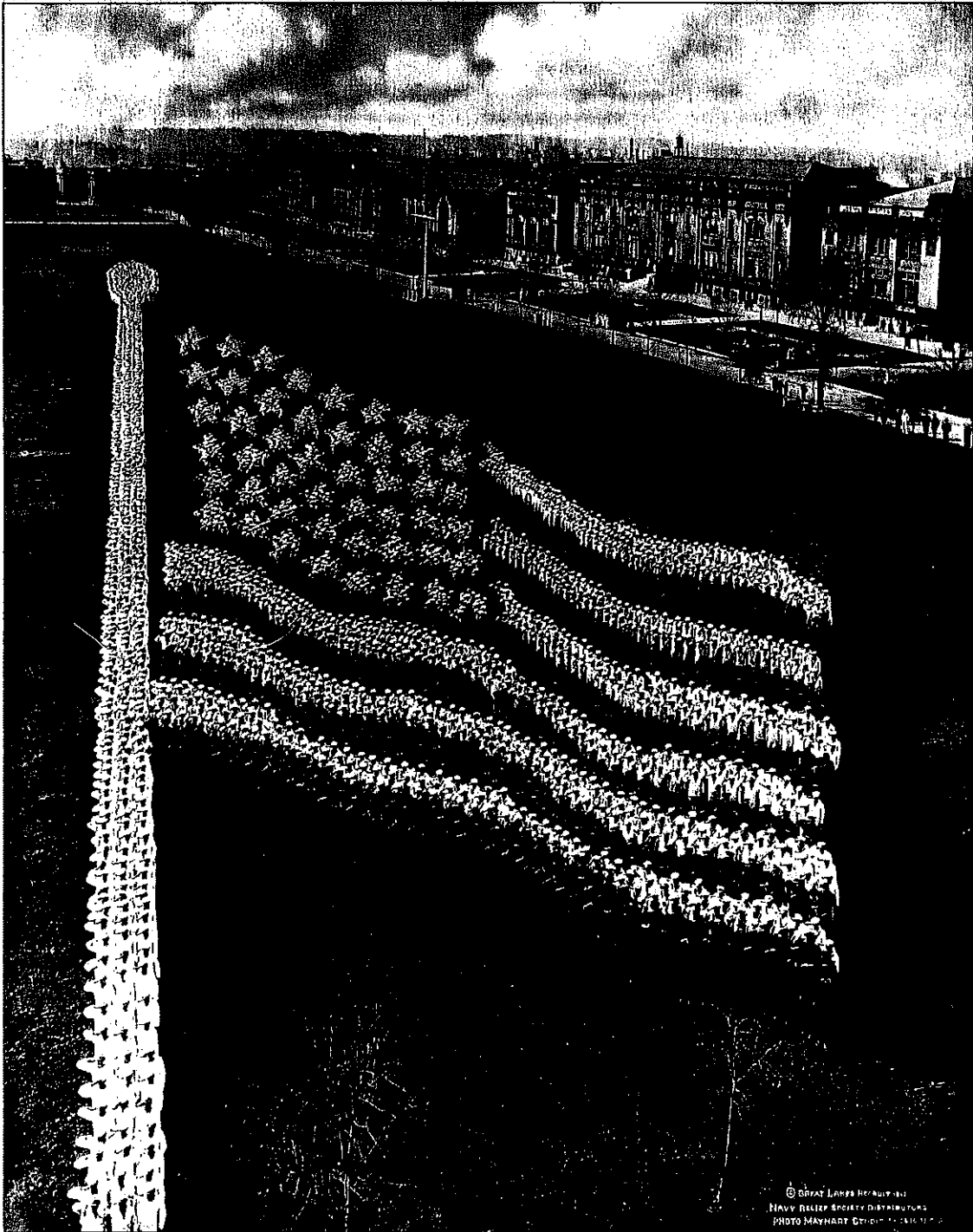


aa

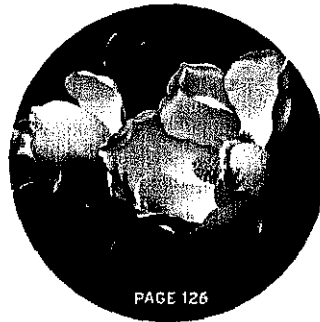
ART & AUCTION



© GREAT LAKES HERALD
HAWK RELIEF SOCIETY DISTRIBUTORS
PHOTO MAYNARD GRIFFIN

★ AMERICAN ART SPECIAL ★

- 19 In the Air**
- 28 Around the Block**
Artist's Family Sues Smithsonian and Dealer, Ahistorical Society?, Carpenter Loses Suit, No Tax Break for Art, Corrections
- 48 Talk of the Trade**
Tools of the Trade, Maroun Salloum, Jason McCoy, Fuller than Ever
- 60 In the Galleries**
Torres-García at CDS, Franz Kline at Allan Stone, Robert Ferris and His Collection at J.J. Lally, Alexandre Noll at de Beyrie, Southeast Asian Sculpture at Spink & Son, Roy Dowell at Margo Leavin, Viennese Clocks at D&S, John Currin at Andrea Rosen, Diego's Bestiary, Games at Harvey
- 74 Under the Hammer**
Sleeper of the Month, Auction Ear, Regionals Enjoy "Best Ever" Year, Expertise's...?
- 86 Portrait of the Artist**
Alex Katz
- 94 Private View**
Turning on the Faucet: Anthony Fawcett
- 100 In the Know**
Bright Lights, Big Problem
- 104 Souren Melikian**
A New Era



PAGE 126



PAGE 132



PAGE 137



PAGE 94



PAGE 86

FEATURES

- 117 EYE ON AMERICAN**
- 118 19th-Century Sculpture: Unbound**
