

HOME PLATE: A PRIVATE COLLECTION OF IMPORTANT BASEBALL MEMORABILIA

AUCTION: DECEMBER 16

PREVIEW BY APPOINTMENT: DECEMBER 11-16



NEW YORK – Christie's and Hunt Auctions announce a historic offering from a single owner private collection of baseball memorabilia and trading cards presented within a December 16 live auction entitled *"Home Plate: A Private Collection of Important Baseball Memorabilia."* The collection has been assembled over the last 25 years, and features iconic players, teams, and moments in the history of Major League Baseball with specific focus on items of scarcity. Highlights of the auction include a very rare original Lou Gehrig jersey worn during the 1931 New York Yankees home season (estimate on request) and a Babe Ruth Boston Red Sox Era Professional Model Baseball Bat circa 1916-18 (estimate: \$500,000-1,000,000). The collection is notable for some of the greatest artifacts extant relating to the 1903 World Series, 1927 New York Yankees, and the 1934 U.S. All-Star Tour of Japan. With over 150 lots in total, estimates range from \$500-1,000,000.

"This particular private collection has remained largely unknown within the industry for over 25 years," **stated David Hunt, President, Hunt Auctions.** "We expect the debut of this world class collection to mark as one of the finest of its type to have been offered at public auction. A great number of the items within are being unveiled to the public for the very first time including several which are the finest known examples of their medium. Hunt Auctions is thrilled to partner with Christie's to present this iconic offering of historic baseball artifacts."

Highlighting the sale is a very rare original [Lou Gehrig jersey](#) worn during the 1931 New York Yankees home season in the prime of his Hall of Fame career (estimate on request). By 1931, Lou Gehrig had emerged from the shadow of Babe Ruth to rightfully assume his position as the finest player in the American League, if not all of baseball. This Gehrig jersey is one of the earliest to be offered to the public, and one of less than four extant which date to 1931 or earlier, with most of the surviving examples dating to the mid to late 1930s period. The jersey is a cream color heavy gauge flannel displaying its original blue pinstripes, with A.G. Spalding manufacturer's tagging affixed inside the collar area and a fine "L. Gehrig" name identification chain stitched in red within the collar, displays beautifully with strong contrast.

Another rare highlight of the collection is a [Babe Ruth Boston Red Sox Era Professional Model Baseball Bat](#) *circa* 1916-18, with provenance and history that make it among the most important early career Babe Ruth bats extant (estimate: \$500,000-1,000,000). The Louisville Slugger bat has "RUTH" in block lettering on the barrel and possesses a succinct provenance, which traces its origins to an appearance at a 1944 War Bond Game played at Shiba Park in Philadelphia. Connie Mack had invited Ruth to participate and would be given three swings to try to hit a home run. Ruth hit the first and second balls to the fence and the third and final swing also hit to the wall but cracked the bat. Ruth reportedly remarked to the crowd, "Ole Babe doesn't have it anymore." The bat was presented to his old friend Connie Mack, who in turn presented it to the Philadelphia A's bat boy Frank Gara. It descended within the Gara family until its purchase by noted bat collector Michael Montbriand in 1991. Additional items related to the Bambino include a [Superlative Babe Ruth Single Signed Baseball](#) *circa* 1940s, which is in excellent condition with the signature positioned squarely across the sweet spot (estimate: \$50,000-100,000), and [Babe Ruth First Major League Game "Lineup Card"](#) from July 11, 1914, which marked the debut of the rookie pitcher, and originated from the personal collection of Hall of Fame umpire Tommy Connolly (estimate: \$50,000-75,000).

Leading the outstanding selection of baseball cards is a baseball tobacco card of Ty Cobb in superlative original condition (estimate: \$225,000-425,000). The [1909-11 T-206 Ty Cobb](#) card is a world class example of one of the most desirable cards in the highly revered T-206 set and among the highest condition grade which exists. The card maintains all the hallmark qualities sought after by collectors; the portrait of Cobb is crisp and well registered against the solid green background and wear is virtually non-existent with "pack fresh" qualities to corners and edges throughout. The [1933 Goudey #149 Babe Ruth](#) card is an exceptional example of one the defining trading cards issued in the 1930s era, and one of the most desirable in the field of collecting (estimate: \$100,000-200,000). The [1902-11 W600 Sporting Life Honus Wagner](#) card portrays an iconic image of Wagner as captured by noted photographer Carl Horner and is one of the most recognizable early 20th Century athlete portraits ever taken (estimate: \$50,000-100,000).

