

Preview

The BADA Fair

Phil Ellis finds out what's on offer at this award-winning event

Since it began back in 1993 as a one-off that became an annual event, the BADA's fair has established a deserved reputation as a fair of the highest quality. The organisers are not slow to point to the additional recognition they received last summer, in the form of a gong, or more specifically, a British Antiques and Collectables Award for Fair of the Year.

Now, I know that many people are rather cynical about awards, which is understandable in an age where burger bars give out medals to members of staff for doing their jobs. But as most industries seem to have award ceremonies, why not

the antiques trade indeed? And why shouldn't the BADA feel pleased with themselves for having won this award, especially given that the competition included the illustrious Grosvenor House Fair?

Antiques experience

But enough of past plaudits, what does this year's fair have to offer? Well, a lot of quality antiques and art certainly, but it's worth noting that not all of it will be on the stands and for sale. This fair is not just a place to buy antiques, but to learn about antiques, to talk about antiques, to meet people connected with antiques – in short, to



A fine silver mounted mazer bowl by Omar Ramsden, English, circa 1920, from Fay Lucas.

experience antiques.

At this year's fair, the Victoria and Albert Museum will be contributing to the overall experience with the loan of some of the most important pieces from its new British Galleries. The galleries will not open until November, but you can see some of its most important pieces here at the fair. The V&A display will include some important works recently acquired by the museum and there will be a chance to find out about some spectacular discoveries resulting from recent conservation and research.

Classic cabinet

Highlights from this display will include John Evelyn's Cabinet, a magnificent cabinet made of ebony with gilt bronze mounts and pietra dura panels by Domenico Benotti. John Evelyn (1620-1706), the celebrated diarist, ordered the pietra dura plaques in Florence in October 1644, but it is not known where the actual cabinet was made. The mounts are either by Francesco Fanelli, court sculptor to Charles I, or more likely, cast by his assistant John Bank, from models by Fanelli. Its stand and gilt bronze cresting are 19th century additions.

Also included in the exhibition, which is sponsored by Aon Artscope, incorporating Needham Jobson, the art and antiques insurance specialists, is a cast bronze sculpture of Charles I by Fanelli, and recent acquisitions of fine English porcelain.

The V&A will also have some involvement in another event, which will be a talk by Paul Atterbury and Suzanne Fagence Cooper on the Victorian Vision exhibition, opening at the museum next month. The duo promise a sweeping look at the Victorians as makers of the modern world, and they will be signing copies of the exhibition's accompanying book.

High fashion

If you don't tend to associate antiques fairs with fashion, then think again, as another of



A fine early 17th century painted armada chest, 30" x 18" x 17" approx., to be exhibited by Lucy Johnson.

The BADA Antiques & Fine Art Fair will take place at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Kings Road, London SW3 from 21st-27th March 2001.

Entrance to the fair is £10, which includes a catalogue.

the ancillary events at this fair has haute couture very much in mind. For the second year running this fair will be hosting a fashion show of contemporary couture and antique jewellery.

Leading couturier Samantha Shaw, who designed the wedding dress of the Countess of Wessex will present her summer collection with headwear by Cozmo Jenks. It will be accompanied by children's designs from Minnie's wardrobe, and complemented by antique jewellery from exhibitor Sandra Cronan.

Also at the fair, Jeremy Musson, Architectural Editor of *Country Life* will give a talk on country houses new and old, while John Bly (who will of course be among the exhibitors) will discuss antiques related to the drinking of wine. The latter event will be accompanied by a wine tasting by Britain's oldest wine merchants, Berry Bros. & Rudd. Gourmets will enjoy a tasting for Steak Tartare and Steak Baltique, presented by Patrick Gwynn-Jones of Pomegranates Restaurant. Interior designer Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill and traditional architect Robert Adam will give an illustrated talk on



Two rare Chelsea botanical strawberry leaf dishes, circa 1756-7, from Robyn Robb.

the influence of antiquity and the antique on Modernism and beyond.

