



BEFORE ART

BEFORE ART

ART ANCIENT

'Didn't this man ... when he picked up a stone to give it a shape useful to his needs ... open the way for all sculptors and architects to come?'

Jacques Boucher de Perthes, *Antiquités Celtiques et Antédiluviennes*, Vol. 1 (1847).

The objects in this catalogue were made from beautiful stones, every intentional strike captured on their surface.

Banded flints, multicoloured jaspers, translucent chalcedonies, they were given pleasing symmetrical form, leaf-like silhouettes. Some are much too large to use, some seem too precious. They are all overdesigned. Unnecessary embellishment. They were created hundreds of thousands of years ago, transported by glaciers and submerged under newly formed seas. Their patinas created over unfathomable lengths of time.

These stones preserve an instinct for beauty, before art.

Hand Axes: Controversy to Art

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At the end of the seventeenth century, London-based apothecary, John Conyers, unearthed the skeleton of an elephant and a strange stone object while removing gravel at Gray's Inn Lane. The stone, described and illustrated in 1715 by his friend and antiquary, John Bagford, as a 'British weapon,' shaped like the 'head of a spear', necessitated an explanation. Had the elephant accompanied the Roman army to Britain during the reign of Emperor Claudius? Did the stone weapon therefore belong to the ancient Britons, who had not yet learnt how to cast metal?

Occurring at a time when the biblical narrative was widely accepted and it was believed that the human race was only six thousand years old, these explanations seemed to be the most plausible. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, a great deal had changed regarding our understanding of the history of the Earth. Geologists now believed that parts of Europe had been covered by vast swathes of ice, which were known to be tens or even hundreds of thousands of years old, and fossils of strange creatures - the mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros, and the cave bear - all unknown to the modern mind, were unearthed. In the 1790s, among the same glacial deposits, John Frere (1740-1807) famously found hand axes. Presenting this astonishing discovery to the Society of Antiquaries of London, Frere boldly claimed that these hand axes, and the people who made them, had to date to a very remote period 'beyond that of the present world'. However, it wasn't until later that the significance of this find would be acknowledged. Adding evidence to these incredible suggestions, in the 1830s and '40s, French amateur excavator, Jacques Boucher de Perthes (1788-1868), began to amass a large collection of flint hand axes and extinct animal bones from very deep geological deposits along the Somme Valley. This was followed in quick succession by similar findings from William Pengelly (1812-1894) at Brixham Cave in Devon, England. Most significantly, however, in 1859, two businessmen, Joseph Prestwich (1812-1896) and John Evans (1823-1908), found more hand axes in Abbeville, France. Having photographed them *in situ* among fossilised animal remains, Prestwich used this evidence to write in defence of Frere's earlier claims, setting in motion what has come to be known as 'The Time Revolution of 1859'.

Scientists and the public now had to come to terms with the particularly controversial notion that their ancestors had once lived alongside large and terrifying animals that had roamed the Earth many years before the believed date of Man's creation. Indeed, on the publication of their finds, Prestwich was warned by Reverend Charles

Kingsley (1819-1875) that 'religious persons will be angry, and try to crush the truth'. Nonetheless, the broader social and political environment of 1859, marked by the rise to power of Britain's first Liberal government and the release of John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, created a more favourable climate for challenging traditional Creationist viewpoints. Then, the groundbreaking study by Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (1859), was published, and archaeologists tried to reconcile Prestwich and Evans' discoveries with this new theory of evolution. In his seminal book, *Prehistoric Times* (1865), John Lubbock introduced a new term, 'Palaeolithic' or 'Old Stone Age', to describe the era in which humans crafted hand axes. This served to challenge the more traditional label of 'antediluvian', which was commonly used to describe the time before the biblical flood. Lubbock delved into the usage of these hand axes and offered insights into the culture of the people who created them. Through comparisons with the Aboriginal Australians and Native American peoples, who still used stone tools, he presented a controversial portrait of the European ancestor: a cave-dwelling creature who carved axes by chipping flakes from pieces of flint, and used them to slaughter animals. No longer a signifier of the 'inferior' overseas 'races', these stone implements were found in Britain, significantly challenging the Western understanding of their own past. But as evidence grew, more came to accept that there was a human history beyond contemporary understanding; a prehistory, that needed to be understood, collected and studied.

It was soon acknowledged that, just as humans evolved, stone tools had evolved too. In 1883, French archaeologist Gabriel de Mortillet (1821-1898) divided the Palaeolithic further according to the development of the tool, and organised one of the largest public collections of hand axes and other artefacts in Europe, at the Museum of National Antiquities, to illustrate it. The museum attracted large crowds during the Universal Exposition held in Paris in 1867, and other museums soon followed suit in establishing their own collections. This sparked the interest of amateur archaeologists throughout Europe, and in Britain, enthusiasts began their own collections. Indeed, John Evans, a wealthy paper manufacturer, became one of the leading researchers and collectors of Palaeolithic artefacts, working alongside Joseph Prestwich, and publishing his book *Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain* in 1872. A humble draughtsman, Worthington Smith (1835-1917), also became a

passionate collector, searching gravel pits and construction sites around London where Ice Age sediments were exposed, amassing a collection of more than one thousand artefacts by 1882. Gone were the days of the illustrious Grand Tour, this was archaeology that was easily accessible to all, regardless of rank or profession.

