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THE VERY DEFINITION OF EPHEMERA:
24 COLOSSAL SNOW SCULPTURES
OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. Jean Joseph, Comte de Robiano;
   Antoon de Vries (text); Antoine Cardon (engraver).
Collection des Desseins des Figures Colossales
   & des Groupes qui ont été faits de Neige.

$3200.

First and only edition of this strange and wonderful production.

During the harsh winter of 1772, the artists and art students of Antwerp constructed a series of colossal snow sculptures in the frozen streets and courtyards of the city, each more elaborate than the next, some reaching as high as twenty feet. The subjects were mostly classical – Venus, Hercules, Andromeda – with the occasional nod to local subjects. To memorialize these ephemeral works of public art, the Comte de Robiano commissioned a series of twenty-four plates, with accompanying text by the Antwerp canon Antoon de Vries, recording the subject, dimensions, location, and group of artists (some still in their teens) responsible for each sculpture.
Given the limitations of snow as a medium, the plates represent the ideal form of each sculpture: the text notes the artists’ struggle to contain the damage caused by wind and thaw, and their inability to realize some of their more ambitious decorative elements.

The work is dedicated to Charles de Lorraine, Governor of the Austrian Netherlands and a patron of the Royal Academy, where many of the artists were students: his portrait is featured on the snow monument depicted on plate 15.

Text in French. A fine copy, never bound, of the only record of these long-melted colossi, a testament to printing as “the art preservative of all arts.”

Octavo, measuring 8.5 x 6 inches: [16]. Text in sheets, decorative woodcut borders around title and text pages, woodcut tailpiece. Twenty-four numbered engraved plates, loose as issued.
A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE
OF THE MOST EMINENT PAINTERS

2. [Matthew Pilkington.]
A Concise Introduction to the Knowledge
of the Most Eminent Painters.

$500.

First edition of this ambitious eighteenth-century traveler’s guide, an alphabetical table of over two thousand European painters, giving the dates, birthplaces, favorite subjects, and influences of each, from Andrea Abate (a Neapolitan painter of fruit) to Lambert Zustrus (a disciple of Titian). The guide is intended “to instruct (as well as to assist the Memory of) those Gentlemen and Connoisseurs, who either travel Abroad for the Improvement of their Taste, or intend to view the curious Collections in their Kingdoms.” A very good artifact of the glory days of the Grand Tour.

Octavo in fours, measuring 8 x 5.25 inches: [124]. Nineteenth-century calf spine, marbled paper boards, raised bands, spine compartments ruled in gilt, grey morocco spine label lettered in gilt. One page of publisher’s advertisements at rear. Light occasional foxing, heavier to final signatures; lightest shelfwear to binding.
*Voyage Pittoresque et Romantique sur la Cheminée.*
Paris: Louis Janet, [1828].

$850.

First edition of this whimsical account of a domestic hearth, describing the decorative clock, flowers, and candles on the mantelpiece as relics of an exotic civilization: “Rien n’est petit aux regards de l’observateur attentif.”

Prolific children’s author Jean-Pierre Brès (1782-1832) was fascinated by the intersection of play and education: he devised a popular “tableau polyoptique,” sometimes considered the first myriorama, and is credited with producing the first movable book in *Le Livre Joujou* (1831).


NOTORIOUS DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY ATTRIBUTED TO “THE LATE LORD BYRON”


$3200.

Second extant (pirated) edition of Don Leon, an early English defense of homosexuality purported to be a lost poem by Byron.

At least partially composed after Byron’s death, likely in the 1830s, a version of this poem was in print before 1853, when it is cited in Notes and Queries. No example of that first printing is known to survive.

The first extant edition is William Dugdale’s London edition of 1866, printed in an unsuccessful attempt to blackmail Byron’s family. This second extant edition, a piracy printed by Charles Carrington around 1890, is a facsimile of the Dugdale, distinguishable by the “rare editions” advertised on the verso of the jacket, which include a translation of the Satyricon spuriously attributed to Oscar Wilde.
While Byron is not the author (or at least not the sole author) of *Don Leon*, his sexual history provides the pretext for the poem’s argument for tolerance of homosexuality: “Methought there must be yet some people found, / Where Cupid’s wings were free, his hands unbound / Where law had no erotic statutes framed, / Nor gibbets stood to fright the unreclaimed.” The rumor that Byron sodomized his pregnant wife, Annabella Milbanke, leading to the dissolution of their marriage, is duly recapped: “Ah, fatal hour, that saw my prayer succeed, / And my fond bride enact the Ganymede.”

