

## Auction Action In Middleborough, Mass.

White's Varied Sale—

# Comic Books, Movie Posters, Feininger Watercolor, Oh My

MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASS. — John White and his wife Kathy Black split their January 26 sale into two parts. The first portion was dedicated to “pop culture” material, such as comic books, movie posters, autographed *Playbill* magazines, marbles, trading cards, etc. The second part of the sale included decorative arts, such as American and other artwork, military items, coins, Twentieth Century material, scrimshaw, a motorcycle and more. Before the sale, White explained, “It seemed more logical to split the sale in two. Certainly, the customers are different for each and we thought this format would make it easier for them — they’d come for the material that interested them.”

The result? An almost full house for the first part of the sale and more than a full house for the second part. In addition to active bidding in the room, internet bidding was available, phone lines were in use, and there were numerous absentee bids. The short break between the two portions of the sale was filled with pizza on the house. White’s catalog descriptions are comprehensive, including condition, and when they’re not including their own comments on condition, they clearly say so — as they did with the hundreds of comic books that were sold. The two-session sale grossed \$142,000.

The highest priced item in the sale was a 1955 watercolor and ink work by abstract Modernist Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956). It was painted when the artist was 84 years old and it sold for \$8,400 to Kevin Bruneau and Travis Landry of Bruneau & Co., Cranston, R.I., auctioneers. Landry, who heads the pop culture department and is frequently seen on the *Antiques Roadshow*, later said, “It’s a good watercolor and unusual in that it depicts people. Most of the artist’s works don’t include people.” Feininger was multi-talented, producing photo-

graphs, musical compositions for the piano and organ, as well as having been a comic strip artist earlier in his career. His works are in several museum collections, and the Whitney presented a major retrospective of his works in 2011. An oil painting by the artist was sold by Sotheby’s for more than \$5 million in 2017.

Movie posters started the sale, and the first one was unusual. It was a two-sided, hand painted poster announcing Gloria Swanson in *Tonight or Never*, with her portrait, and on the reverse announcing Conrad Nagle, with his portrait, “In Person.” Each side was signed by the artist who did that side; Louis Chiamonte for the Swanson film and “Luigi” for the reverse. The 48-by-22-inch poster with minor paper loss seemed like a good buy, finishing at \$120. The highest priced poster of the lot, a large three-sheet example selling for \$420, was for the 1955 film *Revenge of The Creature*, featuring a scantily clad Lori Nelson, who was about to suffer who knows what from the “creature.” Nelson made a number of other B films in the 1950s and co-starred with Van Johnson in a 1957 film and had top-billing in *Hot Rod Girl* alongside Chuck Connors. This particular film was a sequel to the cult favorite *Creature From The Black Lagoon*.

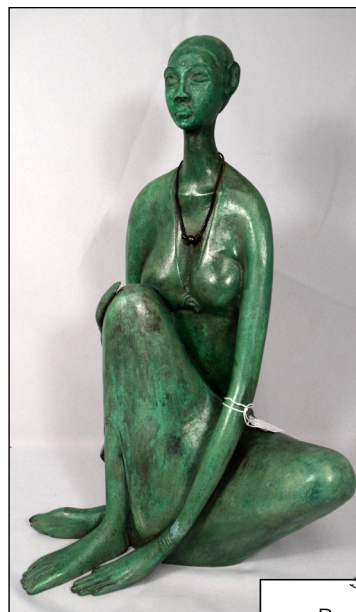
There were numerous other

posters advertising films with major stars of the day: Jane Russell, Jean Arthur, Victor Mature, Rock Hudson, etc. Most had condition issues, and most sold under \$100 each. All had come from the Academy Theatre in Fall River, Mass.

This portion of the sale included a large collection of autographed *Playbill* magazines, which were usually distributed at theatrical performances. Most were from the 1970s and 1980s and they were sold in



A collection of movie posters had come from a theater in Fall River, Mass. The highest priced poster of the lot, bringing \$420, was a large, three-sheet example for the 1955 film *Revenge of the Creature*, featuring a scantily clad Lori Nelson, who was about to be carried off by the “creature” to who knows what fate. The film was a sequel to *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.



By Indian artist B. Probha and bringing \$4,800 was an untitled bronze figure with a verdigris finish of a sitting woman.

Review and Onsite Photos by Rick Russack, Contributing Editor  
Catalog Photos Courtesy Of White's



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A detailed landscape with cows and a woman by Jean Ferdinand Monchablon (1854-1904) sold for \$1,260.



John White and Kathy Black prior to starting their sale. When arriving at the gallery, it's easy to tell you're in the right place — black and white SUVs are parked in front.



The only piece of Russian enamel in the sale was this attractive cigarette case with Russian hallmarks and an inscribed date of 1910. It reached \$1,800



A large circa 1890 religious-themed stained glass window with side panels sold for \$3,660.