by Nicholas Fox Weber
- 120 Western Art: Call of the Wild**
by Christie Brown
- 122 Portraiture: Face Time**
by Margaret A. Oppenheimer
- 124 African-American Art: A Hidden Heritage**
by Steven Vincent
- 126 Landscape Painting: Big Country**
by Doris Athineos
- 128 Outsider Art: Raw Power**
by Victoria Pedersen
- 130 Photography: Coming into Focus**
by Jean M. Dykstra
- 132 Modernism: A Bridge to the Future**
by Steven Vincent
- 134 WHAT IS ANTITRUST ANYWAY?**
by Judd Tully
The current federal probe of dealers and auction houses has many wondering how antitrust laws apply to the art market. Legal experts offer their opinion.
- 136 THE STATE(S) OF GERMANY**
by John Dornberg
The German art market varies from city to city. But right now, there is growing optimism and increasing activity everywhere.

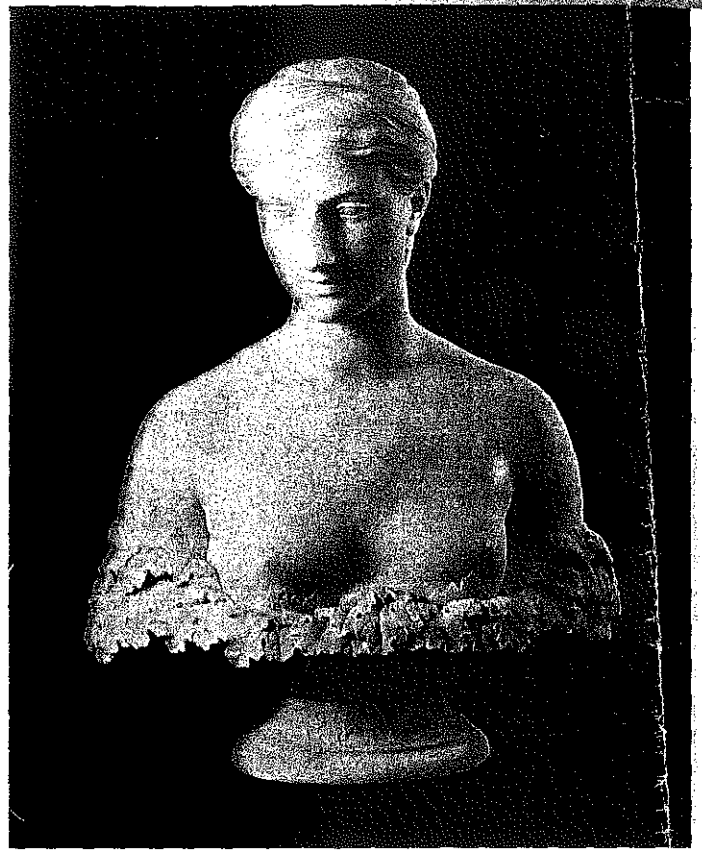
Cover: *E plutibus unum*. In this 1917 gelatin silver print from New York's James Danziger Gallery, *A Living Flag (Great Lakes Recruit)*, printed by the Mayhart Studio of Chicago, a host of Navy recruits fall in line to form the American flag. Beginning on page 117, *Art & Auction* salutes the nation's art with our special section, "Eye on American."