Despite increasingly widespread interest, the excavated pieces were still only recognised as valuable scientific specimens that could inform on the culture of the Ice Age people who made them. While it was acknowledged that they were skilfully made, it was also accepted that they were replaced by more sophisticated artefacts. Hand axes were thus inherently a scientific specimen, placed in the same category as the 'primitive' cultural artefacts of the indigenous peoples from Africa, Oceania and the Americas, and unworthy of the title 'art'.

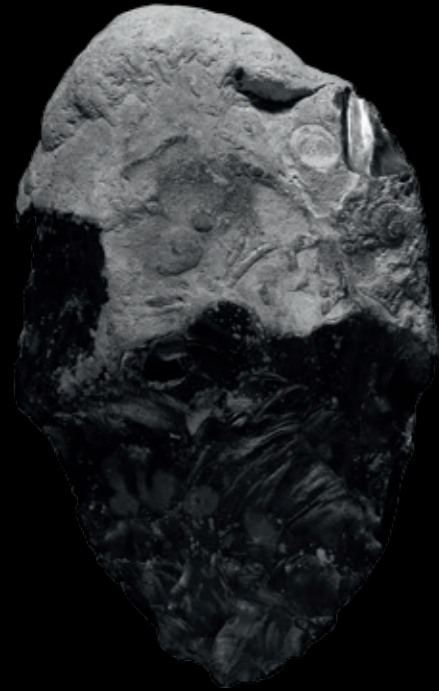
Today, however, attitudes are changing. Hand axes are starting to be appreciated and collected for their beauty and their material. No longer confined to the realms of anthropological collections, they can be considered as the first objects to illustrate a sense of aesthetics in the minds of their creators. In addition to being coveted by artists, such as those collected (and exhibited here) by American painter, Tony Berlant (b.1941), hand axes are now deemed worthy of acquisition by the art museum. The 2018 exhibition of hand axes at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Texas, was the first to place them within a sphere of artistic creativity, as an almost natural extension of its usual displays of modern and contemporary works. Their fit among such creations is hardly surprising, particularly as the Surrealist sculptors of the twentieth century took inspiration from prehistoric objects. Larger museums are now also including examples in their permanent collections. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has twenty-five hand axes on display, the majority of which were acquired within the last five years and are highlighted by curators as 'a potent manifestation' of an early and continuous human interest in aesthetics. And nowhere is this modern conceptualisation more prevalent than in the Louvre Abu Dhabi. The museum, which aims to tell the universal story of human creativity by grouping objects across geographical barriers, places hand axes right at the dawn of all artistic evolution. The display at the entrance of the museum is a powerful statement of their emerging position in the global artistic narrative. As the curatorial introduction notes, 'The birth of aesthetics? Design? Identity? Hand axes or bifaces serve as evidence of the first human interest in aesthetics and reveal the sense of humanity in our common ancestor'.





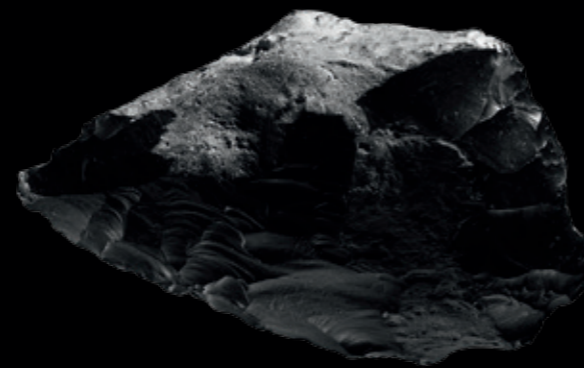
RAW

Just as Michelangelo looked at marble and visualised the sculpture trapped within, early humans conceived an axe within a natural flint nodule, with all its curves and imperfections. They skilfully incorporated parts of the organic nodule as a handle, thumb-hole or grip.



1
Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Mottled brown flint with a gloss patina
Length: 11.5cm

Provenance:
Longueil-Sainte-Marie, Oise, Northern France,
October 1987
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



2
Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Dark flint with a gloss patina
Length: 9.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



3
Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Dark flint with a mottled patina
Length: 16cm

Provenance:
Longueil-Sainte-Marie, Oise, Northern France,
14th October 1995
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



4
Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a chocolate brown patina
Length: 17.5cm

Provenance:
Thebes, Egypt
Collection of Robert De Rustafjaell (1876–1943),
acquired in Thebes prior to 1909.
Subsequently in the collection of Tony Berliant
(b. 1941).

