

HERITAGE
ILLUSTRATION ART

**THE ESTATE
OF CHARLES
MARTIGNETTE**

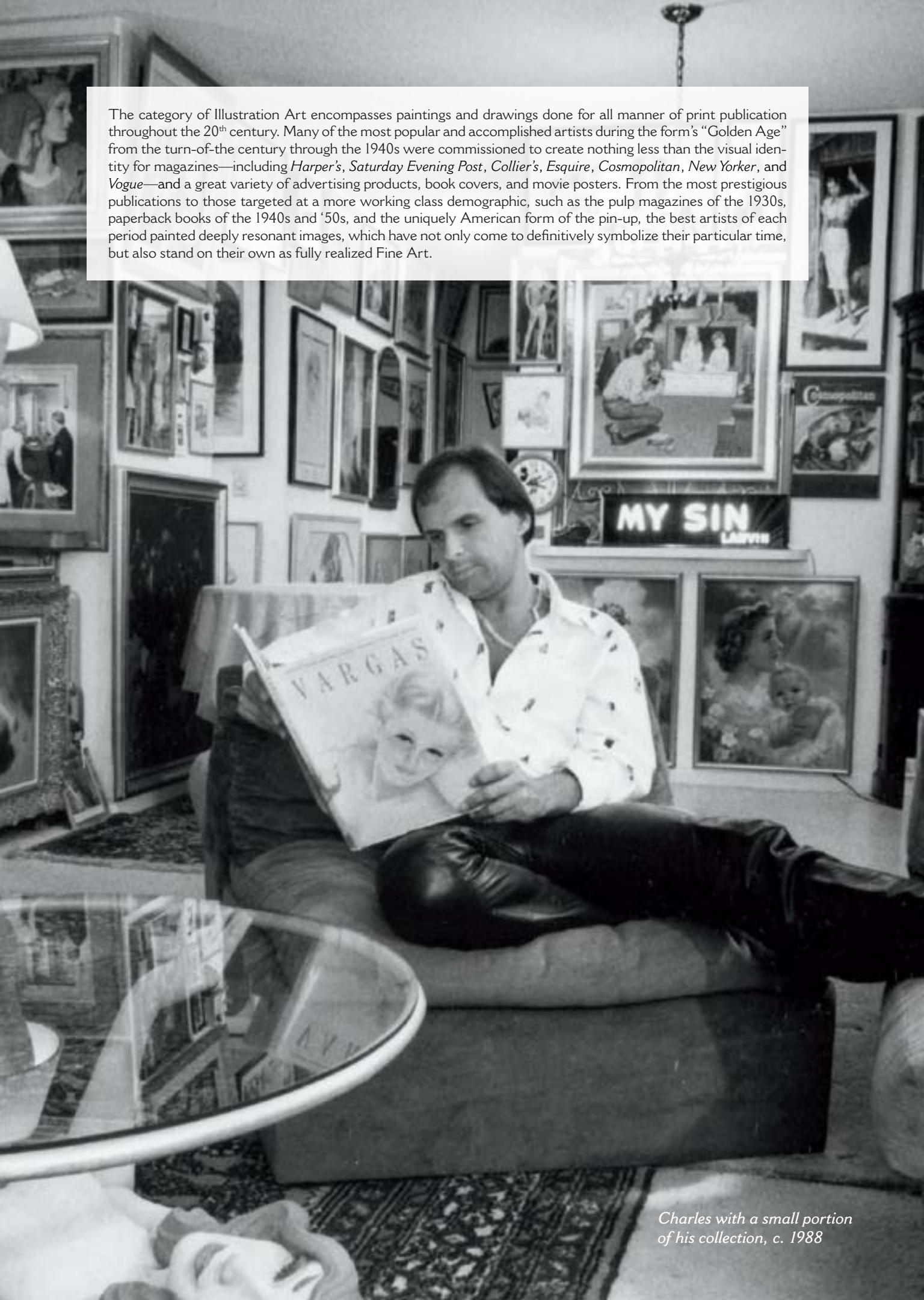
4,300 works spanning the history
of 20th Century American
Illustration, from Western Art
to Pin-ups and Pulp Covers



