



Fig 1: *Trouville, Scène de Plage*, 1884, by Eugène Boudin. With MacConnal-Mason

Rich pickings

With more exhibitors than ever, the forthcoming Treasure House fair has a mesmerising array on offer, including one of the very earliest coronation mugs and a portrait of Henry Moore fiercely playing table tennis

IN the past, major fairs and auctions made London the epicentre of the art market for a few weeks each summer. Last year, after the cancellation of the Masterpiece and Olympia Fairs, it was a scramble to plug the gap with Treasure House in the grounds of Royal Hospital Chelsea, but that made an encouraging start and attracted 30,000 visitors. The second edition (June 27–July 2) promises well, having expanded from 52 to 70 exhibitors. On offer will be five millennia of creativity.

Here is a very brief preview, beginning with a wide range of paintings.

As I am writing this on the 80th anniversary of D-Day, a Normandy beach scene seems to be the appropriate starting place, although it is a peaceful one and a little way from the landings. Trouville, which, together with its twin Deauville, became the most fashionable resort on the coast later in the 19th century, was an obscure fishing village in 1825, when discovered by a young painter,

Fig 2: Charles II coronation mug, made in Southwark. With E. & H. Manners



Fig 3 left: *Oinochoe*. With Cahn. Fig 4 below: Kuba cup, sold by Didier Claes



Fig 5: *St Augustine* by Niccolò 'Paradiso' di Pietro. With Maison d'Art of Monaco

Charles Mozin. After numerous visits, he settled there and was responsible for its early development. Many now better-remembered artists followed, including Monet and, most notably, Eugène Boudin (1824–98). The latter was so much a *plein-air* painter that sometimes sand can be seen in his oil sketches. MacConnal-Mason offers a 6in by 10³/₄in example, dated 1884 and showing the crowded beach on a slightly overcast day (**Fig 1**).



Fig 6 above: **Carp-shaped Fabergé cigar cutter. With Wartski. Fig 7 right: Glass chandelier, 1785. With Fileman Antiques**

As a resort, Forte dei Marmi had a rather similar career to Trouville, attracting both artists and High Society, and the name, ‘fort of the marbles’, explains its particular attraction for Henry Moore: the proximity to Carrara. The sculptor spent summers there in the 1960s and 1970s and, in 1966, one of his guests was Michael Ayrton (1921–75), who left a splendid memento in a 19½in by 15in drawing of a ferociously determined Moore playing table tennis (Fig 8). It will be offered by Christopher Kingzett. A current sculptor who works in the area is Emily Young, one of whose monumental heads, although Indian rather than Carrara-inspired, is with Willoughby Gerrish.

Niccolò di Pietro (active 1394–1426) sometimes signed his work ‘Niccolò Paradiso’, which was not a boast, but an indication that he lived by the Venetian Ponte del Paradiso. Stylistically, he is regarded as a bridge between Northern and Venetian Gothic, as in the 15½in by 41½in panel of St Augustine (Fig 5) shown by Maison d’Art of Monaco.

Not a painting, but certainly pictorial, is one of the earliest coronation souvenir mugs, a

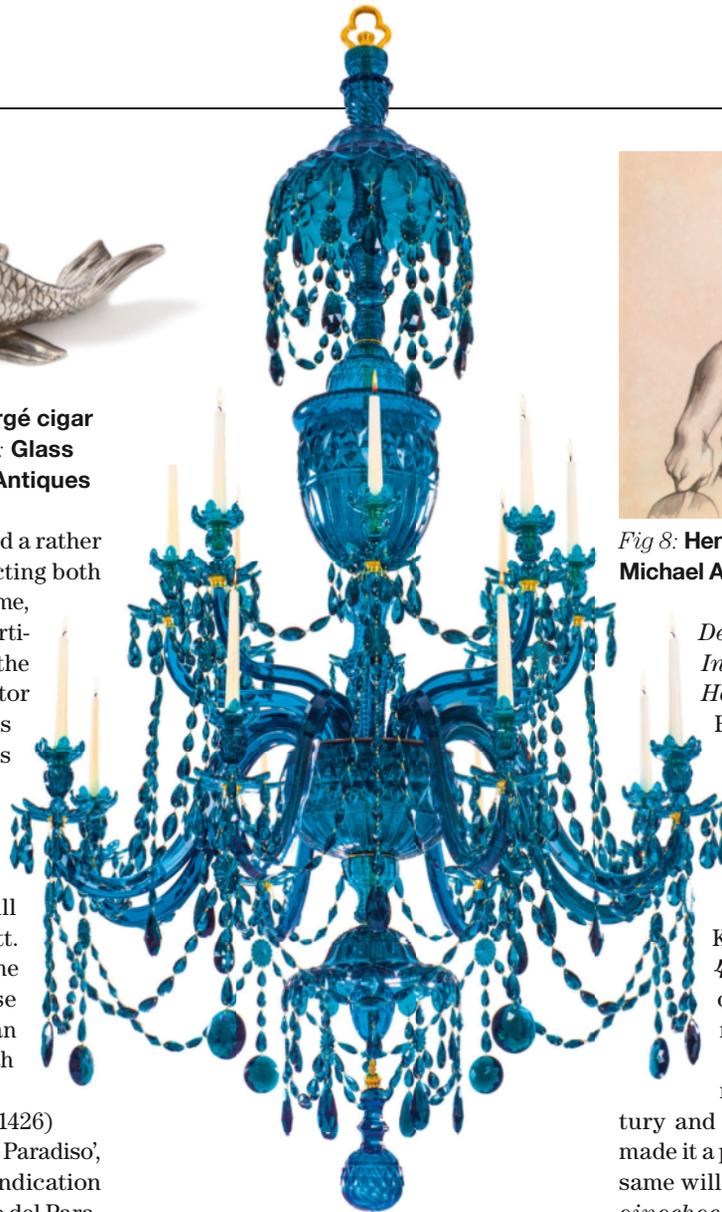


Fig 8: **Henry Moore playing table tennis, by Michael Ayrton. With Christopher Kingzett**

Decorators of Ceramics and Glass: Independent, Itinerant and the Hausmaler, the joint work of Errol, Henriette and Henry Manners.

