

# Acquiring a taste for rising Young market

**BATTERSEA dealer Robert Young has made the quirky, but increasingly commercially hot, field of antique folk art his own.**

Although the majority of his stock is European, he has long had an international profile having attended fairs in both New York and San Francisco.

The pivotal moment of the year, though, is his annual selling show and from May 9 to 17 (with a preview night on the 8th) he holds his ninth *Annual Exhibition of Antique Folk Art* at his shop at 68 Battersea Bridge Road, London SW11.

This year's show is part of the BADA 90th anniversary celebrations and Robert is reminded that it was indeed a BADA initiative that prompted his first such exhibition *Nowt so Queer as Folk*.

It is fair enough to say that folk art is an acquired taste, but it is one which many have acquired, both here and in the United States.

The area is now a favourite with interior decorators and, although prices in Britain have not reached the astronomical levels of those in America (where a decoy duck can cost not far short of \$1m) what may be looked at as the unselfconscious output of an artisan, not artist, can make a surprising amount this side of the Atlantic.

There are 49 pieces in the Robert Young catalogue and around 100 in the show with prices ranging from £200 to around £15,000. One or two special pieces cost more, but the vast majority are well under £10,000.

■ Dealer's speciality in quirky folk art gains commercial edge

■ Selling show will gauge interest this side of Atlantic



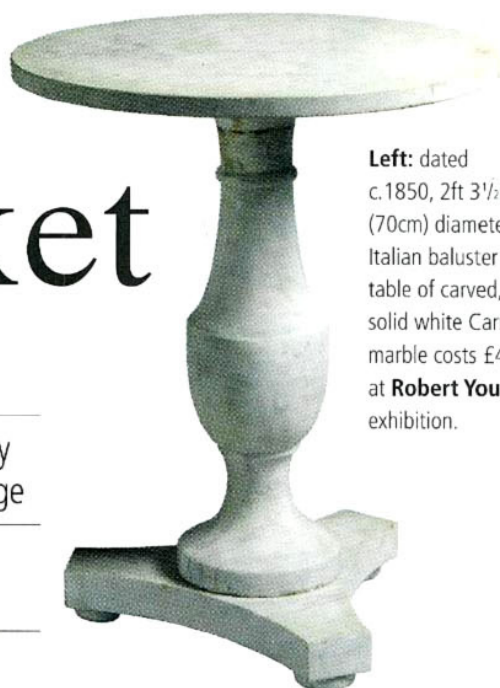
**Above:** a weathered English sheet-metal bull weathervane with traces of original paint for which Robert Young will ask £2500 at his Battersea show. The 2ft 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ in (77cm) wide piece is dated c.1880 and very much reflects the exaggerated square proportions, short legs and static quality found in 19th century English Naive School livestock paintings.

Those who know the Young look are familiar with the mix of periods, countries and styles, all individual but united by a charm based on perhaps primitive, but not always unsophisticated, form and decoration.

There are metal conservatory tables from the Arras region of France; an exceptional late 19th century French

provincial handpainted screen; mangleboards; love tokens galore; comb-back Windsor chairs and a number of those familiar, and eminently collectable, 19th century naive oil paintings of fat prize cattle.

Not fine, but, in the plethora of mainstream BADA shows, certainly something refreshingly different.



**Left:** dated c.1850, 2ft 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (70cm) diameter Italian baluster table of carved, solid white Carrara marble costs £4500 at Robert Young's exhibition.