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ON THE TRAIL OF FRANZ KAFKA
AND JOHN HEARTFIELD

Vibrant Color Plates and More at Forum Auctions

Unique Presidential Signatures Come to Auction

Shackleton’s Lost Book and Other Rarities

Taking Pride in Their Work

Prague

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Vibrant Color Plates and More at Forum Auctions

Wide selections of antiquarian books with stunning color plates arrive at auction. This volume includes 87 etched plates partly printed in color and finished by hand by César Macret after Knip. *Les Pigeons* is considered to be the best and most famous monograph on pigeons and doves.

Another highlight of September’s sale is a complete first edition of William Gilbert’s *De Magnete* in original condition (estimated £10,000–15,000). Published in 1600, this is known as the first truly modern scientific book published in England. Theorizing that the Earth was a giant magnet, Gilbert worked out the variation and declination of the compass, distinguished magnetic mass from weight, and was the first person to use the term “electricity.” *De Magnete* would go on to influence Kepler, Galileo, and Newton, becoming one of the foundational works of modern physics.

Also uniquely noteworthy is a copy of Johan Jacob Steinmann’s *Souvenirs de Rio de Janeiro* from the 1830s (estimated £20,000–30,000). This work contains a series of exceptionally fine hand-colored aquatint plates extensively heightened with gum arabic, all mounted on the same brown paper. “This is a stunning suite of Brazilian views with the most exceptional quality of coloring,” Powell said. “Few copies have appeared at auction, and the date appears to vary from 1835 to this, of 1837.”

Forum Auctions will feature these and a variety of other antiquarian books in their sale on September 29, 2022, live and in-person in London.
Hindman Auctions@Auction

Unique Presidential Signatures Come to Auction

Hindman offers a wide-ranging collection of signed books and manuscripts.

This fall, Hindman Auctions will present selections from the collection of Patrick Atkinson as part of a two-day sale. From November 8–9, buyers will be able to bid on Atkinson’s collection of books and manuscripts signed by U.S. presidents and other influential world leaders.

An early booklover and the son of a politician, Atkinson began collecting U.S. President-signed books after meeting a few at his parents’ home and during his professional career. “Atkinson’s virtually complete collection of books owned or signed by U.S. Presidents is one of only a few, if any, comparable collections to come to market at auction,” said Gretchen Hause, vice president and senior specialist of Books and Manuscripts at Hindman Auctions. “We’re honored to represent the collection this fall.”

She noted that while most collections of presidential signatures gravitate to manuscripts, Atkinson’s collection is unique because he was intent on collecting books signed by each president, because “books were his first love as a collector,” Hause said.

When he was unable to track down a signed book, Atkinson acquired manuscripts to round out the collection. For example, Atkinson’s collection includes an autograph letter written by George Washington to his land agent, Battaile Muse—son of Revolutionary-War Colonel George Muse who served with Washington—in 1785, requesting his help making sense of leases on his property.

However, one particularly notable item is a nineteenth-century autograph book, which formerly belonged to Robert C. Scanland of Illinois. It contains the signatures of Presidents Grant and Garfield, who signed before they were presidents, and Abraham Lincoln, who signed when he was president. Lincoln’s signature resides among the first few pages of the book, and his private secretary, John G. Nicolay, also signed on the page beneath Lincoln’s signature.

Hindman’s collection of books and manuscripts signed by Mahatma Gandhi, and continued to carefully expand the collection—Included in the expanded collection is Martin Luther King Jr.’s account of the 1955–1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott, Stride Toward Freedom (1958), which is signed and inscribed with King’s pacifist credo: “The strong man is the man who can stand up for his rights and not hit back.”

Additionally, buyers can expect to see Francis Scott Key’s copy of Thomas Lead’s Reports of Sir George Croke… of Such Select Cases as were adjudged in the said courts during the Reign of James the First (1795), signed by Key and with his bookplate, as well as an autograph manuscript of “America the Beautiful,” signed by author Katharine Lee Bates. It was first published as a poem in 1893, and later set to music by Samuel A. Ward in 1910.

A long-time collector, Atkinson noted, “We never actually own a historically or culturally important book. We are the stewards, the caretakers, doing our best to care for these valuable items until the next collector comes along.”

The next stewards of these signed books and manuscripts will be able place bids online, by telephone, or in person at Hindman’s Chicago saleroom beginning at 10 a.m. Central both days of the sale. As the collection is still being catalogued, estimates are forthcoming and will be available on the Hindman Auctions website. 

