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2003 ADAA Art Show review

It was inevitable that attendance and sales would be down with current economic instability, but overall sales were good and quality was high

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31 March 2003

New York

The Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA) is a nationwide group, but its annual Art Show in the Seventh Regiment Armory on the Upper East Side is a quintessentially New York event. Of this year's 70 exhibitors, only nine do not have Manhattan operations, yet locals vie to pay upwards of \$20,000 to show in these temporary quarters a few blocks from home. Why? "The public's conditioned to attend," says fair director O. Kelley Anderson, citing the convenience of visiting so many dealers in one outing.

Besides, the galleries bring out their best material, mainly mid-century American masters. Calder, Pollock, Hoffman, and Hartley were prominent this year, with a smattering of Europeans, a smidgeon of contemporary art and a rising tide of photographs replacing the

waning supply of Old Masters.

As usual, the quality was very high. Indeed, a deep-pocketed curator would have had no trouble filling his shopping cart with multi-million-dollar canvases by Copley, Homer, and Sargent at Berry-Hill, a superb Tiffany stained-glass window at Jason McCoy, and an autumn landscape by Hudson River School founder Thomas Cole at Kennedy. Jim Berry-Hill said he sold Martin J. Heade's "South American landscape with orchids and hummingbirds", ex-Thyssen, for around \$2.25 million, and Jonathan O'Hara said Calder's "Red gong", a rare musical mobile from 1951, brought \$1.1 million. But there were few if any other seven-figure sales. "We came into the fair with very low expectations, but we were pleasantly surprised," said Mr O'Hara.

Calder's abounded, but nowhere like at PaceWildenstein, where Marc Glimcher installed more than two dozen small-format works selected from the estate with the artist's grandson Sandy Rower. "This is the best," mused Matthew Marks, as he took a break from his own booth to admire the excellent show—and most visitors agreed. An adorable 1926 dachshund, cut from a matchbook-sized piece of sheet metal, promptly fetched \$85,000.

Ann Freedman of Knoedler's said a late Calder painting sold for \$400,000, an Avery brought "in the area of \$550,000," and a 1946 Reinhardt went for "around \$150,000." But the eye-catching centerpiece of her booth was a 15 x 28-inch drip painting by Pollock—red, black, and white swirls over silver—new to the market from an estate outside the US. Freedman says it is "under consideration" at \$8 million.

CRG mounted a Fontana solo show, with unique rococo ceramic figures from the 1930s to early 50s priced from \$28,000-\$165,000, several of which sold to US collectors. Angela Westwater showed "Concetti spaziali" from the 1950s and 60s, and sold two for six-figure prices. And Garth Clark's perforated ceramics show "In praise of holes!" included a 1960s gold-lustre Fontana which sold for \$140,000.

Photographs ranged from Hans P. Kraus Jr's British and French works of the 1840s to early 1860s—he sold a LeGray seascape after the fair to a private collector "in the six figures"—to David Tunick's Atgets on consignment from MoMA at prices starting at \$25,000. Of the 1,000 duplicate prints from the museum, "about half remain in terms of number and value." Edwynn Houk sold a Man Ray "rayograph" to a private collector for \$250,000, and sold out an edition of five Sally Mann collodion-negative landscapes at \$16,000 to \$32,000.

In light of the recession, the threat of war, and the February blizzard that buried New York two

days before the fair, it was inevitable that attendance and sales would be down.

Originally appeared in The Art Newspaper as *'Pre-war jitters, but decent results'*

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