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## **Days Before Election, Presidential Signatures in High Demand at Swann Galleries' