



Moebius: cover of La Déviation (Humanoïdes Associés, 1980)*** (estimate €45,000-55,000)

Sotheby's First-Ever Comic Strip Sale

Hergé's The Crab with the Golden Claws (c.1940): full-page drawing in Indian ink & original colouring version (estimate €235,000-250,000 / \$296,000-315,000)

Iconic Plate from Hergé's The Shooting Star (1942): Philippulus the Prophet Predicting the End Of The World (est. €220,000-240,000 / \$277,000-302,000)

Moebius – to whom the sale is dedicated: cover of La Déviation (Humanoïdes Associés, 1980) (est. €45,000-55,000 / \$56,600-69,200)

Paris, May 2012 – Sotheby's first-ever auction of comic strips will be held in Paris on July 4. The highly selective catalogue features a hundred lots by outstanding exponents of what the French call 'The Ninth Art' – from the start of the 20th century down to the present day, charting the history of Comic Strips and their relationship with the plastic arts.

To **Guillaume Cerutti, Chairman & Chief Executive of Sotheby's France and Vice-President of Sotheby's Europe**: 'It was written in the stars that the world's oldest auction house, Sotheby's, should one day stage an auction devoted to the most recent of art forms: the Comic Strip!

The sale will conform to all the traditional standards and goals of a firm like Sotheby's, and will be an **event of international importance**, with an **extremely selective choice of works**, presented by an **internationally recognized specialist in Jean-Marc Thévenet**.'

The expert **Thévenet** in charge of the sale explains that: 'The auction reflects our conviction that **Comic Strips** have become an **art-form in their own right**. The lots selected reflect a certain approach to what Rodolphe Töpffer, the acknowledged father of the comic strip, called **literature in prints** – retracing their development over the decades through works by Hergé, Franquin, Moëbius and Enki Bilal, and ending with today's generation of comic strip artists. **Our strategy is to offer rare works** – like a magnificent **Hergé** drawing from *The Crab with the Golden Claws*; the exceptional cover of *La Déviation* by the French comic strip artist **Moëbius**, who passed away on 10 March 2012; and plates from key moments in comic strip history. There will also be **paintings, full-length stories and unusual works**, such as the amazing Milou poetry album containing Hergé's earliest drawings. The sale also features artists who made a key impact on the dynamic development of graphic art, like the **Bazooka Group**, who sent shockwaves around the art world in the late 1970s... In short, the sale aims to be a **catalogue raisonné of the First One Hundred Years of Comic Strips!**

Comic strips were long confined to the worlds of childhood and publishing, as 'art with conditions' (Moëbius) – but in recent years have been the subject of **several major Paris exhibitions**, including those devoted to **Robert Crumb**, at the City of Paris Modern Art Museum; **Vraoum**, at La Maison Rouge in 2009; and **Jean Giraud (Moëbius)** at the Fondation Cartier in 2011. In the wake of such early 20th century American pioneers as **Winsor McCay** and **George Herrmann**, followed by **Hergé, Jijé and Franquin**, then **Moëbius, Philippe Druillet and Enki Bilal**, we have now reached a crossroads in the evolution of the Comic Strip; for a whole generation of young artists, the traditional boundaries between comic strips and graphic art no longer exist.



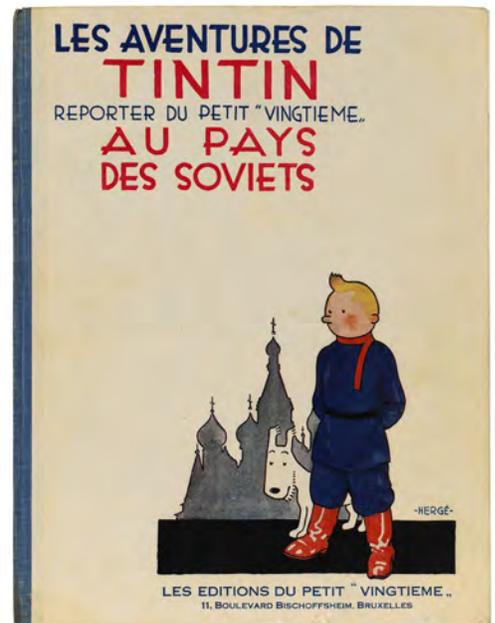
The sale begins with a first edition of **Rodolphe Töpffer's *L'Histoire de M. Jabot*** (1833), said to be the **first ever comic strip album**, produced by the head of a Geneva boarding-school to entertain his pupils, and marking a radical new departure from traditional story illustration. By publishing an album of comic strip drawings accompanied by written narrative, Töpffer effectively creating a whole new artistic genre (est. €16,000-18,000 / 20,000-22,600).*