Published: De Rustafjaell, R., *The Stone Age in
Egypt...*, NY: 1914. No. 324



FLINT

Flint boasts a unique triad of qualities: it is hard, brittle but fractures predictably. It was the perfect canvas for crafting tools and it was in plentiful supply throughout the shores and riverbanks of prehistoric Europe. Some flints, however, possess an astonishing beauty, a charm that may have swayed their selection in the minds of our distant ancestors.



5

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Banded orange flint
Length: 11.5cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



6

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Banded orange flint
Length: 12cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



7

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Banded orange flint
Length: 10.5cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



8

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Banded orange flint
Length: 11cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



9

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Banded orange-white flint
Length: 17cm

Provenance:
Lembras, Dordogne, Southwestern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



10

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a white patina, fossil inclusions
and quartz
Length: 18cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)

FRAME

The natural features of these axes appear as part of a composition, almost as if they were framed to emphasise their presence. Framing is an inherent artistic choice, appearing throughout history, from the borders of classical mosaics to the elaborate cartouches of the Baroque.



11

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a chocolate brown iron-oxide patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
Montguillain, Oise, Northern France, July 1878
Collection of Charles Janet (1849–1932)



12

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Dark flint with an orange-brown iron-oxide patina
Length: 17cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)

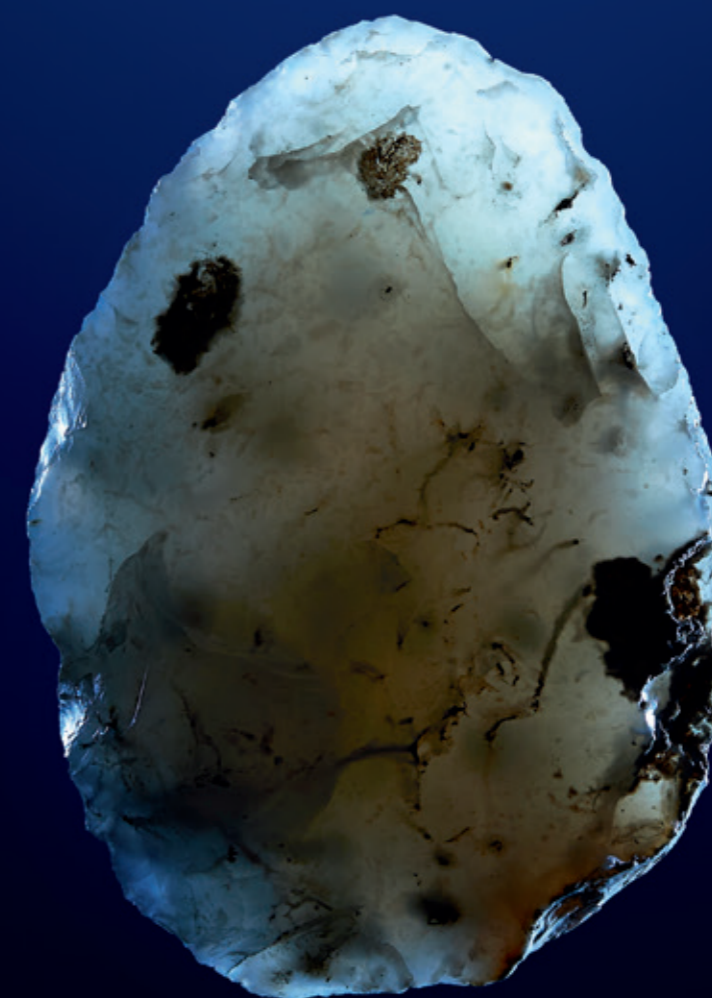


CHALCEDONY

Knapped from a stone of otherworldly translucence, this hand axe foreshadows the millennia-long fascination with chalcedony that was to come, from its use for the intaglios and amulets of ancient Rome to a gem today imbued with spiritual meaning.

13 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Blue-grey chalcedony with a white
vermiculé patina
Length: 11.5cm

Provenance:
Lanquais, Dordogne, Southwestern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)





BRECCIA

Once a vessel of potential, this amber tinged core is a by-product of Palaeolithic blade production. Found in a cave in France, it has been fused for countless millennia within the sediment where it fell.

14 *Homo sapiens*
Upper Palaeolithic
40,000-10,000 BC
Amber-brown flint with a gloss patina,
within compacted cave deposit
Length: 23.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)





JASPER

Even though flint was readily accessible and equally practical, jasper was the material of choice at the site of Fontmore. As archaeologist, L. Pradel, noted, 'it is possible that the Neanderthals, who were able to grasp the harmony of a beautiful geometric tool, were also struck by the admirable multicoloured, ever-changing patterns of Fontmore jasper'.



