Auction
20 July 2017
12 pm central
1440 W Hubbard St
Chicago IL 60642

Exhibition
29 June – 20 July 2017
10 am – 5 pm Monday – Friday
980 Madison Ave
New York NY 10021

THE ART OF
GIL ELVGREN
Gillette (Gil) Elvgren was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1914. After high school he studied architecture at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts before shifting his focus to art. He relocated to Chicago and enrolled at the American Academy of Art graduating in 1936. Around the same time he began painting pin-ups for the publisher Louis F. Dow, and many of his works were reproduced on military aircraft during World War II. Shortly after graduating, Elvgren found steady work as an artist for the prestigious advertising agency, Stevens and Gross working with Haddon Sundblom who would become his mentor and good friend. In 1944 Elvgren started working exclusively for Brown & Bigelow producing imagery for advertising and calendars, a partnership that would last nearly 30 years.

From working with important clients such as Coca-Cola and General Electric, to illustrating stories in publications such as Good Housekeeping, Redbook and The Saturday Evening Post, Elvgren established himself as one of the greatest in the field. A fine painter and excellent draftsman, his work portrayed the American dream through depictions of the comfort and convenience of the modern American lifestyle. Featuring idyllic family imagery to glamour girls and pin-ups, his work was widely distributed and popular both within the United States and with American soldiers abroad. Today, his work is being defined outside of its commercial value and Elvgren stands out as one of the most important pin-up artists of the 20th century.
In the early 1970s, Brown & Bigelow (B&B), a publishing company specializing in promotional products, sold off much of the original art used to illustrate its calendars, scratch pads, matchbooks, and other ephemeral products. B&B had initially found success employing popular artists such as Norman Rockwell and Maxfield Parrish, but subsequently became best known for publishing “pin-up” calendars by artists such as Rolf Armstrong, Gil Elvgren, Earl Moran, and Zol Mozert. With their depictions of glamorous models, movie stars, bathing beauties, and always fashionable but often provocatively dressed women, the pin-up artists captured the ambition of the 1940s and 1950s. When tastes changed in the 1960s, this style of work fell out of favor and was replaced by more graphic and largely women-centric depictions meant to reflect the changing cultural moment.

It is his edge that brings him into the realm of fine art. What is it about the work of Gil Elvgren that proved me right? Although at that point little was known about the depth and breadth of the field, I immediately responded to Gil Elvgren as he was clearly a master draftsman, highly skilled as an oil painter, and his work had an edge that I recognized but had yet to fully understand. Charles went on to become one of the premier dealers in the overall field of original pin-up art. At the heart of his collection were several dozen Elvgren paintings that he hid away on his bedroom walls.

Ten years later, while exploring the galleries in the Soho neighborhood of NYC, I came across the Louis Meisel Gallery. Louis is a specialist in photorealist art, and his gallery shows works by the best in the field. I went back to his gallery and introduced Louis to the work of Gil Elvgren. He immediately recognized the quality of the work, its photorealist aesthetic, and asked me to curate a show in his gallery. In the spring of 1983, we did just that. Nothing sold but we had a great time. I put the collection back in storage and thought little more about it. In the meantime, Charles and Louis joined forces in collecting and promoting pin-up art. Louis is a born researcher at heart and tried to catalog the nearly five hundred paintings done by Gil Elvgren, many of which were then known only from calendars and scratch pad covers. He and Charles published a compendium of pin-up art in 1986 which they titled The Great American Pin-Up. Containing over nine hundred illustrations, The Great American Pin-Up has gone through multiple editions and is still in print.

