

## Historic works hold their own at London Original Print Fair

Despite print fair's focus having shifted over the years, more traditional works still play an important part



📷 This 1935 etching *Venetian Mirror - The Grand Canal Venice* by John Taylor Arms is offered by Elizabeth Harvey Lee for £5000.



Frances Allitt  
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*Venetian Mirror*, an etching depicting the Grand Canal by John Taylor Arms (1887-1953), is among the offerings at this month's *London Original Print Fair*.

Offered by **Elizabeth Harvey-Lee** for £5000, the picture may appeal as much for its backboard as its image. Completed in 1935, the picture was print 27 in Taylors' *Italian Series*.

It combines architectural accuracy with picturesque inclusions, such as a gondolier on the water. Housed in its original frame, the reverse holds letters and related newspaper clippings reflecting the history of its purchase in 1936, when it was bought from the annual exhibition of the Royal Society of Painter Etchers & Engravers.

Harvey-Lee is among many dealers offering historic works at the fair during its 39th edition from March 21-24 at Somerset House. She is one of more than 40 attending, most specialising in Contemporary works, some editions specially commissioned or made for the fair.

### Healthy history

Helen Rosslyn, director of the fair, says: "Although the balance of Old Master to Contemporary prints has completely changed since the fair started in 1985, it is wonderful that we are still able to show prints in their historical context."

There is a healthy showing from Old and Modern Masters.



📷 One of two pastel manner engravings by Louis-Marin Bonnet on offer from the stand of Vistavka Fine Art for £9300 the pair, this one is titled *The Milk Woman*. They are part of a series the French artist produced from 1774-77 illegally using applied gold leaf which was closely monitored by the government. To get around the problem he invented a story that his works were published in England and exported to France.

**Marlborough Graphics** brings works by Francis Bacon and Paula Rego, **Peter Harrington** offers signed and limited original prints and art books by artists such as Salvador Dalí and MC Escher, while **Gilden's Art Gallery** features linocuts by Picasso and a monumental etching and aquatint of *Pantagruel* by Joan Miró.

Other exhibitors include **Hanga Ten**, **Vistavka Fine Art** and **Isaac and Ede**. Among the newcomers this year are **Hauser & Wirth**, **Atelier Le Grand Village** and **Upsilon Gallery**.

Roslyn adds: "The market for Old Master prints is more difficult than it was, as it is ever harder to source material. Once a print has entered a collection it often does not reappear on the market. But interestingly there is still a huge appetite for them.

"One of our long-standing exhibitors of historic prints had their best fair ever last year. This year we have a specialist in 18th century French prints and a new exhibitor showing 18th and 19th century prints which is exciting."

There are two special exhibitions for this year: a special tribute presentation of the art of Joe Tilson (1928-2023) organised by **Cristea Roberts** and a retrospective on Norman Ackroyd organised by the artist himself.

### **Anniversary plans**

Over the past few years there have been various updates to the fair beyond its setting (it was previously held at the Royal Academy). One such change is the online fair which can be viewed before doors open.



📷 Reg Butler's *Untitled (Italian Girl Head and Shoulders)*, 1963, is possibly the only proof of the image. Printed at Curwen Studio, it is offered by Dominic Kemp for £1250.

“We always try to make room for something a little out of the ordinary at the fair,” Rosslyn says.

“Next year we will be celebrating the fair’s 40th anniversary, making us the longest-running art fair in London. So, we have several ideas in the pipeline of how to celebrate this milestone and reflect on how the fair and world of printmaking has changed and developed over this period.”

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