

Antiques Trade gazette

The Art Market Weekly

koopman rare art



12 Dover Street, W1S 4LL
info@koopman.art | www.koopman.art | +44 (0)20 7242 7624

ISSUE 2581 | 25 February 2023

antiquetradegazette.com



Blanes rides off to an auction record £1.15m

by Roland Arkell

A rediscovered work by 'Uruguay's most important painter' Juan Manuel Blanes (1830-1901) has sold for a record £1.15m in West Sussex.

The painting of a gaucho on horseback, identified late last year by Toovey's fine art

consultant Tim Williams, had carried a pre-sale estimate of £80,000-120,000.

In the country of his birth, Blanes is renowned for painting the scenes and events that shaped the national identity during the years of conflict that resulted in independence from Spain.

The national gallery in Montevideo is named Museo del Bellas Artes Juan Manuel Blanes and houses the largest collection of the artist's work.

Williams' research revealed this painting's full

Left: Juan Manuel Blanes' Gaucho on horseback in a Uruguayan prairie landscape, sold for £1.15m at Toovey's.

Continued on page 4

The Open Art Fair also now postponed

by Frances Allitt

The Open Art Fair (TOAF) is investigating new dates and venues after it was forced to scrap its edition for this year.

Organisers Thomas Woodham-Smith and Harry Van der Hoorn informed exhibitors last week that the event had been pulled from the calendar

It was planned to run in Duke of York Square in Chelsea from April 19-23.

However, the brand continues and Woodham-Smith says that they will work with trade association British Antiques Dealers' Association (BADA), which owns a 20% stake in the fair, to find a new time and place to run.

"It is expensive to run in that

time and place [that it was planned]," he told ATG. Stands were to cost £895 per square metre, or £743 for BADA members.

"There is definitely a market for a fair that caters to dealers who would have stood at Olympia or sell at the top end of the Battersea fair," Woodham-Smith added.

Continued on page 6

Special report Annual auction totals

Dreweatts is the UK's leading 'regional' auction house for the second year running, according to ATG's 2022 annual sales totals review.

Owned by art consultancy and valuation specialist Gurr Johns, the Berkshire firm reported turnover of £25.7m.

Woolley & Wallis, previously the top regional firm, conducted auctions totalling £21m, while Lyon & Turnbull recorded sales of £19.5m.

Read the full report on page 10-12

BATH DECORATIVE ANTIQUES FAIR

THE PAVILION, BATH BA2 4EU

10-11 MARCH 2023

Trade Preview Thursday 9 March

Enquiries : 01278 784912 www.bathdecorativeantiquesfair.co.uk

Complimentary Tickets: bathdecorativeantiquesfair.co.uk



Image courtesy of La Place Antiques



Pick of the week

Bidders battle for Naples Nelson porcelain

Elements of an important Naples porcelain service made after the Battle of the Nile have resurfaced at auction in the US. The déjeuner decorated in the neoclassical taste with scenes from the battle and Horatio Nelson's portrait emerged for sale at Pook & Pook in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, on January 20.

Estimated at a modest \$1200-1800, it sold at \$35,000 (£28,200), plus 25% buyer's premium.

Nelson, a great admirer of fine porcelain, owned several celebrated services. In a letter to Admiral of the Fleet John Jervis, 1st Earl of St Vincent, he described a visit to the Real Fabbrica Ferdinanda (the Naples royal porcelain factory) where, having enquired as to the price of some biscuit porcelain figures, he had been told that any piece would be a gift from Ferdinand IV himself.

The king had reason to be grateful. Not only had Nelson's arrival in Naples shortly after the Battle of the Nile on August 1-3, 1798, been met with chaotic scenes of celebration but the following year he had been instrumental in putting down a budding Neapolitan republic. When the revolution capitulated and Ferdinand returned to Naples from exile in Palermo, production at his porcelain factory restarted under director Domenico

Venuti. It is possible the five pieces offered last month in Pennsylvania were part of a documented service commissioned by Queen Maria Carolina (sister of Marie Antoinette) in 1799 as a gift for Nelson himself. It was said to include 12 plates decorated with scenes from sea battles together with the admiral's portrait.

The most impressive single element is a 14in (35cm) tray, decorated to the pink and gilt ground with a scene of British ships setting the French fleet ablaze. It is inscribed to the verso *Combattimento tra la Squadron Inglese, e Francese coll incendio del Vascello Oriente accaduto nella zada d'Alexandria il primo Agosto 1798* (Combat between the English squadron and French with the fire of the *Vascello Oriente* which occurred off Alexandria on August 1, 1798).

A coffee can and saucer carries a profile portrait of Nelson painted en grisaille within a gilt roundel inscribed *Del Britannico Suol Forte Sostecno* (Strong Support for the British). Repeated across all five pieces is a circular roundel with a border of flowers and a fleur de lis.

