



NEW YORK—Lovers of medieval and Renaissance works of art are in luck this month, as Anthony Blumka, above, has organized a fine bronzes and tapestries show at his new space at 209 East 72nd Street. After a three-year renovation, which involved adding a new facade and gutting the interior to create a more streamlined, yet classical gallery space, the Blumka Gallery moved from East 81st Street to this four-story town house, which provides a spectacular setting for an inaugural exhibition held in conjunction with Blondeel-Deroyan, the Paris-based tapestry gallery, from January 27 through February 18.

A fourth-generation European works of art dealer (he is the son of Ruth and Leopold), Blumka is by no means a newcomer to the field. "New York and Paris are the centers for this area of collecting," he says, "and I'm ready." With an array of about 125 pieces, the gallery, Blumka says, "is poised to maximize the interest in various fields that are related to and complement the Old Masters traditionally offered by the auction houses every January." Highlights include a 17th-century Augsburg ebony house altar, a bronze sculpture of Cupid by Soldani-Benzi, circa 1690, and several 16th-century Flemish and French Millefleurs and Feuilles de Choux tapestries.

Asked about the ivory reliefs, Limoges enamels and Gothic madonnas included in the show, Blumka replies, "Last October I had one of my best years at the International Fine Art & Antiques Dealers show in New York, with several objects selling to private collectors on opening night." However, he adds, "institutional collecting still counts for a large share of the market, with the Getty buying aggressively, the Metropolitan pursuing certain pieces and Catholic university galleries such as Notre Dame in Indiana and Loyola in Chicago remaining active in the field."

CARLOS A. ROSAS

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

"Whether you're traveling three blocks or 300 miles, packing for a show requires a lot of time and great care," says New York dealer Allan Chait, as he prepares to transport his treasures 11 blocks north to the Winter Antiques Show, which opens at the Park Avenue Armory on January 16. Chait has been a regular at the fair for 37 years; he, along with other veteran furniture and paintings dealers, have a few tips on how to cut logistical complications for the show.

Simply getting there can be a headache, especially for European dealers—so after spending over £1,000 (\$1,600) in luggage fees at Heathrow for his antique firearms and armor, Warwickshire, England, dealer Peter Finer decided to use London's Packing Shop, which ships his antiques from London to fairs in San Francisco, New York and Palm Beach. Dutch dealer Pieter Hoogendijk, for his part, prefers to store his artworks in U.S. warehouses between shows (he won't say where).

Another hassle, setting up shop, requires unloading trucks in temperatures that can fall as low as four degrees Fahrenheit, so dealers recommend using fingerless gloves. As far as booth construction is concerned, Native American art dealer Donald Ellis of Dundas, Ontario, creates a miniature model of his booth ahead of time, then has it built, while other fair participants use photographs to help them re-create their home galleries. Robert Schwarz of Philadelphia brings a fully constructed booth on his trailer, driving it right on to the Armory floor. One year, however, Schwarz's plan fell through when he had to call on "expensive, but very efficient" union carpenters to raise his booth's ceiling to accommodate a painting.

Yes, the union carpenters, painters and electricians needed to put the booths together are costly, as is renting a booth (a midsize space costs about \$20,000, dealers say), but most agree that the Winter Antiques Show is worth it. Once the show opens to avid antiques collectors, they say, business is good. And—no headache there—it continues to flow, via e-mail and cell phone, three blocks or 300 miles to the home gallery.

JENNIE D'AMATO

LOS ANGELES—When the Manny Silverman Gallery celebrated its 10th anniversary in November with the first commercial show of original Robert Motherwell works on paper since the artist's death in 1991, some wondered how a modest L.A. gallery could manage such a coup. The answer is simple: it has to do with Silverman's commitment to New York School artists and those they influenced. "I love painting, especially abstraction," says Silverman, 56, exuding energetic confidence. "Painters wear their hearts on their sleeves. I like that, especially now that it seems to be so rare." Silverman, right, came late (in 1965) to Abstract Expressionism. "I was young and it left a huge imprint," he recalls. After 23 years as co-owner of a framing business here, Silverman decided to spend more time with the art he loved. Abstract Expressionist painter Sam Francis convinced him to open a gallery and provided his own work from the early '60s for the debut show, in October 1987. "At that time in L.A., 100 galleries were showing emerging artists, but there was no prewar or postwar art being shown," explains Silverman.

Today his gallery, located at 619 North Almont Drive in the heart of the art and design district, is a success. Silverman represents both the Francis and Motherwell



estates, as well as the estates of artists like collagist Hannelore Baron and Abstract Expressionist Adolph Gottlieb (on the West Coast only). Although he has shown boxes and collages from the Joseph Cornell estate and George Grosz works from a friend's private collection, Silverman remains loyal to such Abstract Expressionist artists as Joan Mitchell and Emerson Woelffer. "I think the younger generation following in de Kooning's and Pollock's footsteps was the one who affirmed their ideas," says Silverman. "They took them further, even though they don't get the credit."

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA PHILP

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