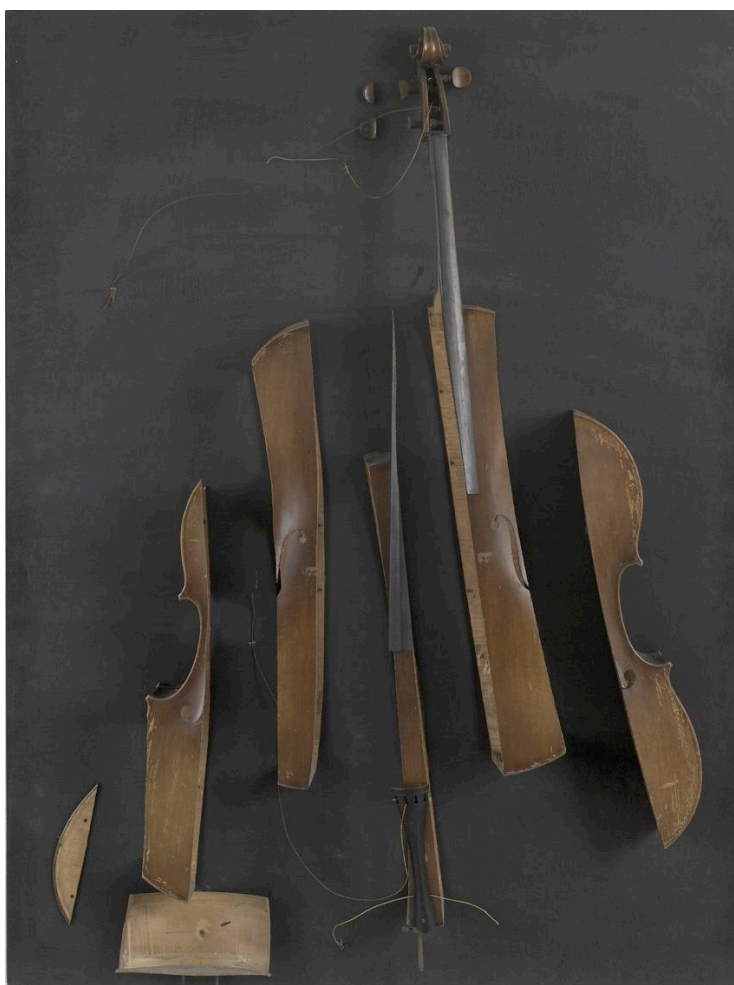


ARTCURIAL

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**THE JEAN ALBOU COLLECTION
HOMAGE TO THE NOUVEAUX REALISTES**

**RECORD PRICES for CESAR, SPOERRI & VILLEGLE
ARMAN *POUBELLE* PRE-EMPTED by the POMPIDOU CENTER**



Arman, *Accord Majeur* (1962) – €371,800 (lot 9, est. €280,000-350,000)

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The Jean Albou Collection of Contemporary Art, sold in Paris on 29/30 January 2008, totaled €3,536,000, equivalent to 88.3% of the total low-estimates (60.2% sold by lot).

"Despite a turbulent economic context, buyers displayed tremendous enthusiasm!" commented **Francis Briest**, Co-President of Artcurial Briest-Le Fur-Poulain-F.Tajan.

French and European buyers (from Germany, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland) captured most of the lots in a saleroom packed to overflowing.

The *Nouveaux Réalistes*, who formed the heart of the collection, were the subject of fierce bidding that paid tribute to Jean Albou's enlightened choices. There were 3 record prices – for César, Spoerri and Villeglé – as only one lot failed to sell.

Works by Arman and César, the leading lights of the Nouveaux Réaliste movement, were keenly contested.

Buyers also saluted Jean Albou's interest in the work of **Chen Zhen**; paintings by **Eugène Leroy** and **Stéphane Pencreac'h**; and **emerging French artists** such as **Gilles Barbier** and **Jean-François Fourtou**.

EXCELLENT PRICES FOR ARMAN

Arman's *La Poubelle des Halles* (1961), sometimes likened to a work of "latterday archeology," sold to France's Musée National d'Art Moderne for €161,100 (lot 7, est. €100,000-150,000), with Alfred Pacquement in the room to preempt this historic work for the Pompidou Center. Arman created just a dozen of these "non-organic" trashcans; most of the others are in leading museums. This one contains an amusing detail: a ticket for the play *Les Croulants Se Portent Bien* ("the old folk are doing fine").

Accord Majeur, a sliced-up cello mounted on board, sold to the European trade for **€371,800** (lot 9, est. €280,000-350,00). This is one of the most important works from the series of *coupes* that Arman began in 1960, embodying one of the most radical gestures in 20th century art: by cutting instruments up into strips, Arman (whose first wife was a gifted cellist) appropriated them and condemned them to silence.

