



Left: a gold lacquer inro by the famous artist Shibata Zeshin which realised €33,000 (£26,830) at Van Ham.

a *Peony*. It was catalogued as “in the manner of Qi Baishi (1864-1957)”, one of the most famous Chinese painters of his era. Numerous bidders were convinced that it was an original work by the painter, judging by the result of €400,000 (£325,200), a nice windfall for the consignor who had been expecting €12,000-15,000.

Chinese bids in Cologne

Chinese bidders were also out in force at another Asian art sale in Cologne held on June 9 by **Van Ham (28/25% buyer's premium)**.

Among the pieces they picked up was a 16th century silk scroll painting with depictions of 60 Chinese beauties over the ages, many of them identifiable, including the poetess Su Ruolan and princess Le Chang.

The 11in x 26ft 8in (29cm x 8.15m) painting was attributed to Ying Lu (1494-1552) and offered for €15,000-20,000. It went on to sell for €39,000 (£31,710).

Refreshingly vigorous bidding greeted Japanese works of art, a field Van Ham have always cultivated.

A 3in (8cm) high boxwood netsuke of Shōki, the demon hunter, carrying a demon Oni on his shoulder, the work of a late 18th century craftsman of the Tokyo School, was moderately estimated at €900 and was finally sold for €9000 (£7320).

A 2in (5cm) boxwood and ivory netsuke of a carp, signed *Masakatsu*, from 1800-40, was one of 31 similar pieces signed by the artist and attracted a closing bid of €13,000 (£10,570), more than doubling the estimate.

The highest result in this section was for a 4in (10cm) high six-part gold lacquer inro by Shibata Zeshin (1807-91), with a realistically painted *trompe l'oeil* tsuba, decorated with five swallows, on the front and numerous other motifs on the rear. A German collector outpaced the international competition when he offered €33,000 (£26,830), more than three times the lower estimate, to secure it. ■

Bavarian town beats drum for German trade

THE 21st edition of the *Bamberger Kunst und Antiquitätenwochen* (art and antiques weeks) opens its doors on July 22.

Whereas in many other German cities the antiques trade has undeniably been in decline, the situation in Bamberg is refreshingly different. The Bavarian town, a UNESCO world heritage site, has – compared to its population of 75,000 – an extremely high concentration of art and antiques dealers.

Twelve of them, including several of Germany's most famous dealers, have a common aim: to cultivate and defend the bastion of traditional collecting, while taking the changing tastes of the buying public into account.

To this end they are organising joint selling exhibitions in their respective premises, all of which can be found within easy walking distance of each other in the heart of the medieval city.

An extensive programme of guided tours and lectures by participating dealers and local academics also takes place, highlighting individual works of art, fields of collecting or specific aspects of collections in Bamberg's museums, galleries and libraries.

The motto the Bamberg dealers have chosen this year, *Unity in diversity*, embodies the range of the event, but can also be read politically. Market turmoil and political uncertainty over the future of Europe and the Euro in the aftermath of the UK's Brexit vote are most certainly not what the organisers were hoping for.

However, the participants of the art and antiques weeks exude optimism. After all, it cannot be ruled out that there will be a surge of interest from asset hunters who wish to protect themselves from a future loss of value of the Euro.

American buyers

Furthermore, the slide of the Euro against the dollar has made the German market more attractive to American buyers. Many of the Bamberg dealers can draw on an international client base, as they are regular exhibitors at *TEFAF* in Maastricht. Walter Senger has also just returned from this year's *Masterpiece* in London.

Furniture, Old Masters and sculpture are particularly well represented, but Art Nouveau glass and 20th century Danish silver are also on offer.

For the fourth time the Bamberg dealers are cooperating with the Villa Concordia, an artistic centre which offers up-and-coming Contemporary artists from home and abroad the chance to become artists in residence. Seven of them, current and past graduates from the Villa, have grasped the



Left: hard to miss at the Bamberg event will be this 4ft 9in (1.45m) high carved wooden fantasy animal, dating from the early 18th century and fitted with the actual horns of a Kudu, an African woodland antelope. This will be offered by Thomas Schmitz-Avila and is priced at €125,000.

opportunity to show their latest works of art in the premises of the participating dealers.

In some cases their works cross the borders between art and design, such as Stefan Eberstadt's (b.1961) minimalist *Bamberg Stool* on display at Thomas Schmitz-Avila's premises. Made of coloured sheet steel, it was first executed in a limited edition in 2014.

On the other hand, the exhibits by Martin Wöhl (b.1974) are to be found in Senger's showrooms; they relate more closely to their location in the historic centre of town.

Using old doors as a starting point, he has carved and cut them until they resemble the gables of medieval or Baroque houses, an ideal allusion to the surrounding buildings.

The *Bamberger Kunst und Antiquitätenwochen* runs from July 22 to August 19.

bamberger-antiquitaeten.de

Left: among the many eye-catchers in the Bamberg art and antiques event is this 13in (33cm) wide casket set with intricately carved and partially gilt alabaster panels offered by Christian Eduard Franke, priced at €38,600.

It probably originates from Roemhild in Thuringia and dates from the first half of the 17th century. Behind some of the removable panels are several hidden drawers and compartments and the inside is still covered with the original marbled paper.

