

Around the Galleries

Samuel Reilly

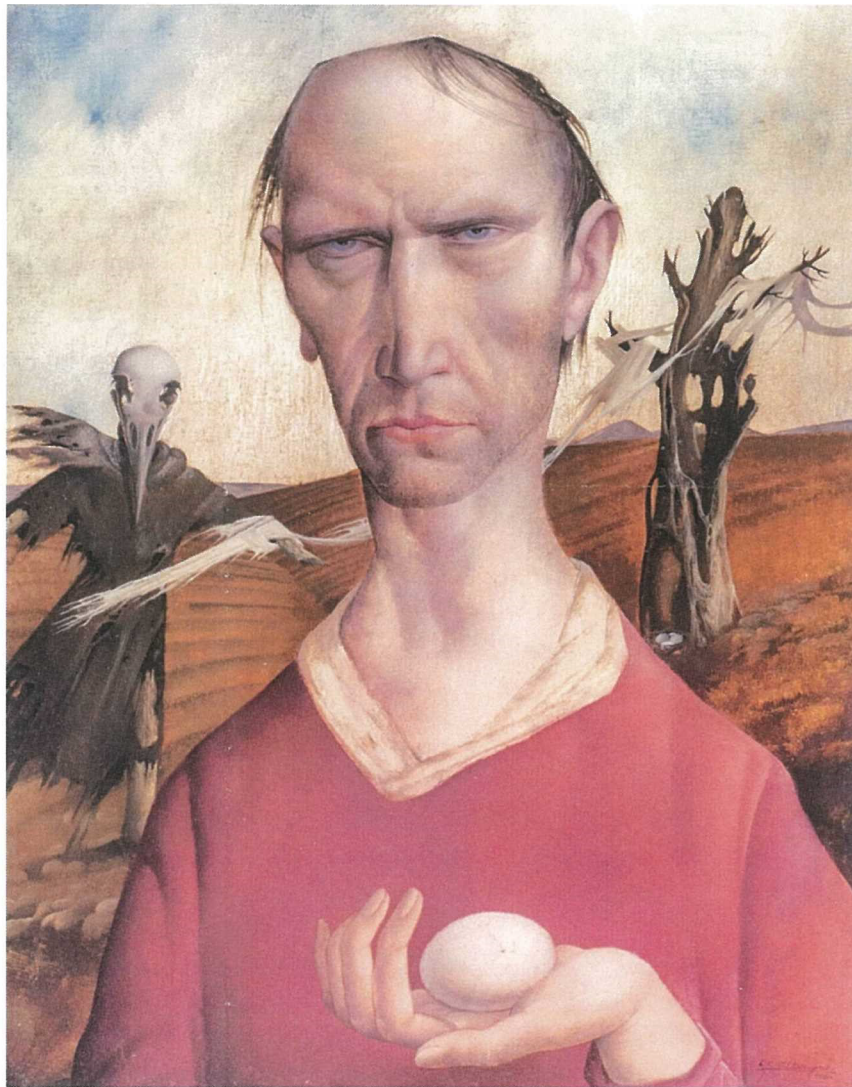
London Art Week and the Art & Antiques Fair Olympia keep the UK capital busy this month, while Brussels has three fairs in one for fans of non-Western art

On 12 April, the UK placed a temporary export bar on a 16th-century casket, believed to be the only one of its kind left in Britain. It was last on public display in Glasgow in 1882–83, lent from Newbattle Abbey by its former owner, the Marquess of Lothian, to an 'Italian Art Loan Exhibition', the complexity of its *trompe l'oeil* marquetry having suggested a Florentine provenance. However, it is now thought to be one of the earliest pieces of German *Kunstammer* furniture in existence. Recent research by Virginie Spénlé has revealed it to be the most elaborate of the dozen or so works thought to have been created by the 'Master of Perspective', an anonymous cabinetmaker from the city of Nuremberg, at the time at the cutting edge of art and science in northern Europe.

The casket will be on public view again this month during **London Art Week (LAW)**, the twice-yearly series of exhibitions and events mounted by some 50 dealers and galleries across St James's and Mayfair (28 June–5 July). LAW jostles for attention among a host of fairs and gallery shows in London this month, but what sets it apart is the level of scholarship that informs dealers' presentations. Spénlé's two talks at Trinity Fine Art (27 and 28 June) – which is presenting the casket in conjunction with *Kunstammer* Georg Laue – promise to be a highlight. Might they tempt a British museum into buying the casket for permanent display?

Fifty galleries are participating in this year's event – the largest edition of LAW to date. Among the newcomers, London-based textiles dealer S. Franes is presenting an exhibition of 'The Lost Tapestries of Charles I'. These works, owned or commissioned by the king, include a recently discovered depiction of Aeneas's farewell to Dido, executed by the royal tapestry workshop at Mortlake. Ambrose Naumann from New York makes his LAW debut at Tomasso Brothers with a selection of modern European paintings, including a fabulously weird portrait by the little-known Belgian surrealist Gustaaf C. de Bruyne (1914–81). The painting, called simply *Waarom (Why)* (1961; Fig. 1), shows a scowling man in what might be pyjamas, standing

1. *Waarom (Why)*, 1961, Gustaaf C. de Bruyne (1914–81), oil on panel, 27 × 20.6cm, Ambrose Naumann Fine Art at London Art Week



in a field with a demonic scarecrow looming over his shoulder, cradling an egg in his palm.

