

## new york

# Braving the elements for the bright lights of New York's shows and sales

■ The Winter Antiques Show and Old Masters under the spotlight early in 2016

Anne Crane & Anna Brady report

JUST as countries have their seasons, so does the art market – and it often follows meteorological fluctuations.

Increasingly, New York is seen as the place where the action is in the first months of the year.

The city draws collectors and dealers from across the US and further afield to take part as buyers and sellers in a roster of events that are staged at a time when much of Europe is in one of its fallow periods.

The January focus on the Big Apple has grown up around the Winter Antiques Show, which has been bringing buyers to town for more than 60 years.

A series of related events have coalesced around this venerable fair, ranging from the big Americana auctions to a specialist ceramics fair and more general shows.

More recently, late January and early February have put Old Masters under the spotlight. They feature major sales in the auction houses and a trail of selling shows devoted to Old Master drawings staged in Manhattan's galleries by resident and 'guest' dealers, many of whom have decamped from London for the occasion.

So there is plenty to tempt the visitor to brave the sometimes hostile elements of a New York winter and venture into the bright lights of the saleroom or showroom. Over the next ten pages ATG gives a snapshot of what the auction houses and dealers have set out on their stalls to coax prospective purchasers to open their wallets and pocketbooks.

And for those who have made it across the Pond and are familiar with those seasonal fluctuations, the New York chill is swiftly followed by the balmer climes of Palm Beach as the traditional buying trail makes its way down south for the Florida fairs season.



WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW

When New York's Winter Antiques Show (WAS), grand dame of the US fairs scene, was established back in 1955, the exhibitors were entirely from the US. Jump to the 1980s and American antiques proliferated. Americana Week was born as the auction houses scheduled their Americana sales to coincide.

Today, while not deserting its Americana roots, WAS reflects a global market by increasingly catering to international tastes, as its 61st run at the Park Avenue Armory will attest. WAS has further diversified this year by dropping its 1969 dateline entirely to allow contemporary material, accommodating a group of new design dealers such as Todd Merrill Studio Contemporary.

They are among the dozen new exhibitors for 2016, who also include Michael Altman Fine Art (New York), Galerie St Etienne (New York), Thomas Heneghe Art Books (London), Kagado Japanese Art (Washington) and Sylvia Powell Decorative Arts, an art pottery specialist who is one of 17 exhibitors from the UK.

The British contingent in particular has

**Below left:** Babylonian marble frog weight dating to c.2nd Millennium BC, 4 x 5 1/4 in (9.8 x 14.7cm), carved from a pale pink marble, priced in the region of \$60,000 from Rupert Wace at the Winter Antiques Show.



**Above:** a view of last year's New York Winter Antiques Show.

**Right:** a nest of pine hand-painted signwriter's signpost drawers, inscribed with initials and date 1924, from Peterborough in Cambridgeshire, England.

The dit Tin (11.24cm) piece will be at the Winter Antiques Show with Robert Young Antiques priced at \$12,000.



swelled recently and in 2015 six of the nine new exhibitors were from London, including Daniel Crouch Rare Books, Apter-Fredricks, H Blamant & Sons and Bloomson Sculpture. All return in 2016. "I love it: where else would you want to be in January?" says Claire Brown of London antiques specialists Rupert Wace, exhibitors for 15 years. "It's a very successful fair for us, oddly I suppose as it's mainly known for Americana."

"The attendance is consistently good, people can still walk when it snows, and our American clients seem appreciative that we make the effort to go to them." Executive director Catherine Sweeney Singer thinks this year's 73-strong exhibitor list is the most diverse yet and disciplines exhibited for the first time include Contemporary Chinese painting and Picasso ceramics.

Interior designers in the US are powerful tastemakers. Keen to strengthen alliances, the WAS has enlisted a group of honorary design chairs to lend their support: Nate Berkus, Elle Culman, Alexa Hampton and Matthew Roberts.

Unusually, the WAS founder, owner

and beneficiary is a not-for-profit organisation: the East Side House Settlement, a charity which provides social services in the south Bronx.

Though benefiting from a loyal exhibitor and visitor base, the latter travelling from across the US for this key social occasion, WAS is not immune to challenges. Foremost, says Sweeney Singer, are "the costs of producing a premier, ten-day show in New York City, the relevance of 'antiques' for the next generations, and the art world's focus on contemporary art."

It is fortunate, though, to retain its location for 2016. The Park Avenue Armory hosts numerous art and antiques shows throughout the year. But over the Christmas period the New York Post reported that the New York Art, Antique & Jewellery Show will lose its November slot in 2016 to make way for an expanded programme of live performance events. Whether this will be the only fair to be dropped by the city's key venue is yet to be seen.

WAS runs from January 22-31 with a preview on January 21. [www.winterantiquesshow.com](http://www.winterantiquesshow.com)

## WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW: MEET THE EXHIBITORS



ELLE SHUSHAN

Shushan is a specialist in portrait miniatures based in Philadelphia and has exhibited at the WAS for 17 years. Commercially it has always served her well, "or at least well enough", but just as important is that this "elegant, innovative" fair is simply "so much fun". It has the advantage of The Metropolitan Museum of Art located on its doorstep: "Having the largest and most diverse museum in the world within walking distance is an irresistible magnet."

