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Salon Art + Design Compels Us To Examine The Relationship Between Artwork And Object



A sensuous entanglement of female form and mythical sea creature arouses our gaze and draws us into an eclectic display of sculpture and painting spanning Modernism and Contemporary art.

The focal point of the sprawling **Galerie Gmurzynska** double booth at **Salon Art + Design**, Henri Laurens' terracotta sculpture *Grande Sirène* (1945), engages us in a tussle between the corporeal and the archetypal and takes us on a journey of elegant female ferocity.

The second-largest terracotta created by French sculptor and illustrator Laurens (1885-1954) has been a highlight at his retrospectives, and renowned curator Bernard Dorival of the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris (now known as Centre Pompidou) described it as "Lauren's undoubted masterpiece" when the state-run museum purchased a bronze counterpart in 1946. Subsequent bronze casts are in the collections of: Musée Cantini in Marseille, France, (a long-term deposit from Centre Pompidou); Kunsthalle Mannheim in Germany; and Musée royal des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels.

Laurens' sculpture is juxtaposed with a wide range of works by artists including **Marjorie Strider**, Roberto Matta, Wifredo Lam, and László Moholy-Nagy at the Galerie Gmurzynska booth. The showcase demands to be viewed by multiple angles, as we approach from two aisles. At a fair where design commands many installations that serve as living spaces, the Gmurzynska display itself is a grand feat of design, underscoring the power of fine art to stir emotion and mood. Moreover, displaying a Strider (1931-2014) alongside a Tom Wesselmann (1931-2004) reaffirms her rightful place in art history. Wesselmann's *Great American Nude No. 48* (1963) fetched \$10.7 million at Sotheby's in New York in May 2008, while Strider awaits her posthumous celebration as an auction darling.

Throughout the Park Avenue Armory, **Salon Art + Design**, which was on view from November 7-11, an array of environments created by curation of each booth evoke myriad feelings, and implore us to consider design objects in the context of fine art.

Transporting our gaze from museum-quality masterpiece to design, we're invited to "touch" **Willi Siber**'s *Triptych of Wall Objects* (2024) at the **Karl Kemp** booth. While the freedom to physically interact with artwork is always intriguing, what enticed my son Michael and I was how the colors oscillated between pink, violet, and teal depending on the incidence of light and the viewer's point of view. We follow the rippling movement of the three panels created on medium-density fiberboard (MDF) with interference varnish milled into the surface.

It's little surprise how fluidly texture, medium, color, and technique align to create motion in *Triptych of Wall Objects*, as we learn the oeuvre of the German painter, sculptor, and object artist (born 1949 in Eberhardzell) spans a wide range across functional and decorative works on view at the Karl Kemp booth.

In its 13th year, Salon Art + Design, produced by **Sanford Smith + Associates**, welcomed its largest-yet crowd of more than 2,500 guests during the preview alone. This year's Salon featured 54 leading exhibitors presenting unique environments that collectively transform the Armory into an exploration of how art and design, and art and object, inform each other.

