



Exhilaration and frustration

Lionel Barber takes a 12-day journey through West Africa and glimpses the region's future

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Spring in the air

The Art Market: fresh starts, Hong Kong on a high, 1stdibs' first fair, Dhaka days. By Georgina Adam

Christie's chairman of impressionist and modern art, Thomas Seydoux, is leaving the firm "to pursue other opportunities in the art world", according to its press release. And with the art world's habitual game of musical chairs, coming back into Christie's is its former specialist, Guy Jennings, who becomes deputy chairman, impressionist and modern art, and who was previously dealing privately with Simon Theobald. "It's like coming full circle, but I am looking forward to the challenge of going back to Christie's," says Jennings. "Perhaps I am fundamentally more at home in the auction world, and the auction houses are really very powerful now, just look at the coming sale of Munch's 'The Scream'."

The surprise might be that Seydoux is not going to Qatar – where a number of former Christie's colleagues have ended up. So what are his plans? He defines himself as a salesman: "I sell, therefore I am." So he is taking three months off, then setting up independently, bringing in one or two colleagues to work together. He gives this tantalising answer to rumours that he will work for Russia: "I will become a private dealer, chasing treasures for clients – who could be in Russia or from elsewhere..."

Sotheby's spring Hong Kong sales ended on a high note just before Easter with the sale of a small, 900-year-old ceramic dish dating back to China's Song dynasty, known as the Ruyao dish, which doubled its estimate at US\$26.7m. It is one of very few such pieces in private hands; its pair is now in the British Museum, donated by Ivy and Alfred Clark. This piece was consigned from a Japanese collection, but had also belonged to Ivy Clark. Its appearance caused great enthusiasm: several bidders chased it up to US\$18m and the final battle pitted the long-



Booty Clockwise from above, at Dhaka Art Summit, Tayeba Begum Lipi's 'Bizarre and Beauty' (2012); the 900-year-old Ruyao dish; 'The 7 Legshow' by Eric Neveu at the Crazy Horse Pin'Up sale

established Japanese firm Mayuyama, who had previously handled it, against the unidentified successful bidder on the telephone to Patti Wong, Sotheby's Asia chairman.

The total tally of US\$316m surpassed the expected US\$244m for the whole series. While the sale of contemporary Asian art was selective, the Indonesian-Chinese collector Budi Tek was reported to have taken the two top lots for a private museum he is building in Shanghai: Zhang's "Bloodline – Big Family: Big Family No.2" (1993), which sold for US \$6.69m, and Fang Lijun's, "1993 No. 4" for US\$3.67m.

Last year, Sotheby's spring sales produced a bigger total of US\$447m, and this time around Wong noted that prices for the more average material have softened. She also said that persuading owners to sell was tougher this year than in 2011, which was "the most successful year we have ever had in Asia."

One of the most successful online sites for selling art and antiques is 1stdibs, which offers everything from vintage fashion and Fabergé jewellery to art,

antiques and modernist design, proposed by 1,200 dealers. They all have to have a real world presence (meaning a shop) and this weekend in New York they also have their own real world fair: the inaugural NYC20. This brings together 40 mid-20th-century design dealers, all of them 1stdibs members, exhibiting in a tent at the Lincoln Centre. While most are based in the US, there are also a smattering of foreigners including London's Trinity House and the Silver Fund (fair ends tomorrow). And in Europe 1stdibs is also extending its reach to the Benelux region, adding 25 dealers to the site, from Amsterdam, Antwerp and Brussels (online from April 18).

"Porno chic" is the Gallic way of describing the material on offer at Paris's renowned Crazy Horse salon's Pin'Up sale tomorrow. Organised by the French auctioneer Cornette de St Cyr, the 438-lot sale includes 25 works specially made for the event by artists such as David LaChapelle, Greg Hildebrandt (two paintings estimated at €12,000-€15,000) and photographs by Antoine Poupel of Crazy Horse dancers (€3,000-€4,000). Alongside these are a host of pin-up paintings, posters and even furniture from the Crazy Horse – a red leather sofa is estimated at €800-€1,000. Prices start at a modest €30 but rise to €30,000 for Helmut Newton's "Nude in the Villa d'Este", a life-size photograph printed by Marc Bruhat and dedicated to him by Newton.

Leading Bangladeshi collectors Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani are launching the first Dhaka Art Summit this weekend (ends tomorrow). It is an initiative of their non-profit Samdani Art Foundation, and aims to bring Bangladeshi artists more international exposure. With a weak gallery system in the country, many artists are unrepresented, and the Summit gives them a platform to show their work, sell it, or at least make fruitful contacts. More than 200 artists will be participating and there is a lecture programme and three public exhibitions of Bangladeshi artists, one by the Britto Arts Trust, which organised the country's first appearance at last year's Venice Biennale.

Georgina Adam is editor-at-large of The Art Newspaper



Review Jazz

Chick Corea & Gary Burton

Barbican, London

★★★★★

Mike Hobart

The initial spark for Chick Corea and Gary Burton's long-running duo was a 1972 after-festival jam. Forty years on and the piano and vibes partnership is still finding new paths to explore. At this gig the pair's extensive back catalogue of originals was almost brushed aside as a warm-up for their new album *Hot House*, a celebratory makeover of lesser-known songs from their favourite jazz composers. The two veterans constructed their own crystalline structures, full of detail, clever twists and passionate intrigue, from the DNA of Art Tatum, Dave Brubeck and Thelonious Monk.

Corea and Burton set out their stall with their opening brace of "Love Castle", from their *New Crystal Silence* album, and 1997's "Native Sense". Burton's vibes shimmered, Corea's ostinato rumbled, solos strode from a latticework of rhythm and hammer-and-tongs duets ended with a stark chord or a neat downward line.

With palette firmly fixed, the duo added trace elements of the composers whose music they were celebrating. "Can't We Be Friends?" introduced Art Tatum's dazzling runs and harmonic trickery, "Strange Meadow Lark" Dave Brubeck's compositional grasp of the American songbook, and in the second set "Light Blue" bounced with Monk's puckish angularity. There was a bossa, a dark-toned "Eleanor Rigby" and a dazzling re-interpretation of an already tricky tune – the be-bop classic "Hot House", written by Tadd Dameron in 1945.

The second set had opened with a short Scriabin prelude – "dense and beautiful and too difficult for me to play", said Corea, waving two sheets of manuscript in the air – followed by Bartók's percussive and equally brief Bagatelle No 2. As before, Burton and Corea sampled melodic fragments and darted off at tangents, even while following the structure of the original. And as the evening unfolded through tweaked notes and delayed beats, intense solos and overlapping duets, their limited palette gained an orchestral scope. The finale, a frisky "Mozart Goes Dancing", put a mischievous melody through a mill now spiced with baroque counterpoint.

Saxophonist Tim Garland joined for a double encore. "We're just going to jam something," said Corea. "Spanish Heart" was skin-tight, "Blue Monk" down and dirty and the playing crystal-clear and unfettered. A good gig had become great.

www.barbican.org.uk

