

Prints and Drawings: A Green-

September 23rd, 2014

Haired Muse and Black-and-White Images of Manhattan by Jeanne Schinto

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Swann Galleries, New York City Photos courtesy Swann

Galleries Pablo Picasso's color lithograph

of a green-haired woman— Françoise Gilot, the artist's muse and lover from 1944 to 1953—emerged as the top lot of a two-day, two-catalog sale that opened the fall season at Swann Galleries on September 23 and 24 in New York City. The

offerings were 776 lots of prints and drawings that brought a total of \$2,790,152 (including buyers' premiums) and achieved a sell-through rate of 71%. Estimated at \$80,000/120,000, Picasso's 1949 portrait, the artist's proof of a 13th state of 13, was passed during the sale itself but later went to a dealer for \$60,000. In real life, Gilot's hair was brown, but as the well-known story goes, a remark by Henri

Matisse was the inspiration for the unnaturally hued head-andshoulders image, La Femme a la Résille (Femme aux Cheveux verts). When Matisse met Gilot,

he said that if he were ever to

paint her, green was the color of hair that he would give her. Recalling his fellow artist's words and in homage to him, that's exactly what Picasso did. This sale featured a plethora of Picasso lots, four dozen in all. Dormeuse et Sculptures (Sleeper and Sculptures),a 1933 etching on cream laid paper, sold to the trade for a new auction record, \$32,500 (est. \$15,000/20,000). The

composition is a jumble of

Cubist female nudes—one real,

the others not—but which is

which? Cataloged as "very scarce," the print was signed and numbered 19/50. Going to a collector for a midestimate \$30,000 was the artist's Femme couchée et Homme a la Guitare. Another rarity, the 1959 color linoleum cut of a reclining woman and a man with a guitar was signed and numbered 31/50. A dealer paid \$25,000, again mid-estimate, for Homards et Poissons (Lobsters and Fish), a large (28¾" x 41") lithograph on smooth, cream

wove paper that was the artist's proof from a 1949 edition of 50. A somewhat later (1962) color linoleum cut, Femme nue assise (Nude woman sitting), brought \$21,250 (est. \$15,000/20,000). It was signed and numbered 28/50. That's about how it went, with the rare prints by the artist, who died in 1973, getting the biggest prices, and others doing merely respectably unless the estimate/reserve was unreasonably ambitious. Jacqueline au Bandeau de Face (*Grand Tête de Femme*),a 1962 color linoleum cut of Picasso's second wife, Jacqueline Roque (1927-1986), was passed and remained unsold afterward. Large $(25\frac{1}{4}$ " x 21") and scarce (signed and numbered 32/50), the portrait was saddled with

sale (\$120,000/180,000). It was

yoked to a tragic story as well.

While Gilot, born in 1921,

became an artist in her own

90s, living in Paris, Roque

right and is still alive and in her

committed suicide after years of litigation with Gilot and Picasso's children over Picasso's estate. Besides, that visage is distorted, with the nose literally bent out of shape in typical Cubist fashion. Some would call it ugly. A magazine ad that onview.com, the defunct on-line art seller, ran for a while used a similar image of Jacqueline with its slogan: "Because the view from the top is only as beautiful as you make it." A 1958 lithograph of Jacqueline that did sell—to a dealer at an underestimate \$27,500—was Jacqueline lisant. It shows her good looks in profile and a book in her hands. It was signed and numbered 30/50. It may be surprising to some readers that "after" prints by Picasso did very well. Les Saltimbanques (The Acrobats),a 1922 color etching and aquatint, sold to a collector for \$23,750, just over the estimate, while Maternité, a 1930 work in the same media, went to the

trade for the same price (est.

dealer paid \$22,500 (est.

a 1934 color aquatint and

Duchamp. A collector took

Couple dans les Mimosas, a

etching "after" Marcel

\$25,000/35,000). In addition, a

\$15,000/20,000) for La Mariée,

1967 color lithograph "after" (est. \$20,000/30,000). And another "after" Chagall, Couple et Poisson, fetched \$32,500 (est. \$25,000/35,000). Indeed, the 1967 color lithograph of a leaping fish and a couple embracing inside a giant wreath of flowers was one of the top ten lots of the sale. Todd Weyman, a Swann vice president and head of its prints and drawings department, defined the term "after" prints and explained their appeal in the catalog. He wrote that many artists issued works that were made by the same printmakers who produced the "original" editions "as a means of extending the artists' commercial output." In some cases, the "after" prints were produced by other well-known artists. For example, the Picassos

mentioned above were made by

Images of New York City

composed another strong

Jacques Villon.

