

December 17, 2003

PLAYBOY AT 50: SELECTIONS FROM THE ARCHIVES TOTALS \$2.75 MILLION AT CHRISTIE'S

Tom Wesselmann's Study for the Great American Nude, #87, 1966, soared above its pre-sale estimate of \$40,000–60,000 to fetch \$107,550. Works by LeRoy Neiman and Alberto Vargas – two artists whose works are instantly identifiable with Playboy magazine – also attracted highly competitive bidding and excellent prices. Neiman's Le Mans, 1969, sold for \$107,550, establishing a new world auction record for the artist. Vargas' Vargas Girl – "Trick or treat?" 1967, fetched \$71,700, also a record for any Vargas work sold at auction.

The sale included original manuscripts by such important 20th-century literary figures as Jack Kerouac, Ian Fleming, and Ray Bradbury. The top seller among them was Kerouac's typed manuscript of Before the Road, a "prequel" to the legendary On the Road, which sold for \$71,700.

The sustained popularity of Playboy cartoons demonstrate the importance that humor has always played in the magazine. Today's sale included a wide range of some of the finest examples ever to appear in Playboy, including Shel Silverstein's 1968 cartoon Silverstein Among the Hippies, which sold for \$65,725.

Memorable photographs of such 20th century icons as Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot, Madonna, Bo Derek, and Cindy Crawford were among the sale's popular offerings. The magazine's very first centerfold, a 1953 color photograph of Marilyn Monroe by Tom Kelley that appeared in the inaugural issue of Playboy magazine, sold for \$17,925. An image from nearly 30 years later, the iconic photo of Bo Derek, taken by her husband John Derek for the cover of the March 1980 issue, fetched \$11,950. Images by legendary fashion photographers Helmut Newton and Herb Ritts also sold exceptionally well, with two of Ritts' photographs of Elle Macpherson from 1994 fetching \$11,352 each.

The final lot of the sale was arguably the most widely coveted: the 1988 Mercedes Benz 560 SEL stretch limousine, which was purchased new by Playboy Enterprises Inc. and then converted by Allen Coachworks/Coachworld Limited of Inglewood, CA in 1989 to a full stretch limousine for Hugh Hefner. The purchase of the Mercedes entitles the buyer to an exclusive tour of the Playboy Mansion and two tickets to the invitation-only New Year's Eve party at the Playboy Mansion on December 31. The final selling price was \$77,675.

"Collectors from around the world embraced works from every category in today's sale, demonstrating the widespread appreciation of Playboy's legacy," said Andrea Fiuczynski, President of Christie's Los Angeles and the head of the sale.

"We are thrilled with the success of the sale and our partnership with Christie's," said Christie Hefner, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Playboy Enterprises, Inc. "Today's results demonstrate the continuing commitment of Playboy to its fans and speaks to the extraordinary value in the company's art collection and archives."

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*Images available on request
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