15

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Multicoloured banded jasper with a gloss patina
Length: 7cm

Provenance:
Fontmore, Vienne, Central France
Collection of Michel Lemarchand (1937–2014)



16

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Purple jasper with a gloss patina
Length: 6.5cm

Provenance:
Fontmore, Vienne, Central France
Collection of Michel Lemarchand (1937–2014)



17

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Yellow jasper with purple flecks and
a gloss patina
Length: 8.5cm

Provenance:
Fontmore, Vienne, Central France, 1937
Collection of Michel Lemarchand (1937–2014)

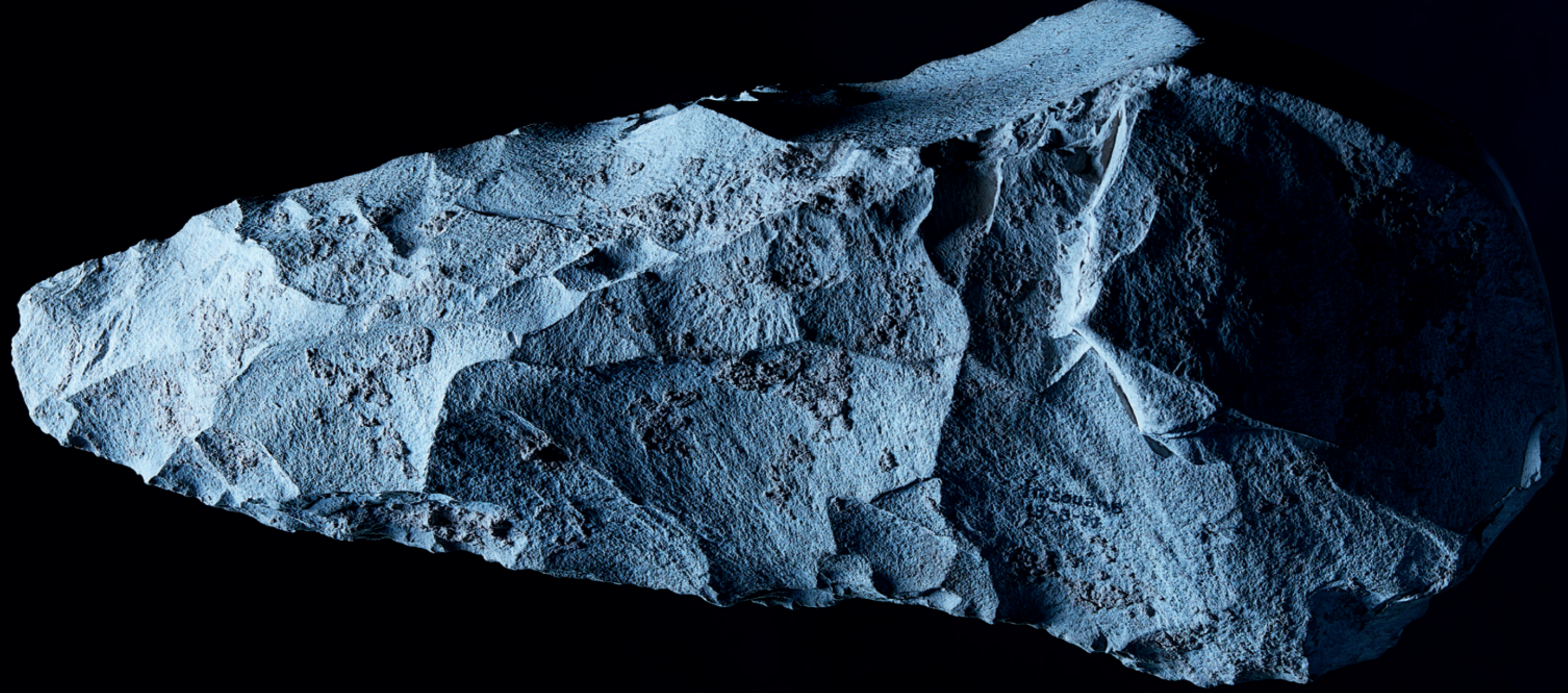


GIANTS

Too big for any practical purpose, evolutionary anthropologists have speculated on the use of these enigmatic giant axes. Like the elaborate plumage of creatures in the wild, were they objects of sexual allure? Signifiers of skill and prowess? Giant axes challenge the notion of prestige as something unique to our own species.

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
c.1300000–300000 BC
White sandstone
Length: 30cm

Provenance:
Imsourane, Morocco, 19th
August 1951
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)



Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Brown quartzite
Length: 35.5cm

Provenance:
Gravière Rodriguez, Presles-et-
Boves, Aisne, Northern France,
15th January 1958
Collection of Mr H. Joullié
(1886–1968).