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HERITAGE
Auction Galleries

The category of Illustration Art encompasses paintings and drawings done for all manner of print publication throughout the 20th century. Many of the most popular and accomplished artists during the form's "Golden Age" from the turn-of-the-century through the 1940s were commissioned to create nothing less than the visual identity for magazines—including *Harper's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan*, *New Yorker*, and *Vogue*—and a great variety of advertising products, book covers, and movie posters. From the most prestigious publications to those targeted at a more working class demographic, such as the pulp magazines of the 1930s, paperback books of the 1940s and '50s, and the uniquely American form of the pin-up, the best artists of each period painted deeply resonant images, which have not only come to definitively symbolize their particular time, but also stand on their own as fully realized Fine Art.



Charles with a small portion of his collection, c. 1988

THE ESTATE OF CHARLES MARTIGNETTE

by Todd Hignite

TO SAY THAT CHARLES MARTIGNETTE (1950-2008) was ahead of his time as a collector is a major understatement. In fact, with his incredible eye and never-ending pursuit of the best examples, he almost single-handedly created the market that is now called Illustration Art. When he died in 2008, his comprehensive collection comprised roughly 4300 works of art, many of them among the very finest ever created by the artists in that genre. Charles was constantly refining, and while he sold pieces to fund new acquisitions, he kept an extremely tight grip on the choicest paintings by every single artist represented.

Heritage is humbled and excited to be auctioning this entire group over the course of the next few years.

Charles began collecting in the 1970s, at a time when much of the art establishment roundly ignored Illustration Art, often considering it nothing more than cheesecake or kitsch at best and trash at worst. Not Charles, though. He sought out the aging artists themselves and bought their original works directly. In the event that the artists had already passed away, he tracked down and dealt directly with their estates.

He was spurred on by the populist notion that this was the real art of the people and one of the most poignant reflections of 20th-century American culture, a great American art form, a view that we at Heritage certainly share. In retrospect, with his entire collection to peruse, the very same art establishment is rethinking its assessment of these amazing canvases. Charles was a historian and an author as well as a collector, so he continually strove to expand his knowledge of the form, as well as his epic collection, by uncovering previously unknown, or forgotten, work.

A true visionary, Charles was obsessed with and devoted to Illustration Art. His diligence resulted in arguably the most important private Illustration Art collection in the world. In the process of assembling the comprehensive collection, he actually rescued a great deal of the art from rubbish heaps—one look through the staggering group is enough to make any art aficionado, or collector, grateful for his obsession. So much of this important, and now highly valuable, artwork would be lost to future generations of collectors and scholars if not for Charles's achievement.

Charles himself wasn't shy about relaying his achievement, and though many of us found his eccentricities endearing, his willingness to blow his own horn rubbed some people the wrong way. This mattered little to him; Illustration Art was his chief love and its pursuit his only action. He was quoted as saying, "I pioneered the entire world of pin-up and calendar art. I was belittled and scoffed at and ridiculed for many years, both in the antique and the art world." It's safe to say that no one is scoffing now, either at Charles or the form he helped to define.

**FRANK EARLE
SCHOONOVER**

The Wounded Lover

Oil on canvas, 36 x 27 in.

Estimate: \$40,000-\$60,000

Ha.com/7016-11005



HE MAY HAVE HAD HIS DETRACTORS, as any person of strong opinion and a willingness to express it will, but Charles was also unceasingly generous in the sharing of his vast knowledge of the history of illustration and with artwork from his collection, selections of which were exhibited over the years at many of the most prominent museums in the country. He was a high-profile character who would speak to anyone who was interested about the importance of illustration; he was a champion when there were few, if any, and he was interviewed and profiled extensively in major newspapers and magazines for his expertise and devotion to the form, and had his own series of features in *Playboy* throughout the 1980s focused on his collection.

No one should make the mistake, however, of thinking that Charles himself or Illustration Art in general was only about the “glamour” pin-up paintings of artists like Alberto Vargas and Gil Elvgren. As you can see here, simply by thumbing through this brochure, the form goes very deep.

