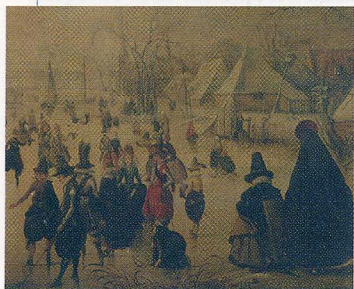


marketplace

GALLERY SALES, FAIR RESULTS AND AUCTION REVIEWS



DUTCH COLF PAINTING SELLS WAY ABOVE PAR

On January 26, with the Maastricht fair just over a month away, Old Masters dealers were in an understandably competitive mood as a highly commercial winter scene by the 17th-century Dutch painter Adam van Breen came up for sale at the British auction house Mellors & Kirk, in Nottingham. Bidding on the telephone for the painting, London dealer Richard Green saw off determined opposi-

tion by shelling out £517,500 (\$754,000)—the highest price ever paid for the artist's work and one of the highest prices for a work offered by a regional auction house in the U.K.

The painting, a detail of which is shown above, executed on a copper panel measuring just 9½ by 15½ inches, was discovered in untouched condition in a cupboard during a routine valuation at a local Nottinghamshire home. The proverbial "little old lady" owner had inherited the painting from her father, who is thought to have acquired it from a dealer some 50 years before. Though the panel carried the monogram of Hendrick Avercamp and the date 1623, auctioneer Nigel Kirk attributed the work to van Breen, an opinion supported by both the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the National Gallery in London. Kirk had expected the painting to fetch in the region of £250,000 (\$365,000).

Van Breen is a little-documented Hague artist who, like Avercamp, specialized in the sort of multi-figure winter scenes that have always been popular with collectors. This example depicts figures playing *colf*, a Dutch game—often played on ice—related to golf.

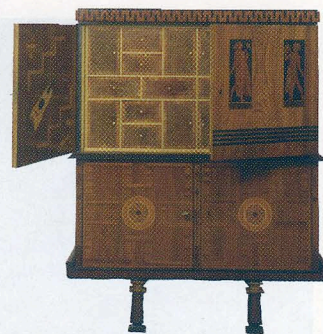
YUSKAVAGE'S "PERKY" MARKET

Lisa Yuskavage, the Yale School of Art grad (class of 1986) who has rocketed to art world stardom with her distinctive saucy figurations, sold out her recent solo show at Marianne Boesky's new gallery in New York's Chelsea district, which ran from January 6 through February 3. According to Boesky, there are currently "many people ready, willing and able to buy a big painting" by the artist.

The show featured six oil-on-linen paintings (including the one shown at right), all titled *Northview*, depicting Yuskavage's well-endowed fictional vixens in a variety of provocative poses. Bathed in a Vermeer-esque light, the figures show off the artist's considerable nimbleness with a brush—as well as her witty appreciation of art history. Priced between \$45,000 and \$55,000, several of the works are destined for museum collections. Two smaller paintings on view that are not part of the same series, *Brande* and *K.K. in Red Room*, sold for \$15,000 and \$20,000, respectively.

While the artist's secondary market has seen paintings trade as high as \$80,000, only one work has so far appeared in a major auction. The aptly titled watercolor on paper, *Tit Heaven #23*, from 1992 (est. \$5,000–7,000), sold for \$7,638 at Christie's New York contemporary day sale in November.

Yuskavage's market remains stout in the wake of a sell-off of a number of her paintings last spring by art mogul Charles Saatchi, who was unloading a large group of works by American artists. Boesky had a resale agreement with Saatchi on the paintings she sold him (giving her the right of first refusal), and she was placed in the awkward position of having to buy back the works from a third-party private dealer. "We had to come up with the money, and it was a big number, unfortunately," says Boesky, who describes the incident as the worst experience of her career. She has since found buyers for most of the former Saatchi-owned works. Boesky declines to identify or comment on the third-party dealer. "Why should some other dealer get to profit off my sweat?"



WINTER SHOW: HOT RESULTS

What looming recession? The slowing U.S. economy was barely in evidence at the 47th annual New York Winter Antiques Show in January, as a near-record number of visitors attended the 10-day event, and buying was generally brisk.

Wayne Pratt, the Connecticut dealer in American furniture, says, "I was expecting to see some slowing of the market, but I haven't. Sales volume was one of our highest at this show." Pratt sold 25 furniture pieces and 8 works of folk art, including what Pratt calls "one of the best Rochester rooster weather vanes I've ever seen," in the \$20,000 range. At the show, he bought a Rochester horse weather vane from another dealer for around \$30,000 and quickly resold it to a collector.

New York 20th-century decorative arts specialist Barry Friedman, whose booth featured early 20th-century European furniture, declared this year's show "by far our best, in terms of sales and interest." Sales were so strong that Friedman had to restock his stand twice in the first week. "My staff wanted to do it again the second weekend, but I was too tired to go through the vetting process," he says. Opening-night sales included a 1928 Swedish architect's cabinet by Svensson and Thorell, shown above, snapped up by architect Peter Marino, and an iron-and-gilt Gilbert Poillerat bed, about which Friedman says, "Probably 10 different people wanted it."

Silver sales were strong, according to Tim Martin of S.J. Shrubsole in New York, who reports that "coffeepots were flying off the shelves," including five 18th-century English examples priced from \$20,000 to \$200,000. A rare English 1695 chocolate pot in the shape of a Chinese ginger jar went for "under \$100,000," Martin says, adding, "The rarest and most unusual things—which usually means the most expensive—are the things we sold fastest."