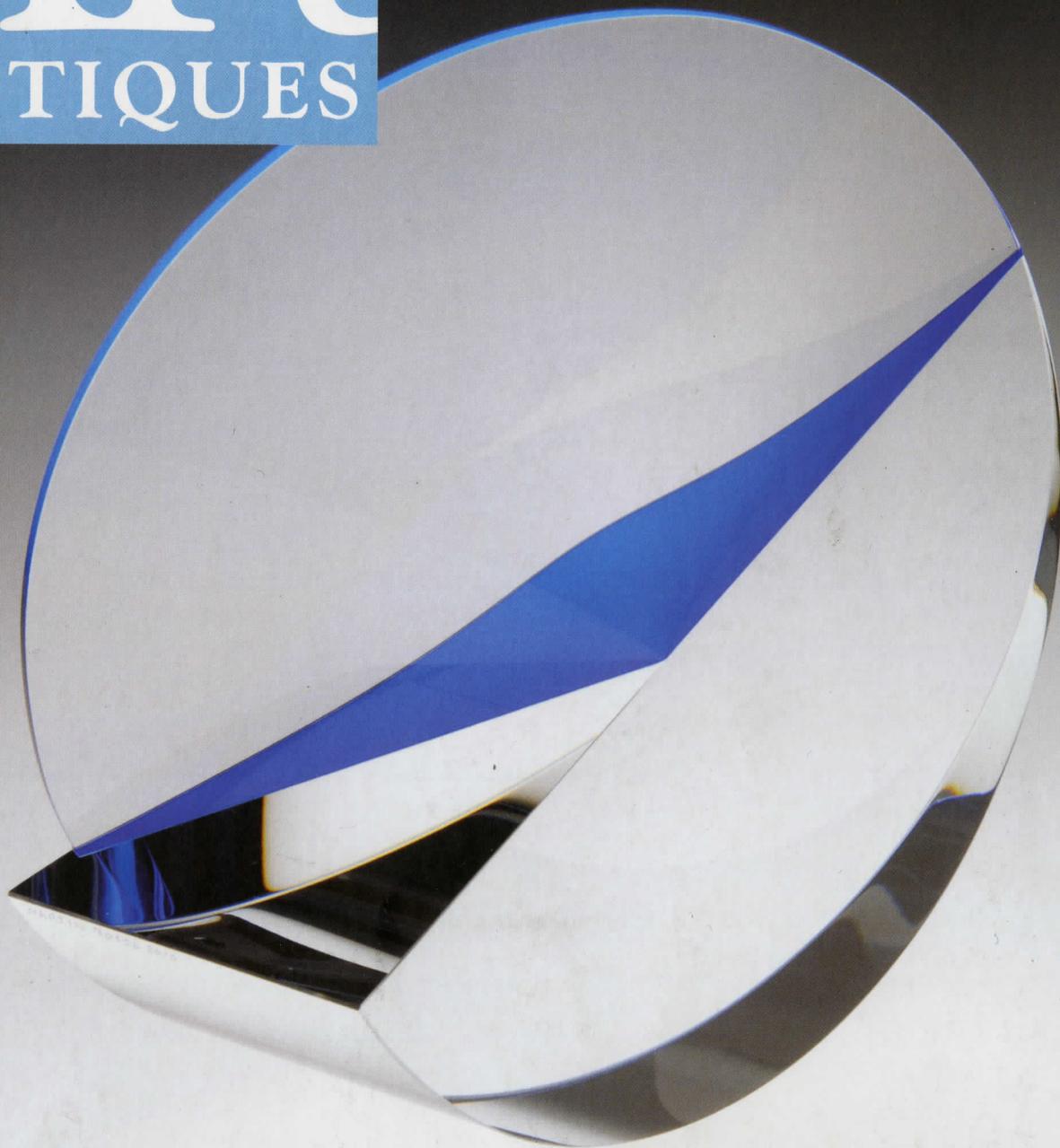


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Art & ANTIQUES

FOR COLLECTORS OF THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS



DIEGO RIVERA & FRIDA KAHLO | GRACE HARTIGAN | DONATELLO | ART IN CHICAGO

Windy City Wonders

FROM AUDUBON PRINTS TO IMAGIST PAINTING TO ASIAN ANTIQUITIES, CHICAGO HAS OFFERINGS FOR ALL TASTES. BY MARGARET HAWKINS



Thomas Hart Benton, *Discussion*, 1967, tempera on canvas wrapped around board, 16 x 20 inches, in the Richard Levin Single-Owner Sale at Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, May 20 (est. \$200,000–400,000).

