

## Stair Dons White Gloves Yet Again For Buatta Sales

PUBLISHED: APRIL 28, 2020



**Three different private collectors chased this set of 12 Portuguese basket-form dishes to reach the highest total achieved in either sale, \$20,910 (\$300/500).**

Review by Madelia Hickman Ring, Catalog Photos Courtesy Stair Galleries

HUDSON, N.Y. – What are the odds that a sale that no one was able to preview or bid on in person would not only find a buyer for every lot but would exceed presale value expectations? Well, when the works are of considerable quality and belonged to a person of note, the odds are better than one might think. Such was the case when Stair Galleries offered ceramics and decorative smalls from the estate of Mario Buatta on April 16-17. With previews available only virtually, all of the lots in both sales were sold and exceeded the aggregate high estimate for a combined total of \$2,751,000. Stair Galleries had 50 bidders on the phones and about 2,000 bidders online, including about 150 bidders who had never bid at Stair before.

"The market and magic continue to hold up for these sales," Colin Stair said. "Psychologically, it was pretty amazing we were able to make it happen. I'm very grateful."

Emily Eerdmans, representing the Buatta estate, commented by email after the sale, "These last two sales in the epic Buatta journey were truly remarkable. I can't imagine having a better result in a pandemic-free, stock market-strong moment. Besides Stair's terrific maneuvering through these troubled times, I think everyone is craving to surround themselves with beautiful, interesting and amusing things – which is exactly what Mario was about."

Slightly less than 200 lots made up the sale of ceramics from the collection of Mario Buatta offered while "Treasures and Trifles: The World of Mario Buatta" on April 17 was comprised of 306 lots. Stair's goal had been to sell everything, and estimates had been priced conservatively; it was a strategy that worked, with many lots selling for multiples of their estimates. Speaking after the sale, Stair said the majority of buyers in the sale were private collectors from around the world.



**This assembled 49-piece Derby porcelain botanical part service made \$7,995. It went to a private collector (\$600/800).**

Topping the results on the first day of sales was a set of 12 Portuguese basket-form dishes that finished at \$20,910 (\$300/500) and an assembled 49-piece Derby porcelain botanical part service that sold for \$7,995. Both were won by private collectors. Rounding out the top three prices on the first day was a group of 11 George Jones-style majolica plates that a trade buyer acquired for \$7,380.

"Treasures & Trifles" was a partly apt description for offerings on the second day; they were certainly treasures, but the prices achieved were anything but trifling. Leading the prices that day was \$7,380, for a group of silver and metal matchesafes, pill boxes and other objects that a trade buyer in the United Kingdom purchased. Bidding on a pair of floral cream-painted tole obelisks started low but in Stair's words, "then it just took off," finally closing to a private collector for \$6,150. Bringing the leaderboard to a close at \$4,920 was a group of five silverplate, composite and gilt-metal Nubian and chinoiserie table ornaments.

Stair said there is still material from the Buatta estate that could be sold but a decision on when to sell it is pending.

Prices quoted include buyer's premium as reported by the auction house.

Stair Galleries is at 549 Warren Street. For information, [www.stairgalleries.com](http://www.stairgalleries.com) or 518-751-1000.





A private collector snapped up this English porcelain part service decorated with flowers and puce tones for \$6,765 (\$500/700).



The top price realized in the Treasures & Trifles sale on April 17 was \$7,380, for this group of silver and metal matchsafes, pill boxes and other objects. A trade buyer in the United Kingdom was the prevailing bidder (\$300/500).



"They were so beautiful! The bidding started low on these but then it just took off," Stair said of this pair of late Nineteenth or very early Twentieth Century floral cream-painted tole obelisks that a private collector won for \$6,150 (\$300/500).



A private collector won this group of five silverplate, composite and gilt-metal Nubian and chinoiserie table ornaments for \$4,920 (\$200/300).