

## At Armory's Winter Antiques Show, Volumes of Variety

January 22, 2015

NEW YORK TIMES ([HTTP://NYTI.MS/1E7XYDA](http://nyti.ms/1E7XYDA))



By Ken Johnson

Celebrated masterpieces are all well and good, but the less-well-lit nooks and crannies of art history are also needed to sustain a true art lover. That's what a big fair like the Winter Antiques Show (<http://www.winterantiquesshow.com/>) at the Park Avenue Armory is especially good for. With 73 purveyors of rare and remarkable objects, from ancient Egyptian sculpture to Modernist painting, it offers innumerable opportunities to encounter and learn about aspects of painting, decorative arts, furniture, jewelry or glass that might be new to even the best-informed visitors.

You probably have never heard of Emerson Burkhart (<http://www.emersonburkhart.info/>) (1905-1969) of Columbus, Ohio, for example. He once was a famous American Social Realist painter. Coming upon his nearly life-size portrait of a grizzled, elderly black man from 1943, at Jonathan Boos, you might think you've discovered a previously unknown painting by Ivan Albright (<http://www.tfaoi.com/newsmu/nmus40b.htm>). Rendered in extreme detail enhanced

by white highlighting, Burkhart's subject, Oscar Coleman, sits in a distressed armchair, wearing a tie, two shirts and a corduroy vest. His lined, worried face and gnarled hands testify to a Lear-like history of anxiety and suffering. Burkhart titled the portrait with a dubious sentiment — "The Life of the Spirit Is Elevated by Pain" — but the painting nevertheless is affectingly empathetic.

Another dramatic portrait of a black man, this one Shakespearean, is in the form of a technically impressive bust at Bowman Sculpture's booth. "Bust of Othello: The Moor of Venice," (<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2014/orientalist-sale-114100/lot.10.html>) by Pietro Calvi (1833-1884), represents our tragic hero contemplating the handkerchief he'd given to Desdemona, who is now dead. He's enveloped in a hooded robe of white marble, while his face and hands are made of nearly black cast bronze. Looking closely, you see he's shedding a single tear. An interesting side note is that Calvi based his portrait on the features of Ira Aldridge (<http://www.biography.com/people/ira-aldridge-9179881>) (1807-1867), the actor who was the first black man to play Othello in Europe.

Unless you're an architect or a historian of the field, you may not know the name of Samuel Yellin (<http://www.samuelyellin.com/today.html>), either. A Russian-born ironworker, Yellin set up shop in Philadelphia in 1908, and by 1928 his employees were fulfilling hundreds of commissions for metal work. Railings, window grilles and gates at the Cloisters (<http://www.metmuseum.org/visit/visit-the-cloisters/in-season/2014/samuel-yellin>) were produced by Yellin. His inventive way with metal is represented by a floor lamp (<http://www.crsculpture.com/artists/samuel-yellin/work/28>), from around 1925, at the Conner Rosenkranz booth. With its inverted, conical shade of dark metal; its square-section stem; and incongruously graceful three legs and feet, it looks like something a steampunk (<http://www.steampunk.com/what-is-steampunk/>) artist might have dreamed up.

Another eminent craftsman not widely known outside his profession was the Danish furniture maker Tage Frid (<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/08/arts/tage-frid-88-woodworker-and-danish-modern-designer.html>), to whom Moderne Gallery has devoted its entire booth. As a professor of woodworking at the Rhode Island School of Design from 1962 to 1985 and an editor of *Fine Woodworking* magazine, Mr. Frid exerted a huge influence on the craft of fine-furniture making. He particularly abhorred woodworkers who prized fancy design over sound construction. You can see his ethos of plain-spoken, well-made simplicity in the tables and chairs on view here, including an example of his most celebrated design, "Three-Legged Stool," (<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=35055>) which looks like the child of a Shaker artisan and a Danish Modern designer.

Along with a delightful set of a dozen 18th-century pocket-watch-size miniatures in oval frames picturing a rabbit, a donkey and 10 different species of birds, at Elle Shushan, there's a small, deftly made pastel self-portrait by John Raphael Smith (<http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/SmithJR.pdf>). Yet another artist, forgotten now, who was well known during his lifetime — in 18th-century England — Smith was celebrated for his mezzotint prints and pastel portraits. He also happened to be J. M. W. Turner's first teacher.

