradually shifting more of our focus to Europe, opening showrooms in Paris and Munich." The Biennale, which Demirjian describes as, "undoubtedly the most glamorous art event in Europe," is a natural venue for them.

Ariadne's stand features a group of rare, fourth to sixth-century A.D. Byzantine works from the Near East and Asia Minor that underline the pre-eminence of Alexandria and Antioch rather than Rome in the development of early Christianity. Demirjian hopes to highlight Syria's importance in the early church, "especially considering the current religious and political situation in the Middle East." Objects such as a large limestone epistyle intricately carved with Christian motifs and a large limestone round carved with a Christogram—both created to adorn Syrian churches in the fifth and sixth centuries—speak with poignant dignity. www.ariadnegalleries.com



Top left: Church of the Holy Sepulchre model, seventeenth-century. Olive wood, ebony, ivory, and mother-of-pearl. Photograph courtesy of Finch and Company, London. *Roundel:* Byzantine, sixth-century A.D., carved limestone. Photograph courtesy of Ariadne Galleries, New York.