

ART & AUCTION

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FIVE DOLLARS

L.A. STORY
TWOMBLY: TRIUMPH OR TROUBLE?
RUSSIA REDISCOVERS ITS PAST



(shortlist)

Glass Act

If a quarter of a million dollars for an original Lalique Art Deco vase depicting the handmaidens of Bacchus is more than you want to spend right now, don't fret. The Lalique family has given us other, less pricey treasures. Founder René Lalique's scent bottles, first mass-produced in 1907 for parfumeur François Coty, begin at only \$500, with prices mounting depending on rarity, design and condition. His son Marc reproduced a smiling angel from the facade of Reims Cathedral on a champagne flute (still manufactured for \$185). René's granddaughter Marie-Claude has recently added colored fish (\$96) and a vase covered with satin-finished martinets in fluid flight (\$1,240) to the family's menagerie. Those devoted to *le style Lalique* should visit New York's private dealers DJL Trading International and London's Galerie Moderne—and shouldn't miss the René Lalique retrospective (through February) at Paris's Musée des Arts Décoratifs.



A Dragon Lives Forever, But Not So Little Boys

Every 10-year-old is a stamp collector. Few stay with it, but those who do should be watching the stamps of pre-Communist China. As Chinese wealth has grown since the death of Mao, so has the desire to collect national history, and the value of these stamps is taking a great leap forward. They're still a bargain, but probably not for long. The market starts below \$50, although it can climb to \$228,000 for an 1897 one-dollar overprint. (The world's most valuable stamp, by the way, is an 1856 British Guiana one-cent, estimated to be worth more than \$1.5 million today.) Those who keep their childhood dreams alive by collecting stamps might want to catch a fast boat to the Chinese stamp market.

Opening The Field

Following the recent, acclaimed traveling exhibition "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries," it's time to rediscover some of that country's too-long-neglected artists. Alfred Ramos Martinez (1872–1946) and the so-called Schools of Outdoor Painting he led introduced early 20th-century Mexican artists to the lessons of French Impressionism. Had Martinez not left Mexico for Los Angeles, just as it seemed he was about to attain wider recognition, today his prices might well be in line with those of his students David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo, rather than only a quarter as high. Works by Martinez and his followers are on display at Beverly Hills's Louis Stern Galleries (in early January), Santa Monica's Bryce Bannatyne Gallery and, despite Martinez's injunction to "stay away from museums, observe nature," at Mexico City's Museo Nacional de Arte.

