

# Priory Works collection to come up for auction

Duke's Auctioneers has announced a sale celebrating the shared passion, vision, and collecting journey of Michelle and Stuart Fraserclarke.

For many years, Michelle and Stuart carefully assembled a distinctive collection of antiques, decorative objects, furnishings, and curiosities, each piece chosen for its character, history, and charm. Originally intended as the opening stock for an ambitious new antiques destination at Priory Works in Bridport, this collection now forms the centrepiece of a unique auction marking the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

Stuart enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a professional stuntman, spanning almost four decades. Beginning in 1986, he worked on some of cinema's most celebrated productions and was privileged to serve as Russell Crowe's stunt double in films including *Gladiator*, *Master and Commander*, and *Cinderella Man*. While his career was defined by extraordinary action sequences and demanding stunt work, friends often note that one of his most recognisable contributions is the famous hand passing through the cornfield in *Gladiator*.

Following his retirement due to ill health, Stuart embarked on a new adventure in Bridport alongside Michelle, whose lifelong passion for antiques inspired a shared dream of opening an antiques business at Priory Works. The pair acquired the building with the intention of transforming it into a destination for collectors and enthusiasts. However, after more than a year of unsuccessful planning applications to change the property's use from storage to retail, the project became increasingly challenging. Combined with personal circumstances, these difficulties ultimately led Michelle and Stuart to make the difficult decision to part ways and begin new chapters in their lives.

The sale therefore represents not only a collection of antiques, but the culmination of a shared vision. Every lot has been selected with enthusiasm, knowledge, and affection, reflecting years of collecting and a genuine appreciation for craftsmanship, design, and social history.

For Michelle, whose particular interest lies in the stories objects tell about everyday life, the auction is especially poignant.



*Stuart and Michelle*

'My passion has always been social history, and for many years I have dreamed of opening my own antiques shop. This collection was intended to become the foundation stock for Priory Works. Sadly, that vision did not come to fruition, and the last two years have been both challenging and emotional. However, I firmly believe in looking forward.'

A devoted member of the Bridport antiques community, Michelle has already established herself at the Alleyways Antique Centre, where she has enjoyed becoming part of a thriving and supportive team. Looking ahead, she plans to open a smaller antiques shop in the town and continue sharing her passion with fellow collectors and customers.

'Bridport has been incredibly welcoming and kind, and it remains a wonderful place to call home. My hope is that the pieces in this collection will find new homes with people who appreciate them as much as we have. Letting them go is not easy—I am known for becoming attached to my treasures—so there may well be a few tears on auction day.'

The live auction will take place on Wednesday 12th August at 10.30am in the Duke's Dorchester Fine Art Saleroom. Viewing and collection will be in Bridport.

*For further information, catalogue information, and bidding details, please contact Duke's directly enquiries@dukes-auctions.com. Tel: 01305 265080. www.dukes-auctions.com.*