

COMMENTS ON THE ART MARKET

VOLUME 170

Rehs Galleries, Inc.
Rehs Contemporary Galleries, Inc.
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Upcoming Shows

By: Alyssa

We are excited to escape the freezing New York weather and head down to sunny Florida for the next couple of weeks! Over 100 works from the gallery will be on display at the Naples Art, Antique and Jewelry Show, which runs from Friday, February 6th through Monday, February 9th. Over 60 internationally acclaimed dealers will fill the 50,000 square foot space with fine art, antiques, jewelry, furniture, silver and more.

By Valentine's Day we will be set up for the opening of our second Florida show, the Palm Beach Jewelry, Art & Antiques Show... hopefully with a few less works than we opened Naples with ☺. This much larger venue will be filled with over 180 international dealers offering a broad span of artworks, jewelry and antiques. The show closes on Tuesday, February 17th, and then unfortunately it's back to the snow and cold for the Rehs Fam.

Stocks

By: Howard

YUK! What a month of huge swings and a lot of meclizine! I really hope this is not a foreshadowing of the year to come. The month opened at 17,821 and by the 6th we hit an intraday low of 17,262. We were back at over 17,900 two days later and continued to bounce around like a pinball for the remainder of the month. When I put this report to bed, on the 29th, the market was at 17,416 (up 225 points on the day) ... what a ride!

Since I was heading off for the Florida shows these numbers are one day short of the month's end: JP Morgan (\$55.67 – down 11%), Emerson (\$56.88 – down 9.15%), Exxon (\$87.58 – down 5.9%), GE (\$24.08 – down 6.3%), AT&T (\$32.96 – down 3.37%), VOD (\$35.94 – up 3.66%), Verizon (\$46.11 – down 3.03%), Wal-Mart (\$87.72 – up 1.25%), Coke (\$42.10 – down 1.77%) and DuPont (\$71.71 – down 2.83%). As you can tell, this was not a very good month ... at least for me.

Tales from the Dark Side

By: Alyssa

Gianfranco Becchina & wife, Ursula Juraschek - The Italian and Swiss police have been investigating this art-dealing couple since 1994 in hopes of uncovering a suspected Swiss-Italian antiques smuggling ring. In a recent raid, police found 5,361 vases, bronzes and frescos valued at \$58M hidden in a Swiss warehouse. This case reveals one part of the dark side of the art world in which dealers forge provenance papers in order to sell to museums and private collectors who assume they are buying them in "good faith." Among the museums that have been fooled by the couple are the Ashmolean, the Louvre, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Metropolitan Museum to name just a few.

Franck Davidovici - has filed a copyright infringement lawsuit against American artist, Jeff Koons. This is the third case brought against the artist claiming his works from his Banality series were plagiarized from other artists. According to Davidovici, his advertisement for the French clothing company Naf Naf in 1980

featuring a woman laying on her back in the snow with a small pig was recreated by Koons as a porcelain 1988 artwork of Ilona Saller (an Italian porn star) laying in the snow with a small pig approaching her. Davidovici demands that the work be confiscated and any and all funds ever generated from the work as well as \$300,000 in damages be paid.

Alex Brook, 23; Joseph Parnell, 36; Sean Sorensen, 20; and Auvia Bellamy, 19 – have been charged with felony theft, after a drunken “black-out” led the foursome to steal three blown-glass spires and an orb from the Chihuly Garden worth over \$100,000. After seeing on the news that what they had stolen was expensive works of art, Brook and Parnell dumped the glass pieces in a cornfield where they were destroyed during harvesting. Both men have been charged with additional counts of criminal mischief and tampering with evidence.

Really!

By: Amy

As I was researching this past month for interesting items for the newsletter, I was intrigued by the sale of the estate of Mary Soames, the daughter of Winston Churchill. When I mentioned that I would be writing about some of the unique items in the sale, I found out that Lance would be writing about the actual paintings done by Winston Churchill in this sale. Well, I will say that the sale does deserve the extra attention. It was historic not only because of the objects and paintings in this sale, but because it had many remarkable results including an outstanding overall result of £15.4M, far above the pre-sale estimate of £3-5.5M. In a breakdown of the results, I found it interesting that of the 255 lots offered, 231 lots (90.6%) sold above their estimates, 16 lots (6.3%) sold within their estimates and a mere 8 lots (3.1%) sold below their estimate...yes, for a 100% sell through! You see, when the right material is offered at the right price, great things will happen.

