

ROBERT
YOUNG
ANTIQUES

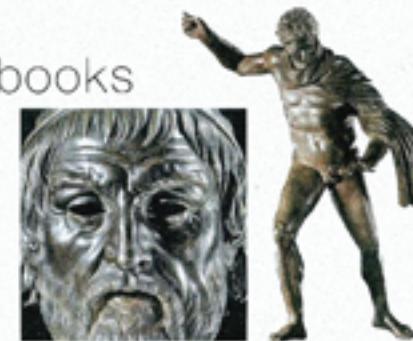


11th Annual
**EXHIBITION OF
ANTIQUE FOLK ART**

7th – 15th May 2010
Preview 6.30pm Thursday 6th May

www.robertyoungantiques.com

books



THE GREEK BODY (by Ian Jenkins and Victoria Turner; British Museum, £19.99) The word gymnasium derives from the ancient Greek *gymnos*, meaning 'stripped'. This is a useful piece of etymology in a book that is, unsurprisingly, chock-full of nudity. As explained by these two curators at the British Museum – where nearly all of the sculpted objects in this attractive volume reside – Greek males did their exercise naked. Cultivating a perfectly honed body carried a moral as well as aesthetic importance, captured in the Socratic connection between the words *kalos* and *agathos* – beautiful and good. Teacher-philosophers, we're told (without a hint of a wink), frequented the gymnasium to attract pupils from among the athletes. No differentiating, for the Greeks, between the jocks and the geeks.

The representation of women au naturel was generally out of the question, though a notable exception to this rule was the depiction of divinities. Splashed decadently across the frontispiece is a close-up of Aphrodite caught at her bath – a large expanse of the goddess's back in all its fleshly glory, her half-turned head turning the viewer into voyeur. Marvel at how perfectly the sculptor has manipulated cold marble to become warm, living flesh; and at how the book's photography keeps hold of this full-figure pictures coupled with dramatically lit close-ups ensure these studies of the human form come alive on the page.

To counterbalance these romantic, idealised images of the Greek body, the authors present us with such works as the early Cycladic marble figurines whose abstract forms inspired Picasso. A concern in the later Greek period for realism and character yielded works such as the carved-ivory figure of a hunchback with twisted, dwarfed body and grotesque face. Here are the darker realms of both the Greek imagination and reality: rapacious satyrs grappling with resistant nymphs, the hunter Aktaeon being attacked by his own dogs; a clay pouring vessel that takes the form of a black man's head, the pathos in whose face becomes more poignant when one considers that its enslaved model might have used this very object to serve his master.

Jenkins and Turner give more attention to the face alone – a whole chapter – than the book's title would suggest. One of the highlights is a second-century BC bronze head believed to be from a statue of Sophocles; it contains as much tragic expression in its lined features as one of the playwright's protagonists, and shows how the Greek chisel could carve out character as adeptly as it could the body beautiful. Somehow, though, it's the rippling torso of the Westmacott Youth and the athletic discus thrower that stick in the mind. Strange, that ■ SOPHIE BARLING >

To order *The Greek Body* for £17.99 (plus £4.50 UK p&p), ring the World of Interiors Bookshop on 0207 911 1747



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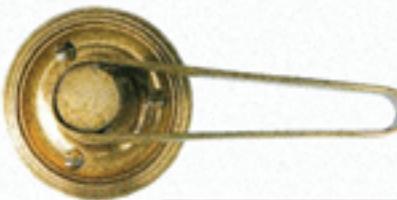
■ Visitors to Harrods' third floor will now find a distinctly Italian feel with the arrival of BB Italia. Since 1966 the company has been a pioneer in contemporary furnishings. The unity of research, industrial knowledge and innovation ensures that each piece is original, authentic and of the highest quality. The firm also co-makes most of its furniture with Quirino, H. SW1 (020 7291 0100).

■ The annual exhibition of antique folk art will be held from 6 to 15 May at Robert Young's gallery in Battersea. This year's is the 11th to take place and includes an eclectic mix of exhibits, from a Viking bowl to love tokens to weathervanes. Young believes that it's the arresting colours, individuality and naivety of folk art that have made people increasingly recognise its value. Robert Young Antiques, 68 Battersea Bridge Rd, London SW11 (020 7228 7847; robertyoungantiques.com).

■ Bean knockers 1860. The products are hand-finished and many are made using the original casts. Its latest collections include the nature-inspired 'Organic', and 'Pupalux', which is influenced by Futurism and the Industrial world. The company's new collection of beautifully veneered 'Lanos' doors is available in a variety of woods, from oak to black-bolivian. Beardmore, 321 Fulham Rd, London SW10 (020 7354 5444; beardmore.co.uk).

■ With over 50 years of experience, Marvin Alexander is truly established in the world of lighting, respected by distinguished decorators and architects alike. To meet the growing demand for antique lighting, the company launched the 'L'Orfeo' collection, with its vast array of high-quality reproduction chandeliers, lamps, candleabras, candlesticks and decorative accessories. Most of the models are made using techniques that have been used for centuries: sand casting, lost-wax casting and glass blowing. Marvin Alexander, 315 East 62nd St, New York, NY 10065 (212 638 2122; marinval@msn.com). ■

■ Evilavonni has gone back to old-school Hollywood glamour with its bedroom collection. Indulge yourself with deep-buttoned headboards, floor-length curtains, metallic-trimmed cushions with delicate embroidery – all available in an elegant palette of silver, charcoal and deep brown. For the finishing touch, go for glass or crystal lighting.



From top: bedroom furnishings by Evilavonni; English Native School painting, c1886, at Robert Young Antiques; 'Harley Prints' lever from The Beardmore Collection; 'Delano' chandelier by Marvin Alexander.



silk wall hanging or bed cover, at Richard Morant; 'Florence' foot stool by Nuttal Home; 'Alcova' bed by B&B Italia