YES, IT'S TRUE. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago will award an honorary doctorate to Kanye West at graduation this month. The decision to honor the Chicago-born hip-hop artist, which caused a bit of uproar, is not the most exciting thing happening in the art world here, though. That would be the actual art.

In a timely coincidence with the recent, fraught mayoral run-off—and in a head-on collision with the very social issues being debated by the candidates—the Museum of Contemporary Art now hosts a show

that addresses some of this city's gravest concerns: violence, economic inequity, the senseless death of young people. Doris Salcedo's retrospective is all about grief. Cement-filled furniture suggests the heaviness of loss of and death as well as the uselessness of personal possessions, and perhaps life itself, to those left behind, after a loved one's death. Salcedo's multimedia work is inspired by problems in her native country, Colombia, but resonates here, too, where murder rates soar. Some works are frankly, painfully local, such as *Disremem-*



bered, which is based on interviews Salcedo conducted with grieving Chicago mothers after their children's murders. The show runs until May 24, then travels to the Guggenheim in New York.

A mile and a half north, the Art Institute of Chicago offers the opposite experience. Instead of grief and tumult ripped from the morning's headlines, "Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690–1840" takes viewers back in time to an oasis of bucolic charm. The exhibition of over 300 works of Irish decorative and fine arts curated from American collections, including the museum's own, presents an orderly, genteel world filled with views of lush countryside, horses, and dogs. The show, up through June 7, features views of country houses and the actual elegant furnishings that once filled them—gleaming mahogany tables, silver, crystal, linen. Perhaps the loveliest objects in the show are musical instruments. A portable harp, painted

green, speaks to the unique musicality of Irish culture. A tiny portable violin-like instrument—called a "kit" in what might be a whimsical abbreviation of "pocket"—recalls the world of itinerant musicians and their need for travel-sized instruments in a time before recorded music.

One of the more important Chicago art stories in the past year was the opening of the Ed Paschke Art Center on June 22, on what would have been the artist's 75th birthday. Paschke, who was not only one of Chicago's best-known artists but also one of its most beloved, died suddenly on Thanksgiving morning 10 years ago. Now, situated in a renovated building in the Polish neighborhood where the artist grew up, Paschke's namesake museum houses a re-imagining of his studio and contains ample space for exhibitions and education. Currently up is a retrospective of photographs by rock photographer

Clockwise from top left: Darrell Roberts, *Salmone Carmine*, 2009, oil on canvas, 12 x 9 inches; Karl A. Buehr, *Woman With Parasols*, circa 1914, oil on canvas, 13 ½ x 10 inches; Frederick James Partridge for Liberty & Co., *Tiara With Corn Design*, circa 1900





Clockwise from top left: Wilhelm Lucas von Cranach, *Octopus Waist Clasp*, circa 1900; spinel ring crafted at The Goldsmith, Chicago; dealer Joel Oppenheimer in his gallery; John James Audubon, *American Flamingo*, from the original Audubon double-elephant folio, 1860 edition.

Paul Natkin, featuring portraits of Johnny Cash, Miles Davis, and Ice Cube. In the spirit of Paschke's lifelong commitment to accessibility, despite his growing celebrity in later years, admission to the center is free.

