

Andrew Smith & Son September 2011 sale report

Local Stars of BBC's Flog It Programme, Andrew Smith & Son, recorded a record turnover at their recent Fine Art and Antiques auction sale, reporting a huge surge in International enquiries and sales.

With 1315 lots under the hammer over two days, achieving a success rate of over 90%, and prices that can only be described as fantastic! Not only was the room packed on sale day, but over 250 buyers from all over the world had left bids prior to the auction (known as Commission Bidders), all eight telephone lines were in action throughout the day and to cap it all the live online bidding went into a frenzy on numerous occasions, with the auctioneer barely able to keep up with the online action.



Amongst the 1,300 lots offered it was no surprise that Chinese works continued to attract most attention and the highest prices, with Chinese buyers both in the room, on the phone and online. The star lot was a pair of Chinese jade exquisitely carved ceremonial burial discs, dating from the 17th Century. Telephone bidders from Hong Kong, London and the United States competed against online bidders, commission bidders, and buyers in the room. Bidding having started at a modest £2,000 very quickly topped the £6,000 mark, and was finally knocked down to a buyer in the room at £7,780. This lot is thought to have been of particular interest to collectors, having come from the family of an engineer who accompanied Lord Carnarvon into Tutankhamun's tomb. The discs were first brought to the auction room within a mixed box of ceramics, but fortunately the eagle eyed ceramics expert quickly identified the discs and removed them for sale separately.

The sale started with about 200 lots of oil paintings, watercolours and prints. A large oil by Edward Armfield of Terriers in a stable interior made £3,300 against a presale estimate of £1,500, and a smaller pair by the same artist made £2,000 against an estimate of £1,000. Two sketches by Paul Cesar Helleu of the American society beauty Olga Thompson greatly exceeded expectation, also being knocked down at £3,200 against a presale estimate of £800.

Amongst the china, Chinese works attracted much attention, with a 20th century Canton famille rose figure of a Buddha soaring well above estimate to sell at £600, and a Celadon vase made an astonishing £3,040 against a presale estimate of £300 and a Chinese crackle ware Palliser vase was finally knocked down at £1,000 against frenzied telephone bidding, which started modestly enough at £250.

However, it was not a one way ticket to China! Good quality English china continues to do well, with Worcester and Moorcroft in particular demand. A William Moorcroft jardinière attracted huge interest, not only in the room, but also on the internet, and telephones, finally being knocked down at £3,160 against a presale estimate of £600, despite numerous chips and damage. Not to be outdone a Royal Worcester miniature cabinet tea and coffee set for two attracted even more feverish bidding through all sources, to be knocked down at £1,700. Another well established name which continues to be collectable is Royal Doulton, and a pair of damaged Lambeth faïence baluster vases, decorated by one of their foremost artists, Hannah Barlow, exceeded all expectations, the hammer finally coming down at £2,370 at eight times their estimate.

The second day of the sale opened with the furniture. Good quality unusual items continue to sell well, despite the decline in the Victorian and later period furniture. A good example of this was the £600

achieved for a very tatty Victorian sofa in need of full refurbishment against an estimate of £200 and a good set of Regency rosewood brass inlaid dining chairs selling at £3,160.

A popular section at this auctioneer is the collectables, a generic term covering a wide variety of small and unusual objects, and it is this section which often produces some of the biggest surprises and this sale was no exception. A rare Michelin man automobile compressor also sold well above estimate at £400, a pair of modern Brigade of Guards parade drums made a thumping £640. A Victorian necessaire by Spear of Dublin attracted much interest and was eventually knocked down at £1,220 against an estimate of £400. Certainly nobody was pulling the strings when nine 1950s period Pelham puppets complete with original boxing, theatre etc, put on one of the finest performances of the day when the curtain came down at £1,050 against a presale estimate of £200.

Amongst more specialised items an unusual Lyre guitar sold for £670, but the violin in the following lot played the better tune, achieving a staggering £1,000, almost ten times its presale estimate. Two mandolins then provided an encore, making £950 against a presale estimate of £100. Perhaps one of the more curious entries, inspired by our record breaking corkscrew which sold for over £5,000 in a previous sale, was a large collection of corkscrews which made £1,800.



The military medal section at this auctioneer always produces strong results and this trend continued with a number of surprises including £820 for an Indian mutiny medal, an OBE medal group made £1,330, and a QE2 medal pair made £1,150.

An Edwardian pewter 1908 Olympic Games (London) score keepers badge understandably attracted interest from far and wide, bidding saw all the telephones in action, and feverish activity on the internet, and the room. Bidding starting at a modest £500 was finally secured by a telephone bidder at £2,065.



Finally, the clock section a huge Ormolu mounted eight day chiming table clock making £3,000 and one of the stars of the day, an early English brass lantern clock making over double its estimate at £6,300.

Entries are accepted for Andrew Smith & Sons future sales events on 01962 735988 or visit their website www.andrewsmithandson.com for further information.