

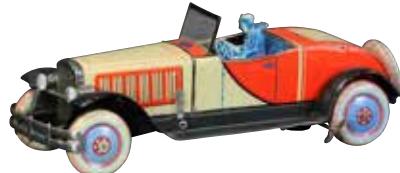
Bertoia's March 11-12 No-Reserve Signature Auction

Exclusively Features the Monique Knowlton Collection
of Antique European, American and Japanese Toys



A former international model, cover girl and art gallery owner, Knowlton never compromised on condition, always buying the best, preferably boxed examples

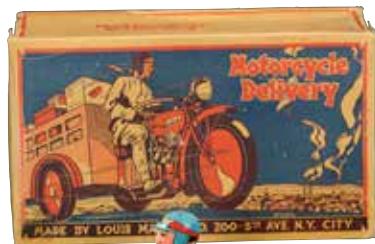




VINELAND, N.J. – On March 11 and 12, Bertoia's will auction, without reserve, the Monique Knowlton antique toy collection, a spectacular assemblage of comic character, German automotive, American toys, and out-of-this-world Japanese robots and space toys.

While she was never a regular at toy shows or auctions and is probably unknown to most other collectors, Monique – a former international fashion model and art gallery owner – comes from a world whose focus is on aesthetics, first and foremost. With her well-cultivated eye for quality and perfection, she came to appreciate the beauty of antique toys after seeing similar objects compatibly incorporated into art installations.

As quoted in her biographical profile that appeared in January's Antique Toy World, Monique always placed condition above all other factors when considering a toy purchase. She observed: "Even if toys were very rare, if their condition wasn't 100 percent, I wouldn't buy them. I wanted things that were perfect, original and working, and if I had a choice, I would always buy a toy that had its original box."





Michael Bertoia, president and principal auctioneer at Bertoia Auctions, recalled: "Monique has always been a great customer of ours. She's very detail oriented and has a curator's eye, which is to be expected of someone who operated a successful Manhattan art gallery. She heeded our advice and went after only the best examples. Whenever she was presented with the opportunity to bid in premier sales like the Donald Kaufman series, she didn't hold back, and that's very clearly reflected in the collection she put together over the years."

The fruits of Monique's many decades of searching and acquiring toys of ultimate quality will be on display for the world to see during Bertoia's two-day sale, with virtually every major toy category represented.







Santa Claus will make a grand entrance behind the wheel of two jaunty automotive rarities: a 10½-inch-long Fischer (Germany) Father Christmas Car, and a rare C.K. pre-war Japanese Santa Car. Each is estimated at \$15,000-\$25,000. The Knowlton automotive fleet also includes a near-mint 20-inch-long Distler race car, \$12,000-\$18,000; a sleek circa-1935 Tippco Mercedes-Benz Autobahn Kurier, \$6,000-\$9,000; and a Karl Bub saloon-style sedan formerly owned by the fabled Zurich toy dealer Peter Ottenheimer, who pictured it in his 1985 reference book *Toy Autos, 1890-1939*. It is estimated at \$4,000-\$7,000.

Additional automotive highlights include a circa-1931 20½-inch-long Karl Bub limousine (ex Kaufman collection), \$3,000-\$5,000; a Stock "Chaff Chaff" tourer (ex Kaufman collection), \$2,500-\$3,500; and an always popular Yonezawa (postwar Japan) Atom Jet Racer, \$5,000-\$7,500. Other Japanese toys of note include a Linemar Popeye Mechanical Air-O-Plane, \$4,000-\$6,000; and a boxed 1910 Alabama Coon Jigger (ex Kaufman collection), \$3,000-\$5,000.





Toys with a Hollywood connection include a Gunthermann (Germany) Harold Lloyd bumper car, \$3,000-\$4,000; and a circa-1913 Nifty (Germany) Silent Movie car, whose line of provenance includes (consecutively) the Ray Holland and Donald Kaufman collections. Estimate: \$2,500-\$4,500

Fans of cast-iron toys will be pleased to see not one but two Hubley Surfer pull toys – both a girl and boy version – estimated at \$10,000-\$15,000 each; and a similarly estimated Hubley Popeye On Motorcycle. A Hubley "Static" speedboat comes with illustrious provenance, having once been part of the Bill and Lillian Gottschalk collection and, later, the Bob Brady collection. Its pre-sale estimate is \$5,000-\$7,500. A Hubley cast-iron Popeye doorstop, once part of Jeanne Bertoia's landmark collection of doorstops, is expected to make \$2,000-\$3,000. Among the earliest cast-iron pieces in the sale is a delightful Gong Bell "Ding Dong Bell" toy, \$4,000-\$6,000.