The true mecca for lovers of Chicago Imagism, the funky figurative style for which Paschke was known, lies farther out, a half hour by car or train west of the city, in the suburb of Elmhurst. Here, at the Elmhurst College Library, resides a permanent collection of some 80 stunning works by mid-century Chicago artists, many but not all of whom were Imagist painters. Paschke may be the most famous artist represented

here, but the collection brims with gems by lesser-known (but not lesser) Chicago masters, too. Frank Piatek's *Notre Dame Sheela Rite of Passage/Entry Eye of the Needle* is one of many dazzlers in this (thankfully) permanent installation.

"Maker & Muse: Women and Early Twentieth Century Art Jewelry," at the Driehaus Museum through January 3, 2016, features over 250 baubles designed for, and sometimes by, women. Curator Elyse Zorn Karlin can't choose a favorite, but one of many she loves is the horn and moonstone tiara designed by Fred Partridge around 1900 to resemble stalks of corn



COLLECTION OF RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN A. FAIER. 2014 © THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS MUSEUM; THE GOLDSMITH LTD.; JOEL OPPENHEIMER, INC.



Clockwise from top left: Library at Primitive; second-floor anteroom at Primitive; Mu Gongshi or wood "spirit stone," on stand, Yunnan Province, China, 51 x 23 x 80 inches.

ornamented with glistening dew drops. "It's just gorgeous, and what's special is that it's made of such humble materials," Zorn Karlin says. Of special interest to Chicagoans is silverwork from The Kalo Shop, founded by Clara Barck Welles, in 1900, in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge. Later the shop was moved to the city, where it became an important source of Arts and Crafts jewelry and a training ground for silversmiths, many of which were women. Welles named her shop, which made everything from dog collars to sardine dishes, after the Greek word meaning "to make beautiful."

Other, more commercial, art enterprises abound as well. Joel Oppenheimer, owner of the Joel Oppenheimer Gallery, says that probably the most remarkable object in his inventory is a bound John James Audubon folio from 1860, which he calls "the largest and most valuable book in America." Intact and in original condition, the folio is priced at \$850,000. Oppenheimer, one of this country's foremost authorities on Audubon, has more than a passing interest in this folio. He has written a book about it: "The Birds of America: The Bien Chromolithographic Edition," published by W. W. Norton in 2013, with additional text by Oppenheimer.

In addition to selling prints, maps, and Hudson River school paintings, Oppenheimer offers restoration and conservation services. His conservators can rehydrate embrittled paper, repair torn canvas so that tears become invisible, make stains disappear, and even reverse cockling, that waviness that appears in paper exposed to water or humidity. Most problems that arise from the aging properties of paper or improper framing are repairable, Oppenheimer says, but other kinds of damage, notably from floods, is more urgent. He compares his lab to the emergency room in a hospital. "Sometimes you require triage," he says.

The Restoration Division is dedicated exclusively to repairing damaged art and paper, including documents and architectural elements. However, the company's name is a bit of a misnomer. "Our goal is to conserve, not restore," says project coordinator Katy Gallagher. "Fading is part of the story. The goal is not to make it look brand new." She described a recent project to conserve and repair a panoramic wallpaper mural in a circular room in the Lathrop House, belonging to the Fortnightly Club. The historic Georgian Revival house





Clockwise from top left: Julla Katz, *Capacity*, oil on panel, 42 x 54 inches (detail); Dan Addington, *Age of Winds*, oil, wax, tar on panel, 36 x 32 inches; Thomas Hart Benton, study for *Flood Disaster (Homecoming - Kaw Valley)*, circa 1951, tempera on board, 8 1/2 x 10 3/4 inches, in the Richard Levin Single-Owner Sale at Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, May 20 (est. \$120,000-180,000).

situated along Chicago's upscale Gold Coast was finished in 1892 and the wall-paper mural installed then was one of a set; another, later, version is located in the White House. Gallagher says it took conservators two-and-a-half months working four days a week to repair the cracked and peeling mural. Another recent project did require actual restoration. When Greek icons were nearly destroyed in a church fire, Restoration Division came to the rescue. Conservators are currently working to restore what was lost. As Gallagher says, "There's a different goal for every project."

