

## Art market



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### Weeks on the web

The first Kensington Church Street's Week will be online, where visitors will encounter a Meissen dog, a table by the young Pugin and a Chinese stand

It is, perhaps, possible that some London galleries among the 52 participants in the virtual London Art Week (LAW) between July 3 and 10 will be able to open in reality, but, if not, they and their visiting colleagues have put up a good online performance ([www.londonartweek.co.uk](http://www.londonartweek.co.uk)). There is obviously no chance for the 12 dealers taking part in what was to be the first Kensington Church Street Art and Antique Dealers Association Week, from this Friday to June 30, to welcome the public to their shops, but they, too, have put on a Virtual Summer Showcase, with each dealer choosing a theme ([www.antiques-london.com](http://www.antiques-london.com); on Instagram @antiqueslondon). Some will be making appointments for visits when possible.

Kensington Church Street snakes for 971 yards, or 888 metres, from the High Street to Notting Hill Gate (of course,



Fig 1: Meissen dog. With David Brower

I've paced it out). In the 1980s, there were 60 or so galleries and antiques shops along it, with more in the very close vicinity. Now, slightly less than half remain—but, compared with many other traditional centres of the trade, that is not too bad. There is still considerable variety to be found along the street, with furniture, Oriental arts, objects and porcelain to the fore.

European and Oriental porcelain has always been a strength among the mixed stock and pets are the theme offered by David Brower, which may be the doyen of the businesses. However, I would tentatively question the



Fig 2: Gothic Revival pollard-oak centre table, by A. W. N. Pugin for Morel & Sedden. With Butchoff



Fig 3: One of Garland's 'Blood Collages'. With Lisbon & Yarker

identification of one of its exhibits as Catherine the Great's Zemira. The Empress, who was as noted for her love of dogs as for her love of lovers, was particularly taken with Italian greyhounds—favourites among 18th-century royalty—and the best loved was Zemira. However, the dog modelled for her by Kändler at Meissen in 1766, of which Brower has a 19th-century example (Fig 1), was not Zemira—nor, indeed, an Italian greyhound, although the model is inscribed *Chien favorit de feu S.M. l'Impératrice Catherine de Russie*. This was a larger dog with a feathery tail, given to the Empress by Orlov, her first great lover, and the pose is taken exactly from a painting of it lying on a sofa by Johann Friedrich Grooth. These Meissen models make good prices at auction. Zemira came later and is memorialised in a life-sized

Imperial Russian Porcelain model by Jean Dominique Rachette (also known as Iakov Ivanov Rochet) that can be seen in the Divan Room at the Peterhof.

The furniture dealer Butchoff (established a couple of years before Brower, but not on the street as long) has a Royal Furniture theme, with Regency to Edwardian examples, including pieces from Windsor Castle. One such is a Gothic Revival pollard-oak centre table (Fig 2) that was designed by A. W. N. Pugin for Morel & Sedden, the partnership

Fig 4: Chinese scroll stand. With Fleurdelys Antiquités







Fig 5: *Putting out to Sea* by Boberg. With Ben Elwes

that refurnished Windsor for George IV in the 1820s. Nicholas Morel, probably a French refugee, had worked for George since the 1790s, when he was Prince of Wales, and was Upholsterer by Royal Appointment.

Among Morel's French connections was Augustus Charles Pugin, whose 15-year-old son was taken on at Ign a day to 'design and make working drawings for the gothic furniture of Windsor Castle'. According to the politician Thomas Grenville, in 1830, 'poor Morel was swindled into bankruptcy by Seddon'; he died the following year. If so, it was only fair that Seddon should be near-ruined by the non-payment of his Windsor bills.

More recent royal appointments feature among the British 1970s jewellery shown by Sandy Stanley Jewellery. Gerald Benney (1930–2008) was the first British

craftsman in any discipline to hold four Royal Warrants simultaneously—from The Queen, The Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh and the Queen Mother. As his *Times* obituary put it, he was 'fundamental to the survival of domestic silver-making in Britain'. His robust 18-carat gold bangle with opals is dated 1975, when he had long moved beyond early Arts-and-Crafts influences to Modernism.

Based with the furniture dealer Patrick Sandberg, Fleurdeyls Antiquités is one of the street's Oriental specialists. For simple elegance, its 18th-century Chinese scroll stand (Fig 4), carved from a single piece of hongmu wood, could hardly be bettered.

Sometimes when an established fair trumpets numerous new participants, one fears that it is in trouble and losing previous stalwarts. The online London Art Week will have plenty of first-timers, but they are top-quality dealers, not there merely to plug gaps. There is a strong contingent from the Continent and New York, for whom it is an attractive gamble without initial shipping and rental costs. It amounts to an online superstore, whose departments run from Egyptian antiquities to Modern British paintings by way of medieval sculpture and Renaissance Master works.

Specialists in early Canadian fisheries and politics may know the name John Bingley Garland, but only those familiar with the Evelyn Waugh archive at the University of Texas might recognise

him as a most intriguing artist. A member of a dynasty of fish merchants based in Poole and Newfoundland, where he was first Speaker of the House of Assembly, he produced idiosyncratic compositions made up of cut outs from prints, scriptural passages, inscriptions and images, decorated with splatters of blood—in red ink. Lisbon & Yarker offers four that were probably owned by Burne-Jones, noting: 'It is the addition of the blood which transforms these eclectic collages from the Victorian commonplace book to proto-surrealist works of extraordinary power (Fig 3).'

I will return to LAW next week, paying particular attention to sculpture, but for now point to a glorious example of draughtsmanship by Théodore Géricault in Stephen Ongpin's 'Drawn from Nature' display and a painting by Anna Katarina Boberg (1864–1935), a Swede who specialised in Arctic subjects, with Ben Elwes. Géricault's ink and wash *Study of a Lion at Rest* (Fig 6) measures 4in by 4½in and Boberg's canvas *Putting out to Sea* (Fig 5) 36in by 25½in. ↪

**Next week Praiseworthy sculpture**

### Pick of the week

A first-time exhibitor, sculpture dealer Stuart Lochhead, collaborates with Georg Laue (London) in presenting 'The Studiolo from Renaissance to Modern' at London Art Week. A *studiolo* could be described as a collector's cabinet with comfortable chairs—a place to read, contemplate, handle treasures and discuss with fellow connoisseurs. What a joy. Among the curiosities featured is a collection of 17th- to 18th-century turned items.

Fig 6: *Study of a Lion at Rest*, ink and wash, by Géricault. With Stephen Ongpin



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