



OVERTURE AUCTIONS

Reykjavik - Hampstead Theatre and Overture Auctions A Re-Use case study.

Overture Auctions is a new Antiques and Vintage Auction House based just North of London. In addition to traditional auction house work we specialise in working with theatres to help re-home items post-production and to clear out prop stores. Goods are then sold on behalf of the company via a nationwide online platform and sold into the antiques trade, private buyers or back into the entertainment industry. We aim for zero landfill and for items that cannot be sold at auction, we organise charity donations and, where necessary, recycling.

We were contacted by Hampstead Theatre about the production *Reykjavik*, a new work set in 1970's Scotland and Iceland. Most of the props and furniture were already second hand having been sourced from antique fairs and dealers and consisted of mainly mid century and industrial furniture. We visited the theatre one evening during set up for the show to agree which items we felt could successfully be re-sold, including those that had been adapted for stage use. In this case pretty much everything apart from the set itself was suitable.

In liaison with the Production Manager we agreed a suitable time during the get out for the items to be collected, and as far as the production was concerned that was job done, everything out of the way so they could concentrate on the next show.

Our work then began photographing, researching and marketing the items back at our base ahead of our next sale. In this case, being that most of the items were very on-trend 70's furniture we sold around 70% of the items in the first sale, the remainder was carried over into our next sale, after which a few remaining items were donated to a local prop house. Nothing went to landfill. Most items sold back into the antique trade and a few pieces to private buyers, who were thrilled to learn the pieces had had a previous life on stage, adding a little to their story.

Hampstead Theatre received a healthy proportion of their props budget back. Through some competitive bidding a few items actually sold for more than they had paid for them, so well done SM team for those purchases. As part of the process documentation was created showing where items have gone, which could be used as evidence in Green Book reporting.

This shows how auctions can be provide a hassle free way to re-home items, quickly and easily and recoup some money for the production. It works with best with vintage items that tend to hold their value, but there are many auction houses that will take more modern items. Yes, the returns are perhaps less than organising the sale yourself, but you are guaranteed the items will be cleared at the get out and don't tie up stage management dealing with enquires. A word of warning, not all auction houses operate a zero waste policy, skipping items that don't sell, and some will charge for collection which needs to be factored in.

Consider contacting your local auction house during the sourcing process to see if they would be interested in re-selling items after the production and allowing you to plan ahead. They may even be able to help you source items using their extensive list of contacts.

We have also helped thin out some prop stores and unearthed some antique gems that were sat on shelves gathering dust.

Our hope at Overture Auctions is that by providing these services, and becoming a useful source of re-used props, we, and other like minded auctions, can help grow the circular economy with both environmental, and financial, benefits to all involved.



For more info go to www.overtureauctions.co.uk