Arguably the finest German draughtsman of the 19th century, Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905) was commissioned by the Prussian king Frederick William IV to illustrate the works of his ancestor Frederick the Great, and in 1898 became the first painter admitted to the Order of the Black Eagle, the highest

order of Prussian chivalry. It is 35 years since the last exhibition devoted to Menzel in the UK: a wrong that Stephen Ongpin Fine Art will right at LAW. Look out for *A Bearded Man Looking Down to the Left* (1891), in which the superbly rendered tufts and wisps of hair are as eloquent as a Dürer drawing (Fig. 2).

Ancient art is represented at LAW by Ariadne Galleries, which offers a calcite weight in

the form of a duck, made in Mesopotamia in the second millennium BC. For more recent sculpture, head to Ben Elwes Fine Art for a fine portrait relief in white marble of the 19th-century opera superstar Jenny Lind, 'the Swedish Nightingale', by American sculptor Margaret Foley. Finally, Andrew Clayton-Payne displays a series of rediscovered drawings by Royal Academy founding member Johan Zoffany. Don't miss the minutely observed musculature of his *Sacred Cow* (c. 1785).

Coinciding with LAW is **A Collectors' Paradise**, hosted for the third year at Brian Haughton Gallery at 15 Duke Street. Haughton is joined by fellow ceramics dealers Robyn Robb (London) and Christophe Perlès (Paris), with the three presenting between them a wide variety of wares in porcelain and pottery. Robb, a specialist in English porcelain, offers a Chelsea mug from the 1750s painted with a great snow owl, while Haughton brings a pair of 18th-century French faience figurines depicting the ballerina Marie-Anne de Cupis de Camargo. In west London, **The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia** returns from 19–28 June, with some 160 exhibitors offering everything from neoclassical furniture to modern painting and sculpture. Look out for Craig Carrington's pair of Louis XVI marble vases, each emblazoned with an ormolu head of Medusa.

There are also plenty of gallery shows to catch in the UK capital. The standouts include **Bastian's** presentation of two significant mid-career print portfolios by Cy Twombly.



2. *A Bearded Man Looking Down to the Left*, 1891, Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905), graphite and black chalk, 20.6 × 13cm. Stephen Ongpin Fine Art at LAW

June Calendar

Cy Twombly: *Natural History*

Bastian, London

Until 15 June

www.bastian-gallery.com

Jannis Kounellis / Claudio Abate

Almine Rech, London

28 May–27 July

www.alminerech.com

Michael Craig-Martin: *Sculpture*

Gagosian, London

31 May–3 August

www.gagosian.com

Cultures – The World Arts Fair

Place du Grand Sablon, Brussels

12–16 June

www.bruneaf.com

www.baaaf.be

www.asianartinbrussels.org

The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia

Olympia, London

19–28 June

www.olympia-art-antiques.com

London Art Week

Various venues, London

28 June–5 July

www.londonartweek.co.uk

A Collectors' Paradise

Brian Haughton Gallery, London

28 June–5 July

www.haughton.com

In *Natural History I & II* (1974 and 1975–76), Twombly takes Pliny the Elder as the starting point for an exploration of the human urge to classify and categorise, and the unknowable nature of reality. **Almine Rech** pairs the Arte Povera pioneer Jannis Kounellis with fellow Italian Claudio Abate, who photographed some of Kounellis's sculptural installations in the late 1960s; and **Gagosian** presents sculpture by Michael Craig-Martin.

In Brussels, **Cultures – The World Arts Fair** returns to the Place du Grand Sablon for its fourth edition. The event, which this year includes 46 international exhibitors, brings together three well-established fairs. Among the variety of tribal works on offer at BRUNEAF (the Brussels Non-European Art Fair), don't miss Ambre Congo's display of decorated calabashes, created by the central African Kongo people. Alexandre Claes brings a spectacular 19th-century helmet mask, fashioned from a human skull by an Ekoi artist from the Cross River region of Nigeria, most likely evoking a vanquished enemy (Fig. 3). For archaeological objects, head to BAAF (Brussels Ancient Art Fair); highlights here include a head of an Egyptian priest, carved from brown serpentine during the Middle Kingdom (c. 1780 BC), brought by Robert R. Bigler. Finally, at AAB (Asian Art in Brussels), look out for Carlo Crivelli's stand, which includes a remarkable pair of schist capitals originally from the Gandhara kingdom on the Indian subcontinent, dating to the 2nd–3rd century, with carvings of Buddhist deities, lions and acanthus leaves. **A**



3. Helmet mask, 19th century, Ekoi people, Nigeria, wood, animal skin, human hair and skull, ht 25cm. Alexandre Claes at Cultures – The World Arts Fair