

Marklin boat, Ives man on rocking horse top the parade of toys at Bertoia's \$1.55M auction, Nov. 11-12



Collectors in a quest to find rare antique toys in superior condition struck gold at Bertoia's Nov. 11-12 Toys on World Tour auction, which realized \$1,550,000 (inclusive of 15% buyer's premium). The 1,502-lot sale was very well attended, with phone bidders keeping Bertoia's staff members constantly engaged. Internet bidding played a major role in the auction's success, as well. The daily average of purchases attributable to online buyers was 27.4%.

Cast-iron toys proved to be a category with resiliency, as evidenced by the setting of several world auction records.



“I would say that at this auction cast iron was not only back, but back to the future. That’s how strong it was,” said Bertoia Auctions associate Rich Bertoia. “The Kaufman auction series, which grossed over twelve million dollars, seems to have reignited the fever of collecting cast iron. We even saw a few new players at the sale.”

A circa-1932 Arcade cast-iron rendition of a Mack dump truck in bright red and yellow, came with provenance from the respected Larry Sieber collection. Considered the finest known specimen of its type, the 9-inch, near-mint truck claimed the top spot in its category at \$17,250.



Having passed through Bertoia’s gallery before, during the Kaufman series, a 17-inch Kenton cast-iron “Speed” truck painted green with a stake-side open body toppled its previous auction price to sell for \$12,650 against an estimate of \$6,000-\$7,500. “There were many other pieces from both the Don Kaufman and Dick Ford collections that followed that same pattern, selling for much more than they had in recent auctions. They still had their previous Bertoia tags on them,” Rich Bertoia noted.

Another surprise was the buoyant prices achieved by German clockwork tin boats. “Normally in a single auction we don’t get as many all-original or nearly all-original boats of such outstanding quality, but it happened this time,” said Bertoia.

The sale’s top lot, an exceptionally well-scaled Marklin “Avalanche” painted in light blue and with all four lifeboats, two stacks, flags and other original accessories had no trouble sailing to \$41,400 against an estimate of \$20,000-\$22,000. Other big winners by Marklin included a “Puritan” ocean liner, \$23,000; “Columbia” battleship (partially restored), \$18,400; and 1930s “Freya” battleship, \$17,250 against an estimate of \$8,000-\$10,000.

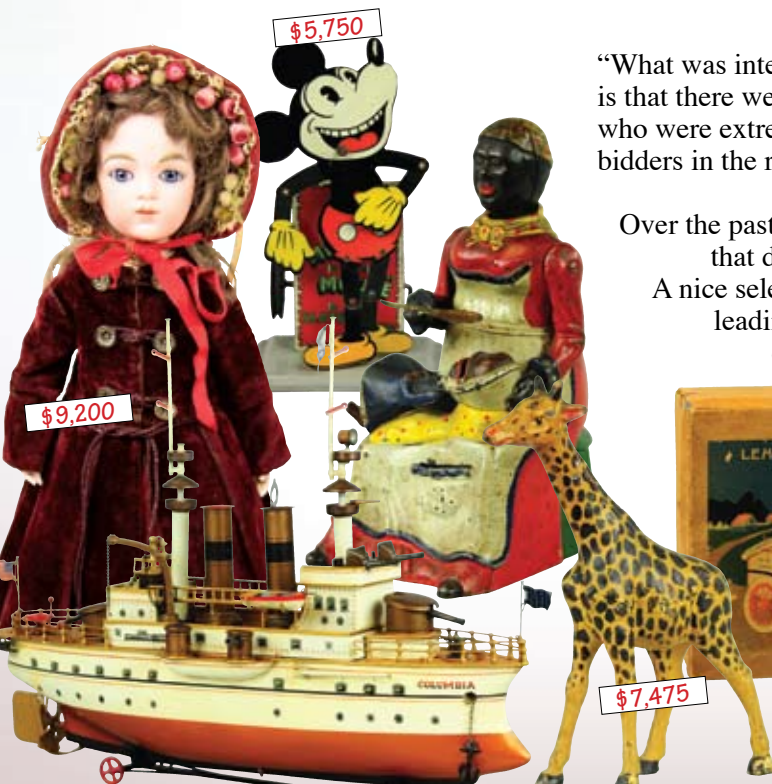


Additional European tin toys that won favor with bidders included a Hans Eberl two-seat clockwork tourer with handpainted driver, lithographed body, and spoke wheels. Estimated at \$600-\$750, the vibrantly colorful open car made \$10,925. An earlier production dating to around 1900, a Gunthermann 12-inch vis-à-vis with hand-painted driver figure surpassed its estimate to reach \$5,175.



“What was interesting about the European toys is that there were many Europeans on the phones who were extremely competitive but could not win against bidders in the room. It seemed that the estimates didn’t matter,” said Bertoia.

Over the past decade, the market for early American tin toys has confirmed that demand continues to exceed supply for rare and fine examples. A nice selection of this specialty was included in Bertoia’s sale, with the leading piece being an extremely rare Ives Man on Rocking Horse, ex Tom Anderson collection, that raced past its \$6,000-\$8,000 estimate to cross the finish line at \$39,100.





Of the collection of biscuit tins offered, “those in great condition brought great money,” Bertoia said. A circa-1920 W. Crawford & Sons “Fire Brigade” tin – one of the featured items on Bertoia’s auction catalog cover – benefited from crossover bidding from firefighting fans and commanded \$6,900 (est. \$1,000-\$1,200). One of only two or three known examples of a tin pram with baby and golliwog lithographed on its lid was a runaway favorite and earned \$6,325 against an estimate of \$700-\$900.



Almost every sale conducted by Bertoia’s features an array of excellent-quality cast-iron doorstops. The Nov. 11-12 offering included a charming rarity: a snow-capped yellow cottage with hand painting reminiscent of Grandma Moses’ primitive New England style. The doorstop was a book example and had been entered in the sale with a \$1,200-\$1,600 estimate. “Apparently there were many bidders who wanted this doorstop for their collections. It sold for \$5,175,” said Bertoia Auctions’ owner Jeanne Bertoia, who is, herself, a renowned expert and author on the subject of antique doorstops.



Other sale highlights included an Asahi 1962 Chrysler Imperial tin car in rich cobalt blue, \$6,900; and a 30-inch-tall, signed Vichy automaton of a beautiful lady with hand mirror. Superbly modeled and painted, with a Jumeau bisque head accented by pearl “drop” earrings, the elegantly dressed automaton soared to \$18,400 against an estimate of \$6,000-\$9,000.



The much-anticipated selection of Christmas antiques attracted bidders across the board, but most especially toward the rarely seen antiques. “Collectors are waiting for the great things to come out, and they’ll pay the price to get them,” said Rich Bertoia.

The Christmas section was led by a late-19th-century chalkware belsnickle, 22 inches tall, painted in brown and red with holly and berries on the hood of its knee-length coat. Estimated at \$10,000-\$12,000, it was pushed competitively to \$18,400.



Bertoia’s Spring Auction will be held March 23-24, 2012 and will feature doorstops from the Chuck and Barbara Cook collection, comic character toys from the Ronnie Rosen collection, cast-iron rarities from a private collection, Lehmann and Martin windups, steam engines and many other choice pieces. For additional information call 856-692-8697, e-mail toys@bertoiiauctions.com, or visit www.bertoiaauctions.com.

