

SPRING SALES ROUND UP

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times



The March and April sales brought to the market interesting and beautiful lots rewarded by strong results. Rumor has it that the auction boost has something to do with the booming real estate market pushing collectors to acquire pieces for their new homes. Indeed, it appeared that clients were buying several pieces at a time favouring quantity, perhaps facing this need to fill in a new house. If so the compulsive buying may well be a phase. Another factor that has been highlighted in the last years is the ease to bid online which might be more enticing for new collectors. On that second note I would like to bring to the attention of the e-buyer that Drouot online charges an extra percentage in addition to the regular fees of the auction house.

When looking at the results it appeared that French collectors seem to pay attention to Italian design as reflected in the results of the dedicated sales at Art Curial (total € 1.5 m with a majority of lots selling slightly above estimate) and Piasa (totaled € 2.4m.).

Italian design is seductive, inventive, concerned with comfort and has an unrivalled liberating playfulness. The dedicated sale is a clever marketing trick and I would encourage collectors to look beyond Paris and perhaps venture to the motherland itself. However, such a journey will require the utmost attention to condition and authenticity as well as specific export certificates.

Seeing your future acquisition remains a must for the collector who buys at auction. With the complications to travel it has become less and less convenient to come person but this frenetic acquisition wave only gives more reasons to be caution about condition and authenticity.

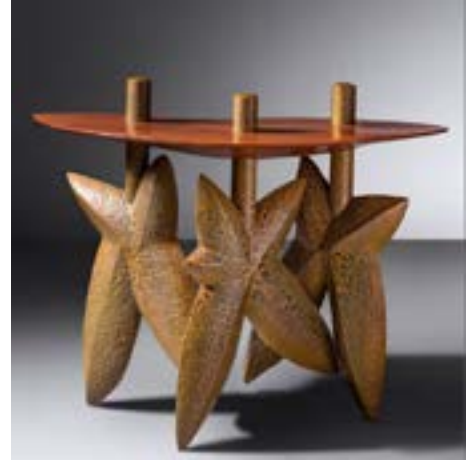


Important ash mirror by Ettore Sottsass, circa 1959
Estimate 15 000 - 20 000 €
sold 23 400 €

Another slice of the market to keep your eye on is the American Studio Craft. This movement of the late 20th century, not as well known in Europe, is a delightful balance between formal irreverence, technical mastery of traditional craft traditions as well as function and practicality. Resonating with the market coined as 'collectible design' the Chicago auction house Hindman auctioned the Springborn Collection of Contemporary Craft auction offering a beautiful selection.



Cowabunga II cabinet by Wendy Maruyama, 1990
 Estimate \$2,000 - \$4,000
 Sold for \$6,250



Three-Star Console Table by
 Wendell Castle, 1996
 Estimate \$8,000 - \$12,000
 Sold for \$16,250

Although the spring sales are usually a *amuse bouche* before the grand sales of the auction trio Sotheby's- Christie's and Phillips some results felt serious like a *plat de resistance*.

Le Grand Canard by François Xavier Lalanne fetched 1 963 000 € at Gros&Delettrez on the 12th of April. It is interesting to see such an early and unique work of this caliber consigned to a smaller auction house and performing so well. The Lalanne market has been strong and most likely defining for design in the last decade and one may wonder how long before this webfooted treasure opens his wings to land in a contemporary art sale.

Outside of the traditional calendar appeared at Sotheby's New York the collection of Michelle Smith. It was a well dosed and successful recipe: a selection of works by iconic designers, with a wide range of estimates and presented in a contemporary setting with desirable in-situ shoots of the collection. The result: a total of 43 million dollars. Amongst the beautiful sale one could admire a staggering pink plaster lampe Egyptienne by Alberto Giacometti (estimate \$300-500,000 sold for \$3,287,000) a bronze bench by Diego Giacometti (estimate: \$400,000 - \$600,000 sold for 3,287,000\$ - sold in 2014 at Artcurial as a low table for 194,000€), a cabinet by Jules Leleu (estimate \$70-100,000 sold for \$746,000 - in 2008 at Sotheby's New York for \$46,000).

The works presented were certainly beautiful but there were not all the most desirable of their kind. What does it mean for the market of these designers? Probably a little push but most likely a moment and a provenance to remember. What is certain is the collectors appetite for high end popular designers (the favourite being Lalanne, Giacometti and Royère) is driving the prices increasingly high.



Le Grand Canard by François-Xavier Lalanne

Astrid

What to look at

In New York

[Christie's New York, Paris in New York: A Private Collection of Royère, Vautrin, Jouve, Live sale, 26 May 2021, 11 am EDT](#)

Assembled in the 1990s (mostly through the DeLorenzo gallery) this collection includes iconic works by Jean Royère such as a 'Polar Bear' Sofa and an 'Antibes' Floor Lamp and a stunning selection of Vautrin mirrors. There are also less seen designs by the French designer such as the 'Eiffel' lamp and the illuminated desk that still move by their elegance and timeless qualities. Jean Royère's drawings are an insight into the attention to details and the care with which the designer created furniture or interiors. The estimates are overall conservative but the collection of such iconic and desirable works should do very well.



