

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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MAGNIFICENT TIFFANY LAMPS FROM THE COLLECTION OF SAN FRANCISCO ICONOCLAST, “HENRY AFRICA,” ON SALE AT CHRISTIE’S, JUNE 14

SUPERB EXAMPLES OF DAFFODIL, WISTERIA AND LABURNUM TIFFANY
LAMPS INTERSPERSED WITH VINTAGE MOTORCYCLES SET ECLECTIC
AMBIENCE AT EDDIE RICKENBACKER’S BAR



Tiffany *Wisteria* lamp
estimate: \$500,000-700,000



The bar at *Eddie Rickenbacker's*



Tiffany *Laburnum* lamp
estimate: \$400,000-600,000

New York – On Thursday, June 14, Christie’s is pleased to offer *A San Francisco Iconoclast: Henry Africa’s Magnificent Tiffany Collection*, comprising seven beautifully crafted leaded glass lamps valued at \$2 million. Originator of the “fern bar” concept, Norman Jay Hobday opened the bar *Henry Africa’s* at the corners of Polk and Broadway, (later moved to Van Ness and Vallejo) in San Francisco. The décor of a “fern bar” was defined by its hanging fern planters, warm lighting and comfortable antique furnishings which transformed the bar scene into a safe place to socialize for the growing ranks of young urban professionals at the dawn of the 1970s. He officially took the name of the bar as his own and over the next five decades, opened several equally eclectic dining and drinking establishments, including *Eddie Rickenbacker’s*, which opened in 1987 in San Francisco’s financial district. Africa decorated Rickenbacker’s with several of his beloved collections: vintage motorcycles, model trains, Venetian glass chandeliers and superb Tiffany lamps.

Josh Holdeman, International Director, 20th Century Art, said: *“It is an honor for Christie’s to offer the magnificent Tiffany lamps comprising this collection. A true connoisseur, Henry Africa selected the best individual examples of each lamp. Situated behind the bar among martini glasses and underneath hanging motorcycles at “Eddie Rickenbacker’s,” the world’s first “fern bar,” where the “lemon drop” was invented, these lamps ring true as an integral part of pure San Franciscan lore.”*

Eddie Rickenbacker’s epitomized the spirit of a city known for its quirky characters and strident individualism. His collection of Tiffany lamps was stationed behind the bar, lined up among the tumblers and martini glasses, vintage motorcycles hung from the ceiling, interspersed with Venetian glass chandeliers and model trains circling the perimeter from above.

The colorful floral lamps, including superb examples of the “Wisteria” (estimate: 500,000-700,000) and “Laburnum” (estimate: \$400,000-600,000) models with their domed forms and intense hues, were a startling but intriguing contrast with the rest of the décor at Rickenbacker’s. An inveterate collector, starting his Tiffany collection with the “Daffodil” (estimate: \$50,000-70,000), Africa thoughtfully acquired each subsequent lamp, taking great joy in the hunt as well as in the fantastical creation of *Eddie Rickenbacker’s*.

Henry Africa (Norman Hobday)

Norman Hobday, aka “Henry Africa,” was a fixture in the San Francisco saloon scene for 50 years. Credited with inventing the Fern Bar concept in 1970 with Henry Africa’s Bar at Polk at Broadway, later moved to Van Ness at Vallejo, he also is known as the inventor of the “Lemon Drop” cocktail. Other bars he owned included the Dartmouth Social Club, Admiral Duncan, Flo Nightingale’s, and The Mouse House.

Auction: *A San Francisco Iconoclast: Henry Africa’s Magnificent Tiffany Collection* June 14, 2012

Viewing: Christie’s Rockefeller Galleries June 9-13, 2012

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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