Sarasate's Gipsy Hair, a *colère de violon* (smashed violin) from 1962, sold to the European market for **€185,900** (lot 10, est. €180,000-220,000). *Allure d'Objet* (1960), an abstract painting formerly owned by the artist Jean-Pierre Raynaud, soared to **€173,500** (lot 4, est. €120,000-150,000), selling to the European trade; while *Le Mur des Communications* (1970), an accumulation of telephones set in concrete, sold to the French market for **€80,500** (lot 74a, est. €60,000-80,000).



Arman, *La Poubelle des Halles*, (1961), €161,100 (lot 7, est. €100,000-150,000)

RECORD FOR CESAR

There was a new world record for César as a Swiss collector paid **€310,000** for his welded iron **Tubes (1959)**, a unique work from his series of plaques. This is an outstanding example of the welded iron sculptures César began in 1958, reflecting his search for direct confrontation with matter (metal) – the true subject of his work (lot 6, est. €300,000-400,000).

Compression de Motocyclette (c.1970), surely one of César's finest motorbike compressions, sold to a French collector for **€204,500** (lot 19, est. €150,000-180,000). Pierre Restany talked of its "pure expression" of matter, as all the motorbike's elements are compacted; César's automobile compressions, on the other hand, lack certain parts (engine, brakes ...). César compressions rarely appear on the market.



César, *Compression Motocyclette*, circa 1970, €204,500
(lot 19, est. €150,000-180,000)

RECORD FOR DANIEL SPOERRI

Daniel Spoerri obtained a record price of €136,300, paid by a French collector, with his 1964 *tableau-piège* ***Eaten by Marcel Duchamp***, featuring objects stuck to panel (lot 12, est. €110,000-150,000). Arman was the first owner of this historic work, both a Spoerri *tableau-piège* and Duchamp *ready-made*. Arman bought it at the exhibition *31 Variations on a Meal* held at the Allan Stone Gallery in New York in March 1964. Spoerri's 1961 *tableau-piège* ***Les Puces*** sold to a European collector for an impressive **€92,900** (lot 8, est. €80,000-120,000).



Daniel Spoerri, *Eaten by Marcel Duchamp*, 1964, €136,300
(lot 12, est. €130,000-150,000 €)

RECORD FOR JACQUES VILLEGLE

Jacques Villeglé posted a record €148,700 as his ***Quai des Célestins—20 March 1965*** (torn posters mounted on canvas) sold to the French trade (lot 13, est. €150-200,000).



Jacques Villeglé,
Quai des Célestins,
20 mars 1965, €148,700
(lot 13, est. 150,000-200 000 €)

FINE SCORE FOR CHEN ZHEN

To Jean Albou, **Chen Zhen's** work proved a revelation. His *Le Monde/Le Chaos*, a pseudo-landscape involving metal, stone, glass, newspaper ashes, and copies of burnt newspapers, sold to the Swiss trade for **€396,500** – the **third-highest price ever obtained for Chen Zhen** (lot 39, est. €350,000-450,000).

Meditation helped Chen Zhen take objects from their social cycle and inscribe them in a natural cycle. Here we see pages from *Le Monde* regenerated by fire, finding a new dimension – and a new destiny – in the form of ashes.

PAINTINGS

Paintings in the Jean Albou Collection included an imposing canvas by **Eugène Leroy**, which sold to the European trade for **€74,400** (lot 49, est. €50,000-70,000); and two works by **Stéphane Pencreac'h**, each sold to a private French buyer: *L'Atelier Noir* (1994) for **€37,200** (lot 53, est. €30,000-40,000); and *La Main Noire* (1995) for **€27,300** (lot 54, est. €15,000-20,000).



Chen Zhen, *Le Monde/ Le Chaos*, 1990, €396,500, (lot 39, est. €350,000-450,000)

EMERGING FRENCH ARTISTS

There were healthy prices for emerging French artists.

Gilles Barbier's monumental installation *Orgue à Pets – l'Effort* (1996), over 22 feet long, sold to the French trade for a solid **€61,960** (lot 25, est. €80,000-120,000). It was the first time a major work by Barbier has been offered at auction.

His *Divertissement 2—Programme TV* (1994) in gouache, ink and pencil on paper, an illustrated artist's version of a TV schedule, sold to the French trade for **€55,800** (lot 36, est. €60,000-80,000).

Reflecting **Jean Albou** the animal-lover, creatures by **Jean-François Fourtou** prompted sustained interest (lots 40-42 & 97-102). **Richard Fauguet's** glass firearms were also well received (lots 34-35-96).



Gilles Barbier, *L'Orgue à pets*, 1996, € 61,960 (est : 80,000-120,000 €)