The true author or authors of *Don Leon* are well-versed in early nineteenth-century parliamentary debates over the punishment of vice; as Louis Crompton notes: “The poem is in fact a rhymed pamphlet in favor of homosexual law reform that incorporates a pseudoautobiography and erotic jeux d’esprit.”

Speculation as to the authorship of *Don Leon* has included George Colman, John Cam Hobhouse, Thomas Love Peacock, William Beckford, and William Bankes. The poem would be reprinted by the Fortune Press in 1934, in a limited edition immediately suppressed for obscenity. For more on *Don Leon*, see Louis Crompton, “Don Leon, Byron, and Homosexual Law Reform” in *Literary Visions of Homosexuality*, ed. Stuart Kellogg (1983), and the critical apparatus to the Pagan Press facsimile edition (2017). OCLC locates five holdings of this Carrington piracy worldwide (British Library, Morgan, Cornell, Penn, and Minnesota), although there are almost certainly more copies miscatalogued as the 1866 edition it purports to be.

A near-fine copy of a true rarity, a fascinating early effort to overturn the criminalization of homosexual acts in England by way of Byron’s Romantic legacy.

*Octavo, measuring 7.5 x 5 inches: [4], 52, 63, [3], 17, [1]. Original plain wrappers, printed dust jacket, untrimmed. Separate title page, dated 1865, for “Leon to Annabella.” Rubbing to spine ends, light edgewear to jacket.*
LATE VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM
FEATURING WOMEN AND GIRLS READING

5. [PHOTOGRAPHY].
Late Victorian photograph album featuring images of women and girls reading.
Likely United States: nineteenth century.

$1250.

Victorian photograph album of images of women and girls, most of them posed with books.

The images represent a thoughtfully assembled thematic collection, rather than a record of a particular family’s life: the photography studios represented range from New York to California, Massachusetts to Wisconsin, England to Germany.
Thirty-one of the photographs present women or girls posed with books or letters. Many of the others highlight other cherished possessions: a picture hat, a doll, a fan, a drum, and in the case of a nun, a crucifix and rosary.

While most of the photographs feature studio backdrops, a few appear to be candid shots: groups of women gathered around a supper table and on the shore of a lake; a single woman standing in a garden; a group of girls in a schoolyard, posed with a tennis ball and racquet. The one printed reproduction included in the album depicts a woman reading aloud to a young boy, surrounded by the comforts of a Victorian parlor.

The importance of education was reflected in nineteenth-century studio portraiture through the conspicuous display of books and letters, but the appeal of this album lies, in large part, in the genuine pleasure that many of the subjects appear to take in their reading. Among the most charming is a seated pair of young women, arms affectionately draped over each other’s shoulders, with an open book across their laps.

A delightful collection, celebrating the importance of reading in the nineteenth century.
Photograph album, measuring 8.25 x 11.25 inches: 16 leaves. Original patterned velvet boards, celluloid cover with chromolithographed village scene within floral borders, all edges gilt, brass clasp to foreedge. Fifty-three cabinet cards and one printed reproduction, most measuring about 6 x 4 inches, inserted loosely into gilt-patterned frame mounts, two larger images laid in. Several images hand-captioned. Extremities rubbed with minor loss to celluloid, a few loose leaves, occasional light surface wear to photographs.
Striking table game published on the occasion of the Universal Exposition of 1900, the world’s fair held in Paris to celebrate progress in science, industry, and the arts. The game board features the fair’s engineering marvel, the Grande Roue de Paris, the largest Ferris wheel ever constructed. Based on the classic “jeu de l’oie,” or game of the goose, this game replaces the traditional sixty-three landing squares with spaces corresponding to the forty carriages of the Grande Roue. The spaces depict monuments, including the Louvre and Eiffel Tower; scientific achievements like the train and automobile; scenes of sports and amusements; and fates to avoid: death, prison, the dentist’s chair! Five additional spaces are located outside the wheel, for a total of 45 landing squares.
Printer Simonin Cuny specialized in children’s games, puzzles, and toys, often drawing inspiration from current events. In 1904, the firm joined four other printers of amusements to form Les Jeux et Jouets Français.

