

Press release: Paris

Paris | 33 (0)1 53 05 53 66 | Sophie Dufresne | sophie.dufresne@sothebys.com

33 (0)1 53 05 52 32 | Claire Jehl | claire.jehl@sothebys.com

R. AND B. L.: ROMANTIC LIBRARY

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND FIRST EDITIONS FROM THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

TOTAL: €2.2 MILLION



**VICTOR HUGO'S UNPUBLISHED AUTOGRAPH BOOK OF LOVE LETTERS
TO JULIETTE DROUET - €217,500**

THIS COPY NOW JOINS THE COLLECTION OF ANNE-MARIE SPRINGER (PRIVATE LETTERS)

**DRAWING BY VICTOR HUGO
THE GIBBET OF MONTFAUCON €187,500**

**MAGNIFICENT COPIES OF THE
MÉTAMORPHOSES DU JOUR AND *UN AUTRE MONDE* BY GRANDVILLE,
IN PUBLISHER'S BINDINGS,
SOLD FOR €40,000 and €37,500**

Paris, October 2017 – The sixth part of the R. and B. L. library, devoted to the Romantic period, with illustrated books, posters, first editions, autographs and drawings of exceptional quality, ended on a resounding high note. This unique collection, sold in association with Binoche & Giquello, achieved a total of €2,215,938.

Booklovers were there in force to battle over copies in extraordinarily fresh condition, in period bindings, often signed and some richly decorated. The originality and rarity of this collection lay in the fact that often the same texts were contained in these period bindings or were bound at a later date in exquisite covers by great names of the early 20th century. These copies, often cited in bibliographies, mostly belonged to great bibliophiles like Laurent Meeûs, Henri Beraldi and Victor Mercier.

Anne Heilbronn, vice-chairman of Sotheby's France: "This Romantic library was a true ode to love, and contained great classics of 19th century literature in period bindings, like *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *Les Trois mousquetaires*, *La Chartreuse de Parme* and *Le Rouge et le noir*."

Dominique Courvoisier, specialist in charge of the sale says, "The results obtained today show an unflagging interest in Romantic illustrated books, and of course in exceptional copies, the prerogative of great collections." "We are now much looking forward to the seventh section," adds auctioneer **Alexandre Giquello, a partner at Binoche & Giquello.**

Grandville garnered the highest prices in the first session. At **€40,000**, *Les Métamorphoses du Jour*, an extremely rare item in a publisher's shagreen binding decorated with animal plates, doubled its high estimate (lot 30, estimate: €15,000/20,000). This work made Grandville's reputation. Another magnificent and highly sought-after copy was *Un Autre Monde*, a first edition in publisher's shagreen of Grandville's most extraordinary work, written and illustrated in the Surrealist vein (lot 45, **€37,500**; estimate: €20,000/30,000). A copy of the *Aventures de Robinson Crusoë*, unique for its 43 original pen drawings, was pre-empted at **€27,500** by the **Bibliothèque Nationale de France** (lot 35; estimate: €25,000/35,000).

The second session saw the extraordinary unpublished relic of **Victor Hugo's love life addressed to Juliette Drouet**, his true love, fire the bidding all the way up to **€217,500**. This now joins the **Anne-Marie Springer collection (private letters)** (lot 219; estimate: €70,000/90,000). Genuine evidence of the early days of their love, containing four autograph poems in addition, this was one of three extant notebooks in which Victor Hugo wrote something almost every day for his great love, Juliette Drouet.

None of Hugo's letters to Juliette Drouet from before October 1833 now survives, because she burned them all after having misunderstood the meaning of a word in one of them. This makes this long declaration of love all the more precious.

Six magnificent original drawings of landscapes and seascapes by **Victor Hugo** feature in the collection. They include a striking ***Gibbet of Montfaucon*** which at **€187,500** largely exceeded its high estimate of €120,000 (lot 240, estimate: €80,000/120,000). This terrible symbol was mentioned in his work by the author, who was intensely opposed to capital punishment. Another splendid and powerful drawing, a hitherto unpublished picture of a fantastic castle rising out of the shadows, multiplied its estimate by ten at **€150,000** (lot 242, estimate: €10,000/15,000).

A prominent figure in this second part of the sale was **Honoré de Balzac** with his celebrated ***Letters to Louise***, precious private correspondence (described by his biographer as a real "romantic quest") with a woman whose identity Balzac never knew. They inspired a battle all the way up to **€68,750** (lot 119, estimate: €40,000/60,000). The superb first edition of ***Mémoire de deux jeunes mariées*** with the monogram of the Empress Marie-Louise, Duchess of Parma, fetched **€22,500** (lot 128; estimate: €12,000/15,000).

One of the most sought-after lots by **Alexandre Dumas**, the prolific writer of plays and historical novels, was his earliest play, ***Henri III et sa Cour***, in a magnificent binding by **Thouvenin** produced for the famous actress Mademoiselle George. This fine copy, which came with three autograph letters, including two from Alexandre Dumas, stayed within its estimate at **€43,750** (lot 167, estimate: €35,000/45,000). One of the finest known examples of the first edition of ***Les Trois Mousquetaires*** in a remarkably well-preserved period binding largely exceeded its high estimate at **€93,750** (lot 170, estimate: €50,000/80,000).

Lastly, an attractive series of works by **Stendhal** in the form of autographs and first editions included the writer's great masterpieces. They all respected their estimates: *Armance*, the author's first novel (lot 337; **€37,500**; estimate: €30,000/50,000); ***Le Rouge et le Noir*** in a period binding (lot 340, **€37,500**, estimate: €30,000/50,000), and ***La Chartreuse de Parme*** (lot 345, €37,500, estimate: €30,000/50,000).

Pre-emptions by the Musées de France

BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

Lot 35

Jean-Jacques Grandville - Daniel de Defoe

Les Aventures de Robinson Crusoë, Paris, Fournier the elder, 1840

First printing

Unique copy with 43 original drawings

€27,500

Lot 92

Prince Alexis Soltykoff

Voyage en Perse, 1851

First printing

€4,000

Lot 179

Xavier Forneret

A mon fils naturel. November 1847

€4,000

MAISON DE BALZAC

Lot 39

Jean-Jacques Grandville

Bookstore poster for "Les Animaux peints par eux-mêmes", c. 1856

€3,500

Lot 40

Jean-Jacques Grandville

Bookstore poster for the "Scènes de la Vie Privée et publique des Animaux", 1842

€10,000

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