Shushan also exhibits at Masterpiece London, one of more than a dozen dealers who

so both events yet, she says, they are very different. "The Winter show is 61 years old, has 73 exhibitors and a museum loan show is a very compact, historic space. Everything about seven-year old Masterpiece is new and grand, with more than 160 exhibitors, four restaurants and a sculpture garden." But "as an exhibitor, must-see events, both at the top of their game."

What sort of visitors does WAS attract? "Because the first four days of the winter show coincide with the Americana auctions, and the show is about one-third Americana dealers, dedicated collectors and curators of all things American fill the show overflooding through the first weekend."

"Additionally, European curators and collectors are at the fair all week between viewing the Old Masters Sales and Master Drawings week. Then there are the New Yorkers – by definition enthusiastic shoppers – for whom the show has been an annual adventure for generations."

For the first time this year, thanks to the dropping of the fair's dateline, Shushan will exhibit the work of living artists alongside her period miniatures, namely the work of Bettina von Zwehl, a London photographer who shoots portraits in miniature.



THOMAS HENEGHE

Heneghe is an enthusiast, his interests manifold. So, for his first WAS, the London dealer will mix a selection of his stock-in-trade art reference books with a collection of Medieval seals, a large selection of Classical to Neo-Classical engraved gems, an ornate penwork coin cabinet that once belonged to the Duke of Argyll and a large 13th/14th century bronze Angelus bell.

Heneghe is particularly pleased with the cameras: "I showed a group of cameras about 30 years ago at Grosvenor House, but I've never had as many good ones as I have now."

Since the demise of Grosvenor House, Heneghe has done one just one fair, TEFAP Maestricht. His fairly unusual specialism of art books will be a new addition to WAS, but why has he chosen to do the fair?

"Firstly, because we are debating not doing TEFAP in 2016 as our current stand is badly situated at the back of the Modern section, making it hard for us to do business. Secondly, we need to generate surpluses more widely. We need new customers, and for the young to understand that bookshops still exist."

"I didn't want to do a London fair as I already have a shop in St James's and we already do a lot of business in the US, so for me it seemed an obvious choice."



**Above:** a portrait cameo of Isachan Marat, his wife Caroline Bonaparte and their eldest son Achille carved in agate, Italian c.1800, set somewhat later as a brooch in a gold surround. Priced around \$120,000 from Thomas Heneghe.

**Left:** Mickal Ilf by Bettina von Zwehl, 2015, a new print, portrait 2 1/2in (58mm) diameter in a 6 1/2in (16.5cm) frame, around \$350 from Elle Shushan.

## Whisk(ey) and wellies: surviving the freezing Big Apple in January

THOUGH December was unseasonably mild in New York, the big cold snap may yet still come. January in the Big Apple is famously chilly and often engulfed in snow. Four seasoned dealers share their tips for beating the cold.

a whole roast chicken" on snowy evenings after a long day's work."

### 1. WELLES

The fashion-conscious city bows to practicality come the snow, slush and ensuing ice – you need sturdy boots.

As folk art dealer Robert Young says: "It is the only place in the world that makes me feel like a girl traveling with her heels in her handbags."

To counter the "New York uniform of all black over more black", Elle Shushan pulls out a pair of bright red Hunter wellies which "cheers up everyone".

### 2. COMFORT FOOD

Claire Brown of Rupert Wace Ancient Art buys warming soups from Hale & Hearty.

Young heads to the old-fashioned and cosy L'Abouthe, a traditional French restaurant a couple of blocks from the show "for oysters and

### 3. DIVE INTO A MUSEUM

Altogether all the commercial activity, there's a wealth of cultural diversions in the (warm and dry) Museums.

Young will be heading to Picasso Sculpture at MOMA (until February 7) and to the American Folk Art Museum for *Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art from the Alan and Kendra Daniel Collection*. Crispian Riley-Smith suggests Pierre Jean Maudette and the Art of Collecting Drawings at the Morgan Library & Museum (January 21-May 1).

### 4. LIP BALM AND MOISTURISER

"A cold wind drying," says Brown.

### 5. THE WOODS

"It's a nice break, for Shushan, while Young experiments with neutron and re-whiskey from one of the craft distilleries "takes either straight up" or with a splash of water, certainly not drowned in it".

## Making way for contemporary ceramics and glass artists

FOR most of its 17-year history, The New York Ceramics & Glass Fair has largely been the preserve of antique pieces.

But, as with many fairs now, new works increasingly creep in and this year co-producers Meg Wendy and Liz Lees bring in a group of contemporary ceramic and glass artists to the fair at the Bohemian National Hall.

They include Carrie Gustafson and Hideaki Miyamura Studio who will exhibit their own work alongside 30 galleries and dealers from the US and Europe showing pieces from the 17th to 21st centuries.

US dealers such as New Yorkers Leo Kaplan and Earle D Vandeker are joined by numerous British dealers who habitually make the annual trip. Specialists, such as early English pottery specialist Garry Adams, English porcelain dealer Roderick Jellicoe, and antique glass specialist Mark J West.

Joanna Bird will display works by 20th century studio pottery masters Hans Cooper and Lucie Rie alongside contemporary artists.

The New York Ceramics & Glass Fair (January 21-24, preview January 20), Bohemian National Hall, 321 East 73rd Street.

[www.nycceramicsandglassfair.com](http://www.nycceramicsandglassfair.com)

**Above:** Goddess of the Fragments, 2015, by Bruce DeVries (b.1960), made from 18th and 19th century fragments of porcelain and steel, 21.4in (71cm) high, priced in the mid-five figures from Ferris Contemporary at The New York Ceramics & Glass Fair.