

COMMENTS ON THE ART MARKET

VOLUME 128

Rehs Galleries, Inc. – 5 East 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 – (212) 355-5710
www.rehs.com

The Baltimore Show

It is almost time for the Baltimore Antiques Show which runs from August 25 – August 28, 2011 at the Baltimore Convention Center. A link to the complimentary tickets can be found in this article on our web site (please visit the Newsletter Archive).

We plan on showing works by many of your favorite artists: Julien Dupré, Daniel Ridgway Knight, Louis Aston Knight, Montague Dawson, Jean B.C. Corot, Eugene Boudin, Antonio Jacobsen, Thomas Luny, Edouard Cortès, Antoine Blanchard, Sally Swatland, Greg Harris and many others.

The Stock Market

Stabilizing? Could it be? Who knows! I can tell you that during the past month I have been treading water ... up one day and down the next (or the next few); far better than the wild rollercoaster rides just a few years ago. My big question is: what happened to the idea of investing in great companies for the long run? Guess I am still 'old school'.

As for some of my favorite stocks, RIMM (around \$27) is still in the crapper – so sad! Will I ever get back to break even? I know ... maybe not in my lifetime!! As for some of the others: GE - \$18.60 (same), AT&T \$30 (down), VZ \$36.30 (down), MCD \$88.14 (up), Citi \$40 (down), VOD \$27 (up), Cisco \$16.33 (up) and a new one: Pioneer Drilling (recommended by one of my readers) \$17 – it is up 13% since I bought it. And finally, I am sure you are all waiting to hear about SNRS ... it is still at .0001 – I will have to wait a little longer before retiring!

Tales from the Dark Side

I know everyone seems to like this feature, so here are a few new ones and a couple of updates:

Leigh Morse, former director of Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, was sentenced, this month, to serve weekends in prison for four months (starting in August) and make restitution of \$1.65 million – ouch! I guess that is far better than what the DA was looking for: 1 – 3 years in prison and \$9 million in restitution.

William T. Meloy – this fugitive, already wanted in North Dakota and Montana, has been making his way through Missouri writing bad checks at antique shops and then taking the merchandise and selling it to other dealers. Now here is the sad thing, in 1998 Meloy served time at the North Dakota State Penitentiary for doing the same thing ... like I always say: leopards never change their spots.

Unknown – at the time I wrote this the name of the criminal was not released, but earlier this month a 57 year old French man walked into the National Gallery, London, took out a can of red spray paint and 'enhanced' two paintings by Nicolas Poussin, *The Adoration of the Golden Calf* and *Adoration of the Shepherds*. He was grabbed by security officers and finally arrested by police. According to reports, the conservation staff was swift to respond as well; very little, if any, permanent damage was sustained – the paintings are already back on display. Here is my question: how on earth does someone get into a museum like that with cans of spray paint?

Mark Lugo – I am sure most you have heard about this one, but just in case ... Mr. Lugo was arrested for stealing a Picasso from a California gallery on July 5. In addition... **for the rest of this article, please visit the Newsletter Archive on our web site.**

Spanning the Globe

For months I have inundated you with art sales report and there are still a few more to cover this month; however, I thought that I would also include results from other parts of the art & antiques world that took place over the past few months ... it will show that strong prices are not only reserved for fine art.

Sports

At a sale in New Jersey a 1938 Lou Gehrig Yankees jersey sold for a record \$329K (this same item sold just two years ago for \$240K); a restored Honus Wagner baseball card sold for \$188K while a Joe Jackson card from 1910 made \$200K; the 1886 Kalamazoo bat of Jim O'Rourke (purchased in 1991 for \$6,050) brought \$58,750; Jake Daubert's 1919 Cincinnati Reds World Series championship pin brought \$94K and a voucher, signed by Joe Jackson, brought a record \$64,625. In a New York sale John Wooden's UCLA coach's jacket made \$183,500; "Downtown" Freddie Brown's 1979 Seattle SuperSonics World Championship ring made \$115K and Julius Erving's 1972-73 Virginia Squires ABA autographed game jersey sold for \$190K.

Celebrity

At a sale in California (where else) Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' jacket made an impressive \$1.8M – I just checked my closet and found some old jackets ... anyone interested!!!? Several pieces of George Washington's original coffin (including one of the handles) made \$12,000 – how do they actually verify that? In addition, his personal compass made \$59,750. And the winner of this category was Chief Black Bird's Oglala Sioux beaded and fringed hide war shirt that made \$2.65M!

Photography

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but what is a camera worth ... well, if it is the right one, a lot – at a sale in Austria a Leica M2 grey brought \$172K; however, that was not the highlight ... a 1923 Leica 0-series camera sold for \$1.89M (the same piece sold in 2007 for about ¼ the price). At a sale in the US, Robert Vance's daguerreotype (c.1850) of a gold mining scene fetched... **for the rest of this article, please visit the Newsletter Archive on our web site.**

The Art Market

My monthly report would not be complete without some art coverage and there was plenty of art to cover – even in the dog days of summer.

