

# Mining eBay?

## **The Tactile Mind Weekly #27**

23 October 2003

*Coffee Shop Notes*

Sara Stallard

---

Run a search for "deaf art" on eBay and you'll find nothing. Even without the quotation marks, which limit the search to that exact phrase instead of searching for both words separately in whichever order. Try it. <http://www.ebay.com>

The world's largest and most popular auction website carries SOME deaf items—mostly kitsch ILY hand shapes that masquerade as pins or clocks (don't misunderstand, they're nice to have around, although they're very much so a superficial representation of what it truly means to be deaf or a signer). At the time this is being written, a search parameter of the word "deaf" will turn up 210 items. Including ILY dog tags.

Also featured among the 210 choice items are a pair of old postcards of the Illinois School for the Deaf, in Jacksonville. These cards date from 1925, and the auction is about to end (before midnight Wednesday, 22 October) at approximately \$7.50, with a buyer. There was another bidder. The price might go up just before the auction ends, in true sniper fashion (eBay snipers are people who wait till the last minute to try and outbid on items—the concept is to try and keep the price as low as possible, instead of driving it up early).

There also are 5 other auctions of deaf school postcards, all dating from the first half of the 20th century. Nice. Cute. Vintage. How charming.

Where are our Deaf artists? Run a search for any of your favorites (Dupor, Miller, Baird), and if you're lucky later on, maybe something will turn up, but at present, there seems to be nothing. Not even a photograph of the eminent Douglas Tilden, whose sculptural work was featured at two Salons in Paris around the turn of the century, and now graces the cities of San Francisco, Berkeley and Fremont.

Could this be proof that deaf art does not sell? Or do we simply, as a community, not subscribe to the idea of eBay as a marketing opportunity? Probably the latter. And then, what would the implications of this be?

---

© Sara Stallard. All rights reserved. Columns are not to be printed. Anyone desiring a printed form, should contact the author for permission.