

## **A Stylish Newport Antiques Show**

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By David S. Smith

Newport, R.I.

The Newport Jazz Festival was not the only thing in town over the weekend of August 7–9 that was making for lively times and sweet music. Moving to a beat of its own, the Newport Antiques Show opened across town on Friday evening, with a well-attended gala preview party and continued its two-day run over the course of the weekend.

Featuring 42 dealers, the elegant and tasteful displays catered toward the upscale Newport crowd with a wide range of merchandise that spanned the centuries. Merchandise included everything from a Sixteenth Century illuminated manuscript ready to be placed on a shelf to Twentieth Century wicker settees all set for a veranda with an ocean view. Although set up in a hockey rink, this show does the impossible and conceals it. Similar to a cocoon, it opens into a spectacular vision of exquisite antiques displayed in intertwining aisles.

A benefit for the Newport Historical Society and the Boys and Girls Club of Newport County, the show is managed by Diana Bittel.

A special loan exhibit on display, "Maps From The Collections of The Newport Historical Society," traced the history of Newport. Beginning with a 1712 example by John Mumford that displayed an al-ready developed town, the exhibition continued with the 1777 "Blaskowitz" map that depicted a bustling commercialized downtown area. Paper conservator Elizabeth Combs was also on hand Saturday morning to discuss her role in the restoration of the maps from the collection.

While the entrance at St George's School had not changed, a revised and dramatic entryway onto the floor of the show was a topic of conversation. It proved to be both visually appealing and effective, delivering showgoers into an open area in the corner of the show's floor and offering them several options in regard to a path to follow. Some were attracted by the uniquely flavored Americana offered immediately on their left in the stand of Cunha-St John, some to the exceptional artwork displayed across



*Quester Gallery, Rowayton, Conn.*



*Raccoon Creek Antiques, LLC at Oley Forge, Oley, Penn.*

The booth of Newport art dealer William Vareika proved to be a unique study center for the paintings of William Trost Richards. More than 30 examples were on display, ranging from monumental local scenes to a series of smaller, yet equally impressive, works. "Sunset at Second Beach, Near Newport R.I., 1891," is arguably one of the artist's masterpieces and it dominated the rear wall of the stand. A watercolor titled "A Rhode Island Farmhouse" by Richards was attracting attention, as was another watercolor, "Morning: Old Fort (Dumpling), Conanicut, R.I.," 1874.

Vareika, the show's sponsor, stated that "Richards is one of the many important American artists who found special inspiration in the sublime natural environment and unique societies of Newport and the Narragansett Bay region." The dealer was conducting his summer exhibition concurrently with the show that features more than 100 works by Richards.

While outside of the Richards theme, but still within the local theme, other stellar works in Vareika's booth included Childe Hassam's "Newport 1901," price on request, and John Henry Twachtman's "Paradise Rocks, Newport" that was marked \$750,000. George Wesley Bellows' oil "The Tree," 1918, was another work of note that was marked \$450,000.

For further information, [www.newportantiquesshow.com](http://www.newportantiquesshow.com) or 401-846-2669.

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