

Press release Paris

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The collection of Count & Countess de Ribes Achieves nearly €23 million at Sotheby's in Paris

White-glove sale for the "Treasures" of the Collection

Five world records

**Antonio Susini | Marguerite Gérard | Nicolas-Bernard Lépicié | Johann Christian Neuber |
A Delft earthenware piece**

Five pre-emptions by French institutions

**Château de Versailles | Musée du Louvre | Bibliothèque Mazarine |
Bibliothèque Nationale de France**



The Library of Counts de Ribes achieved €4.4 million

Mario Tavella, CEO of Sotheby's France and president of Sotheby's Europe: "A white-glove sale, five world records and five pre-emptions by the Musées de France all make this a red-letter event for the art market, and pay a glowing tribute to this extraordinary collection."

For two days, Sotheby's France was the scene of an extraordinary event in the art market, with the sale of works from the collection of the Comte and Comtesse de Ribes, posting a total of €22.8 million. The first part, dedicated to the "treasures" of the collection, opened this remarkable sale with remarkable results: a total of €18.4 million, 100% of lots sold, five world records and three pre-emptions by the Musées de France. This session was followed by one dedicated to books and manuscripts collected by the Counts de Ribes, which made €4.4 million in all and included two pre-emptions. Part of the sale's proceeds will benefit philanthropic and cultural organisations.

As soon as it was officially announced, this sale of a selection of historical works aroused enormous interest in collectors and the public alike. Over 2,000 visitors came to discover this exceptional collection, unveiled to the world for the first time by Sotheby's. In an electric atmosphere, every lot inspired a keen battle between the saleroom, phones and the Internet, whipping up the appetites of collectors from 33 countries and leading French museums including Versailles and the Louvre.

FIVE RECORD PRICES FOR ANTONIO SUSINI, MARGUERITE GÉRARD, NICOLAS-BERNARD LÉPICIÉ, JOHANN CHRISTIAN NEUBER AND A DELFT EARTHENWARE PIECE

The highest price of both sales went to a *Rape of a Sabine* attributed to **Antonio Susini** (1558-1624), model by **Giambologna** (1529-1608), Florence, Italy, c. 1590-1610, which at **€4,493,200** achieved a **world record for the artist** (lot 14). Engraved under number 335 in the Crown Bronzes inventory, this magnificently chased casting will now be joining the **Château de Versailles collections**.

It was kept secretly in this private collection for over two centuries before its rediscovery added to the *corpus* of the four initial castings, attributed to Antonio Susini and executed during Giambologna's lifetime.

Another **world record** for the artist was obtained at **€1,812,500** for **Johann Christian Neuber** with a **gold snuffbox set with hardstones made in c. 1770 in Dresden**, which the Count de Ribes bought in 1947 at the sale of the collection of Alexander Baring, fourth Baron Ashburton (lot 59).

A **world record** was also achieved for **Marguerite Gérard** with *L'Elève intéressante*, pre-empted at **€1,032,500** by the **Musée du Louvre** (lot 18). This accomplished composition by the young artist revealed a twofold attribution, as her brother-in-law and teacher, Fragonard, painted the white cat teasing the dog asleep on a stool.

Nicolas-Bernard Lépicier's *Le chien obéissant* of 1772, a masterpiece of true feeling, enchanted collectors, who pushed the bidding all the way up to **€287,500** – a **world record for the artist** (lot 19).

Lastly, a pair of monumental **late 17th century Delft earthenware pyramids**, which joined the Ribes collection at the end of the 19th century, went to a museum, obtaining the **world record for a piece of Dutch-Delft earthenware at €1,032,500** (lot 24).

OTHER REMARKABLE PRICES

The second bronze from the collection, **Fortune**, attributed to **Antonio Susini** (1558-1624), model by **Giambologna** (1529-1608), Florence, c. 1580-1600, and engraved under number 236 in the Crown Bronzes, landed **€1,812,500** (lot 59). Never shown in public, this had been kept in the Artigues collection since the early 19th century and was passed down through the family to the Count and Countess de Ribes.