The salesroom was full for both the first and second sessions of the sale. Under the clock are some of the staff working the computers and phones during the sale.





Two Silver Age comics, Avengers #4 and Captain America Lives Again, together sold for \$960. Did you know that Captain America was once a 98-pound weakling?



There was only one motorcycle in the sale, a bright red Honda CB400, originally purchased in 2005. It had only about 1,700 original miles and sold for \$1,380. It had been stored properly and was in running condition.



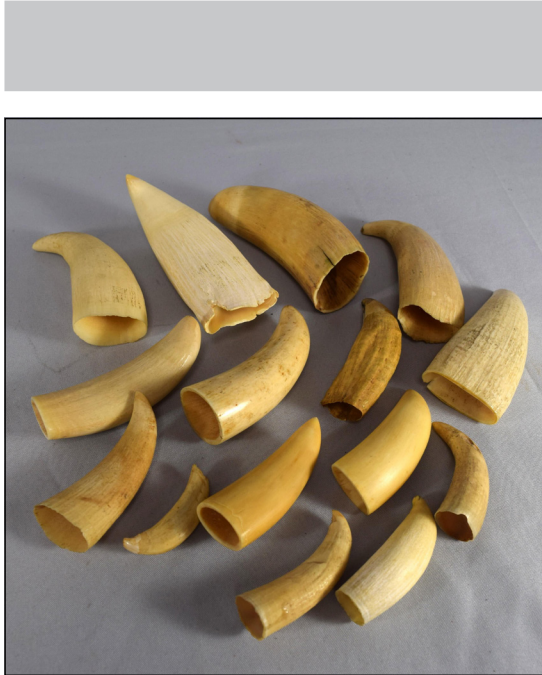
There were close to 60 lots of comic books, organized alphabetically. The highest priced lot of the selection was realized by a group of 12 that included three Strange Adventures and other books beginning with the letter S. The lot sold for \$1,380. White's does not grade comic books, so prospective bidders had to personally examine the material.



Prior to the sale, several prospective bidders examine coins and other smalls with the assistance of White's staff.



An unframed oil by Edward Percy Moran depicting a mother and child on rocky shore with a choppy sea in the background realized \$1,140.



The several lots of scrimshaw and whale's teeth included this lot of 15 whale's teeth, which sold for \$570.



Of the several military lots, the most popular with bidders was an enlisted man's Civil War light artilleryman's shell jacket that reached \$1,500.

## White's Auction



It was not marked, but judging by its price, bidders identified it as a Hingham miniature bucket. The unpainted firkin, slightly under 2½ inches tall, sold for \$540.



Marble collectors had plenty from which to choose as there were numerous lots. At \$390, a group of 14 onion skins was the most popular with bidders.

lots, arranged alphabetically. For example, a group of 13 issues with autographs of stars, including Farrah Fawcett, Ed Asner, Lena Horne, Tom and Dick Smothers, Olympia Dukakis and others sold for \$72. There were several lots and it seemed like an inexpensive way to start, or add to, an autograph collection. Other lots included signatures of Helen Hunt, Mathew Broderick, Derek Jacobi, Robert Wagner, Carol Burnett, etc.

A large collection of ungraded comic books was also organized alphabetically and included numerous Gold, Silver and Bronze Age titles. Two Silver Age comics, Avengers #4 and Captain America Lives Again, together sold for \$960. Topping the comic book lots was a group

of 12 that included three Strange Adventures and other books beginning with the letter S. Presumably this lot included some desirable issues as it sold for the top price of the comic book lots, \$1,380. Several other lots sold for more than \$500, depending on condition and the popularity of the characters. Apparently, Archie is not high in the list of today's collectors, as a lot with 26 issues of Archie comics sold for \$10. Travis Landry later said that one lot included an early appearance of Wasp, a female member of the Avengers team who had a variety of powers including the ability to shrink to just a few centimeters and was able to fire "bioelectric energy blasts." The presale estimates on the comic book lots did not appear to have

much effect on bidders — some sold for far more and some for far less.

The sale included some works by prominent Indian artists. Bringing \$4,800 was an untitled bronze figure with a verdigris finish of a seated woman. It was signed by B. Probha, (1933-2001), a well-known female artist who also did oil paintings. At the start of her career, women artists and lower-class women in India were not well respected, but the main themes of Probha's oils were poor rural women and she was quoted as saying, "I have yet to see one happy woman." Her bronzes are uncommon, and this one sold for \$4,800. A large, colorful Indian painting on cloth, 69 by 47 inches, of a ceremonial scene depicting Radha and Krishna in a palace surrounded by devotees sold for \$870. Works by American artists included an unframed oil by Edward Percy

