

ble emphasis on first, the gigantism of the *moai*, and second, the theme of island environmental destruction which presages worldwide ecocatastrophe, suggests a strong element of hyperbole in the iconic representation of Rapa Nui to the English-speaking world. It goes without saying that the present inhabitants are totally absent from the Rapa Nui iconic system as currently established.

My second conclusion is really a beginning. I'd like to see the growth of a cultural approach to Rapa Nui Studies that emphasizes both the history of the island and the place of the island in the world, here and now. There are a dozen graduate theses to be done in this field. Over 20 years ago I suggested that "the single-minded pursuit of Easter Island prehistory has resulted in an almost total neglect of the island's modern development" (Porteous 1981:v). Happily, more research is now being done on Rapa Nui history, environment, development and planning. Cultural studies approaches could be the next frontier.

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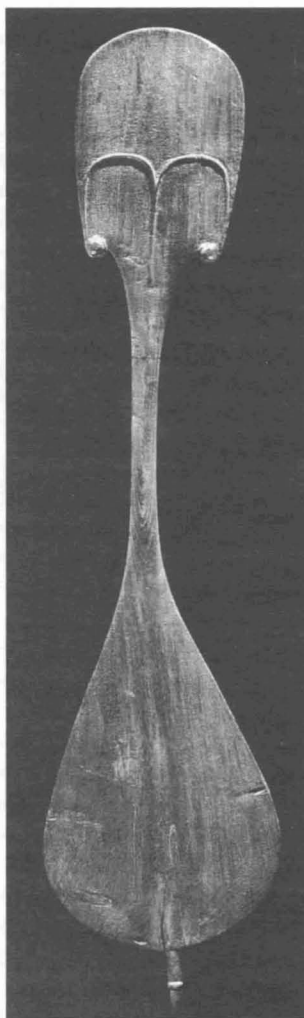
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WHAT'S NEW IN MAASTRICHT, the NETHERLANDS

By Herbert von Saher

EVERY YEAR YOUR PERIPATETIC CORRESPONDENT in the Netherlands makes a trip to the city of Maastricht in the Southern tip of the country. In this city of Roman origin, The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF) is organized annually. In a period of little over a decade this fair has become the most important art fair in the world: 80% of all great master paintings that are for sale are being offered there. At 261 stands, antique dealers from all over the world offer their treasures. I always get a tremendous kick out of my visits to this fair. One could imagine that an art museum of the greatest importance is being opened and after ten days the paintings, sculptures, furniture and jewels, always from private collections that are normally not on view, disappear again. Everything is for sale, if you have the money to buy. It is a sensation.

The fair for 2004 lasted for two days and I made my rounds until I was completely exhausted. On the stand of Galerie Meyer-Oceanic Art, 17 Rue des Beaux Arts, 75006 Paris a beautiful Rapa Nui ceremonial paddle was on sale. It is described as follows: "Rapa, Ceremonial Dance Paddle from Rapa Nui. 1640 to 1820 (Carbon 14) Toromiro wood, 88.4 x 20,9 x 1,5 cm. Provenance: André Breton, 42 Rue Fontaine, 75009 Paris, No 6144 of the André Brton auction, 2003."



This sculpture is accompanied by the French "certificat pour un bien culturel".

As for its exhibition history and literature reference: "La Révolution Surréaliste, Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou, 2002, Paris; catalogue: Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou, 2002, pp 310/311. 'Surrealismus', 1914-1944, K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2002, Düsseldorf."

"An extremely rare ceremonial dance paddle, or *rapa* representing a highly stylized male figure in the form of a double blade paddle. The Janus face on the upper blade is represented by a twin arch forming the eyes and meeting in the center to form a nasal ridge. The extremities of the arches are decorated with large round ear ornaments. The lower blade, larger and more sensual in form, ends with a phallic finial showing the retracted foreskin. The slight curvature of this *rapa* gives it an elegance that is not found in the straight paddles. The anthropomorphic representation is perhaps that of MAKEMAKE, an important god figure in the local pantheon. The central section of the shaft shows distinct wear and signs of usage and age. The penile finial is blunted and dented from the repeated ritual striking of the paddle against the ground or the altar."

The asking price for this paddle is Euro 250.000, (equivalent to US\$ 312.500) which shows that it is a real collector's item.....