There is also the **moving poetry album created by Hergé when he was 11, and containing his first known drawings.**** He gave the album to his childhood sweetheart, Marie-Louise Van Cutsem (nicknamed 'Milou'); the two drawings are signed Georges Rémi and dated 1917 and 1920. The album evokes both Hergé's personal life and the genesis of his later oeuvre, when (long after his fleeting love for Milou) he emerged as the father of Tintin (est. €10,000-12,000 / \$12,500-15,000).

Towards the end of 1924 Georges Rémi adopted the name R.G. or **Hergé** and, in 1925, joined the newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle*, directed by Abbé Norbert Wallez. Sotheby's will also be offering one of the finest covers designed for *Le Vingtième Siècle's* illustrated supplement ***Le Petit Vingtième***, and which first appeared in 1928. With its pure lines and compositional sense, this drawing displays astonishing graphic mastery. It features a liner 'slicing through' the ocean, and adds a new dimension to the world of Tintin: Hergé took an unexpected risk here, in that none of his usual characters appear in the drawing (est. €125,000-150,000 / \$157,000-189,000).

The sale's only **Tintin album** is the first one Hergé ever produced: ***Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*** (1929). This rare black-and-white album, in an exceptional state of preservation, is one of the finest copies to come on the market for a decade; just ten copies in this state are known to exist. Hergé made his debut as draughtsman/author on 10 January 1929, publishing the first two plates from Tintin in the Land of the Soviets in *Le Petit Vingtième*. Books were his only background source, notably Joseph Douillet's recent *Moscow Unmasked*, and the much earlier *General Durakin* by the Comtesse de Ségur. Although controversial, this mythical debut album helped **marked Hergé's first step towards the pantheon of great 20th century artists** (est. €40,000-45,000 / \$50,400-56,600).

Hergé's *The Shooting Star*, published in 1942, reflects the apocalyptic period in which it was written – with the plate offered here featuring Philipulus the Prophet predicting the end of the world; the tar melting beneath Tintin's feet suggests the end may indeed be nigh. **This is the iconic plate from the album**, and one of the most striking scenes from all the *Adventures de Tintin* (est. €220,000-240,000 / \$277,000-302,000).

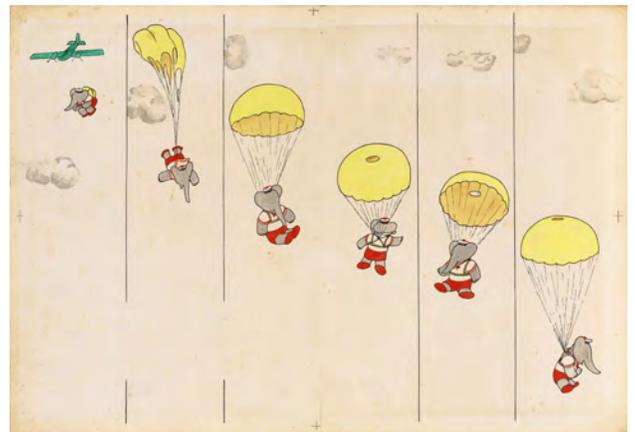


Another landmark Tintin album, *The Crab with the Golden Claws* (1944), is represented by a **full-page Indian ink drawing on paper**, dating from the end of the 1940s and produced for Casterman's new edition of the album. This was the third full-page drawing (without blank margins) from the black-and-white edition of 1941, and used in the colour editions from 1943-47. The page is not divided into strips, but contains a single large scene, showing **Tintin, Snowy and Captain Haddock** tearing through the alleys of **Bagghar in Morocco** in search of **Lieutenant Delcourt**. As with many other Tintin scenes, this exotic image has become implanted in our collective subconscious – and inspired the chase scenes in the recent Tintin film by Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson.



