

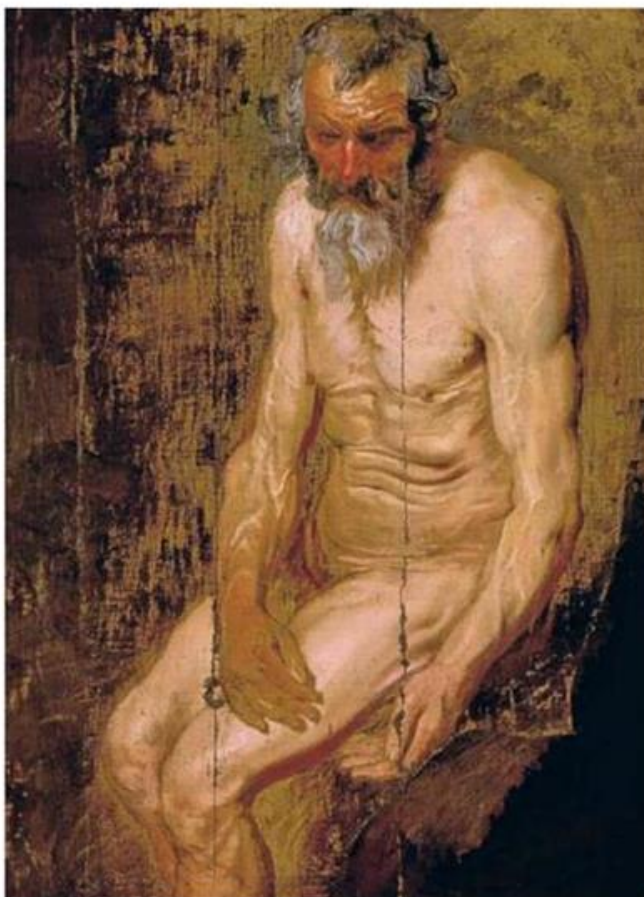
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Hidden treasures in the attic



**Elizabeth
Birdthistle**

Affordable art, marriage spoons and diamonds in January sales show there might be treasures hiding in your home



■ Clockwise from main: A Sketch for Saint Jerome by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, a new discovery purchased for \$600. It is now expected to achieve somewhere between \$2-\$3m at a Sotheby's sale in New York; Marianne Ayren-McElroy, Running Man, Adam's, (€80-€120); Hector McDonnell, Antler Inn, Adam's (€500-€800); Arthur Armstrong, Near Ballyconneely Adam's (€2,000-€3,000)



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Now that festivities are well and truly over, it's that time of year for a good spring clean. Auction houses are currently consigning works for sale, and you never know what you might find lurking in the rear of some press or attic in your home that could be sold off.

Last year was a considerable one in terms of rediscoveries. Hanging over a 90-year-old woman's bed in London – discovered when she was transferred to a nursing home – was *The Depiction of the Madonna and Child* by a follower of the Italian Renaissance painter Filippino Lippi. The painting sold for £255,000 (€288,728) at Dawson's Auctioneers in June.

A lost painting, of a young woman by Umberto Boccioni, which was picked up for £100 (€113), is now estimated to be worth in excess of €250,000. A weathered sculpture, that sold for £5,200 (€5,896) at a garden statuary sale, turned out to be a long lost work of Antonio Canova. It is now estimated to be worth £5 million-£8 million (€5.6 million-€9 million) according to Christie's.

To kick start 2023, Sotheby's Masters Week (now open in New York) features *A Sketch for Saint Jerome* by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, a new discovery from the artists' earlier work, originally purchased for \$600 (€552). It is now expected to achieve somewhere between \$2 million-\$3 million (€1.8 million-€2.8 million) – a nice return on an investment originally picked up in a farm shed.

But these are rare enough finds and with access to research on the internet, auctioneers seldom miss a piece – known as a sleeper – these days.

What January does offer, however, are some clearance sales, so it can be a good place to start a collection or indeed a great place to seek out a bargain.

Adam's first sale of 2023 is its online picture sale, a timed auction of 300 lots which is currently open, ending on Tuesday, January 31st. With many lots listed without a reserve, it's a good place for affordable artworks by both established and lesser known painters.

Highlights from the sale are selected works from the collection of Patrick MacEntee, a Dublin barrister with an interesting eclectic assemblage, though his big ticket artworks will form part of the auction houses' Important Irish Art sale in March.

"His taste was varied and we see everything from early illuminated manuscripts, to 18th-century portraits, to French and American abstract expressionists," according to Nicholas Gore Grimes of Adam's.

Works by John Luke that include car-

toons and detailed nudes feature alongside artworks by Arthur Armstrong, TP Flanagan and Chris Wilson.

Viewing in person

January 31st also marks the first sale of 2023 for auctioneer John Weldon in Temple Bar. With more than 260 lots, Weldon says he is still conducting live online sales as they have worked so well over the past few years. He recommends attending a viewing in person to see goods on offer as web pictures should not be relied on because they can look larger or smaller and the colour too can be off in photographs. He also cautions:

"Don't get carried away and set yourself a limit."

Weldon has a selection of diamond rings and a colourful diamond and multi-gem gold brooch by Alabaster and Wilson, the century old English craft maker known for high quality pieces (€300-€500). He has two videos on his Instagram reel of a table canteen of cutlery that sits in an attractive two drawer table. Estimated at €2,000-€3,000 with 124 pieces for 12 place settings, it was made in Sheffield circa 1930. "I reckon it will find a new home easily and go back into service as the contents are quality," Weldon says.



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And for those lucky enough to have an orchard, the sale lists an Irish silver apple corer, from 1830s Dublin. Describing it as "a cool gadget", Weldon says it's "something for the person who has everything" (€30-€50).

Taking place on February 1st in Bandon is Hegarty's Fine Interiors sale, with 200 lots of art, silver, jewellery and furnishings. Good value artworks include Fisherman Scene, by Patricia Good (€100-€200) and John Morris's Dún Laoghaire Harbour which is listed at €500-€600, fresh off the back of Morris's painting of the Shelbourne Hotel where the work - which was estimated at €1,000-€2,000 - achieved €5,200 representing the highest price paid for a single item at Niall Mullen and Aidan Foley's five-star hotel sale last week.

In terms of furniture, the sale lists "an exceptional 19th-century mahogany, rosewood and satinwood long-case clock" at €1,800-€2,800 and a fine 19th-century fold over mahogany tea table at €300-€600.

Of interest is a 19th-century French silver marriage spoon with incredibly ornate carvings. Listed at €100-€200 it would make a unique nuptial gift.

Highlights in the jewellery section are an 18ct white gold marquise cut diamond ring (€4,000-€5,000) and an 18ct white gold Columbian emerald (3.5ct) and diamond ring (€11,000-€12,000).