



Paper chase

Works on paper (and even glass) enrich souls on both sides of the Atlantic



Fig 1: Jan Wyck oil-on-paper study. With Martyn Gregory

I WOULD love to be in New York just now, where the eighth annual Master Drawings week continues until Saturday. Twenty-four dealers are showing in East Side galleries between 63rd and 86th Streets, almost all between Park and 5th Avenues. This means that, weather permitting—and it appears likely to be comparatively clement—much can be seen in the course of a pleasant day's stroll.

The original London drawings weeks, launched in 2001, had a similar atmosphere, with collectors and connoisseurs roaming around the West End village, enjoying, discussing, refreshing and, of course, buying. Now that drawings have been subsumed

into the wider summer Art Week, some of that friendliness has been lost here, but it persists in New York.

Even if politicians rarely believe it, art is not an 'elitist' luxury, but

positively good for people and good drawings have qualities that make them the best tonic of all. Ilona van Tuinen, who recently moved from the Fondation Custodia, Paris home of the Lugt Collection, to the Morgan Library in New York, understands this. She notes in a brief introduction to the current event: 'On my first day at the Fondation Custodia, director Ger Lijiten predicted that my time there would change my life and enrich my soul. He was right, of course. I look forward to the continued enrichment during Master Drawings week, and I hope to share this experience with many of you.'

Six London dealers are showing in New York, including Martyn Gregory, who is putting on two exhibitions: works on paper including English watercolours at Leigh Morse Fine Arts on E 80th Street and China Trade paintings at the Academy Mansion, E 63rd Street.

Among the former is an 8¼in by 11¼in canvas-mounted oil-on-paper study by Jan Wyck (1652–1702) after an image by Paulus Potter of a leopard-spotted horse (\$45,000) (Fig 1). Such horses were progenitors of the Appaloosa. Among the latter, at \$30,000, is a 12½in by 10¼in reverse-glass portrait of Capt John Cranstoun (Fig 3) of the East India Company by Spoilum (fl.1770–1805).

Fig 2: Spilliaert's bridge over the Zandevoorde. With Patrick Lancz

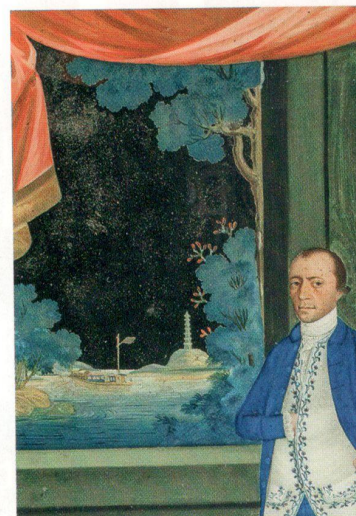
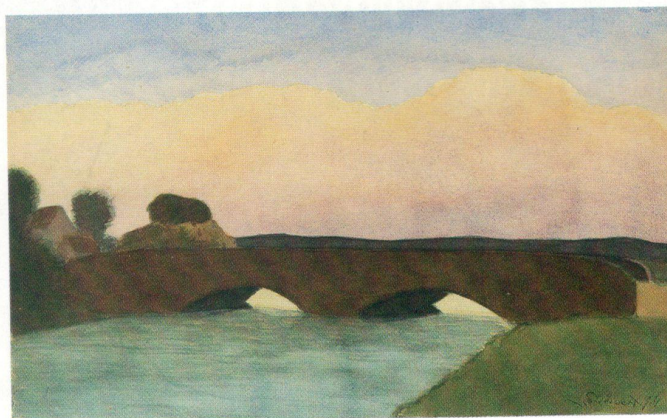


Fig 3: Portrait of Capt Cranstoun. With Martyn Gregory

Another New York watercolour exhibitor, Guy Peppiatt of Mason's Yard, St James's, will be hurrying back to take part in the Works on Paper Fair at the Royal Geographical Society from February 9 to 12. There are rather fewer exhibitors this year, about 40, split between dealers in drawings and prints.

Among the former is Patrick Lancz from Brussels who specialises in works from 1880 to 1950. He will have at least one example by Léon Spilliaert, an artist whom I have come to admire more and more over the past couple of years and who is currently receiving increased attention not only in Belgium and beyond, but even in his native Ostend, where he has long played second fiddle to his friend James Ensor.

