

Antique Oriental Carpet Tops Sotheby's Curatorial Auction



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“Another example of the interest in the best of the best” comments Claremont Rug Company's international rug expert; sells at nearly three times estimate.

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Jan David Winitz, an eminent art dealer who specializes in antique Oriental rugs, today commented that the sale of a 16th century Isfahan Persian carpet for nearly three times its high estimate was another indication that art collectors continued to focus on the “best of the best.”

The carpet, which attracted a bid of \$1.93 million (U.S.), was the highlight of last week's Sotheby's “Masterworks” auction, an assemblage of 22 items curated from a variety of collecting segments. Its value was fully 36 percent of the total sales for the auction.

Last week, Claremont Rug Company, which Winitz founded in 1980, mounted its third annual, online “best of the best” antique Persian rug exhibition and the “response from clients and visitors to our website has been extremely positive,” he said. He added. “In fact, a number of our clients internationally have asked to be put on waiting lists for when more best-of-the-best quality antique rugs become available. “

“I have been emphasizing to my inner circle of clients for many years that best of the best quality antique Oriental carpets are as good as gold, only much rarer. The Sotheby's sale is yet another example.”

According to a rugs and carpets specialist at Sotheby's in New York, the rug, woven during the Safavid Dynasty, had sold 10 years ago at the auction gallery for \$420,000. “Our experience is that really good pieces will sell well,” he said. “This rug was classical, in really good condition with excellent provenance. We considered it museum quality.”

Winitz added, “Great uniqueness, excellent quality and above all an awe-inspiring level of beauty reigns paramount for buyers of art-level antique rugs.”

The price of \$1.93 million level was in line with the pre-sale interest in the Isfahan carpet. “There was active bidding from a number of bidders,” the Sotheby's spokesperson said. “We knew that this would happen from the reaction to the catalogue. For a rug to be in the Masterworks auction, it has have provenance and be quite rare.”