

Taxidermy

Weekly Times Column

By Warren Joel

The fashion of collecting taxidermy is alive and well (no pun intended) despite the green movement. The first question we might ask is what is taxidermy? This refers to the broad area of collecting anything to do with animal parts, stuffed or otherwise. We have all seen those scenes in the classic English manors where the room is full of mounted deer head, prized Scottish salmon or the colourful pheasant.

Recent sales in Australia have shown a strong demand for this type of material, with deer heads selling for many thousands of dollars. Now for all of you animal lovers reading this article not all taxidermy involves killing innocent animals. I was recently shopping in suburban Melbourne for some furniture for home and sitting on the floor of the warehouse was a large bin of deer antlers that caught my eye. As I wandered over I noticed the chandeliers above the bin were also made of deer antler. I enquired as to the origins of these and it was explained to me that all the material was sourced locally in Australia from deer farms.

This area of collecting also includes some of the natural fur and skin throw rugs. These rugs became very popular in the early 19th century and are having resurgence. The rarest I have ever heard of was a rug made from the now extinct Tasmanian Tiger. This probably explains why they are now extinct.

Before you turn your nose up at the stuffed deer head on the wall or the fish in the glass case, they may be a valuable collectors' item.

Next week: Fishing Rods and Reels

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to valuations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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