

CHRISTIE'S

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THE MICHEL PÉRINET COLLECTION 23 JUNE 2021 AT CHRISTIE'S PARIS

"I am a collector who would like to have everything and keep nothing. Just from time to time an object, (...) the one that, in its kind, would sum up for me a collection"
Michel Périnet in *Être antiquaire*, Ardin et Pimenta, 1983.

Paris - Christie's France is honoured to announce the sale of Michel Périnet's collection of African, Oceanic and Native American art on Wednesday 23 June in Paris, 9 avenue Matignon.

Prior to his death in 2020, the legendary Parisian gallerist and collector had entrusted the sale of his collection to four esteemed colleagues, leading art world specialists Alain de Monbrison, Lance Entwistle, Bernard Dulon and Maître François de Ricqlès, who will oversee the sale of 60 iconic works from around the world. They have chosen Christie's to conduct this momentous sale.

The auction will be a fitting tribute to a discreet man and a distinguished collector. Those visiting the free public exhibition, from 19 – 23 June, will have the opportunity to see this extraordinary collection of masterpieces for the first time in 50 years.

The sale includes iconic works from the Gabonese equatorial forest, masks from Central Africa and a collection of pieces from Easter Island, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.



Highlights from the sale



ill.1
FANG HEAD
Estimate: €2,000,000-3,000,000



ill.2
KOTA MASK
GABON
Estimate: €300,000-400,000



ill.3
LUBA MASK
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
Estimate: €1,500,000-2,000,000

The African collection includes a remarkable group of five works from the Gabonese equatorial forest. The exceptional Fang head once owned by Maurice de Vlaminck (ill. 1), which has not been exhibited since November 1930, stands alongside the Fang reliquary figure *byeri* acquired by the architect Josep Lluís Sert in 1929. The famous Kota helmet, which once sat near the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* at the home of the couturier Jacques Doucet (ill. 2), is displayed alongside Léonce-Pierre Guerre's Fang *ngil* mask, Pierre Loti's Mahongwe and a moving Tsogho bust.



ill.4
BAGA SHOULDER MASK
GUINEA
Estimate: €800,000-1,200,000

Also included in the African collection is a Congolese Luba mask - an icon of Central African art (ill.3). Alongside this work is an exquisitely-crafted shoulder mask, made by the Baga artists of Guinea (ill.4). Finally, a precious Dan mask from the Ivory Coast – a work which was previously owned by Helena Rubinstein and Hubert Goldet before it was acquired by Michel Périnet. (ill. 5).



ill.5
DAN MASK
IVOIRY COAST
Estimate: €200,000-300,000



ill.6

RAPA DANCE PADDLE,
EASTER ISLAND

Estimate: €700,000-1,000,000



ill.7

TAPUANU MASK
CAROLINE ISLAND

Estimate: €500,000-700,000

Another sumptuous ensemble, this time of Polynesian origin, the four Easter Island works in the Périnet collection, range from the abstraction of the *rapa* dance paddle (ill. 6) to the powerful expressionism of the "ribbed man" *moai kavakava*. They are among the most accomplished examples of Easter Island aesthetics from the classical period.

Acquired in 1877 by the Goddefroy Museum in Hamburg, the rare *tapuanu* mask from Mortlock Island has also graced the walls of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Dresden (ill. 7).

The New Ireland black *uli*, one of only seven known to exist in the world, is an unmissable masterpiece (ill. 8). Alongside this, in Périnet's Oceanic collection, is an outstanding example of a ceremonial shield from the Solomon Islands, inlaid with elaborate designs in mother-of-pearl (ill. 9).

"It is by entering the object that one enters one's own skin"
Matisse, 1952.



ill.8

ULI STATUE
NEW-IRELAND

Estimate: €600,000-800,000



ill.9

CEREMONIAL SHIELD,
SOLOMON ISLANDS

Estimate: €500,000-700,000

Michel Périnet, the collector

Michel Périnet was well-known for his high standards and discretion as a collector. As a jeweller, he built up the finest *art nouveau* collection centered around the creations of René Lalique. He used to say that if he could go back in time, he would have tried to prevent the birth of Calouste Gulbenkian, his great rival as a Lalique collector and founder of the famous Lisbon museum. From his shop on rue Danièle Casanova, Périnet was tireless in the hunt for new treasures to tempt his elite group of clients. As a measure of his dedication, a René Lalique jewel, once handled by him, still holds the world auction record (*Beyond Boundaries* Christie's Geneva – [A diamond and pearl pendant](#) sold for \$975,035, on 13 November 2017).



