



# ANTIQUES TRADE gazette

THE ART MARKET WEEKLY



A gothic ivory table casket c.1330 sold for £1.2m at Lyon & Turnbull on May 20.

## A glory of the chivalric age

The Five Centuries sale at Lyon & Turnbull in Edinburgh on May 20 included a sensational example of medieval art – a 14th century French gothic ivory casket or coffret. Ten minutes of bidding that began at the top estimate of £50,000 estimate ended at £1.2m.

A glory of the chivalric age, this is one of only nine complete secular ivory coffrets known. Probably made in Paris c.1330, it is intricately carved in bas-relief with narratives relating to courtly literature. On this coffret, that measures 10in (25cm) across, the panels appear to

relate to the famous medieval romance *Tristan and Isolde* and the Arthurian legend *Queste del saint grail*.

To the lid (pictured left) is a scene of 'wild men' fighting to conquer a castle (and again defeated and in chains on the back panel), a popular motif in medieval imagery akin to the winning of a lady's heart. The brass brackets, straps and handle are later additions.

The casket comes with an impeccable provenance from Tornaveen House in Aberdeenshire. Its history can be traced back to 1615 where it is described in the genealogy of the Baids of Auchmedden in connection with Thomas Baird, a friar of a monastery in Besançon, Burgundy. Family history suggested it had been made (rather than acquired) by Thomas Baird leading the vendors to erroneously believe it was 17th century.

The final price with a 25/20% premium was close to £1.45m. It was L&T's first seven-figure lot on UK soil (and the most expensive work of art sold in Scotland) although in 2016 the firm went to Hong Kong to sell a Xuande (1426-35) mark and period blue and white stem cup for £3.1m.

Roland Arkell



## Maastricht fair 'online only' for 2021

by Laura Chesters

TEFAF Maastricht 2021 has been cancelled due to the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The international art and antiques fair had been moved from March to September this year but the decision has now been taken to cancel the event.

In a statement the organisers said: "After careful consideration of current global circumstances, The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF) has made the decision to cancel the in-person component of TEFAF Maastricht 2021."

TEFAF Online 2021, will run from September 9-13 instead of the physical event.

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## Art Market Participants must register by June 10

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has again warned the art market that businesses must register under the 5th Money Laundering Directive by next month.

Known as 5MLD, this regulation took effect on January 10, 2020. It requires auction houses, art galleries and dealerships to conduct stricter due diligence on buyers who purchase works of art above a threshold of €10,000.

The regulation requires Art Market Participants (AMPs) – anyone trading in or acting as an intermediary in the trade of works of art that sell for above the threshold – to register with HMRC

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# A glimpse of the old Singapore

Contents of a Straits Chinese shophouse sold at auction provide window to the past

by Roland Arkell

The sale at Hotlotz (24% buyer's premium) in Singapore that closed online on May 2 included the contents of a Peranakan shophouse.

The furniture and many of the furnishings had been bought for the property. Number 20 Blair Road, a merchants' street laid out in 1900, had since remained largely untouched, its tiled and painted interior providing an atmospheric glimpse into the life of old Singapore.

The Peranakans, descended from the first waves of Chinese settlers into the ports of the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago, readily embraced Western culture and religion as a means to advancement.

In Singapore, where administrative and civil service posts were often filled by prominent Straits Chinese, they were known also as the King's Chinese due to their loyalty to the British Crown.

This mixing of Chinese and local culture can be clearly seen in Peranakanese (or Baba-Nyonya) decorative arts: furniture that mixes English, Dutch and Chinese elements, Straits Settlement ceramics imported from China and meticulously embroidered and beaded textiles and garments that owe much to European floral subjects.

In recent years, as the once distinct lifestyle fades into history, Peranakanese material culture has become a lively collecting market based in Malaysia and Singapore.

Perhaps the best-known accessory of the Nyonya is the beaded slipper or *kasot manek*: first popular in the early 20th century, they were made by stringing tiny faceted Bohemian glass beads (*manik potong*) onto canvas in bold floral patterns.