Presented at the Congrès Préhist.
de France, 16th session, Monaco,
1959.

Exhibited at the Musée de
l'Homme, Paris, 1960s.

Published:
Joullié, H. & Kelley, H. 'Recherches
récentes sur le paléolithique de
la région de Vailly-sur-Aisne', *SPF*
Bulletin, 58: 7 (1961): 440–449.
Kelley, H. 'Bifaces de Très Grande
Taille', *C. R. du Congrès Préhist. de*
France, XVIe session, (Monaco,
1959): 739–772.

"In May 1958, Mr Henri Joullié...
was kind enough to show me
several pieces from his collection,
one of which was quite remarkable:
a biface found on 15 January 1958
in the Rodriguez Quarry at a depth
of around 4.5m near the canal and
close to Presles-et-Boves (Aisne).
This piece is, I believe, probably
the largest Earliest Palaeolithic
biface found so far in France
and possibly in Europe."

Harper Kelley, 1959





LUSTRE

Dull when freshly knapped, flint can acquire an intense lustre over countless years of silica precipitation. Silica precipitates from groundwater into tiny pores within the stone, leaving a smoother, 'polished' layer. An accidental embellishment, highlighting not just the hue of the flint, but the skilful knapping of its anonymous maker.



20

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Black-brown flint with a lustrous gloss patina
Length: 14.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



21

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Black-brown flint with a lustrous gloss patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne (1936–2020)



TEXTURE

Like the ever-growing stalactites of Palaeolithic caves, over the course of millennia, sand and sediment have become cemented to the surface of these hand axes.



22

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Light coloured flint with an orange iron-oxide
patina
Length: 20cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



23

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Grey flint with a brown iron-oxide patina
Length: 17.5cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



REVOLUTION

After more than a million years of one-stage Acheulean technology, in the Middle Palaeolithic the revolutionary two-stage Levallois technique resulted in large hand axes of exceptional quality and uniformity. The apogee of Palaeolithic axe production.



24

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a two-sided mottled grey-blue patina
Length: 19cm

Provenance:
Yonne, North-Central France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



25

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a two-sided peach-white and blue-grey patina
Length: 15cm

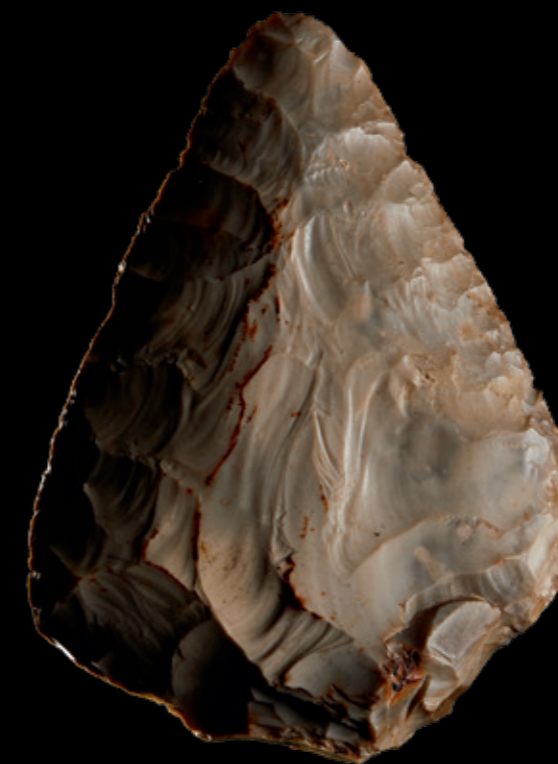
Provenance:
Saint-Victor-sur-Avre, Eure, Northern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



26

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with an orange iron-oxide and chalky white patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
Monségur, Gironde, Southwestern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



27

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a creamy grey patina
Length: 14.5cm

Provenance:
Gron, Yonne, North-Central France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



28

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a two-sided cream vermiculé patina
Length: 14cm

Provenance:
Poitiers, Vienne, West-Central France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



SYMMETRY

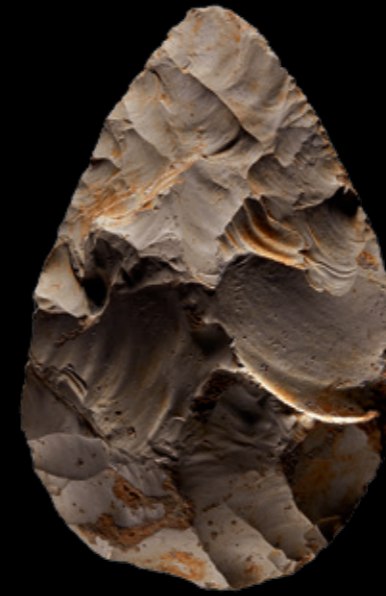
Just as artists distort reality to create perspective, crafting Levallois axes defied intuition, demanding instruction from master to apprentice. First, a core was prepared and struck in cross-section to form pre-determined flakes, which were then reworked. Mastery of this process yielded small, thin, gem-like tools.



