

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE OF EIGHTEENTH & NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN REVEALED IN THE FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION IN LONDON OF DOMESTIC NAÏVE PAINTINGS

Simply British: A Private Collection of Naïve English Paintings at Olympia 12 – 18 November 2007

Massive prize-winning pigs and livestock, favourite horses and wacky races, homesteads were painted by ordinary, untrained folk of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain for fellow villagers and townspeople. A private collection of these naïve paintings will be shown in the first exhibition of its kind at the Winter Fine Art and Antiques Fair 2007.

With skewed perspective, exaggerated scale, simple confident lines and a limited, often bold, palette, coachpainters, housepainters and glaziers, tavern and trade sign painters around the British Isles were commissioned to showcase a farmer's livestock or depict a local event, person or place, giving a fascinating insight into what was considered valuable or prestigious in days gone by.

The often unnamed and untrained 'artists' display a child-like handling of perspective and proportion that lends their work a special charm. The exhibition includes iconic images of well-loved places across the country, including 'A View of Groombridge Place, East Sussex' c.1754-60 where simplistic forms and silhouettes of homes, clouds and dwellings are repeated across a birds eye view flat picture plane. Distortion and exaggeration of scale are immediately apparent in the magnificent image of 'Joseph Lawton's Midland Plum Pudding Pig', where Lawton stands proudly alongside his prized pig, which is as big as the man behind it.

Some works capture moments of local historic significance, such as 'The 150 Mile Race between Mr Burke and The Bedford Times Coach, 18th December. 1843'. Mr Burke and his trotting ponies are shown outstripping the Crow brothers' stagecoach from the Swan Inn, Bedford to the Blue Boar Inn, Holborn. Burke won the outward leg, but on the return journey was arrested for cruelty to animals, following the collapse of one of his ponies.

Traditionally naïve painting has been ignored or overlooked by the mainstream art establishment and regarded as amateur and insignificant. However modern audiences are becoming increasingly beguiled by the raw, minimal and unpretentious qualities of these works. Art historians and critics are increasingly discovering qualities and values in these vernacular images that have links with early twentieth abstract and surrealist paintings.

'Simply British' is curated by leading folk art dealer Robert Young and director of Crane Kalman, Robin Light. The exhibition is a non-selling loan exhibition of the pioneering collection belonging to one passionate English individual.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Simply British: A Private Collection of Naïve English Paintings at the
Winter Fine Art and Antiques Fair, Olympia,
Olympia Exhibition Halls, □Hammersmith Road, □London W14 8UX

Fair opening hours from 12 to 18 November: Monday preview night; Tuesday to Sunday from 11am daily, closing at 8pm from Tuesday to Thursday, at 7pm on Friday and Saturday and at 5pm on Sunday.

On-site dining at Leiths Restaurant, cafés and the Champagne Bar.

Ticket Hotline +44 (0)871 231 9218 or www.olympia-antiques.com

Advance Booking Discount £10 single / £16 double

On the door £12 single / £20 double

Fully illustrated catalogues for the fair and loan exhibition will be available

PRESS INFORMATION AND IMAGES

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