

Antiques

Wendy Moonan

Jaw-Dropping Jewelry And Exotic Objects At the Armory Show

An 18th-century Italian terracotta lion as big as the ones guarding the New York Public Library. An Elizabethan rapier still sharp enough for battle. A bronze rhinoceros bearing a celestial sphere clock from 1800. A 2000 B.C. Bactrian stone idol. An 18th-century Italian portrait of the French painter Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun in *pietre dure*, copied from her self-portrait at the Uffizi Gallery. An intense blue Tiffany dragonfly lamp. A bronze bull that Elaine de Kooning sculptured in 1972.

These are a few of the show-stoppers at the International Fine Art and Antique Dealers Show at the Park Avenue Armory, which continues through Thursday. The quality is as high as ever and the fair has never shown a wider range of works. (Two-thirds of the 61 dealers are not American.) Like the Winter Antiques Show, this fair encourages dealers to save prized pieces for months, to reveal them here first.

In terms of décor, two booths stand out. Pelham has created an 18th-century Italian salon in one corner, with wallpaper made from a blowup of a William Chambers engraving. Placed against the wall is an overscaled painted bench, a pair of large Sicilian mirrors with polychrome carved flowers, a pair of gilded Genoese torchères in life-size female form and a magnificent Italian marquetry console.

A 90-inch-wide oil of a "Chinoiserie Scene" sets another theme. The painting, of a Chinese woman flanked by two men, is by Jean-Baptiste Pillement, a popular Rococo painter and designer whose work resembles those by Watteau and Boucher. The composition is strewn with flowers, many of them inventions of Pillement.

The chinoiserie motifs are ech-

The International Fine Art and Antique Dealers Show continues through Thursday at the Park Avenue Armory, at 67th Street, (212) 642-8572, www.haughton.com/iads.



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The Pelham stand, by Alan Rubin, at the International Fine Art and Antique Dealers Show.

oed in a white lacquered cabinet on a stand from Turin, Italy, from around 1740. Chinese figures fill three sides, while the borders and legs are covered with gilded scrollwork on a blue background.

By contrast, the Tambaran booth has a sparse, elegant display of carved tribal spoons in wood, shell, horn and ivory. Many of the examples are ceremonial spoons from Africa, but there are others from Southeast Asia and a few from North America, made by the Iroquois, probably before the colonial era. The Iroquois ones are in maple and adorned with tiny carved quail, preening swans, a hawk and an otter. In their simplicity they could almost be contemporary.

The fair has about 20 furniture and clock specialists, as many paintings dealers, several jewelry and ceramics dealers and a few specialists in ethnographic art, rare books, carpets, antiquities and armor.

It would be hard to top the old masters that Bernheimer and Colnaghi are showing with Otto Naumann, who is new to the fair. Naumann has a Vermeer-like oil, "The Lemon Slice," by Jacob Ochtervelt (1634-82), in which a young girl in an ermine-trimmed red coat is seen from behind, watching as an older man shows her the tool he just used to peel a lemon. It is riveting.

Colnaghi has a fine portrait of a "Monsieur de Buissey," by Joseph

Siffred Duplessis, a court painter to Louis XVI whose style recalls Nattier. Among the floral still-lives, one in oil on copper by Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601-78), depicting tulips, roses, narcissus and forget-me-nots, is exquisite.

Richard Green is also showing floral still-lives, his, by the 17th-century masters Pieter Claez, Jan Davidsz de Heem and Bathasar van der Ast.

Except for the Chinese Porcelain Company and Mary Helen McCoy, few dealers are showing great French furniture, although Bernard J. Shapero has a notable eight-volume set of flower pictures from Paris, 1802-16: Pierre-Joseph Redouté's "Les Liliacées," with nearly 500 plates.

As always, though, the fair is full of drop-dead English antiques: a white 18th-century Chippendale-style bookcase with pagoda decorations (Kentshire); a pair of dazzling gold-and-crystal Osler wall lights from the 1870s (Bernard Goldberg); a George III mahogany artist's table with an adjustable easel (Pelham); a white marble Adam mantel with Blue John stone insets (Mallet); an Owen Jones cabinet, around 1865 (Harris Lindsay); a set of 1824 silver-gilt wine coolers with bas reliefs copied from the first-century B.C. "Portland Vase" found in Italy (Koopman); a George I giltwood settee with eagle-head armrests (Ronald Phillips); a mid-18th-

century brass chandelier attributed to John Giles (Apter-Fredericks); and a 100-inch-tall Queen Anne grandfather clock by John Bushman (Raffety & Walwyn).

By contrast, Sampson and Horne shows 18th-century English country antiques: pottery and furniture, not at all rustic.

Jewelry is always a strength here. A La Vieille Russie has a French diamond bow brooch from 1870 inspired by a famous brooch made for the Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III. Hancocks has an Egyptian Revival Cartier Art Deco clock in lapis lazuli and a flashy 1940s Traber Hoeffler-Mauboussin bangle encrusted with diamonds, sapphires, rubies and citrines. Along with its Fabergé pieces, Wartski has a Lalique dragon brooch and a Suzanne Belperron diamond shoulder pin with 22 stars made in 1935 in Paris. James Robinson has a ravishing antique English diamond necklace with more than 30 flexible pendants.

For 20th-century fans, Maison Gerard has midcentury French furniture, including a rare white shagreen-covered sideboard by Jules Leleu. Luther has a large 1920s parchment-covered extension table by André Arbus; a stunning French 1940s oak cupboard with carved chevrons; and two sculptures depicting the abduction of Europa by the bull.

And this is just a sampling of the treasures on view.