

PRESS RELEASE

15 March 2006

A Theatrical Spectacle at the Spring Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair

Special Exhibition of Toy Theatres from Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop of Covent Garden

The Spring Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, 25-30 April 2006, will feature a charming and fascinating exhibition which unites the drama of the stage with the drama of interiors.



The exhibition, being staged in the foyer of the Marquee in Battersea Park, will feature rare and antique toy theatres drawn primarily from the collection of enthusiast, and actor, Peter Baldwin, as well as offering a number of modern examples for sale from Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop, owned by Peter and his brother Christopher.

Before such new-fangled novelties as magic lanterns and the gramophone, the 'must have' entertainment for the smart set was the Toy Theatre. Tracing its beginnings to the early 19th Century, publishers, printers and stationers began to sell souvenirs of the great theatrical productions of the time. Initially simple theatrical portraits were sold, but these soon developed into whole miniature productions of the pantomimes and melodramas being staged in Covent Garden. Toy Theatres, also known as 'The Juvenile Drama', became wildly popular and were avidly collected by children and adults. Centred around the fashionable theatrical districts of London, their popularity was such that they were bought for, and known as, simply as 'a penny plain, twopence coloured'.

Wonderfully detailed, the theatres and characters have charmed and delighted children and adults alike for the last 200 years.

Canny decorators and private buyers have long been aware of the decorative possibilities of antique and vintage toys, using them to add interest and warmth to interiors. Visitors to the Decorative Fair have been able to indulge their inner child by buying quirky items for their homes such as beautifully painted vintage dolls, colourful tin toys, articulated papier-mâché animals, the perennially favourite rocking horse, pedal cars, toy farms and dolls houses – all adding that desirable uniqueness of touch to their homes.

The Decorative Fair is renowned amongst interior decorators and private buyers as a source for quirky and dramatic objects to enhance the modern interior, as well as an excellent source of well-priced traditional wood furniture, painted and decorated pieces, C20th design and accessories, mirrors, chandeliers, paintings, sculpture, garden statuary and collector's curios.

A cast of over 80 exhibitors are waiting in the wings to take part in the Spring Fair and lift the curtain on their latest selection of exciting stock.

The Cruising Café will also be delighting audiences during intervals from shopping with an array of hot and cold refreshments.

Questions? Don't hesitate to call Pippa Roberts (020 7923 3188) or Laura Colborn (020 7381 1981) to find out more about the Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fairs