

Rhinebeck's Fall Antiques Harvest Wends Down Ruby Lane

ONLINE — It was high irony in a virtual antiques show where the tagline was “Treasures At A Click,” host Leigh Keno, well-known for appearances on the *Antiques Roadshow*, was regaling Kingston, N.Y., dealer Judy Milne with the story of how as youngsters he and his brother Leslie would climb perilous barn roofs to bring down antique weather-vanes. The reminiscence was part of a video prepared for online visitors to Barn Star Productions' Antiques at Rhinebeck fall edition, and Keno, sponsor of the

online show, November 13-15 on the RubyLane.com platform, prepared a dozen of them with participating dealers to both educate and entertain. For event manager Frank Gaglio, securing Keno's participation along with 40 of Rhinebeck's core dealers was a way to differentiate the event in the absence of bringing folks to the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in the time of Covid-19. “Leigh's knowledge and hands-on experience has been recognized throughout our industry from his tenure on the

Antiques Roadshow to specialized auctions presenting exceptional Americana and folk art throughout the years,” said Gaglio. “Additionally, Leigh brings a level of expertise and enthusiasm to every object he places his seal of approval on, and that is what we attempt to bring to the fall Antiques at Rhinebeck online show.” Virtual shows have become a lifeline during lockdown, and while Gaglio said he believes the future of indoor brick-and-mortar shows is still pending, having an online option is better than merely canceling shows until the all-clear signal arrives. “I'm always happy once a show is over, but the best thing is to hear that the dealers did some business, that some new customers found the site.” Gaglio added that while not all the analytics from the show, such as page views, return visits, etc., were available, he believed it was

successful, adding, “The dealers were up for the game. I'm really glad with how everything worked out.” The show began on November 13 at 9 am (its busiest day) and continued through November 15, midnight, Eastern Standard Time. It was the fourth such online show that Ruby Lane has produced with Barn Star, according to Alex Gardner, marketing and business development coordinator at Ruby Lane. “We have produced 13 online shows in total with more exciting shows to come, including the first ever Brimfield Holiday Market scheduled for November 27-29, and Lux Events — The Holiday Show scheduled for December 4-6,” said Gardner. Ruby Lane regular and New Canaan, Conn., antiques dealer Patricia Funt said the three-day selling event went well for her. “I sold a number of pieces. My favorite sale was a Nineteenth Centu-

ry carved wooden ladle with an eagle head. It shows some very challenging carving skills from whoever made it. That ladle buyer also went to my permanent Ruby Lane Shop and bought some more at the same time. That was nice. At a live show, there's always something you wish you had taken that you left behind — this time some people did venture to my permanent store to find many more things.” Having done a number of online shows, Funt observed some interesting contrasts. “As a person who sells smalls and jewelry, I take hundreds of things to live shows and that's not going to work online. But there is something to be said for zeroing in on fewer items — they get more attention that way, and yet you don't get to show them among a wide range of things as in a store or live show. Also, as the show opens, in a conventional show the crowd comes in and you see the action — online you really can't really feel what's



Among fine art offered by David Smernoff was this trompe l'oeil table top still life, oil on wooden board, 11 by 15 inches. Smernoff said he was not sure if this is an American or European painting.



Joseph Eliot Enneking, (American, 1881-1942), “November,” early Twentieth Century, oil on board, 12 by 14 inches. The impressionist painting captures the mood and softness of a bucolic autumn day. Blue Heron Fine Art, Cohasset, Mass.



Neverbird Antiques offered an antique Canadian family record sampler with original and brilliant color. It was created in 1829 by 9-year-old Lucy B. Smith (1820-1836) in her hometown of Stanstead, Estrie Region of Quebec (then Lower Canada). Lucy died at age 16, but her sampler survived in full color remembrance.

Host Leigh Keno Educates & Entertains

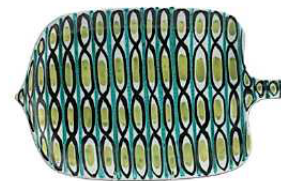


Featured in a video chat with Leigh Keno and Judy Milne of At Home Antiques, Kingston, N.Y., was this American molded sheet copper prancing “Hambletonian” horse weathervane. From the late Nineteenth Century, the vane featured a full body form with a molded head and dents to body, probably caused by BB pellets.



