

FAB enjoys its new date in Paris

Good sales and happy exhibitors as France's showpiece fair moves from November to mid-September

Laura Chesters

John Updike wrote in 1953: "I love Paris in the spring time, I love Paris in the fall, I love Paris in the winter when it drizzles, I love Paris in the summer when it sizzles."

Art and antiques fairgoers love Paris in the fall most of all. This year *Paris* moved for the first time from November to mid-September and the new date seems to suit it. Guillaume Léage of 18th-century furniture and objets d'art specialist *Marie Léage* said: "I find the new dates are ideal to create a momentum at the start of the season, offering Parisians and international buyers a strong cultural programme, certainly a better timing than the former Biennale, which was too late in September."

Lesley Boyle, gallery director and curator of research at London drawings specialist *Stephen Ongpin Fine Art* said: "We enjoyed participating in the fair for the second time – and I prefer it being in September as it kicks off the fall season."

The fourth edition of the fair – that jointly unites the *Biennale des Antiquaires* and *Fine Arts Paris* – opened its VIP day on September 19 and will run until September 24.

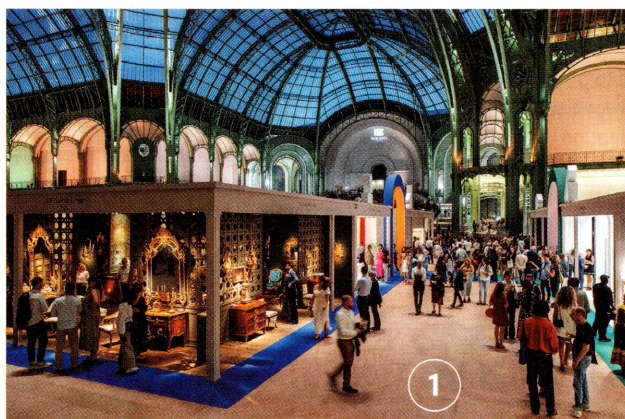
Last year's event suffered from cold temperatures in the glass and metal structure of the 125-year-old Grand Palais so it was a welcome change to have a mild, if sometimes variable, climate this autumn.

Although sales on the first VIP day may not have been as fast paced as at other high-end art fairs, several exhibitors made significant sales early on.

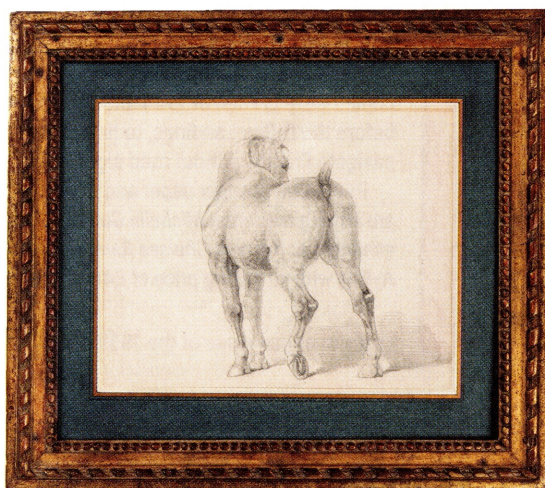
Japanese specialist *Jean-Christophe Charbonnier* almost sold his booth within just three days. Sales included his main piece, a 17th-century Gomai Mogami musoku armour priced between €100,000-500,000.

Animal sculpture specialist *Ger Eeckhout* parted with seven sculptures during the preview day, including a bronze model of a coat of arms by François Pompon offered at an asking price of €200,000.

Antoine-François Cazeau also recorded multiple sales, including a gouache on paper by Chu Teh-hua which was presented with an



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asking price of €100,000-200,000.

Many dealers praised the event for bringing new customers.

Ceramics specialist *Thomas Fritsch-Artrium*, was pleased with a "fresh audience" with half of the visitors to his stand new to him. He sold eight works to new customers including three with first-time collectors.

For *Stephen Ongpin Fine Art* "numerous new collectors" were welcomed while Laura Bosc de Ganay of *Arteas Ancient Art* was very happy to have met 10 new clients during the fair.

She commented that many visitors were surprised at the relative

affordability of her selection of antiquities.

Among her sales was a Ptah Sokar Osiris statue at €20,000, a Cycladic head for €14,000 and a lion limestone sculptor model. De Ganay says: "Mostly clients are very surprised and asked why antiquities are so cheap in comparison with the other specialities... especially since the objects are steeped in history, most of them unique, and often in an incredibly well-preserved state given their age."