Illuminated Desk by Jean Royère,
circa 1950
Estimate \$50,000 - \$70,000

'Tour Eiffel' Floor Lamp
by Jean Royère,
circa 1947
Estimate \$100,000
-150,000



Atelier drawing of the 'Dents Grecques' low table
model by Jean Royère, circa 1950
(the lot comprises three Royère atelier drawings)
Estimate \$5,000 - \$7,000



[Christie's New York, Design, 27 May, live sale, 10 am](#)

The various owner sale will offers an eclectic selection. The top lot is a mesmerizing chandelier by Josef Hoffmann designed for DR. Hermann Wittgenstein circa 1906. Only one example of this model is known and recorded in the Wiener Werkstätte Archive. This chandelier as well as part of the Viennese selection of the sale are part of the same private collection as the one presented last June assembled with the help of the visionary advisor Berry Friedman in the 80s. Amongst the highlights the Lalanne(s) creations including a 'Brochet' cabinet from 1973, it originated in the famous decorator Andrée Putman collection but was already sold in 2018 in Paris at Sotheby's for 212,500 €. The Art Deco section has high estimates but presents beautiful models amongst which my eye was caught by the slender lines of Marc Duplantier's daybed. This daybed was previously offered at Sotheby's Paris in September 2019 and remained unsold, most likely due to a high estimate (150-200,000 €) now lowered. It is most likely not sold by a private collector but the Spanish collection from which it was originally acquired is a great provenance. Aside from these market consideration it is an outstanding design that would enchant any interior. Finally for the historical design fanatic a 'Beugelstoel' tube-framed chair by Gerrit Rietveld from the first year of production and previously bought in the Barry Friedman sale in 1992.



'Égyptien' Daybed by Marc du Plantier , circa 1935
Estimate \$100,000 - \$150,000

Unique Chandelier
Model No. M0409 by
Josef Hoffmann for Dr.
Hermann Wittgenstein,-
circa 1906
Estimate
\$200,000 - \$300,000



'Brochet' cabinet by François-Xavier Lalanne circa 1973
number 23 from an edition of 50
Estimate \$120,000 - \$150,000



Early tube-frames
'Beugelstoel' by
Gerrit Rietvel, 1927
Estimate
\$25,000 -
\$ 35,000



[Sotheby's New York, Important Design: from Noguchi to Lalanne, 25 May 2021, live sale, 10:00 am](#)

The sale is anchored by a newly discovered table by Isamu Noguchi, an exceptionally rare piece, executed between 1945-1947. Only three early examples of the form hand-carved by Noguchi himself that are known to exist. Another focal point of the sale will be the selection of works by the Lalanne(s) led by an important 'Crocodile' Settee and pair of 'Croco-Consoles' from the historical collection of the designers, and two Moutons de Laine from the Collection of Kay Unger. Amongst this impressive sale, features a group of early and iconic forms by the fantastic American designer Harry Bertoia such as the dandelions and the airplanes constructions. In addition, these beautiful works have desirable provenances and will most likely cause a bidding war.



Dandelion by Harry Bertoia, 1965
77 3/4 in. (197.4 cm) high
32 1/4 in. (81.9 cm) diameter
Estimate \$200-\$300,000



Pair of 'Usonian' chairs by Frank Lloyd Wright, circa 1939
estimate \$15,000 - \$20,000



Multi-Plane Construction by Harry Bertoia, circa 1955
84 1/2 x 21 1/8 x 15 3/4 in. (213.3 x 55.8 x 40.6 cm)
Estimate \$80-\$120,000



An Important Table
by Isamu Noguchi,
1945-1947
Estimate \$700,000 -
\$1,000,000



Desk by Wendell Castle, 1964
Estimate \$25-\$35,000

In Paris

[Sotheby's Paris, Important Design: from Noguchi to Lalanne, 26 May 2021, live sale 2:30 pm](#)

Sotheby's will hold its Parisian sale the following day. Covering a wide range of decorative arts from the end of the 19th century to the present day, it will feature a 'Nuage' low table by Guy de Rougemont from a private Parisian collection (not an original edition from the 70s but edited with the artist), an 'Aux cariatides' et 'Aux atlantes' table by Diego Giacometti commissioned from the artist for Henri Samuel and a Tête de femme floor lamp and two lamps by Alberto Giacometti from the former collection of Georges and Myrtille Hugnet. Of course, Lalanne works will complete the sale with a collection from the couples godson including a unique and mesmerizing ceiling light originally made for the couple's personal use and then gifted to their for his 20th anniversary. Filled with humor and irreverence the Litta desk by Ettore Sottsass and will add a distinctive personality to any interior. A rare and inviting chair by Carlo Bugatti with an attractive estimate but no provenance.



A rocking chair by Carlo Bugatti,-
circa 1905
Estimate 8,000 € - 12,000 €



“Aquarium” lamp by Maison Desny,
circa 1928
Estimate 7,000 € - 10,000 €

A unique ceiling light by Claude and
François-Xavier Lalanne, 1965
Estimate 240,000 € - 360,000 €



Boomerang Grand PDG desk by Maurice Calka, designed in 1969
Estimate 30,000 € - 50,000 €



“Litta” desk by Ettore Sottsass, 1989
Manufactured by Zanotta, Milano, Italy
Estimate 5,000 € - 7,000 €

En passant:



Unmissable work of design from one the most glamorous commission of the 20th century

A glass and alpaca console and matching shelf by Eckart Muthesius for the library of Manik Bagh, Palace of the Maharajah of Indore - circa 1930

Estimate 250 000 - 350 000 €

[Artcurial, Paris, Art Deco, 31 May 2021, 4 pm](#)



Two 'Flèche' desks, French production, circa 1970

estimate (for each) 200/300 €

[Binoche et Qiquello, Paris, Arts du XXIème siècle, 27 Mai, live sale, 2 pm](#)

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