TITLE INFORMATION
Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/uk

Every Object Tells a Story

Oliver Hoare

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- The detailed accompaniment to the 2017 exhibition that celebrated art dealer Oliver Hoare's lifetime of collecting passion through a labyrinth of seductive, peculiar objects and artworks

What is assembled here might look like a modern 'Cabinet of Curiosities', an assemblage of the exotic and curious from the four quarters of the world. There is an intention behind it, however, that goes beyond presenting a wide variety of curiosities. We are today linked up to all those four quarters, and while a huge amount of information is available to us, unlike to those who awaited the ships in the ports of Amsterdam, Genoa, Lisbon, London, Marseille, Seville or Venice, the horizon of what interests us seems to have shrunk. The art market is an interesting barometer of this shrinkage. The point is, therefore, that we can connect with the whole world on a much more profound level than can be gained from package touring, through the possession of, and study of even the most modest objects of different cultures. The purpose of collecting, as Moliere might have put it, should not be limited to becoming rich through the investment in one's purchases, but to become enriched through the possession of what one has acquired. Highlights include: the silver libation cup of Mongke Khan, grandson of Genghis and ruler of an empire that stretched from modern Bucharest to Peking, and Karachi to Novgorod; the apple from the Garden of Eden – a silver pomander belonging to the Stuart Kings, with bite marks, opening to reveal a silver skull; a Scythian (6-7th centuries BC) jade pendant of the endangered Saiga antelope, as nely carved as anything by Faberge; a bronze Bacchus head from a tripod table belonging to the Emperor Augustus; a limestone bear carved in 3rd millenium BC Bactria.

Oliver Hoare, one of London's most distinguished dealers, originally learnt his craft in the company of Bruce Chatwin. His love of the rare, the evocative, the seductive shines out from every stunning object in this collection and the stories that he teases outfrom them. No one could fail to be drawn into this gorgeous labyrinth.

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