

# FRENCH ART DE VIVRE

## #4

**Paris Biennale  
des Antiquaires**  
Grand Palais

CONNAISSANCE DES  
**arts**





## CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR ART DECO

New collectors have arrived on the market over the past few years with astronomical resources and houses to be furnished. The demand for 20th-century decorative arts has never been so strong or so selective. High quality pieces are rare and, what's more, in two clicks of a mouse, the results of auction sales and gallery exhibition archives are accessible. However can the element of surprise be maintained? Presenting an unprecedented stand that measures up to the Biennale's reputation is no mean feat. This year, Cheska Vallois stands out from the crowd by hosting a non-commercial exhibition, the fruit of a forty-year career and the relationships built with some very prestigious clients, who have lent her works. This show is a homage to Jacques Doucet, the legendary collector who, prior to 1925, managed to assemble, among other things, furniture by Eileen Gray or Pierre Legrain and Pablo Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Cheska Vallois has brought together works that belonged to the great man, including Eileen Gray's superb lacquered wood *Chariot Table* (1915) and other furniture and objects worthy of his discerning gaze. However, there is also some exceptional furniture to be purchased at the Biennale. Félix Marilhac has a table by Eugène Printz with a black lacquered wood top and U-shaped metal legs, an almost modernist piece that reflects present-day collectors' tastes. "They all buy contemporary art and often fall in love with pieces that go well with their paintings," remarks Cheska Vallois. The same spirit of modernity governs the Galerie Mathivet's choices. Its star piece is a handsome, atypical commode designed by Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann in 1932, a year before his death. Its sobre lines clearly herald the 1950s style. Yves and Victor

1. Line Vautrin, *Mirror Folly or The Sun has a Rendezvous with the Moon* (one of a pair), c.1958, black talosel resin and mirrors, 64 x 85 cm (Galerie Jean-David Botella, Paris) 2. Wendell Castle, *Sixteen Hundred*, 2013, stained and oiled ash, 90.8 x 246.4 x 140.3 cm, one-off piece (Carpenters Workshop Gallery, Paris) 3. Étienne Hajdu, *Monumental "Gensoli" Vase*, 1967, Sèvres porcelain, H. 172 cm (Galerie Mathivet, Paris) 4. Pierre Legrain, *Stool*, c.1920, ebony, shagreen, gold highlights, H. 56 cm (Galerie Vallois, Paris. ©Arnaud Carpentier)





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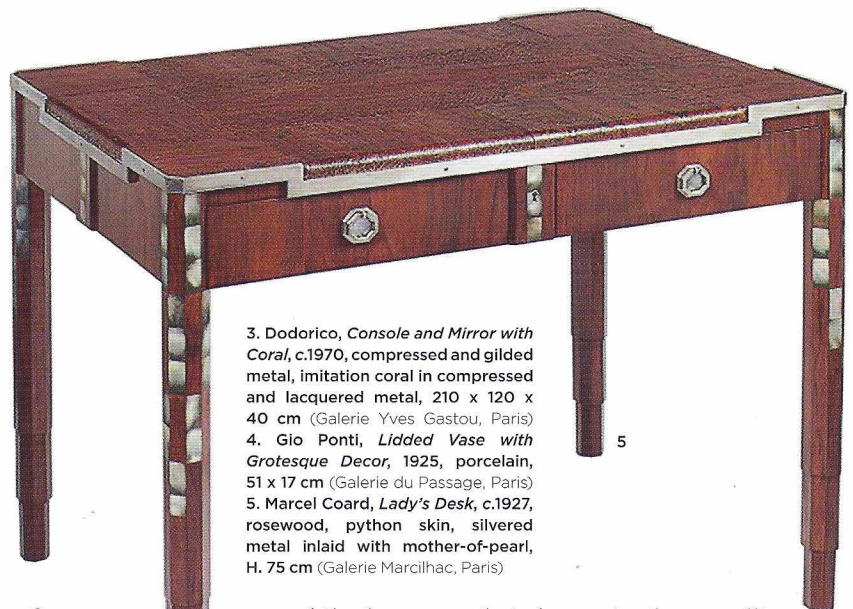
1. Alfred-Auguste Janniot, *Torso of Hercules*, c.1935-38, original bronze cast, 85 x 48 x 26 cm (Galerie Michel Giraud, Paris) 2. André Sornay, *Vertical Commode*, c.1930, airbrushed green lacquered wood, coppered metal and wood, 167 x 90 x 50 cm, one-off piece (Galerie Alain Marcelpoil, Paris)



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3. Dodorico, *Console and Mirror with Coral*, c.1970, compressed and gilded metal, imitation coral in compressed and lacquered metal, 210 x 120 x 40 cm (Galerie Yves Gastou, Paris) 4. Gio Ponti, *Lidded Vase with Grotesque Decor*, 1925, porcelain, 51 x 17 cm (Galerie du Passage, Paris) 5. Marcel Coard, *Lady's Desk*, c.1927, rosewood, python skin, silvered metal inlaid with mother-of-pearl, H. 75 cm (Galerie Marcihac, Paris)

Gastou, volutes Moreux in eye. The the bronze off a vast

meanwhile, have put their hopes in the metallic of a dining-room suite designed by Jean-Charles 1940. But there is more to this ensemble than meets the thick pink marble table top and visible hammering of almost give the impression of a sculpture, which sets off a vast Italian stained-glass window (c.1970) on their stand, in line with the trend for eclecticism. "Since the Bergé-Saint Laurent sale in 2009, new collectors have realized that knowing how to mix styles gives rise to the ultimate elegance," remarks Julien Lombrail, from the Carpenters Workshop Gallery, whose stand pays tribute to furniture made by the American sculptor Wendell Castle. That's probably why, despite rumblings from some of the exhibitors, the organizers of the Biennale have once again invited this upholder of contemporary creation to the celebrated Parisian antiques fair.

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