

Print Article



Thierry Mugler's 1992 ensemble from "Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2008



Christian Dior's "Bar" suit and hat, ca. 1955, in "The Golden Age of Couture" at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2008



ARTNET DESIGN

by Brook S. Mason

Forget Chippendale and Chelsea porcelain, the extravagant creations of the fashion world are spiking on the Richter scale of museum attendance. The *Art Newspaper* has compiled its extensive annual list of visitor numbers for 2008 museum exhibitions, and among the top ten shows in the decorative arts category, a stunning five are devoted to, well, luxury brand togs. Top of the heap is the **Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute's** "Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy," last fall's extravaganza of costumes from Hollywood films as well as from Paris couturiers like **Thierry Mugler**, notable for his penchant for animalier-like creativity.

The Met show is followed, in terms of the number of visitors, by "Golden Age of Couture" at the **Victoria and Albert Museum** in London, "Salvatore Ferragamo: 1928-2008" at the **Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art**, "Christian Lacroix" at the **Musée des Arts Décoratifs** in Paris and "Blog.mode: addressing fashion," back at the Met again. The measurable fashionista interest in museum exhibitions should spur even more fashion-house sponsors to enter the haute museum world.

And indeed, the next fashion label snaring the art-world spotlight is **Missoni**, when London's **Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art** debuts "Workshop Missoni: Daring to be Different," July 1-Sept. 20, 2009. In addition to the firm's signature patterned knits, the show features Missoni's own holdings of modern Italian art, including works by **Giacomo Balla** and **Gino Severini**.

But back to the *Art Newspaper's* decorative arts top ten, where exhibitions devoted to the artistry of Japan claim four spots. Among them are "Tea for Everyone: Japanese Ceramics" and "The Potter's Mark: Art of the Edo Period," both at the **Freer and Sackler Galleries** in Washington, D.C. Also included are "Export Lacquer" at the **Kyoto National Museum** and "Ukiyo-e Influence on French Ceramics" at the **Tokyo National Museum**. In other words, that's 40 percent for Asia in the top ten.

What happened to antique furnishings? Well, we're having a rather **Marie Antoinette** moment in these recessionary times. Of the top ten museum survey shows, the French court with its pricey gilt chairs and exquisite Sèvres porcelain took home three winners. They are "Splendor of France's Royal Court" at the **Metropolitan Art Museum** in Tokyo, which also racked up record attendance when it traveled to Japan's **Kobe City Art Museum**. And the frivolous wife of **Louis Quatrotze** also took center stage in "Marie Antoinette" at the **Grand Palais**.

In 2008, attendance figures for architecture and design shows outdistanced those for photography. The **Museum of Modern Art** garnered first and second highest attended shows with architecture curator **Barry Bergdoll's** "Home Delivery," a winning nod to prefab housing, and "Design and the Elastic Mind," which put hipster designer



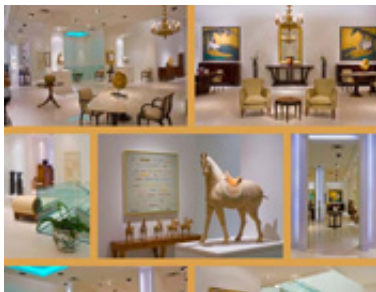
Giacomo Balla's *Futurist Suit*, ca. 1918, in "Workshop Missoni: Daring To Be Different" at the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art in London, opening July 1, 2009-04-16



Joseph Ducreux' portrait of Marie-Antoinette, 1769, in "Marie-Antoinette" at the Grand Palais in Paris



Joris Laarman's *Bone Chair*, 2006, at Friedman Benda, New York



Joris Laarman with his bone-like chairs on the global map.

Biedermeier in Manhattan

Just when most of the Chelsea art world is quaking in this uneasy financial climate, surprise, surprise -- there are antiques dealers opening vast quarters.

Biedermeier is coming to midtown Manhattan with a vengeance. The decorative style, popular in Austria and Germany in the 1820s-1840s, shunned the heaviness of French Empire pieces and tended towards clean lines, supple shapes and light colored woods. It is the focus of **Iliad Antik**, a 5,300-square-foot gallery sheathed in white marble opened only a few weeks ago by **Adam Brown** and **Andrea Zemel** at 212 East 57th Street. The new shop is triple the size of the pair's previous Upper East Side establishment, indicating the rising vogue for this style. Cementing their reputation for top Biedermeier, Brown and Zemel were lenders to "Biedermeier: The Invention of Simplicity," which premiered at the **Milwaukee Art Museum**, traveled to Vienna and Berlin, and concluded at the **Louvre** in 2007.

