



Welcome Subscriber 75667 ( [Logout](#) or [View Account](#) )

October 24th, 2013

# Painting Stolen in 1991, Recovered, and Sold at Shannon's

by Jeanne Schinto



“It was a burglary to order. It was from *Doctor No*,” auctioneer Gene Shannon said, recalling the way thieves stole 14 paintings from him back in 1991. One of those paintings has now resurfaced. It’s *Woman in a Black Kimono* by Alexander Levy (1881-1947).



*Woman in a Black Kimono* by  
Alexander Levy.

Shannon was a dealer at the time of the theft. He had a retail gallery, Shannon Fine Arts in Orange, Connecticut, and the painting had been part of an exhibition, *A Tribute to Women*. One Thursday night, at 8 p.m., what Shannon described as “four hired, professional Guatemalan burglars” made off with the goods in all of two minutes and ten seconds. “We know the timing from the alarm company,” he said. “The state police were there in four minutes. They took particular paintings. They knocked over other ones. They knew what they were after.”

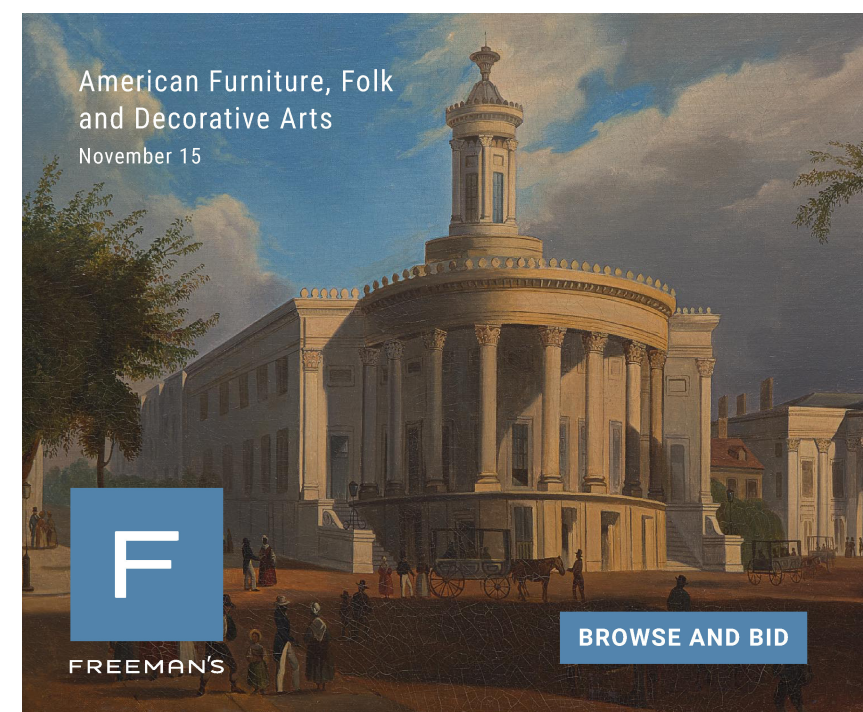
Shannon said he knows they were Guatemalans because the F.B.I. recognized their modus operandi, which included the use of crowbars and a particular way of “popping the locked doors.” They made their getaway on U.S. Route 1. “And they did it when many businesses were still open, so they could blend into traffic.”

Shannon, who left dealing and founded Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers in 1997, said the theft was "a shock. They stole \$400,000 worth of paintings from me, and nothing has come to light until this year, when somebody consigned *Woman in a Black Kimono* to another auction house—we don't know which one—and they had things checked by the Art Loss Register, and it turned up stolen."

The painting, meanwhile, no longer belonged to Shannon. It was the property of the New York City-based AXA Art Insurance Company. “And I was talking to them and said, ‘Gee, I’d love to sell it, since I missed the opportunity to sell it the first time.’ So it came home to Shannon’s.”

Estimated at \$15,000/25,000, the 1915 portrait sold on October 24 for \$18,000 (including buyer's premium). A full report on the \$2.4 million sale will appear in a future issue of *M.A.D.*

Originally published in the December 2013 issue of *Maine Antique Digest*. © 2013 Maine Antique Digest



comments powered by Disqus



Advertising | Subscriptions | Billing | Editor

1 (800) 752-8521 • PO Box 1429

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. [Learn more](#)

**Got it!**