

## Auction catalog

<b>Title</b>	A Curated Collection of Fine African Metalwork Auction Ending 5/30
<b>Description</b>	Items located in Pleasant Valley, NY. Items include wall plaque from the royal palace, Edo people, Benin; rare masterwork ceremonial ax, Sapo-Sapo/Songye people, Congo; prestige neck ring, Kirdi or Fali people, Nigeria; West African anklet and bracelet bells; late 19thC gold weights, Akan people; and more. AFRICAN ART COLLECTION OF MARY SUE AND PAUL PETER ROSEN Mary Sue and Paul Peter Rosen have collected African art for over thirty years, making nine trips to Africa to study the art in its cultural setting. The Rosens have published three African art books, curated more than ten exhibitions from their collection, and have given public lectures about African art and culture. They have donated art from their collection to various institutions including the Newark Museum, Temple University in Philadelphia, the SMA Fathers African Art Museum in Tenafly, New Jersey, and the African American Research Library in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Payment is due by Monday, June 3 at 1PM. Pickup in Pleasant Valley, NY must be completed by Monday, June 3 at 3PM. All lots sold as is, where is. There is a 15% Buyers Premium for all lots purchased. Payment methods include cash, MC, Visa, Discover or good check. You can make credit card payment online by going to your Member Area and selecting your invoice. Shipping available on all items.
<b>Date</b>	Tue, Mar 5, 2019
<b>Starts at</b>	4:00 PM
<b>Address</b>	Online Auction Only, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569 USA
<b>Categories</b>	

<b>Lot #</b>	1
<b>Qty</b>	1
<b>Title</b>	CURRENCY BRIDEWEALTH BUNDLE. Kissi people, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. T-shaped rods with a twisted shaft, terminating at one end in lateral, pointed appendages called nileng, were widely used as currency by the Kissi people. Until the 1920s, the so-called 'Kissi pennies' were the only money used in the region. By the 1940s colonial governments had replaced Kissi pennies with coins, but the metal objects were still used in certain rituals, especially as bundles wrapped with cloth which were presented by a man to a potential bride's family to signify his interest (bride wealth). This fine example of such a bundle dating from the early 1900s resembles a bouquet of flowers. On custom base. Hand forged iron, cloth. H18in. Ex Eric Robertson Collection.
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**Lot #** 2  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** TWO DUBIL CURRENCY BARS. Madagali region, northeast Nigeria. The town of Madagali and the surrounding region has been taken over by the Islamist militant group, Boko Haram. As a result of ongoing warfare between Boko Haram and the Nigerian army, this region is no longer accessible to outside visitors. The dubil in this lot were collected around 2000 before the war began. A dubil is a bar-form iron ingot splayed at the ends. Dubil date at least from the 16th century when they were made from locally smelted iron. In the 18th and 19th centuries they were mostly made from iron brought by European traders which entered Nigeria through many points along the coast. Underlying the value of dubil as a basis for exchange was their convertibility by blacksmiths into tools, weapons, various forms of currency, and other objects of value to specific groups of people. By the late 19th century iron bars were supplanted by scrap iron from machines. cars, tools, and even ships. In the 1700s a female slave cost 10 dubil and a male slave 13 dubil. Each on a custom magnetic base. Iron. H15in and 15.5in.

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**Lot #** 3  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** RARE DECORATED SHOVEL-FORM HOE. Kona people, eastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon. The decorated upper end of the handle rises into a pointed spine that buttresses the blade. Blacksmith hammer marks on the blade follow its curvature. The socket in the metal handle would have been set on a short wooden shaft. On custom base. H14in.

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**Lot #** 4  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** SEVEN LATE 19TH CENTURY GOLDWEIGHTS. Akan people, Ghana and Ivory Coast. Shapes are triangle, round, rectangle, and fortress. Each uniquely created in lost wax cast (cire perdue) brass. The two larger rectangles have symbolic designs on raised tiers. The larger round weight is pierced by triangular apertures that form a large, multi-pointed star. Punched designs evident on several weights were added by blacksmiths after they were cast. Weights range from 2.5oz (triangle) to 0.7oz (fortress). All exhibited at the Free Library Gallery Philadelphia 2012.