This Hudson Valley kas shown by Jenkinson Antiques was mid-Eighteenth Century and made mostly of gumwood. Its form was similar to several from the Albany, N.Y., area.

Review by W.A. Demers, Senior Editor
Photos Courtesy Show Dealers



A Twentieth Century decorative arts high-light was this Stig Lindberg (1916-1982) large faience leaf platter, 12 by 89 inches, manufactured by Gustavsberg, Sweden, in the 1950s. It was offered by Hamel20, Red Hook, N.Y.



Cobblestone Antiques showcased an early to mid-Twentieth Century wooden trade sign of woman in dress and cap with pie in hand, painted in blue and white original paint. The Dutch maid design is reminiscent of logo from Baker's Baking Chocolate or various Dutch Maid branded products. A great piece for kitchen or restaurant decor.



Harold Cole & Bettina Krainen Antiques offered this pair of mid-Eighteenth Century Queen Anne side chairs with shaped crest and vase-turned splats, bulbous turned front stretchers, ending in pad feet. Each chair had the following history tacked to the bottom: “Purchased from Mrs Catherine Curtis of Ct from the old homestead of Putnam. Ct., of Gen. Israel Putnam of the battle of Bunker hill of June 1775 and probably this chair was used by him in his Ct home.”



Lori Frandino has been offering antique rugs to the trade and public for more than 28 years in Walpole N.H. This early Twentieth Century Kazak 3-foot-8-inch-by-5-foot-3-inch example was woven in the South Caucasus. Its bold primitive design featured a couple of small gold birds and critters to boot.

happening until people start to buy. In a live show, the people feel the urge to buy when others are around, and that also means if there isn't a good crowd the buying falls off. Online buyers can't be sure that someone won't buy something out from under them — so they feel that pressure to buy. In fact, I did have a person asking for a better price on an inkwell, and shortly after she decided to buy it, someone else had already purchased it for the asking price."

Funt looks forward to getting back to selling in person. "Nothing can substitute for personal contact and being able to examine things and hold them in your hands," she said. "And you don't have to box and ship everything! And yet, I did get a call from Seattle about a Northwest Coast piece I'm selling. That wouldn't happen in a live show."

Funt's bottom line: "There are good points to both online and live shows. So, I will stick with the good quality online shows like this one for now, and I'm glad we are doing the safe thing until we beat this pandemic."

Twentieth Century decorative arts were ably represented by Hamel20, a Red Hook, N.Y., business owned by Bill Hamel. "Frank did a wonderful job organizing and promoting this event by having Leigh Keno be the face of the show and having Ruby Lane host it. While I did not make any sales during the show, I had a number of inquiries and requests for information, and it certainly drove a lot of traffic to my website. Based on those inquiries, I'm confident there will be some post-show sales that will not have happened otherwise."

Hamel added that adapting to the online show paradigm is something that both dealers and the antiques and art shopping public need to embrace. "It's not likely we will be doing live person shows for some time. The videos that we did with Leigh Keno were a great way to introduce ourselves and the objects to the public and I think that helped bridge the gap between in-person and online. I look forward to doing them again, and I hope more of the regular dealers will show up in the future."

Also not making any sales this time out but finding a silver thread in the virtual showroom experience was Walpole, N.H., Oriental rug expert Lori Frandino. "Though there was some interest in a few of my rugs, I didn't sell anything. But I actually had someone make an appointment to come see all of my inventory, so that's something — and they are four hours away so they must be serious. I vastly prefer 'real' shows! We almost always have good to great results, and



Greg K. Kramer & Co. had this covered stoneware presentation cake crock, cobalt blue with incised birds and stars and inscribed for "Mrs. S.A. Eddy." With a rare inset lid, stepped finial and cobalt decoration, it was probably from Somerset Pottery Works in Massachusetts and stood 10 1/2 inches high.

the extra time and physical labor is well worth it. I think that folks are more comfortable buying old rugs when they can actually see and touch them in person. So I'll be so happy when it's safe enough for the in-person shows to return!"

