



Gallery: Disappearing Middle-Class Jobs



Hollywood's Highest-Paid Actresses



How To Check Out Your Stock Broker



AdVoice: Death, Taxes And Videogames

Free Issue >

Yesterday
How Banks Plan To Compete With Groupon

KASHMIR HILL *The Not-So Private Parts*

Yesterday
Inside Jerry Seinfeld's \$18.3 Million Colorado Crib

MORGAN BRENNAN *Closing Table*



Abigail R. Esman

PEN & SWORD

[MY PROFILE](#) [MY HEADLINE GRABS](#) [MY RSS FEED](#)

Some Thoughts On Egypt, The Art Market, And Jesus On A Pig

Feb. 1 2011 - 10:14 am | 556 views | 1 recommendation | 5 comments

They have abandoned the people and the streets of Cairo and Alexandria this past weekend, leaving (to defend) entirely for themselves; but Egypt is still, over the museums and treasures of their country.

Something about this strikes me as extraordinary – and telling; it speaks loudly of the importance historical patrimony and the passion of a culture for its artistic and historical treasures – a passion that may explain why, in the weeks following 9/11, so many pulled their money out of Wall Street and began buying art instead, and why even now, as financial markets tremble and the economy rocks, Christie’s auction house announced last week that 2010 had been its best year ever, grossing 5 billion dollars in art sales alone. That tally represents a 53 percent increase over 2009 sales, according to a Christie’s press release, thanks to the sale of 606 works that surpassed the \$1 million mark – including Picasso’s *Nude, Green Leaves, and Bust* which sold for a record-busting \$106.5 million last spring. And while certainly investment and financial incentives play a role, there’s surely more involved. Interest in art, even from those who can’t quite manage a million-dollar price tag, is booming, as evidenced by the fact that increasing numbers of people find themselves traveling ridiculous distances with ever-greater frequency to attend various art fairs, where they meander tirelessly through airless convention centers, taking advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view assorted masterpieces in that brief moment they stand suspended between the collections of one fortunate owner and another – often never to be seen



"Isis," bronze, 6th century BC at Eberwein

10

Share

0



4

3

Share

MY ACTIVITY FEED

Show all activity

ABIGAIL'S NEW POST Yesterday

"We're Going Through A Collapse Zone": What Caused The Manhattan Synagogue Fire?

ABIGAIL COMMENTED Yesterday

"Very well done - thanks!"

Posted to **DSK AND THE BILLIONAIRE ART DEALER CONNECTION: CONSPIRACY OR COINCIDENCE?**

ABIGAIL COMMENTED Yesterday

"This may or may not be true, of course - again, pending the outcome of the investigation, and which works..."

Posted to **DSK AND THE BILLIONAIRE ART DEALER CONNECTION: CONSPIRACY OR COINCIDENCE?**

CONTRIBUTOR COMMENT Yesterday



CLARE O'CONNOR
Filthy Rich

Commented on **DSK AND THE BILLIONAIRE ART DEALER CONNECTION: CONSPIRACY OR COINCIDENCE?**

"Re: Sinclair's art collection, some more detail here in a story I wrote for Forbes: <http://blogs.forbes.com/clareoconnor/2011/how-rich-are-dominique-strauss-kahn-and-his-wife-anne-sinclair/> Also, I am not sure..."



MOST POPULAR

MY POSTS

All Posts Last 24 Hours

publicly again.

Last Friday, I was one of them, drifting dreamily through the aisles of my personal favorite of such fairs, the [Brussels Antiques and Fine Arts Fair](#) (BRAFA), celebrating its 56th season.

True, BRAFA doesn't have the "wow" factor of the main mega-fairs like Basel, Basel Miami or TEFAF Maastricht or Frieze; but it offers up a host of surprises and quite a number of treasures among them, from 18th-century French diamond-and-ruby brooches to Oceanic and Oriental art, Medieval icons, Old Master paintings, and 20th century masters from Picasso to Warhol, from Christo to Wang Guangyi.

That eclecticism is probably best represented by [Finch and Co](#), the London-based dealers in – well, just about everything. Whimsy coupled with the remarkable filled their stand, with items like a 19th-century Nile crocodile, a four-foot high, 19th-century Narwhal tusk, and a German Renaissance wine tap in the form of a dolphin – not to mention a centuries-old Australian boomerang and 12th-century sandstone head which, according to the owners, was inspired in part by a Celtic "cult of the severed head."

