



Fig 1 left: The Baptism of Constantine by Niccolò Codazzi and Domenico Piola. With Galerie Piola. With Canesso.

Fig 2 above: Study of a waterfall by Peder Balke. With Van der Meij Fine Arts

lands in the 1450s and contains 17 large miniatures by the Master of Girart de Roussillon and his workshop. Historical accuracy was of no concern to these artists and the actors in scenes such as Achilles and Ajax playing chess in a tent are dressed in the height of mid-15th-century fashion (**Fig 3**). Niccolò Codazzi (1642–93) and his collaborator Domenico Piola (1627–1703) were almost equally unconcerned with historical pedantry. Although their 56½in by 45in canvas *The Baptism of Constantine* (**Fig 1**), to be shown by the Parisian Galerie Canesso, nods to Classical dress, it is an entirely Baroque take on it, as is the architecture of the setting. Codazzi was responsible for the architecture and Piola the figures.

Passion in Paris

Fine Arts Paris and Also Known As Africa: Art & Design Fair are certainly worth booking your Eurostar tickets for

TWO recently founded art fairs will have their second and third outings in Paris in the next fortnight: Fine Arts Paris (FAP), with 43 French and foreign galleries at the Carrousel du Louvre from November 7 to 11, and Also Known As Africa: Art & Design Fair (AKAA), with 44 galleries from 15 countries at the Carreau du Temple from November 9 to 11.

I missed both last year, but at least I should get to FAP this time and much look forward to it. It is organised by the same team as the Salon du Dessin, one of my favourite Parisian events.

I hope that four of the oldest offerings will, in fact, reach Paris, as Les Enluminures, the specialist in medieval manuscripts and rings, which operates in Paris, Chicago and New York, is currently showing them in its New York gallery and they might well sell there.

With a very fine Bible, a Book of Hours and a hagiography of a sainted Anglo-Saxon princess, there is a wonderful *Roman de Troie*, a French version of the story of Troy, which is claimed to be the oldest European chivalric tale.

It was probably composed in Brussels or the southern Nether-



Fig 3: Roman de Troie (the story of Troy), with Les Enluminures



Fig 4: Sculpture by Dominique Zinkpè with Galerie Vallois

Although born in Naples, Codazzi had strong connections with Genoa and he moved back there after periods in Rome and France, where he had worked for Louis XIV at Versailles. This was probably painted for the Spinola Palace at Genoa, where Piola was the leading artist of the day.

Another artist represented at Versailles is Peder Balke (1804–87), a Norwegian landscape painter and social reformer. His talent was recognised early and

neighbours funded his education, with him decorating their farmhouses in return. Among others, he was a pupil of J. C. Dahl and was strongly influenced by Turner at his most romantic. In 1830, he undertook a long walking tour, making sketches and small paintings to be worked up later.

Success came fairly quickly; the Swedish royal family bought paintings and then, in 1846, he sold 30 works to King Louis Philippe for Versailles. He was responsible for the co-operative development of the Oslo area of Balkeby and advocated grants for artists. In 2014, the National Gallery gave him a major London exhibition.

A 4¾in by 4in study of a waterfall in oil paint on canvas—perhaps one from 1830?—will be shown by Van der Meij of Amsterdam (**Fig 2**). It does have a strong dash of Turner, perhaps mixed with traditional Chinese landscapes.

François Pompon (1855–1933) had to wait until the age of 67 before he won the recognition he deserved as an animal sculptor, even though Rodin, whose assistant he was for a while, had told him that he would be a great artist.

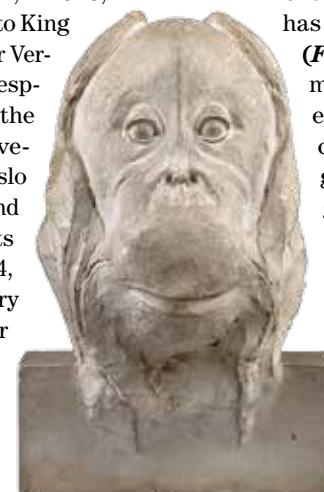


Fig 6: Plaster version of Head of an Orangutan by Pompon. With Galerie Malaquais

His breakthrough finally came in 1922, with a life-sized marble polar bear, now in the Musée d'Orsay; it was carved in a style that was both realistic and close to Art Deco and so caught the popular mood. Shortly thereafter, Pompon won the accolade of being extensively faked.

One of his final works was a *Head of an Orangutan*, of which the Galerie Malaquais has a plaster version (**Fig 6**). These primates are like humans enough to be disconcerting as they gaze at us with their great eyes below domed foreheads. This one reminds me of the painter Edward Burne-Jones, although lacking the lengthy beard.

Apropos of almost nothing, Pompon sported a remarkably luxurious moustache.

Contemporary African art is enjoying a vogue, deservedly so, as it has shaken off the 'airport art' associations that damaged both modern and older African work. As there are 54 recognised countries on that continent and artists of many races, variety is to be expected and relished. The main categories at AKAA are paintings, sculptures and photographs.

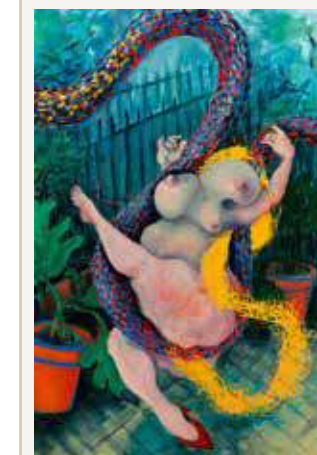
Given that almost anyone can now produce increasingly sophisticated images, we may be nearing the end of photography as a specialist profession and art market. However, here there are still beautiful things by fine photographers to be had.

Among the best is Patrick Willocq, who has spent much time in the Congo. Here will be his records of the Walés (nursing mothers) of the Ekonda pygmy tribe, who live in seclusion tended and taught by older women. They are given the respect and care otherwise reserved for the king, devoting their energies exclusively to themselves and their children.



Fig 5: Photograph of a Walé (nursing mother) of the Ekonda pygmy tribe by Patrick Willocq. With VisionQuest 4rosso of Genoa

Pick of the week



The south London Sulger-Buel Lovell Gallery specialises in contemporary art of Africa and the diaspora, with an emphasis on South Africa. At AKAA, it will show enamel paintings by Isabelle Grobler, who puts new spins on famous images, such as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* or, as above (detail), Fragonard's *The Swing* (www.sulger-buel-lovell.com).

Adopting elaborate grooming rituals—such as coating themselves in *ngola*, a red powder from a tree believed to chase evil spirits away—and donning heavy brass bracelets that restrict their movements, along with the skins of carnivorous animals, the Walés follow strict rules until the time arrives for liberation.

Willocq's superb photographs (**Fig 5**) will be shown by VisionQuest 4rosso of Genoa.

With the Parisian Galerie Vallois will be sculpture and paintings by Dominique Zinkpè from Cotonou in Benin. His paintings have a Surrealist quality, with loose figures 'battling and swimming on the canvas', as the gallery puts it.

Nurturing females are also a theme for him and many of his sculptures (**Fig 4**) address the Yoruba concept of twinship. He was awarded the Prix Jeune Talent Africa in 1993 and won the Prix Umeoa at the 2002 Dakar Biennale.

Next week Fakes and a small masterpiece