PAGE 104

SEEING THE MASTERWORKS OF 19TH-CENTURY American sculpture can feel like a journey to your great grandparents' attic; the shock is to discover that those virtuous old-timers were aficionados of pornography. This isn't hard-core stuff—the nudity is mostly of the type that has long been considered fine in museums—but this figurative statuary is still plenty sexy, with issues of power and bondage playing no small part.

Consider Hiram Powers's life-size 1846 marble *Greek Slave*, now owned by the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. This smooth-skinned white goddess poses in all her glorious nudity, yet her handcuffs, linked by chain, make it clear that her flesh is not her own, but someone else's possession. Erastus Dow Palmer's *The White Captive*, a plaster from 1859, stands bound at the wrists, brutally fastened to a tree trunk, yet Palmer made her the epitome of grace and allure—the fantasy might be the Marquis de Sade's. And sexiness and captivity were not reserved for the female body alone: William Rimmer's slightly-larger-than-life-size bronze from 1861, *Falling Gladiator*, flaunts his rippling torso and terrific physique, yet for all his strength, what marks him is his position of subservience and defeat. As for Horatio Greenough's circa 1833–41 marble *George Washington*, he is clad in the Greco-Roman mode, with nothing but half a toga (its skirtlike folds covering him mostly from the waist down) and skimpy sandals. Our First President's naked shoulders, pectorals and well-delineated ribs suggest that, when he wasn't crossing the Delaware or address-



19th-century sculpture

UN

COLLECTORS AND MUSEUMS GET PASSIONATE ABOUT 19TH-CENTURY



There's been a "resurgence of interest" in 19th-century American sculpture. Frederick MacMonnies's bronzes, such as *Nathan Hale*, left, from James Graham & Sons of New York, have doubled in value in the last decade. Above, Hiram Powers's *Proserpine*, from New York's Conner-Rosenkranz; opposite, *Undine Receiving Her Soul* by Chauncey Bradley Ives sold for \$222,500 (est. \$50-70,000) at Christie's New York in December 1996.

ing Congress, he was working out.

What our forefathers chiseled, molded and cast as they stuck to traditional techniques makes clear that no amount of rules and regulations will suppress personal taste. On the contrary, it seems today that the more consummate the skill and scholarly the Classical reference, the more risqué the result. Yet at the time they were made, the audience for these works read them as moral statements rather than as erotica: in the American section of the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition in London, *Greek Slave* was immensely popular as (in the words of poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning) an "appeal...against man's wrong"; similarly, a committee of clergymen deemed the statue (which soon toured the U.S.) "clothed in her own virtue." Yet on the other hand, when it was put on view at the Boston Atheneum, men and women were required to see it separately on alternate days. Is it only in Victorian Boston and through the more gender-conscious, psychologically alert eyes of the 1990s that these figures in marble, plaster and bronze seem so erotically laden? Or was the sexiness of this so-called academic art always apparent? Such personal reactions are hard to gauge, perhaps. But for whatever reasons, 19th-century Neoclassical sculpture, greatly in favor when it was made and then relatively out of style, is now in again.