Unfortunately, Charles died at age 57 in 2008. His enormous collection of original pin-up art including several dozen Elvgrens fell out of favor and was replaced by more graphic and largely women-centric depictions meant to reflect the changing cultural moment. None are more revered than Norman Rockwell and Gil Elvgren, “the Norman Rockwell of pin-up artists.” Will Cotton, a prominent contemporary painter, speaks of being inspired by Gil Elvgren, and can be seen painting with a copy of an Elvgren tear sheet taped to his easel. While collectors are drawn to the mastery of Elvgren, it is in his edge that brings him into the realm of fine art. American pin-up artists, most notably Elvgren, have been called “the original Pop artists, speaking to the cultural moment.” The work of Richard Hamilton and Allen Jones, two seminal British Pop artists, make this clear with their incorporation of Elvgren imagery throughout their work. The expression of Surrealist ideas is perhaps a more important, though less recognized characteristic of Elvgren’s early works. During World War II, many European Surrealists fled to the United States. Their aesthetics, particularly the risks of the unconscious mind in the creative process, influenced many post-war artists. Freudian symbols abound in the work of Elvgren and are at the heart of many of the works from this collection. I will leave the exploration of this iconography to the future art critics who will put Gil Elvgren in his unique place in the canon of modern art.

A few notes on the collection: Charles Marigette and I remained friends until his death. He frequently tried to buy or trade art with me for another Elvgren to add to his hoard. He especially coveted the painting One for the Money which he felt was one of the great “All American Girl” pin-ups. Art Areas, on the other hand, wanted Something Bawdier, Something Blue, perhaps in an attempt to marry the bride of his dreams. Proto-Pop art imagery can be seen in Good Looking Where a blank television screen was used to provide space for advertising. By picturing the emerging medium of television and its commercial potential, this painting artfully juxtaposed the seminal best of Pop Art as art based on popular culture and the mass media, especially as an ironic comment on traditional fine art values. Freudian imagery can be seen in Popular Number, A Read Display, In the Red, Haven’t I Got Swell Eggs, and especially in Did Someone Whistle? with its open manhole, open purse with red lining, and “men at work” sign. In the Red also illustrates Elvgren’s thoughts on the contemporaneous art movement of Abstract Expressionism in a manner similar to Rockwell’s The Connoisseur. It can be seen both as a parody and homage to modernist sensibilities.
GIL ELVGREN
Nobody Can Pinch Me!
1946
oil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed ‘Elvgren’.
$50,000–70,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, The Great American Pin-Up, Cologne, 2014, pp. 181, fig. 255, illustrates this work | Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 91, fig. 224, illustrates this work.

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleson/Baritz Collection
GIL ELVGREN
A Neat Display
1953
oil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed ‘Elvgren’.
$50,000 – 70,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 105, fig. 302

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection

GIL ELVGREN
Something Borrowed, Something Blue
1947
oil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed ‘Elvgren’.
$40,000 – 60,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 83, fig. 206

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection
GIL ELVGREN
One for the Money
1954
oil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed 'Elvgren'.

$50,000–70,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 144–145, fig. 351. Illustrates this work.

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleson/Reitz Collection
GIL ELVGREN

104

Haven’t I Got Swell Eggs?

1946

oil on canvas

30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

Literature

Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pg. 96, fig. 223

Illustrates this work

Provenance

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection

105

GIL ELVGREN

On the Right Track (My Money Goes Faster than the Horses)

1949

oil on canvas

30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

Literature

Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pg. 96, fig. 222

Exhibited


Provenance

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection
GIL ELVGREN

In the Red

1950

oil on canvas

30¼ h × 24¾ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$50,000–70,000

Literature

Charles G. Martinette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 115, fig. 71

Illustrates this work

Exhibited


Provenance

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleensky/Ritz Collection
**GIL ELVGREN**

107

*Popular Number*

1953

oil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

**Literature**

Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, *Gil Elvgren*, Cologne, 2013, pg. 104, fig. 300

Illustrates this work

**Exhibited**


**Provenance**

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection

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108

*Good Looking*

1950

doil on canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

**Literature**


Illustrates this work

**Exhibited**


**Provenance**

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection
GIL ELVGREN

Cee Bee (To Hold) (Fascinating Figures)

1953

oil on canvas

30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)

Signed 'Elvgren'.

$50,000–70,000

Literature

Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pp. 100, fig. 243
Illustrates this work

Exhibited


Provenance

Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN

Oleson/Britz Collection
GIL ELVGREN

This Bicycle’s Built for Woo

1947
don canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pg. 90, fig. 226, illustrates this work.

