

# Baltimore Roadshow

*This year's Baltimore Summer Antique Show attracted over 30 foreign dealers and featured works by Monet and O'Keefe.*

BY DEBORAH K. DIETSCH

Landscapes by French impressionist Claude Monet and American painter Georgia O'Keefe were being offered for just under \$1 million. Ancient Chinese carvings were priced in the hundreds of thousands and a silver urn by Viennese Secessionist designer Josef Hoffmann was going for \$55,000.

Those were just some of the rarer treasures for sale at the Baltimore Summer Antique Show held over the Labor Day weekend. This year's event, staged from August 31 through September 3, was more upscale than in the past with new management attracting higher-quality dealers among the 550 exhibitors.

Last fall, the Palm Beach Show Group acquired the show from previous owner Frank Farbenbloom, who founded it in 1980. The Florida-based company also runs the Palm Beach Jewelry and Antiques Show, which is staged annually over the President's Day weekend in February and known for its top-notch wares.

Inside the cavernous Baltimore convention center, the atmosphere felt more like an art museum than a flea market with room-like displays lining spacious aisles. "It's a huge improvement in terms of

the quality of dealers and layout," said Michael James of the London-based Silver Fund, one of 30 exhibitors at the Baltimore show who also participate in the Palm Beach venue. Inside the well-lit vitrines of his stand were glistening pieces of Georg Jensen silver, including a 1915 tea set priced at \$90,000.

Michael Teller IV, owner of T.K. Asian Antiquities in Williamsburg, Va., a participant in the Baltimore event since its inception, also remarked on the change. "There has been an upgrade in the quality of exhibitors this year," he said, standing next to an ancient Chinese "monkey demon" (asking price: \$100,000). "The presentation is better and there's more variety."

The new Palm Beach owners enticed about 100 exhibitors to come to Baltimore for the first time. Among them was Albert Levy who specializes in Lalique art glass (\$2,500 to \$50,000 per piece) and 19<sup>th</sup> century French furniture. Customers to his tony gallery on Palm Beach's Worth Avenue include Donald Trump, Rod Stewart, Sylvester Stallone and Bruce Springsteen. No celebrities turned up to visit in Baltimore, Levy said, although "a nice clientele of collectors" did.

This year's show attracted more than 30 foreign dealers from England, France, Italy, Japan, Uruguay and Canada, plus another 30 from the West Coast. That was enough to attract many visitors from outside the Baltimore-Washington area. "The reason we come here is that some dealers who



come to Baltimore don't do shows in New York," said Sooky Goodfriend, a Manhattanite who buys and sells vintage jewelry. She and friend Saul Kaplan were checking out the colorful Palissy ware at a booth manned by two Frenchmen.

Japanese collector Yumi Hattori flew all the way from Tokyo to buy European silver and porcelains. "Very good quality ceramics here," she said while browsing Wedgwood at Texan Earl Buckman's booth, "but

the same prices as in New York."

Many of the 30,000 antiquers at the Baltimore venue were knowledgeable collectors on a mission to find the perfect treasure to add to their stash, according to several dealers. "Palm Beach is more for decorators and less for collectors," said Pierangelo Marengo, a dealer from Milan, Italy,

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who sells antique canes and scientific instruments. "More people come to Baltimore looking for smaller stuff, not furniture."

The best venue in the country for antique silver, the Baltimore show offered plenty of shine in every corner. Among the oldest treasures were French silver spoons made in 1450 for \$8,500



each at the stand run by Robert Lloyd, a New York dealer. Both Lloyd and Spencer Marks, Ltd., a Massachusetts antiques business, sold pieces made by Baltimore silversmith Andrew Ellicott Warner to the artisan's descendants.

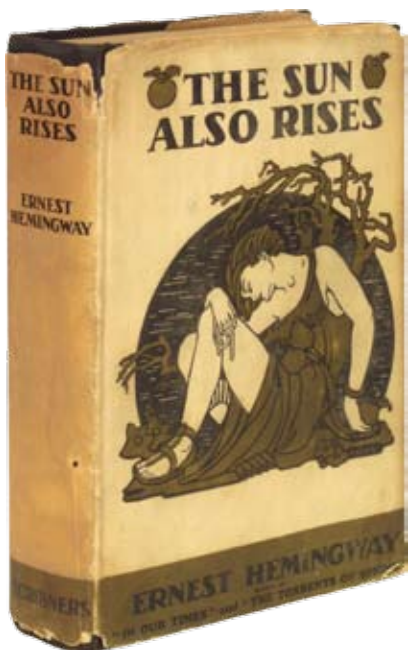
Bill Rau, the New Orleans dealer showing the Monet and O'Keefe, collected \$26,000 for a 1793 serving spoon made by Paul Revere.

Not as well represented as the silver and Asian antiques, which also made a strong showing, were the vintage midcentury modern designs now enjoying a revival in the decorating world. "We haven't found as strong a market for it in Baltimore as New York, Miami or Chicago," said Leonard Davenport of Long Island, New York, who specializes in artworks from the 1960s and 70s. Fran Schreiber, owner of Serendib in Brooklyn, was offering futuristic German pottery at a reasonable \$375 per piece but had few takers. New Yorker Greg Nanamura who specializes in 20<sup>th</sup> century furnishings brought only jewelry to the show.



With display fees higher than last year — an increase of about 20 to 25 percent, according to several exhibitors — dealers were anxious to make top-dollar sales. Nicolaus Boston Antiques, one of 16 British exhibitors, scored with a museum-quality Wedgwood majolica vase sold to a Baltimore collector. The dealer had priced it at \$95,000 but, like so many exhibitors, wouldn't say how much he got for it.

Rau didn't sell the Monet and O'Keefe. But he managed to rake in \$700,000 from buyers willing to spend big bucks on an Art Deco cabinet, an 18<sup>th</sup> century French desk and a diamond bracelet among other items. "Even though we had the most expensive house in the neighborhood, we still did fine," Rau said via email. "We will definitely be back next year." **WL**



*Opposite page bottom- Celluloid and leather purse circa 1930. Opposite page top- A Gilt-bronze mounted ivory and metal cloisonné marquetry jardinière by Ferdinand Duvinagge, circa 1880. Above- An alabaster and bronze figurine of an Eastern woman riding a camel, French, Late 19th Century. Bronze with black green patina. Left- First Edition in first issue dustwrapper of Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.*