

The London Magazine

WHAT LUXURY

The most overused word in property

ON THE SCENT

Jo Malone's city inspiration

DEADLY AIR

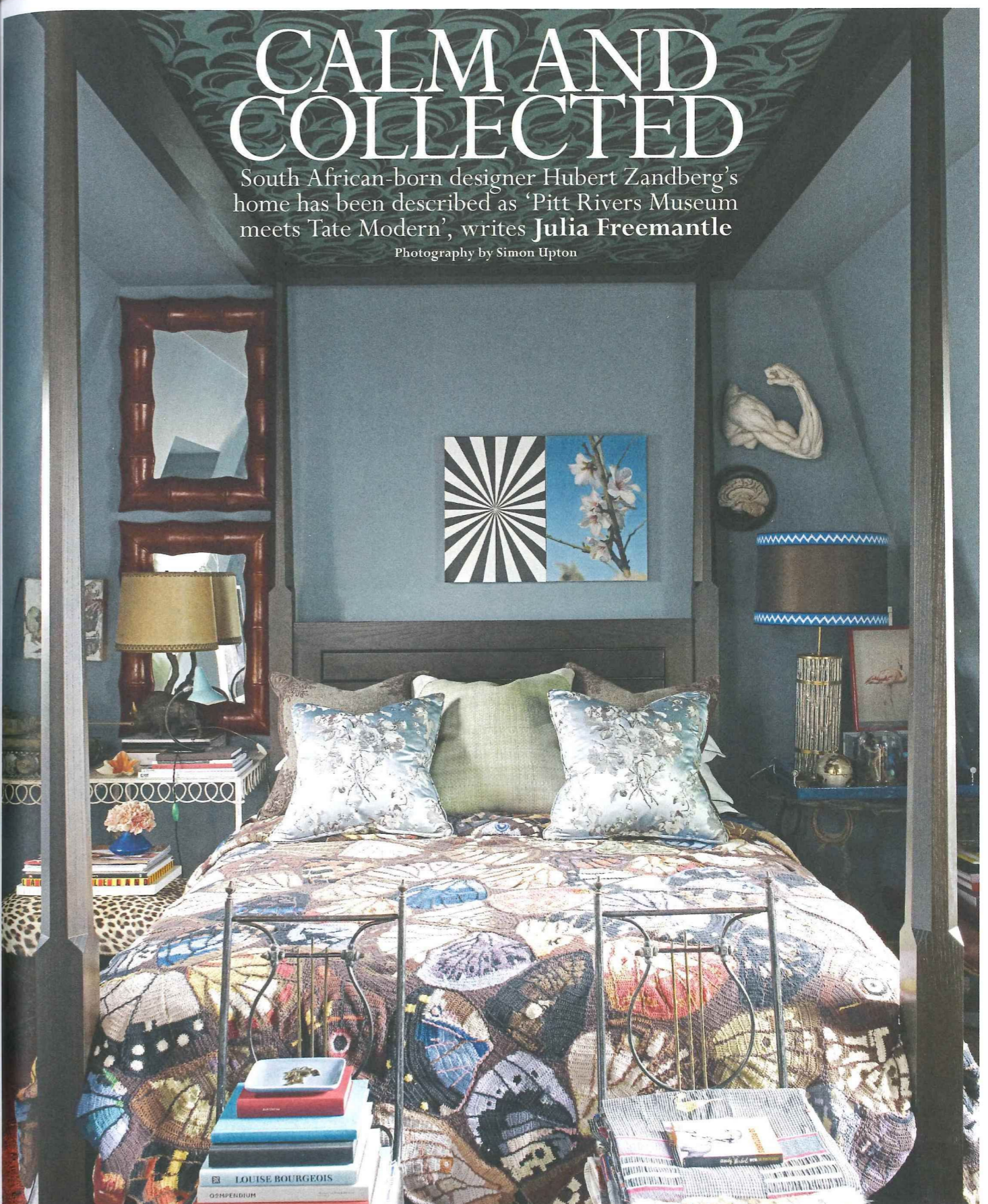
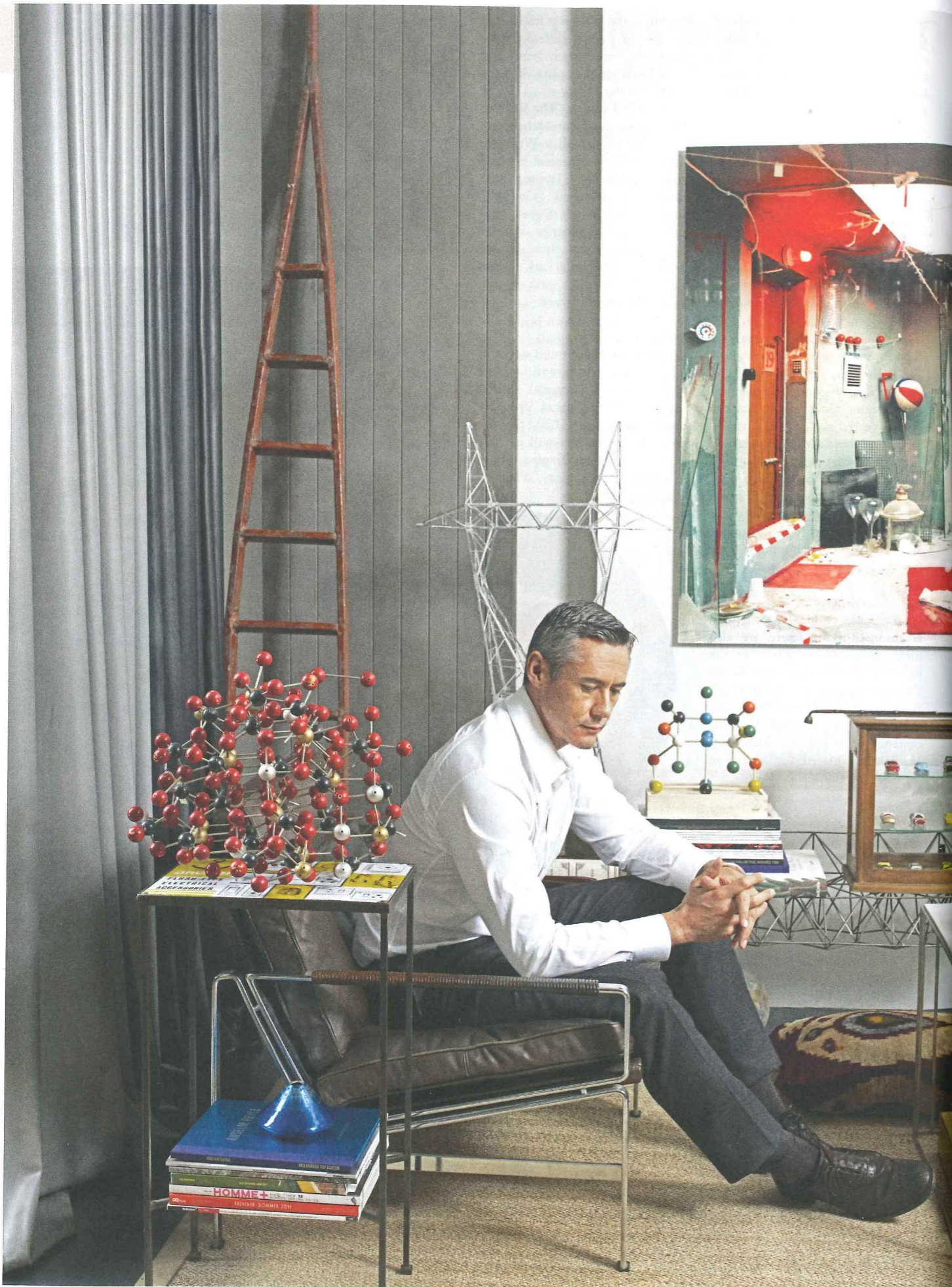
Time to get tough on pollution