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**Lot #** 5  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** WEST AFRICAN ANKLET AND BRACELET BELLS. (A) Baule people, Ivory Coast. Hollow cast from brass with high copper content, this heavy anklet has a large semicircular aperture. It contains stones which rattle when the wearer dances. H3in Diameter 5in. (B) Yoruba people, Nigeria. Bracelet in the form of a cuff worn on the wrist. Twelve small bells are suspended in pairs from the corners and top. On custom base. H2.5in.  
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**Lot #** 6  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** PRESTIGE NECK RING. Kirdi or Fali people, Nigeria. Worn by the wife of a high official during important rituals. It represents a two-headed cobra snake. There are finely engraved decorative designs on the front-facing surfaces of the snake heads, and the surface of the round body has the texture and feel of snake skin. Hand forged iron. H9in.  
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**Lot #** 7  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** OLD BAT-FORM CEREMONIAL HOE. Gayum village, Nigeria (possibly Anyo people). Not a functional object. It was presented to the parents of a prospective bride to certify a man's desire to marry their daughter. The shape is probably derived from a very old form of shovel-shaped hoe the tip of which has been removed. It is very unusual to find one of these old blades with all of its points intact. This example dates from the mid-to-late 1800s. On custom base. Hand forged from locally smelted iron. H8.5in.  
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**Lot #** 8  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** LEG BAND. Mongo and Konda people, Congo. This type of heavy brass leg band was worn by a wife of a wealthy man. It served as a store of wealth and would be removed if needed as a form of currency. Large rolls made from plant fiber wrapped in cloth were used to protect the wearer's ankles (see picture). They were made by pouring molten brass into a mold in clay or sand (see LOT #9). Brass H8in Weight 8lb.  
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**Lot #** 9  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** FORM FOR ANKLE LEG BAND MOLD. Mongo and Konda people, Congo. This wooden form was pressed into specially prepared clay or sand to create the mold for an ankle leg band. After the metal was set but still very hot, the ingot was wrapped around a log to create a cylinder. The leg band was then carefully burnished to create a smooth outer surface. The inside retains the uneven surface of the molten brass and impressions left by the log around which it was formed. (see LOT #8). Wood. H12in.  
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**Lot #** 10  
**Qty** 1  
**Title** RARE MASTERWORK CEREMONIAL AX. Sapo-Sapo/Songye people, Congo. The Sapo-Sapo and Songye are neighboring ethnic groups who share a number of cultural attributes, including ceremonial ax forms. This ax, a masterwork of a highly skilled blacksmith, would only be made for and available to a high ranking, wealthy member of the community. Given the 'primitive' tools available to African blacksmith's in the mid-19th century when this ax was made, it should be considered equal to some of the work of the greatest European blacksmiths of the same time period. The wooden handle is entirely tightly covered in a hammered thin copper sheath and wrapped with copper wire at mid-shaft. The flared blade is supported by three struts: a straight one in the center and a curved strut on either side. A unique feature of the Sapo-Sapo/Songye ax is the images of faces on both sides of the three struts. Often, there are only 4 faces, two on each side. This ax is exceptional in that there are two faces on each side of the central strut and one on each side of a lateral strut, making a total of 6 faces. The faces are thought to represent important male ancestors who lend support to the authority of the owner of the ax. The blade is also supported by two twisted struts which are entwined with semi-lunar horizontal bars that resemble curtain swags. On custom base. H16.5in. Ex Dalton-Somaré Collection Milan, Italy.  
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<b>Lot #</b>	11	
<b>Qty</b>	1	
<b>Title</b>	RIBBED HEAVY BRACELET-FORM MANILLAS. (A) Yoruba people, Nigeria. Almost complete circle with 5 ribs. Dates from mid-1800s. Excavated near Ife in 1965. Encrusted (due to being buried) brass with high lead content. On custom base. Diameter 5in. Weight 5.2lb. (B) Ekonda subgroup of Mongo people, Congo. Nearly complete circle with 10 ribs (5 ribs on either side of a central spine). Dates from mid-to-late 1800s. Brass with high lead content. Diameter 5in. Weight 6.5lb.	
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<b>Lot #</b>	12	
<b>Qty</b>	1	
<b>Title</b>	ARCHED BAR CURRENCY Mbole and Ngelima people, Congo. Brass bar ingots in various shapes were used as currency in the regions of the Ubangi and Lomani Rivers. Some were simple rectangular flat bars, but others were shaped into faceted arches or twisted spirals. This arched, faceted example has flared feet which were enhanced by engraved native designs that include a 6-pointed star. Dated to mid-1800s. Brass with high copper content. H4in. W5.75in. Weight 4lb.	
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<b>Lot #</b>	13	
<b>Qty</b>	1	
<b>Title</b>	RARE TWISTED MANILLA WITH DESIGNS. Yoruba people, Nigeria. Unusual form. Covered with punched and incised designs added by a blacksmith to increase its value. Ends (feet) flared. On custom base. Brass. H5in. W5in. Weight 4lb.	
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<b>Lot #</b>	14	
<b>Qty</b>	1	
<b>Title</b>	CEREMONIAL SPEAR CURRENCY. Tuareg and Toubou (Tubu) people, Niger and Chad. Miniature currency spears duplicate the full-sized weapons from which they derive. Incised and punched designs decorate both sides of the handles and points. Miniature spears were given as currency for ceremonial purposes. (A) Spear currency with barbs below the point on either side of the shaft. Copper, brass, and steel attachments duplicate those which were added to real spears to resist the magical powers of enemy weapons. On custom base. Iron, copper, steel, brass. H25in. (B) Short spear-form with subtle small barbs at the base of the point. Iron. H20.5in.	
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**Lot #** 15  
**Qty** 1



