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## On the Block: New York City Stuff

Marquee items in Sotheby's auction include Yankee Stadium sign and a 9-foot bronze statue of Lady Liberty



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By **BRENDA CRONIN**

March 27, 2015 4:01 p.m. ET

Lady Liberty goes on the block next week. So do quirky slices of Yankees and Mets history, which are among the marquee offerings at a Wednesday auction of New York City art and memorabilia.

Among the 91 items up for bid at Sotheby's will be a painting by Frank Sinatra, a study for the mural in Grand Central Terminal's Oyster Bar and a portrait of John Lennon on the roof of the Dakota. The auction house estimates the sale will bring in between \$2.3 million and \$3.7 million.

The auction's big-ticket lot is a bronze Statue of Liberty cast from a model used by France's Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi. At 1,000 pounds and almost 9½ feet high, this Lady Liberty is a sylphlike edition of her monumental copper cousin in New York Harbor. Sotheby's estimates the statue, one of 12 cast from a model in the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris, will fetch between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million.

The statue appears in other, less pricey offerings as well. A signed, numbered screen print of Leroy Neiman's "Lady Liberty" is estimated to fetch \$1,000 to \$1,500, while a Marcel Boucher "Torch in Hand Statue of Liberty Brooch," with a "faux pink topaz" flame, has a \$500 to \$700 estimate.

More than half the items are expected to attract bids of \$10,000 or less. "We wanted to make it accessible," said Maria Kelly, a senior vice president at Sotheby's. "There are pieces at all price points."

The city-focused auction is a first for Sotheby's in New York, Ms. Kelly said. It was inspired by a "Made in Britain" sale begun by Sotheby's in London last year. The stateside version will feature items—art, artifacts, jewelry and other works from a range of eras—that are "part of New York history or tell a story about New York," Ms. Kelly said.

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galleries through Wednesday, cut a wide swath. They range from the lease for Andy Warhol's first studio on East 87th Street to a bronze statue of Mercury that once graced a Fifth Avenue traffic light to an untitled abstract work by Frank Sinatra, which the crooner hand-delivered to its current owner, Ms. Kelly said.

Many items, such as a diamond-spangled bracelet with a design inspired by the Chrysler Building (estimate: \$30,000 to \$50,000), capture Gotham's more rarefied echelons. Sotheby's specialists included jewelry pieces designed by Harry Winston, Bulgari and others that they imagined "a New York lady would have in her jewelry box," Ms. Kelly said.

Some objects, such as a gleaming Colonial-era punch bowl and an Art Deco cigar box, reflect the city's history as a major silver-producing center, said Kenneth T. Jackson, a Columbia professor and editor in chief of the "Encyclopedia of New York City."

Other items, such as a first edition of street-photographer Weegee's 1945 book, "Naked City," reveal the city's grittier depths. Also included: a lightly stained copy of the "standard operating procedures for waitresses and busboys" at Max's Kansas City, a restaurant and club that had its heyday in the '60s and '70s. ("If a customer asks you, you know nothing about whether there is dancing, or if we have a discothèque.")

After word of the New York auction got around, Ms. Kelly found herself on the telephone with Reggie Jackson. The Baseball Hall of Famer was considering parting with the enormous sign that lighted up the rim of Yankee Stadium from 1976 to 2008.

"I think Reggie felt it was time for somebody else to enjoy" the sign, Ms. Kelly said. It consists of 13 blue letters spelling out "Yankee Stadium," each 10 feet tall and weighing 400 pounds.

For Mets loyalists, the auction includes a bullpen cart the team used to tool around Shea Stadium for several decades, starting in the late '60s. The vehicle still runs, Ms. Kelly said.

Many images in the sale capture aspects of a vanished New York, such as typewriter-rental companies along Broadway and El trains along Second and Third Avenue. There are photographic prints from the 1930s by legendary New York chronicler Berenice Abbott and, more recently, from Robert Longo's energetic "Men in the Cities" series.

These and other images show how the city "has merit as a subject of art," said Mitchell L. Moss, a professor of urban policy and planning at New York University. "What's striking is how much of the everyday life of New York attracts artists: The streets, the sidewalks, the buildings, the day-to-day experience that most people associate with New York."

Bidders will get a crack at prints of two photographs by Brian Hamill, including a portrait of John Lennon, taken after the ex-Beatle made the photographer a grilled-cheese sandwich.