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection

GIL ELVGREN

Did Someone Whistle?

1947
don canvas
30 ¼ h × 24 ¼ w in (77 × 62 cm)
Signed ‘Elvgren’.

$40,000–60,000

Literature
Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Gil Elvgren, Cologne, 2013, pg. 89, fig. 220, illustrates this work.

Exhibited

Provenance
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul, MN
Oleshansky/Ravitz Collection
Each Lot in a Wright Auction or Wright Catalogue is offered subject to the following Terms and Conditions of Sale (“Terms”), as supplemented in writing or otherwise by us at any time prior to the sale. By Registering to Bid, Bidding, or otherwise purchasing a Lot from Wright, you agree to be bound by these Terms. In these Terms, “we,” “us,” “our,” “Wright” or similar terms refer to Wright, Wright, Ltd., and any of its agents, and “you,” “your,” “buyer” or similar terms mean a person bidding on or buying a Lot at a Wright Auction, Private Sale, Wright Now Sale or otherwise through us. Please see Section 9 below for the meanings of capitalized terms or phrases that are not defined elsewhere in these Terms.

1 BIDDING AT AUCTION

Prerequisites To Bid, you must Register to Bid with us in advance of the sale. In addition to our general registration requirements, we reserve the right to require: (a) photo identification; (b) bank references; (c) a credit card; and/or (d) a monetary deposit which will be refunded immediately if you do not submit the highest bid on a lot and will be applied to any Purchase Price Bid.

Assumed Costs and Risks By Bidding, you understand that any Bid you submit can and may be regarded as the Purchase Price Bid for a particular Lot; accordingly, you agree to assume personal responsibility to pay the Purchase Price Bid, plus the Buyer’s Premium and any additional charges that become due and payable in connection with your purchase of a Lot; and that upon the failure of the auctioneer’s hammer or other indication by the auctioneer that bidding has closed for a particular Lot, if your last Bid is the Purchase Price Bid for that Lot, you agree to purchase the Lot and assume all responsibility to pay the Purchase Price Bid, plus the Buyer’s Premium and fees relating to the execution of such Bids. Wright has no control over, and assumes no responsibility for, the conduct, privacy policies, or practices of any third-party websites or services. You expressly release Wright from any and all liability arising from your use of any third-party website or service. We may apply any such money or treat any such property in any manner permitted under the Uniform Commercial Code and/or any other applicable law. We hereby grant as the right to prepare and file, any documents sought by us to protect and confirm our security interests, including, but not limited to a UCC-1 Financing Statement.

2 PAYMENT FOR AND COLLECTION OF PURCHASES

You Pay Buyer’s Costs If your Bid results in a Purchase Price Bid (or you agree to pay the purchase price for a Lot as a part of a group of Lots) on the fall of the hammer or otherwise, you agree to pay the following charges associated with the purchase of such Lot:

- Hammer Price (for Auction Sale) or Lot purchase Price (for Wright Now Sales and Private Sales), plus Buyer’s Premium (for Auction Sales) which is 25% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) up to and including $10,000; 20% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) in excess of $10,000 up to and including $100,000; and 15% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) in excess of $100,000. An additional premium will be added to any successful bid accepted through a third-party site, if any.

Collectively, the “Buyers Costs”. All purchases will be subject to state sales tax in Illinois or New York unless the buyer has provided us with a valid certificate of exemption from such tax.

Payment Procedure You agree to pay all Buyer Costs immediately following Wright’s acceptance of the Purchase Price Bid unless other arrangements have been approved by Wright in advance. If Wright approves of such other arrangement for payment, Wright may at its discretion require you to make a non-refundable down payment on Buyer Costs. All payments must be made in US Dollars, in any of the following acceptable forms of payment:

- Cash
- Check, with acceptable identification
- Visa, MasterCard or American Express
- Wire transfer

Wright reserves the right to charge and collect an additional 5% of payment made by credit card.

