

# Rare Harlem Renaissance sculpture could produce surprising price at Sterling Associates' Oct. 2 auction

*Featured: Bust by Augusta Savage, first person to open African-American art gallery in US; Euro. & American paintings, Qing Dynasty etagere, exotic Persian rug*

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Whatever might be found inside a tastefully-decorated New Jersey residence is also likely to appear eventually at an auction produced by [Sterling Associates](#). Owned and operated by Stephen D'Atri, Sterling's roots go back to a family business established seven decades ago.

Over the years, the focus on estates and collections has never wavered, as reflected most recently in the discoveries chosen for the company's October 2 Fine Estates Auction. The 202-lot sale crosses a broad spectrum of periods and styles, with one of the top highlights associated with a luminary of the Harlem Renaissance.

Until earlier this year, many art collectors might not have known the name Augusta Christine Fells Savage (1892-1962), but a February episode of PBS Television's *American Masters* changed all that. Titled "Searching for Augusta Savage," the biographical documentary revealed the largely unheralded Florida-born sculptor and educator to be one of the most important – and talented – of all Harlem Renaissance artists.

Additionally, she was one of the first female Black activists to fight for the inclusion of African-



Augusta Christine Fells (Moore) Savage (African-American, 1892-1962), painted red clay/terracotta relief bust of an infant. Signed and dated 1942. Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

American artists in the mainstream canon. In spite of her undeniable gifts, Savage's own career was plagued by racism and sexism. Even some of her male counterparts in the famed Harlem Black art movement failed to offer support.

More than half of the 160 artworks Savage created in her lifetime are missing or have been destroyed, and none of her extraordinary monumental sculptures has survived, including the 16ft foot sculpture she created for the 1939 World's Fair. When Savage could not raise the funds to transport or store her depiction of a choir of 12 Black children singing, the sculpture was destroyed. Yet she remained undeterred.

At the peak of the Harlem Renaissance, Savage sculpted busts of prominent individuals, including W E B Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, and opened the first US gallery devoted exclusively to African American Art. Over time, her significance could no longer be suppressed, even abroad. Two of her works were accepted for exhibition at the Salon d'Automne and exhibited at the Grand Palais in Paris. She was also appointed the first director of the Harlem Community Art Center.

“

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*Stephen D'Atri, Owner,  
Sterling Associates*

oeuvre since 1931, Goldberg remains one of the foremost chroniclers of Jewish storytelling through visual art. A framed copper engraving titled Shtetl is a signed artist's proof that measures 20 by 30¼ inches, while a pencil-signed etching that depicts a Purim celebration,



Tiffany & Co., sterling silver flatware set, 74 pieces, Chrysanthemum pattern. Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000

“There is so much more to the Augusta Savage story,” said Sterling Associates' owner Stephen D'Atri, “Her legacy and influence can only increase. Because her work is so rare, it is especially meaningful that we've been entrusted to auction one of her sculptures in our October 2nd sale.” The artwork is a [painted, red clay/terracotta relief bust](#) of an infant, signed and dated 1942. Sensitively modeled, the work measures 9 inches by 12 inches by 10 inches and is conservatively estimated at \$4,000-\$6,000.

Around two dozen artworks by Chaim Goldberg (Polish/Israeli, 1917-2004) passed by descent through the artist's family. With scores of exhibitions documenting his



number 52 of an edition of 200, has a framed size of 19 by 13 inches. A diversion in style is seen in Goldberg's attractive oil-on-canvas waterside scene, 33 by 25 inches, signed in Hebrew and dated 1962. Each of the works is estimated at \$100-\$200.

In his short life, self-taught painter Bradford Boobis (American, 1927-1972) used art as an outlet to explore the theme of societal woes and personal loss. He was known for his dystopian realist imagery and dreamlike depictions of subjects in turmoil, but his talent and imagination did not stop there. For example, his portrait of actor Richard Boone of *Have Gun Will Travel* fame appeared on the cover of a 1963 issue of *TV Guide*, an assignment that might have pursued by many professional artists of greater renown.

He also scratched the surface of founding a cult, with the idea of building temples for the display of art, including his own. In 2022, the 50th anniversary of his passing, Boobis' work was featured in an exhibition at the respected Louis K Meisel Gallery in New York. Three Boobis paintings from a lifelong art collector in New Jersey are entered in the auction, including an oil-on-canvas painting of John F Kennedy. Signed and dated 1968, it has a framed size of 34 by 44 inches and is estimated at \$800-\$1,200.