Until the past few years, the stature of this work has been a bit like the names of lesser-known U.S. vice presidents and the details of our nation's territorial expansion: facts that every high-school student is expected to learn but is then permitted to forget. But now the spotlight is on it again.

"Sculpture had taken a backseat to painting for so many years that it's practically been in the trunk," says Martha Fleischman, president of New York's Kennedy Galleries, which features 18th- to 20th-century American paintings, sculpture and prints. "Curators had been scattering sculpture around with decorative arts, but now it's being reappraised in its own right. There's a new passion for this work among museums and private collectors." Whereas sculpture by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (already considered an American master in his lifetime), Frederic Remington and Charles Russell (both with devoted audiences) have long been esteemed, many pieces by other sculptors that 10 years ago might have been plopped on top of a mahogany side table are now being shown freestanding. "Years ago," Fleischman adds, "the market was fueled by folk collectors. Now people are willing to embrace sculpture aesthetically because it interests them as it didn't before—in part because of the concern with monuments, but also because of the growing interest in American history." Paul Provost, a specialist in the American painting and sculpture department at Christie's New York, notes that because pieces by Palmer, Powers and Rimmer rarely come to the market, more easily available works by their contemporaries are garnering increased attention: a circa 1855, 49-inch white marble by Chauncey Bradley Ives, for instance, *Undine Receiving Her Soul* (est. \$50-70,000), sold for \$222,500 at Christie's New York in December 1996. Collectors of sculpture by Thomas Eakins,

resurgence of interest in this style and in this period—a certain appreciation for it—in today's world." Shay points out that the bust version of Powers's *Greek Slave*, which cost under \$10,000 a decade ago, now sells for "\$20,000 and up—a very beautiful one selling for \$50,000."

Rosenkranz notes a "striking rise of prices" for late 19th-century bronze sculpture by Bessie Potter Vonnoh, a particular interest of his. A 14.5-inch-high *Girl Dancing*, from 1899, that Rosenkranz sold in 1986 for approximately \$25,000 came on the market again at Christie's December 4 sale and fetched \$57,500 against an estimate of \$10,000 to \$15,000. Similarly, since the 1980s, the bronzes that Frederick MacMonnies made in New York—such as his statue of Nathan Hale gracing the park in front of City Hall—have risen substantially.

Those links of New England to ancient Athens, those 19th-century embodiments of academic skill, those testaments to the eternity and complicatedness of lust, are now treated with renewed pride and fascination. ★

BOUND

SCULPTURE BY NICHOLAS FOX WEBER

Thomas Ball and by women sculptors like Edmonia Lewis and Harriet Hosmer have also rallied to the occasion, with Hosmer's 1854 white marble *Medusa* (est. \$30-50,000) selling for \$62,500 at Sotheby's New York in May 1996.

Joel Rosenkranz—co-owner with his wife, Janis Conner, of New York's Conner-Rosenkranz, specialists in 19th- and early 20th-century American sculpture—remarks that work previously thought to be sentimental is now regarded as "technically superb and aesthetically interesting." Like Fleischman, he gives Powers top billing among the Neoclassicists. His work is still available to collectors because, Rosenkranz explains, "some of the models were created in substantial numbers. Over 100 examples of his original *Proserpine* were done. There were many models of the *Greek Slave*." Yet, the dealer adds, collectors are increasingly aware that the supply is by no means unlimited, which is why the work is being sought more assiduously.

Fifteen years ago, these 19th-century American marbles were "relegated to minor auctions and sold for small sums, say, \$10,000 to \$15,000," Rosenkranz recalls. "Now it's all changed. We're catching up with how Europeans feel about their 19th-century market. There's a new generation of curators and collectors who don't have the clichéd notion that these objects are passé, and who look at them with a fresh eye." So whereas Conner-Rosenkranz might have sold a life-size Powers bust for \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the early '80s, the dealers currently are offering a marble *Proserpine*, circa 1844, for \$75,000. Cameron Shay, vice president of New York's James Graham & Sons, which deals in 19th- and 20th-century American art, is also seeing "a