The second, a shot of a couple on a movie set by the 59th Street Bridge, was taken more than 35 years ago with a Nikon camera at 3:45 in the morning. The couple? Diane Keaton and Woody Allen.

“I said to Woody right after I shot it, ‘That was a beautiful tableau. That could be a poster,’” Mr. Hamill recalled. His black-and-white valentine to the city became the advertisement for Mr. Allen’s movie, “Manhattan.”

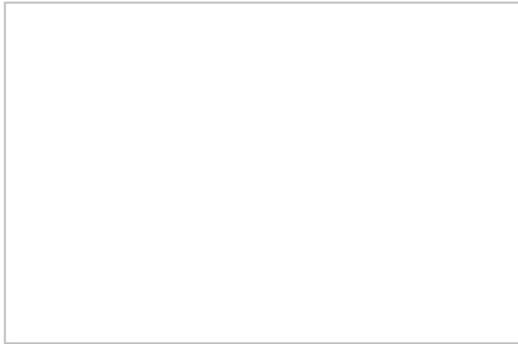
Mr. Hamill isn’t fussy about which bidders end up with his prints. “Whoever comes up with the most bread,” should have them, he said.

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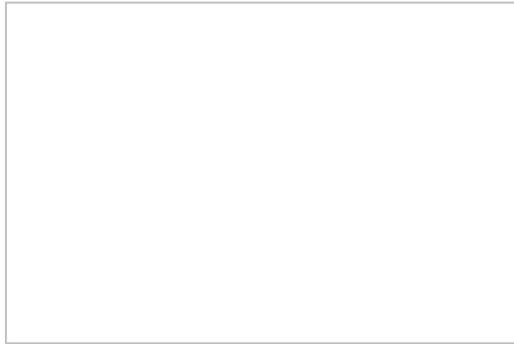
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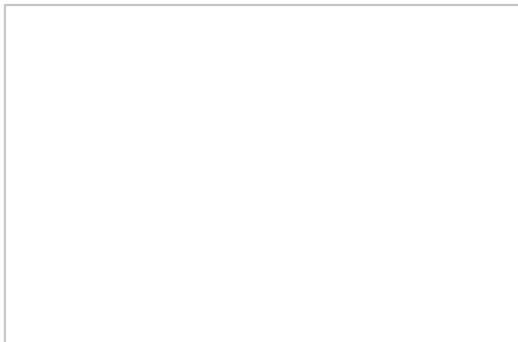
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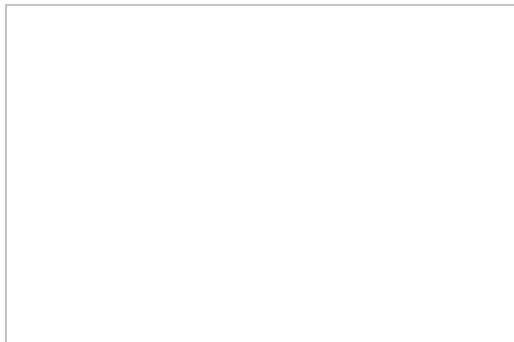
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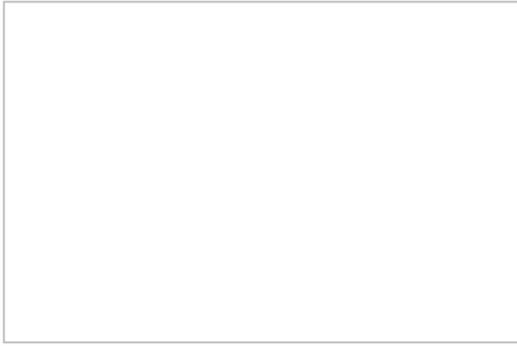
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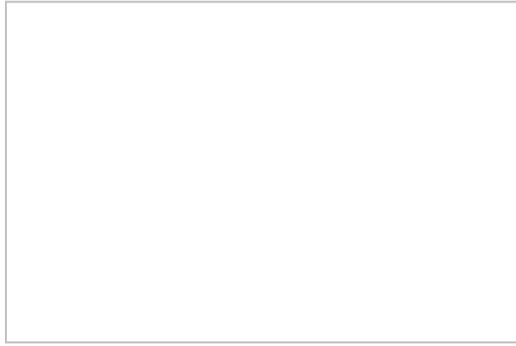
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