Here are just a few of the items in the sale that soared far beyond their estimates. The first item is quite unusual; actually it's the only one in the world, a collage featuring parrots and a budgerigar, titled Birthday Menagerie. The piece was signed with initials and dedicated “From Toby Churchill to Winston Churchill, November 30th, 1960.” What makes this interesting, and amusing, is that Toby Churchill was the budgerigar that was given to Churchill by Christopher Soames's sister in 1956 (apparently, Churchill loved parrots.) The collage was a humorous birthday present given to Churchill and was estimated at £40-60 (\$63-94); it flew past the estimate to make £2,500 (\$3,929).

Another birthday gift that had a remarkable result; a pair of wine coasters given the Churchill in November of 1953 for his 79th birthday from ‘The Prof,’ one of his best friends. 1953 was an important year in Churchill's life; he became a Knight of Garter and received the Nobel Prize in Literature. The Order of the Garter was founded in 1348 and is the highest order of chivalry and the most prestigious honor in Great Britain. These silver and wood coasters were given at an important time in Churchill's life and the result speaks for it...estimated at £500-800 (\$786-1,257) they sold for £40,000 (\$62,860).

Winston Churchill had a love of cigars, which is well known, additionally, his daughter Mary shared this love. Mary's daughter remembers her grandfather and mother having contests to see who could support the biggest ash on the tip of their cigars...oh what fun...LOL. To light those cigars, Churchill had a silver cigar lighter manufactured by S.W. Smith and Co, 1926 which had a modest estimate of just £50-80 (\$126-189). You can imagine the amazement when it sold for £21,250 (\$33,394)! And of course you must have a humidor to keep your cigars in. While the provenance is uncertain as to whether the humidor in the sale belonged to Churchill, Christopher Soames or his daughter, this Asprey humidor, c. 1930, had an estimate of £1,000-1,500 (\$1,572-2,357) and brought £21,250 (\$33,394)! I could not guess what it would have sold for if they were sure it was Churchill's!

A red leather dispatch box made for Churchill by John Peck & Son, c. 1920, and used during his time as Secretary of State for the Colonies, set off a bidding war. This box is one of seven to have survived his tenure in the Colonial office; all the others are on public display at the Chartwell and the House of Commons War Rooms. It was estimated to bring £5-7,000 (\$7,857-11,001) and when the bidding was over, the dispatch box commanded £158,500 (\$249,083).

And one more birthday gift to Winston Churchill was The War Cabinet Jug given to him in 1942 with the inscription ‘Egypt 1942/ To Winston/ from/ his colleagues in the/ War Cabinet/ November 30, 1942.’ The

part of the inscription Egypt 1942 refers to the Battle of Alamein, near the Egyptian coast; it was the first victory for the Allied forces in the area and a turning point in WWII. The jug, which was estimated at £4-6,000 (\$6,286-9,429), sparked a fierce bidding war and finally sold for £278,500 (\$437,663)!

There were many more impressive results, far too many items to continue; but you will be blown away by the results Lance will review. Really!!

SEX32 – Coming in April

By: Lance

I am sure many of you have been anxiously awaiting more information on our upcoming exhibition, SEX32, featuring a selection of work from the incredible talents at the Ani Art Academies. As the first few images start rolling in, I can honestly say that this will be by far the most impressive and extensive collection of works we have ever offered from the Ani Instructors, Alumni and Current Apprentices.

The concept behind this year's show is to explore the perceptions that surround one of the most debated topics in society today ... ideas that relate to gender stereotypes and sexual identity, while touching on culture, religion and politics. We know you will find this exhibit not only filled with beautiful works of art; but intriguing, inspiring, and thought provoking pieces which we hope will bring some enjoyment to your life.

Each artist will have a different take on the theme. Anthony Waichulis, director of the Ani Art Academies, had the following to say about the influence one of the masters of 19th century American still life had on his contributions to the show:

"The Bachelor's Drawer by nineteenth century Trompe L'oeil master John Haberle is by far one of the most influential works I have ever laid eyes on. I remember that upon first glimpse I was not only awestruck by the captivating demonstration of virtuosity, but also by the sentiment and candor inherent to this intimate snapshot of nineteenth century living. As a young aspiring artist, I was inspired beyond words.

It was not until many years later that I felt the confidence to attempt to pay homage to Haberle's influential masterpiece. My 2005 work "A Bachelor's Pad" was not only an attempt to strive to meet the technical standards of the celebrated nineteenth century master---but was also an exercise in weaving another intimate glimpse at lifestyle.

Now, 10 years later, I am elated to find the opportunity to revisit the influence of Haberle's great masterwork for the highly-anticipated 2015 Rehs Contemporary exhibition, SEX32. It is my intention to again explore the potential of this 'intimate snapshot' to present a more mystery-laden landscape to be explored. I sincerely hope that the viewers will enjoy the challenge..."

