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FAIR REVIEW

The Unforgettable Meets the Unimaginable at the Winter Show

Back to its home in the Park Avenue Armory, the fair offers one-of-a-kind art from America's earliest known free Black painter, and even a marble skull.



Bettina Jackson Cantador touches up. Lila Barth for The New York Times

By Will Heinrich

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This year's Winter Show, back to its longtime home in the Park Avenue Armory after a brief pandemic dalliance with the former Barney's building on Madison Avenue, is full of treasures, as usual — offering casual viewers as well as collectors a scattershot wealth of surprising objects. Sixty-eight dealers have converged for this edition, exhibiting art and

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antiques from around the world to benefit the East Side House Settlement. Themes and repetitions pop up here and there: Both **Hirschl & Adler (B9)** and **Bernard Goldberg (C1)** have brought works by the German American modernist Winold Reiss following his show at the New-York Historical Society.



“Lily Table Lamp,” circa 1902, by Tiffany Studios at the Lillian Nassau booth. Lila Barth for The New York Times

Tiffany glass is well represented by **Lillian Nassau LLC (B2)**, which has a lovely “lily” table lamp, among other things, and **Macklowe Gallery Ltd. (C9)**; a portrait of a woman by America’s earliest known free Black painter, Joshua Johnson, joins a group of paintings by women at **Robert Simon Fine Art (C10)**. And alluring vignettes abound, as organized by the fair’s own designers or by exhibitors like **Steinitz Gallery (B10)**. The main event, though, is in the details, like the glass Lalique hood ornament on a 1930 Isotta Fraschini Commodore Roadster (**Kelly Kinzle, B15**); an 18-karat gold cast of the supermodel Veruschka’s lips (**Didier Ltd., D6**); or a striking 250-year-old faience casserole dish shaped like a turkey (**Michelle Beiny, D1**). Here are a few booths to focus on.

Cove Landing (A1)



A skull (late 19th century) carved out of Italian Portasanta marble at the Cove Landing booth.
Lila Barth for The New York Times

Among the eccentric objects in this distinctly eclectic booth is a near life-size skull carved out of Portasanta marble after the rediscovery of an ancient quarry on the Greek island of Chios in the late 19th century. The stone, whose name refers to its use around the door of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, looks like an Italian confection, with white, pink and maroon chips in a reddish-brown ground. It makes for an unusual memento mori — though not, perhaps, as strange as a 19th-century yellow-glazed redware flask in the shape of an English outhouse.

Bernard Goldberg (C1)



A miniature Pierre de Wiessant, the most famous of Auguste Rodin's "Burghers of Calais," circa 1905, in a moment of resignation, shown at Bernard Goldberg Fine Arts. Lila Barth for The New York Times

Three 20th-century bronzes get things going with a clang in this booth located right by the entrance. First there's Jacques Lipchitz's towering gray "Lesson of a Disaster," 1961-1970, in which an almost comically cheery phoenix feeds her young atop an elaborate tower of flames, hoops and globes. A reclining figure by Henry Moore (1984) has wrinkle-like scratches in its valleys, a rare nod to the realities of flesh amid the English sculptor's surging, idealized curves. And a miniature Pierre de Wiessant, the most famous of Rodin's "Burghers of Calais," was cast in 1905 when the sculptor was still alive. With moss green patina on his forearms and hair, this de Wiessant looks as if he were petrified while waiting for the Resurrection.

Hill-Stone (D3)



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's "Les Jardins d'Horace" ("The Gardens of Horace"), 1855, at the Hill-Stone booth. Lila Barth for The New York Times

An enthralling library of antique drawings and prints showcases the extraordinary graphic powers of hatching and crosshatching. From the grain of wooden ceiling beams in St. Jerome's study, as rendered by Albrecht Dürer, or the saint's vigorous, corona-like halo, to the furry little curlicues on a "wild man" and woman printed in the early 1800s from three-century-old woodblocks, parallel black lines seem able to do almost anything. But they reach their protean peak in a bucolic cliché-verre, 1855, by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. In this lovely example of an early photographic process analogous to etching, the French master used the same loose scribble for foliage, grass and sky — and all with perfect lucidity.

Didier (D6)



Cutlery by Salvador Dalí and Claude Lalanne at the Didier booth. Lila Barth for The New York Times

In 1957, Salvador Dalí commissioned 99 sets of gold-plated silver tableware from the French artist and designer Claude Lalanne and then sold them without crediting her. The salad fork, at least, a rigid sea serpent with four braided tongues for tines, did come from Dalí's own drawing. Whatever their intellectual provenance, though, all six pieces of the sets — two of which can be found here — are unforgettable, at once extravagantly imaginative and surprisingly elegant. Purple and yellow enamel turns the misshapen bowls of the spoons into flower petals, while little glass beads hanging from the knives might have been secreted by the snails on their handles.

