

Auction Action In Detroit

A December To Remember For DuMouchelles

DETROIT — “DuMouchelles’ December auctions brought the year to a strong close, featuring a wide range of art, fine jewelry and important objects,” said Bob DuMouchelle, general manager. “The results underscore the quality of the material and the trust placed in us by collectors and consignors.” The three-day auction series spanned December 18-20, with the final session being online only. A diverse selection of estate jewelry and rare watches kicked off day one, followed by Modern and Midcentury Modern furnishings, art and

Native American artifacts on day two. Day three comprised diverse offerings in nearly all collecting categories at a more accessible price point. In total, the 936-lot auction closed with a 90 percent sell-through rate.

While two lots shared the auction’s highest price, one made an especially newsworthy splash. Rescued from the Canadian waters of Lake Superior, a life ring buoy from the SS *Edmund Fitzgerald* surfaced at \$186,000, besting its high estimate of \$20,000. The orange flotation device was sold with a wooden plank from

lifeboat “No 1.” According to the auction catalog, these artifacts were discovered by 27-year-old Larry Orr on November 18, 1975, 10 days after the *Edmund Fitzgerald*’s demise. They were loaned to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum in Paradise, Mich., in 1988, and were brought to auction now for the first time. Speaking to news outlets following the sale, Orr stated, “I’m dumbfounded... I never believed in a million years it would go for that much money.”

The other lot to reach its apex at \$186,000 was also an exciting result, as it came to auction with a high estimate of just \$2,500. This piece was a Russian 14K gold picture frame

featuring a central portrait of Czar Nicholas II. Accented by diamonds, the frame had a primary background of jade, though pink stone was used for each of the four corners, behind gold double-headed eagles. “An exceptional blend of artistry, history and rarity — this sale marks a standout moment for Imperial Russian works,” according to a DuMouchelles social media post. This lot was one of several among the top lots to come from a notable collection inherited by the consignee from petroleum magnate Henry Penn Wenger (1927-1997).

The same subject was the focus of a 1911 portrait by I. Matskevich. In this three-quarter-length depiction, the Czar was shown in the uniform of the Hussar Life Guards Regiment, adorned with the sash and medal of the Order of St Andrew, and having a bear-fur-lined coat draped over his

shoulders. Historic markers on the work include a partial red wax seal on the stretcher bar, possibly for the Imperial Academy of Arts, and a faint Cyrillic paragraph inscribed to the back of the canvas. From the same consignment, this work was taken to \$74,400, more than eight times its high estimate.

Wenger’s collection included other Russian works of art, as well as Polish and French pieces. Bringing \$117,800 was Sergei Ivanovich Svetoslavsky’s oil on canvas painting “Ilyinsky Gate, Winter.” This circa 1900 Moscow scene had a label from Birmingham Gallery (Birmingham, Mich.) on its reverse and soared past its \$1,600 high estimate. Bearing visual similarities, depicting a Moscow in winter, was Paul Louis Bouchard’s (French, 1853-1937) 1895 oil painting depicting a Russian Orthodox cathedral. “Church of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God” was signed,



Review by
Carly Timpson, Associate Editor
Photos Courtesy DuMouchelles



This three-quarter “Portrait of Czar Nicholas II” by I. Matskevich (Russian, Nineteenth/early Twentieth Century), 1911, oil on canvas, measured 39 by 30¾ inches in a modern giltwood frame; it realized \$74,400 (\$6/9,000).



This circa 1900 Russian 14K gold and diamond picture frame, 4¾ inches square, featured a central portrait of Czar Nicholas II; it matched the auction’s high price of \$186,000 (\$15/2,500).



“Kulak Driving a Wagon with Five Bolting Horses” by Stanislaw Ksawery Szykier-Siekierz (Polish, 1860-1895), Nineteenth Century, oil on canvas, 32 by 48¼ inches framed, sold for \$38,700 (\$1/3,000).



