

Sotheby's

Press release Paris

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Comic Strip

AUCTION ON SATURDAY 14 MAY AT SOTHEBY'S PARIS



Robert Crumb – Philippe Druillet – André Franquin – Edgar P. Jacobs – Jim Lee Manara – Gir-Moebius – Winsor McCay – Jean-Claude Mézières – Chris Ware

Paris, April 2016 – After the success of the Jean-Arnold Schoofs collection in October 2015*, **Sotheby's is pleased to announce its next Comic Book Art sale on 14 May** featuring Franquin, Uderzo, Herriman, McCay, Jacobs and Manara, to name just a few. This catalogue of almost 260 lots of original drawings and plates, brings together the greatest European and American authors in this field. Amateurs will have the opportunity to admire the artistic talent of Hugo Pratt, discover the suspense of Jacobs and Jim Lee, enjoy the humour of André Franquin, or lose themselves in the dreamlike vignettes of Little Nemo.

*24 October 2015, €2.7 million. A world record for an original double-page spread by Hergé for €1.6 million

EUROPEAN PLATES

André Franquin will be the star of this selection decated to European artists.



ANDRÉ FRANQUIN

GASTON LAGAFFE, LAGAFFE NOUS GATE

Plate, gag no. 589 – volume no. 8 – 1970

(Dupuis - 1970)

36.5 x 45.5 cm

Indian ink on paper

€100,000 – 110,000

This *Gaston Lagaffe* plate prefigures *Les Idées Noires*, André Franquin's famous comic book. However, we are only in 1969, a successful period for the artist. Two of his favourite characters are in the spotlight: Gaston and Jules-de-chez-Smith-en-face. Franquin's humour can be seen from the very first panel, then intensifies in the following frames until the firing of the rocket, reaching a climax with the sheepish retreat of the two slouched figures. Once again, Franquin offers an unbeatable example of the workings of humour.

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ANDRÉ FRANQUIN

SAINT NICOLAS AU BON MARCHÉ, LABORATOIRE DE CHAMPIGNAC AVEC MARSUPILAMIS

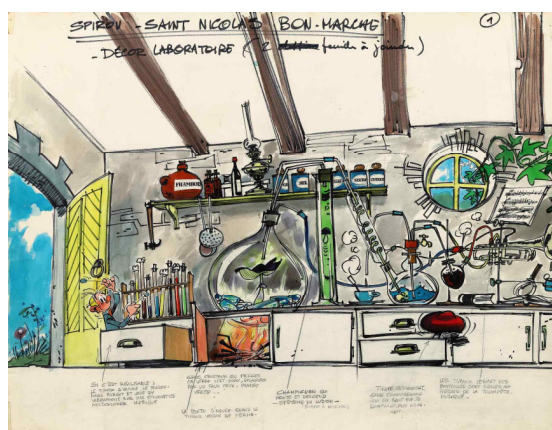
Ink on paper

Illustration – 1967-68

130 x 56 cm (x2)

€35,000 – 45,000

These numbered drawings, substantially annotated by the author, form a unique set in more than one respect. Unknown to collectors, they are just as remarkable in terms of graphic design. Created in the late sixties for Saint Nicolas du Bon Marché in Brussels, this interior design project, which would never come to fruition due to a lack of funds, allows us to get the measure of Franquin's genius. If you look closely at the drawing of the laboratory, you can discern his sense of detail and creativity.



EDGAR P. JACOBS

BLAKE & MORTIMER, LE PIÈGE DIABOLIQUE

Indian ink on paper

Plate 10 – volume 8 – 1962

(Lombard – 1962)

41 x 55 cm

€85,000 – 105,000

This exceptional original plate presents magnificent crayon sketches and various notes by Jacobs on the reverse side. On the front, the plate is of stunning quality, entirely produced by the author and signed by his hand. His art takes this scene in *Le Piège diabolique* to a higher level. Here, Mortimer eclipses his sidekick Blake, becoming the protagonist of the action. Propelled into Prehistory, the professor observes a fight between dinosaurs before wrestling with a horde of pterodactyls. Thirty years before the famous film *Jurassic Park*, readers were fascinated by

the immense size of creation's first animals. This effect is reinforced by a skilful page layout and brilliant inking. The perfectly framed final panel, in which the birds make a dive-bomb attack, is superb.

MOEBIUS

INCAL, L'INCAL NOIR

Mixed technique on paper

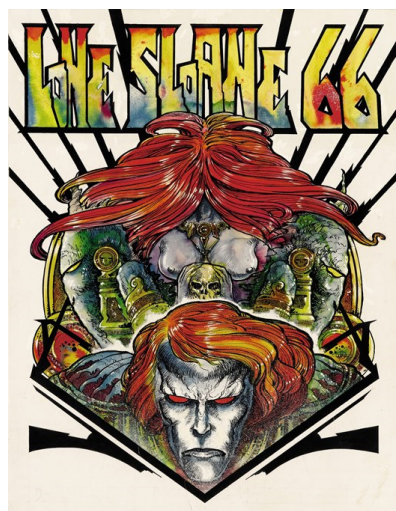
Cover - Volume 1 – 1981

(Les Humanoïdes Associés – 1981)

25.5 x 33 cm

€50,000 – 60,000

Moebius a.k.a. Gir or Jean Giraud was one of the most ingenious cartoonists in Franco-Belgian comic art. In addition to his comic book *Blueberry* in which he developed a classic aesthetic, he marked the history of what the French call the "Ninth Art" with the director Jodorowsky. To console himself over the film *Dune*, which he could not see through to completion, Jodorowsky created *L'Incal* and entrusted the project to his set designer: Moebius. The cartoonist took it beyond a mere science fiction account to make it an unforgettable work, his second greatest success. This first cover, the perfect model of purity and grace, would also become the cover for the complete works.



