



PHILANTHROPISTS AND PATRONS such as Liliane M. Stewart (1928 – 2014) and David M. Stewart (1920 – 1984) are few and far between. Their generosity was exceptional, and they supported many institutions, such as the Université de Montréal, the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal hospital, Macdonald College and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, to name only a few. Transcending cultural, medical and educational causes, their civic patronage was a truly collaborative endeavour. Together, they created the Macdonald Stewart Foundation in 1973, after selling the Macdonald tobacco business, of which David M. Stewart was the heir. David was also the founder and main benefactor of the Stewart Museum, a private museum of Canadian history, for which he and Liliane had amassed a collection of historical objects and documents that chronicled the arrival of Europeans in the New World.

In addition to the couple's philanthropic work, Liliane Stewart's magnum opus was her comprehensive collection of decorative art that she built over many decades. Through

her project, she worked with the Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts (MMDA) and eventually with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), which earned her the apt nickname "best friend of Montreal museums." Her great taste and discernment informed her acquisition process. She would select objects that were not only significant to her, but to others as well. Although seemingly obvious, this is no easy feat—it requires an understanding of the history of decorative arts and a vision. In the process of acquiring her collection, she saved national treasures. By safeguarding the preservation of artifacts of Canadian history, she assured the transmission of important historical knowledge. Starting with jewellery, then household objects, and finally furniture, Stewart assembled a collection of some 6,000 objects.

When Stewart considered the acquisition of an object, either by herself or through the MMDA acquisition board, she would seek both excellence and accessibility, and often attempted to connect the local to the global. The goal was to select objects of good design that would later become great heritage. Founded in 1979 and housed in the historic Château Dufresne, Stewart's

collection was first part of the MMDA's collection. Due to the museum's lack of space, Stewart chose to donate her collection, one of the most important collections of decorative arts in North America, to the MMFA. The MMDA then moved in 1997 to a section of the Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion of the MMFA, and the collection space was designed by Frank O. Gehry. Today, one can admire her extensive collection in the 1976 pavilion created by Canadian architect Fred Lebensold, located on Du Musée Avenue behind the original 1912 building. This pavilion now bears the name of Liliane and David M. Stewart. The MMFA's Acquisition Committee for Decorative Arts, which was founded in 2001 and chaired by Liliane, continues the MMDA's original mission. Through her collection, exhibitions and museum wing, Stewart has given Montreal a lively institution. It should be noted that Montreal was officially appointed a UNESCO City of Design in June 2006.

Stewart, who was born in Cairo of Czech parentage, was very well traveled and also had a keen interest in the Canadian military. She was an honorary colonel of the Queen's York Rangers, the Compagnies Franches de la Marine and the Old 78th Fraser Highlanders. She was made an officer of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 1988, an officer of l'Ordre national du Québec in 1989, and in 2007, she was made an officer of the Order of Canada.

Animated by a genuine desire to give back, Stewart spent years shaping the cultural life in her city. She invested countless hours and considerable funds to create a coherent ensemble of significant objects. She salvaged national treasures, helped advance Canadian museology and transmitted precious historical knowledge.

Charrette embourbée by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and *La pluie sur la tonelle* by Raoul Dufy, lots 126 and 127 respectively in this sale, were part of Stewart's personal collection of fine art, along with pieces to be offered in Heffel's May Online Auction by Eugène Boudin, Alfred Pellan, Léonard Tsuguharu Foujita, Achille-Émile Othon Friesz, Jean-Jacques Henner and two works by Maurice Utrillo. Stewart was extremely fond of these nine works and held onto them until she passed away in 2014.



OPPOSITE: Liliane M. Stewart and David Stewart at Château Dufresne, Montreal

ABOVE: Liliane M. Stewart
Photo courtesy of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation, Montreal