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EMMA RUTHERFORD


LAURA DADSWELL


CHARLOTTE RUSSELL



Emma Rutherford

ART HISTORIAN AND SPECIALIST IN PORTRAIT MINIATURES

portraitminiature.com

Emma Rutherford is one of a handful of art historians in the world who specialises in portrait miniatures – an area of the art market considered niche but with so much to offer in terms of wearable history. She began her 25-year career working with the National Collection of Miniatures at the V&A before working at auction houses Bonhams and Phillips. She then became an independent consultant working closely with Philip Mould & Co. and made some major discoveries, including the earliest Black subject painted in miniature, the only signed work by Mary Queen of Scots' favourite artist Jean Decourt and the Lost Portrait of Charles Dickens. In 2023, she set up The Limner Company, where she now sells antique portrait miniatures, as well as consulting. She will be exhibiting at the Cotswold Art Antiques Chelsea, at Chelsea Old Town Hall, 20-23 March.

"Held in the hand, exchanged as gifts or worn secretly with a particular political allegiance, portrait miniatures were highly personal small portraits," says Emma. "The art form begins in the 16th century and continues until eclipsed by photography in the mid-19th century. Defined by their methods and materials (watercolour on parchment or ivory), portrait miniatures were small as their purpose was usually to be worn on the body. My client base is quite balanced between male and female collectors, but the women have the advantage of being able to wear their buys! There are also plenty of women artists to collect in this field – painting portrait miniatures was considered a genteel attribute, with women artists only requiring a small studio space and shorter sittings compared to oil portraitists.

"Portrait miniatures are often considered undervalued in the art market. Traditionally an area reserved for learned connoisseurs, a renewed interest in historical fashion (particularly via Instagram) has brought forth new interest from a younger generation. I even have designers who work for some of the most prestigious fashion brands as collectors of miniatures. The price range is very varied, as collectors can buy examples from the 16th through the 19th century, but tend to run from £1,000 up to £100,000. Whether you wear your miniatures or display them on the wall, they're always a talking point."

Laura Dadswell

ANTIQUES SPECIALIST

westlandlondon.com

Laura Dadswell is one of the directors at Westland London. Specialising in antique fireplaces, the showroom and website also host an expansive collection of decorative antiques, including lighting, mirrors, garden statuary and furniture. The company has elevated the concept of salvage by curating one of the finest collections of antique fireplaces available to buy. At the moment, stock includes an extraordinarily rare fireplace by the renowned 18th century architect Robert Adam, a discovery which involved many hours of research and a lot of negotiation.

"I work in an overwhelmingly male-dominated industry, which was quite daunting at first, although I've now come to appreciate that this gives me a unique perspective within the field," says Laura. "It might have taken some of my peers a while to adjust to having a young woman working in the trade, but I'd like to think my enthusiasm and interest in my stock won my clients over straight away.

"Over the years, I've taken great pleasure in seeing the pieces from our collection carefully chosen by many of the talented and passionate female interior designers and clients I've had the pleasure of working with. Most of our pieces are destined for very beautiful homes, luxury hotels, restaurants and even yachts! Without a doubt, the most enjoyable parts of my job involve searching for special pieces, researching their provenance, and seeing our team of talented restorers bring them back to life. This is only matched by seeing them placed in well-loved, beautifully designed interiors.

"I hope that our website and showroom offer a place of inspiration for those seeking antiques with quality, history, and beauty. We live in a world of wasteful mass-production, so working with objects that will last for centuries brings so much value to my job."

Charlotte Russell

AUCTIONEER, SPECIALIST AND VALUER

bellmans.co.uk

As head of Bellmans' South Kensington office, Charlotte Russell never knows what she's going to be doing next. The element of surprise is a favourite aspect of her role.

"I love the challenge of not knowing what I might be asked to appraise. Before joining Bellmans I'd worked in various specialist art departments, so my knowledge has become quite broad, which comes in handy in my current role. And at Bellmans, we have a team of expert colleagues to call on."

Charlotte's career spans some of the country's leading auction houses, as a junior specialist, department head,

UNKNOWN TREASURES Clockwise from top left: This spectacular Christian Dior custom wedding gown is set to feature in Bellmans' Works of Art auction on 25 March, carrying an estimate of £1,000 to £1,500; with a price estimate of £3,000 to £4,000, this Boucheron diamond bird brooch will go under the hammer at Lyon & Turnbull's London Jewellery auction on 9 April; Emma Rutherford will be showcasing and selling portraits like this Richard Cosway miniature of a moustachioed gentleman from 20 to 23 March at CADA's annual fair, Cotswold Art Antiques Chelsea; *Helena III*, a limited-edition bronze sculpture by German artist Nando Kallweit is offered for an estimated value of £1,000 to £1,500 by Capital Culture Gallery via online marketplace platform Snoofa

PHOTOGRAPHS: BELLMANS; LYON & TURNBULL; SNOOFA; COTSWOLD

Our director, Emma Rutherford, was featured in an article on women working in the luxury investment sector. Emma discusses the appeal of portrait miniatures to a variety of clients. The article was also feature in The Telegraph.

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