



1
Robert McGregor (1847-1922)
oil on wooden panel, 'The
Darner', signed, 10 x 7in.
Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 09.
HP: £1,000. ABP: £1,176.



2
George Boyle (Exh. 1880-95)
oil on canvas, Cattle in a
meadow, signed, 18 x 22in.
Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 09.
HP: £600. ABP: £705.



3
William Mark Fisher (1841-
1923) watercolour, 'Spring',
signed and dated '83, 17.5 x
25in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr
07. HP: £2,900. ABP: £3,411.



4
Manner of John Alfred Arnesby
Brown, late 19th/ early 20thC,
cattle in a landscape under
dark clouds, unsigned on
textured paper, poss. sketch for
'In June' at the Lady Lever Art
Gallery, Liverpool, label verso,
12 x 14in, gilt frame.
Dee, Atkinson & Harrison,
Driffield. Sep 08. HP: £580.
ABP: £682.



5
Harry Fidler, cattle shaded by
trees, oil on canvas, signed
FID, 36 x 40.5cm.
Charterhouse, Sherborne. Jan
09. HP: £600. ABP: £705.



6
Samuel John Lamorna Birch,
oil, Young Girl and Pigs near
a Farmstead, signed and dated
1903, 13.25 x 9.5in, gilt frame.
Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 08. HP:
£4,800. ABP: £5,646.



7
Samuel John Lamorna Birch,
RA, RWS (1869-1955) 'The
Heart of Cornwall', signed
and inscribed verso, water-
colour, 44.5 x 60cm. Swords,
Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 05.
HP: £1,950. ABP: £2,293.



8
John Robertson Reid (1851-
1926) oil on canvas, Mussel
Gatherers, Ferryden, signed
and dated 1889, 36 x 48in.
Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 09.
HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.



9
Louis H Grimshaw 1870-1943,
Harbour scene, pen and black
ink and watercolour, signed,
inscribed '12 years old' and
dated 1882, 15.5 x 16cm.
Rosebery's, London. Mar 08.
HP: £260. ABP: £305.



10
James Paterson (1854-1932)
oil on board, Yacht on the
quay, signed, 6.5 x 9.5in.
Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 09.
HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,882.

The Art Market

By Chris Murray

There was a subtle change in sensibility in British painting during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. It was largely because of the influence of French art, above all Impressionism - brushwork became a little freer, colours brighter, and subject more likely to be taken directly from life. Working out of doors brought a greater freshness and naturalness. A simple example is Robert McGregor's (1847-1922) charming little depiction of an old woman, (1) sensitively observed and with little of the sentimentality seen in most Victorian depictions of the old. Then there's a sunny landscape (2) by the little-known George Boyle (exhibited 1880-95), and one by the much better-known American-born artist Mark Fisher (1841-1923). (3)

Continuing the 'cows in a field' theme, in September 2008 there was a painting described as being 'in the manner of' John Alfred Arnesby Brown (1866-1955), which reached only £580. (4) Brown, who was one of the artists attracted to St Ives, liked to work in the open and was particularly successful at cattle in sunlight. This work is closely related to his celebrated painting 'In June' in the Lever Gallery in Liverpool, for which it may well have been a study (though it could also be a later study of the painting by another hand) - the uncertainty over authorship kept the price down.

And then there was a version of this theme by Harry Fidler (1856-1935), (5) who is much better known for depictions of farm horses at work, works which can exceed £2,500. Oils by Samuel John Lamorna Birch (1869-1955) can reach around £9,000, so £4,800 was a bargain for a small bucolic scene, (6) though with pigs this time. A fine watercolour landscape by him sold for £1,950. (7)

John Robertson Reid (1851-1926) was a Scottish painter who spent a great deal of time in England, and who in later life painted alongside the keen amateur Winston Churchill. This oil in a popular nineteenth century genre (life by the sea) contains a portrait of the mother and child that looks particularly fine. (8) It sold for £1,700 in February 2009; only three months earlier it had sold for less than half that figure.

Louis H. Grimshaw (1870-1943) established a reputation for his ports and harbours. Condition may have let it down, but (9) is still a characterful study of Scarborough, painted (according to an inscription) when he was only 12. It sold for £260, at much the same time a similar watercolour by him sold for three times that figure. His oils of similar subjects can on good days reach around £40,000.

A small and atmospheric harbour view in oils by the much travelled James Paterson (1854-1932) was not expensive at £1,600; (10) in May 2008, a watercolour of the harbour at Honfleur by him sold for well over £3,000. William Thornley (1857-1935) was also a painter of coastal scenes, and though he studied under French teachers, his style (11) remained curiously old fashioned when compared with those of his contemporaries, such as Thornley and Nelson Dawson (1859-1941). Best known as an Arts and Crafts jeweller and potter, Dawson painted occasional marines, usually in watercolour, so it was interesting to see an oil in his typically light colours. (12) His prints, with the characteristically rich tones of drypoints, are commoner; they are much sought after, so two signed prints for £130 was very good value. (13) Also good value was a celebrated etching by Arthur Briscoe (1873-1943), an extraordinary semi-abstract depiction of a ship's rigging. (14) And while we are on the subject of prints from this era, two etchings by William Lee-Hankey (1869-1952), one a landscape and one a typical Lee-Hankey mother and child, reached only £160, which was low. (15)

