



## Warning signs over autograph crackdown

Fears that Californian 'collectables' law could have wider implications

**Report by Roland Arkell  
and Laura Chesters**

**A LITTLE-PUBLICISED California law aimed at protecting buyers of sports memorabilia is threatening to impact the wider art and antiques sector.**

Bill 1570, signed into law in the Golden State in September and effective from January 1 next year, demands that owners of 'collectables' provide an authenticity certificate before selling or consigning to auction.

Under the bill, 'collectable' is defined as any autographed item sold for \$5 or more and penalties are potentially severe (see *Factfile*, p6).

Rare book dealers are particularly vexed by the new law as they worry it will place extraordinary demands on paperwork, constitutes an invasion of privacy and could lead to nuisance lawsuits.

The bill, created because of the growing problem of fake

autographs, has implications for any sale made in California or a sale to a Californian resident.

Allen Michaan, the owner of California-based Michaan's Auctions, told ATG: "This legislation was originally about sports memorabilia. Then at the last moment they removed the word 'sport' and it now covers everything with a signature."

He called the measure "draconian" and liable to "make selling anything at auction very difficult. It is trying to kill a fly by using an atomic bomb".

The bill states a certificate of authenticity must include detailed information about the item and, controversially, also give the name and address of the person who sold it.

Scott Brown of California's Eureka Books said the bill was bad for privacy, collectors, art galleries and booksellers.

He told ATG that the need for the name and address of a

*Continued on page 6*



**Left:** the 'castle-top' card case showing the General Post Office, Dublin, by Alfred Taylor, Birmingham 1860, which set a record by selling for £9800 at Woolley & Wallis.

## Card case posts world record

Dublin view sets new auction top sum in Salisbury – page 7

**Art Market** market-fresh group of Mod Brits emerges from the dust – page 24-26

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# Turkish picture delight

TAKEN c.1870, this photograph is the work of Maison Rubellin, a studio which advertised itself as 'Photographie Parisienne' in Smyrna, Turkey.

The family first specialised in 'Type et costumes de l'Asie Mineure', taking photos of subjects as far afield as Constantinople and Athens.

This image was taken locally, however, showing a Turkish woman holding a shisha pipe.

**Dr Jens Mattow – Antiquariat für Buch und Fotografie** (Berlin) brings the photo, which is available for **£300**, to the next instalment of the *London Photograph Fair* on November 6 at the Bloomsbury Holiday Inn.

The event features exceptional and affordable works, from 19th century pieces, such as the one pictured here, to 20th century fashion photography and press photographs.

Around 50 dealers are set to stand, including **Galerie Verdeau** (Saint-Ouen), **Pablo Butcher** (Oxford) and **Philip and Rosemary Banham** (Devon).

[photofair.co.uk](http://photofair.co.uk)

■ See *International*, page 52.



## 5 Questions

**Anthony Smith** started **Anthony Smith Books**

after working in several book dealerships around London. He

exhibits at fairs, and stands at his first

*Chelsea Book Fair* this weekend (November 4-5). He also holds

regular pop-up shops in John Murray's former publishing offices. His next pop-up shop is on November 22.

[anthony-smith-books.com](http://anthony-smith-books.com)



### 1. How did you get your start?

A holiday job at Hall's Bookshop in Tunbridge Wells during my first vacation from university led to full-time work when I graduated in 1990. I've never considered doing anything else, which is probably just as well.

### 2. How has the market changed?

Unlike Hall's, so many good general bookshops have disappeared since I started. Shop stock is much harder to sell now the internet has flattened low-end prices. But the market for first editions, association copies, anything freighted with history remains buoyant, especially if the books are in wonderful condition. Someone with a little money but less time can still come to a dealer like me to put together a great collection.

### 3. Fairs vs shops?

Both! Anything to keep people buying books is a good thing. Fairs can boost the bookshops in the local area. Shops get to bring something of themselves to new customers when they travel. I miss the daily interaction of being in a physical shop but my business is now 24 hours a day and reaches round the world.

### 4. One secret for success?

Know your customers and serve them well. That said, there's nothing like taking a bit of a gamble. I love the Nonesuch Press and recently bought a large collection without anyone in mind. The first customer I offered it to snapped it up.

### 5. Real ale or espresso martini?

I've never tried the second. The ingredients are good by themselves, but I'm not sure how they work together. Real ale, red wine and single malt for preference. Unmixed!

If you would like to be featured in 5 Questions, please contact [francesallitt@atgmedia.com](mailto:francesallitt@atgmedia.com)



**Above:** featuring the seal of Bishop Masseo of Terni, this c.1300 gothic signet ring is available for **\$90,000**.



**Above:** this Byzantine aquamarine and pearl ring dates from the early 6th century AD and is available for **\$105,000**.

DESPITE its relatively diminutive subject matter, a new exhibition on rings is large both in scope and in scale. **Les Enluminures'** display *Rings around the World* was roughly 10 years in the making and now takes place on two continents, showing 25 examples dating from pre-history to the present.

"I was struck by what I might call the 'universality' of rings," says Les Enluminures founder Sandra Hindman, recalling her research for her 2007 book *Toward an Art History of Medieval Rings*. "Certain ideas and forms occurred across cultures and through time. With that in mind, I started buying rings for an exhibition on this subject – but for when I didn't know."

The time, as it turns out, is now, with the exhibition opening on November 2 and accompanied by a catalogue co-authored by Hindman and British jewellery historian Beatriz Chandour-Sampson.

The catalogue illustrates the similarities between rings that occur, even when made by different cultures or at different times.

They can be talismanic and protective, sentimental tokens of remembrance, signs of union or status symbols. Similar meanings and styles recur, with, for example, the same granulation and filigree techniques appearing on Etruscan rings and those of the Karo people from the Indonesian archipelago.

"An inscribed Chinese ring reminded me of the engraved 'posies' in 17th century English rings," Hindman writes in the catalogue foreword. "The pyramid shape of a walrus ivory ring from the Sudan recalled Merovingian 'architectural' rings."



**Above:** this Art Nouveau 'Lady with Pearl' ring comes from France or Belgium c.1900 and is available for **\$40,000**.

Twenty-four of the 25 rings, which come from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, are for sale – the exception is contemporary jeweller Wallace Chan's *My Dreams* ring.

The others, many of which are far older, include a rare Byzantine aquamarine ring likely to have been a symbol of high rank in the imperial court; a gothic signet ring belonging to an Italian bishop featuring a scene of the crucifixion; and a 'double ring' from the 1980s, worn over two fingers made to resemble a column capital.

The exhibition is hosted in London at Sam Fogg's Clifford Street gallery and will move to Les Enluminures' gallery in New York on November 17.

[lesenluminures.com](http://lesenluminures.com)