

Collecting

Curiosities and cabinets

Frieze Masters | The fair is expanding beyond fine art to include artefacts, tribal art, ceramics, rare books and textiles. *Emma Crichton-Miller reports*

First it was ancient artefacts, then tribal objects, now it is fine books, atlases and modernist furniture. In its sixth year, Frieze Masters, which embraces art made over 6,000 years, continues to extend its remit.

Entry is by no means restricted, these days, to paintings and sculpture. Fine decorative objects – whether an Ancient Egyptian mummified falcon at Rupert Wace Gallery, Byzantine fingerings at Les Enluminures, 13th-century Ethiopian crosses at Sam Fogor or early Ptolemy atlases from Daniel Crouch Rare Books, from periods when all fine making was art and all art purposeful – are increasingly on view.

This eclecticism is particularly evident in the Collections section of the fair. Launched in 2015 and selected by exuberant curator Norman Rosenthal, the first year included displays of Pacific Island fish-hooks, Japanese netsuke and Maiolica clustered in small booths.

Last year, London's Sophia Contemporary Gallery exhibited Suprematist ceramics, Daniel Blau brought Pacific taro pounders and Berlin's Galerie Ulrich Fiedler created a "Destijl room" with furniture by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld and stained glass by Theo van Doesburg.

This year, seven galleries have been selected, including returns The Gallery of Everything and Galerie Ulrich Fiedler. Between them they cover five millennia, with objects ranging from



a carved idol of the Bactrian culture, third millennium BC (£250,000) to an early Bauhaus tea pot by Theodor Bogler (£125,000).

It is not so much the category into which the object falls which matters, but the conceptual interest of the whole assembly. As Rosenthal explains: "I always say to the dealers, 'Please, this is not stock.' I want a focus." He even resists using the term "collections". "For me, each booth is an idea, a germ for a larger institutional show."

The tone is set by specialist design



Clockwise from above: 'Shadow Picture of the Forms of the Hundred Night Demons' (1887), woodblock print by Kawanabe Kyosai; 13th-century seal ring of Komhno; ceramic work by George E. Ohr; Marcel Breuer, armchair (1923) (credit: ©Globe Gallery, Les Enluminures, The Houses of Everything, Galerie Ulrich Fiedler)



dealer Ulrich Fiedler, whose exhibition of early Bauhaus works recreates the first Bauhaus show at MoMA, in 1938, curated by Walter Gropius. Fiedler's display includes many of the same modest, experimental works in metal, ceramics and glass as well as a rare early Marcel Breuer wood and cloth armchair from 1923, a forerunner of his famous tubular steel furniture (£150,000). "In those early days the work was still very craft-based, very experimental. Each one was a prototype," Fiedler explains.

Paul Hughes Fine Art is presenting an outstanding collection of Andean textiles, dating from 2000BC to 1500AD, with prices from below \$20,000 to more than \$70,000. Hughes has gathered them over 35 years, inspired – as Anni and Josef Albers were – by these significant works of abstract art.

James Brett's The Gallery of Everything, which specialises in untutored, naive art, is mounting the first comprehensive UK exhibition of ceramics by the pioneering 19th-century American potter George E Ohr (prices range from £5000 to £50,000). The self-proclaimed "Mad Potter of Biloxi" worked from a self-built pottery in Biloxi, Mississippi, in a style entirely at odds with his times, creating folded,

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Ulrich Fiedler

twisted, sculptural pots. They were rediscovered in the early 1970s and sought out by artists such as Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Brett says, "A good 20 of Johns' paintings [included in the current exhibition] at the Royal Academy have George Ohr's in them."

The rare book dealer Benjamin Spademan offers a collection of works that hover between books and art: books embellished with the signatures and drawings of artists, from Henry Moore to Henri Matisse. Prices range from £2,000 to £95,000; there is a book of poetry by Isaac Watts inscribed, touchingly, by John Constable to his goddaughter, with watercolour drawings, as well as 20th-century volumes of works by Francis Bacon, Graham Sutherland and Picasso inscribed by the artists. And Daniel Crouch Rare Books brings a monumental world map from the Dutch Golden Age (£675,000).

The new entrant, young Paris- and Brussels-based dealer Martin Doustar, whose gallery reflects his wide-ranging collecting across ancient and tribal art, brings 100 exquisite small objects, as if to create a *kunstkammer*; those miniature museums once valued as microscopic reflections of the sum of human creativity.

October 5-8, frieze.com/masters

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In praise of older women

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That issue – the difficulty of showing, let alone selling, explicit sexual material – gets the full frontal treatment at Frieze's new section for 2017. Entitled Sex Work, it brings together the work of radical and feminist artists who choose to make art that is not just frank and fearless about sex and bodily depiction, but positively transgressive. Definitely not for family viewing.

All are women, none are young. Marilyn Minter, at 69, is the baby of the group; three are over 80. These artists are survivors. Kicking against the sometimes prudish aspects of sexual politics,

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they proved too raunchy for museum shows – thus, as the years went by, they were often left out of the narrative even of radical feminist art.

This injustice is something curator Alison Gingeras aims to put right. She sees artists such as Renate Bertlmann, Penny Slinger, Betty Tompkins and the others as pioneers rather than outliers, unrecognised rather than marginal. And indeed they look especially relevant right now, when questions surrounding feminism's relationship to pornography are being newly explored.

There are nine women artists under the Sex Work umbrella, shown in the fair by dozen galleries (Marilyn Minter is exhibited by no fewer than three). Often these galleries have supported their artists through thick and thin over the years, and Gingeras is keen to pay them tribute for a steadfastness that, is,

sadly, not too common in the art world.

Apart from the question of whether there's much of a market for this art, Sex Work is powerfully in tune with a wider trend of rediscovering older women artists. In the past few years, OWAs have been making a vigorous comeback: an extreme example is Carmen Herrera, who last year opened Lisson's New York gallery with her first US solo show in many decades – at the amazing age of 101. Others, such as Bridget Riley (86, recently picked up by mega-gallery David Zwirner), Gillian Ayres (87, currently conquering China) or Geta Bratescu (91, representing her native Romania at this year's Venice Biennale) display the U-shaped career typical of so many women in the creative arts: a high of early success, followed by long years in the middle-aged dip, re-emerging (longevity permitting) for a brilliant late run.

What's noticeable, though, is that it's only their gender and their age range that unites these artists. And in the case of the Sex Work artists, a certain attitude to subject matter. Apart from that, the work could hardly be more various. Herrera's fierce geometric abstraction could not be further from the monstrous, aggressive sexual appendages made by Judith Bernstein (b.1942), the jauntily bright shapes depicted by Ayres, the quasi-surreal, cartoon-inspired creations of Beth Edelson, the wincingly lurid super-bright images of Marilyn Minter.

Which only shows us what we already know: women are capable of anything.

October 5-8, frieze.com

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