EASTERN SPLENDOR


DON’T MISS

Frank Moore may have possessed the technical prowess of the Old Masters, but he was an artist wholly of his time. With a poetic spirit and an activist’s sense of purpose, he created dreamlike canvases that poignantly addressed hot-button issues, including the degradation of nature, genetically modified foods, and AIDS, which claimed his life a decade ago at age 48. “Toxic Beauty: The Art of Frank Moore,” at New York University’s Grey Art Gallery, examines the full scope of his career, with 35 symbol-rich paintings—such as Viral Romance (1992), left—as well as drawings and films (September 6 to December 8, nyu.edu/greyart).

fast forward

In the decades after World War I, Norman Bel Geddes promoted a bright future for America. A visionary thinker and persuasive pitchman (George Nelson called him “the P. T. Barnum of industrial design”), Bel Geddes revamped refrigerators and radios, created theater and film sets, and advocated a streamlined look, as seen in his 1930s model for Motor Car No. 9, below. A retrospective at the University of Texas at Austin’s Harry Ransom Center reassesses his impact on everything from the interstate highway system to retractable-roof stadiums (September 11 to January 6, 2013, hrc.utexas.edu).

TOP SHELF

Rose Cumming: Design Inspiration (Rizzoli, $55) revisits the career of the influential decorator known for her daring use of color (and, late in life, for her electric-blue hair). Her satin upholstery and high-shine walls exuded glamour, but her “Ugly Room”—with predatory-bird prints and swords—was the stuff of legend.

The sweeping survey of buildings featured in Concrete (Phaidon, $50) illustrates the material’s chameleonlike versatility, from the Pantheon’s cof fered dome to Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye. There are also unexpected juxtapositions, such as New York’s Guggenheim Museum with the London Zoo’s spiraling penguin ramps.

Mighty Maharajas: Forts & Palaces of India (Vendome, $75) tours more than 60 historic sites throughout India, including crumbling hillside bastions, royal quarters adorned with dizzying glass mosaics, and opulent colonial-era villas that blend local and European styles.