

# CHRISTIE'S

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## Christie's Announces Three Leading European Art Dealers to Curate Pop-Up Exhibition at Hong Kong Convention Centre During May Auction Season

**Robert Bowman – Didier Claes – Xavier Eeckhout**

**25 to 29 May 2018**

**Hong Kong** – As part of Christie's ongoing commitment to facilitating the public exhibition and sale of works of art from a broad variety of categories to global audiences, a special exhibition will be staged from 25 to 29 May by three leading European dealers at the Hong Kong Convention Centre, during Christie's spring season of activities.

Guillaume Cerutti, Chief Executive Officer, Christie's: "We have invited Robert Bowman, Didier Claes and Xavier Eeckhout, three highly respected figures in the art industry, to bring a selection of works of art to our flagship public exhibition in Asia. Christie's is not only committed to exhibiting and celebrating artworks from across era and cultures, we also wish to forge stronger relationships with our partners in the trade through projects such as this. These selling exhibitions offer a wonderful opportunity to collectors in Asia."

### **BOWMAN SCULPTURE, LONDON**



Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917),  
*Le Baiser (The Kiss)*, 2nd Reduction,  
Bronze with a rich dark brown  
patination, with lighter brown and green  
highlights,

Height: 23 3/8" (59.4 cm),  
Conceived in 1886.

This example cast between 1905 and  
1910

© Courtesy Bowman Sculpture

Bowman Sculpture specialises in works by leading artists, ranging from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the present day, and is the foremost gallery in the world for sculpture by Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917). During Christie's May season in Hong Kong, Bowman Sculpture will present a selection of works by Rodin, whose celebrated sculptures have become icons of modern art. Highlighting the collection will be Rodin's *Le Baiser (The Kiss)* (conceived in 1886), one of the artist's best known sculptures. Originally conceived as part of *The Gates of Hell*, it was first exhibited as an independent group in Paris and Brussels in 1887. *The Kiss* represents the tragic love story of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini from *Dante's Inferno*. Today, with its blend of eroticism and idealism, *The Kiss* is considered an emblem of love and passion and will be displayed alongside Rodin's *L'Éternel Printemps (Eternal Spring)* (conceived in 1884), also inspired by Paolo and Francesca.

The exhibition will also present *Le frère et la soeur (Brother and Sister)* (conceived in 1890), a rare collaboration between Rodin and the famous female sculptor Camille Claudel, who was Rodin's lover and studio assistant. Madly in love but unable to abandon his partner of many years Rose Beuret, the relationship between Rodin and Claudel ended in 1890, the same year that *Le frère et la soeur* was conceived. While the sculpture is signed by

Rodin and acknowledged as being a work he created, the original figure for the young woman was in fact

modelled on Claudel's *La Jeune Fille à la Gerbe* (*Young Girl with a Sheaf*). Using Claudel's original form, Rodin made slight alterations to the composition including the addition of the small child. *Le frère et la soeur* (*Brother and Sister*) is the only known work in which Rodin directly collaborated with Claudel and was greatly received by collector's during Rodin's lifetime, perhaps because of its tender nature which differentiated it from the sombre figures that characterised *The Gates of Hell*. As a result, numerous museum collections around the world currently house versions of this model; including the Musée Rodin (Paris), the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), Walker Art Gallery (Liverpool), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC) and the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston).

Robert Bowman: "Rodin sits among the greatest sculptors since Michelangelo. While acquiring sculpture by Michelangelo is impossible, it is still possible to collect world class sculptures by Rodin. At Bowman Sculpture, we guide collectors through the maze of numerous casts, offering only the very best works from the artist."

## DIDIER CLAES, BELGIUM



GABON (Makokou-Mékambo)  
Ethnic group: Kota  
Presumed period: late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup>  
century  
Provenance: Ancient Collection Vérité, Paris  
Catherine et Patrick Sargos Collection, Paris  
© Studio Philippe de Formanoir

The Didier Claes gallery will display a selection of important masks, highlighted by a Kota mask from Gabon, along with a Chokwe mask from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and an Ibibio mask from Nigeria. The Kota masks are a rare and still unknown aspect of Kota art, discovered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in North Kota, eastern Gabon. This mask (presumed period: late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century), is known as an *Emboli* or *Empoli* and is a helmet mask of impressive height, carved out of wood. The mask reflects dreamlike imagery, merging animal and anthropomorphic motifs. The face is somewhat reminiscent of reliquaries with bulging eyes, a flat triangular nose and a rectangular mouth. The spots on the mask symbolise the panther and represent a warlike strength, while the ridge recalls the sagittal crest of the male gorilla, which evokes a powerful spirit of the forest. These masks appear at festivals and during the initiation ceremonies.

