

Winter Antiques Show dealer focus: Robert Young

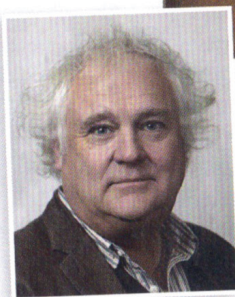
Robert Young is one of the leading UK dealers in folk art but each year, rather like taking coals to Newcastle, he exports this speciality across the Atlantic to the *Winter Antiques Show* where he has been an exhibitor since 2001. ATG asked why he has made a beeline for this fair over the last 17 years.

“The show has always been our most successful fair,” says Young. “It is America’s longest-established and probably still highest-profile antiques fair, always amazingly well attended with some very loyal clients.”

Young notes that “when ‘antiques’ were more ‘fashionable’ it was a particularly prestigious show at which to exhibit and an honour to be invited. There is still a healthy waiting list of dealers who would like to participate and a very low attrition rate, which to some extent reflects its commercial success”.

He adds: “The fair is perfectly positioned in the New York calendar and is a genuine antiques and decorative arts show, with very few dealers with items displayed in glass cabinets.”

Although a strong group of high-end dealers still exists for American pieces, Young says there is now a more even spread, with international dealers and a wider variety of disciplines. “It is a comparatively small show with perhaps 70-75 dealers and has always had a completely different



Left: among the pieces that will be taken by Robert Young to *The Winter Antiques Show* will be this 20in x 2ft (53 x 63cm) framed British naïve school still-life of c.1880. A *Quiet Supper* features a ploughman’s meal. The oil on canvas is priced at \$8500.

Below left: folk art dealer Robert Young.

look and feel from the Houghtons’ international show in the same building and now *TEFAF New York*.”

He likes the dealers’ stylish presentation which, he feels, helps to attract a broader, younger audience.

When it comes to collecting tastes for folk and vernacular art on either side of the Atlantic, Young says that the Americans have long been excited by their cultural heritage and celebrated inspired naïve and primitive works created by their pioneering population.

“We have always discerned an innate sensitivity for the forms and

aesthetically compelling qualities of folk art, both American and European,” says Young, although he adds that “some hard-core Americana collectors would never buy European examples”.

Does Young make a particular selection from his stock to take to New York?

“Honestly, no”, he says. “We do not select works any differently for exhibition in New York or for *Masterpiece* in London, nor indeed for our gallery.

“Mainly we try to take the most exciting and significant works we can source, as it is an educated and highly selective market.”

Quote of the week

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Folk art dealer

On the New York Winter Antiques Show, where he is exhibiting this month. See p33.