

Title:

Not Savvy Collecting

Word Count:

469

Summary:

Original paintings by Renoir, Chagall, Picasso, Rembrandt and Mary Cassatt at a discount buying club??? Embarking more than 25 miles each way to experience possibly original prints by these artists, I figured the press release was probably only slightly errant. Almost no Rembrandt paintings in private hands are available for sale anywhere in the world, much less as part of a 3 day art trunk show at a discount buying club.

The named art dealer was from a seemingly swank So...

Keywords:

fine art,southwestern art,paintings,prints,native american art,native american basketry and crafts

Article Body:

Original paintings by Renoir, Chagall, Picasso, Rembrandt and Mary Cassatt at a discount buying club??? Embarking more than 25 miles each way to experience possibly original prints by these artists, I figured the press release was probably only slightly errant. Almost no Rembrandt paintings in private hands are available for sale anywhere in the world, much less as part of a 3 day art trunk show at a discount buying club.

The named art dealer was from a seemingly swank Southern California locale. Some degree of suspicion results, as mention of this location is designed to trigger a certain poshness. There are reputable art businesses in this locale alongside those who consciously prey on the uninformed spontaneous art buyers. Other potential victim zones in the U.S. are Carmel, California; Honolulu, Hawaii and Scottsdale, Arizona. Travelers far away from the pressures of work, often in the company of a favorite companion, spend dollars with relative abandon. In short, they don't comparison shop or do their homework.

There were paintings by an artist with a French last name, a relative no-name artist. The omission of this individual's last name caused me to wonder. Didn't the seller know his/her first name? Was the viewer to think "If I ask, he'll think I don't know who the really famous French artists are?"

The remaining golden opportunities consisted of original lithographs by Marc Chagall, unsigned meaning they were originally tipped into books. These have some value but are generally not rabidly pursued or priced so aggressively. The Rembrandt etchings were 19th century impressions. As Rembrandt lived and worked during the 17th century, his etching plates were frequently re-etched over the next two centuries, seriously altering the appearance of the resulting etchings. Practiced art buyers do not knock themselves out to acquire the later impressions, especially for the prices presented.

The Mary Cassatt etchings were replica etchings made in France from the original plates long after Mary died. The Louvre has a division that creates and sells posthumous prints from plates residing there. These typically sell for a few hundred dollars, not thousands as they were priced in the discount buying club.

In short, these opportunities were fool's gold. Here are some tips that will help you avoid getting hurt:

If unsure about a purchase, ask for a photograph and description then hire a Fine Art appraiser to carry out research pronto!

To find a designated Fine Art appraiser, American Society of Appraisers' website is www.appraisers.org.

No self control? Ask about their return policy and make sure your receipt includes artist's name, title of work, date of work, medium, condition of art and frame and the price plus all the dealer's contact information.

Remember, if it looks too good to be true it probably is.