**Title** ILER (HILAIRE) HOE. Songhai people, Niger and Mali. Almost all African hoes consist of a blade attached to a short wooden handle. The shapes and weights of the blades are very varied, but the handles tend to be similar. This requires that farmers, the majority of whom are women, work in a stooped position. The iler (hilaire) hoe of the Songhai people is one of the few exceptions to this rule. It not only has a long handle, but the handle is made of iron that is forged to a U-shaped blade (see picture). A short wooden pole was inserted into the socket at the end of the handle to make the relatively heavy hoe easier to handle. Obviously, this type of hoe would be a prized possession, which accounts for the prominent decorations which make this an exceptional example. The decorations consist of punched and incised designs midshaft and three inset bright brass bands. Punched designs on the handle are partly worn away from use. Iron, brass. H49in.

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**Lot #** 16  
**Qty** 1



**Title** SPEAR CURRENCY. Chamba people, Nigeria and northern Cameroon. This is an outstanding example of a blacksmith's skill with 3 gongs suspended from spiral hangers on either side of the tall point. Spears were considered to be important emblems of authority and power among the Chamba. This miniature, embellished version of a spear was offered in very important transactions such as a gift to a woman's family during a marriage ceremony. On custom base. Hand forged iron. H42in. Ex Martial Bronsin Collection Brussels Belgium.

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**Lot #** 17  
**Qty** 1

**Title** CHIEF'S CEREMONIAL EXECUTION KNIFE. Ngombe people, Congo. Ceremonial execution knives were carried by Chiefs and senior members of the tribe during Likbeti, an important 2-day long dance event that culminated in the beheading of a slave or war captive. By the 1800s, when the value of slaves had increased because they could be sold to Europeans, a goat became the victim for decapitation. Knives with a bifurcated, curved blade such as the one in this lot were reserved for a Chief. The picture shows a fictional scene published in an 1890 edition of the British publication, The Graphic, depicting the decapitation of a slave by a Ngombe Chief. Images like this were published to show the purported savagery of the Congolese people at a time when the British (e.g., Stanley and Livingston) were exploring the Congo with the intention of converting the natives to Christianity. The shaft and blade are decorated with incised and dotted ornamentation and the base of the blade is wrapped in wire to secure it in the wooden handle. On custom base. Iron, wood, wire. H24in. Ex Scott Semans Collection.



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**Lot #** 18  
**Qty** 1

**Title** TRUMBASH: A SICKLE-FORM CEREMONIAL KNIFE. Mangbetu people, Congo. The hand forged heavy iron blade is set in a beautiful bone handle. The right-angle shape of the blade perforated with 2 round holes, and the lateral spines on the shaft, are typical features of the Mangbetu trumbash. These knives were highly prized possessions of chiefs and noble members of the Royal Court. The picture depicts King Mbunza of the Mangbetu holding a trumbash as a scepter in a drawing published in 1874. On custom base. Iron, bone. H16in.