Make sure to keep your eye out for sneak-peaks and previews over the next couple of months as we approach the opening, Saturday, April 18th 2015!

Revisiting Things Not To Do

By: Howard

As you read this article, please do so in the light and playful tone it was written in. Back in 2010 I wrote a series of articles listing things people should not say or do when entering a dealer's booth at a show. I know most people do not read my newsletters, so we still see and hear many of the same things. I have been thinking about printing out my list and hanging it on the wall so people understand how we would like them to act in our space – then comes the big question: would they actually read it? My printed list would probably include the following answers to the most frequently asked questions: No, I did not paint all of these works. No, I am not the artist. Yes, they are for sale and the frames are included. I wish you the best of luck in the upcoming lottery. And, I do appreciate you thanking me for bringing them.

At the most recent show in Los Angeles I was amazed that a number of people asked me if I painted all the works. I did not realize how talented people think I am! Thank you!! I was also shocked at the number of people who walked into our booth and started taking pictures of every work (including the wall cards) ... at this show we had about 100 works on display, so that would add up to about 200 photos. I even had one young gentleman ask me to move out of the way so he could photograph one of them. Now I do understand that certain people would like a picture memory of certain works and I see no reason why they should not take a photo or two of their favorites. However, I would really like to know what the people who photograph every painting do with all those images? Someone suggested that they would be posted on social network sites, but I have yet to see one of our paintings in a post ... maybe I need to expand my network of friends?

At this same show, I was also stunned at the number of people who walked into our booth and touched the paintings. Tim Jahn's self-portrait was a magnet for people and a number of them just had to touch it ... one even commented that they thought it was a photograph. Ok, even if it were a photograph, why would you touch it? I was also amazed at one young girl (in her early 20s) who walked into our booth and, while I was standing close by, quickly ran her fingers down the front of an Antoine Blanchard. I looked at her and said: "please do not touch the paintings". She, and her male friend, looked at me like I was crazy or rude, backed away from the work, and then quickly walked out of the booth. Another dealer in the show was so annoyed at people touching the paintings in his booth that first he resorted to carving the words "Do Not Touch The Artwork" into the walls of his booth. When that did not seem to stop people, he had a 3 foot high barrier constructed in front of each wall to keep people away from the works. Amazingly, people were still leaning over to get a real close look!

I do understand that some people are amazed at the technical precision some artist can display and are unsure if what they are looking at is a painting or a print ... there is an easy way to find out -- either ask the dealer or read the corresponding wall tags.

And here is one final item for my 'please do not do this' list. If you are interested in a work we have on display, please do not ask if I would entertain an offer and then throw out a price that is about 1/3 our posted price. Most dealers, myself included, would not consider that an offer, but an insult. Do you really think that I could accept that offer and still make a profit? If you find that dealers are regularly accepting your lowball offers, then you are probably still paying way too much for the art or there is an issue with the work and they just want to get rid of it. In addition, please do not come back to me with the following comment: I looked up the artist's works in one of the databases and his prices are all over the map. Really? No kidding ... you will find that is the case with most artists. Have you ever looked up the price range for someone like Renoir? If so, I am sure you were amazed ... they go from \$10,000 - \$78M ... that is one big map.

The biggest issue here is that a majority of people have no idea how to use the information in these art databases. While most offer you a brief description and price, they do not supply information on the condition, quality, period, etc. In addition, you have no idea if the works shown are in fact authentic. There are many inaccuracies in these databases and a lot of 'fake' works are listed. These databases are a nice general reference, but that is about it. What is most important to remember, is that typically, the best works of art will bring far more than average ones – in fact, a true masterpiece can bring 10 times the price of a typical work. In addition, these lists only include the works offered in the public forum and there are many important works that are bought and sold privately. So if the works that have come to auction are not the artist's best, the records are really worthless when looking at the best works. Not only do you need to be a true expert to know the difference between the best, the good and the bad; but most pros will know a lot about the condition, quality, period, etc. of each work that came on the market and why some brought more than others. They will also know what other factors may have impacted a particular sale ... financial turmoil, weather, etc.

Before you dive into the deep end of the art market, find yourself a real expert in the period/periods that interest you. The right expert will make sure that the works you buy are the 'right' ones. And always keep in mind that the best part of acquiring works of art is – the hunt!

In case you missed my earlier articles on What Not To Do and What Not To Say, please see volumes 112, 114 and 118.

A Great Experience in L.A.