A lot here comprising eight pairs of *kasot manek* alongside elements of embroidery and beadwork that formed part of a wedding attire, received 71 separate bids. Estimated at Sin\$150-250, it sold to a Singapore bidder at Sin\$20,000 (£10,800).

## Mixing East and West

Typical of the Peranakanese furniture made for the shophouse, c.1910, was a carved and parcel gilt side cabinet that combined Western motifs (a gallery top decorated with ribbon tied swags) with Eastern inspired dragon carved



1



2



3



4



1. Peranakan carved and parcel gilt side cabinet – Sin\$24,000 (£12,900) at Hotlotz.

2. These pairs of beaded slippers or *kasot manek* sold alongside beadwork elements of wedding attire – Sin\$20,000 (£10,800).

3. Shown in situ in a Peranakan shophouse, untouched since the 1920s, this carved mirror-backed sideboard with a later painted finish made Sin\$8500 (£4600).

4. Three pieces of Chinese export Nyonya ware – Sin\$8500 (£4500).

“

The mixing of Chinese and local culture can clearly be seen in Peranakanese decorative arts

supports and pierced decoration. It also attracted fierce competition, selling way above a Sin\$400-600 guide to bring Sin\$24,000 (£12,900).

Straits Chinese porcelain, popularly known as Nyonya ware, was exported from China between 1856 (the beginning of the Tongzhi era) and 1945 (the end of the Second World War).

Ostensibly similar to much later Chinese porcelain (many have red enamel factory marks to the base), it assumes distinct colour combination, motifs and shapes that define the collecting hierarchy.

Popular local forms such as the covered bowl and stand (*kamcheng*) and the covered jar (*kat may* or *chupus*) decorated with traditional designs against strong background colours are particularly desirable. Many of these 'festive' pieces (blue and white wares were reserved for everyday use) were made as wedding sets.

Several group lots sailed away at Hotlotz including three pieces (a *kamcheng* and two *chupus*) decorated with flowers, foliage, Taoist symbols and phoenix against a pink and brown ground sold at Sin\$8500 (£4500). ■



## Two Tongues in Toulouse



A collection of 20th century designer furniture has been discovered in a local apartment by Jérôme de Colonges, auctioneer for Primardecò/Ivoire Toulouse and will feature in a sale on June 1, writes Anne Crane.

In the 1970s the vendor's father asked the Toulousian architect Fabien Castaing, a pupil of le Courbusier, to build and furnish a house in the village of Launaguet near Toulouse. The interior furnishings included, among others, a group of furniture by Charlotte Perriand that featured a table, a set of six Meribel chairs and a Berger stool, two high stools plus two of Pierre Paulin's famous Tongue chairs.

In all 17 pieces will be offered in the June sale in Toulouse. Pictured here is the pair of Paulin chairs which have an estimate of **€1000-1500**.

► [primardecò.com](http://primardecò.com)

## Belk heiress porcelain collection

Doyle in New York is selling the collection of the Belk department store heiress Sarah Belk Gambrell, who died last year aged 102, in various auctions this year.

On June 24 it will hold a dedicated single owner sale of European porcelain from her collection followed by Asian porcelain in September and furnishings and art in October.

The June sale of European ceramics has over 140 lots and will include examples from Continental European factories such as Meissen, du Paquier, Vincennes, and a variety of English factories including Chelsea, Longton Hall and Bristol.

Pictured here is one of the English lots, a pair of Longton Hall taperstick models of birds dated to c.1750 from the Snowman class (so called because these pieces have a covering of thick white glaze). The long necked crested birds, each depicted pinning down a snake or branch beneath their claws, stand 6¼in (16cm) high and 7½in (19cm) wide. Both are missing the candle nozzles and there are some areas of damage and restoration. The birds have a provenance to a sale at Christie's, London in 1971. The estimate is **\$8000-12,000**.