Also worthy of mention is a Roy Sanner oil-on-canvas painting based on an iconic photo taken amid the devastation following the World Trade Center terrorist attack on 9/11/2001. Titled *Out of the Rubble*, its subjects include Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Governor George



Chaim Goldberg (Polish/Israeli, 1917-2004), oil-on-canvas waterside scene. Signed in Hebrew and dated 1962. Framed size: 33in x 25in. Provenance: direct descendant of artist. Estimate: \$100-\$200



From a collection of 30 lots of Air Jordans in the sale, this pair of 7 OGs in white with black detailing and cardinal-red interior. Release date 1992. Size 9½. New in box with eBay COA. Estimate: \$200-\$300

Pataki, President George W Bush, Senator Chuck Schumer and NYFD Commissioner Thomas von Essen. Signed and dated 8/02 on the stretcher, the 51½- by 39½-inch painting is expected to make \$600-\$800.

Fine silver is led by a 74-piece Tiffany & Co., sterling silver flatware set in the Chrysanthemum pattern. In typical Tiffany style, no luxurious detail was spared in the creation of this set, even down to the vermeil (gold over sterling silver) enhancements to the oyster forks. With an approximate weight of 131ozt, this extravagant service will be presented to bidders with a \$3,000-\$5,000 estimate.

The grand aesthetic seen in 19th-century French decorative art is captured in Jean Didier Debut's (1824-1893) gilt and silvered figural group titled [Venus Rising From The Sea](#). In this piece, whose height is 31 inches, Venus is surrounded by cherubs and stands atop a seashell supported by dolphin fish. Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

Furniture highlights include both Asian and Chinese examples. An antique Chinese Qing Dynasty zitan etagere/display cabinet with multiple levels, door and drawer is carved with bamboo galleries and friezes throughout. Standing 88 inches tall on talon-form feet, it is estimated at \$1,000-\$2,000. A pair of circa-1820 Regency period brass-inlaid rosewood game tables has provenance that includes a 1994 purchase from Agostino Antiques Ltd. Estimate: \$2,000-\$3,000

Opulence can be seen from floor to ceiling in Sterling's October 2nd sale, starting with an 18th/19th-century Persian rug of extraordinarily fine quality. Richly patterned with detailed scenes of mythological figures, men, women (one seminude) and animals, it has a central motif of a tree with serpent, birds and bird nest. Measuring 91 by 54¾ inches, it would add high style to any residence. Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

Overhead, the auction features eight stunning antique chandeliers. They run the gamut from ornate Empire-style brass and crystal designs to a monumental 19th-century Continental bronze, tole and papier-mache chandelier of Gothic style with dragon adornments. A massive 73- by 52-inch fixture, it lights up the category with a \$2,000-\$3,000 estimate.

Pop culture plays a big role in the sale with a collection of Air Jordan sneakers amassed over the past 20 years by a New Jersey sports fan. Most are mint in their original boxes and all are



18th/19th-C. Persian rug of extraordinarily fine quality. Richly illustrated with scenes of mythological figures, men, women (one seminude) and animals and central motif of tree with serpent and birds. Size: 91 in x 54¾ in. Estimate: \$4,000-



accompanied by eBay Certificates of Authenticity. Among the 30 sneaker lots in the sale, a pair of Jordan 7 OGs, size 9½, are white with black detailing and have a cardinal-red interior. Their release date was 1992. This mint/boxed pair should fly to a top bid of \$200-\$300.

Sterling Associates' Wednesday, October 2, 2024 online-only auction will follow the same innovative blueprint which owner Stephen D'Atri has employed since first opening the doors to his brick-and-mortar business. The auction will begin at 3pm ET and will be conducted online via LiveAuctioneers and Invaluable exactly like a gallery auction, but without a live audience in attendance. All items may be previewed through the online catalog or in person at Sterling Associates' gallery by appointment only. Winning bidders have the option of picking up their auction purchases at Sterling Associates' premises at 537 Broadway, Norwood, NJ 07648. Alternatively, goods can be shipped anywhere in the world via third-party shippers.

For additional information on any item, call 201-768-1140 or email [info@antiquenj.com](mailto:info@antiquenj.com). Online: <http://www.antiquenj.com>. View the fully illustrated catalog and sign up to bid absentee or live online through LiveAuctioneers or Invaluable.

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