Charles’s collection is so vast in terms of quality and quantity, in fact, that the series of auctions in which we will be disseminating the collection represent nothing less than a retrospective of 20th-Century American Illustration with a particular emphasis on the Golden Age greats—artists like Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker (represented by numerous *Saturday Evening Post* covers), Harvey Dunn, Frank Schoonover, Jessie Wilcox Smith, and Dean Cornwell (Charles’s personal favorite painter—he assembled by far the most important examples in existence). The list goes on and on: Howard Chandler Christy, James Montgomery Flagg, Tom Lovell, John Falter, Charles Dana Gibson, John Clymer. You name the artist, the period, sub-genre, and region, and Charles was probably both a collector of it and an authority on it. He was, simply, blessed with a great eye.



DEAN CORNWELL

Captain Blood Inspecting the Treasure Chest Jewels,

Cosmopolitan illustration, July 1930

Oil on canvas, 26 x 52 in.

Estimate: \$40,000-\$60,000

Ha.com/7010-23006

“The images that comprised the genre of illustration art were pictures that captured the hopes and dreams, fears and problems of the American people in a visual manner that acted at the time of their creation and publication as a documenting mechanism. [...] Today the thousands of images that were created by the hundreds of illustrators who worked throughout the past century are now being valued and recognized for their priceless historical significance. These pictures, which were once a part of every American’s daily life, now serve as reflective mirrors that capture moments in time and depict slices of America’s past life at home, at work, in sports, fashion, romance, adventure, and education.”

— Charles Martignette



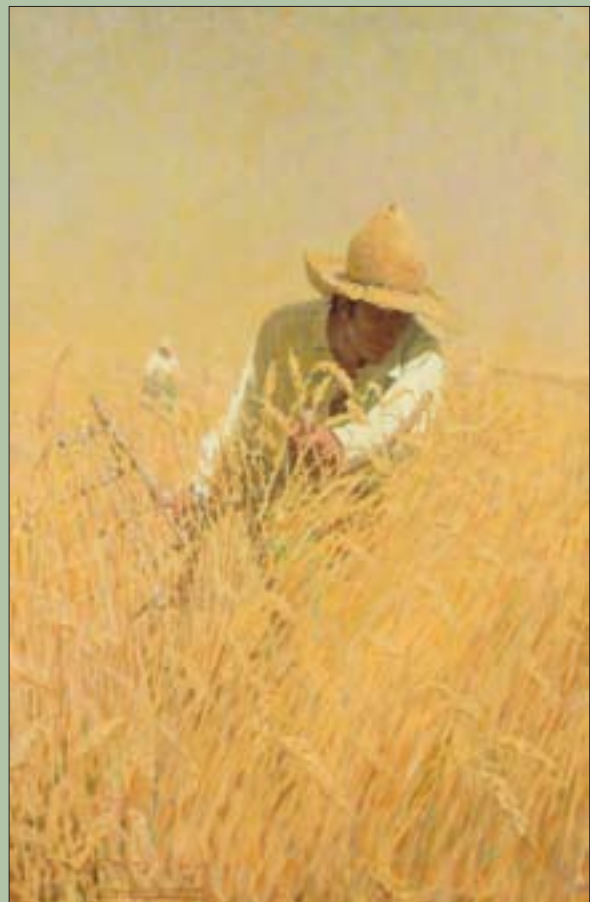
HARVEY T. DUNN

The Plowman, 1907

Oil on canvas, 36 x 24 inches

Estimate: \$40,000-\$60,000

[Ha.com/5019-59003](https://www.ha.com/5019-59003)



HARVEY T. DUNN

Thresher, 1908

Oil on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Estimate: \$50,000-\$70,000

[Ha.com/7016-11012](https://www.ha.com/7016-11012)

