Rob Zanger Rare Books

RARE BOOKS, FINE ART, PHOTOGRAPHS



Catalogue Number 20 – September 2026

Our September catalogue is an eclectic collection of staff picks—books, prints, photographs, and other discoveries that caught our attention and earned a place in this month's selection. From Renaissance drawings and eighteenth-century Shakespeare criticism to private-press books, Parisian dancers, early photographs of Japan, and glimpses of Rome and New York, there's a little bit of everything.

These are the things we've been enjoying lately: some familiar favorites, some unexpected finds, and plenty of objects we simply couldn't resist sharing. We hope you'll find a few favorites of your own.

Rob, Flavia, & Shawna

We welcome inquiries. Send an email to: info@robzangerrarebooks.com

If an item strikes your fancy, please click on the image, title, or price. You'll be taken to the full description on our website, with additional images. You can zoom in and enlarge the images there by clicking on the icon in the upper right hand corner. If this email was forwarded to you, please click on "View this email in your browser."



Ilsted, Peter

Little Girl with a Flat Cap, 1924

Ilsted's signature geometric compositions and diffused light are beautifully exemplified here, with a seated child framed symmetrically between two empty chairs. His mastery of spatial balance and tonal gradations gives the room a sense of order and contemplative stillness. Created through a subtractive mezzotint process, the copper plate was first roughened with a multi-toothed rocker to yield a velvety, ink-retaining burr. Ilsted then scraped and burnished the metal from dark to light, smoothing selected areas to control light absorption and produce delicate tonal gradations. To achieve color, he applied pigments directly onto the single plate using the à la poupée inking technique; carefully dabbing each hue by hand with small cloth stumps before a single run through the press.

$ 3,200 >

Carracci, Annibale / C. Cesio, engraver

Aedium Farnesiarum Tabulae, 1753

A magnificent record of one of the great decorative achievements of seventeenth-century Rome, this volume reproduces Carracci's celebrated fresco cycle in the Palazzo Farnese, one of the masterpieces of early Baroque painting. Begun in 1597 and completed in 1608, the monumental decorations of the palace gallery depict the "Loves of the Gods," bringing together scenes from classical mythology, allegory, architectural illusion, and an extraordinary wealth of ornament.

The engravings by Carlo Cesio translate Carracci's frescoes into an impressive printed record, preserving the complex interplay of figures,





Whittington Press / Pissarro, Lucien

Pastorale; Wood Engravings by Lucien Pissarro, 2011

A remarkably faithful and historically sensitive revival of the aesthetic of the Eragny Press, produced by the Whittington Press using handmade papers manufactured over a century earlier to the specifications of William Morris. The present “Edition C” was printed on the celebrated Crown and Sceptre paper, whose subtle aging and tonal variation lend the book an authenticity entirely in keeping with Pissarro’s original productions. An elegant detail is the blind-stamped index numbering beneath each engraving, allowing reference to the illustrations without disturbing the harmony of the page design. This project was a collaboration between the Whittington Press, the Ashmolean Museum and the Morgan Library & Museum.

$ 700 >

Hirsch, Joseph

Soft and Low, 1964



Soft and Low captures the smoky, late-night pulse of an underground New York jazz club. One familiar with the scene can imagine it may be the Village Vanguard, or Arthur's Tavern. The vertical composition pulls the viewer into a dimly lit room, organizing three figures along a tight, cascading axis. A towering bassist and a hunched musician form a dense block of shadow and concentration, while an absorbed listener in the foreground leans against the bar, lost in thought beside his drink. Executed with velvety chiaroscuro and rich tonal gradations, Hirsch captures the essence

fades.

$ 350 >



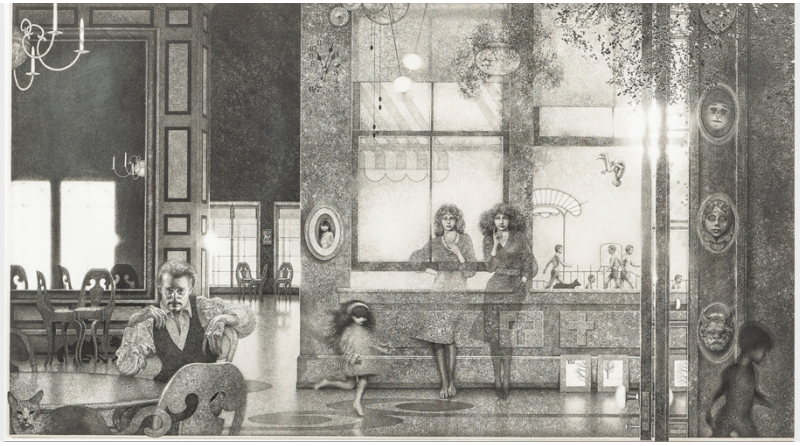


Donadoni, Stefano

Arco di Costantino, circa 1890

Having existed for more than 1,500 years by the time Donadoni painted it, the Arch of Constantine commemorates Constantine I's victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Dedicated in 315 CE, the structure stands as a massive, triple-bayed monument that famously incorporates reused reliefs (spolia) from Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius. This deliberate recycling linked Constantine to Rome's golden age.

