

Paper covers both new and old

Contemporary works rub shoulders with those from the past at annual London showcase

by Frances Allitt

Familiarity with the works on paper market means getting to grips with the technical processes behind drawing, painting and printing and learning the requisite vocabulary.

Most works on paper collectors worth their salt will know their lithographs from their linocuts and their etchings from their engravings.

During the first months of the year, the best place in London to find such well-informed enthusiasts is at the annual *Works on Paper Fair* (February 1-4) at South Kensington's Royal Geographical Society, where more than 30 dealers will pitch up this year.

It's a busy time in this realm, however, as the event overlaps with *Master Drawings New York* (January 27-February 3, also see *International Events* page 34-36). The drive to deliver a stand-out show is furthered by the search for that ever-elusive group: new collectors.

"The younger clientele is looking for something bright for their walls," says exhibitor **Karen Taylor**, who made her debut at the London fair last year.

So, as a specialist in British art of all periods, she returns this year exhibiting both the old and the new, showing works from contemporary artist Luke Elwes alongside those of past masters in the watercolour tradition: Paul Sandby, David Cox and Edward Lear.

The show is not just about boosting total sales with a selection of recent works (though Taylor adds that it is good to "go with the flow" in these matters). It is also about drawing out parallels between the traditional and the contemporary.

One of the images from Elwes' *Waterline* series, she says, "really reminds me of a late Turner. People will make that connection. Even though artists today are pushing the boundaries, they can't help bumping into past masters."

Meanwhile, there is a healthy diversity of dealers across the event, specialising in masters past and present. Among them this year are 19th and 20th century specialist **Babbington Fine Art**, Russian picture dealer **John Barkes** and **Elizabeth Harvey-Lee** with a selection of European Old Master Prints. British drawing



A view of last year's Works on Paper Fair



Above: **Emma Mason** brings this 1955 lithograph, *The Silent Service*, by Robert Tavener, which is framed and available for **£1250**



Above: **Xavier Mellery**, *Majorité*, crayon, ink in pen and wash and gold background, 22 x 15in (55 x 38cm), offered by **Thomas Deprez** for **€70,000**

“**The bottom line for us is to attract the type of people who have the sort of knowledge and interest that will make them want to buy**”



Below: **Karen Taylor** mixes together the old and new on her stand, showcasing pictures from Luke Elwes' *Waterline* series alongside those by classic British watercolour masters. Among the pieces included at the fair are Paul Sandby's (1725-1809) *River Landscape with Trees*, **below right**, a 4 x 5½in (11 x 13cm) watercolour with a pencil sketch of a house in a landscape verso. It is offered for **£3200**. Taylor also brings Elwes' *Waterline 8 (Green Shade)*, **below left**, a 22½ x 2ft 6in (57 x 76cm) mixed media on paper work offered for **£2700**

and watercolour specialist **Guy Peppiatt** also appears - he splits his time between this event and *Master Drawings New York*.

Contemporary specialists such as **Coombe Gallery** featuring West Country artists, **Camburn Fine Art**, which specialises in paintings by Alan Halliday, and **Hanga Ten**, bringing Japanese prints, are also showing. First-time exhibitors include **Flowers Gallery**, **Thomas Deprez** and **Japan Print Gallery**.

Emma Mason, who deals in British works produced since the 1950s, returns to the fair this year after several years' absence.

Her stand features a series of **Richard Platt's** lithographs which chronicle British working life in the 1950s. Mason is also involved in the programme of talks (she will speak

on *The Guinness Lithographs of 1956 and 1962*), another major element of the event.

"The bottom line for us is to attract the type of people who have the sort of knowledge and interest that will make them want to buy," says fair director **Richard Hodgson**.

He credits the event's educational programme for ensuring the attendance of tried-and-tested buyers year after year. Ultimately, he adds, it is "both an educational and entertaining event".

On the schedule for this edition is **Jenny Uglow** speaking on **Edward Lear** and **David Boyd Haycock** on **Augustus John**. On the Friday of the event, artist **Grayson Perry** will deliver the annual **ArtFund** talk. ■

worksonpaperfair.com

All images are copyright of their respective Dealerships.