Title and Risk of Loss Title to a Lot purchased in accordance with these Terms shall not pass to the buyer until Wright has received the Buyer Costs (including clearance of checks and wire transfers). We reserve the right to delay delivery of or otherwise prevent access to any purchased Lot until Wright has received all Buyer Costs, notwithstanding passage of title, risk of loss to a Lot passes immediately to buyer upon Wright’s acceptance of a Purchase Price Bid. All sales are final.

Security As security for full payment to us of all amounts due from the buyer and prompt collection of your purchased Lots is accordance with these Terms, we retain, and the buyer grants to us, a security interest in any Lot purchased by the buyer in accordance with these Terms (and any proceeds thereof), and in any other property or money of the buyer in our possession or control (including payment of storage fees and administrative expenses of handling such matter), without any further liability to the buyer. You agree that this remedy is reasonable in light of the costs Wright would have to incur to continue to store and process purchased Lots after sale.

Breach If a buyer fails to make timely payment as required in these Terms, or breaches any other covenant, representation or warranty in this Agreement, we shall be entitled, in our discretion, to exercise any remedial remedy legally available to us, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lien: the sale of the Lot to the non-paying buyer, including the sale of any other Lot to the same buyer (whether or not paid), selling the Lot, at public or private sale, with or without reserve, to the highest bidder for a price exceeding the buyer’s reserve. Without delay, the buyer shall deliver title and possession of the Lot to the buyer, and shall execute, at the buyer’s expense, a power of attorney in our favor to execute such instrument of transfer as we may require.
- Resale: if any alleged violation of a representation or warranty is alleged as the basis of a default, in addition to any remedies provided above, we will attempt to resell the Lot and will credit the buyer for storage and handling expenses, unless such credit is waived in writing by the buyer. We will give the buyer the right to inspect the Lot and to be present during the resale, and we will agree to sell the Lot at a price and under terms satisfactory to the buyer. We will not agree to sell the Lot for less than our reasonable costs.

Export, Import and Endangered Species Licenses and Permits Before bidding for any property, prospective buyers are advised to make their own inquiries as to whether a license is required to export a lot from the United States or to import it into another country. Prospective buyers are advised that some countries prohibit the import of property made of or incorporating plant or animal materials, such as ivory, coral, crocodile, ivory, rhino, butterflies, Brazilian rosewood, rhinoceros horn or tortoiseshell, irrespective of age, percentage or value. Accordingly, prior to bidding, prospective buyers considering export of purchased lots should familiarize themselves with relevant export and import regulations of the countries concerned. It is solely the buyer’s responsibility to comply with these laws and to obtain any necessary export, import and endangered species licenses or permits. Failure to obtain a license or permit or delay in doing so will not justify the cancellation of the sale or any delay in making full payment for the Lot. As a courtesy to clients, Wright will advise clients who inquire about Lots containing potentially regulated plant or animal material, but we do not accept liability for errors or for failing to advise on Lots containing protected or regulated species.

Delivery Buyer is solely responsible for collection of purchased Lots from Wright facilities, including making arrangements and paying all costs associated with packing and delivery. We may, as a courtesy to the buyer, provide or arrange packing, shipping or similar logistical services, or refer the buyer to third parties who specialize in these services. Any such services referred, provided or arranged by us are at the buyer’s sole risk and expense, we assume no responsibility for any act or omission of any party in connection with any such service or reference, and we make no representations or warranties regarding such parties or their services. You expressly release Wright from any and all liability arising from your use of any third-party website or service.

Storage, Abandonment and Related Charges All purchased Lots not collected from Wright’s facilities by buyer or buyer’s authorized agents within thirty (30) days following the Sale Date, will become subject to storage fees of not less than $5 per day. A late payment fee equal to 1½% per month may be assessed on any Buyer Costs remaining unpaid thirty (30) days following the Sale Date. If a purchased Lot has not been collected from within sixty (60) days after the Sale Date, and Wright has not consented to continue to store the Lot, the buyer will be deemed to have defaulted under these Terms, and, in addition to any other remedies we may have at law or equity, we shall be entitled to fiscosell on the Security Interest by selling each Lot and using the proceeds from such sale for any purpose (including payment of storage fees and administrative expenses of handling such matter), without any further liability to the buyer. You agree that this remedy is reasonable in light of the costs Wright would have to incur to continue to store and process purchased Lots after sale.

