

Bellmans to sell the Anthony Gardner Collection in April



Bellmans to sell the Collection of the late Anthony Gardner, the notable London-based jewellery dealer and collector, who specialised in the Art Nouveau and Arts & Crafts periods. The auction will take place on 16th April 2024 in Sussex, but there will be a preview in London at Cromwell Place on 12th & 13th March.

The main part of the auction will be his private collection of jewellery, including examples by Cartier, Liberty & Co, Faberge, Boucheron and others. There is also a large group of spare parts from his repairs workshop. In addition, Anthony collected silver, ceramics, glassware, paintings, furniture, books and works of art. Among them are works by Lalique, Chiparus, Liberty, Omar Ramsden and Tiffany.

Anthony Gardner (1938-2023) started The Purple Shop in the 1960s with his civil partner Michael Becker (1943-2013). They originally sold fur coats and belts on the Portobello Road market, but soon created the famous and much loved London shop and brand. Specialising in costume jewellery and later in luxury Art Nouveau antiques, they became world-leading experts in their field. Michael had an art and design background with a degree from Central St Martins.



Their business had a great following in Chelsea and further afield. They opened at a time when the Kings Road was full of creative energy and the home to contemporary designers like Vivienne Westwood, Zandra Rhodes and Mary Quant and among their customers were the likes of Princess Margaret and Barbra Streisand. Purple Shop designs and jewellery were regularly seen on catwalks across Europe and in fashion magazines.



Harrison Goldman, Auctioneer & Head of the Sale, says: "It is a great honour for Bellmans Auctioneers to have been entrusted with the collection of the late Anthony Gardner. Well known to many on the London antiques scene, Anthony and his late partner Michael Becker were popular figures particularly in jewellery dealing circles and well-remembered for 'The Purple Shop' unit within Antiquarius on the Kings Road, Chelsea. With a passion for beautiful objects, it was the Art Nouveau and Arts & Crafts period that became their particular speciality and their enthusiasm was patronised by renowned clients. This single-owner collection sale provides potential bidders with a rare opportunity to acquire a piece of late 19th century art and design, be it fine jewellery, porcelain or sculpture, many of which have not been on the open market in almost half a century."

Anthony and Michael were avid collectors and collected for over 65 years at their home in West London. Business and life partners for over 50 years, their collection includes some of the best works that undoubtedly influenced their designs and own works.

Michael was originally from Hamburg and a trained graphic designer who worked for other London fashion brands before honing his skills with jewellery making, capturing the fashions and zeitgeist of Chelsea from the late 1960s to the 1980s, but also focus on Art Nouveau items and developing an unrivalled expertise in that area.

Anthony was also a trained RADA actor in a cohort with Albert Finney, Sian Phillips, Sarah Miles and Tom Courtney. He occasionally acted on stage and screen alongside acting legends such as John Hurt, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, John Cleese and Vanessa Redgrave. One of his most memorable performances was with Elizabeth Taylor in Franco Zeffirelli's film 'The Taming of the Shrew', but he also performed on the West End stage and had several TV appearances.

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Bellmans is holding book and ceramics & glass auctions on 7 December 2023.
Auction dates for 2024: 15-17 January, 19-21 February, 25-28 March, 13-16 May and
24-26 June.

**For further press information, images or to arrange an interview, please
contact Silke Lohmann: silke@exclamationpr.co.uk or 07932 618754.**

Notes to editors:

Bellmans, founded in 1989, has grown over the years to become one of the largest auction houses in the South of England and has a significant and growing online presence. The saleroom in Wisborough Green, West Sussex, is situated between the cities of Guildford and Brighton, only eight miles from the historic town of Petworth. Our Central London office at Cromwell Place, South Kensington offers valuations and auction advice by appointment. Bellmans holds regular specialist auctions across a wide spectrum, including Asian Ceramics & Works of Art, Pictures, Jewellery, Wrist Watches, Silver, Furniture & Works of Art, Clocks, Books and European Ceramics. Their team of specialists covers a wide range of categories and offers free valuations.