The new Iliad Antik showroom boasts impressive lighting and Versace-like glam. Showstoppers include an 1820 Viennese circular table with a trumpet-styled base and veneered top, priced at \$38,000. "Viennese pieces are generally more refined while German ones are more architectonic and Hungarian furniture bears a Baroque tendency," says Brown.

The shop also carries later material. Not to be missed is a 1938 sideboard by the Milanese designer **Dossi**. It's clad in parchment with slivers of exotic woods illustrating Homeric epics. The exacting workmanship is reflected in its price of \$235,000.

In celebrating their expansion, which coincides with their tenth anniversary, this dealer duo is planning a series of contemporary art exhibitions -- including a 20-year retrospective of works by gallery co-founder Andrea Zemel (b. 1960). Titled "Pathos, Hubris & Zoe," May 7-June 30, 2009, the show features Zemel's wall-based artworks incorporating text and references to the Greek world as well as mosaics, ceramics and glass.

Garden Temperature

With spring upon us, **LASSCO** -- the **London Architectural Salvage and Supply Company, Ltd.** -- usually witnesses a seasonal uptick in garden ornament sales. But with the sharp change in the financial climate, big ticket garden ornament sales are slowing, as monumental Grecian ladies in marble and huge cast iron urns rely on those very buyers who have been most hit by the downturn. "Russians, fund managers, real estate developers, and the swagger material they favor has not been shifting," says LASSCO chairman **Adrian Amos**.

Still, he is seeing strong sales in mantels, mirrors, paneling and reclaimed flooring: the kinds of "country house chic" that **Ralph Lauren** wannabes tend to covet. He attributes this to the "perception of LASSCO being the interface of the buying public with the impoverished gentry and desperate rag-and-bone men." Americans are among his biggest buyers.

Interestingly, LASSCO is inundated with offers of material.

Norman Adams at Auction

Casting a shadow over the antiques world, the 87-year-old London dealership **Norman Adams** is shuttering its doors and selling its stock at



Gallery views at Iliad Antik in Manhattan



Biedermeier trumpet-shaped, tilt-top pedestal table, walnut veneer with maple inlays, Vienna, ca. 1825, at Iliad Antik in Manhattan



Andrea Zemel's glazed ceramic and glass mosaic *Chronos*, 2005, at Iliad Antik



An English pine Tuscan order entrance portico, ca. 1830, stripped, £11,500, at LASSCO

Sotheby's London on Apr. 21, 2009. The withering exchange rate and changing taste led to that closure. The auction features 235 lots of English antiques and is expected to total in excess of £1.3 million.

At the same time as the viewing and auction of its stock, Norman Adams is headlining a selling exhibition of contemporary furniture by British designers, also at Sotheby's. Top of the tree among the works by 27 designers in the show is **John Makepeace's** ripple ash dining table, which is being offered for £50,000. Across the board, most of the works average around £2,000-£5,000.

Makepeace is a pivotal English designer, whose furniture has long been favored by Chicago art patron **John Bryan**, chair of the fundraising efforts for the **Art Institute of Chicago's** new modern wing, which opens May 15, 2009, as well as for **Millennium Park** nearby. Bryan's vast decorative arts collection is housed at his **Crab Tree Farm** just outside the Windy City and includes key furniture by Makepeace.

BROOK S. MASON is U.S. correspondent for the *Art Newspaper*, and also writes for the *Financial Times* and other publications.



Charles II carved limewood wall mirror, ca. 1680, est. £20,000, offered in "Classic English Furniture: The Norman Adams Legacy 1923-2009" at Sotheby's London, Apr. 21, 2009



Matthew Burt's *Before-you-go* at Norman Adams Antiques

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ON VIEW AT ILIAD....
212 East 57 Street
from May 7 to June 30

Andrea Zemel, Pathos, Hubris & Zoë:
A twenty year retrospective including
her current body of work "Beehive Brain"

NEW YORK March 23 – To launch its Tenth Anniversary Year in New York in its expansive, newly relocated gallery at 212 East 57 Street, ILIAD (www.iliadantik.com) will present a special exhibition of artist/owner ANDREA ZEMEL'S work in a Twenty Year Retrospective entitled Pathos, Hubris & Zoë, from May 7 to June 30.

