

25 YEARS of THE DECORATIVE FAIR

Press Release: 10 November 2009

Pagodas & Pavilions: Eastern Influences on British Design At The Winter Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair 19th to 24th January 2010 The Marquee, Battersea Park, London SW11

The Winter edition of London's favourite event for unusual interior design, The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, will feature a special foyer display focusing on Chinoiserie, and highlighting the many eastern influences on British interior design of the past 300 years.

The Decorative Fair takes place three times a year, with around 130 exhibitors from the UK and Europe, all specialising in antique and 20th century design. Its popularity continues to increase in this, its 25th year of business, as an inspiring source for interior decorators and private buyers of the exotic, the unusual and the useful. Particularly well known for its wide range of painted and decorated furniture of all periods, as well as lighting, mirrors and glamorous accessories, the Fair also features a large number of 20th design specialists, as well as more traditional English furniture, textiles, garden ornament, art and sculpture, as well as quirky *objets* and collectors' items.

Chinoiserie, always popular at the Decorative Fair, captured the imagination of Europe from the time that intrepid trading ships first sailed to the Orient in the 17th century. They returned laden with porcelain and silks, bringing us a taste for the exotic and a long-lasting interest in eastern decoration.

The Foyer at the Winter Decorative Fair, 19-24 January 2010, will display for sale mainly British examples of the oriental-inspired style, from Chinese Chippendale onwards, but in particular focusing on the later flowering of Chinoiserie in the 19th and early 20th centuries, commonly found in smart country and town houses. Oriental export items will also be included. Whilst few of the western products of Chinoiserie are entirely true to their Chinese roots, it was the reconfiguring and adaptation of the style to the tastes and requirements of the day that led to its recurring fashion.

Ceramics, textiles, wallpaper, lacquer and its European interpretations (japanned furniture, tôleware), decorative features and ornamentation, will all feature in the Foyer, and all items will be for sale, as they are supplied by dealers at the Fair. The Foyer will be decorated using wallpapers kindly supplied by Zoffany.

The Fair is easily reached by courtesy Renault shuttle services from Sloane Square, and there is also limited free parking at the site, making it simple for customers to load and take home purchases from the Fair. On-site packing and shipping is available through BBF Shippers. An excellent licensed brasserie café, by Megan's of Kings Road, provides pre-opening breakfast, lunch, tea and drinks. The Fair is a most relaxed and enjoyable environment in which to shop or spend the day; even well-behaved dogs are welcome.

The Decorative, along with other UK antiques fairs, has been experiencing increased visitor numbers this year, a sign of growing interest amongst the public in the more traditional areas of art and design. Antiques as tangible assets, their 'green' credentials and craftsmanship superior to most contemporary high street furniture, as well as value for money, are all major reasons for purchasing antique and 20th century design right now.

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A feature-length historical background on Chinoiserie is available, and an Elements of Chinoiserie Picture Sheet.

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Notes to Editors

Event: The Winter Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair
Date: Tuesday 19 to Sunday 24 January 2010
Venue: The Marquee, Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ
Tickets: £10.00 including catalogue (which allows free return to Fair)
Transport: Sloane Square Tube – a free Renault shuttle service runs from Sloane Square to the Marquee every 10-15 minutes during opening hours.
Open: Tuesday 12pm – 8pm
Wednesday, Thursday 11am – 8pm
Friday & Saturday 11am – 7pm
Sunday 11am – 6pm
Organisers: Harvey (Management Services) Ltd
Enquiries: +44 (0)20 7616 9327
Website: www.decorativefair.com

Key Chinoiserie Style Elements

- **The Exotic:** China as a far away place featuring exotic characters, themes, legends, landscapes full of fanciful pavilions, fabulous creatures such as rare birds and fish, and unusual plants such as bamboo
- **Dragons:** the most exotic of all the above elements
- **Architecture:** the sweeping lines of pagoda roofs and Chinese architecture were incorporated into many objects especially furniture
- **Oriental dress:** the use of silks and embroidered items, people in Chinese clothes added to a fabric design, porcelain figures of such exotic subjects, jade, pearls, clothing in the 1930s
- **Tea:** afternoon tea drinking as a 'British' custom originated in China, period teawares etc
- **Techniques:** lacquer, porcelain, embroidery, tôle, japanning etc
- **Interpretation:** Few of the western products of Chinoiserie are entirely true to their Chinese roots. The success of Chinoiserie's fashion is down to its ability to reconfigure itself and adapt to the tastes and requirements of the day. This might mean the introduction of different colour schemes, materials or motifs. It is not unusual to see a printed fabric incorporating Chinese, Japanese and Turkish elements. The approach is not to be "correct" but to evoke an atmosphere of the exotic and this was the power and charm of the aesthetic.

See Chinoiserie in Britain's great houses:

Chinese Bedroom, **Badminton House** by John & William Linnell, 1753-55; Chinese Room, **Claydon House**, Bucks, 1760, with extravagant woodcarvings by Luke Lightfoot; **Saltram** (Devon) has Chinese wallpapers dating from the reign of K'ang Hsi (1662-1722), probably the earliest still to be seen; **Nostell Priory**, Erdigg, near Wrexham and **Belton House** (Lincs) also retain papers; the **Royal Pavilion** at Brighton led the craze for Chinoiserie in the Regency period.

'Thus it is happened ...we must all seek the barbarous gaudy goût of the Chinese; and fat headed Pagods and shaking Mandarins bear the prize from the greatest works of antiquity; and Apollo and Venus must give way to the fat idol with a sconce on his head.' So wrote Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu (society hostess and bluestocking), describing in 1749 the rage for Chinoiserie decoration in England.