It was not in perfect condition. The hot water jug has a repaired handle and a section of the spout had been



Above: Naples Battle of the Nile service, \$35,000 (£28,200) at Pook & Pook.

broken and remodelled, while the saucer was broken and reglued. Pook & Pook said the vendor's family had acquired the set at Sotheby's in London in July 1968.

Although none fit this description, a total of five named 'Nelson' services are listed in the inventories of Emma Hamilton's silver and ceramic compiled at Merton in 1813 and 1814. Elements from all are highly prized by collectors.

A teapot from the Baltic Service presented to Nelson to mark his victory at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1802 sold for £28,000 at a Waterloo-themed auction held by Bonhams in 2015, while a specimen plate from the 'Horatia' Service ordered from the Chamberlains factory sold for £25,000 at Bonhams in 2017.

Roland Arkell



Precious metals

On Friday, February 17, Michael Bloomstein of Brighton was paying the following for bulk scrap against a gold fix of:

\$1817.90 €1726.24 £1527.65

Gold

22 carat: £1351.33 per oz
(£43.45 per gram)

18 carat: £1105.64 (£35.55)

15 carat: £921.36 (£29.63)

14 carat: £859.94 (£27.65)

9 carat: £552.82 per oz
(£17.78 per gram)

12 Month High: ▲ £18.27

12 Month Low: ▼ £17.63

Hallmark Platinum

£21.00 per gram

Silver

£14.70 per oz for 925 standard hallmarked

12 Month High: ▲ £17.15

12 Month Low: ▼ £12.76

Antiquities dealers boycott BRAFA

Ancient art and antiquities dealers boycotted the latest BRAFA fair in Belgium this year due to a "hostile environment", with dealers claiming checks in previous years made it impossible for them to exhibit.

Vincent Geerling, chairman of the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA), said: "Unfortunately, the Belgian authorities created such a hostile environment at BRAFA. Brussels was once a pleasant and thriving environment for the art trade; unfortunately not any more. No area of the market is subjected to more scrutiny from the authorities than antiquities, and we are at the market's cutting edge when it comes to compliance. Reputation is all, so we go to great lengths to ensure dealers trade honestly."

"We have been working positively for years with various international bodies and law enforcement to improve confidence in the market but, so far, have received little to no consideration in return. It is time for that to change or, as with BRAFA, we will vote with our feet."

BRAFA blamed the issues on the anti-money laundering regulations in Europe.

A spokesperson said: "We are convinced that we must defend our profession and BRAFA for a more transparent art market."

"However, we also believe that there should be a legally approved framework for the authorities to carry out these controls."

"Each year, BRAFA ensures that all the works of art on display are duly checked before the opening, thanks to the work of international experts, the Art Loss Register and a mobile scientific laboratory that is present throughout the



Above: Vincent Geerling, chairman of the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art

procedure. All parties share the same ambition: to prevent any kind of illegal practice and to make the art market as respectable as it should be."

BRAFA said it will always welcome back dealers to the fair from the antiquities sector.

For a review of the latest BRAFA and sales from the exhibitors who were in attendance see page 50-51.

Hansons launches auctions in Kent

Derbyshire auction house Hansons has expanded into a fifth location, opening a saleroom in Tunbridge Wells.

Founder Charles Hanson has hired valuer Robin Fletcher as saleroom manager for the Kent venture with the first sale scheduled for May.

The new saleroom, as tipped in ATG No 2561, joins an antiques collective at The Pantiles Arcade which is led by decorative arts specialist Eric Knowles and business partner Robert Woodmansey.

The Hansons saleroom at 49 The Lower Pantiles will focus on quarterly fine art and antiques auctions scheduled for May 23, August 31 and November 21, followed by a range of specialist sales in due



Above: Charles Hanson and Robin Fletcher.

course. It will also host free valuation days on Fridays and Saturdays (10am-3pm).

Clock dealer Richard Price has also now opened in the centre, joining a host of decorative arts dealers.

CADA announces new fair dates

The Cotswold Art & Antique Dealers' Association (CADA) Fair has new dates for this year. It will now run from November 17-19 at Compton Verney to coincide with an exhibition at the Warwickshire venue.

In 2019 it swapped its previous venue, Blenheim Palace, for the museum and

Brussels fair settles successfully into its new home

The 68th edition of the *BRAFA Art Fair* closed its doors to the public on February 5 with 65,000 visitors having passed through its doors, writes *Anne Crane*.

Brussels Expo, the event's new home since last year, is a large venue set out over two adjoining halls and plenty of display space was available for the 130 exhibitors, 35% of which came from Belgium and 65% from outside the country.

They seemed pleased not only with the venue but also its good parking facilities for visitors and many also expressed satisfaction at being back in the fair's traditional time slot (last year's *BRAFA* was moved to June).

As several exhibitors pointed out, the late January/early February staging is the date that *BRAFA*'s clientele have come to expect and put in their diaries and it also makes it the first major European fair in the annual calendar.

Visitors included collectors, museum curators, decorators and art lovers who had come from all over Europe as well as from Japan, Mexico and the US.

