

# NAPLES INTERNATIONAL ART & ANTIQUE FAIR

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## ***Naples International Art & Antique Fair* closes with major sales and rave attendee reviews**

Naples, FL- “All I can say is “Wow!” said Naples resident Keith Davison. This sentiment was echoed by more than 15,000 attendees of the inaugural ***Naples International Art and Antique Fair*** held February 24 – March 1, 2011 at the newly remodeled Naples International Pavilion located at Immokalee Rd and Livingston Road in Naples.

“Now Naples has a truly quality international fine art fair,” said local collector and museum board member Bob Edwards. “We needed a major fine art fair,” said Thomas Davidson. “New York has the *Winter Antiques Show*, Palm Beach has the *American International Fine Art Fair*, and now Naples has its own fair of equivalent quality and stature.”

“It was inconceivable that just a few short weeks ago this was a run-down empty supermarket” said Quail West resident and local realtor Steve Levitan “When we came to the opening evening it was as if we had been transported to an entirely new, spectacular, elegant museum. ”

“The City of Naples really pulled together at every level to make this inaugural international fair a success,” said David J. Lester, principal of International Fine Art Expositions of Bonita Springs, which organized the fair and operates the new exhibition facility. “The community cooperation and support at every level – from Myra Daniels of the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts and the Patty and Jay Baker Naples Museum of Art, officials at every level of Collier County, the Collier County Sheriff’s and Fire Departments, the *Naples Daily News* and other local press – all played a major role in insuring the success of this first international event. This type of community cooperation was like that of Miami and Miami Beach when it welcomed *Art Basel Miami* to that community – and now that event generates tens of millions of dollars each year to that community”.

“We are proud that Naples will have several major international new cultural events each year in our community,” said Jack Wert, Executive Director of the Collier County Convention and Visitors Bureau. “These events bring exhibitors to Naples and attract visitors to our community who will patronize local hotels, restaurants, and merchants during their stays thereby contributing millions of dollars to the local economy each year”.

Dealers found a welcome reception from local collectors. “We have been coming to Naples for 29 years,” said Jacqueline Smelkinson of Spare Room in Baltimore. “Every day there was a line of people waiting to come into the show, and there was never a letup. We did very well. I think the show has enormous potential.”

That sentiment was echoed by Bill Rau of M. S. Rau Antiques of New Orleans whose firm staged one of the major exhibitions at the fair. “There are serious collectors and serious collections in Naples,” said Rau. “We made a number of sales of paintings, objects, silver, jewelry and furniture – some of which reached the seven-figure range. Many clients knew us from New Orleans or other major fairs - others we were pleased to meet on our first visit to the Naples community”.

“We love the Naples community.” said Michael James of the Silver Fund. “The people we met here understand quality and that makes it exciting for us to return next year. When we begin each new fair, we understand that it really takes three years to really establish a profitable foothold in each community – but no community offers us greater promise than Naples.”

Local dealer Bill Meek of Naples commented, “People are always asking me how a community’s art and culture seen grows. I answer that it happens in stages. When something significant happens such as

Harmon Foster opening the first gallery in Naples in 1964, then when Naples saw a flush of galleries open in the 80's, followed by the Patty and Jay Baker Naples Museum of Art in the 90's. These two fairs are the next stage of growth. Seeing this caliber of fair in Naples, the kind you would only expect to see in New York or Hong Kong, it's quite exceptional."

Most dealers had modest expectations for the Naples fair its first year. Although some dealers exceeded those modest expectations, most found the fair to be an introductory vehicle to establish new clients and develop a new annual market. Some fortunate dealers reported total sales in the six and even seven-figure range.

Harmon-Meek Gallery's one-man Adolf Dehn exhibition was very well received. The local gallery sold multiple works by the artist including an original watercolor and a major painting that will be on the cover of a forthcoming book about the artist.

M. S. Rau Antiques spectacular results were further validation that Naples has a market for major works of art. The New Orleans gallery sold an original Norman Rockwell from 1927 and Jean-Léon Gérôme from 1889, together priced at over 4 million dollars. The gallery also reported silver, jewelry and furniture sales.

Willow Gallery of London reported the sale of a major work by Italian painter Eugene Von Blaas.

J.S. Fearnley - specializing in haute and period jewelry - reported sales in the six-figure range.

Cavalier Galleries reported significant sales including an oil on canvas work by artist Edward Minoff entitled "Night" and multiple other works.

Forum Gallery, who will also be exhibiting in Art Naples at the end of the month, sold a work by Israeli artist Yaacov Agam.

Among the other dealers reporting sales were Callaghan Fine Paintings & Contemporary Bronze, Framont Fine, Michael James Fine Art, The Silver Fund, Jewels by Vigi, Persian Gallery, Pier & Co., Eostone, Forum Gallery, A.B. Levy, Potterton Books, Robert Hall, Wellesley House, Mark Heliar 20th Century Design, The Kendall Collection, Gallery Afrodite, Eve Stone Antiques, Julia Santen Gallery, Charles Washburne Antiques, Hamshere Gallery, Spare Room, Marilyn Garrow Fine Textile Art, 19th Century Shop, Mark Borghi Fine Art, and Ed Weissman Antiques.

Naples International Art & Antique Fair will return for its second edition February 23rd-28th, 2012. For more information we welcome you to visit the website at [www.niaaf.com](http://www.niaaf.com) or call 239-949-5411.

Please enjoy some fair reviews NIAAF has received already: [Multi-million dollar sales highlight first Naples International Art & Antique Fair](#) and [Art & Antiques: Nice in Naples](#)

For photography of NIAAF 2011 including social and interior images please visit the press area of our website by clicking [here](#).

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