$ 600 >



Interiors I: Family Reunion, 1984

Interiors is a masterpiece of direct-resist etching and engraving, and serves as an example of how specialized intaglio methods can render spatial transparency. Drawing with fine drafting tools on Mylar film, Milton transferred intricate linear compositions onto photosensitive copper plates. This process allowed him to achieve extraordinary micro-tonal range, seamlessly blending solid interior forms with ghostlike reflections. Etched with precision through controlled acid bites, the central figures appear to float across pane glass, merging the reflective cafe interior with an exterior landscape. Milton's mastery of line density and controlled aquatint dissolves rigid architectural structures into fluid, dreamlike planes. Though conceived as a singular image, Family Reunion served as the foundational primo pensiero for seven subsequent prints, ultimately anchoring the Interiors Suite created over an eight-year period.

$ 9,500 >



Nielsen, Kay (Illustrator)

East of the Sun and West of the Moon; Old Tales from the North, (1922)

A collection of 15 stories of Norse folklore, this edition contains magnificent illustrations by Danish illustrator Kay Nielsen (1886 – 1957), who was part of the Golden Age of Illustration. He also collaborated with Disney, contributing story sketches and illustrations for several films, including for Fantasia.

$ 575 >

Mielatz, Charles

Rainy Day, Providence, 1901

Mielatz's masterful intaglio techniques create a vivid atmospheric mood here. Bold, diagonal etched lines drive downward to simulate a heavy, windswept downpour, while a film of deliberate plate tone leaves a damp, luminous haze across the scene. Shadowy drypoint figures dissolve into the gloom, and uninked paper highlights transform the slick pavement into a mirror of reflected light.

$ 800 >





Spruance, Benton

Cat and Busybody, 1933

Framed by dramatic, ink-heavy shadows and stark geometry, this streetscape from Philadelphia's



architecture looms with somber Precisionist weight, yet the scene breathes with a little mischief; a nod to the classic "busybody" mirror designed for discreet window-gazing. Perched above, a solitary feline plays neighborhood sentinel, turning the moody scene into a wry commentary on harmless voyeurism.

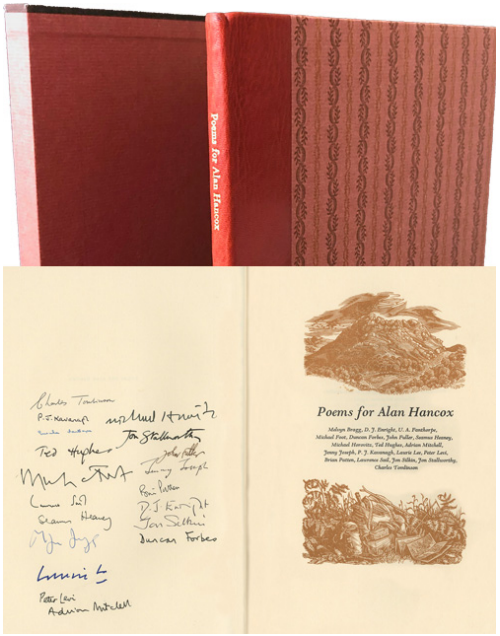
$ 3,200 >

Whittington Press / Heaney, Seamus & others. Miriam Macgregor, illustrator.

Poems for Alan Hancox; Melvyn Bragg, D. J. Enright, U A. Fanthorpe, Michael Foot, Duncan Forbes, John Fuller, Seamus Heanery, Michael Horovitz, Ted Hughes, Adrian Mitchell, Jenny Joseph, P J Kavanagh, Laurei Lee, Ptere Levi, Brian Patten, Lawrence Sail, Jon Silkin, Jon Stallworthy, Charles Tomlinson, 1993

An elegant tribute to Alan Hancox was assembled by Alan Tucker, The introduction is by Melvyn Bragg and the afterword by Michael Foot. It contains sixteen poems (15 of them previously unpublished), and a prose piece by Laurie Lee. Alan Hancox opened his first bookshop in Cheltenhaim in the late 1940s, and it quickly became a meeting place and the literary heart of the town.

