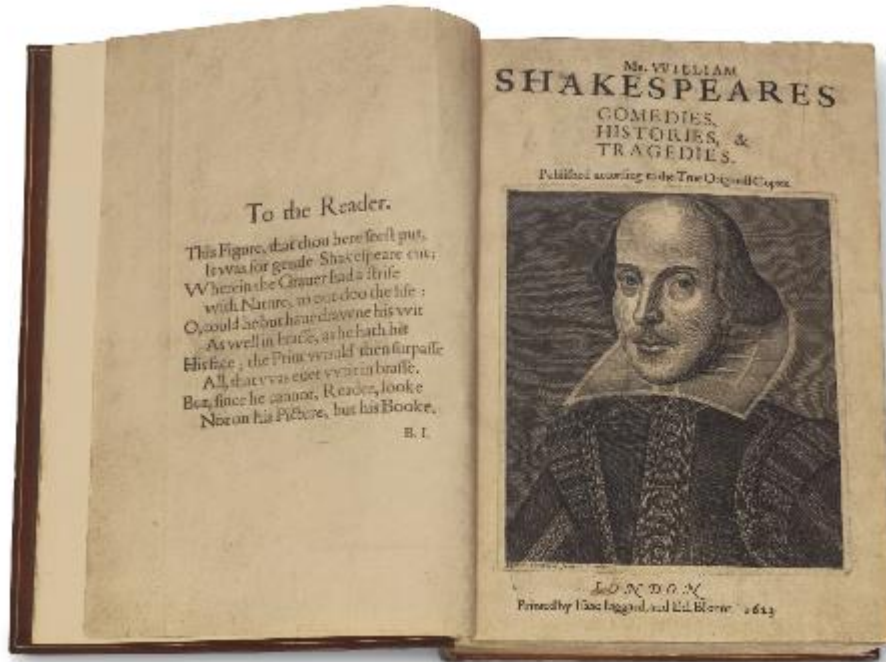


# CHRISTIE'S

MEDIA ALERT | NEW YORK | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 14 OCTOBER 2020

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST FOLIO SELLS FOR \$9,978,000 AND SETS WORLD AUCTION RECORD FOR ANY WORK OF LITERATURE AT CHRISTIE'S



William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

*Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies.*

*Published According to the True Originall Copies.*

London: Printed by Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623.

Estimate: \$4,000,000-6,000,000

Price Realized: \$9,978,000

WORLD AUCTION RECORD FOR ANY WORK OF LITERATURE

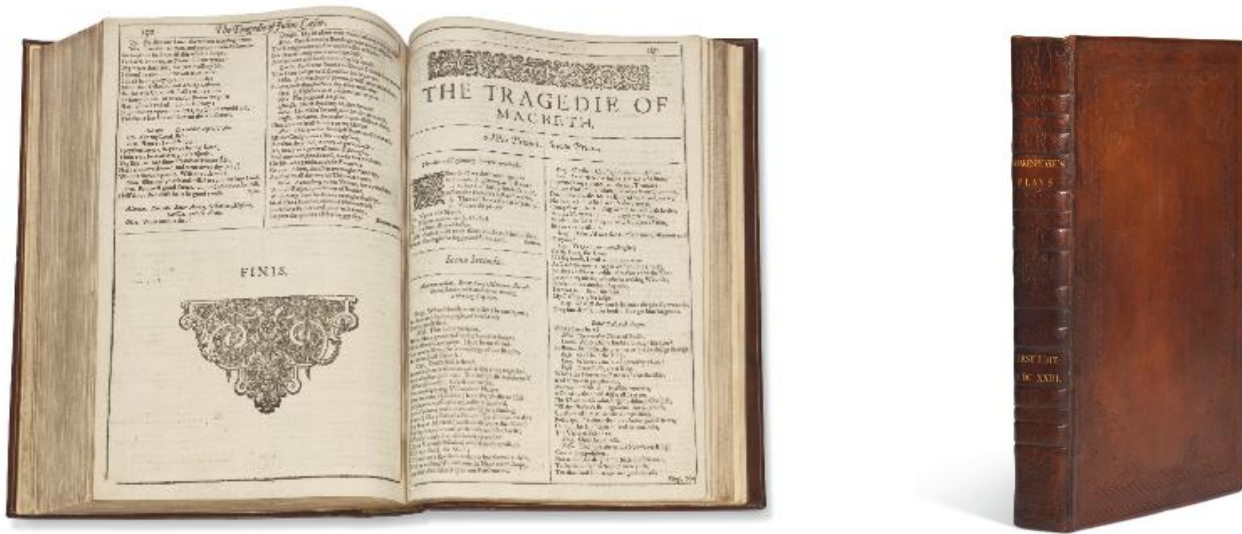
**New York** – William Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, often referred to as the "First Folio," sold for \$9,978,000 and established a new world auction record for any work of literature. The First Folio was included in 'The Exceptional Sale' at Christie's New York on 14 October 2020 and exceeded its estimate of \$4,000,000-6,000,000. The First Folio, bringing together for the first time the collected plays of Shakespeare, ranks as the greatest work of the English language and, indeed, of world literature. Already celebrated on its first publication, it has remained a highly sought-after masterpiece over four centuries. Only six complete copies are known in private hands.

**Margaret Ford, International Head of Group, Books & Manuscripts, London** comments, "Christie's is delighted to have established a new world auction record not only for a work by William Shakespeare, but for any work of literature. It is befitting that William Shakespeare's First Folio, printed in 1623, holds this remarkable record, given its tremendous significance and influence around the globe."

After six minutes of bidding between two other phone bidders, the First Folio was bought via phone bid by **Stephan Loewentheil**, who comments, "William Shakespeare is incomparably the greatest writer in the English language and one of most important international cultural influencers in all history. The first Folio is the most important collection of

plays ever published and revered throughout the world. It is an honor to purchase one of only a handful of complete copies of this epochal volume. It will ultimately serve as a centerpiece of a great collection of intellectual achievements of man. We at the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Rare Book and Photograph Shop are pleased you have worked through Christie's to obtain this wonderful treasure."

The book was published in 1623 by Shakespeare's friends and fellow actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, who collaborated after the writer's death to compile this authoritative edition of his work. The First Folio contains thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays, including eighteen that may have otherwise been lost forever — among the rescued works are *Macbeth*, *The Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Julius Caesar*. Heminge and Condell also shaped the way the world would read Shakespeare's plays by organizing them for the first time into the categories of comedies, tragedies, and histories. The book's large size helped elevate the cultural standing of Shakespeare and drama generally, as it assumed an imposing folio format typically reserved at the time for Bibles, theology, and law books.



Note to editors:

- The previous auction record for a Shakespeare First Folio was \$6,166,000, set by Christie's on October 8, 2001 in New York. This First Folio was sold from the Library of Abel E. Berland.

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#### About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had auction sales in the first half of 2019 that totalled £2.2 billion / \$2.8 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. Christie's offers around 350 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

*\*Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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Images available on request

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