

Homes & Gardens

June 1998

Olympia Summer Fair

FAIR DEALS

If you're hunting for antiques then head for this month's London fairs

Inspiring, enticing and exciting, London's art and antiques fairs are also big business – this June alone more than £50 million is expected to change hands at the capital's five major events. But despite the huge sums involved, this is not the exclusive territory of dealers and collectors. These days, the trade aims to attract everyone by presenting contemporary works alongside antiques on increasingly imaginative stands that have more in common with stage sets than antiques shops.

Prices vary wildly, but there are now more affordable pieces on offer than ever before. You may even bag a bargain, particularly during the last days when stallholders are often reluctant to cart bulky items back home unless absolutely necessary. And don't be afraid to haggle: for many dealers marked prices are simply conversation pieces.

The Grosvenor House Art and Antiques Fair is the forerunner of all the summer fairs and the only event to enjoy the patronage of the Queen Mother and to display exhibits from the Royal Collection. This year around 90 dealers will be offering pieces dating from antiquity to the present day. Stars of the show include a rare Queen Anne walnut bureau bookcase from Apter-Fredericks, Grace Wu Bruce's beautiful examples of Ming furniture and S Marchant & Son's Chinese celadon glazed vase, while newest recruits Waddington Galleries are exhibiting a painted metal cut-out by Picasso entitled *Tête d'Homme à Moustache*. Prices start at £100, swiftly skip on to the thousands and then climb into the million bracket – making this a wonderful browse but not, for most, a realistic shopping trip. *From 11-20 June, Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W1A 3AA, (0171) 495 6406.*

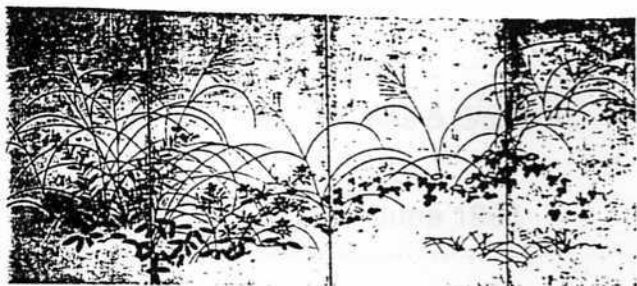
The Olympia Fine Art and Antiques Fair is a spring chicken at just 25 years old; the crowd is slightly less well-heeled and the atmosphere somewhat more businesslike and informal than at Grosvenor House. The fairs take place every three months or so, and this June a

phenomenal 411 dealers are rolling up with their mixture of quirky, affordable pieces and high-quality antiques. Lucy Johnson sets out her fine English furniture and blue-and-white Delftware in a reconstruction of a Queen Anne interior, while Gregg Baker offers a selection of handsome Oriental screens. Curiosities include miniature models of furniture and some



ABOVE Early 19th-century French fashion plates from the *Journal des Dames et des Modes* from Bernard Shapero at the Antiquarian Book Fair.

CONT'D.



ABOVE 18th-century Japanese paper screen from Gregg Baker.

BELOW Contemporary blue-and-grey Dobby Drum Pots (1997) by Jon Williams.

◀ tiny "apprentice pieces" at Guinevere Antiques, and elegant bird cages and statuary at Elliott and Snowdon. *From 4-14 June, Olympia Exhibition Centre, Hammersmith Road, W14 8UX, (0171) 244 2219.*

The Antiquarian Book Fair occupies the space next-door during the first days of the Olympia Fine Art and Antiques Fair, with 146 dealers selling early printed books, children's books, modern first editions, fine maps and prints. The theme this year is the 1890s, and prints by notorious artist Aubrey Beardsley abound (this year is the centenary of his death). Buy a collection of original Penguin Classics, or visit Bernard J Shapero Rare Books, the leading London antiquarian book dealer, to see a unique set of 42 volumes of French fashion plates. *From 4-7 June, Olympia Exhibition Centre, Hammersmith Road, W14 8UX, (0171) 439 3118.*

The Hali Antique Carpet and Textile Art Fair is the first major fair of its kind in the world, bringing together more than 50 dealers in rugs, carpets, tapestries and costumes under the auspices of *Hali*, the respected magazine of woven art. Prices range from a few hundred to many thousands of pounds, and now is a good time to buy, with antique carpets and textiles growing in popularity and costing a fraction of the price of paintings. Or simply enjoy strolling around this exotic souk of textures and colours, where exhibits include Galerie Achdjian's tapestry screen based on Aesop's Fables dated 1739, and the *Cartouche de Fleurs*, a 16th-century carpet fragment. *From 11-15 June, Olympia Exhibition Centre, Hammersmith Road, W14 8UX, (0181) 710 2153.*

The International Ceramics Fair promises pottery, porcelain and glassware ranging from ancient Chinese tomb figures to 20th-century vessels and abstracts. The 47 exhibitors from eight countries will be joined by a Crafts Council exhibition entitled *Ceramics from British Collections*, showing works by Bernard Leach, Alison Britton, Walter Keeler, Jennifer Lee and Richard Slee. Other highlights include a Han dynasty black pottery cocoon flask on the stand of London dealers Priestley & Ferraro, and early English Delft rarities at Jonathan Horne's. For contemporary pieces, visit Adrian Sassoon's stand to see Jon Williams's blue-and-grey-spotted Dobby Drum Pots, and Kate Malone's huge eccentric Pine-apple Centrepiece.

From 12-15 June, The Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly, W1Y 8BX, (0171) 734 5491. ■

