

META COLLECTION SEEN IN LONDON FOR THE FIRST TIME:

Meta takes over Mallett store during the Frieze Art Fair

Meta, a new company by esteemed antiques house Mallett, is to take over the Mallett store on New Bond Street during the Frieze Art Fair (16th -19th October). This will be the first time the much lauded Meta collection has been seen in the UK.

Meta is a perfect fusion of the best of 18th-century techniques and materials and 21st-century design. Leading contemporary designers, Asymptote, Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby, Matali Crasset, Tord Boontje and Wales & Wales, collaborated with master craftsmen and artisans to create the inaugural collection of contemporary objects and furniture which debuted this year to overwhelming praise at the Milan Furniture Fair.

During the Frieze Art Fair deconstructed gold letters spelling out the legend Meta will transform the entire frontage of the Mallett store; and for the first time in Mallett's 143 year history the store will be open to the general public.

A doorman will invite inquisitive passers-by to come inside and view the entire Meta collection alongside Mallett's prestigious collection of 18th and 19th century antiques. The Meta collection will unfold along a path throughout the entire ground floor, creating a fantastical apartment of contemporary objects and 18th century craftsmanship.

Meta provides new opportunities for today's leading designers to create a collection of timeless contemporary objects and furniture, ranging from a precious gold bonbonnière, to a stunning silver candelabra, to an elaborate fig-leaf wardrobe. By collaborating with master craftsmen and artisans, the designers were given access to an extensive range of exceptional materials, methods of manufacture and knowledge of archetypal forms.

Meta was created by Mallett in response to growing interest in living with contemporary objects of similar quality to its fine antiques. The establishment of Meta and the commissioning of a new contemporary collection by some of the world's most talented designers mark the first such venture by a leading antiques company.

Giles Hutchinson Smith, Managing Director of Mallett & Son (Antiques) Ltd. says: "Over the last several years, we have noticed clients increasingly seeking our advice on where they might find contemporary furniture and objects of equal quality to their existing Mallett antique pieces."

Alison Sachs, Managing Director of Meta adds: “The genesis of Meta sprang from the simple idea that quality, exquisite attention to detail and thoughtful selection of materials and construction is as desirable and sought after today as it was in the past.”

Meta has been conceived with Louise-Anne Comeau & Geoffrey Monge who have taken on the role of Creative Directors at Meta. Comeau says: “When Mallett approached me to work with them to create a contemporary collection, it was quickly apparent that their enormous knowledge and appreciation of nearly forgotten materials and techniques was as relevant and useful to creating the finest contemporary objects as it was to appreciating some of their breathtaking antiques.

“Meta is the antithesis of machine-age production. Each object is as rare as the collaboration between the designers, artisans and materials which make it possible.”

The first collection from Meta is comprised of eleven richly detailed, functional and unique pieces to be lived with and enjoyed. Although each piece is available for sale, the availability of the finest master craftsmen and the particular requirements of the techniques used to create the Meta collection will often only allow a few pieces to be produced each year. In addition, the unpredictability of obtaining only the highest quality materials prevent Meta from guaranteeing that any single combination of materials, colours and finishes will be available in the future.

The first Meta collection consists of:

Asymptote (Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture)

Ivo_03

Materials & Techniques: Tula steel (historic 1780 formulation), slumped glass traditional hand etching and polishing

Dimensions: 1.50 x 0.90 x 0.45 meters

Asymptote’s low table features slumped glass suspended across an abstracted alloy surface of diamond-shaped facets. The base is made of a bespoke formula of Tula steel recreated by Meta based upon the analysis of a rare piece of Imperial Tula steel from 1780. Using some of the same craftsmen responsible for restoring the Kremlin Palace, the perimeter edge of the base is hand-etched with an Asymptote pattern of incised relieve and hand-finished using traditional polishing methods.

Mnemos_01_02_03

Materials & Techniques: Gold, silver gilt, hand-made custom hinges, satinwood and purpleheart, hand-formed interior compartments

Dimensions: various

Asymptote has designed a series of exquisite gold boxes in collaboration with a preeminent Parisian atelier specializing in the finest of hand-made objects. These exceptional containers mark a reintroduction of the once highly coveted and still highly collectable 'previous gold boxes' of the 1700s.

Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby

Cidade

Materials & Techniques: 958 Britannia silver hand spun, rolled and cast, pearwood, custom beeswax

Dimensions: 510 x 310 x 200 millimetres

Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby's highly reflective and candle-laden *surtout de table* is reminiscent of those popular on an 18th-century table. Using Britannia silver (a rarely used and exceptionally pure silver standard introduced in 1697), London-based silversmith-makers Ottewill have hand-crafted a collection of seven candlesticks that rest on a silver base with an under base of golden polished pearwood. Cidade is lit with bespoke candles made of a custom beeswax formulation.