A delightful souvenir of the newly constructed Grande Roue de Paris, whose height would not be surpassed for almost a century, in near-fine condition.

Game board, measuring 14 x 10.75 inches. Chromolithographed sheet heightened in gold, divided in half vertically, mounted to two red boards joined by a cloth spine, folding to 10.75 x 7 inches. Rules of play printed at base of image, publisher’s imprint lower right.

Trivial offsetting from glue at center fold, occasional stray mark, trace of old label to upper righthand corner.
7. Jean Segaloff.
Literary Women of the Left Bank, Paris, 1900-1940’s.
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Jean Segaloff, circa 2016.

$1500.

Limited edition livre d’artiste celebrating modernist women writers and publishers in Paris, signed by artist Jean Segaloff.

The book contains hand-colored etchings of twelve important literary women, most of them queer: Nancy Cunard, Djuna Barnes, Sylvia Beach, Adrienne Monnier, Janet Flanner, Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Bryer [sic] (Annie Winifred Ellerman, pen name Bryher), Gertrude Stein, Colette, and Kay Boyle.
Each portrait is paired with a vellum overlay printed with a quotation by or about the subject.

The sheet that reads “I opened a little book shop on the rue de Odeon called Shakespeare and Company” lifts to reveal bookseller Sylvia Beach, publisher of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

The overlay to writer Djuna Barnes quotes a line from her most famous novel, *Nightwood*: “I talk too much because I have been made miserable by what you are keeping hushed.”

Segaloff notes: “The literary women of the Left Bank of Paris from 1900-1940 were a diverse group. . . . I wanted to portray each woman as a complex, intellectual being rather than a one-dimensional character.”
Segaloff created these etchings on polyester plates to achieve soft, richly inked lines, adding watercolor “to give the portraits warmth and character.”

This copy is number “1” of the second edition of Literary Women of the Left Bank, an edition that likely ran to fewer than five copies, following the 2014 first edition of three copies. OCLC locates one institutional holding, a first edition at Yale.

A fine example of a moving livre d’artiste.

Oblong volume, measuring 7 x 11.5 inches: [28]. Original rivet-bound, burnt orange cloth boards, green and gold paper pastedown labels, silk endpapers. Twelve hand-colored drypoint portraits with printed vellum overleaves.
First edition of this anthology of June Jordan’s poetry, edited by Toni Morrison, warmly inscribed to civil rights attorney William Kunstler, who shared Jordan’s lifelong commitment to political activism.

The poems in the collection are divided into four sections: “For My Own,” “Directed by Desire,” “Against the Stillwaters,” and “Toward a Personal Semantics.” While Jordan’s subjects range from the personal to the political, her poetry is united by her distinctive conversational voice and pointed wit, reflected in “Calling on All Silent Minorities,” which reads in its entirety:

“HEY / C’MON / COME OUT / WHEREEVER YOU ARE / WE NEED TO HAVE THIS MEETING / AT THIS TREE / AIN’ EVEN BEEN / PLANTED / YET.”
Jordan has inscribed this copy: “1978 / for William Kunstler, / Attorney, freedom fighter, Brother: / wishing you and your family / all love and peace and joy, always / Respectfully / and with love, / June Jordan / 7/17 / N.Y.C.”

Best known for his high-profile defense of the Chicago Seven and the Black Panther Party, Kunstler maintained: “I’m not a lawyer for hire. I only defend those I love.” Jordan met Kunstler at Yale in 1971, during their shared work on behalf of the prisoners at Attica. In her 1985 essay “Black People and the Law,” Jordan recalls “that sunny morning in New Haven when I first met Big Bill Kunstler... when I heard that extraordinarily deep voice filling up that splendid stairwell, I felt no longer exhausted by the phone calls, the flyers, and the rest of it. I felt exhilaration and relief. I knew he would surely kick ass. And he did.”