Artist, designer, and co-founder of ILIAD, Andrea Zemel is a Wash D.C. native who has exhibited paintings, works on paper and sculpture in galleries and public institutions throughout the United States and Eastern Europe since the 1990s. Her edgy imagery and psychological narratives push at the boundaries between contemporary and historical myth making. As sculptor and furniture designer for her own spin-off company Iliad Design, she creates high end one of a kind furnishings for many of New York's top interior designers and architects in her own atelier in Prague, CZ.

Zemel says "This show will present my current body of work in ceramic and glass which includes the series Beehive Brain and Writing on the Wall, the culmination of many years of work delving into the vocabulary of the human unconscious. The images, glyphs, triptychs and hexads of Beehive Brain draw upon narrative elements from ancient cultural and literary sources while Writing on the Wall looks to the written tradition of oracular prophecy in the language of the epics".

Say's ILIAD's co-owner Adam Brown, "The work is in a category of its own. Like Andrea's earlier material, it encompasses the idiom of depth psychology but digs even deeper - amalgamating Hermetic, alchemical, and mythic imagery into a unique and holistic visual language. Like the Mysteries, the work is multifaceted and multi-layered; one can be captivated by the surface or go as deep down the rabbit hole as one would like to go. Highly intelligent and elegant, it presents like a well-articulated theorem. It is entirely contemporary yet richly archaic - but it departs from post-modernism in that

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it embraces the concept of art. In short, a visual expose of the perennial philosophy.

Zemel says her latest work is an expression of her infatuation with mosaic, using materials and techniques evocative of the ancient world while her imagery remains profoundly relevant for our times. The process evolved from her collaborative work making public art at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 90's and has become the focus of her studio efforts to date.

Like her earlier works on paper, the new series employs text and visual narrative with an intense interest in what Zemel calls 'contemporary mythologies'. "The work is richly textured and timeless in feel. It is rooted in the present, but looks to the remote past and to the archetypal in an effort to bring to light our eclipsed, "chthonic" origins that continue to shape human experience. Consistent with my earlier work, these pieces continue to blur the boundaries between sculpture, painting and literature. Like illuminated manuscripts, they are at once symbolic and decorative with a great concern for craft as a vehicle for content."

Pathos, Hubris, and Zoë re-examines the notion of civilization, discontent, and self-realization through both an analytic and poetic lens, and draws from a catalogue of twenty years of Zemel's work. Many of her earlier narratives employ what Brown has coined the "Promethean dialectic", where the development and emergence of our contemporary society is profoundly marked by a perpetual cycle of noble attempts requited by unanticipated outcomes. Included in the show are pieces from her irony laden series of block prints done in the mid 90's, Myth of Progress, which harps on the notion of American manifest destiny in an increasingly rapacious and disposable world. Also included from the same period is an installation of 16 hand-colored etchings from her edgy and burlesque "Ask Twenty Questions" folio.

Zemel's current work achieves a harmonious balance in Beehive Brain by reaching for transcendent truths rooted deep within the frustration of the human condition. Key to her inspiration and included in the title of her show is Zoë, a Greek term for life used to designate the unbounded, uncontainable, and overflowing nature of the life force. The capacity to overcome cyclic nature through metamorphosis is part of the Greek religious ideal encapsulated in Zoë, and the term was integral to Greek philosophic and religious thought from Dionysian cult, to Platonic notions of transmigration of the soul, to the Gnostic movements of the inter-testamental period. In the iconography of the Bronze Age Mediterranean world, the symbol for Zoë was the bee. In Zoë, the Greek idea of eternity comes closest to a Buddhist ontology of mind.

The Zemel works on view include.....

CHRONOS

Beehive Brain series

2005

13.5"h x 13.5"w

glazed ceramic and glass

A play on the Greek word for time, Chronos depicts the universal sign of the Uroborus, an archetypal glyph that demarks the emergence of self-reflective awareness from the unconscious unity of man's prehistoric slumber. The serpent that swallows its own tail is equally a reflexive symbol of finite time and cyclic temporal being, mythically characterized by the experience of mortal existence.

ORION'S DOG

Writing on the Wall series

2007

42.5"h x 42.5"w

glazed ceramic and glass

A paraphrase from Book 22 of the Iliad. In the mythopoeic language of epic, Homer evokes the image of Achilles in battle's hot pursuit. Achilles' god-like renown is ill omened; the conundrum of being both at once the pride and the envy, of all the Greek host. The philosophic ambivalence juxtaposing man's ambitions with his mortal doom is a prevalent theme of the Iliad. As the great tragic figure of western Epic, Achilles' unquenchable nature is both a warning and a legacy for us all; a moral epitaph to the disintegration and demise of a once great civilization.