The Contemporary

Last month I left off at the HUGE London sales with the catalogs weighing in at 17.37 lbs. This series started on the evening of June 28th at Christie's and as expected, there was plenty of action. Taking to top three positions were Francis Bacon's *Study for a Portrait* (est. upon request – and I never requested it) that made £17.9M (\$28.7M), Warhol's *Mao, 1973* (est. £6-8M) at £6.98M and Peter Doig's *Red Boat* (est. £1.4-£1.8M) at £6.2M – the Doig was bought in 2004 for \$162,000 and there was a little legal issue that arose prior to the sale ... you can find more about this on the internet.

When the evening session ended, of the 65 works offered, 53 sold leaving a sell-through rate of 82% and a total take of £78.8M (\$125.8M); the expected range was £55.3M – £76.7M, so with the buyer's premium they beat their expectations with only 82% selling – showing that the highly contested works will bring in the bacon!!!

On the 29th they followed with their day sale and taking the top positions here were Richter's *Untitled, 1969* which sold for £481K (\$770K - est. £350-£450K), Dubuffet's *Frequented Neighbourhood, 1979* at £409K (\$654K - est. £100-£150K) and Warhol's *Portrait of Florinda Bolkan* at £361K (\$578K - est. £90-£120K). Of the 249 works offered 186 sold (75.1% sell-through rate) and a total take of £13.2M (\$21M)

At the end of Christie's two days their totals were: 314 offered, 239 sold (76.1% sell-through rate) and a total take of £92M (\$147M) ... and then came Sotheby's.

That same evening the competition launched their attack and taking top position here was ... go on, take a guess ... Francis Bacon's *Crouching Nude*, that sold for £8.3M (\$13.3M – est. £7-£9M). In second was Polke's *Jungle* that made an auction record £5.7M (\$9.2M – est. £3... **For the rest of this article, please visit the Newsletter Archive on our web site.**

Old Masters

We then rolled into July with the Old Masters and while there were some fireworks, my overall impression is, and always has been, that July is a tough time to sell art. Let's face it; this is the time of the year when many people are more concerned about some fun in the sun.

On the evening of the 5th Christie's offered their Old Master & British Paintings (finally -- no 19th century works) and the top lot here was George Stubbs' *Gimcrack on Newmarket Heath* at £22.44M (\$35.9M – est. £20-£30M) ... now while this was an auction record for the artist it should be noted that the work had a 'third party guarantee' (in other words, before the sale they basically presold the work). So, should that really be considered an auction sale since the work sold at what appears to have been the reserve? Not in my opinion. For more on this check the web for Souren Melikian's take - *Eagerness to Buy Old Masters at Odds With Their Availability in Auctions*. Anyway, let's move on ... the number two position was taken by Gainsborough's *Portrait of Mrs. William Villebois* at £6.5M (\$10.5M – est. £4-£6M) and in third was Michelangelo's drawing *A Male Nude Seen from Behind* that fetched £3.2M (\$5.1M – est. £3-£5M).

When the evening ended, of the 61 works offered 41 sold (a sell-through rate of 68%) giving a total take of £49.7M **for the rest of this article, please visit the Newsletter Archive on our web site.**

Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous

As if they had not put enough works on the market that week, the two main London rooms created sales geared exclusively towards the rich and famous. Now I know you are asking: More? You are kidding? Nope! After a while you just have to laugh at this. However, what the results will continue to show is that for the right material, there are tons, and I mean tons, of money available.

During the Old Master week Sotheby's offered Treasures, Princely Taste which featured 33 very expensive items, including furniture, vases, clocks, etc. Of these, 20 sold (60.6%) for a total take of £10.8M (\$17.4M) – top lot was a pair of Italian carved giltwood settees at £1.7M (\$2.8M – est. £300-£500K). The next day Christie's offered The Exceptional Sale, 2011 ... who comes up with these titles? I heard that some of the other options were: Most Of You Cannot Afford This Stuff Sale, Show Us The Money Sale, Stuff For the Super Rich, The Big Bucks Sale, Black Card Holders Only Sale ... just kidding, I think! Of the 50 items offered 36 sold (72%) creating a ... **for the rest of this article, please visit the Newsletter Archive on our web site.**

Trust you are all enjoying your summer.

Howard L. Rehs
© Rehs Galleries, Inc., New York –August 2011

Gallery Updates: GREAT NEWS – we are still on our summer hours ... this month we are only open Tuesday – Thursdays; all other times by appointment – I love August!

Web Site Updates: Works by the following artists have made their way through the gallery: Montague Dawson, Henry Woods, Aston Knight, F. Kaufmann, T. Wores, A.G. Hill, Blanchard and Cortès. And look for new works by Cortès, Blanchard, Jacobsen and Luny that have been, or will be, added to the web site.

Next Month: There are more sales to cover.