This watercolor and gouache on paper laid to cardstock “Landscape with Hills and Trees” by Milton Avery (American, 1885-1965), 24½ by 30½ inches framed, brought \$24,800 (\$15/25,000).



“Ilyinsky Gate, Winter” by Sergei Ivanovich Svetoslavsky (Russian, 1857-1931), circa 1900, oil on canvas, 31 by 27¾ inches framed, was taken to \$117,800 (\$800-\$1,600).



Despite the winter season, bidders still celebrated the “Night of St John.” Zofia (Sophie) Stryjenska’s (Polish, 1891-1976) circa 1950-70 gouache and tempera on canvas, 37 by 29¼ inches framed, was lifted to \$54,825 (\$20/40,000).



Beating its \$46,000 estimate, this 15-inch-long gold necklace with cabochon emeralds, sapphires and rubies had two bracelets or extensions to total 86 inches and was pushed to \$14,880.

This Russian Vilnius silver samovar, retailed by Fabergé, Nineteenth Century, 20 inches tall, brought \$24,510 (\$3/4,000).

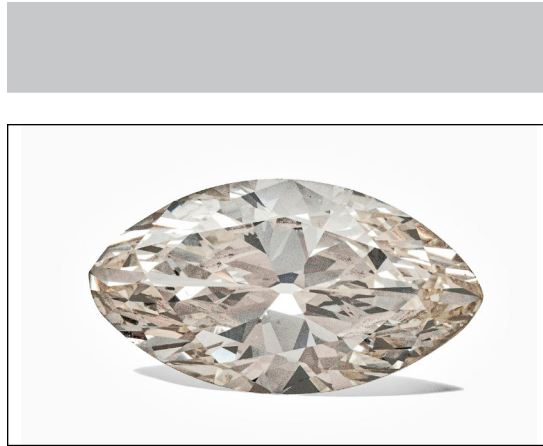


dated and located to the lower left and bore labels and information from Denver Art Galleries and Birmingham Gallery on its reverse. Housed in a silvered wood frame, the work realized \$40,300 (\$600-\$1,000).

Nineteenth Century Polish artists Stanislaw Ksawery Szykier-Siekierz and Walde-mar Los were each represented by landscape scenes featuring horses. Szykier-Siekierz's "Kulak Driving a Wagon with Five Bolting Horses" exceeded its \$3,000 high estimate to bring \$38,700, while Los' 1880s "Wotyn Village Scene at Dusk" finished for \$37,200 (\$5/10,000).

A Russian Vilnius silver samovar retailed by Fabergé and bearing French import marks also exceeded expectations,

heating up to \$24,510. And, rounding out the highlights from the Wenger collection was a circa 1900 Russian flower sculpture featuring a spray of purple berries and pearl flowers with diamond accents held fixed within a clear crystal



Measuring 18.29 millimeters wide, this 6.74-carat modified marquise brilliant-cut diamond dazzled bidders to \$55,800 (\$30/50,000).



This 3.8-carat brilliant-cut platinum ring had an adjustable band and two baguette diamonds on the shank; it brought \$49,600 (\$15/20,000).



Blooming to \$17,360 was this circa 1900 Russian crystal quartz jade and pearl flower sculpture, approximately 6 inches tall by 3 inches wide (\$600-\$1,000).

quartz flowerpot, which grew to \$17,360.

Diamonds were not just accents to larger items — an impressive 6.74-carat modified marquise brilliant-cut diamond on its own brought \$55,800. Complete with a GIA report grading it K for color and VS1 for clarity, the diamond came from a private collection in Grosse Pointe Park, Mich., and had a yellow gold bezel setting marked "Schubot." Other notable diamond results included the \$49,600 realized for a 3.8-carat brilliant-cut platinum ring from the estate of Dr and

Mrs Robert Cording, Dearborn Heights, Mich., and the Art Deco-style platinum ring set with a 2.2-carat round brilliant-cut diamond and 58 Old European-cut diamonds, which brought \$17,360, just exceeding its high estimate.

