

dealers' diary



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reports

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Mould and Bruce back on Sunday



Above: blend suave London art dealer **Philip Mould** and BBC news anchor **Fiona Bruce** with a dash of art sleuthing and the result, it turns out, is TV gold. Pictured here looking rather awkward in a gondola, Mould and Bruce return to BBC1 this Sunday, July 5, with a fourth series of *Fake or Fortune?*, the hit show that has attracted audiences of up to five million.

The eight-week run will look at new works in the first four episodes followed by four episodes of highlights. It kicks off with three works supposedly by that much-faked artist, Lowry, left by a Liverpool businessman to his sons but without the receipts to prove their authenticity.

But I doubt Mould will be watching the first episode himself this Sunday night – he is hosting a late-night opening from 5-7pm for *London Art Week* (July 3-10) at his enormous new gallery on Pall Mall in St James's.

Perfectly formed, now

■ Size isn't everything, but this deserves a boost in numbers

"QUALITY rather than quantity" was the overriding comment to emerge out of Art Antiques London (AAL) fair, which ran for the sixth year from June 12-18 in Kensington Gardens.

Organised by experienced husband-and-wife team **Brian and Anna Haughton**, AAL is in a great spot by the Albert Memorial, run like clockwork and with an understated, boutique feel.

Having said that, size isn't everything and some visitors like its manageable proportions. It's smart rather than sexy, with a generally more mature and knowledgeable crowd, a real collectors' fair and with a preponderance of ceramics exhibitors.

Exhibitors almost universally praise the event and its organisation (see comments opposite), but privately many told me it was a shame that this good little fair, with all the right ingredients, didn't have more exhibitors – ten or 15 more stands would strengthen it considerably.

Buying is unhurried and considered, so little wonder that exhibitors agree it is a slow burn for business. A glut of sales on opening night boosts confidence and holding out until the last day or two, or after the close, is akin to playing chicken.

Brushing shoulders with the civvies this year were Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani, Princess Esra Jah, the Begum of Hyderabad and members of the Al Sabah family, the ruling Kuwaiti dynasty, the actor Jeremy Irons and, on an official visit, The Lord Mayor of Westminster.



Above: a selection of English 18th century slipware and agateware, c.1750-90, that John Howard offered at AAL.

"Jewellers Lucas Rarities also sold what they described as 'an important signed period necklace' for a significant six-figure sum"

Some consistent business was done in the four- and five-figure price bracket. **Raffety Clocks** sold a 17th century English bracket clock and longcase clock in the £20,000-30,000 range to American

and UK collectors respectively.

There were many "irons in the fire" as the fair closed and, a week later, the jewellers **Lucas Rarities** also sold what they described as "an important signed period necklace" for a significant six-figure sum. The peppering of Modern British art specialists also made some good sales (see exhibitor comments, right).

With Olympia's date move to coincide with *Masterpiece*, AAL this year was ahead of the curve, not overlapping with any other fair. Standing alone can have its benefits, but the fact that it felt quiet was of concern to a number of exhibitors. Perhaps some additional marketing and PR might help, some felt.

Loyal ceramics exhibitor **John Howard**, who commented that this was his best fair in seven years, echoed the thoughts of many when he said: "As a general and personal view, the fragmentation of dates of the three important London fairs is a loss to the art and antique community. It must be advantageous for a consolidation in June, giving international buyers reason to visit London as the antiques and art capital for the month."

Howard added: "The antiques world has a knack of shooting itself in the foot." So good news as, after the event, Anna Haughton called me to say that next year AAL will indeed change its dates to later in the month to coincide with Olympia and *Masterpiece*, though the exact dates are yet to be confirmed.

The public and private faces of Katrin Bellinger

DURING *London Art Week* (LAW), Old Master drawings specialist **Katrin Bellinger** presents an exhibition of *French Drawings from the 17th to 19th Century* at **Colnaghi** on Bond Street, including works by Gillot, Millet and Fragonard.

However, Bellinger's private collection of drawings has also provided the starting point for a new exhibition at the Sir John Soane's Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, titled *Drawn from the Antique: Artists & the Classical Ideal* (June 25 until September 26).

Bellinger has lent 15 drawings to the show, which looks at how drawing from ancient Greek and Roman sculpture has inspired western artists over the past

five centuries, and includes 34 drawings, prints and paintings by artists such as Rubens, Fuseli, Turner and Zuccaro.

The Courtauld Gallery launches another exhibition of interest to LAW visitors with the recently opened *Unfinished... Works from The Courtauld Gallery*. It features a display of paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture from the Renaissance to the early 20th century that are all 'unfinished'.

Running until September 20, the show consists of works from the gallery's permanent collection, revealing something of the creative mechanics behind the paintings. It features works by Degas, Cézanne and

Daumier among others.

"This is a particularly fitting display for The Courtauld Gallery: it holds an unusually high number of unfinished works because of its ties to the leading higher-learning institute in art history and conservation," says Dr Karen Serres, Schroder Foundation Curator of Paintings.

"Such works were considered an unparalleled way to learn about the artistic process and question academic conventions. It is the first time that the theme of the unfinished work of art has been explored and it will undoubtedly be a revelation for visitors."