WILLIAM HERBERT DUNTON

The Badger Hole (The Spill), 1906

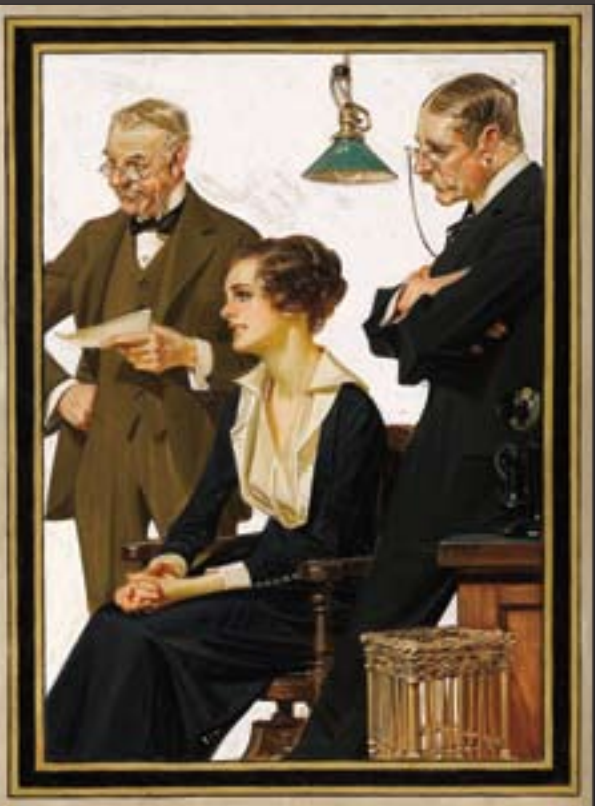
Oil on canvas

28 x 19 inches

Estimate: \$120,000-\$180,000

Ha.com/5019-59005





**JOSEPH CHRISTIAN
LEYENDECKER**

*A Proud WW I Sailor's New
Uniform. House of Kuppenheimer
ad diptych, 1917*

Oil on canvas, 29 x 46 in.

Estimate: \$50,000-\$70,000

Ha.com/7010-23001

**JOSEPH CHRISTIAN
LEYENDECKER**

*The Hero's War Story, Saturday
Evening Post cover, May 10, 1919*

Oil on canvas, 27.5 x 19.5 in.

Estimate: \$50,000-\$70,000

Ha.com/7010-23002



"It soon became extremely obvious to me that no one in the world had more knowledge, understanding, research material, and love for the great Illustration artists than Charles Martignette. We spent hours through the night hundreds of times discussing every aspect of the history and achievements of these artists. Charles knew every image by every artist and where and when it was used. For every painting he owned he also had copies of the books, magazines, calendars and ephemera in which they appeared."

— Louis K. Meisel



NORMAN ROCKWELL

Al Smith Was Fellowman to Every Man, 1945

Oil on canvas, 28 x 22 in.

Estimate: \$70,000-\$90,000

Ha.com/7016-11071



JOHN CLYMER

Clearing the Snow, Saturday Evening Post Cover, February 6, 1960

Oil on board, 33.5 x 26.5 in.

Estimate: \$18,000-\$22,000

Ha.com/7010-23051



TOM LOVELL

The Corpse Was Beautiful, story illustration

Oil on canvas, 34 x 25 in.