and-white images of Manhattan —by Martin Lewis, Reginald Marsh, and Louis Lozowick each achieved \$42,500 on different estimates, and the one by Lozowick, a 1930 lithograph called Traffic (est. \$10,000/15,000), set a new auction record for the print. From an edition of only 20, it is a precisionist's composition of clean, pure shapes crisscrossing elevated trains and boxy, period cars on the streets below the tracks. None of the other four lots of works by the Russian émigré came close to achieving the price that this one brought.

identified as the corner of 34th Street and Park Avenue, looking west. It's the close of day, and pedestrians, most prominently cloche-hatted women, are moving east, so the sun is behind them. Their long legs make corresponding shadows, but their feet barely touch the ground as they appear to float down the sidewalk in their diaphanous dresses. That is literally the "shadow dance" of Lewis's title. Thirty lots of prints by Thomas Hart Benton represented the opposite end of American life in about the same period: the barnyards and windmills of farm country. Significantly, most of the farming equipment in these images is old-fashioned—a simple sickle, a mule-drawn plow. Steam-powered locomotives are already roaring through the countryside, but Benton's art shows resistance to the future. The Race, a 1942 lithograph that went to a collector for \$23,750, shows a horse galloping alongside a train, and the horse is winning. Wreck of the Ol' 97,a 1944 entire world has been upended by progress.

of New York life, too.

Selden Rodman (1909-2002), an iconoclastic author, cultural critic, art collector, and advocate of artists, particularly folk artists. It came by descent to the auction and went way over its \$5000/8000 estimate, achieving \$19,200. Of the strong prices for the best material, Weyman said, "We are seeing people who have been collecting paintings and drawings coming into the prints market. Traditionally, prints have been one of the most accessible markets" (i.e., people who couldn't afford originals went for prints). "What we're seeing now is the reverse of that"—people who have originals and can afford more of them are going for the major offerings of prints. "It's happening as the quality and quantity of original works shrinks."

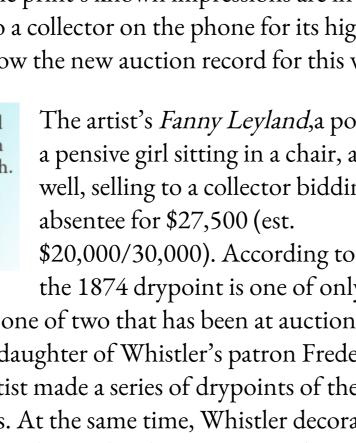
Bidders were much choosier overall when considering 19th-century

Subscribe! absentee for \$27,500 (est. Click to go to our subscriptions page. \$20,000/30,000). According to Swann, the 1874 drypoint is one of only 12 known impressions and only one of two that has been at auction in the last 25 years. The subject is a daughter of Whistler's patron Frederick Leyland of Liverpool. The artist made a series of drypoints of the Leyland children in the 1870s. At the same time, Whistler decorated Leyland's dining room. The result was the glittering Peacock Room that, after Frederick's death, was sold to American industrialist Charles Lang Freer, who had it dismantled and shipped to the United States. It is now owned by the Smithsonian Institution and visitable at the Freer Gallery

Signed and numbered 19/50,

of Art (www.asia.si.edu) in Washington, D.C.

Fanny Leyland by James Abbott McNeill Whistler sold to a collector for \$27,500. The 1874 drypoint is 7¾" x 5¼".



For more information, phone Swann at (212) 254-4710 or see the Web site (www.swanngalleries.com). Picasso's *Dormeuse et Sculptures*, a 1933 etching on cream laid paper, is $10 \frac{5}{8}$ " x $7\frac{3}{4}$ ". It sold for a new auction record, \$32,500.



