

# Lake Shore Unlimited

**CHICAGO SETS ITS OWN TONE, ARTISTICALLY AND OTHERWISE, AND ITS GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS ARE GREAT PLACES TO MAKE DISCOVERIES.** BY MARGARET HAWKINS



André Lhote, *Café au bord de la mer*, circa 1921, oil on canvas, 20 x 25 ½ inches, to be offered on May 16 by Leslie Hindman Auctioneers (est. \$80,000-120,000).

CHICAGO ARTIST Michelle Grabner—painter, curator, critic, gallerist, and professor of painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago—co-curated this year’s Whitney Biennial, and with 17 of the 103 artists in the show from here, the city’s art community feels a little more visible than usual. It’s a welcome change in a climate where artists still regularly have The Conversation, about whether to stay in town or decamp to a coast. Grabner was quoted in a Huffington Post interview in March, weighing in on the subject, referring to the

Midwest as the “backseat” where, she said, she prefers to ride, citing the advantage of distance and perspective to better see the art world’s blind spots.

But backseat or not, Chicago is home to many artists who stay by choice not default, more than a few with international reputations. The most famous right now is probably Chicago luminary and high-energy arts impresario Theaster Gates. Like many younger artists—he’s 40—Gates wears a lot of hats. Trained as a potter, he made his breakthrough as a sculptor in the 2010

Whitney Biennial. Since then he's continued to broaden his practice, which now includes music, installation, and a kind of amalgam of community activism and real estate development that has been called large-scale urban intervention. Dealer Kavi Gupta, who has represented Gates since 2009, compares him to Ai Weiwei. "He's important because he's using art to draw attention to things other than art, to this blighted South side neighborhood and to the idea that art can do a lot more than it usually does."

On the museum front, the Art Institute of Chicago currently features a retrospective exhibition of the work of Christopher Wool, the mid-career conceptual artist who draws heavily on the lessons of Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism. A retrospective of Berlin-based sculptor Isa Genzken, her first in the United States, is on view at The Museum of Contemporary Art through August 3. Genzken's assemblages range from diorama scale to room-sized and incorporate kitsch, photographs, plastic flowers, and elegant designed objects, as well as a profusion of inventively repurposed cheap household products such as aluminum foil.

"Home Truths: Photography and Motherhood," at the Museum of Contemporary Photography through July 13, features work by nine photographers who deconstruct the sentiment and mythology around motherhood to challenge long-held stereotypes.

Not every Chicago venue is dedicated to showing contemporary work. The Richard H. Driehaus Museum, located in a restored Gilded Age mansion built by a Chicago banker in 1879, houses period decorative arts. Currently the museum features selected highlights from Driehaus's private collection of over 1,500 Tiffany glass works. The show runs through June and includes stained-glass windows, vases, lamps, and accessories.

For something completely different, The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago is featuring the sumptuous and refreshingly obscure "Performing Images: Opera in Chinese Visual Culture," an exhibition of nearly 80 objects that refer to or were used in Chinese opera

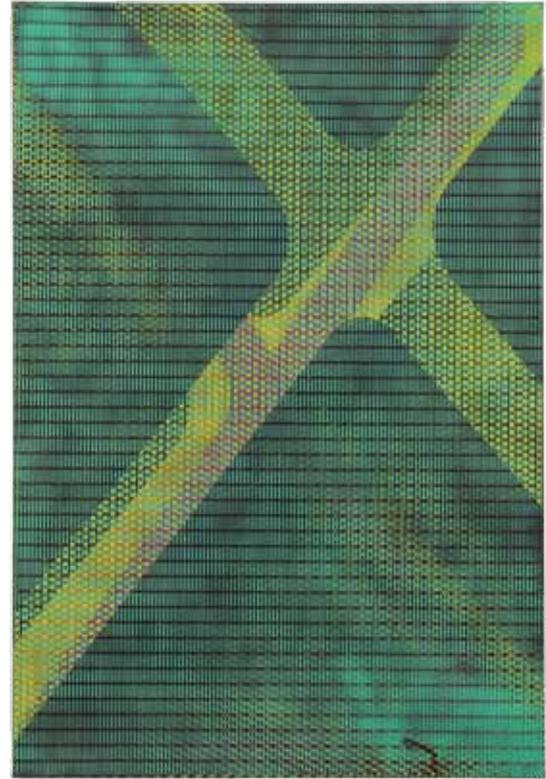


From top: Perle Fine, *Untitled*, circa 1946, gouache on paper, 12 x 16 inches; William S. Schwartz, Galena, Illinois, circa 1935, watercolor and gouache on paper, 17 1/2 x 24 inches

from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Some commercial galleries specialize in non-contemporary art, too. Madron Gallery carries American paintings, drawings and prints from 1890–1940 with a focus on American Impressionism. Inventory includes works by Frederick Frieseke, Wil-





