



**Telephone:** (604) 733-1326

**Address:** Hampshire Antiques Ltd. 2233 Granville St.

Vancouver, B.C., V6H3G1 Canada (Granville St. & 7th Ave.)

**Website:** <http://www.hampshireantiques.com>

**Email:** [robin.w@telus.net](mailto:robin.w@telus.net)

---

VOLUME 28•2

COLLECTOR'S NEWS

SUMMER 2007

---

## Editorial

**WE HAVE MOVED!!** Our new address is 2233 Granville Street between 6th & 7th Avenues. We are next door to Petley Jones Gallery and two doors south of Panache Antiques. Everything they say about moving is true and doubly so when you are consolidating down to half the space you previously had.

Our arrival now makes five antique stores within two blocks which is the largest concentration of quality antique stores in the city. Although there have always been antique shops below Broadway, this is an area for many galleries both old and new with Uno Langmann anchoring down the north end and Heffel to the south. Our mix of smaller objects is not working quite like it did up the street because we are only one like this here whereas there were several similar shops in our old block creating a destination area. Naturally, there is an interest in paintings at this new location and we are seeing some focused tourists which is encouraging. Our traffic flow, so far, is substantially less than at 14th Avenue and we are keeping shorter hours because of this and to enable us to search for exciting new stock.

We are constantly hunting for interesting items and the following photos will give you a good idea of the type of things we have been purchasing lately. If you have not already paid us a visit at our new location, we'd love to see you again.

## THE MARKET

As I pound out this Newsletter on my typewriter, I hear on the radio that the Dow Jones & TSX have hit new highs. The high end antiques and art markets are no different. We are in the midst of the largest bull market in our lifetimes with prices again, like the stock markets, hitting new highs for the right items.

Sothebys Auction house clearly don't think the roundabout will stop soon as they just announced recently that they will concentrate all their activities where their best profit margins are and will not accept low value goods under US\$6,000. Actually most major auction houses like antique dealers have the same problem - inexorably rising business overheads in an industry that is plagued with high maintenance costs on the products it sells. So it makes rational business sense to handle less goods but of much greater value. This really is in tune with a market where it is the best against the rest.

I wrote in a Newsletter this Spring about how the 20th century has really taken over the antiques business and mentioned, in particular, a Chiparus Art Deco bronze which, not so long ago may have made \$50,000 but now approaches half a million. Well, just last month in New York a Russian Dancers Chiparus Art Deco bronze group went for just under a million at auction demonstrating how quickly the market is moving for these objects largely because of Russian money.

Actually, a million for an art object like a million for a house, doesn't seem to really buy you that much anymore. The world's top five per cent of the population have an awful lot of money. This is especially true from folks coming from the Russian and Chinese economies, who are buying back their heritage a lot of which is in the Western world. Their revolutions and the upheavals in both these countries by mismanagement saw scholarship erode and caused masses of stuff being either spirited out of, or sold off by these hard-up regimes to collectors in the west. Now that they are making money, prices are going through the roof. A Russian 19th century painting which might have sold for \$20,000 fifteen years ago can now be multiplied by four or five. But it is not just confined to the antique. Contemporary Chinese paintings like Zhang Xiao Gang's somewhat repetitive Bloodline series like the oil on linen 'Family' painted in 1997 sold for 280,000 pounds in London.

The market is moving in totally directions with the staple, standard antiques often being ignored by new mediums such as photography. There has always been an interest in early photographs but it is the modern photographs that grab the headlines. Andreas Gursky (German) 99 century II colour cybochrome diptch sold to a Russian trade buyer in London recently for 1.5 million pounds! Looking at this photograph one was reminded of coloured boxes and bottles in a dollar store. It can be easier to sell this type of art for big money than often regular art. The collecting world has moved forward at a very fast pace to the point that major antique fairs display and sell some original modern works.

The profile of the new breed of Western buyers indicates that largely they are very busy people with limited shopping time. They are the computer generation which they use to track down items whether they be in shops, shows, auctions or listed online. The internet has had a dramatic effect on our business. We actually sell things online to local customers who don't want to make the trip to Granville Street. And with fewer people putting up with the hassles of air travel, a website can be a very useful sales tool and can make the difference between profit and loss. It is a lot of work and expense but does point the way should store overheads become prohibitive.

The internet does have its down side in that the rapport so essential between collector/buyer and dealer is diluted. The 'net' has also had a detrimental effect on our book sales. We couldn't figure out a couple of years ago why our general book sales were grinding to a halt. After conferring with our publishers and distributors we all came to the conclusion that everyone was 'googling' for information and eschewing books. (Publishers tell me, it's not only book on antiques but atlases & other reference material that's been hard hit.) There is a lot of incomplete and sometimes misleading information on the net but if you have a computer that is costing you, the rationale is that it costs nothing but time to seek information.