HOT PROPERTY. COOL DESIGN. HEATED DEBATE

IN THE DOGHOUSE

PETS AND THEIR
WELL-BEHAVED
OWNERS WELCOME





CALM AND COLLECTED

South African-born designer Hubert Zandberg's home has been described as 'Pitt Rivers Museum meets Tate Modern', writes **Julia Freemantle**
 Photography by Simon Upton

NATURAL EVOLUTION Left: Hubert Zandberg in the living room. Displays of toy cars and molecular models contrast with artwork, which he finds in galleries including Heidi Erdmann and Michael Stevenson in South Africa. Above: The guest bedroom is a riot of colour and includes a bed of his own design



'HIGGLEDY UN-GALLERY SPACE' A geometric sculpture by Bruno Peinado serves as shelves, dividing the living room. On the walls, is an Edgar Martins photograph, top left, while a Francis Bacon lithograph and Pieter Hugo photo sit alongside a collection of tortoiseshells. Top right: cacti and lush foliage in a garden room. Right: the kitchen



Hubert Zandberg doesn't seem familiar with the dictum "less is more". The designer's London home is chock full – in a thrilling where-to-look-first way – with artefacts, curios and curiosities on every surface.

The house's history is almost as quirky as its contents, no doubt part of why it appealed to Zandberg, whose passion for sourcing pieces has informed his singular style. Split over five levels, his home in Ladbroke Grove was once a canal-keeper's house, the lower levels storing hay, horses and coaches. But, oddly enough, its last incarnation was as a motorbike workshop.

"The house has been many different things, so it seemed to welcome all my disparate objects, and even invite them," he says.

Zandberg's South African roots are immediately apparent. "It's a cliché but the truth is you can't grow up in the Karoo and not be affected by it," he says.

He once described his work as "Vintage regality meets modernism, with a dash of anarchy". But as well as contemporary influences he is inspired by his links with Africa.

For him, African art has two sides. Bold colour and bright gold sun and sand. And its spare, monochromatic counterpart: sun-bleached bones, quills, horns.

Zandberg has given these pieces a Eurocentric twist, adding an element of edginess by taking them



out of context. "A friend describes it as 'Pitt Rivers Museum meets the Tate Modern'," he says. "I feel that by showing the artefacts and art not as separate concepts, it gives the effect relevance."

A passionate frequenter of flea markets – his favourite is Portobello Market, where he is a Saturday regular at Owen Hargreaves and Jasmine Dahl's stall, but also Columbia Road, Brick Lane and Golborne Road – Zandberg thinks of himself as more of a collector than a designer.

He visits Paris and Brussels for "the really good things", adding, "there is so much junk out there, fakes and curios". "If you want anything good you pay for it. I collect more utility objects and dress, which is more affordable.

You can get very good examples for under £10,000."

And rather than buying his collection to fill his home, he chose what he calls his "higgledy un-gallery" space as somewhere to house his collection.

"For some it may be overwhelming but for me the dialogue of all these objects is actually strangely calming," he says.

The pieces transmit culture and colour, life and death, heritage and humour. In bringing them together, Zandberg found that pieces acquired further meaning, a process he finds fascinating. "The spaces evolve organically and sometimes when I stand back and look at a scene again, I see symbolism I didn't ever intend, »

“I DECIDED THAT RATHER THAN FIGHT THE ROOM’S CHARACTERISTICS, I SHOULD HAND IT OVER TO THAT PURPOSE”



ETHNIC YET MODERNIST Antlers, taxidermy and skulls give a museum feel. In the guest room, a flamingo stands next to a 1960s American Memphis-style desk



but that must have been in the back of my mind,” he says.

He’s referring in particular to a tableau of *objets* in a guestroom, where a Madonna under a cloche sits alongside a tiny army tank: “The reference to religion and war isn’t lost on me – it shows you how powerful the subconscious is.”

In the master bedroom pops of yellow stand out incongruously against a predominantly black space, underpinned by religious symbolism and imagery that borders on the macabre: skulls, snakes, crucifixes. Zandberg’s skill is in the mix. The colourful ikat

cushions and oversized pop art pull it back from the edge.

After leaving the Karoo, Zandberg studied near Cape Town for five years before coming to London 20 years ago. He worked with the designer David Champion in his Westbourne Grove shop. “He was my mentor,” he says.

Today, Zandberg has his own interior design company. “Family clients” see him move from a French château in the Loire, to a penthouse in St Moritz, an apartment in Moscow, and a number of properties in Doha, Qatar.

In his own home, Zandberg has

played on the idea of light and dark, with certain rooms engineered to function better as nighttime spaces. The main reception room (trickily situated so that you enter it straight off the street) is almost a public space and he has treated it as such.

