



**A**tury has treated the art and antiques world to a rollercoaster ride of success and misery. While astronomical bids are regularly achieved in the salerooms (in February an Edward Steichen photograph achieved a staggering \$2.9 million), in Britain a record number of antiques dealers have left the profession amid evidence of a general rejection of 'brown furniture' for the joys of Ikea and clean-lined modernism.

But there is good news on the horizon. It appears that young collectors have not abandoned the antiques world at all. Rather there has been an overriding shift in interest. What is now in demand are objects with a strong aesthetic, in myriad areas – often not the traditional ones – such as medieval art, antiquities, textiles, tribal pieces and mid-20th-century designer furniture.

The Grosvenor House Fair, founded in 1934, is a case in point. The grandest of all the annual London antiques fairs, it marked its 60th anniversary by abolishing its age criteria for pieces and has since welcomed a gallimaufry of dealers in modern art and design as well as areas such as natural history and ethnographica that would not have been contemplated before. Perhaps surprisingly, the collectors on these pages all sourced these prized possessions from dealers showing at this year's Grosvenor House.

*The Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair runs from June 15-21 at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London W1 (020-7399 8100; grosvenor-antiquesfair.co.uk)*

## What is now in demand are objects with a strong aesthetic, in myriad areas – often not the traditional ones

**Gregory Meuzen** (left) relishes 'the sense of discovery' he gets from looking at (and acquiring) objets d'art, whether in flea markets or top-notch international fairs. A resolutely contemporary sculptor in New York, he is drawn to earlier pieces 'with a certain elegance', in particular Old Master drawings and medieval or Renaissance 'Corpus' figures. (He describes one of these as 'close to a Michelangelo' and did not plan to buy it but put in a bid after seeing a picture on the internet and ended up flying to Paris to fetch it.) He is photographed with a mid-16th-century north Italian Christ figure bought from the London dealer Richard Philp. 'I first came across him at a fair in the States and liked his whole aesthetic: the medieval thing,' Meuzen explains. 'I've been to his space many times since but never bought from him before.' He fell for the Christ figure the second he saw it. 'It had a whispering quality that drew me in. It's small-scale and internalised, yet it evoked something monumental.' 020-8748 5678; richardphilp.com



Old Master prints and drawings, but he also has a passion for East Africa dating from his student days, and for years used to return laden with what his girlfriend calls 'ghastly tribal trinkets' made for tourists. He recently decided to replace them with one wonderful East African artefact, and selected the basketwork winnowing tray in the photograph. It was made in about 1910 by the Barotse tribe, and came from the dealer Peter Petrou. A former Sotheby's English furniture specialist, Morris is now an adviser to private individuals and institutions on museum-quality pieces, which, as he ruefully puts it, 'I can rarely afford myself. So I've gone off on a different tangent.' He does not normally collect tribal pieces, though he could not resist some 4,000-year-old stone idols, also from Peter Petrou. He admires Petrou for his 'great eye for out-of-the-ordinary things', and because 'he can talk incredibly academically but also have a giggle'. 07831-633886; peterpetrou.com

**Julian Lovett** When Sims Reed called Julian Lovett to tell him it had acquired a raft of pieces from the Ramie family in Vallauris, Lovett swiftly popped round to have a look. Suzanne and Georges Ramie owned the Atelier Madoura where Picasso made ceramics after the Second World War, and the prints at Sims Reed included some by the maestro himself, including 'this one which immediately grabbed me', as Lovett puts it. The linocut poster is the first plate of two Picasso made to advertise a show of his pottery. The red print is *Blood Wedding* by Wayne Warren. Lovett studied printmaking at Farnham School of Art and runs a branding and design company, Flame Creative Solutions, so it is hardly surprising he is drawn to the print medium in his own home. 'I'm interested in work that really pushes the envelope,' he says. His taste ranges from contemporary work to 18th-century etchings. His chief hunting ground is fairs, though he also 'keeps an eye on auction houses and the internet'. 020-7930 5111; simsreed.com

**Karl Dunkley** 'The clean lines are what attracted me,' Karl Dunkley says of his startling silver centrepiece bowl. 'And its quirky, off-line symmetry – a twist on a form.' The bowl was designed in 1952 for Georg Jensen by Henning Koppel, one of the company's leading post-war avant-garde sculptors, and was spotted by Dunkley earlier this year in the St James's windows of the Silver Fund. 'I'm an impulse buyer,' he says. 'If I like a piece, I've got to buy it.' Dunkley has been collecting silver for eight years. His first purchase was a pair of traditional candlesticks and he has since moved on to art deco and beyond. He likes to use pieces rather than putting them behind glass, and the only disadvantage of silver is that it requires polishing. Dunkley's own business is Grosvenor Shirts, which manufactures all its wares in Northern Ireland. Its Mayfair base is convenient for Dunkley's trips to the Silver Fund. 'I tend to go there because it has such a large and continually changing selection.' 020-7839 7664; thesilverfund.com

## Free market operators

With antique brown furniture firmly out of fashion, what interests younger collectors? In the run-up to London's grandest antiques fair, **Annabel Freyberg** talks to aficionados of medieval art, ethnographica, modern silver and prints. Photographs by **Jens Umbach** (left) and **Rebecca Duke**