Jordan and Kunstler’s friendship was grounded not only in their passion for social justice, but also in their love of poetry. Kunstler’s first book, Our Pleasant Vices, was a co-authored collection of poems, published in 1941 when he was still a Yale undergraduate. His last book was a collection of sonnets, Hints and Allegations, The World (in Poetry and Prose) According to William M. Kunstler, published in 1994 with a foreword by Allen Ginsberg.

A very good presentation copy, testifying to the bond between two important voices of the American civil rights movement.

Single volume, measuring 8.25 x 5.5 inches: xvii, [1], 203, [3]. Original grey boards stamped in copper, black cloth spine lettered in copper, original unclipped photographic dust jacket. Ink presentation inscription from Jordan to William Kunstler on front free endpaper. Toning and spotting to edges and endpapers, occasional stray smudge, light edgewear to dust jacket.
First edition of this children’s activity book celebrating African-American scientists and inventors, a supplement to the National Afro-American History Kit series of educational guides edited by J. Rupert Picott, who worked for years to establish Black History Month as a national observance. In 1979, Pamela Brown of Shoouple Enterprises received a federal grant to produce this activity book, based on Picott’s History Kit series. Combining the words “soul” and “hope,” Shoouple Enterprises distributed its coloring books in schools; they were included with meal purchases at McDonald’s restaurants as well.

Readers are encouraged to cut, color, and paste the portraits of these pioneers beside descriptions of their innovations, from the preservation of blood plasma to the induction telegraph system to the incandescent light bulb.

OCLC locates one copy, at Howard University.

A fine copy, never cut or colored.

Side-stapled volume, measuring 11 x 8.25 inches: [2], 3-18, [2], including wrappers. Original black and white pictorial wrappers, black and white illustrations throughout text.
10. Graham Greene. This Gun for Hire.

$3600.

First edition, published one month before the English edition titled A Gun for Sale. The inspiration for the 1942 film noir starring Veronica Lake and Alan Ladd, Greene’s seventh novel follows the conflicting interests of a hired gun, the private eye on his trail, and the detective’s fiancée, who gets drawn into the chase. The dust jacket’s promise, “A Novel of Terror and Devotion,” reflects the flashes of humanity that illuminate Greene’s hardened characters: “They were a little quietened because each had known a man who was suddenly dead; but the knowledge they shared gave them a sense of companionship which was oddly sweet and reassuring. It was like feeling safe, like feeling in love without the passion, the uncertainty, the pain.” Barzun & Taylor 1574. A sharp, near-fine copy of a crime fiction classic.

Single volume, measuring 7.25 x 5 inches: [8], 293, [3]. Original tan cloth, stamped in green on spine, original unclipped color pictorial dust jacket with price of $2.00 to front flap. Bookplate to front free endpaper. Light sunning to jacket, expert restoration to spine panel and folds.
TOO MANY COOKS, 1938, WARMLY INSCRIBED BY REX STOUT

11. Rex Stout.  
Too Many Cooks: A Nero Wolfe Mystery. 

$8500.

First edition of Rex Stout’s fifth Nero Wolfe mystery, in the uncommon dust jacket, with a scarce contemporary inscription. 

Too Many Cooks finds the orchid-loving, gourmand detective at a meeting of Les Quinze Maîtres, the fifteen greatest world’s chefs, as their guest of honor. Wolfe is reluctantly pulled into service when one of the chefs is murdered during a taste-test challenge, and is ultimately satisfied not so much by solving the case as by having obtained a coveted secret recipe for Saucisse Minuit. 

Too Many Cooks was serialized in The American Magazine before publication, and promoted with a national tour that sent Stout and a cast of actors across the country in a dedicated Pullman car.
Each stop on the tour featured reenactments of the novel’s scenes and special press luncheons that served dishes from the recipes included in the novel’s appendix: “dishes as hearty and robust as the crimes which he undertakes to solve,” including Terrapin Stewed in Butter, Avocado Todhunter, and Shad Roe Mousse Pocahontas.

A scarce signed copy of a high spot of modern detective fiction.