The drawing for the colouring album of 1944, also to be offered here, differs from the original black-and-white version through its depth, angle of approach and a handful of details, altered to facilitate colouring. When Casterman reprinted the three colouring albums in 1950, the drawing remained unchanged in album n°3 (joint estimate for the black-and-white drawing together with the colouring version: €235,000-250,000 / \$296,000-315,000).

Meanwhile **Babar the Elephant** aficionados will be catered for by two original plates from *Babar et ce Coquin d'Arthur* (Babar's Cousin: That Rascal Arthur) by **Laurent de Brunhoff**, published in 1946. It was Laurent's father Jean de Brunhoff who began publishing Babar's adventures in 1931, based on stories his wife Cécile told their children; Laurent carried on from his father after World War II. Tens of millions of Babar books, translated into 27 languages, have since been sold (est. €14,000-16,000 / \$17,600-20,100).



Le Gorille a Mauvaise Mine was a story written and drawn by **Franquin**, that ran in *Le Journal de Spirou* from issues 944-966 (17 May-10 October 1956). It was a new adventure for Spirou & Fantasio, who had been bought from their creator Robert Velter by Editions Dupuis in 1939, and were drawn by Franquin who, in 1956, was at the height of his powers; apart from Spirou & Fantasio, he authored the fun-loving Modeste & Pompon, worked on advertisements and trailers, and was preparing to launch a character of his own – Gaston Lagaffe (est. €15,000-17,000 / \$18,900-21,400).

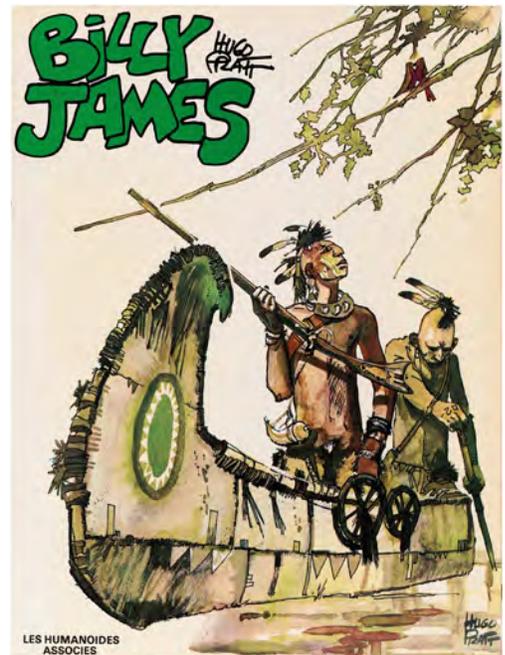


Sotheby's is also offering the cover of *Le Transperceneige (volume 3)*. The story by **Jacques Lob** – the only writer ever to receive the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival (in 1986) – enjoyed a chequered history before being continued by **Jean-Marc Rochette** in the magazine (*À Suivre*) in 1982. Few comic strips have enjoyed such widespread artistic acclaim, and *Le Transperceneige* is now set to be adapted for the cinema by the South Korean director Bong Joon-ho. (est. €5,000-6,000 / \$6,300-7,500).

After a string of adventures around the world, **Hugo Pratt** returned to Italy in the early 1960s. He worked for the comic *Il Corriere del Piccoli* from 1962-67 and in 1965, created Billy James (story-line by Milo Milani) for the prominent magazine *Chouchou*. While not enjoying the global popularity of *Corto Maltese*, Billy James reveals Hugo Pratt's graphic genius and provides a perfect introduction to his creative world. **Plate No3** from **Billy James**, published in France by Humanoides Associés in 1980, is to be offered here (est. €12,000-15,000 / \$15,000-18,900).