The exhibition will also feature a Pwo female mask (presumed period: late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century), an outstanding example of a traditional Chokwe mask. Carved in wood, the mask features half-closed almond eyes with arched brows and patterns of scarification. The mask honours the founding female ancestors from who the Chokwe trace their descent and are often worn during ceremonies to bring fertility and prosperity to a community.

The Ibibio mask (presumed period: late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century) originates from southwest Nigeria. The mask has an emaciated appearance and the design is indicative of death or to the diseases common to the area. These masks are worn during annual ceremonies and relay the connection between the world of the living and that of their ancestors, who are responsible for the welfare of the tribe.

Didier Claes: "On the occasion of the exhibition organised by Christie's in Hong Kong with two other gallery owners, Xavier Eeckhout and Robert Bowman, my gallery will present a selection of important masks. The selected group includes a Chokwe mask from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an Ibibio from Nigeria, and also a rare masterpiece: a Kota mask from Gabon. Power, exaltation and discovery will be the themes of this exhibition. The gallery has decided to participate in this exhibition for two reasons; it is a lovely

opportunity to exhibit in a fabulous city with an exciting, fast-paced art scene and the Didier Claes gallery is honored to work in collaboration with Christie's and great art dealers: Xavier Eeckhout and Robert Bowman."

## GALERIE XAVIER EECKHOUT, PARIS



Rembrandt Bugatti (Italian 1884-1916)  
*Asian Elephant walking*  
Bronze signed  
Founder stamp A-A. Hébrard  
Circa 1909-1910  
© Courtesy Xavier Eeckhout Gallery

Xavier Eeckhout is an expert in the field of animal sculpture, offering an eclectic and varied array of works. Among the highlights on display during the exhibition, Galerie Xavier Eeckhout will present Rembrandt Bugatti's (Italian, 1884-1916) *Asian elephant walking* (circa 1909-1910). Bugatti sought to capture the strength, movement and character traits of these majestic mammals, dedicating a series to sculpting elephants from 1907 to 1910. Also on view from Galerie Xavier Eeckhout will be works by Edouard Marcel Sandoz (Swiss, 1881–1971) including *Seated fennec* (circa 1920-1930), alongside *Two young dogs* (1931) by his pupil Enrico-Manfredo Di Palma-Falco (Italian, 1886-1988). Both artists completed their training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris under the tutelage of

sculptor Antonin Mercié. Marcel Sandoz's *Seated fennec*, portrays his understanding of classical and traditional techniques, knowledge of materials and profound understanding of his subject-matter. Focusing on the study of both wild and domestic animals, Marcel Sandoz was a prominent member of the Société des Artistes Animaliers, founded in 1912, and went on to establish the French Society of Animalists in 1933.

Xavier Eeckhout: "Accepting Christie's invitation to promote animal sculpture on the Asian continent is an honour and a project dear to my heart. It is an innovative initiative which encourages collaboration between art dealers and auction houses, thus creating a dynamic which is indispensable in a constantly evolving art market."

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### Public Exhibition:

Friday, 25 May 2018  
Saturday, 26 May 2018  
Sunday, 27 May 2018  
Monday, 28 May 2018  
Tuesday, 29 May 2018

### [About Christie's](#)

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2017 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$6.6 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. 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 its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

#### [About Bowman Sculpture](#)

Bowman Sculpture is based at 6 Duke Street, St James's, London, and is the foremost gallery in the world for sculpture by Auguste Rodin. The gallery starts its sculptural journey with European Romantic sculpture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dealing in the masters of this period such as Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse and Aimé-Jules Dalou through to the Impressionist, Modern and Cubist sculpture of Edgar Degas, Pablo Picasso, Henri Laurens, Jaques Lipchitz and Ossip Zadkine. Bowman Sculpture also specialises in the work of the English New School sculptors including Alfred Gilbert, Lord Frederic Leighton and Hamo Thornycroft. In addition, Bowman Sculpture exhibits the best of 20th century sculpture, particularly Modern British, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Lynn Chadwick, Elizabeth Frink, and Eduardo Paolozzi. In addition, Bowman Sculpture represents contemporary artists including Emily Young, Hanneke Beaumont, Maurice Blik and Yves Dana.