■ soane.org

■ courtauld.ac.uk/gallery

for more exhibitors



Left: at AAL, new exhibitor **Panter and Hall** sold this unusual oil on canvas, *Boxing Match*, by the Swedish painter George Lagerstedt (1892-1982), with an asking price of £18,500. It was unusual for the gallery to be exhibiting at what is predominantly an antiques, rather than art, fair, and though Panter & Hall are currently better known for their stock of Contemporary art, here they bought a personal selection of secondary market works by mainly lesser-known 20th century artists, to a good response. Other sales included their centrepiece, *Study for Needlework* by David Jagger (1891-1958).

ART ANTIQUES LONDON: EXHIBITORS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Harry Moore-Gwyn, British paintings

"AAL remains one of my favourite fairs of the year; very well run, varied and of generally high quality in content. It is, of course, also in the most perfect location. A few more stands would strengthen it even further. I had a good fair this year partly helped by the strong sales from my Orpen catalogue *William Orpen, Intimate Sketches*. By the end of the event I had sold all but three of the drawings from it. Others sales included two beautiful and rare paintings on panel by Thomas Monnington, who was president of the Royal Academy in the 1970s. The fair was also good for the lower end of my market, with strong sales of unframed drawings and watercolours in the £200-£800 bracket."

Ashley Gray, Gray Modern and Contemporary Art

"AAL's greatest strength is its focus on quality rather than quantity, both in terms of dealers and visitors. A smaller and more intimate fair than many in the London summer fair season that also attracts blue-chip clients and collectors to its stylish base in Kensington Gardens. "...Most importantly the fair draws the best international visitors and a high number of discerning collectors ...one of our best fairs to date."

This was the first time Gray brought Modern British textiles to the fair, and he sold out of his group of textiles by Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore, William Scott, Kenneth Rowntree and Keith Vaughan. "I picked up a whole new market because the textiles are very affordable and collectable."

Other sales included the screenprint *Three Seated Figures*, 1943, by Henry Moore, to a Singapore collector, alongside fashion drawings and Contemporary works.

John Howard, English pottery

Though a bit despondent talking to me halfway through the fair, English pottery specialist John Howard's week picked up: "It was my best fair in London for seven years," he said after the close. "The fair is a slow burner for business but the quality of the visitor always means there is a good chance of a decent sale. I did have two blank days, which is always a trial."

He had several good sales, from £1000 to £10,000, of English delftware, slipware, early English pottery and animal figures, including one to a member of staff at St James's Palace and another to an asset manager based in the City, both new customers. Howard notes that he often meets new clients here, who only seem to frequent this fair.

"The fair has the strongest ceramic contingent exhibiting in London and this gives a gravity pull which does not exist at the other June events. My customers appreciate the in-depth and consistent quality of the fair, which features traditional antiques to which they relate."

Debut exhibitor Vanessa Clewes-Salmon, Modern British art

"A super professional event, beautifully run... the staff were charming, efficient and good humoured. Any problems were ironed out immediately. Even the moving in and out of the fair was a pleasure. The fair itself was extremely

pretty and elegant. There are so many fairs and sales in London in June, so perhaps the fairs should all be condensed into a two-week slot so visitors can easily go from one to the other, possibly by shuttle."

Anthony Hepworth, Modern British art

"For us it turned into quite a successful fair; we sold modest items every day. On the last two days though, we sold a lovely Ivon Hitchens (*Flower and Red Gladioli*, 1948, asking price: £75,000) and a Keith Vaughan painting. We have also had follow-up business, which is very good and should double the business actually done at the fair.

"AAL is a very handsome event with some good dealers offering very good material. The charity evenings were very well attended and all in all, it is a classy event."



Above: *Three Seated Figures* by Henry Moore.

CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE

of Twist Interior Design, interior designer and antiques dealer based at Great Grooms in Hungerford, Berkshire www.twistinteriordesign.co.uk



1 How long have you been dealing?

Three years.

2 What was your first job?

I started out working for *Horse & Rider* magazine (both horses and writing were, and still are, big passions so it was a dream come true at the time).

3 Best and worst thing about being a dealer?

Best, having an excuse to buy gorgeous things. Worst, horrifically early starts to beat the crowds when buying at fairs.

4 Best buy and biggest mistake?

Best buy, a beautiful old French dresser that has never made it to the shop. It will now stay in my kitchen forever. Biggest mistake, same as above – so I never made any money on it and it cost an arm and a leg!

5 Dream object?

No contest, anything by George Stubbs.

6 What key trends have you noticed at the moment?

Despite the big online revolution, people still want to come and see a piece in the flesh. They will use the website to find it, but then travel to come and see it for themselves before buying.

7 Biggest threat to the trade at the moment?

The price of retail space in key locations on the high street.

8 Guiltiest pleasure?

Unusual salt and pepper shakers.

9 Any advice for those starting out in the trade?

You have to take risks and invest to reap the rewards.

10 Alternative career?

A dressage rider (although I probably wouldn't have made the grade unless I had a huge training and horse budget).

If you are a dealer and would like to be featured in 10 Questions email annabradley@atgmedia.com