

PREVIEW
PARIS AND BRUSSELS



AROUND THE GALLERIES

Carré Rive Gauche returns to Paris's Left Bank in early June, with an array of fine art, sculpture and furniture. In Brussels, a trio of fairs presents outstanding antiquities and Oriental works. **Monique Kent**



- 1 Seahorse, early 16th century
Padua, North Italy
Bronze, ht 16cm
Galerie Ratton-Ladrière at
Carré Rive Gauche, Paris
- 2 *Le Singe Bleu*
Beata Czapska (b. 1949)
Patinated bronze, ht 15cm
Galerie Bruno Janssem at
Carré Rive Gauche, Paris

Collectors and art enthusiasts flock to Paris's Left Bank for this year's eagerly awaited **Carré Rive Gauche** (www.carrerivegauche.com; 1–3 June). Celebrating its 35th anniversary, this year's event in the 7th arrondissement takes the theme 'Wild Thing', with a single choice work being exhibited across the 120 participating galleries. Split into seven categories (with such thought-provoking titles as 'Ferocious', 'Bestial' and 'Luxuriant'), the different sections admit an intriguing array of 17th-century furniture, primitive objects, 20th-century ceramics and fine art. In addition, several of this year's participants are also presenting exhibitions to coincide with the event.

Galerie Bruno Janssem, a specialist in modern art, offers a charming bronze monkey entitled *Le Singe Bleu*, by the Polish sculptor and architect, Beata Czapska (b. 1949; Fig. 2). Czapska's work explores the natural world, using stone, wood, granite and marble, imported from all over the world, to create images of animals, flora and fauna.

Galerie Ratton-Ladrière presents a striking early 16th-century Italian bronze of a hippocamp, a mythical beast that is half-horse and half-fish (Fig. 1). Originally used as a door knocker, its

craftsmanship can be attributed to a Paduan workshop, which was highly influenced by the Italian sculptor known as Riccio (1470–1532). Another version of this sea creature, with the hippocamp carrying a figure on its back, is attributed to Bartolomeo Ammanati and resides in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Galerie Alain Bovis presents an exhibition of ancient African ritual masks and statues entitled 'L'Afrique Sauvage' (31 May–3 June). One of the highlights here is a rather alarming Nigerian Boki sculpture. Carved in wood and dating from the late 19th or early 20th century, the figure's eyes are closed while its huge mouth gapes open in a scream.

Galerie Gabrielle Larouche explores the more organic sub-theme 'Vegetal/Luxuriant' with a rare Venetian walnut *cassone* (a carved or painted chest), dating to the 17th century. Hundreds of small pieces of ivory and different woods are inlaid in geometric patterns all over this spectacular piece, using a form of marquetry known as *certosina*.

A bronze statue of a *Drunken Silenus* group is unveiled by **Galerie Sismann**. This mythological composition is believed to be based on paintings and drawings on the subject executed in the early 16th century by Peter Paul Rubens. The maker of this

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work remains unknown, but it is likely to have been cast in France during the 17th century. The bronze shows Silenus being supported because of his age and drunken condition. A satyr holds him up on his right while his student and companion Bacchus, the ancient Greek god of wine, assists him on his left. Only five other casts of this subject exist, all of which belong to major public collections such as the Louvre and the Wallace Collection.

Following on from Carré Rive Gauche, Brussels hosts a trio of exceptional fairs at the Place du Grand Sablon from 6 to 10 June. Firstly, primitive art from Africa, Oceania and Indonesia is showcased at the **Brussels Non European Art Fair** (BRUNEAF; www.bruneaf.com). This year's event offers an array of rare primitive and aboriginal works from Australia, Africa, Columbia and Asia. An assortment of masks, jewellery, coins, weaponry and sculptures are displayed with both local and international dealers from Italy, France, the UK, Holland and the US. Among the highlights is an early 20th-century ancestor figure from the Murik Lakes region of Papua New Guinea, presented by **Michael Evans Fine Art**; Belgian participant **Daroun Galerij**, meanwhile, offers a bold Peruvian weaving (2nd–6th century), made from Alpaca wool.

For those with an interest in Asian and Oriental art, the **Brussels Oriental Art Fair** (BOAFair) boasts specialists in these areas from across the globe (www.boafair.be). Highlights include a 12th-century Chinese figure of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, presented by Jacques How Choong, and a Japanese Tenmoku-shaped tea bowl in the Awata manner by Ito Tozan (1846–1920), offered by Kitsune. An opportunity to view a 15th-century Dakini Simhavaktra from Tibet is afforded by Parisian

dealer Renaud Montméat (Fig. 3). This lion-faced Buddhist figure is carved in black stone in the *ardhaparyankasana* pose, and holds a *vajra* chopper in one hand and a skull bowl in the other.

The final of the trio of fairs taking place in the Belgian capital is the annual **Brussels Ancient Art Fair** (BAAF; www.baaf.be). BAAF offers a plethora of classical, Egyptian and Near-Eastern antiquities from around 20 international galleries. This year, the 10th anniversary of the fair is celebrated by an exceptional exhibition of Egyptian antiquities. 'Ancient Egypt: Masterpieces from Collectors and Collections' is open at the **Hôtel de Mérode** for the duration of BAAF, and presents around 120 artefacts from Predynastic Egypt to the Roman period. Instead of the more usual reliefs and coffins, this intriguing show presents smaller, precious Egyptian items, such as a glazed bee amulet dated 664–323 BC. Not to be missed is this spectacular head of Osiris from the 26th dynasty (664–525 BC; Fig. 4). Identifiable by his tall crown with plumes at either side, the deity wears a uraeus as king of the after-life and the underworld. Orisis was widely worshipped until the arrival of early Christianity. **A**



- 3** Dakini Simhavaktra, 15th century Tibet
Polychromed black stone, ht 17,3cm
Renaud Montméat at BOAFair, Brussels
- 4** Head of Osiris, (664–525 BC)
Egyptian, 26th dynasty
Greywacke sandstone, ht 28cm
Hôtel de Mérode, Brussels

May Calendar

L'Afrique Sauvage

Galerie Alain Bovis,
Paris
31 May–3 June
www.alainbovis.com

Carré Rive Gauche

7th Arrondissement,
Paris
1–3 June
www.carrerivegauche.com

BRUNEAF

Place du Grand Sablon,
Brussels
6–10 June
www.bruneaf.com

BOAFair

Place du Grand Sablon,
Brussels
6–10 June
www.boafair.be

BAAF

Place du Grand Sablon,
Brussels
6–10 June
www.baaf.be

Ancient Egypt: Masterpieces from Collectors and Collections

Hôtel de Mérode,
Brussels
6–10 June
www.baaf.be