

Making It Modern

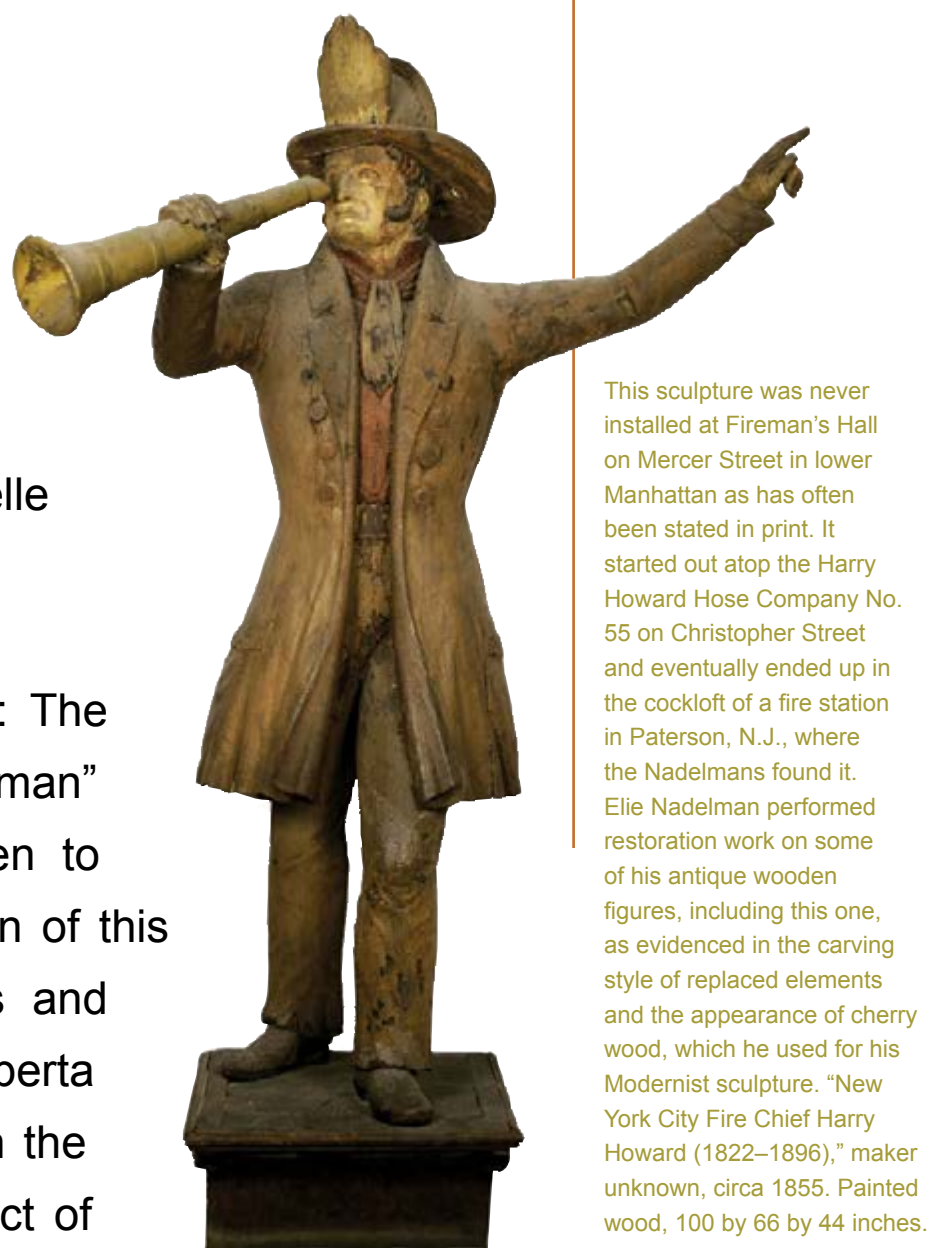
The Folk Art Collection
Of Elie And Viola Nadelman



By Kate Eagen Johnson

NEW YORK CITY — Perhaps you have heard of the fabled dealers Israel Sack, Charles Woolsey Lyon and Nancy McClelland, but how about C. Vandevere Howard, Matthew Holden or Estelle Berkstresser?

Among the delights of “Making It Modern: The Folk Art Collection of Elie and Viola Nadelman” is the serious and thorough attention given to art retailers who contributed to the formation of this remarkable compendium during the 1920s and 30s. Co-curators Margaret K. Hofer and Roberta J.M. Olson explore the interactions between the Nadelmans and these dealers as one aspect of



This sculpture was never installed at Fireman's Hall on Mercer Street in lower Manhattan as has often been stated in print. It started out atop the Harry Howard Hose Company No. 55 on Christopher Street and eventually ended up in the cockloft of a fire station in Paterson, N.J., where the Nadelmans found it. Elie Nadelman performed restoration work on some of his antique wooden figures, including this one, as evidenced in the carving style of replaced elements and the appearance of cherry wood, which he used for his Modernist sculpture. “New York City Fire Chief Harry Howard (1822–1896),” maker unknown, circa 1855. Painted wood, 100 by 66 by 44 inches.

One of only two known, this elaborate wonder was probably not produced on a commercial scale. The Nadelmans collected stamped tin toys, cast iron mechanical banks and other fairly mass-produced items for their museum. Riverboat Excelsior pull toy by George W. Brown & Co. (1830–89), circa 1870, Forestville or Cromwell, Conn. Tinned sheet iron, iron, paint, paper; 14 by 21 by 7 inches.



a broader exhibition and catalog project, the first to address the Nadelman Collection in a scholarly way.

They reveal the names and circumstances of these antiques traders and show how the Nadelmans drew upon dealers' connections and finds to build their exceptional trove. What makes this initiative even more astonishing is the fact that it was stimulated by the seemingly prosaic unearthing of six boxes of index cards in a family's long-term storage area.

“Making It Modern: The Folk Art Collection of Elie and Viola

Nadelman” will enchant visitors at the New-York Historical Society through August 21, before moving on to the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Mass., where it will be on view September 17–December 31. It opened at the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History last year...

(Continued on page 30 in the E-Edition)

**Read Full Article
on Desktop**

**Read Full Article
on Mobile**

Although the Nadelmans thought this action toy far earlier in date, it was likely made in the mid-Nineteenth Century in imitation of examples produced in German toy-making centers. Jumping jack, 1830–70, probably England. Wood (probably pine), paint, string; 12½ by 7½ by 2 inches.



Browse More



**Old Saybrook Show Is
Long On Country Charm**



**McInnis's Memorial Day
Weekend Sale
Successful At \$700,000**



**Brandywine Antiques
Show Celebrates
45th Anniversary**