Exhibitors

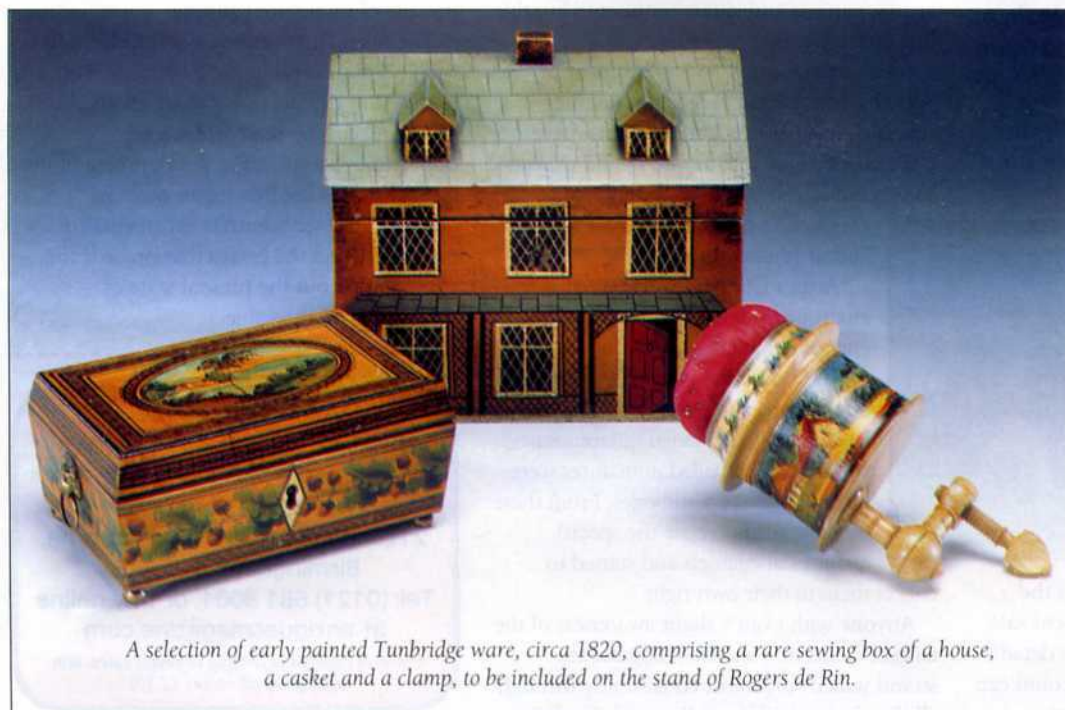
On the stands this year, there will be a number of first time exhibitors, who will add to the breadth and variety of stock on offer. Newcomers will include David Alexander Antiques, specialists in 16th, 17th and 18th century English and Continental furniture and Hahn & Son, dealers in 18th and 19th century British and European painting. Also new to the fair will be Michael Harding-Hill, with rare English Windsor chairs, and Gloucestershire dealer Jillings, who will bring 18th and 19th century clocks.

Returning exhibitors include Dublin dealer Michael Wisehall with unusual 19th century furniture, Rafael Valls Ltd., who specialise in fine 18th and 19th century European paintings and Dutch and Flemish Old Master paintings, and Richard Courtney Ltd. with

fine Georgian furniture. Christine Bridge Antiques will be there with glass, as will Jeanette Hayhurst and Mark J. West. Silver specialists will include Nicholas Shaw and Fay Lucas Gallery, while Blue and White specialist Gillian Neale will be among a strong line up of ceramics dealers. Ceramics specialists will include Early English Pottery expert Jonathan Horne, and Bath-based Andrew Dando. Picture dealers will include Haynes Fine Art of Broadway and Christopher Wood, as well as Boydell Galleries. Also among the exhibitors will be Adams Antiques, W. R. Harvey, Howards of Aberystwyth, Reindeer Antiques, Ulla Stafford, Jeffrey Formby, Mac Humble Antiques, and Derek and Tina Rayment, to name but a few.

A tough act to follow

This year, the fair will have a lot to live up to. Last year's event was generally acknowledged to have been the best to date (hence, one assumes, the award). It attracted around 16,000 visitors, and it was the better quality items that were particularly sought after. Perhaps the pattern will be repeated this year, and the BADA fair will be in the running for another award. Whatever the case, the organisers are determined to make the opening a memorable one – there will be a charity gala evening on 22nd March, attended by Prince and Princess Michael of Kent. This champagne reception will be in aid of KIDS, a charity with strives to enable children with disabilities and other special needs to develop their skills and abilities. □



A selection of early painted Tunbridge ware, circa 1820, comprising a rare sewing box of a house, a casket and a clamp, to be included on the stand of Rogers de Rin.