

Sotheby's

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Collection
Marceau
Rivière



Paris, 12 March 2019 - Sotheby's is delighted to unveil the African art collection of Marceau Rivière, the great African art promoter, specialist and dealer and, above all, eminent art historian. For more than 50 years, this discreet man has gathered several hundred works, which Sotheby's will present for sale on 19 June in Paris.

Alexis Maggiar, Sotheby's European Head of African and Oceanic Art, said: *"I was honoured when Marceau Rivière welcomed me into his home for the first time a few years ago; what I discovered there was stunning. His collection, kept hidden from the public for more than half a century, immediately established itself as one of the finest and most comprehensive in African art. We are particularly delighted to promote a beautiful collection which has been guided throughout Marceau Rivière's life by his passion and knowledge."*

As one of the most important collectors in this field, Marceau Rivière is distinguished by his education and approach as an art historian, having dedicated a major part of his career to research and writing. His books have contributed to the rediscovery of many artists, particularly those from the Ivory Coast. For more than 50 years, Rivière has been one of the most dedicated promoters of African art, continually positioning it at the forefront of the art

world and sharing it with the widest possible audience. Rivière also demonstrates an exceptional instinctive approach to art works and artistic sensibility, which have guided the growth of his private collection.

His fascination for Africa began during his childhood when he watched a film on the Congo, shown by a missionary visiting his region, and since then has never left him. He began collecting at an early age buying his first mask at the age of 11, a mask he still has today. In 1957 he joined the French camel corps in Algeria and worked for the first time for the Bardo Museum in Algiers. He was demobilised in 1961 and joined the airline UTA as an engineering technician. His new job enabled him to live in Africa, particularly in Chad, the birthplace of the Sao civilisation. For more than 20 years, his work took him around the whole of the African continent, allowing him to develop friendships with village chiefs, and researching indigenous art and customs wherever he went. During this period he began to form the vast and wide-ranging collection that now exists. In 1975, he wrote his first book, *African Masterpieces from Private Collections*, which earned him an international reputation as soon as it was published, and was translated into English and German. Many reference works followed.

Rivière also met European collectors living in Africa including Paul Delcourt, André Blandin, Maître Loiseau, Philippe Guimiot, Jacques Kerchache, Pierre Darteville and Alain Dufour. His network quickly grew, and in the 1970s he began trading with major collectors and dealers.

His friends were all important collectors and promoters of African art, such as Merton Simpson, Maurice Nicaud, Samir Borro, Willy Mestach, Robert Duperrier, Henri Kamer and René Rasmussen.

Rivière left the aviation industry and dedicated himself entirely to his passion. He expanded his collection by buying works of prestigious provenance from the Vérité, Rubinstein, Guillaume and Ratton collections, through his fellow dealers and at auction. In 1981, he opened the Sao gallery on Rue Saint-Benoit in Paris, named after his stay in Chad; it became a meeting point for connoisseurs from around the world.

Alongside masterpieces from the Ivory Coast, for example Baulé, Dan and Guro works which formed the core of the collection, were icons of Fang, Kota and Kongo art among others. Each piece embodied the sculptor's individual genius and the institutions that nourished the artist's imagination, and also told the story of their discovery by the West in the early 20th century.

This exhaustive group of African art constitutes one of the last historic collections in the field, and reflects the life of a passionate connoisseur dedicated to Africa and its treasures.

BAULE, MASK, IVORY COAST
High. 22,5 cm.



BETE, FIGURE, IVORY COAST
High. 64 cm



BAULE, MASK, IVORY COAST
High. 35 cm



BAULE, ORACLE, IVORY COAST
High. 26 cm



GURO, MASK, IVORY COAST
High. 29,5 cm



DAN, SPOON, IVORY COAST
High. 52 cm



BAULE, FIGURE, IVORY COAST
High. 49 cm



KOTA MAHONGWE, RELIQUARY FIGURE, GABON
High. 39 cm



ZANDE, FIGURE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
High. 26,5 cm



DAN, MASK, IVORY COAST
High. 22 cm



CATALOGUE

The catalogue of the Marceau Rivière collection will be a reference work including texts by renowned international specialists, dealers and curators such as Daniel Hourdé who will write the introduction

COLLECTION WITH GREAT PROVENANCE

- Paul Guillaume, Paris
- Helena Rubinstein, New York
- Armand Arman, Paris
- Baron Lambert, Brussels
- Hans Himmelheber, Heidelberg
- Merton D. Simpson, New York
- Charles Ratton, Paris

BIBLIOGRAPHY | MARCEAU RIVIERE

- Marceau Rivière, *Les chefs-d'œuvre africains des collections privées française*, 1975
 - Marceau Rivière, *Exposition d'Art Africain*, 1979,
 - Marceau Rivière, *Masques d'Afrique*, 1986
 - Marceau Rivière et Raoul Lehuard, *Art Africain*, 1991
 - Marceau Rivière, *Arts Ancestraux du Cameroun*, 1995
 - Alain-Michel Boyer, Patrick Girard et Marceau Rivière, *Arts premiers de Côte d'Ivoire*, 1997
 - Joubert, Marc L. Félix et Marceau Rivière, *Image de la Femme dans l'Art Africain*, 2000
 - Hélène Joubert et Marceau Rivière, *Masques d'Afrique*, 2010
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AUCTION ON 19 JUNE 2019

Exhibition from 13 to 18 June

Highlights will be exhibited

Sotheby's Hong Kong : 29 March - 2 April

Sotheby's Paris : 8 - 10 April

Sotheby's Brussels : 25 - 28 April

Monaco: 24 - 28 avril, Moretti Monaco, Park Palace, 27 avenue de la Costa, Monaco

Sotheby's New York: 9 - 14 May

Sotheby's Paris: 1er - 4 June