

Repairing and reviving adored antiques

Growing up in Budapest, Hungary, Laszlo Jajczay, owner of Seattle Decorative Art Restoration Services, was introduced to antiques through his grandparents.

During visits with the couple, who owned a bakery in the countryside, Jajczay would admire the antique furniture, paintings and porcelain that adorned their home. This set the tone for his fascination of decorative objects, and the direction he would follow in his professional career.

Following his heart and deep-seated appreciation for decorative art, Jajczay studied art and restoration at university in Europe. Today, that passion and appreciation still runs deep in Jajczay, as he uses his skill and talent to repair and revive antiques through restoration. Recently, *Antique Trader* caught up with Jajczay to learn more about his journey as a professional restorer and appraiser.

Antique Trader: What prompted you to get into the field of restoration of antiques and collectibles? What type training and education did you obtain to prepare you for the work you do?

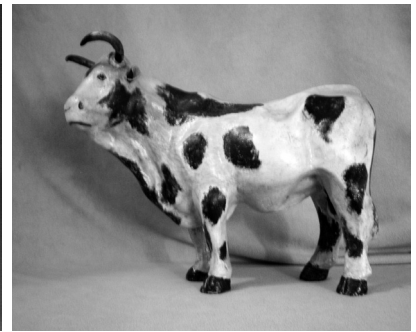
Laszlo Jajczay: I moved to the U.S., Seattle, in 1987. I started working for Carriage House Galleries then. The owner, Robert Bernard Shaw, became my mentor. After his death, I became an antique dealer and started my own business. I'm also a certified appraiser, graduating from the Ashford Institute of Antiques, and a member of several appraiser associations, including the New England Appraiser Association.

AT: How have restoration techniques changed and evolved in the couple decades you've been in business?

LJ: It is very important to know and always learn about the new materials entering the field of restoration. Times are changing, and materials that were used in the "old days" have been replaced by newer techniques and materials, more suitable for restoring.

AT: What is one of the most memorable restoration jobs you've done, and what caused it to have such an impact on you?

LZ: I have done painting restorations for several large auction houses, as well as several important oil paintings by well-known artists. Restoring antique paintings is very



Before-and-after photos of a large Victorian chalk bull figure, restored by Laszlo Jajczay, owner of Seattle Decorative Art Restoration Services. Submitted photos

challenging and time consuming work, that I enjoy very much.

AT: Do you specialize in certain types of antiques and collectibles, and are there items you won't consider for restoration work?

LZ: I love to restore antique paintings, porcelain pottery and ivory objects. I do not do much with prints or glass objects.

AT: What are a few key tips you have for someone considering restoring an item or having it restored?

LZ: It is a very important to read reviews about restoration companies in order to find the right one.

AT: Obviously each project is unique in its needs and requirements, but on average, what is the price range for most restoration work you do, and what is the time frame?

LZ: As far as the length of time needed to restore an item, it depends on the amount of damage. The Jewish rabbi figure restoration took 12 hours, and just recently I finished cleaning and retouching some of the primarily color on an antique oil painting, and that took 14 hours. My rate starts at \$68/hour plus tax, including material. ■

LASZLO JAJCZAY'S THREE KEYS TO GREAT BUSINESS

- Listen closely to clients' requests.
- Be honest.
- Put 100 percent effort into each project, to meet client expectations.

For more information

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Laszlo Jajczay working to restore a Jewish rabbi pottery figurine. Submitted photo

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