Clockwise from top left: Chinese opera mask; Isa Genzken, *MLR*, 1992; Fernando Botero, *Reclining Nude with Books and Pencils on Lawn*, 1982, oil on canvas, 44 x 60 inches, to be offered on May 15 by Leslie Hindman Auctioneers (est. 300,000-500,000).

liam Glackens, Reginald Marsh, Raphael Soyer, and James McNeill Whistler. Up now is “The Urban Experience,” an exhibition that features paintings of city scenes. Ken Skolnik, Madron’s owner, points to Chicago native William Samuel Schwartz as one of the less-known standouts in the show. “He was an opera singer, and his painting was influenced by music, especially his more abstract work,” Skolnik says. Schwartz was well known among

the artists of his era, according to Skolnik, but “never got the full credit that he was due.” Skolnik aims to remedy that.

Douglas Dawson Gallery, recently relocated to the historic Santa Fe building on Michigan Avenue, across the street from the Art Institute, specializes in ancient and historic tribal art from

Africa, Asia and the Americas. Holdings include textiles, ceramics, metalwork and sculpture. As a nice extra, Dawson’s blog keeps collectors and armchair travelers up to date on his most recent finds while supplying reviews of exhibitions of ethnographic art in the Americas and beyond. Coming up in May is an exhibition of Yoruba beadwork from Nigeria that includes crowns, coronets, sheaths and a 19th-century royal tunic.

Primitive: Living + Collecting is a very large, unique gallery that combines ethnographic artworks with furniture in a huge, fully-designed space that also houses restoration facilities. This month, Primitive will be exhibiting extremely rare collections of both African and Buddhist art. Owner Glen Joffe says, “Although at first glance, these collections appear disparate, they share the common trait of coming from the hand and heart, characteristics endemic to authentic objects.”

Another huge venue for diverse objects is The Golden Triangle, which started out in 1989 as a specialist in Thai antiques but has expanded to include modern Western



SMART MUSEUM: LONTJ EBERS, NEW YORK. © ISA GENZKEN, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GALERIE BUCHHOLZ, COLOGNE/BERLIN; LESLIE HINDMAN AUCTIONEERS

design, particularly Art Deco. Owner Doug Van Tress says, "In recent years we've been adding a lot to our inventory, and our focus is now ancient and modern. We mix the Asian antiques with modern and contemporary pieces from the past 50 to 80 years. I like showing people how to mix these things together."

Established in 1969, Joel Oppenheimer Inc. is located in the landmark Wrigley Building and features an extensive collection of natural-history art from the 17th through 19th centuries, including prints by John James Audubon, John Gould, Pierre-Joseph Redoute, and other artists from the Golden Age of Exploration. The gallery also offers museum-quality framing and state-of-the-art conservation services.

Thomas McCormick Gallery shows some contemporary artists but mostly deals in mid-century American abstrac-

tion, representing a number of artists' estates including those of Samuel Feinstein, Norman Kanter, and Melville Price, as well as living artists such as Mary Abbott. Currently on view are works on paper by Abstract Expressionist Perle Fine, who was a member of Hans Hofmann's circle in the 1940s and '50s and is notable for being one of the few women members of the seminal 8th Street Club.

Art, especially art from an earlier century, sometimes needs more than just appreciation. It can need maintenance and repair, and The Restoration Division supplies just that. Founded in 2007 by Dmitri Rybchenkov, who came to Chicago from Russia, the enterprise has grown to become the second largest conservation company in the Midwest, specializing in textiles, photographs, documents, murals



Earrings, 14.63-carat and 12.76-carat pear-shaped emeralds and diamonds set in platinum and 18K white and yellow gold.

VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

# Pacific Galleries

Since 1972

## UPCOMING PREMIER AUCTIONS:

May 11th & 12th:  
Fine Art, Antiques & Asian Auction

June 8th & 9th:  
Fine Art & Antiques Auction

### Pacific Galleries Antique Mall & Auction

241 South Lander St. Seattle WA. 98134  
206.441.9990 • www.PacGal.com



62-plate iron Japanese helmet with white silk, circa 1600's, featured in the May 11th Premier Auction.  
**Auction estimate:** \$4,500-\$6,500



Japanese armor; full, complete, matched set, early to mid 1700s, featured in the May 11th Premier Auction.  
**Auction estimate:** \$11,000-\$15,000



Clockwise from top left: Theaster Gates, *Conflation of Leanings*, 2013, wood, metal and wheels, 92 x 58 x 49 inches; Great Crown, Yoruba, Nigeria, 20th century, cotton ground, multicolored glass beads, 35 x 11 inches; reclining figure of the Buddha, river stone. Opposite from top: Hungarian Art Deco barrel chairs, circa 1930; John James Audubon, *Great Blue Heron*, plate 211 from *The Birds of America*.

and paintings. Of his decision to make a life in art, Rybchenkov says he didn't have a choice. As a sixth-generation artist in a family of artists, he always knew what profession he'd follow, though now he applies his talent to conserving art rather than making it. But the professions are inseparable, he points out. "Fine art conservation is not a bakery. It is not a hospital. It requires creativity to keep things afloat and expanding." The Restoration Division, now occupying roughly 5,000 square feet, expects to move to a larger facility soon.

In addition to conservation, works of art also need insurance. Willis Fine Art, Jewelry & Specie is a specialist insurance broker, has the largest practice of its kind in the world. Senior Vice President Sandra Berlin, with 20 years of experience, heads the Chicago team. "Most of our new business are referrals that come from word of mouth," says Berlin. "We have a very high retention rate—over 98 percent—because we develop strong relationships with both clients and underwriters. Many of our clients value our expertise in working with art, jewelry, and museum loans on an international basis. We work closely with our clients to help insure the protection of their collections. In the unfortunate event of a loss, we are hands-on with our clients helping them get the claim resolved."

For seekers of fine jewelry, both estate and contemporary, there is Van Cleef & Arpels, located on North Michigan Avenue. The boutique's design is in keeping with the house's tradition of understated luxury, intended to create an elegant atmosphere that does not distract from the beauty of the



jewelry. Among the standout estate pieces available are a "Lion's Head" set featuring diamonds, pearls and emeralds set in 18K yellow gold, and earrings featuring 14.63-carat and 12.76-carat pear-shaped emeralds and diamonds set in platinum and 18K white and yellow gold.

Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, based in Chicago, is one of the biggest auction houses in the U.S. Founded in 1982, it has offices in five cities and represents everything from fine jewelry and timepieces to manuscripts, dolls and toys, fashion and what they're best known for—fine art. Highlights from upcoming auctions include a Botero nude estimated at \$300,000–500,000, to be auctioned among other works of Modern and Contemporary Art on May 15, and a Picasso nude from 1961, valued at around \$10,000, to be auctioned with other fine





prints on the same day. On May 20 fine silver and objects of vertu will be on the block and will include an 18th-century Meissen porcelain thimble valued at \$5,000.

“It’s fascinating,” says Hindman of the auction business. “And it’s a great deal of fun. We deal with unusual objects and interesting people every day. We recently handled an enormous collection of Napoleonic memorabilia. Just this morning the silver department was showing me a nef, this huge silver centerpiece from the 15th century in the shape of a boat. *Things are fascinating.*”



THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE; JOEL OPPENHEIMER, INC.



Anders Zorn, 1902. Richard Haupt, 1900, oil on canvas, 49 x 36 in. (124.3 x 91.3 cm). Private Collection

## ANDERS ZORN: SWEDEN'S MASTER PAINTER

A virtuoso watercolorist, bravura painter, and etcher, Anders Zorn (1860-1920) painted some of the most sought-after portraits of America's Gilded Age.

**ON VIEW THROUGH MAY 18, 2014  
NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM**

1083 Fifth Avenue at 89th Street  
Open Wed-Sun, 11 AM - 6 PM  
[www.nationalacademy.org](http://www.nationalacademy.org)  
212.369.4880 x201

