



What in the world is that?

A globe that fits inside a walking cane and Bakongo fetishes are among the fantastical objects to grace Parisian galleries this September

IF Anthony Meyer describes an Inuit artefact as 'an enigmatic object of anthropomorphic form', then its meaning must indeed be obscure. Is it human, animal, fish, bird or insect? Mr Meyer, of the eponymous gallery in the rue des Beaux-Arts on the Parisian Left Bank has dealt in Oceanic tribal arts since the 1980s, but he also collected early Eskimo art—as he terms it—and he is internationally respected for his expertise.

In 2010, he launched a specialist department to deal in it and the 7½in walrus-tusk carving is his poster object for this year's *Parcours des Mondes* from September 6 to 11 (www.parcours-des-mondes.com). It is about 1,000 years old, give or take a couple of centuries, and comes from the Alaskan Punuk culture on the Bering Sea.

Mr Meyer has a busy autumn ahead of him, with the *Biennale des Antiquaires* at the Grand Palais overlapping with the *Parcours*, from September 10 to 18 (www.biennale-paris.com), and then *Frieze Masters* in London from October 6 to 9 (www.frieze.com/fairs/frieze-masters). For this reason, unlike some of the neighbouring shows, his special *Parcours* exhibition will close on September 11. It will be on the theme of 'Series



Fig 1: Niue 1860s hand-painted bark cloth. With Michael Evans

& Collections': groups of same-type objects, objects of similar form and/or function, and a collection of objects of diverse provenance and typology all representing the same image.

Now in its 15th year, the *Parcours* is widely regarded as the foremost primal-arts fair, although, recently, it has expanded beyond its traditional 'tribal' base to include a wide range of Asian arts and also some antiquities. The 78

participants include 16 galleries from Belgium, 11 from the USA and others from Britain, Australia, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland.

With the exhibitions concentrated in an easily walked and most agreeable area around Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the *Parcours* is always stimulating and it has educated and enthused me in fields about which I had previously known little. Alas, I shall have to miss this one.

Specialised, or focused, shows include African subjects and Bwiti reliquaries at the Galerie Bernard Dulon; Bakongo fetishes at the Galerie Alba et Alain Lecointe; the oneiric (dream-like) universe of Monsieur X at the Galerie SL (Fig 3); 'Savage Island —The Art of Niue'

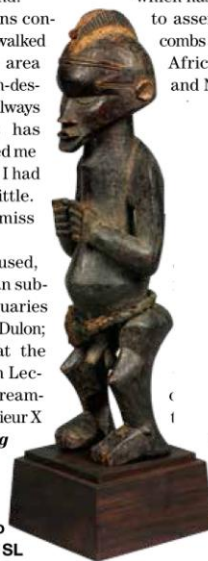
Fig 3: Wooden Congo statue. With Galerie SL



Fig 2: Lacquer panel. With Max Rutherford

with Michael Evans (Fig 1); and *netsuke* with Max Rutherford (Fig 2). Bwiti is a syncretic belief system in Gabon and Cameroon that combines elements of animism, ancestor worship and Christianity. It involves much use of the psychedelic root bark of the *Tabernanthe iboga* plant. Niue, north-east of New Zealand, is one of the world's smallest states and is known for bark-cloth paintings and elegant clubs and spears.

Another remarkable exhibition will be Yann Ferrandin's 'Hair', which has taken some years to assemble and includes combs and ornaments from Africa, Oceania, Asia and North America.



Pick of the week

One of the dealers exhibiting in the *Parcours de la Céramique* is Antoine Lebel from Brussels, who is enjoying the hospitality of the galerie Jacques Leegenhoek in the rue de Lille. By training, Dr Lebel is a Classical archaeologist with a DPhil from Oxford, but he specialises in Chinese export porcelain. Although now based in Belgium, in 1992, the gallery originally opened in the Carré Rive Gauche. A highlight of his show is a rare pair of *aiguières*—that is, goose-shaped ewers intended for water.

Although for the European market, there is something unmistakably Chinese about this 8½in-high pair, with their high lids, coral spirals and green goose-necks. They date from the Kangxi period, about 1700.