

# ART & ANTIQUES

BY CAROL CORDREY

It's officially summer, and time for the fun of the fairs in London, epicentre of the art world

## Faceless, Fabulous Females

How can an artist possibly make a success of creating faceless portraits? The answer is by using the skills and romantic touch of Christian de Laubadère. This French artist relocated to Shanghai where his portraits of women represent an harmonious mix of the two distinct cultures; they are a version of French haute couture merged with traditional Chinese femininity. Employing his fine painting skills and the technique of collage, Laubadère produces his wonderfully elegant head-and-shoulder portraits but only as back views which renders them faceless. Bizarrely, they retain a sense of individuality because he affords them varied hair styles, richly coloured Chinese robes and beautiful jewellery. Metaphorically speaking, his portraits are veiled in mystery and so, tantalisingly, viewers mentally attach to each one the face of someone they used to know, currently know or long to know. This injects an aura of romance into Laubadère's work which makes it all the more appealing and leaves me wondering if the artist paints these portraits with the famously amorous lyrics of *She* by French singer/songwriter, Charles Aznavour, ringing in his ears:

*"She may be the love that cannot hope to last.  
May come to me from shadows of the past.  
That I remember 'til the day I die".*

Christian de Laubadère  
15 June – 14 July  
stephaniehoppen.com



Q&A

with THOMAS WOODHAM-SMITH, Creative Director of Chelsea's Masterpiece

**Q: What were your ambitions when you established Masterpiece in 2010?**

**A:** We founded Masterpiece as a group of industry experts looking for a chance to promote London as the pre-eminent dealing hub; it had to be both serious and glamorous to draw in visitors, enthusiasts and buyers from all over the world. We wanted it to be interdisciplinary and to focus on display so that we could show collectors how marvellous and fun it can be to put all the ages and forms of excellence together.

**Q: Will this year's visitors see only paintings and sculpture, and will everything have been expertly vetted?**

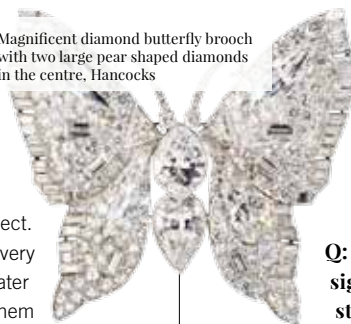
**A:** The diversity has never been broader. All periods of art and sculpture are represented, plus a comprehensive coverage of jewellery, tribal art, antiquities, photography, contemporary design, ceramics and glass.

We have the best in English furniture and clocks alongside their Continental parallels and we are particularly excited by our new, monumental contemporary sculpture project. On the question of vetting, every year we bring in an ever greater number of scholars, giving them the very latest in technological support. More than 130 people devote nearly two days to it.

**Q: 'Masterpiece' implies extremely high price tags; will there be items suited both to enthusiasts and new collectors?**

**A:** 'Masterpiece' relates both to a work recognised by time and scholarship and to a piece created by an apprentice when he reaches maturity. We actively encourage exhibitors to focus on quality, innovation, materials and rarity when choosing

Magnificent diamond butterfly brooch with two large pear shaped diamonds in the centre, Hancock's



what to bring. We hope that all visitors, regardless of wealth or experience, will consider themselves welcome to visit the fair and engage with the experts.

**Q: Can we look forward to any significant changes or new stands this year?**

**A:** We have many new exhibitors, all acclaimed in their fields, and we are looking forward especially to paintings by the late William Scott. I am forever thrilled by the mixture we can entertain visitors with, so this year we have vintage E-type Jaguars, fabulous Japanese art and previously unseen antiquities.

Masterpiece, 27 June – 3 July  
Royal Hospital, Chelsea  
masterpiecefair.com

# ART & ANTIQUES

## A Cornucopia of Artistic Treasures

Held at Olympia and partly coinciding with the Antiquarian Book Fair is that equally exciting attraction, the International Art & Antiques Fair. It brings to London a wonderful cornucopia of art, furniture, textiles and objects dating from pre-historic times to the modern day so it is a fascinating event for collectors, interior designers or anybody looking for an item that will bring a special finishing touch to the refurbishment of a room.