By: Howard

During every show, we meet people who put a big smile on our face ... here is one such story. During the recent LA Show, which was extremely busy, I decided to sit down for a moments rest. When I looked up a woman with two very young boys was heading towards me. In her hand were two of our wall cards and my initial thought was that they had pulled them off and she was bringing them over so we could put them back. She handed me the cards and said: 'they have made their decision, they want these two'. I was speechless for a moment and probably looked a little confused. The two young boys (ages 3 and 5) had looked around the show and chose two of Chelsea Herron's superhero pastels for their collection ... I have always said it is nice to see young people buying art, I just never thought they would be this young and that they would buy something from us. The two boys were so excited about their purchase and could not wait to get them – they even let me take a photo of them holding their new acquisitions. We wrapped them up and off they went ... well, they didn't leave so fast; you see, one of them had a bag filled with Lego and when Lance saw that, well the two of them were seated on the floor playing. That was pretty cool; but the story gets better. About an hour later an artist, who had been in the booth earlier, returned and told Lance he was back and had to buy one of the Chelsea Herron pieces. When Lance informed him that a young collector had already purchased the one he wanted, the amazed look on his face was priceless and he was not going to be bested by those little guys so he bought the 3rd one.

I have always said that you are never too young to start collecting!

The Art Market

The Season is About to Start

Yes, the art market is about to move into high gear and this month we had a few minor and a couple of major league (Old Master) sales.

The 19th Century

By: Howard

On the minor side we had a low to mid-level 19th century sale at Bonhams in London. Top lot here was Rossetti's *Portrait of Jane Morris* – a very small work on paper that carried a £20-30K estimate and sold for £147K (\$222K). In second we had a small Corot that brought £141K (\$213K – est. £50-80K) and in third was a fabulous Dorothea Sharp at £99K (\$149K – est. £60-80K).

The sale offered 133 works and sold 97 (73% sell-through rate) for a total take of £1.81M (\$2.75M – low end of the presale estimate was £1.59M). This sale is interesting because it featured many works in the £2–15K range and 63 of them sold ... a sign of more general interest in the 19th century market.

The Old Masters

By: Howard

The last week of the month found NYC filled with Old Master paintings (some of which left me wondering); but then again, what do I know about Old Master paintings? Up first were 2 sales at Christie's that took place on the 28th - Old Master Paintings Part I & Renaissance – and I am sure that they were rather disappointed with the results.

To begin with, the overall quality was rather iffy (at least to my 19th century trained eyes) and according to some people, the estimates were rather aggressive and many of the woks had been on the market very recently. It was interesting to see that in the Part I sale there was a tie for the number one spot – both the Giroust (est. \$500-\$700K) and Ruysdale (est. \$1 - \$1.2M) made \$1.45M; while the number two spot was nabbed by Zocchi's view of Venice at \$1.23M (est. \$1-\$1.5M). Now we could go on with the gory details and discuss the Caravaggio, Brueghel, Canaletto, Reni, Claesz. and Rombouts that did not sell, but I think the final numbers say it all.

Of the 54 works offered, only 22 sold (a sell-through rate of just 40% -- wow, that is bad) and the total take was a measly \$9.3M – the high end of the presale estimate was \$39M. Oh My! One trade publication reported that this was the worst Old Master sale since 2002 – I am sure it was. Look, you cannot just throw anything you want on the market and expect it to sell. In addition, it is likely that the fall in the European currencies did not help matters. Oh Well.

Then we had the Renaissance sale and the top lot here was a portrait by Bronzino that made \$9.2M (est. \$8-\$12M) – or as much as the entire Part I sale brought. It is interesting to note that this same work was offered back in 2013 with a \$12-\$18M estimate and failed to find a buyer; could you imagine if it did not sell this time around! Second place was grabbed by a Studio of Botticelli work at \$845K (est. \$400-\$600K) and in third was a Van Aelst I of St. Jerome at \$665K (est. \$300-\$600K). So you might think that this was going to be a much better sale ... well, not so fast.

Of the 55 lots offered, 29 sold (52.7% -- a little better than Part I) and the total take was \$15.78M – the high end of the presale estimate was \$27M. So I guess it was better, but overall I would classify this as a real disappointment – and that is being kind.

Between the two sales, 109 works were offered, 51 sold (46.8%) and the total take was about \$25M.

And just when we thought the market for Old Masters was all but dead, Sotheby's presented their important Old Master works and the results were just a little different. Taking the top spot here was a beautiful pen, ink and oil on panel by van de Velde that brought \$5.43M (est. \$2-3M). In second there was a lovely interior scene by Panini that brought \$5.32M (est. \$3-5M) and in third we had a John Constable at \$5.2M (est. \$2-\$3M) - the best part about the Constable is that the painting was bought at a country sale held by Christie's in 2013 for \$5,200 ... someone is going to be very upset.. Running close behind was a Van der Neer skating scene at \$4.76M (est. \$4-\$6M) and a marvelous small Brueghel at \$3.97M (est. \$3.5-4.5M).