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**Lot #** 19  
**Qty** 1  
**Title**

**WALL PLAQUE FROM THE ROYAL PALACE.** Edo people, Benin. The Edo Kingdom, which dates from the 13th century, was located in the eastern part of what is now Nigeria. The capital of Bendel State in Nigeria, Benin City, was once the capital of the Benin Kingdom. The head of the Kingdom, the Oba, was the leader of what grew to be a complex political and social organization administered by various palace, town and hereditary chiefs who served as government officials, military leaders, and spiritual attendants. Artists formed groups similar to the guilds of medieval Europe. Most noted were the artisans skilled in carving ivory and casting the large brass objects that filled the Royal Palace, especially the brass plaques that adorned its walls. Cast objects were created by the lost wax method in which wax was shaped over a clay form that was then enclosed in a clay mold. This complex object was then heated to allow the melted wax to be poured off and replaced with molten brass. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Benin in 1486. They were impressed with the complex social development of Benin and established a flourishing trade relationship with the Royal Court. Horses, a particularly important symbol of wealth and power in the Benin Court, were known to the Edo people from their conflicts with the cavalries of Islamic states to the north. Horses rarely survived long in the forested Benin Kingdom because they were very susceptible to trypanosomiasis (ngana) carried by tsetse flies. Only the Oba had the resources to keep a horse alive under very sheltered conditions, although the actual cause of ngana was not known. A picture published in 1668 by the Dutch historian Olfert Dapper, based on descriptions provided by Dutch explorers who visited Benin, depicts the Oba astride a horse with his retinue outside the Royal Palace. The objects on the tops of towers in the picture are 'birds of prophesy', not crosses. The Portuguese King sent a fully outfitted horse to the Oba via sailing ship around 1500. The earliest European documentation of wall plaques was in the 1600s when they were described as covering columns in the Royal Palace. The plaque in this lot shows the Oba holding the royal sword (Eben) seated on a horse and flanked by two senior royal attendants with shields. One attendant holds the horse's bridle and the other holds a spear. All figures wear traditional regalia, and the attendants wear pendants with the face of the Oba. Figures were typically depicted in a frontal orientation in Benin plaques. A SIMILAR PLAQUE SHOWING A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COURT (NOT SEATED ON A HORSE) IS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM (CATALOG # 1898.I-15.85) AND PUBLISHED IN NIGEL BARLEY'S BOOK 'FOREHEADS OF THE DEAD' 1988 FIG 14. On custom wall mount with electric spotlight. Lost wax cast brass. 16in x 20in.



**Des.** WALL PLAQUE FROM THE ROYAL PALACE. Edo people, Benin. The Edo Kingdom, which dates from the 13th century, was located in the eastern part of what is now Nigeria. The capital of Bendel State in Nigeria, Benin City, was once the capital of the Benin Kingdom. The head of the Kingdom, the Oba, was the leader of what grew to be a complex political and social organization administered by various palace, town and hereditary chiefs who served as government officials, military leaders, and spiritual attendants. Artists formed groups similar to the guilds of medieval Europe. Most noted were the artisans skilled in carving ivory and casting the large brass objects that filled the Royal Palace, especially the brass plaques that adorned its walls. Cast objects were created by the lost wax method in which wax was shaped over a clay form that was then enclosed in a clay mold. This complex object was then heated to allow the melted wax to be poured off and replaced with molten brass. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Benin in 1486. They were impressed with the complex social development of Benin and established a flourishing trade relationship with the Royal Court. Horses, a particularly important symbol of wealth and power in the Benin Court, were known to the Edo people from their conflicts with the cavalries of Islamic states to the north. Horses rarely survived long in the forested Benin Kingdom because they were very susceptible to trypanosomiasis (ngana) carried by tsetse flies. Only the Oba had the resources to keep a horse alive under very sheltered conditions, although the actual cause of ngana was not known. A picture published in 1668 by the Dutch historian Olfert Dapper, based on descriptions provided by Dutch explorers who visited Benin, depicts the Oba astride a horse with his retinue outside the Royal Palace. The objects on the tops of towers in the picture are 'birds of prophesy', not crosses. The Portuguese King sent a fully outfitted horse to the Oba via sailing ship around 1500. The earliest European documentation of wall plaques was in the 1600s when they were described as covering columns in the Royal Palace. The plaque in this lot shows the Oba holding the royal sword (Eben) seated on a horse and flanked by two senior royal attendants with shields. One attendant holds the horse's bridle and the other holds a spear. All figures wear traditional regalia, and the attendants wear pendants with the face of the Oba. Figures were typically depicted in a frontal orientation in Benin plaques. A SIMILAR PLAQUE SHOWING A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COURT (NOT SEATED ON A HORSE) IS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM (CATALOG # 1898.I-15.85) AND PUBLISHED IN NIGEL BARLEY'S BOOK 'FOREHEADS OF THE DEAD' 1988 FIG 14. On custom wall mount with electric spotlight. Lost wax cast

brass. 16in x 20in.