Picasso's Homards et Poissons brought \$25,000.The 1949 lithograph on smooth cream wove paper is 28¾" x 41". This is the artist's proof from an edition of 50; there were four other artist's proofs and trial proofs, too.



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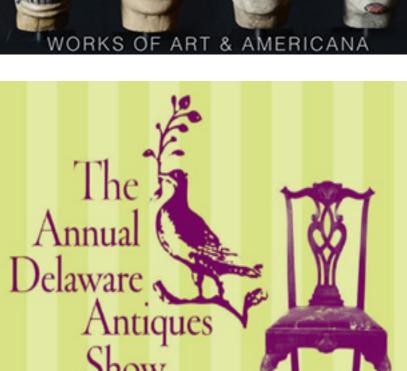
collector for a new auction record, \$25,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000). The 10 7/8" x 131/4" lithograph, from an edition of 54, is signed and inscribed "No. 35/54 III."

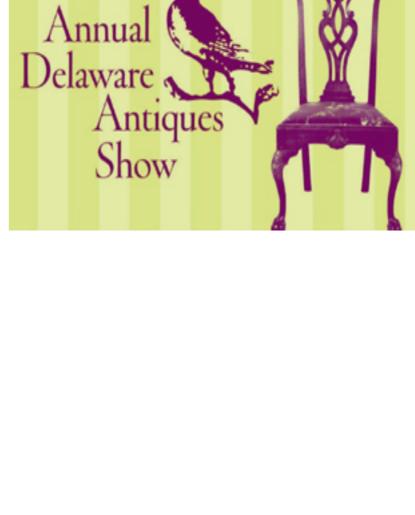
Convex and Concave by M.C.

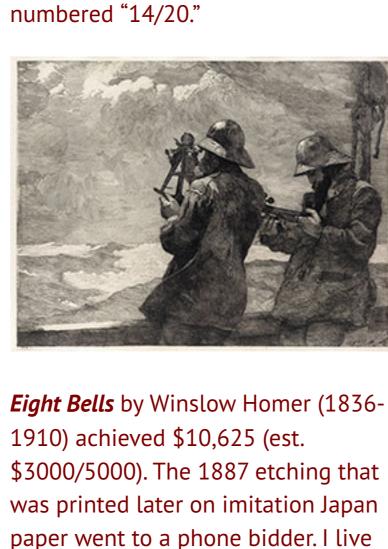
Escher (1898-1972) went to a

Join Ruby Lane .com American Furniture, Folk and Decorative Arts









in Andover, Massachusetts, home of

original painting. The lore, from the

Phillips graduate George H.W. Bush

museum's security guards, is that

(class of '42) loved this work and

Phillips Academy, and its Addison

Gallery of American Art has the

Shadow Dance by Martin Lewis (1881-

drypoint and sand-ground print from

an edition of 109 is 9¼" x 10¾". This

was not the first time that the print

has done very well at Swann. The

auction house set a still-standing

\$50,400 on September 16, 2010. It is

Traffic by Louis Lozowick (1892-1973)

sold for a new record for that print,

lithograph is signed, dated 1930, and

\$42,500. The 9 1/8" x 16 1/8"

the highest price achieved for any

record when it sold a copy for

work by the artist.

1962) fetched \$42,500. The 1930

used to visit it in later life, sitting in front of it for long stretches. The print measures 19½" x 25". The 1886 painting is 25 3/16" x 30 3/16". Anton Schutz's *Plaza Lights* brought \$4000 (est. \$1500/2500). The 9 7/8" x 13 7/8" aquatint on hand-tinted blue wove Japan paper is a circa 1929 work by Schutz (1894-1977).