Far less gruesome – but at least equally entertaining – were the (real) pigs by Wim Delvoye who sat quietly greeting visitors to [Guy Pieters'](#) stand. The stuffed, tattooed swine are among the artist's "signature" pieces,

a play on the idea of art as investment (or, that is, art as "piggy" bank). Behind them, other tattooed pieces by Delvoye on pigskin, depicted – as do some of the tattooed pigs – Disney images from Cinderella and other fairy tales. These juxtapose tellingly with an exquisitely-rendered Jesus inked across one particularly fine pork back by the name, apparently, of "Rex." (Miraculously, not a single Muslim, Hindu, Jew, Christian, animal rights activist, or anyone else defaced the installation, or demanded it be removed.)



Wim Delvoye, "Rex," 2006, at Guy Pieters Gallery, BRAFA

Other exhibitors, however, took a more serious tone, from the breathtaking French deco jewels by Cartier and others at [Epoque Fine Jewels](#) to the paintings by Belgian artist Paul van Hoeydonck (best known for having sent the first sculpture, *Fallen Astronaut*, to the moon in 1971) at Ronny van de Velde. (The *Astronaut* remains still at Hadley Rile, commemorating American and Russian space travelers who had lost their lives in the eternal quest to conquer the unknown.) Other offerings at Van de Velde included charcoal drawings by Degas and an early Ensor oil on canvas, while paintings by Antonio Saura, Pierre Soulages and Jean Dubuffet grabbed the drama nearby at Galerie Pascal Lansberg.

But with all eyes now on Egypt – and the possible destruction of its archeological treasures – perhaps most gratifying of all were the Egyptian limestone sculptures from the 7th century BC at Galerie F. Cervera Arqueologica, and a seated Isis in Bronze (Egypt, 600 BC) at [Roswitha Eberwein Antike Kunst](#).

Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of how these totems were taken out of Egypt and why, or what their market value might be or become, their quiet assertion here, now, caught my breath: a reminder that it has been not the Pharaohs who have survived these long millennia, but the relics, the art, the creative vision, of the people. We can only hope that their call for democracy and freedom will prevail now, and endure at least as long.

1. Myths and Truths About the "Ground Zero Mosque" 7,749 views
2. Apple calls in Secret Service to raid artist who snapped its customers 7,673 views
3. The Rape Of The Mona Lisa 6,700 views
4. Did Iran Know About the Yemen Terror Plot? 4,613 views
5. World To Jews: Drop Dead 4,500 views

ABOUT ME

Author, writer, critic, humanist, chocoholic; I write about art, politics, and religion -- the things that people argue about at cocktail parties -- in the belief that doing so will actually make us all better people, living in a more fulfilling, inspired, enlightened, and peaceful world. In addition to my work at Forbes, I am a contributing editor at Art & Auction and Interiors magazines; have won awards for my essays from The Economist and the National Health Education Association; have published articles and op-eds in (among others) the Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, and Vogue; and am the author, most recently, of *Radical State: How Jihad Is Winning Over Democracy In the West* (Praeger, 2010). See my web site at www.abigalesman.com Follow me on Twitter: twitter.com/radicalstates See my profile »

Followers: 30
Contributor Since: September 2010

[MY PROFILE](#) [MY RSS FEED](#)
[MY HEADLINE GRABS](#) [EMAIL ME TIPS](#)

[Kunst 11 Zürich](#) www.kunstzuerich.ch
17th International Art Fair, 17-20 November 2011

[Egypt Property Magazine](#) Experience-Investments.co.uk
Free Spring 2011 Egypt property & Lifestyle Magazine, News, Articles

[Light InThe Box](#) www.LightInTheBox.com/
Official Site. Global Shopping From China

[Joe Tilson](#) www.berardinelliarthe.com
Joe Tilson acquatinta Joe Tilson british art

AdChoices ▶

Recommend



Previous Post:

'Jihad Jane' expected to plead guilty in terrorist case | Philadelphia Daily News | 01/29/2011

Next Post:

Democracy in Egypt? Define "Democracy."

More on Forbes Right Now

Related Posts

Egypt Antiquities Chief Says He May Quit (NY Times)

Anderson Cooper Egypt Tweet: Fear Has Been Defeated

Saudi Billionaire Prince Alwaleed In Egypt Land Dispute

Bill Gates Talks Technology, Egypt And Revolution With CBS' Couric

Unrest in Egypt, Day 5

LIVE STREAMS ▶

Related streams

Arts Entertainment

Lifestyle

OpEd

World Affairs

Comments

DISPLAY

Called-Out Comments

All comments

5 Total Comments
Post your comment »

DISPLAY

Called-Out Comments

All comments

Log in for notification options

Comments RSS