Recently relocated to the Berkshires, Jamie Shenkman, formerly of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., reported that the virtual Rhinebeck show drew attention to her Ruby Lane shop. "A few pieces in my shop sold, as did several in the Rhinebeck show. One buyer remarked, 'I look forward to doing business with you again in the future.' That, from a new customer, was very encouraging! I also liked the way the items were displayed, in a continuous horizontal format, which was different and more exciting than static photos."

Joanne and Brian Kaley of Cobblestone Antiques, Pleasant Valley, N.Y., are Rhinebeck regulars, and they have done all of Gaglio's online shows this year as well as the Brimfield show. "Overall, the year has been a learning opportunity for promoters, dealers and buyers as online shows have virtually replaced all live shows," said the couple. "Our feeling is that Frank correctly viewed what would be the protracted impact of the pandemic on our industry and early on embraced the transition to online shows. He also realized the need to have an established partner like Ruby Lane to make it all happen. As dealers, it helped speed up our development of an online 'footprint' that all dealers need to have today, regardless of the pandemic. We also have Frank to thank for giving us an alternative show format rather than just show cancellations throughout the year."

The Kaleys said that bringing in Leigh Keno to headline this show was a good way to get more atten-



Rhinebeck Antiques Emporium provided the setting for the *Antiques Roadshow*-like videos with Leigh Keno. Here emporium owner Jay Grutman and Keno discuss the portrait by itinerant painter Ammi Phillips (1788-1865, active 1810 to 1860). Phillips traveled between Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York. This portrait is of a member of the Newkirk Family of West Hurley, N.Y. He is painted sitting in a fancy chair holding Milton's works. The painting was done somewhere between 1815 and 1820.



The buyer of this Nineteenth Century carved wooden ladle with an eagle head offered by Patricia Funt in the online show later went to the dealer's Ruby Lane shop and bought some more items. "That was nice," said Funt.



Berkshires-based jewelry specialist Jamie Shenkman offered this Seidengang sterling silver amethyst necklace with detachable pin, an estate piece.



From Patricia Funt Antiques came this antique Chinese famille rose Cadogan porcelain teapot from the mid to late Nineteenth Century. The teapot is in the form of a peach, which symbolizes immortality, or a long and healthy life.



Holden Antiques presented a wonderfully stylish carved wood Great Blue Heron mounted on driftwood.

tion and interest. "In terms of comparing live versus online shows, the momentum is certainly building for online, but our observation is that dealer participation and volume of business and customer 'attendance' still, understandably, lag the live show format. That said, we had a good show selling four items, including an Adirondack oil painting as well as ceramic and nautical items. Buyers were from throughout the country, which is certainly different from the typical live show. Also, most buyers are now clearly quite sophisticated with respect to buying items online so that bodes well for increased comfort with the format going forward."

The Holdens, Anita and Ed, are also among Gaglio's cadre of Rhinebeck regulars. Ed said he credits the show's leadership — Gaglio, Keno and Gardner — with going above and beyond, using some innovative experimentation in an attempt to elevate the show's importance and to distinguish it from others. "They all did a great deal of work, and it all looked great, and now we will just have to see how it worked out in the numbers" said Ed Holden. "Regardless I applaud their efforts as experimentation in these early days of online show



This coastal scene is Wesley Elbridge Webber (1841-1941), who painted with J.J. Enneking and Frank Shapleigh and exhibited at the Boston Art Club, and the Peabody Museum in Salem. The painting is an oil on canvas signed lower left, measuring 14 by 22 inches. Art & Antique Gallery, Worcester, Mass.

development is important. Some things will work, some will not. In any case a lot of innovation is going to be needed to make online shows a consistent success. Right now, it is pretty boring as you go through thousands of items in a lifeless matrix of small photos."

In terms of results, the Holdens, who winter in Naples, Fla., exhibited about 60 items, all smaller items and generally at lower price points. "We had just come home to Naples and had a limited inven-

tory to work with. Plus, I generally believe that these current online shows do not work well with more expensive items or larger, difficult or costly to ship items. We did sell 15 items, all under \$200 and most under \$100. We did have buyers from the West Coast and East Coast, but pretty much all seeking lower value items."

For information, www.barnstar.com, 914-474-8552; www.rubylane.com or 203-918-1673.