A **Louis XVI musical automaton clock** featuring a woman in a turban, whose eyes indicate the hours and minutes, was carried off for **€1,452,500** (lot 3). This masterpiece of mechanical ingenuity by **Jean-Baptiste André Furet and François-Louis Godon** was one of the New Year's gifts presented to the royal family on 1 January 1792.

The highest price for a painting went to *Junon demandant à Vénus de lui prêter sa ceinture magique*, commissioned from **Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun** in 1781 by Louis XVI's brother, Charles Philippe de France, Comte d'Artois, for the Palais du Grand-Prieur within the Palais du Temple. This painting had been thought lost since 1803, so was a real discovery, firing bids all the way up to **€1,452,500** (lot 3).

Collectors certainly appreciated the rarity of two paintings, *Le matin* and *Le soir*, executed by **Hubert Robert** between 1770 and 1780, which landed **€1,332,500** (lot 31). They had not been seen on the market since their last appearance at auction in 1961.

SUCCESS FOR THE LIBRARY OF THE COUNTS DE RIBES

After the strong results achieved by the first part devoted to the Treasures, the ones posted for the outstanding library of the Counts de Ribes paid tribute to their taste, culture and refinement. As well-informed bibliophiles, they brilliantly assembled exquisite books from the 16th and 21st centuries, ranging from Villon to Louise Bourgeois.

The jewels of the collection included a first edition of Montaigne's *Essais*, published in Bordeaux in 1580, still in its original vellum binding. This landed the highest price at **€420,500** (lot 118).

Two remarkable atlases, one by **Visscher**, the other by **Braun & Hogenberg**, soared up to **€384,500** (lot 136) and **€225,000** (lot 122).

With a copy of *Promenades dans Rome*, copiously annotated by **Stendhal** with a view to a corrected edition, the 19th century inspired bidding up to **€137,500** (lot 186).

Among the 20th century authors, **Marcel Proust** lived up to his promises: one of 50 deluxe editions of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* was knocked down for **€131.250** (lot 244), and one of 12 copies on Holland paper fetched **€93,750** (lot 236).

18th century morocco bindings with coats of arms, all in perfect condition, held great appeal for bibliophiles, as witness the results obtained for **La Fontaine's Fables** with illustrations by **Oudry** and a

red morocco binding with gold blocking by **Douceur**, knocked down for **€102,500** (lot 156), and the impressive "Livre de Fêtes" celebrating the marriage of the Dauphin, bound by **Padeloup** for Louis X's daughter, Madame Victoire, and especially illuminated for her, went for **€118.750** (lot 155).

Keen to move into contemporary bibliophilia, Edouard de Ribes had various illustrated books of his time bound by outstanding binders. Worth mentioning are **Louise Bourgeois'** *Ode à ma mère*, which garnered **€82,500** (lot 293), and **Roy Lichtenstein's** *Nouvelle chute de l'Amérique*, which inspired a tussle up to **€50,000** (lot 292), both bound by Monique Mathieu. Meanwhile *Parler seul*, illustrated by **Miro** and bound by **Brother Edgard Claes**, fetched €24,000 (lot 280).

FIVE PREEMPTIONS

CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES

Lot 14

Attributed to Antonio Susini (1558-1624), the model by Giambologna (1529-1608), Italian, Florence, circa 1590-1610

RAPE OF A SABINE

bronze, brown patina ; engraved on the terrace : N° 335

€4,493,200€ - World auction record for the artist

Lot 12

A carved giltwood firescreen, Louis XVI, by Jean-Baptiste Sené

the sculpture by Alexandre Régnier, under the direction of Jean Hauré, delivered in 1787 for King Louis XVI at the Château de Saint-Cloud

€137,500

MUSEE DU LOUVRE

Lot 18

Marguerite Gérard & Jean-Honoré Fragonard

The interesting student

Oil on canvas

€1,032,500 – World auction record for the artist

BIBLIOTHEQUE MAZARINE

Lot 131

Nicolas Jarry

Petit office de la Vierge Marie. écrit par Nicolas Jarry, 1652

€45,000

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

Lot 295

JAMES GUITET

Trouver clair, trouver obscur. Textes occitans traduits. Paris, M.M.ÉD., 1999.

One of the 15 first copies

Highlighted by the painter and bound by Monique Mathieu.

€4,000

About Sotheby's

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