

# Arts & antiques

## WEIRD & WONDERFUL

THE 'room' is a gem of Louis XVI architecture, a triumph of gilded beech, rich velvet upholstery and pineapple finials fringing an exquisite dome. It is not, however, a miniature boudoir, but a *maison de chien*—a glorified dog bed from about 1775. Which pampered pooch rested its paws on the plump cushion? The bed is very similar to another, now at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, US, which furniture-maker Claude I Sené made for Marie Antoinette to house her beloved poodle, Pompon. Might this, too, have once been hers—or rather, Pompon's? The *maison de chien* will be on offer with Mallett at the Treasure House Fair, London SW3 ([www.treasurehousefair.com](http://www.treasurehousefair.com)). This year's edition of the Treasure House Fair will run from June 24–30.



### Take five: highlights of English art



CHARLOTTE MULLINS, author of *The Art Isles: A 15,000-year story of art in Britain and Ireland* (Yale University Press, £25), picks five milestones in English art history.

**1. The Uffington White Horse (above), late Bronze or early Iron Age** For 3,000 years, the Uffington White Horse has galloped across Oxfordshire, maintained by 150 generations who have added fresh white chalk to its streamlined body. Was it a tribute to a sun god, whose chariot was pulled by horses? It is best seen from the air

**2. The Bayeux Tapestry, 11th century (below)** Although probably commissioned for Bayeux Cathedral in northern France, this embroidery, nearly 230ft long, was made in Kent following the Battle of Hastings in 1066—and it's coming this autumn to the British Museum

**3. Joseph Wright of Derby, *A Philosopher Giving that Lecture on the Orrery...*, 1766 (bottom left)** Wright spent much of his working life in Derby, where he was friends with leading scientists. In this painting, a travelling lecturer demonstrates an orrery, a machine showing the movement of the planets

around the Sun. When it was first exhibited, it was praised as being 'exceeding fine'

**4. Turner vs Constable, Summer Exhibition, 1832** Before the Summer Exhibition opened at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, artists were given time to retouch and varnish their paintings. When J. M. W. Turner saw his breezy seascape *Helvoetsluys (bottom right)* hung next to John Constable's *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge*, he was worried: his pale boats leaving the harbour did not have the punch of Constable's river scene, full of red flags and pageantry.

He took out his paintbrush and added a vibrant red buoy to the foreground. Constable's reaction? 'He has been here and fired a gun,' he fumed

**5. Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993** In the year Rachel Whiteread won the Turner Prize, she cast an entire terraced house. The bricks were peeled away to reveal an uncanny concrete interior, a mausoleum to all the families who had lived there. It made headline news and was variously described as a 'bunker', an 'eyesore' and 'an exceptional work of art'. It stood for about three months

