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Los Angeles (CA), USA

« MASSIVE FAIL AT AUCTION »

How to sell a Craigslist level trifle for a 5 figures design masterpiece!

Misattributions flood the art market and especially the design segment. Docantic, the online resource for 20th Century furniture and works of art documentation, recently launched *The Patrol*, a service dedicated to catching and apprehending misattributed artworks at auction. This whistleblower's mission is to *Serve and Protect* the art community and inform of the truth by exposing those whose actions are detrimental to the integrity of the art market.

Case #5641: on May 2016, Palm Beach Modern Auctions sold for \$3,300 combined two occasional tables that were described as a design from French most-bankable mid-century designer, Jean Royère. This artist is known for his fairly small-scale production and the number of such "tables" that floods the market at auction, private galleries and flea markets draw *The Patrol's* attention.

In the past years, the very same model was sold by several auction houses that all shared the same assignation than the Florida based one. Skinner (Massachusetts) sold one in 2014 for \$1,722; Rago (New Jersey) in 2012 for \$3,375... and Tajan (France) performed at the highest in 2003 with a €12,000 sale, and is most likely the one who inspired this neglectful attribution.

Thanks to *The Patrol's* investigative team, the proper origin of this five figures valued work was made in Northern-America in the early 70s and is none other than the stand of a fish tank! Thanks to weeks of investigation, the irrefutable proof was shared with *The Patrol* by well-respected California-based fishkeeping collector, Gary Bagnall, who provided a March 1973 issue of *Tropical Fish Hobbyist* in which the tank was advertised. Although dozen of specialists were capable to identify *O'Dell Aquarium Manufacturing* as the genuine maker, Bagnall was the only one able to endorse his expertise with an undisputable proof. The solution came from the documentation... this is why Docantic was created!

This case serves as a reminder of January 11th 2016 Antique Road Show's massive fail. The episode showed off specialist Stephen Fletcher (who also happens to be Chief Auctioneer Director at Skinner) valuing a 19th Century grotesque figures jug for \$50,000... that turned out to be from Elizabeth Soul, a former Oregon artschooler that made it in the mid-70s. A few weeks later, the TV show posted an update on its website, admitting the grotesque fail.

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Based in Los Angeles, Docantic's team provides leading-edge identification services for 20th Century furniture and works of art. Docantic ensures that design works receive precise attribution and accurate documentation, so that collectors may sell and/or purchase works at the fair market price.

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