29

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Banded flint with a mottled white-grey patina
Length: 10.5cm

Provenance:
Pullay, Eure, Northern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



30

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a chalky white patina
Length: 12cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



31

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a mottled grey patina
Length: 13cm

Provenance:
Maurens, Dordogne, Southwestern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



SPOTLIGHT

32 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a yellow-orange iron-oxide patina
Length: 15cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



33 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a creamy, space grey patina
Length: 11.5cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



34 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a variegated red-orange
iron-oxide patina
Length: 17.5cm

Provenance:
England
English private collection



35 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Dark flint with a gloss patina
Length: 12cm

Provenance:
Bois-Guillaume, Seine-Maritime,
Northern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



36 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a variegated red-orange
iron-oxide patina
Length: 18cm

Provenance:
Vailly-sur-Aisne, Aisne, Northern France
Belgian private collection



37 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with an orange and chalky
vermiculé patina
Length: 20cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



38 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a porcelain-like white-blue patina
Length: 12.5cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



39 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a speckled green-orange patina
Length: 20cm

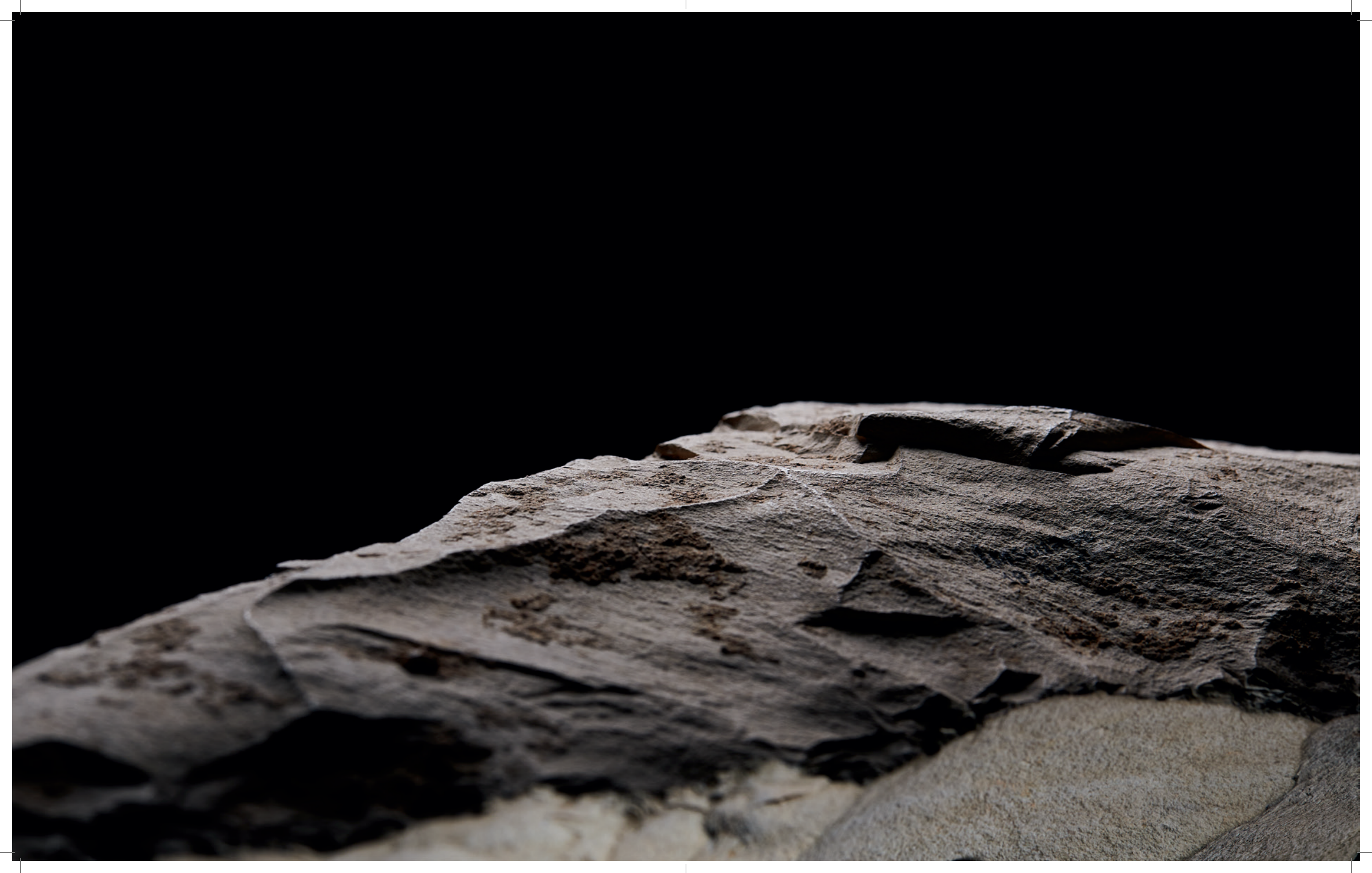
Provenance:
Vailly-sur-Aisne, Aisne, Northern France
Belgian private collection



