

Antiques & Art

An entrepreneur walking across Westminster Bridge was shocked to see another businessperson on the parapet about to jump. He asked: "Why?" The second man began to explain – "The collapsing world economy, the war in Ukraine, global warming, the decomposing of my Damien Hirst shark..."

"Oh, come down and tell me all about it," said the first man. "It can't be as bad as all that." Five minutes later they were both standing on the parapet! Anthony J. Lester ponders the question: Will the recession affect the antiques and art markets?

If working on the theory of logic, one might assume that in such an unstable world environment, the whole art market should be in a state of collapse. Christie's sale in New York on 9th November of 59 select paintings from the collection of Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen (1953-2018), proved this is currently not the case. The sale raised a premium-inclusive £1.32billion. Many of the works generated handsome returns, for example, Paul Gauguin's *Maternité II*, purchased by Allen in 2004 at Sotheby's New York for £18.9million, sold for £80.7million.

In the 8th edition of *Enquirer* I previewed the exhibition of paintings by Gerald Marks (1921-2018), which took place at **Abbott and Holder**, 30 Museum Street, WC1A 1LH. I illustrated one of the oils (£4,000), which proved an early seller. Within days of the opening, all but three of the works had found buyers. In the same edition, I also featured a painting by Francisco Sancha (1874-1936), which was included in an exhibition mounted by Dominic Fine Art. This



Gilt bronze bust after the Antique, Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, Battersea

was snapped up too!

That said, there are shows where red stickers are clearly becoming an endangered species. Currently, rather than being in serious decline, I would describe the market as increasingly selective.

Many eyes will now be focused on three upcoming events, which should prove a good barometer as to market trends. The first, taking place between 12th and 15th January, is **The Mayfair Antiques and Fine Art Fair**, The London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, Duke Street, W1K 6JP. The gathering of over 40 dealers, offer an

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eclectic mix, ranging from superb clocks on the stand of Antiques Roadshow expert **Richard Price**, to fine pictures displayed by **Haynes Fine Art**, who tender a charcoal drawing of four dancers by Edgar Degas (1834-1917).

Bringing together over 100 leading galleries from 14 different counties, **The London Art Fair**, Business Design Centre, Islington, N1 0QH runs from 18th to 22nd January. The event is devoted to exceptional Modern and Contemporary art and among London's respected dealerships are **Osborne Samuel**, **the Redfern Gallery**, the **Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery** and the **Portland Gallery**. The Fair also presents an inspiring programme of curated spaces, events and talks.

One of my favourite events is **The Winter Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair**, Battersea Park, SW11 4NJ, where from 24th to 29th January, some 130 dealers showcase fine decorative pieces dating from the 1700s to the 1970s. Visually, this is a particularly attractive event, with some exhibitors presenting inspiring room sets filled with unusual objects. The Fair also embraces **The London Antique Rug and Textile Art Fair (LARTA)**, with 18 specialists displaying rugs, carpets, tribal weavings and antique textiles.

Away from the above crowded fairs, there are plenty of gallery shows to take in. Situated next to Tate Modern, the Bankside Gallery, 48 Hopton Street, SE1 9JH, is the home of the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Society of Painter Printmakers, who stage their Mini Picture Show until 29th January. Affordability is the key here – I was smitten by *Eric Ravilious's Dog II*, a whimsical etching by Mychael Barratt (b. 1961) priced at £250, Chloe Fremantle's (b. 1950) animated gouache *Manor through the copper beech* (£155) and Jim Hunter's blue dominated abstract watercolour, *Seascape Series 2* (£350).

If your taste is for bold, whimsical paintings full of rich colour, then make a visit to **The Arts Club**, 40 Dover Street, Mayfair, W1S 4NP before 6th February (the Club is a Private Members establishment so, non-members must telephone 0207 499 8581 to make an appointment to view the show). Exhibited across the club's newly renovated first floor space are Jordy Kerwick (b. 1982) large-scale paintings, which include unicorns, tigers, snakes and mermaids. Born in Australia and now based in France, Kerwick is self-taught and only started painting in 2016 but already one of his paintings has sold this year at Christie's for over £220,000. Clearly a rising star!

Over the past decade 20th century and contemporary sculpture has become increasingly popular and **Pangolin**, Kings Place, 90 York Way, N1 9AG is one of London's few galleries dedicated to the

genre. In their sleek and specially designed gallery, Peter Randall-Page, RA (b. 1954) has a showing until 14th January of his stone sculptures, together with a selection of his prints, maquettes and drawings that chart his inspiration he draws from nature. Those seeking more traditional works should

heart of Belgravia opened on 6 December and among the museum quality items are a 1930s 'Bridge' armchair designed by Axel Einar Hjorth (1888-1959), a 1960s bronze bust sculpture designed by Steffen Lüttge (1945-2016) and a stunning acid etched glass vase designed by Alf Wallander (1862-1914).

make their way to **Bowman Sculpture**, 6 Duke Street, St. James's, SW1Y 6BN, who until 22nd December, stage *The New School*. The beautifully displayed bronzes, include Sir Alfred Gilbert's (1854-1934) *Comedy & Tragedy: 'Sic Vita'* (£55,000) and Frederic Lord Leighton's commanding *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*.

Another area to witness growing demand is vintage and contemporary furniture and objects, epitomised by Nordic design. A trailblazer in the field is Modernity, Newson's Yard, 57 Pimlico Road, SW1W 8NE. With a strong emphasis on post-war design **Modernity** was founded in Stockholm, Sweden in 1998 by Andrew Duncanson, a Scott. Their new London showroom in the

In last month's *Enquirer* I mentioned that fine art auctioneers **Bellmans** were holding a sale of fine wines and spirits on 5th December and several readers have asked whether the firm are planning other such auctions. They are indeed – it will take place on 13th February at Newpound, Wisborough Green, West Sussex, RH14 0AZ. It is easy to include items in this sale as Bellmans have offices at 4 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, SW7 2JE. Just telephone 020 4548 4738 to make an appointment. Bellmans have many other upcoming auctions, including Old Master, British and European Paintings on 28th March and Modern British and 20th Century Art on 16th May.

Anthony J. Lester, FRSA



Sleeping Cat, oil by Mary Fedden, RA (1915-2012), Portland Gallery, The London Art Fair



An exceptional Cabinet 'Flora', designed by Josef Frank (1885-1967), Sweden, 1957, Modernity