"Archaeology remains undervalued in my opinion, despite the fact it blends beautifully with contemporary art. I want to encourage young collectors to treat themselves without breaking the bank."

Jacques Leegenhoek, an Old Master and European portrait specialist said he enjoyed the fair and met new clients with sales including a picture by Lo Spadarino and a marine landscape by Pierre-Jacques Volaire. The Spadarino sold for around €140,000.

It was noted by a number of exhibitors that there was an increase in Chinese buyers compared with previous years. The attendance of Asian collectors during the preview led to multiple sales for European sculpture dealers *Trebosc & Van Lelyveld*.

Institutions were out in force, and it is to be expected at a major fair. The Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and The Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF) made significant purchases at the event.

The Louvre bought a marble cherub head by Germain Pilon (1528-1590) coming from the tomb of Valentine Balbiani (1573-1574) from Galerie Sismann; d'Orsay bought a group of six gouaches by American illustrator and printmaker Maud Hunt Suire (1873-1954) from Samuel Drylewicz and the Houston museum acquired an 1859 terracotta model for a fountain by the sculptor Alexandre Falguière (1831-1900) from the booth of Nicolas Bourriaud.



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A trio of autumnal London exhibi

To coincide with the V&A's *Marie Antoinette: Style* exhibition, portrait miniature specialist Emma Rutherford's Limner Company is holding a selling exhibition at **Daniel Crouch Rare Books** in Bury Street, Mayfair.

Titled *Marie Antoinette; Queen and Court* and running from October 14-28, the show features a selection of portrait miniatures of the doomed queen, her family, friends, and even her enemies, "providing a comprehensive view of people who shaped her world".

Rutherford jokes that for those who have seen the V&A exhibition, the show is a chance to "buy the merchandise".

She adds: "The selling exhibition will be an opportunity for collectors with an interest in the period to own a small piece of history, reflecting the influence of Marie Antoinette on fashion, culture, and politics." Price from £1000-22,000.

► portraitminiature.com

Highlights from the Limner Company's pop-up show *Marie Antoinette; Queen and Court*.

Right: c.1750 French School watercolour on ivory miniature of Madame de la Porte (Marie-Anne Pellerin de Painville) (1714-63) set in a ring. It is priced at **£3000**.



Left: a watercolour on ivory portrait miniature of Charlotte-Albertine-Josèphe-Maria de

Buisseret, later Countess Marie-Josephe-Charlotte de Buisseret and the Viscountess de Podenas (1763-85) by Jean-Laurent Mosnier (1743/44-1808). Priced at **£19,500**.



Left: a School of the 17th century portrait miniature of King of France and Navarre, set in an ivory frame.



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1 & 2. *FAB Paris* opening VIP day.

3. The stand of **Galerie Fabienne Fiacre**.

4. Ptah Sokar Osiris statue sold for **€20,000** from **Arteas Ancient Art**.

5. A Cycladic head from Arteas Ancient Art sold for **€14,000** by **Arteas Ancient Art**.

6. Priced in the region of **€30,000**, *Horse Seen from Behind*, a pencil and black chalk by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) was sold by **Stephen Ongpin Fine Art**.

7. *Pietà*, an oil on canvas by Giovanni Antonio Galli (called lo Spadarino) (1585-1652), sold for around **€140,000** by **Jacques Leegenhoek**.

8. Among the opening day sales at **Stephen Ongpin Fine Art** were two works by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804). *A Winged Putto, Facing Left* and *A Winged Putto, Facing Right and Carrying a Laurel Wreath* in pen and brown ink and brown wash were priced as a pair in the region of **€14,000**.

9. This late 17th century Gōmai Mogami dō Gusoku armour, valued at **€300,000-500,000**, sold from the stand of **Jean-Christophe Charbonnier**.

Although sales did take time to build up, all exhibitors agreed that the time and the place was right: the Grand Palais is an impressive venue and the date helped boost visitors and sales.

Louis de Bayser, president of *FAB Paris*, said: "With this new

edition at the Grand Palais, we have established *FAB Paris* in the international art market calendar, in order to showcase the excellence and cultural vitality of Paris."

The next event is scheduled for September 19 to 23, 2026. ■

► abparis.com



Above left: *Burnham Beeches, Buckinghamshire* a watercolour by Frederick Richard Lee (1798-1879) priced at **£3500** by **Karen Taylor Fine Art**.

Above right: *The path through the trees*, a watercolour by Edith Martin (1908-97) priced at **£1250**.



An exhibition titled *A Private Collection of Modern British Art* will be held at century art specialist Freya Mitton's ground floor gallery at 6 Mason's Duke Street