Note to movie lovers: Going through

the New York City section of this

sale's catalogs and seeing images

like this one reminded me of the

white montage of images of New

York is set to the music of George

Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, the so-

called jazz concerto that was wildly

masterful opening of Woody Allen's

1979 film *Manhattan*. The black-and-

popular when many of these prints the highest estimate of the entire were being freshly made by their artists. The Courtyard, Brussels by James



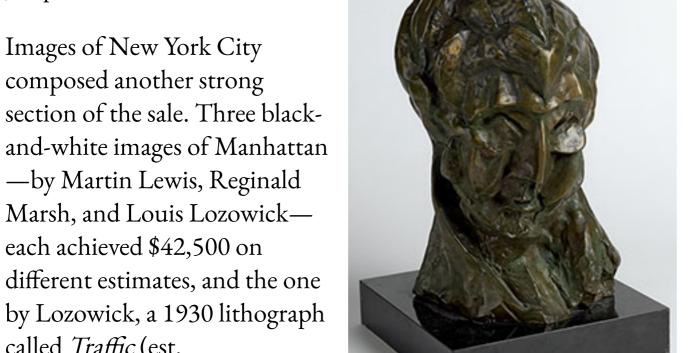
\$80,000/120,000). This is an artist's proof from the 13th and final state, aside from the edition of 50. The 26 Marc Chagall, for the same price 1/8" x $19\frac{3}{4}$ " color lithograph is signed in red crayon. All states were completed during a three-month period in 1949.

Picasso's *La Femme a la Résille*

the auction for \$60,000 (est.

(Femme aux Cheveux verts) sold after





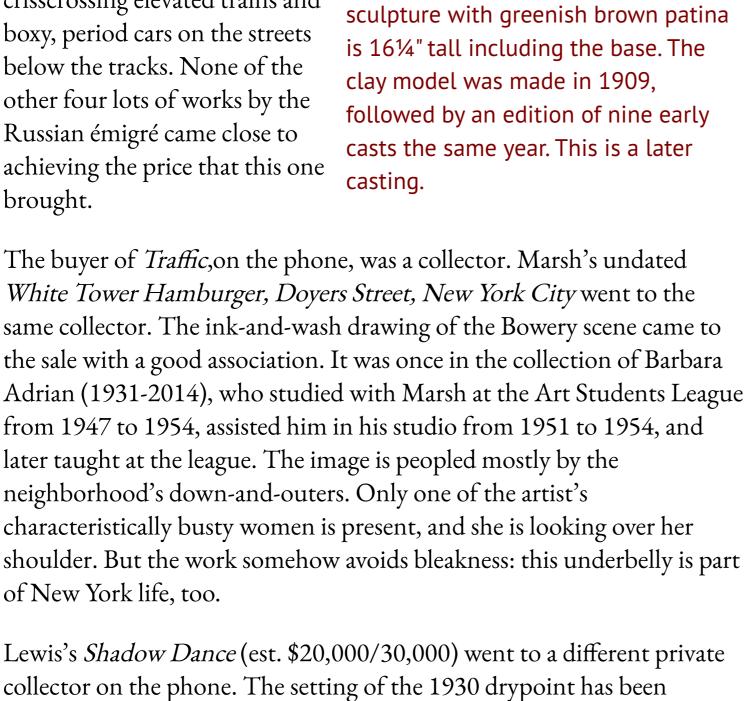
Tête de Femme (Fernande) by Pablo

(est. \$10,000/15,000). The bronze

Picasso (1881-1973) sold for \$20,000

cream wove paper is

7 1/8" x 5¾".



lithograph that fetched \$16,250, depicts the 1903 derailment of a Southern Railway locomotive near Danville, Virginia. It's not only the train that's a wreck. Encountering this disaster, a horse-drawn wagon screeches to a halt and its passengers are thrown from their seats. The The sale of one other work by Benton was noteworthy, a circa 1940 Self-Portrait that had an interesting association. The lithographic crayon on cream wove paper shows the artist with a pipe in his mouth and looking a little fierce. This copy, signed in crayon, was a gift from the artist to

works. Twentieth-century material continues to rule. However, a large collection of more than 30 prints by James Abbott McNeill Whistler brought consistent, notable results. Taking top honors was *The* Courtyard, Brussels. The little (8½" x 5") etching on antique cream wove paper shows hoi polloi busy with chores and with play in a walled yard. Dating from 1887, a time when Whistler was briefly living in the Belgian city, it is a rarity, as seven of the print's known impressions are in institutions. This one went to a collector on the phone for its high estimate, \$35,000, which is now the new auction record for this work. The artist's Fanny Leyland, a portrait of Read all the stories, complete with all their photos and captions, along with a pensive girl sitting in a chair, also did all the news and features every month. well, selling to a collector bidding as an

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