Eguiguren Arte de Hispanoamérica (D10)



A view of the Eguiguren Arte de Hispanoamérica booth centered on “The Battle of the Siege of Los Angeles,” 1846, by James Walker. Lila Barth for The New York Times

The centerpiece of an exhibition rich with Potosí silver and saints dressed in mother-of-pearl is “The Battle of the Siege of Los Angeles,” a lush late-19th-century treatment of the Mexican-American War by the British-born painter James Walker. Blue- and red-coated Yanks seem, at first, to have taken the field, so densely are they clustered in the middle — and then you realize they’re surrounded by Mexican cavalry. Rich with gun smoke, dust and a hundred different expressions of dismay, the painting feels more like an old Hollywood war epic than anything else in the building.

Curious Objects (D16)



“Silver-Mounted Horse Ears” by Thomas Phipps & Edward Robinson, 1790, at the Curious Objects booth.
Lila Barth for The New York Times

Ben Miller, host of the Curious Objects podcast from The Magazine Antiques, had his pick of other exhibitors’ treasures to highlight in this cooperative booth, and his eye turned to silver — a silver statue of Prince Albert’s favorite greyhound commissioned by his wife, Queen Victoria; a pair of elaborate coffee cups made by Tiffany for a “silver king” of Nevada. But nothing is so curious as a pair of “silver mounted horse ears” from **S.J. Shrubsole (A4)**, produced in 1790 “in remembrance of a black gelding” reputed to be “the fastest chaise horse in England.” As Miller notes, with due circumspection, in a wall label, “We are not aware of any other example of taxidermy animal parts encased in silver.”

Patrick & Ondine Mestdagh (E5)



A view of the Patrick & Ondine Mestdagh booth, whose wooden objects include shields, walking sticks and an ironwood club. Lila Barth for The New York Times

Exquisite wooden objects displayed here include oblong shields from Australia and New Guinea, spiraling European walking sticks and a striated, black and white Luba Kifwebe mask from central Africa. But what most delighted me was the perfect marriage of ornament and function in an 18th-century ironwood club from Fiji. The raised bumps on its mushroom-like knob are unmistakably decorative, but must also have been excellent for skull cracking, while the intricate carved handle, a testament to some long-dead artisan's concentration, would have helped warriors keep their grip with bloody hands.

Spencer Marks (E10)



“American Silver Punch Bowl” from the Rose Dinner Service by Gorham Manufacturing Company, 1892, at the Spencer Marks booth. Lila Barth for The New York Times

In a show full of glittering silver, Spencer Marks stands out for both the variety and the sheer quantity of its wares. Look for the rectangular punch bowl encrusted with repoussé roses, survivor of a 64-piece set made by Gorham for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago — one of only three “Rose” pieces that the dealer Mark McHugh has seen in his 30 years in the business — and for an 1877 Tiffany ice bowl decorated with removable walruses.

Imperial (E11)



“Portrait of Louis XIV in Coronation Robes by the Studio of Hyacinthe Rigaud,” circa 1702, at the Imperial Art booth. Lila Barth for The New York Times

In cream shoes with red heels, white satin stockings and a luxurious blue robe embroidered with oversize fleurs-de-lis, Louis XIV looks dapper, if not especially attractive, in a recently rediscovered portrait from the workshop of Hyacinthe Rigaud. (Notice how the dimple in his chin lines up with the cleft in his nose and the part in his enormous pile of black curls.) This canvas, which belonged to the family of the Duke of Noailles for a good 300 years, is the only version known to date back as far as the two originals hanging in the Louvre and at Versailles. A portrait of Napoleon in court dress, giving the Sun King the side eye from one wall over, serves as an entertaining complement.

The Winter Show 2023

Jan. 20 — Jan. 29, Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, Manhattan;
thewintershow.org. \$40 adults/\$25 students.

A correction was made on Jan. 25, 2023

: An earlier version of this review misstated the name of the company that manufactured a silver punch bowl displayed at the Spencer Marks booth. It was made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company, not the Graham Manufacturing Company. The error was repeated in a picture caption. Will Heinrich writes about new developments in contemporary art, and has previously been a critic for The New Yorker and The New York Observer. [@willvheinrich](https://twitter.com/willvheinrich)