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Treasure Hunting at the Winter Show

This browser's delight, with one-of-a-kind art, antiques and modern design, has moved from the Armory to a new Spring Palace — the former Barneys on Madison Avenue.

By **Will Heinrich**

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Opening night at the Winter Show at 660 Madison Avenue, where a Punu mask from Gabon was on view at Tambaran — a perfect balance of delicacy and passion. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

For nearly 70 years the [Winter Show](#) — formerly the Winter Antiques Show — has been raising money for the [East Side House Settlement](#) in the Bronx. This year, a late Covid surge pushed it from January to April and knocked it out of its usual home in the Park Avenue Armory (where it will return next year) to a one-time-only residence at the former Barneys building on Madison Avenue.

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This new location couldn't be more appropriate, since visiting the Winter Show, despite its broader new focus, still feels more like browsing a luxury department store than it does like attending a conventional art fair. Individual dealers have their specialties, but on the whole the event is a crazy quilt of offerings — from Tiffany lamps to 15th-century crossbows; photographs of Frida Kahlo ([Throckmorton Fine Art, Inc.](#), 3-04) and books about Bob Marley ([Thomas Heneage Art Books](#), 4-11) to 19th-century “water squirt rings” ([Les Enluminures](#), 1-11); from a memorable tapestry by Sonia Delaunay ([Boccaro Gallery](#), 4-19), to Nils Fougstedt's incredible “Diana Chandelier” ([Bernard Goldberg Fine Arts](#), 1-17); from John James Audubon ([Arader Galleries](#), 4-16) to Chinese maps ([Daniel Crouch Rare Books](#), 1-10).



Henry Moore's “Working Model for Thin Reclining Figure,” at Bowman Sculpture.
Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

So instead of approaching it gallery by gallery, I relished my chance to encounter unusual objects rarely available to public view, like these 13 — listed from the first booth on the fifth floor (5-01) back down to the lobby.

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1. First up is a wooden Punu mask from Gabon ([Tambaran, 5-01](#)) with sharp features, a diamond of ritual scarification on the forehead, and hair dressed in two round blades that recall the Sydney Opera House. Though its face was originally painted white with kaolin, enough color has worn away to leave it with the look of an actor sweating through her makeup — a perfect balance of delicacy and passion.

2-3. English sculptor Henry Moore's insect-like bronze "**Working Model for Thin Reclining Figure**" ([Bowman Sculpture, 5-08](#)) seems to be lying in every direction at once, with legs horizontal, upper body vertical, and a protruding rectangular belly button. Behind it, also in bronze, is a family of what look like **enormous paper dolls** come to solid, sensuous life, with elegant faces traced into their flat heads, by the Russian artist/sculptor [Ossip Zadkine](#) (1888-1967).



Silver and enamel coffee pot by Tiffany & Co. (1893), S.J. Shrubsole gallery. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

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4. When they bought this 19th-century **Tiffany coffee pot** in chased silver and delicate floral champlevé enamel, it had been polished to a high shine. But after finding a review of its debut at the 1893 Columbian Exposition that referred to the “subdued tone of oxidized silver,” the dealers **S.J. Shrubsole (5-11)** used “[liver of sulfur](#)” to return the pot to a smoky gray.

5. Some may prefer the dewy blush of Edouard Vuillard’s roses in this booth (**Richard Green, 5-13**), or the pinkish haze hovering around a landscape by Pierre Bonnard. But neither quite seizes you by the collar like the thick black outlines and arrested perspective **Suzanne Valadon** used in her 1932 painting “**Bouquet de Fleurs sur une Petite Table.**”

6. The intricate wooden carving on this 19th-century **Austrian hunting horn (Peter Finer, 5-14)** shows the medieval trickster hero Reynard the Fox on the gallows. Though more than a dozen anthropomorphic animals are crammed onto a horn less than 9 inches high, their histrionic expressions are all perfectly clear, from Reynard’s guile to the lion’s slightly stupid outrage.



Left to right, faience boar's head terrine (1750-60) and Brussels gourd tureen (1750-60) at Michele Beiny. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

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7. To serve wild boar in style in 18th-century Holland, you would have needed a stunning **faience boar's head terrine** ([Michele Beiny, 5-15](#)) like this one, with delicately painted tufts of purplish-black fur, resigned eyes, and a cranium that lifts off when it's dinner time.

8. This gorgeous blue and white baluster-shaped **flower pot**, ca. 1680 ([Aronson of Amsterdam, 4-01](#)), is one of only two known examples of the type from its manufacturer. Be sure to look under the bouquet: each flower rests in its own separate hole.

9. In the early 1820s, an English silver firm called Rundell and Bridge cast five editions of a "Shield of Achilles" designed by John Flaxman. Each three-foot gilt silver platter had lines of shepherds, warriors, cattle and lions crowding around a rim, while Apollo himself raced out of the center in a four-horse chariot. One shield, purchased by George IV in 1821, has been a centerpiece of English coronations for nearly 200 years; **this one** ([Koopman Rare Art, 4-03](#)) belonged to the King of Hanover.

10. The pre-Raphaelite painter John Brett's 1859 **portrait of his brother Arthur** ([Lowell Libson & Johnny Yarker, Ltd., 4-08](#)) is remarkable for the vivid specificity of its textures. The loose flop of the younger Brett's bow tie, the starchy white surface of his shirt, the fluffiness of his gingery hair and the reflective sheen of moisture on his lazy left eye are all uncannily vivid.

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11. In a booth stocked with Wyeth, Man Ray, and Cassatt, it's John Singer Sargent's 1882 "Portrait of Henri Lefort" ([Adelson Galleries, Inc., 4-18](#)) that wins the day with its unusually loose background, Lefort's direct gaze and the sharp jabs of red Sargent laid into his signature and the bridge of his subject's nose.

12. A beautiful midcentury necklace ([Macklowe Gallery, Ltd., 4-20](#)) with diamond-centered florets of green peridots and colored citrines of cognac and yellow comes with a matching bracelet.



Frida Hansen's "Southward" tapestry from 1903, at Peter Pap Oriental Rugs. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

13. Before the rug dealer Peter Pap ([Peter Pap Oriental Rugs, 1-03](#)) rediscovered Frida Hansen's "Southward" in Maine last year, the majestic tapestry, on which 10 red-headed maidens ride swans across a very stylized, Japanese-looking sea, hadn't been seen since a 1931 appearance at the Brooklyn Museum.

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Through April 10, 660 Madison Avenue, Manhattan; 917-420-0669, thewintershow.org. \$30 for a day ticket. The event benefits the East Side House Settlement.