The great thing about some online merchandising is the quick turnover. We can buy something,

list it and have it on its way out of the shop in less than a month as opposed to it sitting in the shop for months or years on end waiting for that right customer to open the door. A lesson which I haven't always taken to heart was given in my young bookselling days back in the seventies when I went around the department stores like Woodwards and Eatons. The buyers then told me "Robin, we like these books, but if they are still sitting on the shelves three months from now, we won't re-order them." This is as true today as it was back then and I am only attempting to buy things now with fast turnover in mind. This means keeping on top of fashion trends, buying names and buying the best.

Market forces often move in mysterious ways as we all know and it's impossible to get it right every time although one does get a gut feeling for things when you run a small business. We can often tell which way things are going 6-9 months ahead of the economist's reports in the papers. The long lasting real estate boom has been a boon for the construction industry and suppliers with spinoffs to decorators and their wealthy clients. But average salaried person has had to look at 30, 35 and 40 year long mortgages to qualify for a property loan. (It now takes 70% of incomes in Vancouver to pay for a home!) This is 'keep you awake at night' stuff. This, on top of everything else like coping with record gas prices, food costs and increased taxes all, of which, on wages that never come close to keeping up with inflation. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that something has got to give even with these incredibly low interest rates. It already has with antiques with many people cutting back on high maintenance items connected with entertaining and instead going for the cheap and disposable and only looking instead of buying when they visit stores.

I recently read a statistic put out by the Federal Reserve Board in the USA which stated that the top five per cent of the population own as much or more wealth than the remaining 95 per cent. This is a staggering statistic and one that was last repeated in the 1920s. Then, as now, there were mega millionaires buying into a very active art market for both the pride of ownership and investment. Today we have art investment funds prompted, in part, by the Mei/Moses Fine Art Index which has tracked auction records relative to the Standard & Poor's 500 index listings. This index has noted that art often outperforms the stock market giving rise to the money making opportunities available in fine art. It is certainly an attractive concept as who wouldn't rather look at beautiful pictures on the wall and be involved in a glamorous and exciting search and analysis for a much different type of financial asset for their portfolio?

But art and antiques, like everything else, are determined by supply and demand. I've mentioned already how much middle market stuff is suffering because many middle income people are burdened by high debt and thus disposable income is scarce. It is the exact opposite at the top end. The burning question is how long can it last? Everything goes in cycles and we are well advanced into the later stages of this one. The difference this time around is globalisation and the computer. More collectors can access items available for sale worldwide so it doesn't necessarily follow that if a region hits the financial skids all antique shops will close along with other businesses in the area or at the very least have their activities curtailed dramatically because they can, instead, can rely on their internet activities. Expensive overhead can be chopped in favour of getting around and searching out the desirable and exciting inventory that will speed through their collecting system.

With our new move and a quieter pace down at this end of Granville, I will be focusing much more on finding the right things for our regular customers both here and abroad. This is what now it really all boils down to in an industry that is much more focused and competitive than it has ever been before. If you are looking for any special objects or please do not hesitate to call or email me.



'Summer's Day - Gothenberg Harbour'. 20th century Swedish School. Lovely colors to this impressive OIL PAINTING from Sweden we understand to be Gothenberg Harbour. Canvas. Unsigned. Re-framed. Overall dim. 75" x 60". **CAD \$9,500** (The photo. shows a little bounce in the centre).

A Grand Mahogany upholstered CHAIR in the Chippendale style. Probably English & circa.1910. **CAD \$850**



A very attractive Georgian CHEST-OF-DRAWERS in Mahogany with ornate gilt handles and profusely inlaid on the top and drawer fronts. The inlay work is possibly late 19th century and the chest circa. 1830. England. 37" wide and 20" deep. **CAD \$6,500** (Currently out on rental).

A rare pair of WEMYSS  
CANDLESTICKS from Scotland in  
the Rooster pattern. 12" high. (There  
is a little underglaze discolouration on  
the bases.) Circa. 1900-1910



A selection of interesting Sterling  
Silver items starting from \$95 and up.  
All made in the U.S.A. and circa.  
1930-50.





A cased set of Sterling Silver and Mother -of -Pearl BUTTER/PATE KNIVES. England. Hallmarked: 1911, Sheffield.



A cased set of Silverplate and French Ivory FISH SERVERS in absolutely perfect condition. England. c.1910-20. **\$225**



A JEWELLERY MONTAGE from our extensive collection of Mexican, 1930s-60s Costume , Sterling, Gold & Classics. Prices from **\$75**. New stock includes a fabulous pair of cast Sterling ‘Fishing’ CUFFLINKS

A 3" MOORCROFT VASE in the  
'Anenome' pattern. England. c.1960  
& a Beswick Labrador Dog.  
**CAD \$125 & \$45**



'Napa Valley, California' one of a  
pair of large 1980s  
WATERCOLOURS. Signed and  
framed. **CAD \$495** each (Both  
currently out on rental).



A pair of VENETIAN WATERCOLOURS by Natale GAVAGNIN (1851-). Signed.  
Italy. Overall dimensions 11.5" x 7.5" (Note: original gilt frames are bruised)