

Picture pursuit

Antique photograph has a colourful history

WHEN a dealer prepares to exhibit at the annual Antique Dealers Fair, he spends many months of the year sourcing stock that he knows his customers and the antique market will find interesting and irresistible.

Jeremy Du Mughn, owner of Jeremy Stephen Antiques, takes this challenge seriously, travelling the country finding stock in the months prior to the Fair.

Having said that, the Helmut Newton photograph pictured is not something that Du Mughn chanced upon in the past few months – it's something he has pursued for the last decade.

Newton (born Neustaedter), the famous photographer, was born in Berlin in 1920. After leaving school in 1936 he worked as an apprentice to top photographer Elsie Simon, known as "Yva", where he remained until fleeing Germany after the start of Hitler's pogroms against German Jews.

Newton eventually moved to Australia for a while and opened a studio in Melbourne.

He contributed photos to French *Vogue* and later his works featured in magazines such as *Playboy*, *Marie Claire*, *Elle* and the American, Italian and German editions of *Vogue*.

His provocative styling stretched the boundaries of what a fashion magazine looked like. His studies of nude women became his signature. He died in Hollywood in 2004 at the age of 83.

In the early Eighties, Newton was invited by Saatchi and Saatchi advertising agency to do a series of photographs for the Benson & Hedges silk-cut cigarettes advertising campaign.

The campaign was launched in 1983. It took surrealism up several notches. It didn't feature cigarette packs – only the purple colour of the brand.

The prop he used for this shoot was a pair of mannequin legs, covered in purple silk stockings.

Ultimately, two different versions of the photograph were presented to Benson & Hedges – both were accepted.

Unfortunately, however, these photos never reached the billboards.

At the time, class actions began in the US against cigarette companies, including the case of an American woman who purportedly lost her legs to cancer from smoking.

It was quickly decided that a pair of "body-less" legs in an advert would be considered in bad taste.

"I first saw this photograph in the collection of the art director from Saatchi & Saatchi, more than 10 years ago, but at that time it was not only not for sale, but was something he apparently 'would never' part with," Du Mughn says.

Knowing what an exciting piece he had chanced upon, he has pursued it since then until the owner was finally prepared to part with it.



SEE THIS PHOTOGRAPH

THIS work by Helmut Newton will be displayed for the first time at the 47th Annual South African Antique Dealers Fair to be held at the Wanderers Club from October 15-17.

For more info, contact Marylou Bawden on 011-880-0815 or visit www.saada.co.za.

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