► [doyle.com](http://doyle.com)



## Panther with provenance



Hindman is holding a sale of antiquities and ancient art in Chicago on May 27 which will feature this Greek, (Hellenistic) marble head of a panther dated to c. 3rd -2nd century BC. The head, which comes from a life size model of the animal, measures 8in (20cm) high and 5½in (14cm) wide. It has a provenance to the Mr AT Ganasoulis Collection, Patra, Greece, prior to 1906, acquired by Alexis Nasco, Greece, January 8, 1906 and thence by descent and is accompanied by a purchase record.

The estimate is **\$40,000-60,000**.

► [hindmanauctions.com](http://hindmanauctions.com)

## Beauty and Beyond

As part of its spring sale series in Hong Kong, Bonhams' May 27 Fine Chinese Art auction will open with a 64-lot section titled Beauty and Beyond Women in Chinese art devoted to items featuring representations of women in traditional and modern Chinese art history.

Among the highlights is this 18th century bamboo brushpot. It is carved with a continuous garden scene with buildings and features elderly ladies sitting chatting and entertaining accompanied by three young attendants preparing tea, holding a book and opening a door to the garden wall. The subject matter may refer to a painting by Zhou Wenju (c.917-975AD), an artist active in the late Five Dynasties, depicting ten court ladies playing in an Imperial garden. The brushpot, which measures 6¼ (16cm) high and 5in (12cm) diameter, is notable for the detailed high relief carving. The estimate is **HK\$400,000-600,000**.

► [bonhams.com](http://bonhams.com)



## Hotlotz for charity

The timed sale of jewellery and watches held by Hotlotz in Singapore, which runs until May 30, features 74 lots that have been consigned from a private family collection. They are to be offered for sale without reserve with proceeds donated to the Singapore charity, Beyond Social Services.

The highlight of the collection is an Art Deco style ring set with a Colombian emerald weighing 38ct. The cut-cornered stone is accompanied by a NanYang Gemological Institute Report, dated March 23, 2021, stating that the emerald is consistent with a stone of Colombian origin with indications of minor clarity enhancement. It is mounted on a diamond set gallery and shoulders (one black diamond to the shoulder is missing). The estimate is **Sin\$18,000-25,000**.

► [hotlotz.com](http://hotlotz.com)



## Gérard's portrait of Henry Seymour

Artcurial holds one of its periodic sales of Old Master and 19th century paintings and drawings on June 9. This latest event features a single-owner 25-lot collection of paintings by French artists who lived and worked in Italy followed by a large mixed-owner selection.

A highlight of the various owners' sale is this 5ft 2in x 3ft 9in (1.6 x 1.1m) oil on canvas portrait of Henry Seymour (1776-1849) by the French artist François Pascal Simon, baron Gérard (1770-1837).

The sitter's parents were Henry Seymour Snr (1729-1807) and his second wife Anne-Louise-Thérèse Comtesse de Panthou, a French aristocrat. In 1778 the couple moved to France so the young Henry had a combined English and French education before being forced to flee France in August 1792 when the family's assets were seized under the Revolution. When Henry Seymour senior died in 1807 he bequeathed the demesnes of East Knoyle House, Wiltshire and Northbrook to his son.

The family archives of the artist record that Gérard painted Mr Seymour in 1815 for which he was paid 6000 francs. The portrait depicts Henry not in contemporary clothing but in the costume of the early 17th century (Henry was a distant relative of the Tudors) wearing a slashed doublet and breeches. His hand is placed on the head of a greyhound that was in fact the artist's own pet dog.

The painting was left by Henry to his son Alfred, then passed to his only daughter Jane Margaret Seymour, both of whom lived at East Knoyle. It appeared at Christie's in 1945 after Jane Seymour's death and then has a provenance to an English collection. It comes up for sale at Artcurial with an estimate of **€150,000-200,000**.

► [artcurial.com](http://artcurial.com)



Image credit © ARTCURIAL