Estimate: \$20,000-\$25,000

Ha.com/7010-23146



GIL ELVGREN

Bare Essentials, 1957

Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

Estimate: \$30,000-\$40,000

Ha.com/7015-11018

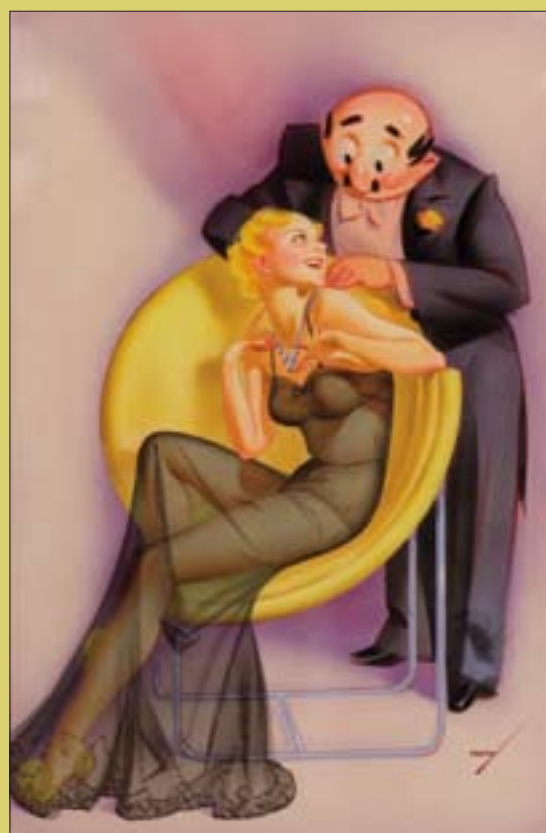
Elvgren

WHILE THE GOLDEN AGE EXAMPLES represent the undisputed high points of this American art form, Charles's greatest achievement arguably did come in the form of pin-ups, which are a uniquely American twist on mainstream illustration. He had a huge hand in rehabilitating the reputation of the pin-up, co-authoring—with Louis Meisel—three seminal books on pin-up history: *The Great American Pin-Up* (Taschen, 1996), which became one of the best selling coffee table books of all time, *Pin-Up/The Edward Runci Collection* (Collector's Press, 1997), and the monograph *Gil Elvgren: All His Glamorous Pin-Ups* (Taschen, 1999).

Charles acquired the absolute best examples, in terms of importance and rarity, in the principal names of Pin-up Art. He saved the works and reputations of Elvgren, Vargas, Enoch Bolles, Rolf Armstrong, Earl Moran, and George Petty—and every other great in the form, all the way up to contemporary masters—from obscurity and brought them back into the full glory of American pop culture. Now the work of some of these masters, including Pop Art icons such as Mel Ramos, is routinely achieving six figure prices when they show up at auction, certainly amounts worthy of what is traditionally considered “Fine Art.”



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG
Lambs' Gamble, Waldorf Astoria Poster, 1938
Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in.
Estimate: \$10,000-\$12,000
[Ha.com/7010-23019](https://www.ha.com/7010-23019)



GEORGE PETTY
Oh Mr. Feinberg, You and Your Pretty Phrases,
May 10, 1919
Mixed-media on board, 17 x 12 in.
Estimate: \$8,000-\$12,000
[Ha.com/7010-23011](https://www.ha.com/7010-23011)



ROLF ARMSTRONG

The Pool

Pastel on board, 38 x 28.5 in.

Estimate: \$18,000-\$24,000

Ha.com/7015-11007



ALBERTO VARGAS

Ski Troops Girl

Watercolor on board, 22.5 x 17.5 in.

Estimate: \$20,000-\$30,000

Ha.com/7015-11041



ENOCH BOLLES

Ideal for a Hunting Lodge, Film Fun Magazine cover,
December 1936

Oil on canvas, 30.25 x 22 in.