SISYPHUS

Ask Twenty Questions, Hungry Dog editions

1995

10"h x 9"w

hand colored etching

Part of a folio of twenty images, here Sisyphus portrays the mythical Corinthian king rolling not his boulder up the hill, but arduously bearing the voluminous book of accumulated knowledge upward toward the precipice.

LONE RANGER

Myth of Progress series

59"h x 34.5"w

hand colored linoleum block print

A Lone rider is poised on a rearing steed atop a multi-story building in an urban landscape - with nowhere to go but down. At street level, all but the child are oblivious to the absurdity of the horseman's position. Completed in

1997, the image was originally created as a black and white block print that was translated into a photo-emulsion print on mylar. A hand-colored version was made from an artist proof on rice paper.

ARIADNE

Beehive Brain series

2009

18" h x 18"w

glazed ceramic and glass

The story goes that Ariadne leads Theseus out of the labyrinth with the aid of a thread. Ariadne's thread is a well-appropriated metaphor – a mythologem and a heuristic signpost that comes down to us from antiquity. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the thread is that which connects the observing ego to the maze of unconscious motivations. In the realm of logic, Ariadne's Thread is an axiom representing the process by which a problem is solved through trial and error and the creation of record. In historic terms, it is that which relates a culture to its submerged and chaotic past.

CULTIVATED TREE

Beehive Brain series

2008

24"h x 24"w

glazed ceramic and glass

The cultivation of trees and wild grains is the original hallmark of early society. The world tree, also known as "Axis Mundi" is a pervasive motif in most Near Eastern and Mediterranean cosmologies. These edifying tales mythically depict civilization itself as a 'cultivated garden', and the place where the world tree grows is in the 'midst of the garden'. Cultivated Tree, as 'axis of the world' depicts our common ground of being as a commentary on material culture. The fruits of our contemporary world are portrayed emanating from the tree whose roots are both enmeshed and subsist upon the bones of our ancestral mound.

Andrea Zemel received her BFA from the University of Pennsylvania in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and her MFA in 1991 at Penn's Graduate School of Fine Arts, studying painting under Neil Welliver and printmaking with Hitoshi Nakazato. Welliver's realist formalism and Nakazato's minimal conceptualism both had an impact on her thinking. She later spent three years on the faculty at Penn, having launched a collaborative and public art program that continues to this day. A deep interest in psychoanalysis and hermeneutics informs her work, which contains both narrative and conceptual elements. Regardless of medium,

Zemel's work maintains a concern for detail while giving authority to the physical material.

In 1999, Zemel left academia and moved to New York with her partner Adam Brown where they founded ILIAD ANTIK in the heart of Manhattan's design district. In 2001, she launched ILIAD DESIGN and then, in 2004, she set up her current studio in Hoboken where she started work on her new ceramic and glass mosaic series.

Adam and Andrea have achieved an ambitious vision in ILIAD's spectacular new space, "To present a tour de force in decorative and fine arts spanning more than 5000 years of the human experience. The connective thread....the freshness and exuberance of modernism."

Andrea is particularly excited about the scale of the new space, which totals 5300 square feet, allowing ILIAD to reinvent itself with its monumental proportions while still retaining more intimate areas in the lower gallery.

"Two levels offer us a new flexibility for our curatorial and artistic expression. My life as an artist and designer can be perfectly merged with my experience as an antique dealer. Adam can emerge as the inventive story-teller who weaves together objects and images from various cultures and traditions."

The Tenth Anniversary Year in New York will include a series of themed shows at the new ILIAD gallery to showcase their period and contemporary designed furniture, as well as ancient and modern decorative and fine arts.
IF YOU GO....

Andrea Zemel, Pathos, Hubris & Zoë:

A twenty year retrospective including her current body of work "Beehive Brain" and the "Writing on the Wall" series

