

Show Time

Curator housecleans and an unsung artist gains attention BY DORIS ATHINEOS

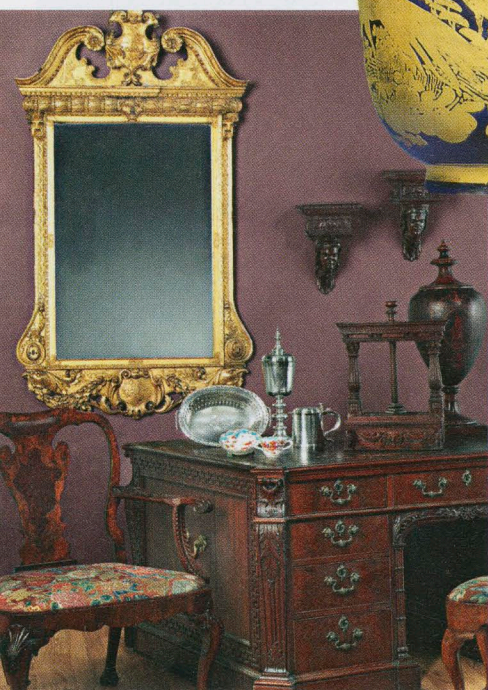


Met Art on the Block

Need an old-money mahogany desk with a polished pedigree? The Metropolitan Museum of Art plans to deaccession (sell) 200 lots of elegant English furnishings at Christie's in New York on October 27. "Our real challenge has been to determine which pieces belong in a museum and which, on the contrary, would sing louder and better in someone's home," writes the Met curator of European sculpture and decorative arts, Luke Syson, for the foreword of Christie's catalog.

The stately treasures include a tall, 18th-century English walnut bureau cabinet with a mirrored door (above), a pair of Chelsea deep-blue cabinet cups (\$4,000–\$6,000), and an 18th-century giltwood mirror that bears the seal of Sir George Bowes, an ancestor of the Queen Mother (\$25,000–\$40,000). But Christie's English specialist, Melissa Gagen, also points to more affordable lots such as a pair of wall brackets (left) robustly carved in the design of female masks. Proceeds from the auction will allow the Met to buy more, filling gaps in the collection. Specifically, they are seeking 19th-century finds "from the Regency to the Great Exhibition to Arts and Crafts Movement and Design Reform," Syson notes.

Left A George II mahogany partner's desk trimmed in Greek key that reputedly belonged to the Dukes of Wellington at Apsley House (\$40,000–\$60,000) and wall brackets embellished with female mask designs (\$3,000–\$5,000).



An overlooked Abstract Expressionist receives his first museum retrospective. "Procession," a traveling show dedicated to Harlem-based Norman Lewis (1909–1979), features 90 impressive artworks, many from private collections. The show's curator, Ruth Fine, who recently retired from Washington's National Gallery of Art, believes Lewis was slighted "because of his painterly approach—different from the muscular emphasis of his contemporaries—and the limited attention paid to African-American artists of his generation." The show opens November 13 (ends April 3) at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art.



Gold Standard

In search of the most exclusive furnishings in the world? Visit Manhattan's Park Avenue Armory when the weeklong International Fine Art & Antique Dealers Show opens October 23. From ancient to modern, these uncommon objets d'art catch the eye of discerning connoisseurs.

For those who fancy Gallic goodies, be sure to see a gold-leaf cabinet fashioned by mysterious 1940s French furniture designer Roger Berthier. Paris dealer Fabien Mathivet describes it as exceptional. And don't miss the regal tigers depicted on a pair of folding screens by Ohashi Suiseki. "He was the best 20th-century tiger painter in Japan," says Jeffery Cline of Kagedo Japanese Art, a Washington-based gallery exhibiting the artwork at the show.



French chic
Gold-leaf cabinet by Art Deco designer Roger Berthier