Additional art highlights included a gouache and tempera on canvas by Zofia (Sophie) Stryjenska. This vibrant work, painted circa 1950-70, depicted festivities on the Night of St John, a celebration of the summer solstice. The work, which came from a prominent Plymouth, Mich.,

collection, was bid to \$54,825.

A prominent Dearborn, Mich., collector consigned a serene watercolor and gouache landscape by Milton Avery. Signed to the lower left, the painting had provenance to Saxon & Clemens Pictures, New York City, and Garelick's Gallery, Detroit; labels for both were affixed verso. The framed and matted work was changed hands for \$24,800.

Prices quoted include the buyer's premium as reported by the auction house. For information, www.dumoart.com or 313-963-6255.

Jan. 31 'Tea & Textiles' Online Symposium Focuses On The Semiquincentennial

ONLINE — Learn what textiles can tell us about patriotism, fashion and flags in "Textiles for the 250th," a virtual symposium on Saturday, January 31, from 1-5 pm. This 2026 edition of the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center's annual "Tea & Textiles with Caroline" offers three hour-long lectures. With each ticket purchase, you receive a free mini-lecture as well as a recipe card and tea bag to enjoy refreshments with the lectures. The cost is \$20 per lecture or \$50 for all three. Register at schwenkfelder.org/tea-and-textiles-with-caroline or 215-679-3103.

The afternoon kicks off with a lecture by independent scholar Lynne Z. Bassett titled "Federal-

ist Fathers and Republican Mothers: The Fashions of John and Abigail Adams." Collector Down Ronningen will present new research in "Evidence of Patriotism From the Sewing Box." Dr Marla Miller from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, looks at "Betsy Ross: The Life Behind the Legend" — the legend of the seamstress and

real-life of the Philadelphia upholster and flag maker Elizabeth Griscom Claypoole. Continuing the flag theme, a free mini-lecture by Schwenkfelder curator Candace Perry will examine "Sewing the Symbol: A History of Flag Factories in Southeastern Pennsylvania."

The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center, a non-profit

affiliate of America250PA, is the regional history museum for the Upper Perkiomen Valley. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. Admission to visit exhibits or research in the library is free.

Details on other programs and exhibits for the 250th commemoration can be found at www.schwenkfelder.org/250.

SAAM Presents 'Shahzia Sikander: The Last Post'

WASHINGTON, DC — Through precisely inked and animated scenes, Shahzia Sikander's video artwork "The Last Post" (2010) critically considers the legacy of British colonialism in Asia, using her signature approach of infusing Indo-Persian miniature paintings with a contemporary perspective.

"The Last Post" centers a European gentleman in a red waistcoat, a symbol of British imperial power. Indian court architecture, Chinese cut-paper silhouettes and a watercolor map of South Asia all dissolve and reconfigure around him. Artist Shahzia Sikander based this figure on miniature paintings from the late Eighteenth Century

depicting British East India Company officials.

Sikander's faceless "Company man" and his shifting surroundings allude to that corporation's expanding presence from the 1600s to the 1800s in South Asia and China, where it blurred state, military and mercantile power. As images shatter across the screen and electronic beats by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Du Yun

explode on the soundtrack, we are invited to viscerally feel the reverberations of imperial activities across continents, oceans and time.

"The Last Post" was recently added to SAAM's collection as part of a longstanding time-based media art initiative. It is presented in a dedicated gallery for immersive media art installations that opened in 2023. This 10-minute film runs continuously and can be

entered at any time.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is at Eighth and G

Streets, Northwest. For information, 202-633-7970 or www.americanart.si.edu.

Shahzia Sikander, "The Last Post," 2010, single-channel HD digital animation, color, 5.1 surround sound; 10 minutes. Music: Du Yun. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment, in partnership with the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, 2025.11, ©2025, Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly, New York/Los Angeles.