In addition to his love of Lalique, he also spotted the then-undervalued works of the Pont-Aven school which he collected extensively. He also assembled an *art deco* ensemble still recognized as exceptional today. In particular, he owned the [famous fauteuil aux dragons by Eileen Gray](#), which he agreed to sell to Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé on a whim and which became the most expensive chair in the world when sold at their Christie's sale in Paris on 24 February 2009 for €21,905,000. He then set his

sights on modern painting, particularly on the work of Francis Picabia, and finally discovered the arts of Africa and Oceania, a passion that would never leave him.



ill. 10
HAÏDA HEADRESS
BRITISH COLOMBIA

In all these fields, Michel Périnet showed an uncommon vision and determination. Always ready to sacrifice for a new acquisition, he never hesitated to acquire the works on which he had set his sights, often criticized for ‘overpaying’ by trade colleagues. This focus helped him build unrivalled collections, the result of the absolute passion and hard work of an extraordinary man with a legendary eye and rigour. He will always be known as a master collector alongside Jacques Doucet, his role model, and Nouran Manoukian, his great friend.

To honour his memory, his wife Madame Cailles-Périnet recently donated a major Native American work of art from the Northwest Coast of Canada that once belonged to the sculptor Jacob Epstein (ill. 10), to the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac.

Sale: Wednesday 23 June at 4pm

Exhibition: 19 to 23 June from 10am to 6pm: Open on Sunday from 2pm to 6pm.

Christie’s specialists: Alexis Maggiar, International Head African and Oceanic Department, Victor Teodorescu Head of sales.

Christie’s: 9 avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris

Notes to editors:

Bernard Dulon:

Bernard Dulon is an ethnologist, a member of the Compagnie Nationale des Experts and an expert at the Paris Court of Appeals. His gallery in Paris has been specialized for the last 40 years in ancient African art. He is responsible for major exhibitions on themes such as Gabonese art (“Tsogho, les icônes du Bwiti,”) Kota reliquary figures, the arts of Cameroon and the African art collection of the sculptor Arman. Bernard Dulon takes part in fairs such as TEFAF Maastricht and New York and in Frieze Masters London. He also acts as an exhibition curator for cultural institutions, editing and/or writing the catalogues. Among other exhibitions, he has organized “Lumière noire —Arts traditionnels” at the Centre d’art de Tanlay, “Objetos-Signos de Africa” at the Ibercaja Foundation, “Carnets de voyages” at the Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, and “Voir l’invisible” at the Musée d’Aquitaine in Bordeaux. In addition, Bernard Dulon writes reviews and humorous texts for the Tribal Art Magazine.

Lance Entwistle:

Entwistle has worked with the traditional arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas for over forty-five years. Established by directors Lance Entwistle and Roberta Entwistle, the company has an unrivalled reputation for the quality and provenance of its objects and the depth of its research. The company has developed many of the field’s most important private collections of African and Oceanic art, as well as placing major works in museums worldwide, among them the Musée du Quai Branly Jacques Chirac, Paris, and the Met, New York. Entwistle has premises in Paris and in London and additionally exhibits at international art fairs.

Alain de Monbrison:

Alain de Monbrison has specialized in the ancient arts of Africa and Oceania for more than forty years. He founded his gallery in Saint-Germain-des-Près in 1971 and is today recognised as an authority in this field. His clients include major European and American private collectors as well as preeminent museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Smithsonian in Washington, the Barbier Mueller Museum in Geneva and the Quai Branly Museum in Paris. Alain de Monbrison is an honorary expert at the Court of Appeal, member of the Compagnie Nationale des Experts and of the Syndicat National des Antiquaires. He played a significant part in the records that were set in auctions including the André Breton sale in 2003, the Pierre Truth in 2006 and 2017 and the Jacques Kerchache collection in 2010.

François de Ricqlès:

François de Ricqlès has been an auctioneer and a renowned art market specialist for more than 30 years. An emblematic figure in the profession, he has orchestrated some of the most significant sales in recent decades in Paris. He began his career in 1988 at the Hôtel Drouot where, among other auctions, he organized the sale of Hubert Goldet's African art collection in July 2001, the largest dispersal sale of its kind at the time. In 2002, he joined Christie's France and later became President, a position he held from 2010 to 2019. His most significant achievements include: the historic sale of the Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé collection held at the Grand Palais in February 2009; the sale of a sculpted head by Modigliani, auctioned for more than 43 million euros in June 2010 (the highest auction result ever achieved in France to date) and "Les Giacomettis d'Hubert de Givenchy" sale in March 2017, among others. In 2019, François de Ricqlès created a consulting firm to advise art collectors and enthusiasts and provide his expertise and knowledge of the market and its stakeholders. He will once again hold the hammer at Christie's on Wednesday, June 23rd for the sale of the collection of his close friend, Michel Périnet.

About Christie's:

Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting Private Sales for clients and online sales are offered year-round across all categories. Christie's global presence is spread across a network of international salerooms and 61 representatives and offices. Christies.com provides detailed articles and videos on the objects offered for sale alongside the latest advances in digital viewing tools to make Christie's accessible to all.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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