If you like miniatures — and even if you don't — one don't-miss booth is that of Les Enluminures, which has a splendid display of small-to-tiny illuminated books, manuscripts and individual paintings. One visionary paperback-book-size painting is "The Creation of the World," made by a follower of Giovanni di Paolo (<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search?ft=Giovanni+di+Paolo>) around 1475.

Followers of modern painting will recognize the name of Allan D'Arcangelo (<http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=79360>), but they might be surprised by his "Guard Rail" (1964), at Geoffrey Diner. Mr. D'Arcangelo was well known in the '60s for his expansive, graphically vivid paintings of highways and road signs, which combine Modernist abstraction and Pop Art. This piece is unusual because it has an assertive sculptural element, a rare thing for Mr. D'Arcangelo. The painted part features a diamond-shaped vignette of a white road with black stripes cut into a field of reddish orange. The sculptural part is a real segment of chain-link fencing topped by barbed wire mounted over more than half of the picture. Anticipating by decades the similarly dystopian use of chain-link fencing by the sculptor Cady Noland (<http://www.moca.org/pc/viewArtWork.php?id=50>), it evokes the dark side of the American dream of infinite mobility with eerie prescience.

There are lots of folk art in the show, including a lovely and amusing quilt bearing a pattern of black elephants on an intricately stitched red field. Made between 1930 and 1950 by an unknown Pennsylvanian, it's at Old Hope Antiques.

A piece of folk art with a rich back story, at Allan Katz, is a tall secretary (<http://john-banks.blogspot.com/2011/11/faces-of-civil-war-bingham-brothers.html>) from 1876. Made of dark oak and walnut, it has a large clock on its top and is decorated all over with stars, eyes and fan shapes made of white bone. On an upper door, neatly cutout letters spell the name of J. F. Bingham, a soldier in the 16th Regiment of the Connecticut Infantry who was killed at Antietam in 1862. This memorial was made by unidentified friends of Wells Bingham, the dead soldier's brother; he also fought at Antietam but survived the war. The friends presented it to him in the centennial year of the United States. Sadly, Wells Bingham committed suicide in 1904 at the age of 58.

Of course, there are masterpieces to be seen. One is a major painting by the great Hudson River School painter Asher B. Durand called "Lake Hamlet" (<http://library.clevelandart.org/node/196175>)(1855). Depicting a peaceful, gleaming lake, with purple mountains in the distance, it's an inspirational expression of transcendentalist faith in God and nature.

### **Correction: January 30, 2015**

*An art review last Friday about the Winter Antiques Show, at the Park Avenue Armory in Manhattan, misidentified the birthplace of Samuel Yellin, an ironworker whose work is represented in the show by a floor lamp. It was Russia, not Poland. The review also misstated the year he set up shop in Philadelphia, and misstated the number of workers he had there by 1928. He began his Philadelphia business in 1908, not in 1909, and the number of workers by 1928 was fewer than 250, not 268.*

The Winter Antiques Show runs through Feb. 1 at the Park Avenue Armory, Park Avenue at 67th Street; [winterantiquesshow.com](http://winterantiquesshow.com).

*Image: An Egyptian Mummy Case, Center, at Rupert Wace Ancient Art. Photo: Linda Rosier for The New York Times.*

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#### **LOCATION**

##### **Park Avenue Armory**

Park Avenue at 67th Street

New York City

#### **JANUARY 24–FEBRUARY 2, 2020**

**Open Daily** 12 PM–8 PM

**Sundays & Thursday** 12 PM–6 PM

**Tuesday** 12 PM–4:30 PM

**Opening Night Party** January 23, 2020

The objects pictured on this website are representative and will not necessarily be available for purchase at The Winter Show.

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**The Winter Show**

@thewintershowny

The reviews are in: Our 65th Anniversary Sapphire Jubilee was a hit! Thank you, @AntiqueDigest!maineantiquedigest.com/stories/the-wi... #antiques#design#fineart#artfair#nyc

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**The Winter Show**

@thewintershowny

If you were Venus, you'd stare in the mirror, too. 😍

Props to Cupid for the assist. 🙌

●●●●●●●●

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Venus at her Toilet (detail), c. 1608. Courtesy of @museothyssen.



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