“I decided that, rather than fight the room’s characteristics, I should hand it over to that purpose,” he says. The result is ultra-glamorous: gold accents, midnight-blue walls and moody contemporary art make it feel more like a nightclub than a run-of-the-mill living room. Conversely, the study one floor down is a sunny, rustic, almost-

safari-feeling space, whose Savanna-inspired palette of browns and tan and a photograph by Anne Hardy of lush foliage are a door to another world. “It’s ethnic but also Modernist,” he says of the space where he has paired a Brazilian rosewood desk with a cluster of sculptures of African heads and a patterned rug.

These complex combinations offer insight into Zandberg’s world: a playground of challenging imagery, rich symbolism and charming, playful irreverence. ■

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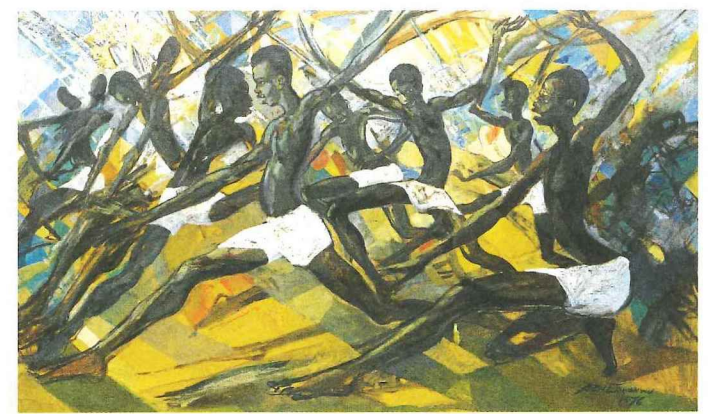
ONES TO WATCH Clockwise from above: Two photographs from the Contemporary African Art Fair, 1-54.com; An initiation shield from Kenya, circa 1920, from Tribal Gathering (tribalgatheringlondon.com); Benedict Chukwukadibia Enwonwu’s *Africa Dances*, which is expected to go for £60,000-90,000 at Bonhams’ auction on 20 May 2015 (his *Seven Wooden Sculptures* sold for £433,500 in May 2013); El Anatsui’s *New World Map*, which sold for £582,000 in May 2012. Visit bonhams.com



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY GALERIE MAGNIN-A, PARIS; COURTESY ATHI PATRA RUGA / WHATISTHEWORLD



“THERE WASN’T THE INTEREST WHEN WE STARTED, BUT IN THE LAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS, AFRICAN ART AUCTIONS HAVE BECOME RATHER EXCITING”



AFRICAN ART

London auctions are setting new records

“African art is a rising market,” confirms Giles Peppiatt, director of contemporary African art at Bonhams, who established its South African Sale in 2007. “This is our eighth year of auctions. When we started out it was very difficult and there wasn’t the interest. But in the last three or four years it has become rather exciting.”

Bonhams hold one sale a year, in May. “Every year we see new world records,” says Peppiatt. Buyers are varied: many are from Africa itself, particularly the economic powerhouse of Nigeria. Then there are collectors from Europe and the United States, both private and museums, such as the Tate Modern, which recently expressed an interest in buying up African art.

Artists who create a buzz of excitement include the Ghanaian, El Anatsui, who, according to Peppiatt, produces, “wonderful rich hangings made out of flattened bottle tops, like chain mail, somewhere between sculpture and painting”. Prices for his work have exceeded £500,000. The works of Nigerian sculptor Ben Enwonwu and the British-born Nigerian Yinka Shonibare also command high prices. Others to watch are Yusuf Grillo, Romuald Hazoumè, Chris Samba, Skunder Boghossian, Malangatana and Bruce Onobrakpeya.

Also reflecting the growth of interest in African art, the third edition of 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair will be held from 15-18 October at Somerset House this year, preceded by the first 1:54 Pop-Up in New York.

For artefacts and African art, visit the Westbourne Grove based Tribal Gathering gallery. Dealing in everything from early 20th century masks and figures to functional stools and bowls, the owner Bryan Reeves has more than 25 years’ experience helping build private collections and selling to museums around the world. ■