Cast-iron mechanical banks are part of the Knowlton collection, as well. Within the grouping to be auctioned are a J & E Stevens Boy Scout bank, \$2,500-\$4,500; a Mammy with Child, \$2,500-\$4,500; and a 13½-inch standing "Jolly" bank, \$2,000-\$4,000.

A traffic-stopping selection of toy motorcycles includes several that sport a common theme: a boxed 9½-inch Tippco Family Cycle with sidecar (ex Ralph Tomlinson collection), \$4,000-\$6,000; a blue version of the same bike, \$2,500-\$4,500; and a George Levy Family Cycle with sidecar, \$2,000-\$4,000.





German by birth and a frequent visitor to European antique fairs and markets, Monique inevitably fell under the spell of whimsical, beautifully designed Lehmann toys. She went on to acquire boxed examples of some of the firm's most desirable productions, such as a "Mandarin," \$4,000-\$7,000; and "Masuyama," \$4,000-\$6,000.

The Knowlton collection also includes many sought-after robots and space toys, led by a complete lineup of Masudaya's legendary Gang of Five – the big, boxy mid-century battery-ops that might be described as the "boy band" of the toy hobby, since each member of the androidal quintet has its own distinct look, action and personality.

The earliest of the Gang of Five series in Monique's collection, is a 15-inch Radicon Robot, which has a pebbly gray industrial-metal finish and separate remote-control box. Made in 1957, Radicon was the first radio-controlled toy robot. Manufactured two years later, the Non-Stop Robot is also known to collectors as the "Lavender" Robot, owing to its attractive pinkish-mauve color. Based on the same form as the Non-Stop Robot, the bright red Giant Machine Man Robot followed as a specially commissioned order and is, by far, the rarest of the Gang of Five. Next came the 1962 addition to the lineup, the



Giant Sonic, or "Train" Robot, given its name because of the "roaring" train sound it makes as it advances and retreats. Last to join the group was the 1964 Target Robot, which came with a toy dart-firing pistol and suction-tipped darts. Monique's Target Robot is accompanied by its colorful original box. "What an accomplishment to complete the series of five! Collectively these wonderful robots are likely to reach into the six-figure range," said Michael Bertoia.

The robot and space toy offering continues with a boxed Bandai Flying Spaceman "Superman" rocket 'cycle that is widely considered to be the nicest of the few that are known to exist. It was last offered for public sale in 2014 and will cross the auction block at Bertoia's with a \$12,000-\$18,000 estimate. A boxed Nomura Radar Robot carries a \$6,000-\$10,000 estimate, while a boxed Aoshin Chime Trooper is entered with a \$5,000-\$7,500 estimate. An extremely rare Bandai Walking Batman with its original box is also expected to reach the \$5,000-\$7,500 range.

There are many other exciting discoveries to be made over the two days of selling, from a boxed Bing clockwork Deepsea Diver, \$3,000-\$5,000 to a circa-1912 Bing tugboat with provenance from the Dick Claus collection, \$2,500-\$4,500.





Train collectors should be on the alert for several gems in the Knowlton collection: a 13-inch Knapp No. 221 steeple cab locomotive in pristine condition, \$5,000-\$7,500; and a pristine to near-mint 19-inch American Flyer President's Special, \$2,000-\$4,000.

Bertoia's Friday/Saturday, March 11-12, 2022 no-reserve auction exclusively featuring the Monique Knowlton Collection of Antique European, American and Japanese Toys will take place at the company's gallery located at 2141 DeMarco Drive, Vineland, NJ 08360. Live attendance is limited and by reservation only, with masks and social distancing mandatory. In-gallery previews are by appointment only. Bid absentee, by phone, or live online through [Bertoia Live](#) or [LiveAuctioneers](#). For additional information, to reserve a seat at the gallery, or to make an appointment to preview the collection, please call 856-692-1881, email toys@bertoiaauctions.com or visit Bertoia's online: www.bertoiaauctions.com.



FRICITION MOTOR POWERED TELEVISION TRUCK WITH MOBILE CAMERAS & STUDIO



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