T E R M S A N D C O N D I T I O N S
Confession of Judgment If you default in a payment of one or more Purchase Price Bids under this Agreement, you hereby authorize any attorney to appear in a court of record and confess judgment against you in favor of Wright for the payment of such Purchase Price Bids and all related Buyer Costs. Accordingly, the confession of judgment may be without process and for any amount due on this Note including collection costs and reasonable attorney’s fees. This authorization is in addition to all other remedies available to Wright.

3 LIMITED WARRANTY

As used in this Agreement, “Lot” means the owner of a Lot offered for sale at a Wright Auction, “Registering to Bid” means providing Wright with your complete, accurate contact information (including address, phone and email) and a current, valid credit card number (including security code), and (i) in the case of phone or absentee bidders, a properly completed Wright bid form and (ii) in the case of online bidders, registration with such authorized third-party online auctioner service providers described on our website on the How to Bid page. Reserve has the meaning given in Section 5. Sale Date means, in the case of Wright Auctions, the date of the closing of bidding for a particular Lot and acceptance of the Purchase Price Bid for such Lot; in the case of all other sales by Wright, the date Wright agrees in writing to sell a Lot to a buyer. Security Interest has the meaning given in Section 7. Seller means the owner of a Lot offered for sale at a Wright Auction, Private Sale, Wright Now Sale or other sale administered by Wright. Terms has the meaning given in the Introduction to this Agreement. Wright Auction means the sale of Lots to the public through competitive bidding administered by Wright (including sales administered through a third-party Internet auctioner authorized by Wright). Wright Catalogue means the design catalogues published by Wright which features Lots available at particular Wright Auctions. Wright Now Sale is a sale of a Lot consigned to Wright by a third party, other than posted on Wright’s website directly or solicited after a Lot fails to sell at auction.

5 COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Wright and its licensors will retain ownership of our intellectual property rights, including, without limitation, rights to the copyrights and trademarks and other images, logos, text, graphics, icons, audio clips, video clips, digital downloads, and the “look and feel” of, the Wright website and each Wright Catalogue. You may not obtain any rights of ownership, use, reproduction or any other rights thereto by virtue of these Terms or purchasing a Lot. You may not use any of our trademarks or service marks in any way.

6 SEVERABILITY

If any provision of these Terms is held by any court to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the invalid/illegal/unenforceable aspect of such provision shall be disregarded and the remaining terms of this Agreement shall be enforced in accordance with the original document and in accordance with applicable law.

7 GOVERNING LAW

These Terms shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the law of the State of Illinois, and, by Registering to Bid or Bidding in the Wright Auction (whether personally, by telephone or by agent), you agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state and federal courts located in Cook County, Illinois in connection with any matter related to these Terms, the Wright Auction or other sale of a Lot to you by Wright.

8 EXPENSES

In addition to the foregoing, you agree to pay to Wright or Seller on demand the amount of all expenses paid or incurred by Wright and Seller, including attorney’s fees and court costs paid or incurred by Wright or Seller in enforcing or enforcing any of its rights hereunder or under applicable law, together with interest on all such amounts at 1.5% per month (the “Enforcement Costs”) within thirty (30) days of the buyer’s receipt of Wright’s invoice for such Enforcement Costs.

9 DEFINITIONS

The following terms have the following meanings: Author and Authorship have the meanings given in Section 3. Bidding Bid or place a Bid means a prospective buyer’s indication or offer of a price he or she will pay to purchase a Lot at a Wright Auction which conforms with the provisions of Section 1. Buyer Costs has the meaning given in Section 3. Buyer’s Premium means the following for any Lot: (i) 25% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) up to and including $100,000; (ii) 20% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) in excess of $100,000 up to and including $200,000; and (iii) 15% of the Hammer Price (or part thereof) in excess of $200,000. An additional premium will be added to any successful bid accepted through a third-party site.