

## The London Original Print Fair announces increase of visitor numbers and significant sales

The London Original Print Fair, the five-day specialist event which ran 22-26 April at the Royal Academy of Arts, has exceeded projected sales and visitor numbers, with 9,470 in total.

This year also saw a wider range of works on sale, from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century etchings, to contemporary lithographs, aquatints and screenprints by artists such as Peter Blake, Michael Craig-Martin, Bridget Riley and Tracey Emin and collectible music and art box-set editions by The Pet Shop Boys.

One of the outstanding aspects of this Fair is the quality and diversity of works on display, many destined for museums rather than private buyers. Exhibitors often hold back prints to bring to The London Original Print Fair and this year was no exception, with Frederick Mulder showing three different colour impressions of an extremely rare lithograph by Edvard Munch, *The Sick Girl*. The price of a single print would be beyond most budgets, but all three were hanging alongside works by recent Royal College of Art graduates on neighbouring stands. Frederick Mulder's sales at the Fair included eight prints by Picasso, for prices up to £20,000, demonstrating that the market for important modern master prints is holding firm.

Other museum-quality pieces included a set of five rare proofs of a portrait etching by Frank Auerbach, of his friend Lucian Freud, on show with Osborne Samuel. The group was bought by a major private collector on the first day for a figure approaching £30,000. Osborne Samuel's sales total exceeded their previous six-figure record at the 2007 Fair. They sold several linocuts from the Grosvenor School, including *Skaters* by Cyril Power, for £25,000. Gordon Samuel said: "The US touring show 'The Rhythms of Modern Life' brought in new interest and more importantly new collectors who have never seen the work before. People are definitely buying."

Gordon Cooke from the Fine Art Society reported that three people tried to buy the same Samuel Palmer etching *The Lonely Tower*, selling at £9,000. They also sold their best Sickert, *Noctes Ambrosianae* for £7,500 and an important Whistler *Fish Shop, Busy Chelsea* for £10,000.

Sales were not restricted to British prints. French exhibitor Galerie André Candillier marked his fifteenth year at the Fair with healthy sales of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century French and Italian material. Amongst the many names sold were a Pissaro for about £5,000 and a Toulouse-Lautrec about £15,000.

Christopher Mendez, a founder exhibitor of old master prints at the Fair, was very impressed with the calibre of visitors to the event: "We are one of the few here who deal with the old stuff, for which there is a small but remarkably strong and loyal market." In high demand amidst the monochrome works on view was an engraving by Lucas Vorsterman the Elder that was sold to an American museum. Andrew Edmunds, specialist in 18<sup>th</sup> century caricature and satire, was pleased with sales well above last year to both museum and individual buyers.

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The contemporary dealers were also pleased with the enthusiastic response to their work on show. Alan Cristea Gallery, one of Europe's largest publishers of limited editioned prints and multiples, reported sales of new work by Julian Opie, Dexter Dalwood; Cornelia Parker and Joe Tilson. With a gallery round the corner in Cork Street, many of their sales to private buyers take place after the Fair.

The same applies to Marlborough Graphics, who launched a series of new prints by Paula Rego at the Fair. At £4,500 for a large etching, these proved to be extremely popular. Royal Academician printmakers are also always well represented at the Fair and new prints by Norman Ackroyd RA sold well with Dolan Maxwell from Philadelphia, and by Craigie Aitchison RA and Albert Irvin RA with Advanced Graphics London. Peter Blake RA, a perennial favourite, who gave a private talk to Royal Academy patrons, sold silkscreen prints from the 'Alphabet' and 'Venice Suite' series on Paul Stolper's stand.

New international printmakers such as Munich's Dreipunkt Editions and Israeli Gottesman Etching Center were delighted with their debut at the London Fair. Both had well-attended booths and plan to attend next year. One first-time exhibitor at the Print Fair said: "I was unbelievably happy with my sales. It was one of the best fairs I have ever done!"

The opening evening was as usual a great success with attendance up on last year to over 650. The events programme treated members of the public to a live demonstration of Japanese wood block printing, the book launch of Norman Ackroyd and Douglas Dunn's new publication, *A Line in the Water* and a sell-out talk with Paula Rego and Marco Livingstone. Sighted at the opening and during the week were Bill Nighy, Jeremy Paxman and David Starkey and Penelope Lively.

Gordon Cooke, chairman of the London Original Print Fair commented: "This was the best-attended Fair we have ever staged, also the largest. Exhibitors and visitors both enjoyed being back in the magnificent galleries at Burlington House. The dealers, publishers and printers arrived with enthusiasm and hope, but realistic expectations. I think the results were better than anyone dared hope."

Commenting on future plans, Helen Rosslyn, Fair Director said: "The atmosphere at the Fair this year was reassuringly buoyant and the steady flow of visitors and sales dismissed ongoing reports of lack of interest in the art market. Within days of ending the Fair, we've already received ten new applications from dealers to exhibit at LOPF 2010."

UK and international galleries alike shared the view that the Print Fair was a success, even during these unsteady times. Commenting on the Fair, first-timer Kristiane from Dreipunkt Editions said: "We believe participating was well worth the effort and at the same time once again confirmed our belief that it is important "to be present" even if times are difficult."

## **PRESS INFORMATION AND IMAGES**

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