

Decorative Arts in Demand at NEC Antiques Fair

ANTIQUES FOR EVERYONE
NEC, BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND B40 1NT
8th – 11th April 2010

American, Japanese and Eastern European buyers joined UK trade buyers and private collectors from around the country to attend the spring Antiques for Everyone Fair, which ran at the NEC, Birmingham from 8th – 11th April. Across the fair dealers in every area made significant sales, although the four days proved particularly successful for more than forty exhibitors specialising in late 19th and 20th century Decorative Arts, always a very popular specialism at the NEC.

'It's been a very good fair for business,' said Kirsty Lewis of So Nouveau, dealers from Nottinghamshire. 'Many of our regular customers come to this fair and no other to buy, and they have bought very well this time,' continued Kirsty, whose comments were echoed among many other Art Nouveau and Art Deco specialists. Others selling well in this specialist area included A.D.Antiques from the Cotswolds, who sold two Martinware grotesque birds, each in the region of £20,000, in addition from a wide range of pieces across the board. Titus Omega from London also sold extremely well, so too Solo Antiques from Lancashire, Wayne Hopton from Exeter, specialising in Moorcroft, Alexander Antiques from Staffordshire, Le Style 25 from London (specialising in Art Deco furniture suites – 'I expected lots of people and they came and spent', said Philip Varma), and Hickmet Fine Art from London, specialising in Art Nouveau and Art Deco bronze sculpture.

Pottery and porcelain has always been popular at NEC fairs and again a majority of the specialist dealers reported good sales. Among the most successful was John Howard from Woodstock, who sold English pottery to both trade and private collectors and also bought well around the fair. 'This fair is always reliable,' explained John, 'collectors know they have a broad choice and will find some very good pieces.' Others selling well included Roger de Ville from Staffordshire, also selling English pottery, Lane End Antiques from Stoke on Trent, Catherine Hunt, showing Chinese Blue & White; Roger Little and Gill Gosling from Oxfordshire, Bradley Gent from Devon and Tony Horsley from Brighton.

In other areas, Garth Vincent, the arms and armour specialist from Lincolnshire, enjoyed one of his most successful ever visits to the NEC, selling to trade and private buyers; new exhibitor Richard Hoppe from Devon was pleased with sales of scent bottles; box specialists Hampton Antiques from Northamptonshire sold well, so too Smithson Antiques from Lincolnshire, who sold numerous items of kitchen ware; Ornate Gilt Mirrors of Somerset, who found a steady demand from private clients for their decorative period mirrors, Fu Ts'ang Lung from Yorkshire who found buyers for Chinese and Tibetan pieces, while Amelie & Melanie Caswell from Bristol were pleased with sales of their extensive range of Japanese works of art. Steve Kember from Kent was delighted with sales of rare musical boxes and said, 'It's been just like the old days, I'm selling every day.' Brian Watson, the glass specialist from Norwich, was also delighted with business.

American trade buyers were among the many purchasers at W. & B. Antiques from Portobello, whose large stand provided an Aladdin's Cave of stock. John Shepherd and Erna Hiscock from Kent also made sales of samplers and early pottery to American visitors.

'Most Successful Fair for Five Years'

One of the most successful specialist exhibitors was Neil Hooper of Wooden Bygones from Hertfordshire, specialising in treen. Said Neil: 'This has been my most successful fair in five years. I've moved a lot of stock and I feel there is more confidence among buyers now than there has been for some time'.

Among the art dealers, Rowles Fine Art from Welshpool was probably the most successful, selling 19th and 20th century paintings and contemporary sculpture. Others reporting good sales were Kenulf Fine Art from Stow on the Wold, The Englishman Fine Art from Surrey, Art World from the Cotswolds, Neville Contemporary Art from Hampshire and Baron Fine Art from Chester.

Oak and country furniture belonging to Mark Seabrook, the Cambridgeshire dealer, proved to be among the most sought after of all the furniture across the fair. Mark sold several early pieces including a small mid-seventeenth century joined hall settle for around £6,500 to a local private collector. Others reporting good sales of furniture included S. & S. Timms from Bedfordshire, Kembery Antique Clocks from Bristol, Yellow Lantern Antiques from Hove and Mike Melody from Chester, who took a large stand for period furniture of all styles and ages.

The summer Antiques for Everyone fair takes place from 22nd – 25th July 2010.

Organiser Tiffany Pritchard said: 'Even in this difficult economic climate, it was reassuring to

hear so many exhibitors comment so positively on the high proportion of serious buyers attending as usual.'

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