Robert Bowman opened Bowman Sculpture in 1993, after 15 years at Sotheby's from 1979 to 1993, during which he was Director of European Works of Art. Robert is an appointed sculpture expert for the UK Government committees for the Acceptance in Lieu Tax Scheme, and The Export of Art and Objects of Cultural Reference. He was the head of the TEFAF vetting committee for 19th & 20th century sculpture for over 15 years. In 2015 Bowman Sculpture sold the iconic Sybil Mignon Cooke archive to the Musée Rodin in Paris.

Bowman Sculpture holds regular exhibitions at the gallery at 6 Duke Street, St James's, positioned between Christie's and the Royal Academy of Arts, in the heart of London's art world. The gallery also participates in major international art fairs including TEFAF Maastricht; TEFAF Spring, New York; TEFAF Fall, New York; Frieze Masters, London; The Winter Antiques Fair, New York; and Art Miami.

#### [About Didier Claes](#)

From his earliest years, Didier Claes was exposed to African culture and traditions. His knowledge came from numerous trips to the Congo and for decades he supplied dealers in Brussels, Paris and New York. From around 2000, Didier Claes started to present selections himself by exhibiting at many fairs, such as the International Tribal & Textile Arts Show in New York, the Antique Dealers' Fair in Belgium, BRUNEAF (the Brussels Non-European Art Fair) and Great Antiques in Brussels, as well as Parcours des Mondes (Route of the Worlds) and the Collectors' Salon at the Grand Palais, in Paris.

In 2002, Didier Claes opened his first gallery, in the famous Sablon district of Brussels, focusing on presenting high-quality art objects from great Western collections. Since 2005 he has been a member of the Chamber of Experts in Art Works, as well as the Royal Chamber of Antiquarians of Belgium and the National Syndicate of French Antiquarians. In 2008 Didier Claes had his first experience of the prestigious TEFAF (The European Fine Art Fair) in Maastricht. At the same time, he undertook numerous other projects. As the Vice President of BRUNEAF, he was the co-curator of the exhibition *Mestach the African*, in 2007, and then *Congo Mythical Masks* in Brussels in June 2009. In 2011, he curated the show *The Art of Africa: Seeing the Invisible* at the Aquitaine Museum in Bordeaux, and edited the book *Prints of Africa: Tribal Art along the Rivers*, published by 5 Continents.

In 2015 Didier Claes was the curator of the exhibition *Uzuri wa Dunia* ('Beauties of the World' in Swahili), which presented 130 masterpieces at the Ancienne Nonciature in Brussels to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BRUNEAF. He was also an expert for many years at the Pierre Bergé & Associates auction house in Brussels. He was particularly noted for his role in BRAFA (Brussels Antiques and Fine Art Fair) in 2011, when he made headlines by presenting a unique Bakongo sculpture, which was typical of his exceptionally high standards. While his nomination in 2012 as Vice President of BRAFA brought him much recognition from his peers, it was his participation in the first Paris Biennial of Antiquarians that brought him rave reviews from the press and public. Today the Didier Claes Gallery is housed in a prestigious space, and includes many American and European collectors among its clientele, as well as international museums.

#### [About Galerie Xavier Eeckhout](#)

The eclectic nature and quality of the works offered by Xavier Eeckhout are now positioning the antique dealer among the rank of the greatest experts in the field of animal sculpture. As a member of the "Syndicat Français des Experts Professionnels en OEuvres d'Art et objets de collection" [French Union of Experts in Works of Art and Collectibles], and a member of the Royal Chamber of Antique Dealers of Belgium and the Syndicat National des Antiquaires [National Union of Antique Dealers], the man is regularly called upon by the largest auction houses and insurance companies to appraise and evaluate sculptures. Expert with auctioneers, he also works for public and private cultural institutions in order to guide them in acquisition choices and collection creations. The gallery takes part of the great gatherings of the art market such as TEFAF Maastricht, MASTERPIECE London, FINE ARTS PARIS and BRAFA Brussels.