Now this sale also had a few big fails, these included works by: Massys (est. \$1.5-\$2M), Claesz. (\$2-\$3M), Breughel (\$1.2-\$1.6M) and Canaletto (\$4-\$6M).

When the session was over, of the 104 works offered, 73 sold (70%) and the total take was \$57.14M (low end of the estimate range was \$54M – so with the buyer's premium added in, they squeaked past the finish line. This was a far better showing than the sale at Christie's and as we have seen in many other areas of the market, it all came down to the quality level and estimates of the works being offered.

Breaking Records With Sir Winston Churchill

By: Lance

"It is always wise to look ahead, but difficult to look farther than you can see."
-W. Churchill

Ask the folks in charge of coming up with estimates at Sotheby's about that last part...

Let's just get this out of the way... Every work by Churchill surpassed its estimate. No sense in keeping up all this suspense.

To be fair though, I do not think anyone saw this coming. Included in December's "Daughter of History – Mary Soames and the Legacy of Churchill" sale were 15 works executed by Sir Winston Churchill himself (yes, this sale took place at the end of 2014, but I know that many of our readers will find it of interest). Many hear the name Churchill and immediately think of one of the greatest leaders in the United Kingdom's history, but it should be noted that he was a fairly accomplished artist as well. As an artist, under the pseudonym Charles Morin, Churchill completed hundreds of paintings and is best known for his impressionist landscapes.

Taking the top lot of the sale as a whole, was Churchill's *Goldfish Pool at Chartwell* though it was only estimated to bring £400-600K. The work depicts a series of water gardens at Churchill's home at Chartwell and was highly sought after as five prospective buyers battled it out. After a flood of bids, the painting ultimately brought a whopping £1.76M (\$2.76M) good for a new auction record, easily surpassing his previous £1M mark (*Chartwell Landscape with Sheep*, sold at Sotheby's in 2007). Churchill's next top

lot (third overall in the sale) was *Tapestries at Blenheim*, a colorful interior executed circa 1930. With an estimate of £200-300K, the piece garnered a considerable amount of interest and found a buyer at £1.08M (\$1.7M). Taking third (4th overall), was a harbor scene titled *The Harbour, Cannes*, which was one of the more accurate estimates at £300-500K and selling for £722K (\$1.13M). Most impressively, a small 10 ½ x 9 inch canvas titled *Battlements at Carcassonne*, which was given to Churchill's daughter, Mary (You know, the one they are talking about in the title of this sale), as a gift, completely destroyed its estimate of £40-60K as the buyer had to lay out over £600K (\$946K)! Really, the results were just incredible; as a whole, the 15 works (all sold) had a combined high estimate of £3.9M (\$6.2M)... They ended up totaling over £10.5M (\$16.5M).

Don't get any ideas George W... the world has enough dog paintings.

The Rehs Family

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Gallery Updates: Links to Complimentary General Admission tickets are on our web site for both Florida shows. Please note that we have moved our booth location in the Palm Beach show (**booth 506/607**).

Web Site Updates: This month a number of works have made their way through the gallery; among the artists were: Julien Dupré, Jose Frappa, Johann Berthelsen, Ben Bauer, David Palumbo, Ken Salaz and Chelsea Herron. We have added new works to our web site; below is a small selection of the recent additions:

TRADITIONAL



Maurice de Vlaminck – *Rue de Village*

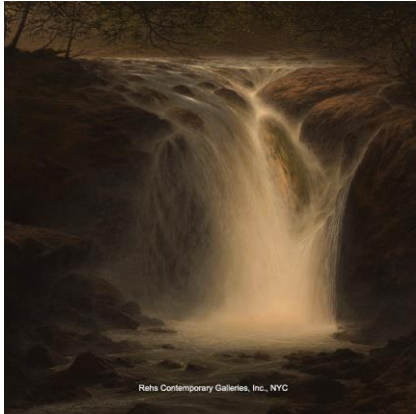


Ilya Bolotowsky – *Vertical Ellipse* – 1978



Julien Dupré – *La jeune laitrière avec son troupeau*

CONTEMPORARY



Ken Salaz – *Grace*



Tony South - *Credo quia absurdum*
(I believe because it is absurd)



Chris Pousette-Dart – *Untitled (Diptych)*



Jay Davenport – *Pablo*



Timothy W. Jahn – *Accession*

Next Month: More action from the auction block.