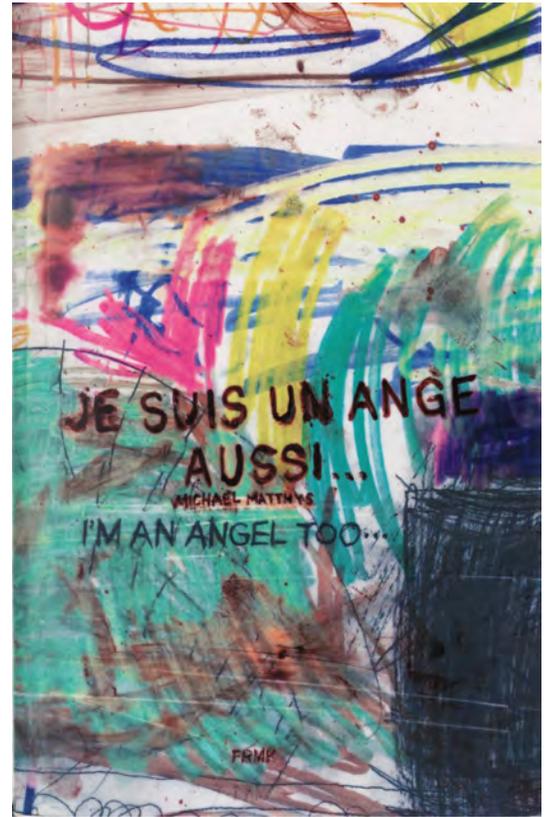
The sale also includes **Hugo Pratt's cover for *Bibliopop* (1974)**, featuring the legendary **Corto Maltese**, who counts among the front rank of Comic Strip heroes. *Corto Maltese* first appeared in 1967, in *Una Ballata del Mare Salato (Ballad of the Salt Sea)* – published in *Sgt. Kirk*, a magazine launched by Hugo Pratt himself. When the magazine ceased publication in 1969, *Corto Maltese* resumed his adventures in *Pif Gadget*, continuing from 1970 until his final album, *Mu*, in 1992 – although Pratt insisted his hero should never die, and even pursue his adventures after his own death (est. €15,000-17,000 / \$18,900-21,400).

Sotheby's sale also features **the cover of *La Déviation* (Humanoides Associés, 1980)***** – an iconic album by **Mœbius (1938-2012)**, to whom the auction is dedicated. The intensity of the drawing's deep blue echoes Yves Klein, and the album marked Mœbius' return to comic strips under the pseudonym Gir. As a disciple of Joseph Gillain (known as Jijé), he originally used his real name, Jean Giraud, in the Jerry Spring adventure *La Route de Coronado (1961)* – a forerunner of the modern comic strip western. In 1963 he drew the first album in the Blueberry series (story-line by Jean-Michel Charlier), and later worked (as Mœbius) for the French magazine *Hara-Kiri*. Mœbius would exploit his genius as a draughtsman to create an extraordinary world that would inspire the cinema, propelling René Laloux's *Time Masters* beyond the realm of a mere animated film. His cinematographic work ranged from *Tron* for Disney Studios in 1982 to Frank Herbert's mythical *Dune*, via costume designs for Ridley Scott's *Alien*. **Jean Giraud/Gir/Mœbius anticipated and, above all, formulated what comic trips had to offer the world of art.** The final homage paid to him at the Fondation Cartier in 2011 evoked his towering career (est. €45,000-55,000 / \$56,600-69,000).



When **Enki Bilal** published *Les Phalanges de l'Ordre Noir* (The Black Order Brigade), written by Pierre Christin, in 1979, he was already an established figure, with his work appearing in *Pilote* and *Métal Hurlant*. But this 1979 album – imbued with Enki Bilal's distinctive graphic style – marked an artistic and cultural watershed, which the celebrated movie-maker Ettore Scola long considered adapting for the cinema. The album constitutes an entry-point to the world of contemporary comic strips, and is a key work for understanding their expressive potential (est. €7,500-9,000 / \$9,500-11,300).

The **Michael Matthys**'s album *I'm an Angel Too* (2010), complete with cover and **64 drawings**, goes beyond comic strips' traditional boundaries. The story about memory – a recurring theme with Matthys – features strips that are inextricably interlinked, yet aesthetically independent from one another. Matthys is recognized as both a comic strip author and an artist in his own right; he belongs to the **generation of authors who, over the past decade, have blurred the supposed boundaries between comic strips and contemporary art – and between albums and gallery/museum exhibitions**. Matthys' work has already been shown at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and his imagination and technical mastery, especially in charcoal, lend new ambition to comic strips... marking yet another stage in their creative evolution (est. €9,000-12,000 / \$11,300-15,000).



Viewing

Saturday 30 June 10am-6pm
Monday 2 July 10am-6pm
Tuesday 3 July 10am-6pm

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