

Collecting

Masterpiece Fair 2017 preview: antiques and modern curiosities

The emphasis remains on cross-collecting, with pieces spanning several thousand years



Egyptian bronze cat (c664-343 BCE) © David Aaron

Held every year in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Masterpiece was conceived to fill the gap after the Grosvenor House Art and Antiques Fair folded in 2009. Now in its eighth year, Masterpiece is a key date in the art fair calendar, an event which dealer Philip Mould has described as a “sensual experience”. The emphasis remains on cross-collecting, with contemporary and traditional pieces spanning several thousand years. In this edition, for the first time, visitors can experience an immersive installation by the Chilean artist Iván Navarro, which will occupy the entrance hall.

20th-century and contemporary art

Coinciding with the [David Hockney](#) retrospective at Tate Britain this year, Lyndsey Ingram is bringing three works by the artist to Masterpiece, including the characteristically bold “Afternoon Swimming”.

Another highlight is Alan Davie’s “Cat’s Claw #8”, at the Washington DC-based gallery Geoffrey Diner, which exemplifies the Scottish painter’s abstract and Aztec-influenced style.

On Jonathan Cooper’s booth, a selection of contemporary wildlife drawings span the continents. Highlights include Chinese artist He Xi’s monochrome “Maze” depicting a suspended goldfish and English artist Elizabeth Butterworth’s vibrant oil painting of a parrot, wings outstretched.

Artefacts

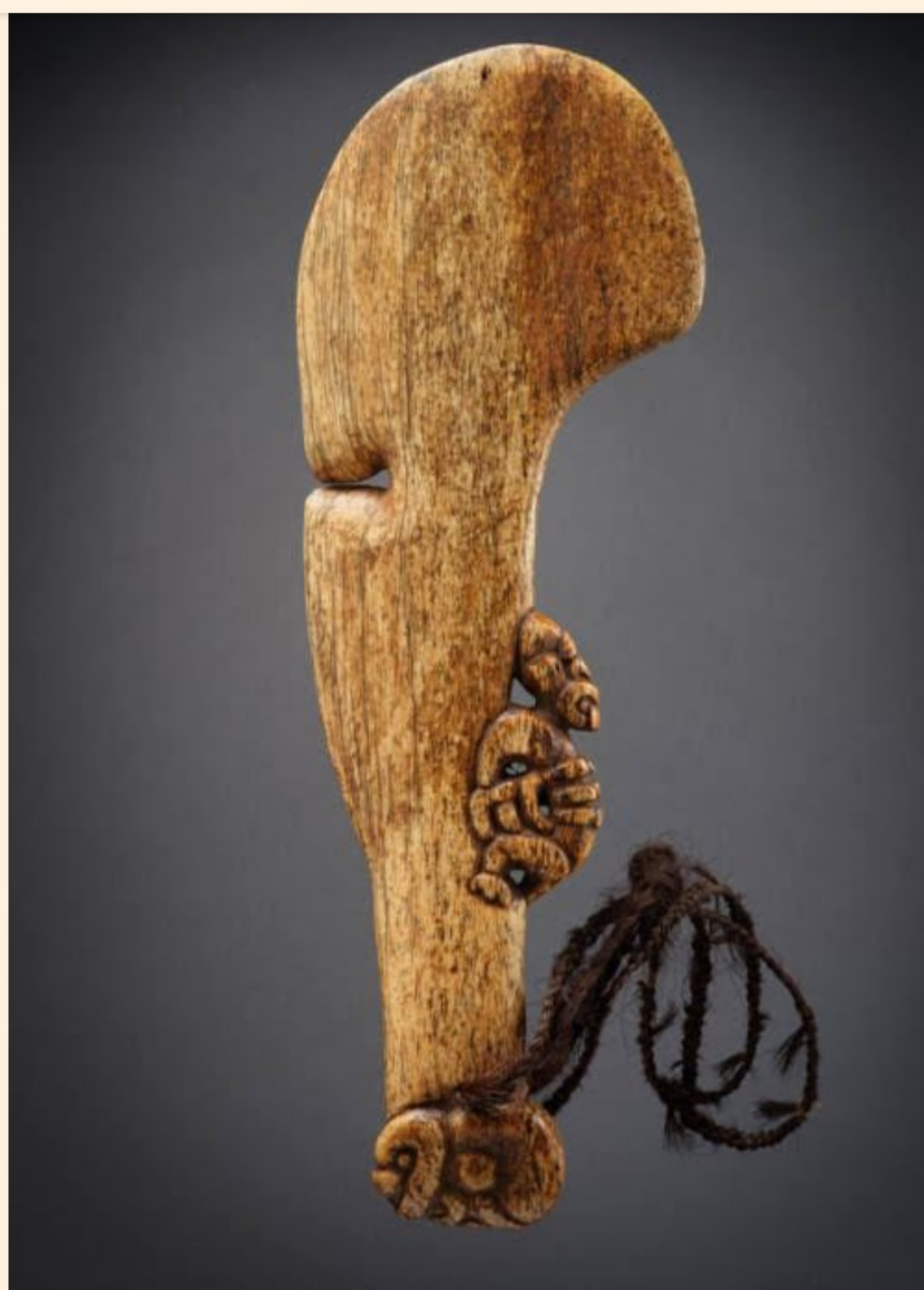
Patrick & Ondine Mestdagh deals in artefacts often picked up on the travels of its eponymous owners. This year the Belgian gallery will be showing historical curiosities from around the globe, notably an 18th-century Maori *wahaika* (traditional hand weapon) made from whalebone, and a striking 19th-century Zulu shield from South Africa. Fitch & Co London has an example of Japanese *netsuke*, carved in ivory and traditionally worn around the waist as a counterweight to an *inro* purse. Also on display is an antique mounted tusk from an arctic Narwhal whale, sometimes referred to as the “unicorns of the sea” for their distinctive spindle-like horns.

