



# A gilded, polished history of time

Edmund de Waals staggeringly beautiful family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, is full of unforgettable moments. It's when words, like skipping stones, are thrown on the page and whisper a series of ripples in your memory. Ripples which you will never forget.

One of these moments is when de Waal writes: "How objects are handed on is all about storytelling." Stories and objects share something, a patina," he says. "Perhaps patina is a process of rubbing back so that the essential is revealed. But it also seems additive, in the way that a piece of oak furniture gains over years and years of polishing."

That is the hidden inheritance of objects. Bought, sold and inherited, objects are not mere wood, iron and paper. Rather, they are recipients of memories, histories and time. It's like the photograph of a childhood holiday. It's not just a photograph - it is a remembrance of ice cream-coloured summers gone by; moments lost but, if you close your eyes, they are moments gained. Look at the photograph and it's a return ticket to the past - no luggage on your way there, but plenty of luggage on your way back.

A six-day sale by auction at Obelisk Auctions Gallery presents thousands of such memories, in the form of over 1,000 lots, including Maltese and European furniture, ceramics, glass, silver, coins, Melitensia, bouille and mantel clocks, jewellery, arms and documents.



The lots include various paintings. These range from 17th and 18th century old master paintings and works by the *bottega* of Mattia Preti to 20th century Maltese contemporary art by Esprit Barthelet, Antoine Camilleri, Richard England, Emvin Cremona and Raymond Pitre.

Of particular importance is a rare set of four views of Valletta harbour by Girolamo Gianni, signed and dated 1878.

Another important lot on auction is a Grand Master Pinto chancery letter, officially stamped - the recipient of the letter was the priory of Catalonia.

The antiques and fine arts auction also presents items from the collection of the late Prime Minister Joseph Howard.

Lot 1196 is a testament to Malta's rich history. It consists of a late 18th century Maltese silver presentation salver by Saverio Meli. The salver sits on four double scroll feet and is finely engraved with the shield of Malta.

The inscription on it shows that it was presented to Brigadier General Graham by the people of Malta in 1800 in recognition of his services in the capture of Valletta from the French.

In 2002, this same salver was sold at auction by Spink auction house in London, fetching 10 times more than expected.

Viewing is on April 16 and 17 at Obelisk Auctions Gallery and Offices at Villa Drusilla, Mdina Road, Attard.

The auction is from April 18-23.



18th century Maltese silver presentation salver



Set of four paintings by Girolamo Gianni



Are you organising a public event? Would you like to promote it on our newspaper?

Contact us and we will feature the event in our Social pages for FREE.

Call Jennifer on 2559 4712 during office hours or email [jennifer.grech@timesofmalta.com](mailto:jennifer.grech@timesofmalta.com)

TIMES OF MALTA  
Rooted in values, driven by innovation