"Many young people were in attendance this year, as well as families, which proves that art is of interest to all generations. We received many compliments about the quality and beauty of the fair. It was a great achievement," said Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke, *BRAFA*'s chairman.

British exhibitors

Among the UK exhibitors the **Stern Pissarro Gallery** sold works by Marc Chagall, Raoul Dufy, Paul Jenkins and a painting by Yayoi Kusama priced in the mid €400,000 range.

Whitford Fine Art sold its Joseph Lacasse oil on canvas *Dominante Bleue* from 1955-6 priced in the region of €130,000. Other highlights included a Lynn Chadwick sculpture, *Stairs*, from 1990, priced in the region of €400,000 from **Osborne Samuel Gallery**.

Tribal highlights

BRAFA features galleries across a wide range of different disciplines and sales were made in many categories from the outset.

In the field of tribal art **Dalton Somaré** from Italy sold one of its highlight exhibits, a Punu mask from Gabon from the late 19th/early 20th century.

The **Galerie Claes** from Brussels



Image: Olivier Pirard

A view of this year's *BRAFA Art Fair* at Brussels Expo.



sold a Benin bronze Edo panther dated to the late 19th century on the first evening and concluded a dozen other deals in the €12,000-40,000 range.

Galerie Desmet from Brussels sold a pair of 16th century carved sgabello chairs priced between €30,000-40,000 and **Dei Bardi Art**, a Brussels gallery specialising in Haute Epoque works of art, sold a Renaissance marble tondo by Domenico Gagini for a price in the region of €40,000.

Among the silver specialists, **D'Arshot & Cie** from Brussels sold a lady's tankard in parcel-gilt silver dating from the late 16th century as well as a series of four early repoussé, engraved and chiselled bowls from Bruges, c.1721-23.

Sales at **Galerie Bernard De Leye** from Brussels included one of

its highlights: a Viennese wine cooler from 1782 by the master silversmith Ignaz Joseph Würth fashioned with two lion skins encircling the body with their tails forming the handles.

Among the fine art, **Francis Maere Fine Arts** from Ghent sold *Figure*, a stone sculpture from 1966 by Eugène Dodeigne; a work in ink on paper by Christian Dotremont from 1972, *Le temps est une harpe qui joue toujours autrement la même chose*, priced around €100,000 and a still-life by Rik Wouters, *Intérieur aquaforte*, c.1911, for a figure in the region of €300,000.

Art Nouveau acclaim

In acknowledgement of the Brussels Capital Region's initiative to make 2023 The Year of Art Nouveau, *BRAFA* had adopted this stylistic movement as the fair's theme (the

carpeting drew inspiration from designs by Victor Horta, one of the leading names in Belgian Art Nouveau).

Among several galleries focusing on this field was **Thomas Deprez Fine Arts** from Brussels.

The gallery's early sales included a silver jardiniere, *Faisans et Raisins*, by Philippe Wolfers which was priced in the region of €18,000, while the Fondation Roi Baudouin made the acquisition of an ensemble of chairs by Horta which will go to the Musée Art & Histoire in Brussels.

Florian Kohlhammer from Vienna, a specialist in Jugendstil and Art Nouveau, found a buyer for the black and white glass vase designed c.1911 by Josef Hoffmann for the Johann Loetz Witwe glassworks that was previewed in *ATG No 2576* for a price in the region of €16,000.





1. Raisins et Faisans jardiniere of c.1901 by the Belgian jeweller and silversmith Philippe Wolfers, sold by **Thomas Deprez Fine Arts** for a price in the **region of €18,000**.

2. Among the sales from the **Collectors Gallery** from Brussels which specialises in artist and designer jewellery and wearable artworks was this gold and lapis lazuli ring by Ettore Sottsass.

3. An early sale at **BRAFA** for the **Osborne Samuel Gallery** for a price in the **region of €400,000** was this *Stairs* sculpture by Lynn Chadwick.

4. This Viennese wine cooler made by Master Silversmith Ignaz Joseph Würth in 1782 was sold by the specialist silver dealer **Galerie Bernard De Leye**. It was part of a service made between 1779-82 for Albert de Saxe-Teschén, governor general of the Netherlands for use at Schonenberg castle, now the castle of Laeken in Brussels.

5. Late 16th century silver tankard from Ravensburg, one of the sales for **D'Arshot & Cie**.

6. **Maison Rapin** from Paris sold this Orione sideboard by Roberto G Rida made in 2017 and priced **around €120,000** to a collector at **BRAFA**.

7. Chinese export porcelain plates decorated with armorials of European families priced in the **€1000-15,000 range** that were sold by **Galerie Lemaire** from Brussels.

8. Glass vase designed by Josef Hoffmann made for the Johann Loetz Witwe glassworks, c.1911, and priced **around €16,000** that was sold by **Florian Kohlhammer**.

9. Floor lamp by Gino Sarfatti, 1946-48, one of the works sold by 20th century design specialist **Goekelaere & Robinson** (Belgium and Paris).