Among the various works to catch the eye was a modest little oil of Chinese children, described as from the 'Circle of Muller'. (16) An

attractive picture for £200, and with the current success of the Chinese economy nineteenth century Chinese subjects can sell very well not just in Hong Kong and Shanghai (where over the last few years an active auction scene has emerged) but also here if Chinese interest is alerted. Another interesting oil (17) was a very small country scene with horses by Wilhelm Velten (1847-1929); a Russian who settled in Munich during the 1880s, he specialised in history and genre scenes featuring horses, usually on a very small format. About £1,000 is usual, sometimes nearly £2,000, so £400 was a bargain. (18) And then there was a gorgeous floral piece by the Impressionist Margaret Fisher Prout (1875-1963), a well-respected artist (a similar work in the Tate) whose works are I think largely undervalued. She was, incidentally, the daughter of Mark Fisher. (3)

Flowers also feature in a limited edition lithograph by David Hockney (1937-), which reached a substantial £5,200. (19) Also among the prints, a silkscreen by the well-established Bridget Riley (1931-) reached £2,500, (20) while for the more adventurous there was a Damien Hirst for £1,500. (21) Two sales of drawings tell very different stories. A sketch Alfred Munnings (1878-1959) made of himself at an easel (on a sheet that included and a caricature of a figure riding a wooden horse), realised £2,500, (22) which is a significant amount for a casual sketch, even if it does have a biographical significance. (though his particularly fine drawings of horses and country life can fetch up to £10,000) Then there were three portraits in the sensitive, Romantic style of the early nineteenth century. (23) Just as three anonymous portraits these were surely worth £110. What's surprising, however, is that two of them were of one of the most fascinating artists of the nineteenth century, John Martin (1798-1854), famous for his vast scenes of apocalyptic destruction. I would have thought that that would have pushed the price up considerably.

To continue the drawing theme, I can't resist mentioning - even at the risk of seeming to have a bovine obsession - a wonderful drawing of a cow by the irrepressible John Byrne (1940-), a parody of the stylised nineteenth century naive paintings of cattle, with the markings taking on a compositional life of their own. (24) A snip at £160.



William Thornley, 1857-1935, oil on canvas, Fishing boats returning to harbour, signed, 10 x 16in. Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 08. HP: £1,000. ABP: £1,176.



Nelson Dawson (1859-1941) unframed oil on canvas, 'The Prussian' ashore under Dover Cliffs', signed, 25 x 30in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 08. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



Nelson Dawson, Sails in Scarborough Harbour and Storms in Harbour Mouth, pair of drypoints initialled in the plate, signed in pencil, 9.25 x 11in, ebonised frames. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 07. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



Arthur Briscoe (1873-1943) unframed etching, The Main Rigging, signed, 9 x 13in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



William Lee-Hankey RBA RE ROI 1869-1952, Mother and child, etching, feigned vignette, signed with monogram within plate, signed in pencil, artist's blind stamp, 23.5 x 19.3cm, with an etching of a landscape by same hand, 15.5 x 23.7cm. (2) Rosebery's, London. Mar 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



Circle of Muller; oil on canvas, Chinese children beside a stream, 14 x 18in. Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 09. HP: £200. ABP: £235.



Wilhelm Velten, pair of oil on boards, signed with initials, horses and figures in wooded landscapes, 4 x 6.5in. Biddle & Webb, Birmingham. Feb 09. HP: £400. ABP: £470.



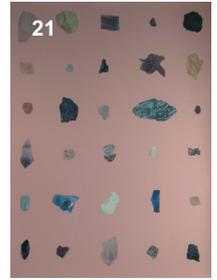
Margaret Fisher Prout, signed, dated 1940, oil on board, impressionist still life study of flowers in a bowl, 'Grand Boquet', Beaux Arts Gallery label verso, 28.5 x 23.25in. Biddle & Webb, Birmingham. Feb 09. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.



David Hockney, 1937-, Pretty Tulips, coloured Ltd Edn lithograph, No 34/200, titled, signed by artist, dated 70 in pencil, 28 x 19.5in, silvered frame. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Nov 08. HP: £5,200. ABP: £6,116.



Bridget Riley (b.1931) 'Fire Bird 1971', signed, dated, silk screen print, paper, inscribed artist's proof, 76 x 101cm, glazed. Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Jul 08. HP: £2,500. ABP: £2,940.



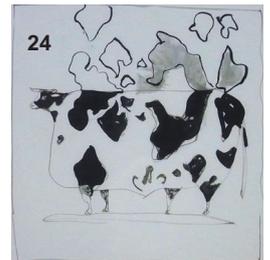
Damien Hirst (b.1965) from The London Portfolio 'Untitled', study of mineral deposits, screenprint on paper, 64 x 64cm. Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Jul 08. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.



Sir Alfred James Munnings, 96 degrees - Increasing to 100, pencil, signed and dated from A.J Munnings/April 11 1924, 20 x 25 cm, with photo of the artist executing the finished portrait of Mrs Park Frew. Charterhouse, Sherborne. Jan 09. HP: £2,500. ABP: £2,940.



British School, early 19thC, Portrait of the artist, John Martin 1789-1854, head study, inscribed and dated July 30th 1830, 25 x 20cm, with a similar study depicting the artist David Roberts RA 1796-1854, head and shoulders, pencil and water-colour wash, inscribed and one further pencil study depicting the artist John Martin reading. (3) mounted. (unframed) Rosebery's, London. Jan 09. HP: £110. ABP: £129.



John Byrne (b.1940) pen and wash, 'Cow'. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Dec 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.