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PRIVATE COLLECTIONS AND WORKS OF ART OF RICH HISTORICAL PROVENANCE AT CHRISTIE'S



Paris - Following the success of 2011, which saw Christie's best year ever for African and Oceanic Art with a major new world record obtained for a Kota reliquary figure, *the department of African and Oceanic Art* is pleased to present their spring sale on June 11th 2012. The majority works of art present in the sale were acquired before the Second World War, have never been seen on the market place and offer deeply historic provenance. Among the highlights of the sale is a group of Gabonese and Congolese works of arts from an important French private collection completely fresh to the market. In this 'time capsule' we discovered a rare Fang-Mvāi reliquary figure estimated €400,000-600,000, a Kota-Shamaye reliquary figure estimated €150,000-200,000 and three Téké *buttū* statues, with an estimate of €25,000-35,000 for the tallest. Several major pieces which figured in the famous African Negro exhibition of 1935 and once formed part of Russell B. Aitken's collection are also presented at auction. A Yoruba horse rider from Nigeria estimated €250,000-350,000, a magnificent Bamana headcrest estimated €60,000-80,000 and an Iatmul Ceremonial hook figure from the Sepik River in New Guinea will be featured in this exceptional sale.

An Important French Private Collection



"Forgotten for over 50 years in the basement of a Parisian apartment, this eclectic collection has reappeared today for our delight offering a rare ensemble of Gabonese and Congolese pieces - some even deserving of the title - masterpiece: a Fang Mvúi with a glossy sacrificial patina accumulated over centuries, a Kota Shamaye reliquary figure with a foliate face as sharp as an assegai blade, two Teke figures with mysterious bilongo charges" **declared Pierre Amrouche, International Consultant for the African and Oceanic Art department.**

Another important group of works of art from West Africa will also be presented within the collection. And from far away Melanesia – a refined Massim lime spatula, a Papuan Gulf zoomorphic drum, two major Kanak door-jambs and two rare Kanak throwing spears adorned with finely carved miniature masks.

"A large group of these items were bought upon the advice of Charles Ratton, whom the owner of the collection, a well-known scientist, knew as reflected clearly in the old

French auction catalogues from the 20 's with hand-written annotations, which remain in the family's archive. Last, but not least, many of the pieces were based on Inagaki's stands – a mark of excellence" **added Pierre Amrouche.**

Former Collection of Russell B. Aitken

We are pleased to reunite in Paris, after almost a century, three important works of art formerly in the collection of the New York collector Russell B. Aitken (1910-2002). The three are led by a masterpiece of Yoruba art. The Yoruba horse and rider was first known in the collection of Parisian art critic Felix Fénéon (1861-1944) – renowned as the first art critic to support Matisse and the so-called 'Fauves' and also, almost one hundred years ago famously called for African works of art to be shown in the Louvre. This magnificent relic, surely from the early 19th century, has been celebrated in 13 publications over the last nine decades including the famous African art exhibition catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art in 1935 (estimated: €250,000-350,000, illustrated right).





Another is a superb Bamana antelope headdress - iconic in the canon of African art - originally acquired from the well-known Parisian dealer Anthony (Père) Moris (1866-1951), and also seen in the 1935 MoMA exhibition (estimate: €60,000-80,000).

The third is a tall Sepik River, Iatmul figure from New Guinea. This archaic figure was acquired in Paris, before the 1930's, from the famous artist and collector Walter Bondy (1880-1940). It later made its way to the collection of the great tastemaker and editor of *Vanity Fair* - Frank Crowninshield (1872-1947) in New York (estimate: €80,000-120,000, illustrated left).

African Art: Edith Hafter Collection

Selections from the collection of Edith Hafter (1911-2011) also highlight the sale. She was from the great family of collectors in Solothurn, Switzerland which included, namely, the famous art collector Josef Mueller (1887-1977). In this tradition, she created



an important collection of Modern art. Like Mueller, she also had a great appreciation for African art. She acquired many works from the well-known Swiss dealer Emil Storrer (1917-1989) including a unique Mende female figure. Highlights of the selection also include a majestic Dogon trough - an exceptional example of this classic West African form. It is estimated €20,000-30,000 (illustrated above right).

African Art: Various owners and collections of Emil Maetzel and L.C Appels



An impressive Kongo power figure, *nkisi*, from the collection of the German artist and collector, Emil Maetzel (1877-1955) and acquired before 1920 is another astonishing sculpture in the sale (estimated: €100,000-150,000, illustrated left).

A rare Songye power figure with its head turned to the side acquired by the Dutch collector L.C Appels before 1930 and which stayed in the family ever since (estimated €30.000-50.000), rounds out the Central African discoveries.

Finally, a major Dan mask formerly in the collections of Maurice Nicaud estimated €80,000-120,000 and a rare Malinke mask (€30,000-50,000), one of only six known, represent a few other noteworthy highlights from this exceptional sale.

Oceanic Art: Various owners and the collection of Dr. Alphonse Long

Treasures from the Marquesas Islands lead our selection of rare works of Polynesian art. A collection never seen before now, with pieces collected in the Islands between 1882 and 1891 by Dr. Alphonse Long (1852-1923), includes a rare Marquesan drum, ancient and in excellent condition (estimate: €20,000-30,000), and an exceedingly rare and impressive Marquesan feast bowl (estimate: €20,000-30,000), of tremendous proportions



with powerful 'tiki' figures flanking each end (illustrated above right).

A rare and important Kanak adze from New Caledonia of elegant proportions with a tiny mask at the cross-section is a Melanesian treasure coming from an important French private collection (estimate: €30,000-50,000).

Sale: Monday 11 June 2012 at 4:00 pm

Exhibition: On Thursday 8, Friday 9, Sunday 10 June from 10 :00 am to 6 :00 pm and on Monday 11 June from 10:00 am to 12:00pm

Christie's : 9 avenue Matignon 75008 Paris

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Images et catalogue disponibles sur demande

A propos de Christie's

Christie's est la première maison de ventes aux enchères dans le monde, avec des ventes aux enchères et privées qui ont atteint en 2011, la somme totale de \$5.7 milliards. Christie's est synonyme d'œuvres d'art exceptionnelles, de services incomparables et de prestige international. Fondée en 1766 par James Christie, la Maison Christie's a dirigé les plus importantes ventes aux enchères des 18^{ème}, 19^{ème} et 20^{ème} siècles et est aujourd'hui le lieu le plus célèbre pour vendre des objets uniques et exceptionnels. Christie's organise près de 450 ventes par an dans plus de 80 catégories différentes, dont les tableaux, le mobilier, la joaillerie, la photographie et les vins. Les prix s'échelonnent entre \$200 et \$80 millions. Christie's compte 53 bureaux répartis dans 32 pays et 10 salles de ventes dans le monde entier, notamment à Londres, New York, Genève, Paris, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubaï et Hong Kong. Christie's a été la première maison de ventes aux enchères à développer de nouvelles initiatives dans des marchés en pleine croissance comme la Russie, la Chine, l'Inde et les Emirats Arabes Unis, en organisant des ventes aux enchères et des expositions qui ont remporté un franc succès à Pékin, Dubaï, Mumbai et en Russie. Christie's propose également à ses clients un accès mondial à ses ventes, par le biais de Christie's LIVE™, son service unique d'enchères sur le net, en ligne et en temps réel.

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