



## THE ANNUAL CHELSEA ART FAIR BITES BACK

As Art of England joins the exhibitors at this year's Chelsea Art Fair, Duncan Phillips previews this popular annual event.

above: The Mako Shark, a sculpture by Alastair Gibson, made in mixed metals from recovered parts of a Honda Formula 1 Grand Prix car. The Russell Gallery, London.

A life-size sculpture of a Mako shark made from the chassis of a Formula 1 Honda Grand Prix racing car will be one of the many show-stopping exhibits at The 14th Annual Chelsea Art Fair.

Held at Chelsea Old Town Hall in the heart of the King's Road, the annual Chelsea Art Fair features thirty-five galleries and opens with a busy and chic 'Invitation Only' Preview on Wednesday 22 April.

Four busy days follow when London's art establishment turn out in force. The fair has a sociable restaurant area for refreshments and light lunches, always a popular meeting place for urban Chelsea art lovers.

The Mako shark will be one of several stunning fish sculptures made in carbon fibre, titanium, permaglass and aluminium recovered from the body parts of Honda Formula 1 Grand Prix cars. The sculptor Alastair Gibson uses all kinds of pieces from the racing cars to produce fascinating sculptures large and small, which he calls Carbonart.

Gibson was formerly Honda's chief mechanic with responsibility for Jensen Button's car. Now exhibitor Sarah Russell, who runs The Russell Gallery in Putney, is preparing to show the large model of the Mako shark, more than two metres in length, which she will hang from the ceiling of her stand.

So why make a shark in Formula 1 metal? Alastair explains, "A shark is a Grand Prix car in nature. It has nothing on its body that shouldn't be there. Everything on a Grand Prix car is made to get it first over the line." Sculptures by Gibson range from around £6,000 to £30,000.

Sculptures feature on several stands around the fair. The stunning works of Guy Portelli will be a major attraction on the stand of Artropolis, the gallery from Anglesey. Portelli recently featured in an episode of *Dragon's Den*, the BBC TV programme, in which he succeeded in securing funding of £80,000 for a major series of new Pop Icon sculptures. Among the pieces in the Pop Icon collection are works featuring Amy Winehouse, John Lennon, Sade, Jimi Hendrix and John Lee Hooker, with prices from around £3,000 to £30,000.

The Annual Chelsea Art Fair opened in 1996 and is now firmly established as one of the UK's most popular art events. Prices range from less than £50 for sketches and signed engravings to more than £20,000 for the latest works by well-known artists.

"The fair has something for everyone," explains organiser Caroline Penman, "with works by many well known names of the past fifty years together with the best of today's generation."

No less than three thousand original portraits, landscapes, figure studies, abstract works, bronzes and sculptures will be for sale.

Many of today's most fashionable artists are sure to feature, such as Mary Fedden, Ruskin Spear, James Butler, Frederick Gore, Ken Howard, John Piper, Pablo Picasso, Fred Cuming, Bernard Dunstan, Martin Leman, Susan Ryder, Diana Armfield, Augustus John, Caroline Bailey, Peter Howson, Michael Hunt, Neil Cox, James Orr, Sherree Valentine Daines,