Leslie Hindman, of the eponymously named Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, is excited about the May 20 single-owner auction of Richard M. Levin's collection, which includes several works by Levin's personal friend Thomas Hart Benton. "Particularly wonderful," is how Hindman describes an 8-by-10-inch tempera study for Benton's 1951 painting, *Flood Disaster (Homecoming - Kaw Valley)*. The study shows the wrenching

moment a family returns to the remains of their flood-ravaged house. A prime example of the Regionalist style, the work is expected to fetch between \$120,000 and \$180,000. Also included in the sale is Benton's study for a portrait of poet and fellow-Midwesterner Carl Sandburg.

Primitive Gallery sells authentic and original objects from around the world, all selected by Glen Joffe, owner, and two of his associates, who travel up to five months a year looking for art and artifacts for his four-story, 31,000-square-foot showroom. Menu buttons on Primitive Gallery's website hint at how diverse their inventory is, offering the option to click on furniture, textiles, baskets, beadwork or—wait, what's this?—bugs and butterflies. Click on that last and up comes not paintings and drawings but the real thing, mounted and framed like precious art objects and mounted in clear acrylic so their buggy undersides are viewable as well. When asked to name one gorgeous object in his inventory of around 30,000, Joffe doesn't hesitate. It's a piece of Mu Gongshi, excavated wood from China that has "decomposed slowly to reveal nature's design." This striking biomorphic "sculpture" was formed, Joffe says, "by the hand of God."

Darrell Roberts' palm-sized paintings





From top: John Zuber, *Views of North America*, Fortnightly wallpaper murals, with restoration in progress at Restoration Division (Inset); Darrell Roberts, *Yes Indeed*, 2010, oil on canvas, 10 x 10 inches.

at McCormick Gallery are big on painterly action if small in actual square inches. These tiny impasto works, some as small as three inches square, squirm and seethe with what Tom McCormick calls “cake frosting surfaces.” One of Roberts’ paintings was recently curated into the collection of The Langham, the 52-story luxury hotel that opened in Mies van der Rohe’s respectfully renovated IBM Building in 2013. The hotel stands out for its collection of work by Chicago artists and those with connections to the city.

Addington Gallery, in the River North Gallery district, represents a variety of contemporary artists working in abstract and figurative modes. In June it will be having a show of work by Chicago artist Sandra Dawson, who, like many of the gallery’s artists, creates what owner Dan Addington—himself a painter—calls “very physical, heavily worked, layered paintings.” They convey “a sense of a weathered wall, with decades’ worth of peeled-off advertisements, graffiti, and traces of scrapings of knives,” says Addington. In July the gallery will be showing paintings by Robin Denevan, who travels to the Amazon and Yangtze River regions and creates works that combine ecological documentation with abstraction, focusing on the shapes created by islands in the river that gradually become visible during the dry season.

“What may have been in vogue 50 to 100 years ago has stood the test of time and is

still beautiful to look at,” says Corolla del Rio of the show *Picturing Women* at Madron Gallery, which specializes in American art from 1890 through 1940. The show is an unapologetic love poem to feminine beauty. Women, some nude, some beautifully garbed, mostly lounge about in romantic poses, or interact with children in sunny gardens. One intriguing anomaly, *The Bull Fight* (1936), by Edna M. Reindel, hints at the future. Here, a woman in modern dress and attitude, wearing a jaunty hat, rubs shoulders with men.

Artisans at The Goldsmith design and create commissioned, one-of-a-kind jewelry using materials that range from ancient coins to pink diamonds. “I have a wonderful collection of colored stones,” says head designer and CEO Sherry Bender. By stones, Bender means diamonds, emeralds, rubies. Her favorite gemstones these days are spinels, red stones often mistaken for rubies, which, because of their rarity, are often just as pricey. Bender likes them for their color. “It’s more complex than the red of a ruby,” she says. “Rubies are just red. These stones have hints of orange or peach or purple.”

Joffe may speak for many curators and gallerists when he says the objects he travels the globe to find have a common message: “All cultures are the same. We just express ourselves differently.”