$ 1,200 >



BROWSE BOOKS





Legrand, Louis (illustrations) & Erastène Ramiro (text)

Cours de danse fin de siècle, 1892

A lively and evocative portrait of Parisian dance culture at the fin de siècle, this scarce volume features Louis Legrand's celebrated etchings and color vignettes of can-can dancers rehearsing their famously exuberant high kicks. Legrand was renowned for his depictions of Montmartre nightlife, dancers, and performers, anticipating the better-known images of Toulouse-Lautrec. The illustrations originated in the wildly successful Gil Blas magazine can-can series of 1891. At the instigation of the publishing house Dentu, Legrand made a set of etchings of his Gil Blas illustrations. The etchings were published in this book in 1892, with a limited run on Japon paper of 50 copies.

$ 4,800 >



Briscoe, Arthur

On the Hard, circa 1925

An elegant etching, On the Hard captures a tranquil maritime scene, depicting masted vessels resting along a quiet, shallow shore. Briscoe's delicate, calligraphic line work and rich tonal variation emphasize an expansive open sky and subtle reflections in the foreground water. The economical mark-making creates an atmospheric sense of calm, characteristic of early 20th-century British maritime printmaking.

$ 900 >

Schäfer, Henri

Rheims Cathedral, circa 1870

Schäfer's watercolor beautifully balances monumental Gothic architecture with the intimate vitality of 19th-century urban life. Soaring above the surrounding town, the cathedral's intricate facade, soaring twin towers, and delicate tracery dominate the upper composition, bathed in a soft, sunny haze that emphasizes its majestic height. Below, Schäfer grounds the scene in the rhythm of daily existence. Flanked by charming timbered and stepped-gable shopfronts, a bustling street scene unfolds across the foreground. Figures in traditional attire gather along the marketplace, chatting and going about their day,



effectively contrasts the grandeur of history with the fleeting charm of civic life.

$ 1,500 >



English School, 18th century

Seaman in petticoat breeches and slops

This ink and wash drawing reflects the popular maritime and satirical visual culture of Georgian Britain. The title refers to "slops" (and petticoat trousers), canvas or tarred garments worn by working seamen and mariners during the 17th and 18th centuries to protect their clothes from water and rigging tar. The work draws on traditional British genre studies and caricatures made famous by artists like William Hogarth and Thomas Rowlandson. Rather than depicting naval officers in uniform, the artist captures the distinctive, everyday attire of common sailors, documenting 18th-century maritime social history with comedic flair. Such satirical depictions offered contemporary audiences a humorous yet authentic view of working-class naval life, blending social realism with affectionate visual caricature.

$ 500 >

BROWSE FINE ART & PRINTS

Cochin, Charles Nicolas Père (1688-1754) & Vincent Le Sueur (1668-1743) after Raphael

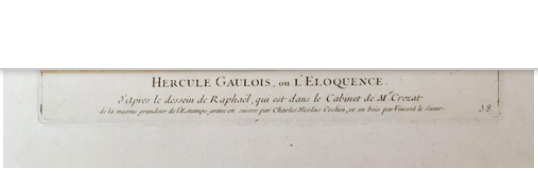
Hercule Gaulois, ou L'Éloquence, circa 1729

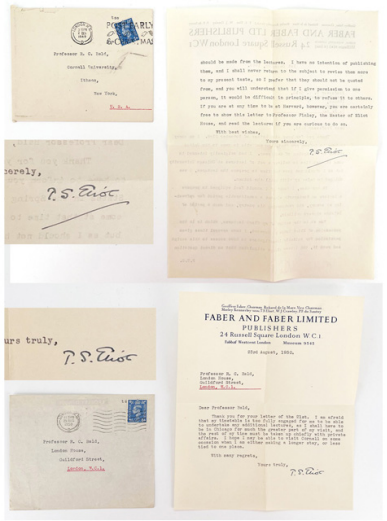
In this work executed for the famous Cabinet Crozat after a drawing attributed to Raphael, Vincent Le Sueur demonstrates the refined eighteenth century French adaptation of the chiaroscuro woodcut technique. Rather than relying solely on tone, Le Sueur paired woodblocks with etched line work by Charles Nicolas Cochin the Elder. Cochin's etched copper plate provided the keyline drawing, while Le



precise registration, the woodcut blocks establish spatial depth, modeled form, and painterly light through broad tonal washes. Unprinted areas of the paper are left exposed as bright highlights, creating a soft, sculpted effect that mirrors the ink wash and highlight quality of Renaissance master drawings.

$ 2,500 >





Eliot, T. S.

Two Typed Letters Signed (TLS), 1949

An engaging pair of letters documenting T. S. Eliot's correspondence with the distinguished Australian-born scholar Robert Cecil Bald, then at Cornell University. In the first, Eliot declines an invitation to lecture on Wordsworth, explaining that he has not worked on the subject for some time, while granting Bald permission to consult his unpublished Clark Lectures at Harvard, provided they are not quoted. In the second, Eliot again declines a Cornell invitation, citing the brevity of his forthcoming trip. Together, the letters offer a glimpse of Eliot as poet, editor, and literary colleague.

