

Sotheby's Annual Auctions of Important Judaica and Israeli & International Art Bring \$6.7 Million in New York

Sales led by An Exceedingly Rare Ashkenazic Hebrew Bible
from 13th-Century France
Sold for \$555,000

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Mordecai Ardon's **Sinai 1967**, Inspired by the Book of Exodus
Sold for \$795,000

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Acquires a Magnificent Illuminated Hebrew Bible
Ahead of Sotheby's Judaica Auction

NEW YORK, 21 December 2016 – Sotheby's annual December auctions of Important Judaica and Israeli & International Art concluded yesterday in New York with a combined total of \$6.7 million. From important manuscripts to ceremonial silver and fine art, below is a look at what drove these strong results:

IMPORTANT JUDAICA
Auction Total \$3.4 Million

Yesterday's morning at Sotheby's New York, the auctioneer for our Important Judaica sale announced that The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York had acquired privately for an

undisclosed amount a Magnificent Illuminated Hebrew Bible from Spain, which had previously been scheduled for the auction. Hailing from the renowned collection of Jaqui E. Safra, the illuminated Bible was produced in Castile during the first half of the 14th century and stands as a remarkable testament to the cross-cultural influences in the Golden Age of medieval Spain.



As the auction proceeded, the offering of books and manuscripts was led by an exceptionally important **Ashkenazic Hebrew Bible** created in Northern France during the third quarter of the 13th-century. This historic document – of which only one other known copy remains in private hands – sold for a strong price of \$555,000 (estimate \$400/600,000). Hebrew Bibles from medieval Ashkenaz seldom come

to auction - thus, the rarity of this type of manuscript, coupled with its extraordinary decorative program featuring figurative Masorah, fine filigree pen flourishing, extensive rubrication, and elegant textual layouts, make it a truly significant and highly valuable monument to Ashkenazic civilization in the Middle Ages.

The selection of paintings on offer was led by a magnificent oil of **Moses on Mount Sinai** by Jean-Léon Gérôme, which sold for \$112,500 (estimate \$100/150,000). Painted circa 1895-1900, Gérôme's canvas depicts one of the greatest moments of Jewish history from the Book of Exodus, as Moses appears with the Tablets on Mount Sinai.

A **Galician silver and gilt-metal Torah Crown**, dated to 1811 led today's selection of silver and metalwork, selling for \$75,000 – more than double its high estimate of \$30,000 – to a private New York collector. Similar to two examples at the Jewish Museum in New York, the current lot was cast with rococo silver bands and decorated with figures of lions and birds.



ISRAELI & INTERNATIONAL ART
Auction Total \$3.3 Million

Interest for works by Moredcai Ardon was particularly strong in the afternoon auction, as all four works by the renowned Israeli artist found buyers. One of the most important paintings by the artist ever to come to auction, **Sinai 1967**, led yesterday's selection achieving \$795,000 (estimate \$500/700,000). The sale also saw record prices achieved for two of Israel's top emerging artists, Fatma Shanan and Nirit Takele.

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* Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.

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