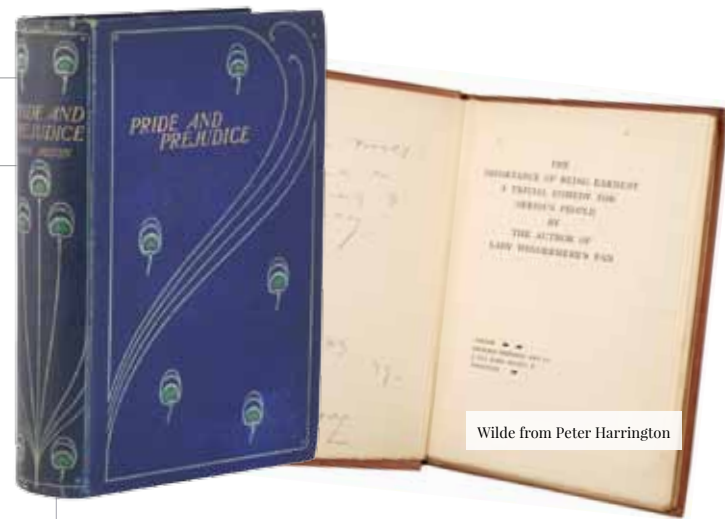
All items at the Fair are thoroughly vetted by experts and among the numerous, distinguished dealers will be Lennox Cato, known to most of us through the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, whose star items will include an English walnut-veneered chest (c. 1710). Ceramics enthusiasts will want to flock to Andrew Muir's stand to enjoy his Clarice Cliff pieces, especially those displaying the striking Appliqué Blossom design.

The international nature of this event is exemplified by Asian textile and furniture dealer Galerie Arabesque who will give pride of place to some early 17th century, very rare imperial dragon roundels. The area of fine art will be amply represented by English and overseas dealers, notably The Reel Poster Company with its iconic film posters such as those created for *Batman*, and Gilden's Art Gallery with a highly sought-after, signed, colour lithograph entitled *Saint Jean Cap-Ferrat* by Marc Chagall. Jewellery and watches by famous names such as Cartier alongside historic marble sculptures from Italy ensure the quality and appeal of this annual event.

*Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair, 6-16 June*  
[olympia-art-antiques.com](http://olympia-art-antiques.com)



*Batman* (1966) by Tom William Chantrell (1916-2001)  
 £4,500, The Reel Poster Company



Wilde from Peter Harrington

## The Beauty of Books

Descartes, the great French philosopher, said that "the reading of good books is like a conversation with the best men of past centuries" and the ideal place to seek out such appealing conversations is the London International Antiquarian Book Fair. Many thousands of visitors flock to it each year at Olympia where it satisfies their vast array of interests through books sourced from as many as 17 countries.

This Fair offers the perfect opportunity to see the finest quality book binding, illumination, writing and illustration created across hundreds of years, plus you can find pieces needed for prized book collections as well as rare books and first editions. Highlights will include an exquisitely presented group of volumes of poems by Shelley to be found on Paul Foster's stand; the specialist Jonkers will display two Jane Austen novels with bindings by the famed illustrator and designer, Talwin Morris; and courtesy of Peter Harrington there will be an example of the novel *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by its legendary author and celebrity, Truman Capote, alongside a copy of *The Importance of Being Earnest* signed by the late literary giant Oscar Wilde.



Capote from Peter Harrington

*The London International Antiquarian Book Fair*  
 13-15 June  
[olympiabookfair.com](http://olympiabookfair.com)

## AUCTIONS: MOST WANTED

### Military Matters

This Kensington auction house develops the great success of its March auction with another antique arms, armour and militaria sale this month. Highlights include a very rare, richly decorated Chinese helmet, c.14th century and believed to be from the Imperial court; a selection of English duelling pistols; Continental target pistols; and a collection of daggers and spurs from the Viking and later Crusader periods, many excavated in and around London.

**Date:** 26 June  
**Location:** 25 Blythe Road  
 Kensington

[25blytheroad.com](http://25blytheroad.com)



### The Beauty of the British Isles

**Item:** A solo show of 40 superb, sensitively painted and atmospheric landscapes that reveal the varied and wonderful characteristics of swathes of Norfolk, Suffolk, the Lake District, Scotland and Wales. This will be the first solo London show by acclaimed English painter Garry Pereira who has been described as "a landscape painter with the soul of a poet".

**Date:** 22 May – 7 June  
**Location:** The Osborne Studio Gallery

[osg.uk.com](http://osg.uk.com)