Two out of 10 ain't bad

Will he, won't he retire? Dealer Julian Hartnoll's 'last' exhibition features an 'uneven' painter, plus the forgotten French Naïf artists





Fig 1 left: Place du Tertre sous la neige by Louis Vivin. With Julian Hartnoll. Fig 2 right: St Mark's Square by John Bratby. With Mr Hartnoll

people in other trades—except perhaps artists. The most likely place to run into a 'retired' dealer is at an auction-house view. Julian Hartnoll, for 60 years a fixture of the As an "artmonger", my clients can hold the St James's art village, has been retiring for picture, touch it, smell it if they wantsome time, but never quite gets there. He closed Realism for real!' Furthermore, he points a natural eye. The limitations of his technithe last, tiny, gallery, and there have been out that one asks a fishmonger whether the sales of stock, but now he is holding a doubleheaded exhibition (March 7–19) for which he $\;\;$ The same should apply to art. has produced exemplary, if elegiac, catalogues, declaring them to be 'nearly the last' of his career. In fact, they are gems, illuminating not only their subjects, but the writer, too.

beginnings. The show is to be in Rupert Maas's ers (he prefers 'modern primitives') he thinks new gallery at 6, Duke Street, St James's, SW1, opposite what used to be the Newman Gallery where he started work in January 1962. Following in the steps of Rupert's father, Jeremy Maas, Mr Hartnoll dealt first in Pre-Raphaelites and, when that market blossomed and he was priced out of it, moved on to girl with the little curl, when he was good, other overlooked areas, among them the Bratby was indeed very, very good. He has Kitchen Sink Painters of the 1950s.

Latterly, he has taken to describing himself as an 'artmonger', which might seem by 36in St Mark's Square (Fig 2), and I did affected, but is actually a dig at affectation.

T seems that art and antique dealers He says: "The epithets "gallerist" and "curator" have more difficulty in retiring than are now current—the former a hideous import, the latter pompous and allowing the "curator" to disguise his lack of scholarship behind his or her self-perception of creativity. fish is fresh, not whether it will go up in value.

Mr Hartnoll's exhibition (March 7-11, it would be rash to call it his 'last') is devoted to John Bratby (1928-92), whose work he has championed for many years, and to a newer Like the ouroboros, he has returned to his enthusiasm, 20th-century French Naïf paintunjustly forgotten. He is the first to admit that Bratby was not only a difficult man, but an uneven painter: 'Of 10 pictures, eight were bad, one was good and one was a masterpiece'. He has whittled down his exhibits to 13 in order to demonstrate that, like the little convinced me with examples such as the 52in by 36in Butterfly Irises and the 48in not expect that he would.

A lifelong haunter of flea markets as well as salerooms, Mr Hartnoll has been buying Naïfs for about 20 years. His criteria are that 'the artist will have made his career in another field-a gardener, a circus performer, a customs officer, a bus driver or the like. He should be untaught. He should have what I would call cal skill should not disturb the viewer's eye'.

There will be 49 paintings on show. One of the best represented artists, fittingly, is Jean Fous (1901-71), as he was an assiduous recorder of marchés aux puces. The oldest is Louis Vivin (1861-1936), and he is one of the most powerful, as in his 15in by 211/2in Place du Tertre sous la neige (Fig 1).

As a companion to the Naïfs, I cannot resist showing a sort of ancestor in a different medium, a mid-18th-century, 31in-high, wellpatinated and burnished-oak Carmarthen chair (Fig 6), which has been sold for about \$12,500 by the early furniture specialist Robert Young of Battersea.

There is little naïvete in the exhibits at Collect, the international fair for crafts and design (at Somerset House until March 6), and here is a new word from it, to me if not to you: dichroic. In optics it refers to 'a material which either causes visible light to be split



up into distinct beams of different wavelengths, or one in which light rays having different polarizations are absorbed by different amounts'. I do like the cast dichroic glass sculptures by Dawn Bendick, such as Two Rock Stack XIV (Fig 4), at £11,500, shown by Joanna Bird.

Goldsmiths' Fair, which is inviting entries for its own annual event in October.

The Five are: Ane Christensen, Angela Cork, Patrick Davison (who won the best new design award at the 2017 Goldsmiths' Fair), Jessica Jue and Sheng Zhang. Here, we illustrate Balance (Fig 5) by Jessica Jue Chevalier, which combines contemporary rugs A new group of 'emerging and mid-career' in Britannia silver with gold leaf (\$6,500), UK-based silversmiths, Five, is showing for and Crumbling Bowl with Shadow (Fig 3), the first time. The group is supported by the a vessel in black brass, balancing on 'shadow'

in oxidised steel, by Ane Christensen (£1,300). There are 31 exhibitors at Somerset House, plus nine more online.

Among those physically present is Sarah Myerscough with a Nature/Nurture display and online is a Parisian favourité, the Galerie and textiles with antique tapestries.

Next week Never trust a Home Secretary



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