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Shackleton’s Lost Book and Other Rarities

Fresh material comes to market from Potter Auctions.

Despite numerous hardships, financial woes, setbacks, and dwindling rations, Ernest Shackleton’s Nimrod expedition of 1907–1909 returned home to a high level of public interest, securing the team’s place in polar history. While they did not reach their South Pole objective, Shackleton became a British national hero, and the expedition marked the longest Antarctic journey made at the time.

Today, polar collectors are familiar with the library from Shackleton’s later Endurance expedition, thanks to Frank Hurley’s famous photograph of the books in Shackleton’s cabin. Most of these volumes did not survive, as Shackleton and his crew were forced to leave non-essential items behind on their trek to safety. The Nimrod library, however, was never documented. Did Shackleton carry many books on his first successful Antarctic expedition? If so, what were the titles? These questions will largely remain mysteries. “Any surviving material has been lost to history, which makes any book taken on these voyages near-impossible to find, especially with existing provenances,” said Chris Brink, director of Fine Books and Manuscripts at Potter Auctions. That’s what makes the star of Potter & Potter Auctions’ October 2022 sale—a book owned by Shackleton and taken aboard the Nimrod expedition—so unique.

The Ernest Shackleton–Robert Browning connection is noteworthy. The explorer could recite any of Browning’s poems from memory. Shackleton’s associates described him as being an incarnation of the poet’s virile faith and optimism. Shackleton would eventually be elected president of the Robert Browning Settlement. He preserved the book in question to the settlement in 1919. It included a note by the explorer describing having this book on the expedition while “in the hut under the Polar night.” “This is the only known book owned by Shackleton that survived one of his expeditions,” Brink said.

Other rarities in this upcoming sale include a presentation copy of The Bodley Head’s Ulysses signed by James Joyce ($50,000–$60,000), Aleister Crowley’s personal copy of The Winged Beetle with his annotations ($10,000–$15,000), and a complete set of Captain James Cook’s Voyages with the elusive atlas ($12,000–$16,000).

This sale will take place via live bidding, absentee and phone bidding, and online through Potter’s platform as well as other third-party auction platforms.

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Swann Galleries hosted its fourth annual sale dedicated to a curated selection of LGBTQ+ art, photography, literature, and other works and collectibles. The sale, “LGBTQ+ Art, Material Culture & History,” carried on a tradition that originally commemorated the anniversary of a watershed event in LGBTQ+ history. In August, Swann Auction Galleries, said. “And I said, ‘That’s the best idea I’ve heard in decades.’”

The first sale was so successful that it became an annual event. Each subsequent auction has generated robust sales figures, with work from famed LGBTQ+ artists fetching up to five times their estimated sale price. In previews for the sale, Lowry highlighted three pieces he expected to generate interest from dealers and collectors alike, stressing that estimated sales figures might be on the low end if past precedent was any indication. The first is a rare historical document: An ink-on-cardboard placard with the words “Homosexuals Are American Citizens Also” (estimated at $24,000 to $26,000). The poster is believed to be from the Robert Wu in 1919. A third item expected to be of utmost interest is a drawing by famed LGBTQ+ artist Tom of Finland. The graphite-on-paper work, “Portrait of Eric” (estimated at $25,000 to $35,000) is accompanied by two autograph letters signed by Tom of Finland to the person who commissioned the drawing, “both on his personal letterhead, one with the original mailing envelope.”

Lowry believes the annual LGBTQ+ sales showcase the unique capabilities of Swann Auction Galleries. The sales are cross-departmental by their very nature, meaning Swann’s experts from a wide range of disciplines—fine books, prints, photography, illustration art, and more—contribute to the sale’s integrity. Buyers and sellers alike benefit from the fact that Swann Auction Galleries is both large enough to meet their needs, and small enough to offer a personal touch.

A company that is run by collectors for collectors, “we’re able to meet our clients’ needs in a unique way,” Lowry said. “And with this sale in particular, we feel like we are bringing to light an under-served element of the market. Other auctions may focus on ephemera, love, or the physical form as a concept, but not many are dedicated strictly to the work of LGBTQ+ artists and creators.”

For more on the annual LGBTQ+ sales, past and future, visit swannagalleries.com. ●

For more information or to consign, please contact Charlie Pogacar at cpogacar@swann.com. He lives with his partner, Charlie Pogacar.

Upcoming Auctions

SEPT 23 American Art
SEPT 29 Printed & Manuscript Americana
OCT 6 African American Art
OCT 13 Early Printed Books
OCT 20 Fine Photographs
OCT 27 Fine Books & Autographs

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