ON VIEW AT ILIAD GALLERY from May 7 to June 30

ILIAD

212 East 57 Street New York NY 10022

Monday – Friday from 11-6, Saturday from 12 -5 and by appointment

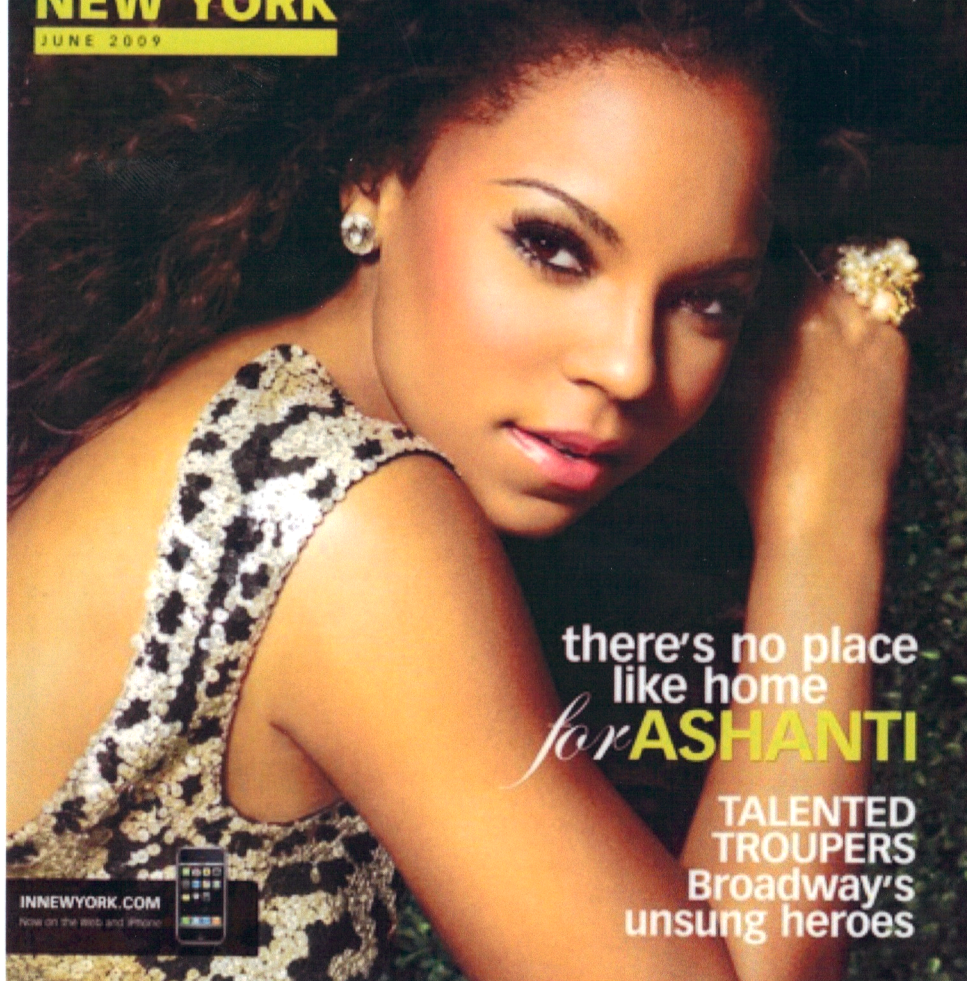
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Past Life

Like comedian George Burns once said, "I look to the future, because that's where I'm going to spend the rest of my life." Artist Andrea Zemel, however, prefers to study the past. A lover of mythology, the New York City-based painter/sculptor/furniture designer often finds inspiration in ancient cultural and literary sources. "Old myths are tales that we tell about ourselves, and there is much to be learned from the lessons that have come down to us through the ages," she says. Among her fable-influenced works is "Triad" (above, 2009; 18 in. x 55 in.), a glazed ceramic and glass triptych—on view at **RIAD**—

RIAD, 212 E. 57th St., 933-4382

that depicts a constellation of characters from classical mythology, including Anadipe. According to the Greek tale, the daughter of King Minos uses a thread to lead her love out of a labyrinth. In "Triad," Zemel uses the thread as a metaphor for "our shared history and lineage," she notes. "It is that which relates a culture to its submerged and chaotic past." Other figures pictured are Ione, the queen of the underworld; the Bard, an archaic poet; and several members of a chorus, all enclosed in beehive-like, glazed ceramic and mosaic hexagons. "I like the way mosaics add texture and a timeless feel to a piece," states Zemel.

Decadent Design

A response to the devastation of World War I, the Roaring Twenties was a period of luxury, decadence and wealth. Free-spirited flappers and swinging jazz music emerged, and artists began breaking away from tradition, eschewing the curvilinear forms of Art Nouveau in favor of the bold, angular and symmetrical style of Art Deco. The aesthetic—inspired by the rise of streamlined technology and machinery—became an instant trend and was incorporated into everything from architecture and commercial vehicles to jewelry and home décor, such as **Showplace Antique + Design Center's** bookends (above, c. 1930s, 5 in. x 3 in. x 1 in.). With patinated Austrian bronze pelicans perched atop black marble bases, the set features Art Deco's characteristic hard lines, strong shapes and lavish materials.



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