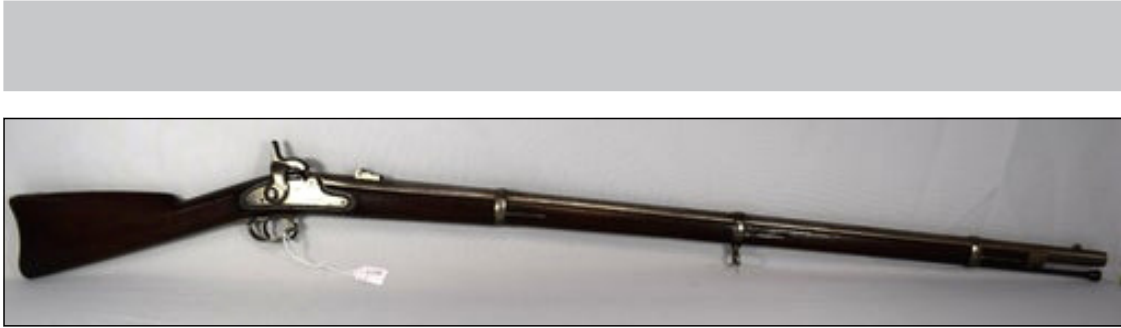


White's sales usually include a selection of coins and mint sets. A proof boxed set of 1987 Constitution coins with a silver dollar and a \$5 gold coin brought \$390. The set commemorated the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.



Posters included a large, circa 1932 Bugatti poster signed Gerold, which sold for \$450.





With 1864 Springfield proof marks on the barrel, a .58 caliber US percussion musket, model 1863 type 2, earned \$1,020.



A Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire silver Yatagan sword with Arabic inscriptions and a decorative handle with a butterfly design brought \$1,740. It was 31 inches long and included a heavily decorated scabbard.

Moran (1862-1935). It depicted a mother and child on a rocky shore with a choppy sea in the background and it realized \$1,140.

The auction included a wide variety of other material, including several lots of scrimshaw. One lot, with 15 vintage, unengraved teeth, reached \$570, while a scrimshawed whale stamp belonging to Rhode Island Captain

D.M. Hale brought \$780. A Russian enamel silver cigarette case with Russian hallmarks and an inscribed date of 1910 earned \$1,800. Of the several military lots, the most popular was an enlisted man's Civil War light artilleryman's shell jacket that reached \$1,500. A .58 caliber US percussion musket, model 1863 type 2, with a lock-plate stamped with an eagle and

Springfield 1864 proof marks on the barrel, earned \$1,020. A few days after the sale, the husband and wife team said, "We're looking forward to our vacation in Florida. We had a good sale and a good crowd for both parts of the sale. We weren't sure about the way we organized the sale, but everyone seemed happy. The Feininger sold within our estimate, the gold



Kevin Bruneau and Travis Landry, Bruneau & Co, Cranton, R.I., with the Lyonel Feininger watercolor that they purchased.

coins and mint sets always do well, and the military items did well." When asked about the large crowd in the salesroom, they said, "We've developed a strong base. Almost everything comes out of local estates and the buyers know that. We try to estimate conservatively and that way everyone can participate. They also know there are almost no reserves, so the

stuff is here to sell. We finished at more than \$140,000, so we're definitely pleased. We did seven or eight sales last year and expect to do about the same this year. But we're really looking forward to the time in Florida." Prices given include the buyer's premium as stated by the auction house. For information, 508-947-9281, 508-269-9275 or [www.whitesauctions.com](http://www.whitesauctions.com).

## Lotus International's 'Wonderful Winter Auction' Closes Feb. 23



Paul McCobb, midcentury desk, wood, 46 by 36 by 15½ inches.



Peter Hujar, "Gay Liberation," photographic print, 22 by 17 inches.



Charles Gruppe, "Birch Trees on the River," oil on canvas, 28 by 32 inches.

GUILFORD, CONN. — Lotus International Auctions is conducting the online-only "Wonderful Winter Auction." Bidding will be done through LiveAuctioneers, and the auction closes February 23. The 450 lots include oil paintings, watercolors, lithographs, etchings, sculptures, midcentury furniture, military swords, historic glassmaking tools and many other eye-catching items.

There are works by Saul Steinberg, Harry Hoffman, Jim Dine, Wolf Kahn, Paul McCobb, Arne Wahl, Max Kuehne, Ernest Oppler, Edmund Greacen, Charles Gruppe, Inuit sculptures and more. Political protest posters will cross the block; areas of interest include Black Panthers party posters by Emory Douglas, Attica Brothers, Cuba, gay liberation, Fidel Castro, International Woman's Day, Central America, Che Guevara, and the CIA, just to name a few.

Harry Hoffman paintings feature a wide variety of locations — Connecticut, Spain, British Guiana and the Galapagos.

A preview period will run Thursday, February 20, through Saturday, February 22.

Lotus international Auctions is at 2470 Boston Post Road. For information, [www.Lotusauctions.com](http://www.Lotusauctions.com) or 203-689-5062.



Harry Leslie Hoffman, "Winter River," oil on board, 14 by 16 inches.

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