Cupola

Materials & Techniques: Venini hand-blown glass, double incalmo, mezza filigrana, cast and spun mirror-polished white bronze, Carrara marble base

Dimensions: 11. x 0.6meters

Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby's collaboration with the innovative Italian glass company Venini to create a reading table continues the great traditions and creative possibilities of hand-blown glass, best captured during the magnificent yet brief trend of glass furniture in the 19th century. The dimensions and complexity of this piece have pushed all aspects of Venini production and required Venini's most experienced master craftsman for the execution.

Tord Boontje

L'armoire

Materials & Techniques: Traditionally sawn cocobolo over mahogany and okoumé structure, hidden compartments, secret locking mechanisms

Dimensions: 2.1 x 1.1 x 0.8 meters

Tord Boontje has reinterpreted the classic wood veneered cabinet of the 18th century by creating a beautiful, sensual shape using simply figured veneers to highlight a rich landscape of curves. A notable feature are the “hidden drawers and secret locks”, features that were very popular during the 1700s for men and women to hide such secret documents as love letters and financial papers. Maîtres Ebénistes’ Mssr. Thomas Barthélemy and Paul-André Péchenard, have produced the wardrobe, M. Alain de Saint Exupéry has custom designed the hidden locking mechanisms and M. Simon-Pierre Etienne is overseeing production as *maitre d’oeuvre*.

The Fig Leaf

Materials & Techniques: Hand-painted enamelled copper leaves, lost wax cast patinated bronze tree, hand-dyed and woven silk, hand-formed tracery support structure, *trompe l’oeil* back

Dimensions: 2.1 x 1.5 x 0.7 meters

The Fig Leaf Wardrobe, reflects on a time when craftsmen vied to out-do each other in demonstrating their skills in the hope of attracting wealthy patrons. The surface of the wardrobe is created from the hanging of 616 hand-painted (front and back) enamel leaves on an internal tangle of branches and a tree made up of a lost wax cast patinated bronze by French Sculptor Patrick Blanchard. Hand painted by some of the last remaining fine enamel painters in England, each leaf vary across 10 basic shapes and custom mixed colours. The silk-lined interior of the wardrobe was made by Gainsborough Silks of Sudbury, England and the upholstery was executed by R D Robins Upholsterers of London.

Matali Crasset

Diamond Are a Girl’s Best Friend 1

Materials & Techniques: Paktong cast using lost wax method, unique repeating master-link chain, mouth-blown sheet glass

Dimensions: 0.8 x 0.6 meters

Working with Oxford University’s archaeological material sciences unit and a family-owned firm, Belmont Metals, who has been producing specialist alloys since 1896, Matali Crasset’s lantern revives paktong, a nearly extinct metal of Chinese origin once known for its unique golden silver patina that never tarnishes. To identify the formulation and recreate the metal, a candlestick from the late 1600s was analyzed. Glashüette Lamberts, one of the few remaining producers of traditional sheet glass, supplied the antique sheet glass for the internal and external panels and Heritage Metalworks undertook the mastery casting and assembling the 102 angles of this multidimensional work.

Diamond Are a Girl's Best Friend 2

Materials & Techniques: Wood structuring with brass detailing, hand-stitched goat hide backing in specially dyed colour, custom polished hand-drawn glass with hand-mirrored finish

Dimensions: 1.93 x 1.02 x 0.74 meters

Matali Crasset's rendition of the Cheval mirror (*psyché*) – an archetype that existed in abundance between 1800 and 1930 – celebrates the ritual of dressing. Bernard Mauffret, a member of the renowned *Compagnons du Devoir* of France, was selected to oversee the production of the piece. The rear panel is made of finest goat hide, custom-dyed and then hand-cut and stitched by Lemerle, a Paris based *gainier*. The glass is made of hand-drawn glass and has been hand mirrored and polished to ensure the finest finish.

Wales & Wales (Rod & Ali Wales)

Glissade

Materials & Techniques: Ash (desk), Olive Ash (legs), Box wood (hinges), Chestnut (dust board), red lacquer (pen box), custom dyed leather (hidden well), hand-crafted wooden wheels and hinges

Dimensions: 1.48 x 0.65 x 0.75 meters

The writing desk was an essential component of every well-educated household in the 18th century. It was not only the place at which business and communication was conducted, but represented the skills of the master wood craftsman and the beauty and abundance of materials. Wales & Wales' rendition embodies these expressions of workmanship in an elegant, clean design. The Edward Barnsley Workshop, with a tradition stretching back to the height of the British Arts and Crafts period, was selected to produce the desk. The workshop continues to use much of the same equipment housed in the very same workshops of this earlier era.

Ends

Meta

Meta was launched in 2008 by the venerable antiques house of Bond Street, Mallett. Founded in 1865, Mallett is one of the world's pre-eminent antiques houses, specializing in 18th-century furniture and objects. Private collectors as well as many of the world's greatest museums, from the Victoria and Albert in London to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, look to Mallett for exemplary pieces that represent an object's design, execution and pedigree. Meta carries on this tradition of dealing in exquisite objects by commissioning leading contemporary creatives worldwide to develop pieces which fuse the best of 18th century techniques and materials with 21st century design.

For further information please contact:

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