$ 2,200 >

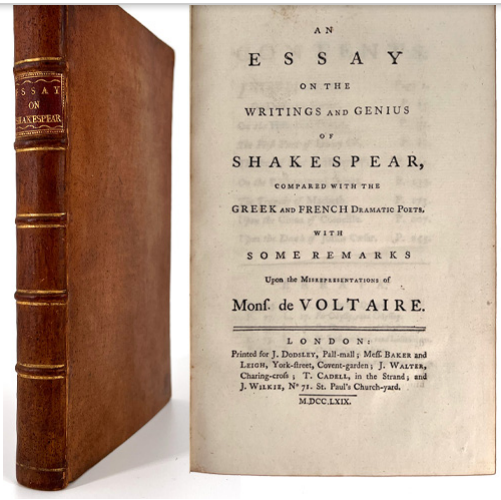
Cruikshank, George (illus.), Apel (auth.)

Der Freischütz Travestie 1824

A scarce and exuberantly illustrated Cruikshank production, this playful travesty draws on Carl Maria von Weber's celebrated opera Der Freischütz, which premiered in Berlin in 1821. George Cruikshank's twelve hand-colored etchings bring the comic tale vividly to life, combining his characteristic wit with the theatrical energy of the original. An important early example of Cruikshank's book illustration, before his celebrated collaborations with Charles Dickens.

$ 1,800 >





[An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare … With some remarks upon the misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire.](), 1769

A scarce first edition of Elizabeth Montagu's influential defense of Shakespeare, written in response to Voltaire's criticisms of the English dramatist. Montagu compares Shakespeare with the great Greek and French playwrights, examining works including Henry IV, Macbeth, and Julius Caesar. Her first published book, originally issued anonymously, it established Montagu as an important literary critic and helped cement her reputation as a leading intellectual of the eighteenth-century Bluestocking circle.

$ 1,400 >

Swiss School, early 19th century

Lake landscape

This warm Grand Tour monochrome relies on tonal wash application and precise line drawing to create a sense of mountain haze and atmospheric depth. The landscape features layers of brushwork which establishes structured foreground elements consisting of figures, foliage, and a small building, against lightly washed mountain silhouettes in the distance. This work was once in the collection of the Spanish National Library.

$ 800 >





Original Photograph / unattributed

Japan – Cooly, drawing Jinrikisha (Rickshaw), c 1880

A charming hand-tinted photograph of a jinrikisha, or rickshaw, and its driver in Yokohama during the early Meiji period. Rickshaws quickly became one of the enduring visual symbols of Japan for Western visitors, and photographs such as this were popular souvenirs for foreign residents and travelers. Carefully staged yet evocative of everyday life, the image offers a glimpse of Japan at a pivotal moment of increasing contact with the outside world.

$ 450 >

BROWSE PHOTOGRAPHS

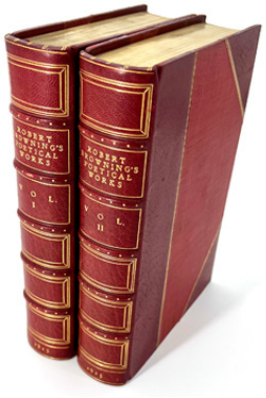
Raphael / Raffaello Sanzio

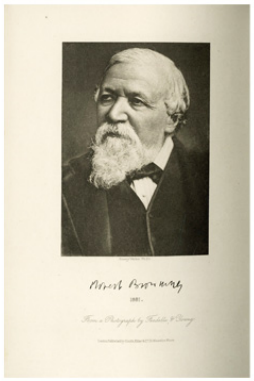
Disegni Originali di Raffaello per la prima volta pubblicati, esistenti nella Imperial Regia Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, 1829

An elegant record of drawings attributed to Raphael, this rare Venetian publication reproduces a sketchbook acquired by the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice. The thirty plates preserve the character of the original drawings, including a facsimile of Raphael's autograph writing found on the verso of one leaf. Published in 1829, the volume offers an evocative glimpse into the study and circulation of Renaissance drawings and the enduring fascination with Raphael's artistic legacy.

$ 1,000 >







Browning, Robert

The Poetical Works of Robert Browning; With Portraits, 1915. 2 vol.

A handsome two-volume collection of Browning's poetry, elegantly bound in red morocco and illustrated with portraits. One of the leading voices of Victorian literature, Browning is celebrated for his dramatic monologues, psychological insight, irony, and vivid historical settings. The volumes provide a substantial selection of his work in an attractive early twentieth-century edition.

$ 325 >

Photographer Unknown

A Free Look, circa 1950

A playful behind-the-scenes glimpse of circus life, aptly titled "A Free Look." Taken outside the big top, the photograph offers an irreverent view of spectators



Roland Butler Collection, the image provides a charming and decidedly tongue-in-cheek souvenir of mid-century American circus culture.

$ 175 >



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