Estimate: \$9,000-\$12,000

Ha.com/7010-23034

ALBERTO VARGAS

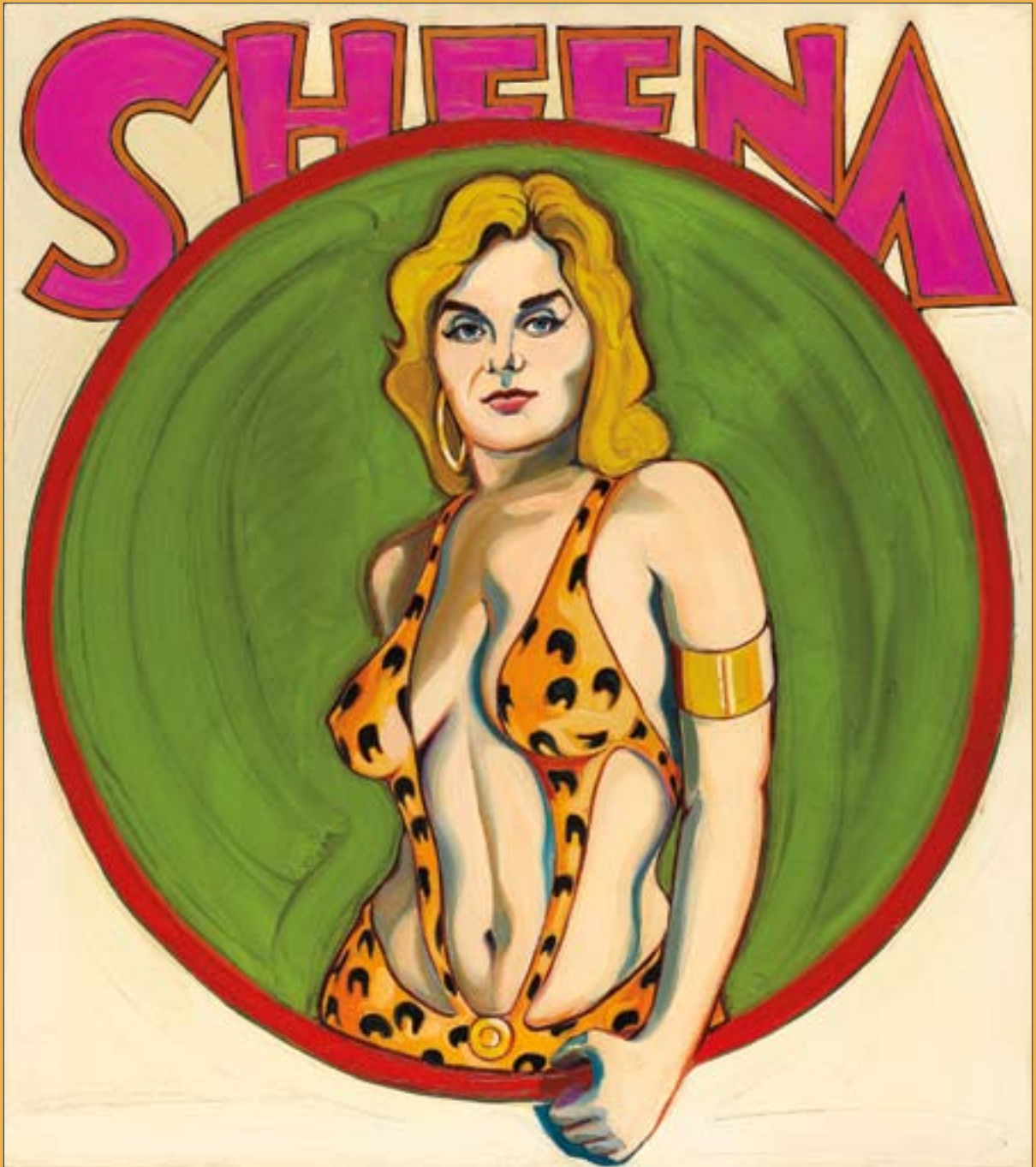
Crouching Nude

Mixed-media on board, 25.5 x 19 in.

Estimate: \$20,000-\$30,000

Ha.com/7015-11003





MEL RAMOS

Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, 1963

Oil on canvas, 30 x 26 in.

Estimate: \$120,000–\$160,000

[Ha.com/7015-11005](https://www.ha.com/7015-11005)



GEORGE ROZEN

The Shadow cover, March 1932

Oil on canvas, 21.5 x 20.5 in.

Estimate: \$20,000-\$30,000

Ha.com/7016-11013

ANOTHER AREA CHARLES COLLECTED in depth, and saved from the dustbin of history, was pulp cover art. He gathered outstanding examples by the likes of Frank R. Paul, Norman Saunders, H.J. Ward, George Rozen, and Walter Baumhofer, as well as paperback cover art by such luminaries as Robert Maguire, James Avati, and Robert McGinnis.



HAROLD W. MCCAULEY

Tiger Woman of Shadow Valley,
Amazing Stories pulp cover,
October 1949

Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in.

Estimate: \$6,000-\$9,000

Ha.com/7010-23182



JAMES AVATI

Goodbye to Berlin, paperback
cover, 1952

Oil on board, 24.5 x 20.5 in.

Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000

Ha.com/7010-23026



RUDOLPH BELARSKI

*Spacecraft X27 Having Crash
Landed*, circa 1954

Oil on canvas, 24.75 x 19 in.

Estimate: \$8,000-\$10,000

Ha.com/7010-23054



Charles inspects one of the 4,300 works in his collection, c. 1988.



Charles Martignette, c. 1988

TRULY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CONVEY THE RICHNESS of this collection; with the volume of paintings it would be a natural assumption that there is a certain amount of chaff. We can tell you, categorically, that is an incorrect assumption. Looking through everything—from individually framed paintings to over-stuffed portfolios—surprises abound. Charles was always selling off the lower end of his collection while trying to keep only the best. For example, in 2003 he consigned about 1,000 pieces to Heritage, representing the lesser examples he had by each artist. That consignment still realized well into seven figures.