Spilliaert (1881–1946) was a largely self-taught Symbolist. He dealt with loneliness and melancholy and liminal subjects—shorelines and quaysides, bridges, bare trees against twilight skies, sunsets and dying seasons. His figures are sometimes reminiscent of Munch, at others Lowry; Redon and van Gogh are there, but also Wadsworth. In short, intriguing, and it is no surprise that he illustrated the Symbolist playwright Maeterlinck.

Unlike Ensor's, his Ostend home was destroyed by wartime bombing, but last year, at last, a private initiative resulted in the opening



of a Spilliaert gallery in the Thermæ Palace Hotel on the Ostend promenade, a building that he painted.

At the fair, Mr Lancz will have an unusually colourful 12in by 19½in watercolour of a bridge over the Zandevoorde (**Fig 2**).

Karen Taylor is a private dealer specialising in British works (www.karentaylorfineart.com), who has not exhibited at a fair for some time. I do not have a price for her 6⅞in by 9⅞in watercolour, *Dent du Midi, from the Valley of the Rhône—early morning* (**Fig 6**) by Arthur Severn (1842–1931), but any admirer of Ruskin who finds his current levels difficult, might care to look at it.

Severn married Joan Agnew, a cousin and companion of Ruskin's mother. On Mrs Ruskin's death, the couple accompanied

him to Brantwood in the Lake District, where they lived with him until his own death in 1900. Severn's work can be very close to Ruskin in style, as here in the hem of trees flicked along the foot of the mountain.

A long-time exhibitor at this fair, Elizabeth Harvey-Lee (www.elizabethharvey-lee.com) deals in Old Master and 19th- and 20th-century prints with a few contemporary examples. Here, she will have an etching by Abraham Bosse (about 1603–76), a Huguenot best known for the title-page of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, but who generally worked in series—cries of Paris, trades, the seasons or the five senses.

Here is his 10in by 12½in *Taste* (**Fig 5**), showing a couple relishing wine and an artichoke



(£1,250). Although Bosse enjoyed the freedom of the etching technique, he liked to give the results the formal look of engraving.

A treat at the fair will be a loan exhibition from the Eton College watercolour collection, including one of Julius Caesar Ibbetson's fine skating scenes on the Serpentine (**Fig 4**).

Next week Wide-ranging Spanish collection

Fig 4: On ice: Julius Caesar Ibbetson's view of ice skating on the Serpentine

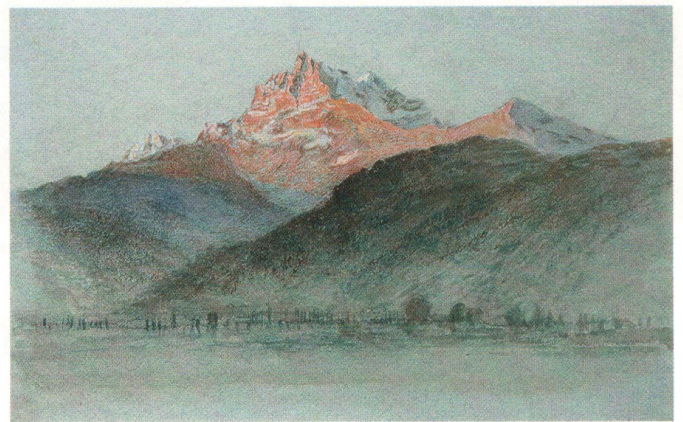


Fig 5 above: Abraham Bosse etching. With Elizabeth Harvey-Lee. Fig 6 below: British artist Arthur Severn's Dent du Midi. With Karen Taylor

Pick of the week

In association with the Redfern Gallery, from February 2 to 25, the Fosse Gallery in Stow-on-the-Wold (www.fossegallery.com) will hold its fourth exhibition of works on paper, including limited-edition prints, by William Gear (1915–97). Most of the 50 works have never been shown and 29 of his 50 colourful, abstract screenprints (*one of which, left*), produced between 1949 and 1972 are represented with prices rising from £500.

South-east of Tower Bridge Road in Bermondsey, an area of post-Second World War storage and transport facilities is being colonised by art galleries and spaces, among them Drawing Room in Willow Walk (www.drawingroom.org.uk). From March 2 to April 26, it will hold a biennale show and online auction of more than 200 works on paper by eminent and soon-to-be-eminent contemporaries. Healthy injections of humour include a Quentin Blake-like cartoon by Michael Landy, mocking his own destruction-as-art installations (*right*).

