

## One of only 12 Bronze Age helmets in existence – and the only one on the market – for sale at The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia



A very rare opportunity to purchase a bronze helmet from 1000 BC is coming up at the 45<sup>th</sup> [Art & Antiques Fair Olympia](#) (26 June – 2 July). There are 12 in existence, 10 of which are in museums and one in a private collection. This helmet was owned by prolific German arms and armour collector, Axel Guttmann, who displayed his magnificent collection in a museum-like manner in his home where scholars and collectors visited in numbers leading up to his death in 2001. It is expected to sell for tens of thousands of pounds.

Bronze Age European metal defensive armour is extremely rare. To date, only twelve complete bell helmets are known, plus fragments of three further helmets. Of the twelve complete helmets, ten were acquired in the past by museums (one of them lost during the Second World War), and only two are in private hands. This is one of those two and is an incredible find by **Alexander Ancient Art**, the Dutch antiquities dealer who will be arriving with the piece to Olympia in June.

**Alexander Biesbroek, founder of Alexander Ancient Art** says: “This really is an exceptional piece in excellent condition and we are hugely excited to bring it to Britain. You can just imagine a soldier wearing the helmet 3000 years ago to protect himself against an enemy now unknown to us.

“Bronze Age European metal defensive armour is extremely rare. The academic, Marianne Modlinger mentions in an article published in 2013 that from the beginning of the Urnfield culture on (ca. 1300 BC), only 120 helmets, 90 shields, over 60 greaves and 30 cuirasses are known so this really is special. I’m confident this will catch the eye of the avid collector of ancient arms and armour – or an individual looking for a really unique, beautiful eye-catching piece for their home.”

While the exact spot of where this specific helmet was found is unknown it is most likely to be Hungary - and not in the ground but in water. This is indicated by the brown metallic patina and the remains of sand found inside. It is likely that the helmet was produced in the Carpathian Basin in Eastern Europe, although the origin or evolution of this type of helmet is still unclear.

**Independent Vetter for The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia, Peter Clayton** was blown away by the piece when he first came across it. He says: “The helmet is a splendid item and you just cannot have a better provenance than the prolific Guttman collection. Its sale will certainly add cachet to the Fair.”

The Fair will be returning for its 45<sup>th</sup> year from 26 June until 2 July, offering more choice than any other top European Fair with prices ranging from £100 to hundreds of thousands of pounds. It is anticipated to attract an audience of art and antiques enthusiasts from across the globe.

**Mary Claire Boyd, Fair Director at The Art & Antiques Fair** says: “Amongst the 160 dealers exhibiting at the Fair, we find some exceptional pieces on sale. The fact that this is the *only* Bronze Age helmet available to buy in the world is very exciting and represents a one-off piece of European history.”

This unique helmet will be on sale at the Alexander Ancient Art stand (G5) at The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Located in the elegant National Hall in London Olympia, the Fair is extremely easy to get to and there will be a free shuttle bus during the Fair between London Olympia and Sloane Square.

A Preview held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June, late openings, champagne bar and a specially created menu at Mosimann’s Jazz Cafe all combine to make the Fair a prestigious and must-attend event in London’s summer calendar.

Tickets are priced at £15 in advance and £20 on the door and £60 on Preview day\*.

The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia takes place at the Olympia National, London, W14 8UX.

For more information and to purchase tickets please visit [www.olympia-art-antiques.com](http://www.olympia-art-antiques.com).

**\*ENDS\***

**Press keen to attend the Preview or in need of more information or high res imagery, please contact [kat.adams@staturepr.com](mailto:kat.adams@staturepr.com) and [georgia.laudat@staturepr.com](mailto:georgia.laudat@staturepr.com) 0207 1000850 /**

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\*A transaction fee of £1.20 applies. Box office closes at midnight on 25 June.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Further Information**

#### **Manufacturing Process**

In order to make a bell helmet, a disc was first cast with a diameter of about 30 cm and a thickness of circa 4 to 5 mm. During the process, the rivet holes near the rim were also cast (rather than punched out later). The disc was then gradually deformed into the bell-shaped form via deep-drawing or die forging, applying several cycles of annealing and cold working. Hammering traces of this process can be observed on most helmets and X-rays on this one show impressions of a round hammer-head. As a result of this process, the thickness of the cap varies: the top and the rim are thicker than the area in between.

Any metal remaining from the cast or chiselled off during production of the helmet may have been reused for the knob – and analysis found that for this specific helmet it is even likely that the rivets were also made of the same alloy.

The knob was made separately, most likely first in wax on a hand-turned lathe which was then attached via a hole that was punched through the top of the cap. The knob was decorated with a series of horizontal lines and has a central hole of 0.7cm for the insertion of a feather or a plume.

### **Wearing the Helmet**

Wearing a heavy bronze helmet would not have been comfortable but it would have come with an inner cap or an inlay made of softer, organic material such as leather. This was fixed with rivets inside the helmet. The rim of the helmet has 11 rivet holes, rather irregularly shaped, with a diameter of 3 to 9 mm and a distance of 55 to 65 mm which will have been used to fasten a chin strap as well as the leather inlay. In fact, on this helmet, it can be shown that the organic lining was also bent outwards, because a band of circa 30 to 35 mm is visible on the outside of the helmet, from the rim up, where the corrosion slightly differs from the rest.

### **Dimensions**

Height of the cap 21.5cm, height of the knob 4.5cm, diameter 19.5cm x 21.3cm, thickness of the cap 1.2 to 3.5 m, weight 1150 gram.

### **Condition**

In excellent condition, completely unrestored. There are a few short cracks and the helmet is covered with pores and other small defects.

### **About The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia**

The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia is the UK's largest and most established art and antiques fair, taking place annually in June and July at London's iconic Kensington Olympia Exhibition Centre. Celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> year in 2017, The Art & Antiques Fair Olympia is recognised as one of the most prestigious fairs in the UK and an annual destination for more than 25,000 discerning visitors from across the world.

### **Social Media**

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