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NEC ups trend as everyone is after fine art and sculpture

SCULPTURE and fine art proved the hot sellers at the winter outing of the *Antiques For Everyone* fair at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre from November 1 to 4. These areas have been particularly strong at all three annual NEC fairs for some time, but this latest burst of business seemed especially serious.

Few were more pleased than the Sussex specialists in French bronzes **Garret & Hurst** who sold one of their star pieces, Louis Ernest Barrias's (1841-1905) *La Nature se Devoilant Devant la Science*, c.1895, for £58,000. Proprietor **Margaret Cowley** said: "This was one of the most important pieces we have ever sold and it was pleasing to see it go to one of our regular younger collectors – a lady in her thirties. We sold other pieces too making this our most successful ever NEC."

Pictures were popular throughout the three halls. A number of the galleries selling higher priced oils, such as **Trinity House Fine Art** and **Haynes Fine Art**, both from Broadway, Worcestershire, had particularly good sales. Ceramics continue to be a mainstay, but this time many specialists noted buyers were more choosy than earlier in the year.

Late 19th and early 20th century ceramics were most in demand, as well as the perennially sought-after early English pottery.

Among the furniture, oak and country was in demand but other areas, like Victorian mahogany, were more patchy.

In past years, the winter fair has been markedly the busiest of the three. This time, with 30 more exhibitors than last year, it did well

Sculpture was much favoured at the Winter *Antiques For Everyone* earlier this month and among the many notable sales was this bronze, **right**, *La Nature se Devoilant Devant la Science* which **Garret & Hurst** sold for £58,000.