

## Around the Galleries

# Treasure House Fair

With everything from sculptures to supercars on show, the summer event promises opulence and a carnival atmosphere, writes *Michael Delgado*



1. *The Paisley Lawn Tennis Club*, 1889, Sir John Lavery (1856–1941), oil on canvas, 63.5 x 76.2cm. Richard Green, London

While Treasure House Fair is holding its third edition this year, one of its founders, Thomas Woodham-Smith, seems to have some of the great London fairs of the past on his mind. ‘We walk in the shadow of Masterpiece, and also of the Grosvenor House Antiques Fair,’ he says. Of course, he is also one of those involved in founding Masterpiece in 2009. When the fair – then under the ownership of MCH Group, which also owns Art Basel – folded at the start of 2023, he and his colleague Harry Van der Hoorn were quick to set up this successor. Returning this year to the Royal Hospital Chelsea – which also hosted Masterpiece – Treasure House is designed to be at once ‘very commercial’ and a ‘cultural, gastronomic, alcoholic event’ which harnesses the ‘magic pixie dust of London in the summer’.

Some 70 dealers and exhibitors, both established and newcomers, are arriving at Treasure House this year, bringing a range of antiques, decorative arts, paintings and more that includes the usual displays of antique silver, porcelain, jewellery, furniture and

so forth, seasoned with some more curious pieces, among which is a drawing of a boat made by King Charles III as a child, from Robert Young Antiques. Several exhibitors are making their debuts this year, including AtKris Studio, a young Dutch gallery exhibiting in the UK for the first time, with a collection of 20th-century Italian furniture and decorative arts, by Gio Ponti and others.

This edition also includes a non-selling exhibition, ‘The Brilliant Bugattis’, curated by the sculpture expert Edward Horswell. Taking in some of Ettore Bugatti’s pioneering cars, as well as bronze sculptures produced by his brother Rembrandt and their father Carlo’s furniture designs, the show speaks to Woodham-Smith’s passion for ‘cross-generational stories’. So too does a, exhibition by Mica Bowman, who is showing contemporary sculptures alongside the 19th-century works brought by her father, the Rodin expert Robert Bowman. This, for Woodham-Smith, is key to the ethos of the fair: celebrating the greats but also ‘the new masters [...] the treasures of the future’.

While part of the appeal for dealers is ‘the draw of London as a trading hub’ – around a third of exhibitors are from abroad – for punters, the fair is designed to be a ‘cultural package’. This year, Treasure House is expanding its sculpture walk with a display of everything from 18th-century bronzes to contemporary works that meanders through the Royal Hospital and out into the gardens. ‘We like giving people what they want rather than telling them what they want,’ Woodham-Smith says, and while a ‘visually impactful’ bar-cum-kitchen-cum-art-experience, for instance, may not be what everyone wants, the variety of Treasure House means that there is sure to be something to satisfy the pickiest customers. There is certainly no denying Woodham-Smith’s enthusiasm, his relentlessly can-do attitude. ‘If an opportunity came up to move the whole thing to Mars, we’d find a way,’ he tells me – and I think I believe him. **A**

**Treasure House Fair takes place at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London, from 26 June–1 July ([treasurehousefair.com](https://treasurehousefair.com)).**