Single volume, measuring 7.5 x 5 inches: [5], 303. Original red cloth stamped in black, top edge stained black, original unclipped color pictorial dust jacket, priced at $2.00. Recipe appendix printed on blue paper. Inscribed and signed by Stout: “Nov. 22 – 1940 - To Kip with love - Rex.” Ink ownership stamp to endpaper above inscription. One-inch stain to fore-edge, expert restoration to jacket.
First edition of Vera Caspary’s romantic psychothriller, an international bestseller that inspired the blockbuster 1944 film starring Gene Tierney. Caspary’s legacy of strong, independent female characters was most realized in the fiercely self-possessed Laura, an advertising executive who is alternately considered a murderer and victim: “I picked up a cigarette. He hurried to light it. ‘Don’t do that,’ I said. ‘Why not?’ ‘You can’t call me a murderer and light my cigarette.’” Caspary started her prolific writing career early. Her dust jacket biography is as entertaining as the novel itself: “Vera Caspary has been around. . . . A genius in selling things by mail, she has distributed in this way cold cream, milking machines, dancing, singing, one-pipe furnaces, rat virus, Zane Grey, Sax Rohmer, heredity, and sex.” A major contribution to the suspense genre, *Laura* was listed as a Haycraft-Queen cornerstone for 1943. A bright copy of a scarce book.

Single volume, measuring 8 x 5.5 inches: [6], 237, [1]. Original blue cloth stamped in red, original unclipped color pictorial dust jacket designed by Bip Pares. Offsetting to endpapers, top edge spotted, jacket professionally restored.
SIGNED FIRST
AMERICAN EDITION OF
THE LITTLE SISTER, 1949

13. Raymond Chandler.
The Little Sister.

$13,000.

First American edition, published three months after the British, of the fifth title in the Philip Marlowe detective series, signed by Raymond Chandler.

The Little Sister follows the private eye to Hollywood, where Marlowe investigates a scandal involving a starlet, her gangster beau, and her missing brother.
Chandler’s disdain for the film business, informed by his own experiences as a screenwriter, is evident: “Real cities have something else, some individual bony structure under the muck. Los Angeles has Hollywood -- and hates it. It ought to consider itself damn lucky. Without Hollywood it would be a mail order city. Everything in the catalogue you could get better somewhere else.”

*The Little Sister* inspired the 1969 semi-noir film *Marlowe*, starring James Garner, who would go on to portray the equally sardonic detective Jim Rockford in the 1970s NBC television series *The Rockford Files*.

Brucoli A8.2.a. A scarce signed copy, in the original dust jacket designed by Boris Artzybasheff.

*Single volume, measuring 8 x 5.5 inches: [6], 249, [1]. Original orange-red cloth stamped in blue, original unclipped color pictorial dust jacket. Signed “Raymond Chandler” in ink on front free endpaper. Bookseller ticket to rear free endpaper. Light rubbing to dust jacket, spine panel with slight loss at ends and two short clean tears, one repaired.*
First edition of Mary Kelly’s acclaimed novel, winner of the 1961 Gold Dagger Award, issued by the Crime Writers’ Association of the United Kingdom for an outstanding work of crime fiction. When a body is found in a vat of liquid clay at Shentall’s, an English pottery of sterling reputation, the detective investigating the leak of the firm’s proprietary designs finds himself at the center of a much more serious case. The Spoilt Kill was among the first British crime novels to mark a shift toward the psychological, establishing Kelly as a master of the genre: “It wasn’t the whine or cringe of self-pity, just a dull resentful disgust for circumstances and his inability to get clear of them, disgust for himself, that was too weak to possess the dignity of utter humility; a wriggle rather than a writhe.” The novel also offers an unusually detailed inside look at the business side of the decorative arts, from production processes to industrial espionage. A near-fine example of this tightly crafted murder mystery, uncommon in the first edition, in the iconic dust jacket designed by James Broom-Lynne.

Single volume, measuring 7.5 x 5 inches: [6], 231, [1]. Original blue cloth lettered in gilt; original unclipped color pictorial dust jacket. Light toning to spine panel; smudging and short closed tear to rear panel; neat ownership signature to front free endpaper.
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