The collection features a group of 32 lots of artefacts from the 1934 U.S. All-Star Tour of Japan. The selection is led by a significant and very rare [1934 U.S. All-Star Tour of Japan Presentational Display Autographed by United States and Japanese Teams](#) consisting of a charcoal illustrative rendering of the flags of the United States and Japan with autographs by both team members including signatures of B. Ruth, L. Gehrig, C. Mack, E. Averill, M. Berg, J. Foxx, C. Gehringer and J.A. Hillerich, and All-Nippon players have signed in Japanese characters with Jimmy Horio also in English (estimate: \$50,000-75,000).

The collection also includes rare documents, letters and photographs. An important [document archive between Lou Gehrig and Dr. Paul O'Leary](#) of The Mayo Clinic *circa* 1939-41 details the progression of Gehrig's disease in addition to his personal views beginning with optimism and infused with courageous yet fearsome reverence as time passed (estimate: \$400,000-600,000). The original archive of documents was retained by Dr. O'Leary and includes numerous letters with significant historical content as it related to Gehrig's illness. A poignant [handwritten letter by Marilyn Monroe to Joe DiMaggio](#) written on the reverse of a dry-cleaning receipt *circa* 1954 and kept folded in DiMaggio's personal wallet, reveals the loving and yet challenging relationship of the two American icons (estimate: \$50,000-100,000). A rare [Babe Ruth And Lou Gehrig Autographed Photograph](#) *circa* 1927 depicts one of the most iconic pictures ever taken of the famed Yankees' sluggers by the legendary sports photographer Louis Van Oeyen (estimate: \$25,000-50,000).



LOT 21

Superlative Babe Ruth Single Signed
Baseball c.1940s
Estimate: \$50,000-100,000



LOT 46

Important 1931 Lou Gehrig New York
Yankees professional model home jersey
Estimate on request



LOT 15

Scarce and important Babe Ruth Boston Red
Sox Era professional model baseball bat,
c. 1916-18
Estimate: \$500,000-1,000,000



LOT 47

1902-11 W600 Sporting Life Honus
Wagner
Estimate: \$50,000-100,000



LOT 60

1909-11 T-206 Ty Cobb portrait
Estimate: \$225,000-425,000



LOT 70

1933 Goudey #149 Babe Ruth
Estimate: \$100,000-200,000



LOT 152

Significant Marilyn Monroe letter
handwritten to Joe DiMaggio as found with
Joe DiMaggio's personal wallet, c.1954
Estimate: \$50,000-100,000



LOT 45

Rare Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig
autographed photograph by Louis Van
Oeyen, c.1927
Estimate: \$25,000-50,000



LOT 87

Highly Important Lou Gehrig Document
Archive from Dr. Paul O'Leary of The Mayo
Clinic With Relation to "ALS: Lou Gehrig
Disease" c.1939-41
Estimate: \$400,000-600,000

Browse the auction: www.christies.com/baseball

Home Plate: A Private Collection of Important Baseball Memorabilia

CHRISTIE'S | 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York

AUCTION DATE | Wednesday, December 16 at 2pm

AUCTION PREVIEW | Viewing by appointment December 11-16

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About Christie's

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**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.*

About Hunt Auctions

Exton, Pennsylvania based Hunt Auctions has been a leader in the sports memorabilia auction industry for 30 years. Numerous former players and their families have trusted their collections with Hunt Auctions including Babe Ruth (HOF), Ted Williams (HOF), Joe DiMaggio (HOF), Roberto Clemente (HOF), Vin Scully (HOF), Brett Favre (HOF), Whitey Ford (HOF), Curt Flood, Gale Sayers (HOF), Tony Dorsett (HOF), Tony Gwynn (HOF), Reggie White (HOF), Randall Cunningham, Joseph Carr (HOF), Leo Durocher (HOF), Robin Roberts (HOF), Earl Weaver (HOF), Commissioner Bowie Kuhn (HOF), Warren Spahn (HOF), Johnny Bench (HOF), Johnny Unitas (HOF), Clem Labine, Mickey Vernon, Jake Pitler, Thurman Munson, Roy Campanella (HOF), Harmon Killebrew (HOF), Bill Mazeroski (HOF), Kent Tekulve, Steve Blass, Johnny Pesky, Charles "Kid" Nichols (HOF), Jim Palmer (HOF), Bucky Walters, Walter Johnson (HOF), Bill McKechnie (HOF), Willie Mosconi, Joe Frazier and Norm Van Brocklin (HOF). Hunt Auctions is also the Official Auction Company of Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory and the Official Auctioneer of the MLB All-Star PlayBallPark®. Hunt Auctions has worked with numerous institutions to include: National Football League, Philadelphia Phillies®, Pittsburgh Pirates®, Baltimore Orioles®, Boston Red Sox®, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, National Baseball Hall of Fame, Chicago Bulls, National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame and Baseball Assistance Team.

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Images available on request

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