40 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Light, mottled flint with a gloss patina
Length: 22.5cm

Provenance:
Saint-Acheul, Somme, Northern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)





41 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Banded flint with a mottled orange
iron-oxide patina
Length: 23cm

Provenance:
La Rivaudière, Nouâtre, Indre-et-Loire,
Central France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



42 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled olive green-yellow patina
Length: 16cm

Provenance:
England
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



43 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled cream-brown and
vermiculé patina
Length: 16cm

Provenance:
Rouen, Seine-Maritime, Northern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



44 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Banded, light coloured flint with
a red iron-oxide patina
Length: 17cm

Provenance:
Kent, England
English private collection



45 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Chert with a cream patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
Combe-Capelle, Dordogne, Southern France
Collection of François Bigot (1950–2009)



46 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Orange-black quartzite
Length: 22cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



47 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a mottled grey-white patina
Length: 15.5cm

Provenance:
Le Moustier, Dordogne, Southwest France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)



48 *Homo heidelbergensis*
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with an orange iron-oxide patina
Length: 16cm

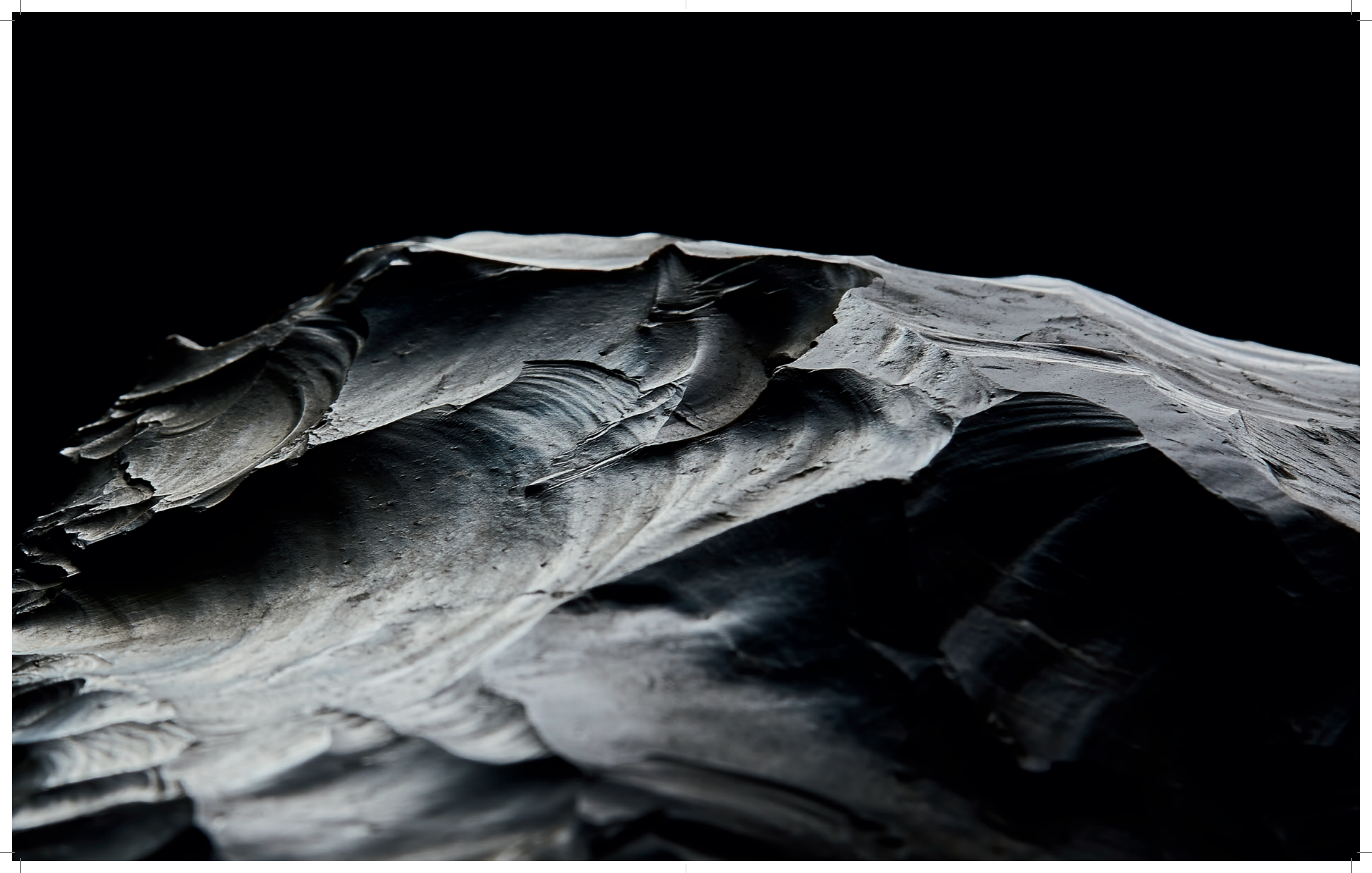
Provenance:
Vailly-sur-Aisne, Aisne, Northern France
Belgian private collection