**Lot #** 20

**Qty** 1

**Title** JELLYFISH-SHAPED CEREMONIAL HOE CURRENCY (BANDAKA). Mambila and Chamba people, Nigeria and Cameroon. Hoes and hoe blades were an essential part of bride wealth (dowry) payments in many African societies. They were presented to a prospective bride's family to signal a man's wish to marry their daughter and his ability to support her. The term, bandaka, derives from the name of the small village (Bandaka) where these objects were observed in use. The blade has two asymmetric sections, slightly offset from each other (not in the same plane) which are separated by a spine that arises from the handle. On one side, the lower edge of the blade is serrated, and an anchor-shaped appendage (sometimes referred to as a 'nose') hangs from the lower edge on the other side. A carrying cord was stretched from the 'nose' to a ring at the end of the U-shaped handle. The handle is tightly wrapped with sewn leather. An iron band is wrapped around the upper third of the shaft. On custom base. Hand forged iron, leather. H19in.



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**Lot #** 21

**Qty** 1

**Title** CEREMONIAL CALABASH HANDLE. Kirdi people, northeast Nigeria and northern Cameroon. Found in villages named Mora, Mokolo, and Yagoua. Was attached to a calabash with leather thongs that passed through holes at the ends of the arched blades (see picture). Punched designs decorated the arched blades. The blades rise to the top of the handle and after passing through an iron band they are transformed into open work formed by three twisted rods capped by a pointed cupola. One small ring of twisted iron wire hangs from each of the open work twisted rods. During ceremonial dances betrothed and married women held calabashes by these handles to demonstrate their status. On custom base. Hand forged iron. H13.5in.



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**Lot #** 22

**Qty** 1

**Title** PAINTED SICKLE-FORM CEREMONIAL AX. Kota people (?), Gabon and Congo. A cord for carrying this ax was strung between the loops at the back of the blade and at the bottom of the handle. Dates from the early 1900s and used as dowry payment. Wooden and iron ceremonial objects were sometimes painted with enamel paints to make them more attractive. This ax was painted red with white dots. Some paint on the handle is worn away by use. On custom base. Hand forged iron, paint. H16.5in.

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**Lot #** 23

**Qty** 1

**Title** SICKLE-FORM CEREMONIAL AX. Kirdi people, northeast Nigeria and northern Cameroon. The hooked blade is thought to represent the stylized head of a rooster, a bird considered to be sacred. The ax was displayed during burial ceremonies when it was held aloft by relatives of the deceased. The front surface of the blade is decorated with fine geometric punched designs. The curved section that joins the blade to the straight handle is wrapped in leather. A copper band is wrapped around the straight shaft which ends with a thin ring of twisted copper wire. The shaft is inserted into an iron ball. On custom base. Hand forged iron, copper. H14in.

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**Lot #** 24

**Qty** 1

**Title** DECORATED BRACELET-FORM MANILLAS. Yoruba people, Nigeria. Decorated manillas were highly prized for ceremonial purposes. The decorative designs, which held meaning for the Yoruba people, were added by blacksmiths to manillas brought by European traders. Entire surfaces of both covered with spiral, circular and linear designs. Both mid-19th century. Each on custom base. (A) U-shaped with flared ends. H3.5in 2lb. (B) Round with flat ends. H4in 3lb.

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**Lot #** 25  
**Qty** 1



**Title** EUROPEAN AND CONGOLESE MANILLAS. Although Europeans brought large numbers of manillas to Africa, they were also produced as ingots by a number of African tribes who used them for trade among themselves. There is considerable evidence that the existence of manillas in West Africa predated the arrival of Europeans. (A) Birmingham bracelet-form manilla from Birmingham England. Mainly traded in Nigeria. The U-shaped form with large flared feet was greatly prized. Smooth surfaces typical of a European manilla. Late 1800s. On custom base. Copper alloy. H3in. (B) Onganda ring-shaped manilla. Jonga (Onga) people, Congo. Two facets on either side are separated by a wide, flat, shallow channel. The ends are slightly flared by hammering. Given as part of bride price (marriage dowry). The uneven surfaces are typical of manillas created in Africa. Mid-1800s. On custom base. Copper. H4.5in.

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