PHILIPPE DRUILLET

LONE SLOANE, LE MYSTÈRE DES ABÎMES

Mixed technique on paper

Cover – volume 1 – 1977

(Humanoïdes Associés – 1977)

68 x 53 cm

€10,000 – 12,000

This large-size cover belongs to a legendary comic book, *Lone Sloane 66*, published in 1977. Published in colour eleven years earlier by Losfeld, a new black and white version was published by Philippe Druillet. The cartoonist knew more than anyone how to reinvent the conventions of comic art. In this composition, he makes brilliant use of depth and revisits his favourite themes, namely death, violence and war.

JEAN-CLAUDE MÉZIÈRES

VALÉRIAN ET LAURELINE

Mixed technique on paper

Cover – complete works volume 6 – 2012

(Dargaud – 2012)

48 x 40 cm

€25,000 – 30,000

In 2012, Jean-Claude Mézières returned to his favourite characters for the cover of a complete works. The charming Laureline is given pride of place on this large-size cover. At her side, we find space-time agent Valérian, along with the famous Shingouz spies, Transmutateur Grognon de Bluxte and Schniarfeur. Mézières' art is not limited to his incredible array of animals. The



use of colour and the textured effects, along with the treatment of the vessel, make this cover a key piece of comic book art.



MILO MANARA

EVE A LA POMME

Indian ink and watercolour

Cover – 1985 – (Glamour Book-Milo Manara 2)

48 x 37 cm

€14,000 – 16,000

In the eighties, Milo Manara designed several covers for the magazine *Glamour*, an absolute benchmark in the realm of erotic comics, such as these two examples designed for the magazine’s large-size compilations. Long before the Italian illustrator endlessly reproduced

the poses and fantasies that haunt his work, these covers already express the quintessence of his art. Through these two pieces, which display breathtaking technical skill, he evokes rather than depicts, lingering on the geometry of generous curves, playing with colour. Eve with the apple drifting in green water exudes a stirring sensuality, while the young courtesan languishing in a lace decor offers an invitation to a mischievous dalliance. If suggestion is an art, Manara is one of its finest representatives.

AMERICAN PLATES



CHRIS WARE

THE NEW YORKER

Blue pencil, Indian ink on paper (preparatory drawing attached to the back)

Cover – 15 February 2010

(The New Yorker, 15 and 22 February 2010 together)

74 x 42 cm

€15,000 – 18,000

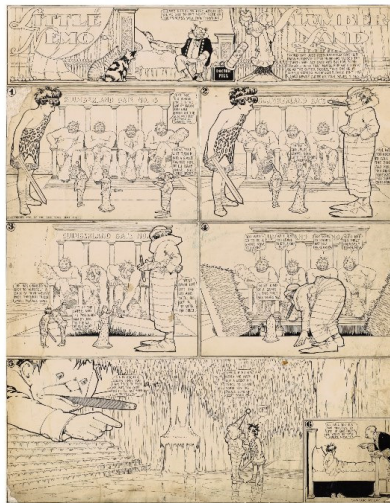
This *New Yorker* cover, published for the magazine’s 85th anniversary, pays tribute to the very first cover by Irvin Rea (1925), the famous magazine’s first illustrator. We saw the dandy “Eustace Tilley” observing a butterfly through his monocle, a metaphor for the curious person examining the most minuscule beauty of the world with interest. Tradition had it that each anniversary edition of the

publication would adopt this theme. A practised typographer, Chris Ware designed *The New Yorker’s* typography himself, following in the footsteps of Irvin Rea. His drawing entitled “Natural Selection” shows the pioneer of The New Yorker’s illustrators carefully choosing the animal that Eustace Tilley will hold between his fingers: a butterfly. All of Chris Ware’s grace and intelligence are condensed into this one drawing.

JIM LEE
BATMAN

Indian ink
28 x 43 cm
€15,000 – 18,000

This original Indian ink drawing by Jim Lee is a variant of the cover of issue 27 of *Batman Detective Comics*. The scene is plunged into a twilight atmosphere; the hero's dark silhouette stands out against a turbulent backdrop, accentuated by the movement of the heavy diagonal rain, and thick black smoke in the background. This composition exudes a cinematic tension.



WINSOR MCCAY
LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND

Indian ink on paper
Sunday page – 1906
71 x 55 cm
€48,000 – 50,000

Drawn by Winsor McCay in 1906, this plate from *Little Nemo in Slumberland* had been sleeping in a private collection for forty years. McCay continually plays with effects of scale, combining oversized figures and microscopic characters. The pediment of the antique door in the background bears the inscription "Slumberland Gate 4". At the bottom of the page, a panoramic panel deploys magnificent typography. The illustrator experiments with different densities of ink and brings to life

clearly defined characters that stand out against a hazy background bordering on the dreamlike.

CRUMB
CENTERFOLD MANIFESTO THE OLD ORDER, THE NEW ORDER

Indian ink
1973
33 x 51 cm
€45,000 – 55,000

This major work by Robert Crumb featured in the exhibition devoted to him by Paris' Modern Art Museum in 2012. Beautifully dimensioned, it brings together several key American figures around the "Pope" of underground comic art, including Griffith, Skeeter Spiegelman, Schenkman, Justin Green, Willy Murphy and Jay Kinney. This *Centerfold Manifesto* makes the connection – not without a touch of humour – between traditional comic strips and a more modern vision of the Ninth Art. The large illustration that takes up the lower half of the page is swarming with characters, indications and comic book covers whose details are sure to captivate the viewer.



Auction on Saturday 14 May at 2.30 pm
Exhibition from Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 May 2016

Images are available on request