Auction houses and dealers alike are guilty of overusing the phrase “once in a lifetime opportunity.” If ever a group of art coming onto the market has merited that call to action, though, this is it.

The Illustration Art offered in the series of auctions over the next few years is truly the best of the best: do whatever you can to win your favorites from this embarrassment of riches—you won't be sorry. Not only are the individual works the cream of the crop, the provenance will remain one of the most important ever.

We couldn't be more honored to be offering this incredible collection, starting with our July 15, 2009 event, as well as paying tribute to the pioneer who put it together.

Todd Hignite
Consignment Director

ILLUSTRATION DEPARTMENT SPECIALISTS



ED JASTER – VICE PRESIDENT, HERITAGE AUCTION GALLERIES

From the very beginning, Ed Jaster seemed destined for the art business. His parents met while attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the 1940s, the same school their son would later attend. Subsequently, for some 20 years, Ed owned his own commercial art firm in Chicago, acquiring, trading, and selling world class collections of American photography, illustration art, and vintage comic books. Ed brought his vast experience and expertise in collectibles to Heritage Auctions in 2002.



TODD HIGNITE – CONSIGNMENT DIRECTOR

Todd is the founder and editor of the critically lauded publication *Comic Art*, which has been nominated for Eisner Awards every year of its existence and won a 2004 Harvey Award. He has extensive experience working in the art world, has been collecting original comic art and illustration art for the past 20 years, and is the author of *The Art of Jaime Hernandez/The Secrets of Life and Death*, and *In the Studio: Visits with Contemporary Cartoonists*, among other publications. He has also curated numerous exhibitions on comics and illustration art, including *R. Crumb's Underground*, which recently toured museums across the country.



ED BEARDSLEY – VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS

Ed Beardsley manages Heritage's Design District Annex and with 15 years of auction experience brings a special focus to our newer auction categories, including Modern & Contemporary Art, 20th Century Design, Furniture & Decorative Arts, Illustration, Western Art, and Texas Art, among others. Ed will also work closely with Heritage's principals to grow the company, lead initiatives to ensure excellent customer service, operational efficiency, and the strategic addition of new collecting categories at auction.



KELLY JONES – CONSIGNMENT COORDINATOR

Kelly Jones graduated from the University of Kansas with a BA in Art History in 2006. Previously she spent six years working in various capacities at both a Regional Artisan Gallery and a Framing Gallery. Kelly joined Heritage in 2007 and currently serves as Special Assistant to Ed Jaster and as Consignment Coordinator for the Illustration, American Paintings and Photography venues within the Fine Art Department.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THIS COLLECTION,
CONTACT TODD HIGNITE AT 214-409-1790 OR EMAIL TODDH@HA.COM .**



JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

Checkers

Oil on panel, 24.5 x 16.5 in.

Estimate: \$50,000-\$75,000

[Ha.com/7016-11070](https://www.ha.com/7016-11070)

SCHEDULE OF AUCTIONS FEATURING THE ESTATE OF CHARLES MARTIGNETTE

July 15, 2009ILLUSTRATION ART
July 16, 2009ART OF THE AMERICAN WEST
September 17, 2009GLAMOUR AND POP ART
December 9, 2009ILLUSTRATION ART
2010/2011, Quarterly.....ILLUSTRATION ART

Receive a FREE copy of either July catalog, or one from another Heritage category. Register online at HA.com/DM17141, or call 866-835-3243 and mention reference DM17141. The July 2009 Illustration Art and Art of the American West catalogs are available for viewing and bidding online at HA.com.

TX Auctioneer licenses: Samuel Foose 11727; Robert Korver 13754; Andrea Voss 16406 • These auctions are subject to a 19.5% Buyer's Premium.

(front cover)

GIL ELVGREN

*Bear Facts (A Modest Look;
Bearback Rider)*, 1962

Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

Estimate: \$30,000-\$40,000

Ha.com/7015-11036

(back cover)

EARL MORAN

A Run on Sugar

Oil on canvas,
24.25 x 19.25 in.

Estimate: \$9,000-\$12,000

Ha.com/7010-23052



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