June 9, 2017 1:33 pm by Tarn Rodgers Johns



Design

Midcentury modern and Scandinavian influence is evident in the contemporary offerings at the fair. Modernity, for instance, is showing an elegant brass table lamp modelled on a scallop shell by the Finnish designer Paavo Tynell. Another freestanding lamp by the designer sold for a record-breaking \$252,704 in Paris earlier this year. Contemporary design connoisseurs should also visit the David Gill Gallery booth, whose exhibits include [Zaha Hadid’s](#) “Ultrastellar” chair, from the architect’s final furniture collection before her death in 2016, and Swiss designer Mattia Bonetti’s sculptural “Cloud” sofa.



Whalebone wahaika (18th century) © Mestdagh

Antiques

The Belgian dealer Axel Vervoordt is showing works from antiquity to the 20th century. Among those featured is marble sculpture of a torso and legs dating from the late first to early second century AD. London-based David Aaron is selling an Egyptian bronze cat, dating from c664-343BC — one of the earliest works at Masterpiece this year — as well as a 12th- or 13th-century gilded wood Amida Nyōrai Buddha from Japan.

And English postboxes haven’t always been painted their trademark red: an impressive 19th-century example at antiques dealer Apter Fredericks is made from solid oak. Usually designed in the miniature to sit on a dining table, this larger, decoratively carved example stands at 56 inches — the same height as the modern postbox.

Oriental and Asian Art

Michael Goedhuis is exhibiting a selection of ink works by the Chinese master Qin Feng, whose energetic compositions fuse the ancient art of calligraphy with daring modern applications.

Takeo Yamaguchi’s “Kō (Suburbs)” is at Gregg Baker Asian Art, alongside fellow Dōmoto and Suda Kokuta. And as for South Asian art, Amir Mohtashemi Ltd is exhibiting an interesting octagonal container from late 17th- or early 18th-century India, with delicate cut-out panels.

June 29-July 5, masterpiecefair.com

Photographs: David Aaron; Mestdagh