One of the many pleasures of regular art fair-going is coming upon links and resonances across centuries and continents. In Brussels this January, I was particularly taken by a 6in-high Kuba wooden ceremonial cup (Fig 4) from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which was with the eminent tribal-arts dealer Didier Claes (*Art Market, February 28*). It was made at the turn of the 20th century and had a wonderful patina, which made it a pleasure to hold. I expect that the same will be true of a 4½in-high terracotta *oinochoe*, or wine jug (Fig 3), with the Swiss antiquities dealer Cahn at Treasure House. These two heads could almost be brothers, but the terracotta version was made in Athens in about 470BC.

John Burley Waring (1823–75) is a new name to me. Described as an architect, he seems →

London delftware example for Charles II (Fig 2) made in Southwark in 1660, which is with E. & H. Manners. This dealer in ceramics and related works of art has just published what will be an invaluable reference for scholars and collectors of European porcelains,

Pick of the week

If by chance you read this column last week, you may recall that several paragraphs related my inability to decipher Leonora Carrington’s record-establishing Surrealist painting *Les Distractions de Dagobert*, which had made the equivalent of £22.4 million in a New York sale. Unexpectedly, in preparing this preview of Treasure House, I came across something that might be relevant. The central scene of Carrington’s composition showed a fantastic figure thought to represent the Frankish King Dagobert, ‘seated on a dray pulled by an Alice-like child’. What I did not mention was that the ‘dray’—actually more like a large skateboard—had a horse’s head



at the front and I was reminded of that when I saw this Regency mahogany cheese coaster with Thomas Coulborn & Sons, the eminent Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, furniture dealer. The elegant four-wheeled coaster has just such an equine figurehead. Regency hosts were advised by *The Footman’s Directory and Butler’s Remembrancer* (1823) to ‘Have your cheese and butter and salad all ready against the second course

is done with’ and one wonders whether there might not have been such a coaster on the dining table at Crookhey Hall in Lancashire, Carrington’s Gothic Revival girlhood home, a house that loomed large in her adult imagination. A ‘Dagobert’ in Belgium is or was a generously cheese- and ham-packed baguette, but apparently this is not relevant, as it comes from the French translation of the 1930s American strip cartoon featuring Blondie and Dagwood—the latter known for his multi-storey sandwiches.

This coaster, now priced £6,500, was in the great W. J. Shepherd collection of treen sold by Sotheby’s in December 1983, when it made £935 (£3,072 today); another, with a marginally less well-carved horsehead, sold for £2,640 (£3,486) at Christie’s in 2005.



Fig 9: Cabinet by Second Empire cabinetmaker Fourdinois. With Butchoff

to have been more an architectural draughtsman and writer. He was superintendent of the architectural gallery of the 1862 Kensington International Exhibition, where his remit also covered furniture, earthenware, glass and jewellery. The three-volume *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture* he published was drawn from it, illustrated with 300 coloured plates described in English and French. One plate was given to the Gold Medal-winning cabinet (**Fig 9**) by the pre-eminent Second Empire cabinetmaker Fourdinois, which is shown by Butchoff, at £350,000, and is probably the most imposing exhibit at Treasure House. In 1862, the collector Alfred Morrison of Fonthill paid £1,400 for it (more than £142,000 today). Quite by the way, Waring claimed divine inspiration for his writing, as well as powers of political prophecy.

Another remarkably imposing piece is a 16-light peacock blue-green glass chandelier (**Fig 7**) made in 1785 for the Nizam of Hyderabad, which is with Fileman Antiques and attributed to William Parker, the foremost late-18th-century maker. The Nizam Asaf Jah II was an ally of the East India Company and Hyderabad became one of the most powerful princely states of British India.

The boundaries between 'how-to-spend-it-ry' and aesthetics are hard to define and, to some tastes, the former Masterpiece fairs had come to lean too much towards bling. Luxury is still very much a part of the Treasure House formula, but in a more restrained manner—quality is the essential ingredient. In different ways and on different scales, this could be exemplified by a silver cigar cutter modelled as a carp (**Fig 6**) by Carl Fabergé in about 1908, with Wartski, and 'the world's most desirable boat', a wooden-hulled Aquamara Special (**Fig 11**), built in 1986 by Riva and offered by Ventura. When launched, it was priced as much as a Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud. Nautical collectors with shallower pockets might turn to a cased model of one of only five steam lifeboats ever built, the 1894 *City of Glasgow* (**Fig 10**), with Wick Antiques. 🐉

Next week LAW: smart pencils

Fig 10 below: Cased model of steam lifeboat City of Glasgow, launched in 1894. With Wick Antiques. Fig 11 right: Wooden-hulled Aquamara Special speedboat, built by Riva. With Ventura