49 *Homo neanderthalensis*
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a mottled cream-grey patina
Length: 14.5cm

Provenance:
Plazac, Dordogne, Southwestern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)





BEFORE

ART



Catalogue list

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See earlier pages.

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Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Dark brown-grey flint
Length: 12.5cm

Provenance:
Longueil-Sainte-Marie, Oise,
Northern France, 1990
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

51

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a yellow-orange iron-oxide
patina
Length: 15cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

52

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled yellow-brown
patina
Length: 17cm

Provenance:
Saint-Même-les-Carrières,
Charente, Southwestern France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)

53

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a chalky white patina
Length: 16cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

54

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Orange quartzite
Length: 17.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France, July 1987
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

55

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled orange iron-
oxide patina
Length: 18cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

56

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a yellow-orange iron-oxide
patina
Length: 17cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

57

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Mottled brown flint with a gloss
patina
Length: 12cm

Provenance:
Longueil-Sainte-Marie, Oise,
Northern France, May 1994
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

58

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a yellow-orange patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
England
English private collection

59

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Dark grey flint with a mottled
orange iron-oxide patina
Length: 9.5cm

Provenance:
Viry-Nouereuil, Aisne, Northern
France, 1987
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936-2020)

60

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled green-orange
patina
Length: 16.5cm

Provenance:
Thames River Gravels, England
English private collection

61

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000-300,000 BC
Flint with a porcelain-white patina
Length: 16.5cm

Provenance:
Bois-Guillaume, Seine-Maritime,
Northern France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950-2009)

62

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a brown iron-oxide patina
Length: 8.5cm

Provenance:
Kingswell Road Pit, Bournemouth,
England
English private collection

63

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a greenish grey patina
Length: 8.5cm

Provenance:
Charente, Southwestern France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

64

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Red-brown flint with a gloss patina
Length: 12cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936–2020)

65

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a chalky white patina
Length: 18.5cm

Provenance:
Saint-Acheul, Somme, Northern
France, 1923
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

66

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a mottled black-brown
patina
Length: 10.5cm

Provenance:
Happisburgh, Norfolk, England, 12th
July 2018
English private collection

67

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Dark flint with a mottled, gloss
patina
Length: 16cm

Provenance:
Mainxe, Charente, Southwestern
France
Collection of Tony Berlant (b.1941)

68

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Chalcedony
Length: 14cm

Provenance:
Lanquais, Dordogne, Southwestern
France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

69

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
c.400,000 BC
Flint with a grey-green vermiculé
patina
Length: 10.5cm

Provenance:
Swanscombe, England
English private collection

70

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a yellow-orange iron-oxide
patina
Length: 14.5cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936–2020)

71

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Mottled grey flint
Length: 7.5cm

Provenance:
Saint-Germain, Eure, Northern
France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

72

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Dark flint with a gloss patina
Length: 13.5cm

Provenance:
Pont-Arcy, Aisne, Northern France
French private collection, acquired
in the early 20th century

73

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Mottled brown flint with a gloss
patina
Length: 13cm

Provenance:
Oise, Northern France
Collection of Jean-Claude Debenne
(1936–2020)

74

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Flint with a fossiliferous limestone
matrix and a mottled patina
Length: 10.5cm

Provenance:
Port d'Envaux, Charente-Maritime,
Southwestern France
Collection of Mrs. G Feys, Vilvoorde,
Belgium

75

Homo heidelbergensis
Lower Palaeolithic
700,000–300,000 BC
Orange quartzite
Length: 23cm

Provenance:
France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

76

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Chalcedony
Length: 10cm

Provenance:
Lanquais, Dordogne, Southwestern
France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

77

Homo neanderthalensis
Middle Palaeolithic
300,000–40,000 BC
Flint with a chalky white, vermiculé
patina
Length: 8cm

Provenance:
Saint-Victor-sur-Avre, Eure, Northern
France
Collection of François Bigot
(1950–2009)

‘One might even view all of
recorded art history as a footnote
to the hand axe, which reigned
a hundred times as long.’

Geoffrey Miller, *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*, (2000).

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