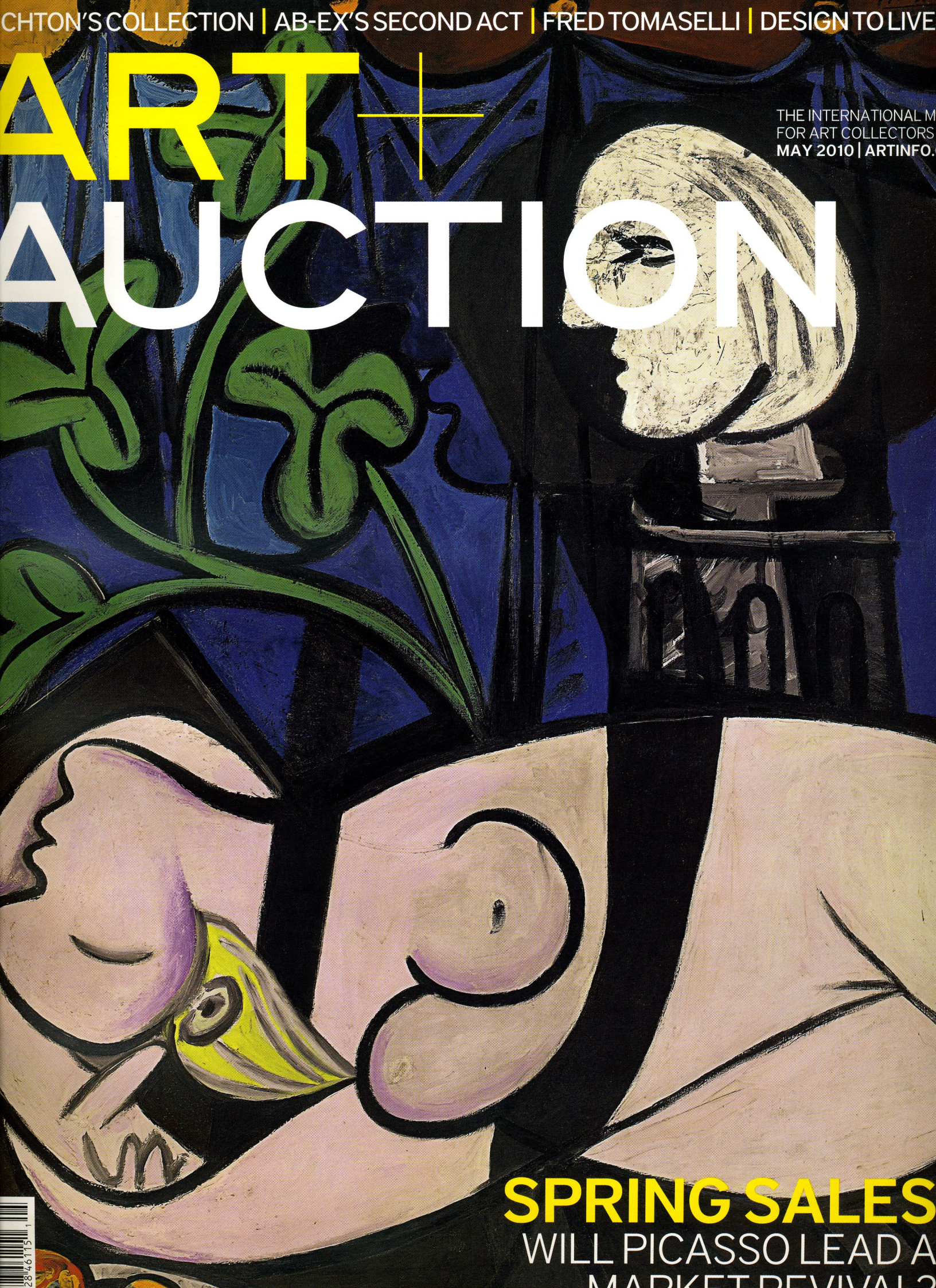


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MARKET REVIVAL?



A PERCH WITH FLAIR

"A table always has to have a flat surface, and a flat surface isn't that interesting," says the legendary designer Wendell Castle. But a chair, he adds, now that is "the most interesting of any piece of furniture." For decades Castle, 77, has redefined design and sculpture by fusing the two seamlessly in his work. His first creation, the Molar chair, of white plastic molded in the shape of a tooth, debuted in 1969 and embraced that decade's Pop verve as well as its utilitarian ethos. The Kansas-born, New York-based craftsman continues to merge these two disciplines perfectly in his new "Rockin'" series, on view at Barry Friedman Ltd., in New York, from May 6 through June 26. The 12 unique chairs in the series, priced between \$35,000 and \$135,000, are made from vertically stacked layers of wood carved into fluid, organic shapes that overlap with complex, curved lines. Named after the Mediterranean wind, the mahogany Sirocco, below, resembles a gnarled tree, its seat seeming to grow out of the base, its back swooshing off to one side like a branch caught in the breeze. "These chairs are very luxurious and comfortable," says Barry Friedman director Carole Hochman, noting that "Castle is really making his best, most immediate and confident work right now." BY MEGHAN DAILEY

