



104 East 25th Street • New York, NY 10010  
Telephone: 212.254.4710 • Fax: 212.979.1017  
swannalleries.com

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Contact: Alexandra Nelson  
Communications Director  
212-254-4710 ext. 19  
[alexandra@swannalleries.com](mailto:alexandra@swannalleries.com)

### **From Norman Lewis to Mary Lovelace O’Neal: Swann Galleries’ Latest African-American Art Sale Offers Market Leaders and Auction Debuts**



New York— **Swann Galleries’** sale of **African-American Fine Art** on **Thursday, April 4** includes works spanning multiple centuries and genres. Defining works by established artists, as well as auction premiers of groundbreaking mid-career artists ensure a history-making sale.

A run of works by **Norman Lewis** is led by *Block Island*, oil on canvas, 1973-75, an impressive magenta and gray example of the artist’s 1970’s period inspired by his summers on the island, expected to bring \$200,000 to \$300,000. Further works by Lewis include *Shapes*, oil on masonite board, 1947, a striking abstraction from his early exploration of form and technique in the late 1940s (Estimate: \$60,000-90,000); and *Blue Moon*, oil on paper, 1960, which once belonged to Roslyn McDonald—the artist’s former girlfriend (\$20,000-30,000).

Additional postwar abstraction includes works by **Hale Woodruff**. *Celestial Door*, oil on canvas, circa 1967, is a striking example of the artist’s *Celestial Gate* series, in which he created abstract shapes based on the forms of Ashanti gold weights and Dogon dwelling doors from Mali (\$75,000-\$100,000). *Dragon*, oil on canvas, circa 1957, is dynamic painting from Woodruff’s mid-career in which he draws inspiration from mythological figures and blurs the lines between figuration and abstraction (\$80,000-120,000).





Contemporary art is well-represented by dynamic women who have pushed the boundaries of their media. Included are two Howardena Pindell works: *Untitled*, a scarce 1970 mixed media of oval shapes on paper, and *Untitled #1*, 1980-81, one of the artist's signature collages of cut, pasted and painted punched paper with thread and nails, each are expected to bring \$20,000 to \$30,000. Further highlights include Faith Ringgold's story quilt *Sleeping: Lover's Quilt #2*, 1986, one of her unique narrative works telling an intimate and unexpected story, and Emma Amos's jazzy painting with African fabric borders, *Let Me Off Uptown*, 1999-2000 (\$100,000-150,000 and \$40,000-60,000, respectively). Finally, **Simone Leigh's** provocative, untitled earthenware vessel from her 2005 series makes its debut at \$40,000 to 60,000, as well as a first

appearance at auction of work by Mary Lovelace O'Neal with *Running Freed More Slaves Than Lincoln Ever Did*, oil and mixed media on canvas, 1995 at \$40,000 to \$60,000.

John Biggers' *Death and Resurrection*, oil on canvas, 1996, is an important painting from late in the artist's career that explores the themes of the celebrations of life and death which he first began to investigate in the 1950s. Biggers displays a fluency in rich symbolism, derived from his study of African cultural practice. The work comes across the block at \$150,000 to \$250,000.

Mid-century luminaries include a powerful charcoal drawing by Charles White, *Caliban*, 1950. Never exhibited publicly, this rediscovered work is a striking depiction of the important character in Shakespeare's *Tempest* as a muscular, enchained figure and carries an estimate of \$150,000 to \$250,000. Romare Bearden's important work in collage and photomontage is epitomized by *Early Morning*, 1968-69, at \$80,000 to \$120,000, and Elizabeth Catlett's *Untitled (Civil Rights Protest)*, mixed media, 1974, a scarce and significant example of her unique work on paper, makes an appearance at \$60,000 to \$90,000.

Harlem Renaissance highlights include Augusta Savage's *Gamin*, plaster, circa 1929, an iconic image of the period in sculpture, as well as a pair of dancing figures—*Untitled (Flute Player)* and *Untitled (Dancer)*, both circa 1939—are expected to bring \$20,000 to \$30,000. *Athlete Stretching (Male Figure)* by Richmond Barthé, the only bronze sculpture by the artist that was cast in Europe, is estimated at \$35,000 to \$50,000.

Among nineteenth-century work is Robert S. Duncanson's *On the Banks of the Doune, Scotland*, oil on canvas, 1871, which features a female figure as the subject—rarely seen in the artist's work. The painting was inspired by the tales of Doune Castle in Sir Edward Waverly's popular novel of the Scottish Highlands, *Waverly*, 1814, and by Duncanson's own travels throughout the country from 1865-76 (\$35,000 to \$50,000).

Exhibition opening in New York City March 30. The complete catalogue and bidding information is available at [www.swannalleries.com](http://www.swannalleries.com) and on the Swann Galleries app.

**Additional highlights can be found [here](#).**

**Captions:**

[Lot 105](#): Norman Lewis, *Block Island*, oil on canvas, 1973-75. Estimate \$200,000 to \$300,000.

[Lot 47](#): Hale Woodruff, *Dragon*, oil on canvas, circa 1957. Estimate \$80,000 to \$120,000.

[Lot 171](#): Simone Leigh, *Untitled (Brown Vessel)*, glazed stoneware, 2006. Estimate \$40,000 to \$60,000.

**Auction date:** Thursday, April 4, at 2:00 pm

**Exhibition dates:** March 30, 12-5; April 1 to 3, 10-6; April 4, 10-12

**Specialist:** Nigel Freeman • [nfreeman@swannalleries.com](mailto:nfreeman@swannalleries.com) • 212-254-4710 x 3

**Press:** Alexandra Nelson • [alexandra@swannalleries.com](mailto:alexandra@swannalleries.com) • 212-254-4710 x 19

**Social Media:** @swannalleries

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