

## Buyers Opt for Quality at NEC Summer Fair

ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE

NEC, BIRMINGHAM B40 1NT

24 – 27 July 2008

**High quality 'signed and designed' collector's items proved to be most in demand at the Antiques for Everyone fair at the NEC, Birmingham from 24 – 27 July 2008. Bronze sculpture, high quality paintings, glass and ceramics proved popular with buyers who once again came from all corners of the UK.**

Probably the most impressive sale was achieved by Books Illustrated, the Salisbury gallery specialising in original artwork for books and posters. Mike Emery described the fair as 'Exceptionally good for business' after selling a number of works including an original watercolour by Edmund Dulac, titled 'Fatima', from The Tale of Bluebeard, for a figure in the region of £30,000 (shown here).



Continental bronze sculpture specialists Garret & Hurst from West Sussex sold their three most expensive exhibits among other items. These included their top priced item, the impressive "Femme se Deshabillant" by Malvina Brach, a distinguished female bronze sculptor who became a member of the Societe des Artistes Francais in 1912. Dating from around 1900, the figure stands an impressive 101cm tall and found a buyer for a figure in the region of £15,000. (Illustrated here).

Collectable glass proved very popular. London dealer Jeanette Hayhurst described the fair as 'My best NEC fair for many years!' after selling a large number of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pieces to private buyers from across the country. Jeanette's comments were repeated by Brian Watson from Norwich, also specialising in glass, and returning to the fair after a period of absence.

In other areas, traditional antiques generally found buyers ahead of 20<sup>th</sup> century items. Cambridge Fine Art from Cambridge sold a number of high priced traditional oil paintings, Ryland Fine Art from North Yorkshire sold fourteen 19<sup>th</sup> century oil paintings, Phoenix Fine Art

from Cheshire, specialising in early English watercolours, made more than fifteen sales, and Michael Webb from Anglesey, also returning to the fair after some time, was very pleased to sell several pictures including his top priced item, an oil by the popular French artist Antoine Bouvard.

Other dealers also recorded a number of good picture sales, notably Peter Bunting, the early oak furniture dealer from Derbyshire, who sold an impressive portrait painting of Charles II. Peter Bunting also sold several items of furniture and a pair of 17<sup>th</sup> century stone lions, and declared himself pleased with business. While furniture sales were widely described as mixed across the fair, a number of dealers were very pleased. Quayside Antiques from Shropshire, specialising in large mahogany dining tables sold several examples, described the fair as their best for some time. Church Street Antiques from Cheshire found new clients for several good period pieces and M. & J. Duncan from Kent sold a Regency bijouterie and other pieces. Andrew Lovatt from Staffordshire sold a range of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century items, so too newcomers Celtic Connections from Shrewsbury specialising in early country pieces.

Among the many ceramics specialists, business was described as better for the earlier, rare pieces. Chinese specialist Catherine Hunt from Cheltenham found herself cornered by two keen collectors within moments of the fair opening for her prize piece, a Transitional period Woucai lidded vase, circa 1660, 37cm tall, which was quickly sold to the first arrival for a figure in the region of £3,200.

Moorcroft pottery and other early 20<sup>th</sup> century studio pieces found keen demand. Exeter dealer Wayne Hopton described business as 'Very good indeed' for his selection of Moorcroft, while Alison Davey of A.D.Antiques from Staffordshire was also pleased with sales across the board, which included that of a Martin Ware tobacco jar, modelled as a grotesque bird. Said Alison: 'With the inclusion of other sales covering Pilkington's, Wedgwood Fairyland, Moorcroft and Ruskin, this was the best opening day that we have had at the fair, and we've been coming for over 10 years. Many of our customers were new to us - so credit must go to Clarion for bringing in the high end spenders.'

Early English pottery specialists John Howard from the Cotswolds and Roger DeVille from Derbyshire both found sales better than expected. Also selling well were many of the jewellers. Scarab Antiques from London were delighted with business, so too Trivette from Hampshire.

In other areas, silver proved disappointing. Many silver specialists have enjoyed a run of good fairs at the NEC and some were resigned to a slowdown in this area of collecting, although dealer Jack Shaw from West Yorkshire enjoyed a very good fair with silver. Above all, most exhibitors noted that buyers were showing a distinct preference for pieces with proven investment potential, across all subjects and in every price range.

The Antiques for Everyone fairs are organised by Clarion Events Ltd and take place every spring, summer and winter. The next Antiques for Everyone takes place from 30<sup>th</sup> October – 2 November 2008.

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