

Culture Minute Sameer Rahim on the life and works of J G Ballard telegraph.co.uk/culture

MARKET NEWS

A former Formula 1 racing mechanic-turned-artist launches his latest creation, *Racing Mako*, a two-and-a-half metre shark, at the Chelsea Art Fair, at the Chelsea Old Town Hall in London on Thursday. Alastair Gibson was the chief mechanic at Honda's F1 team until this year and worked with leading drivers, including Jenson Button and Jacques Villeneuve. "It has been a refreshing change from my previous life," says Gibson.

The mako shark has a carbon-fibre body with parts from Jenson Button's 2008 Formula 1 car. It is priced at £25,000 through the Russell Gallery from Putney, west London. "It's been a labour of love which presented enormous challenges," says Gibson. "It embodies everything I love about this fascinating shark. It's the fastest shark in the ocean."

The fair will also give the public a chance to judge the merits of Pietro Psai, an artist featured on this page some months ago as an Andy Warhol acolyte whose very existence has been challenged. The exhibit has been mounted by dealer John Barham, whose Sussex saleroom has been the main outlet for Psai's work.

● Next month sees the centenary of the first performance of Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes*, and the art market is warming up for it. Next

Alastair
Gibson's
*Racing
Mako*

Tuesday, Bonhams in Knowle will be offering a costume design made by Léon Bakst for the ballet *Le Dieu bleu* (£1,500 to £2,500), but the major event will be an exhibition at the Daniel Katz gallery in Old Bond Street, presented by private dealer Julian Barran, who, as a specialist at Sotheby's, organised an annual ballet sale. Barran's first job there, in 1968, was to help with the sale of costumes and backdrops from the Diaghilev and de Basil ballets.

The exhibition, which opens on May 19, includes original costumes, décor, designs, and photographs as well as drawings by Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Gontcharova from the collection of Larionov's second wife, Alexandra Tomilina, and a collection of designs and memorabilia from the estate of Lillian Ashfeldt, the companion of Serge Lifar, one of Diaghilev's principal dancers.

● Paintings and furniture belonging to the author, broadcaster, and conservationist Polly Devlin, OBE, are to be sold at Lawrences Auctioneers in Crewkerne, Somerset on Friday. The sale has been triggered by Devlin's decision to move from her large house near Bruton to London, says Richard Kay, of Lawrences. It shows Devlin to have been a "magpie" collector with an eye equally for an Old Master still-life by a follower of Brueghel (£800 to £1,200), to a modern print by Edward Bawden.

"One room was full of pictures of dogs - paintings, prints and cushion covers," says Kay, "though none are of huge value." A copy after a dog painting by Sir Edwin Landseer, which is in Chatsworth House is estimated at £250 to £350. CG

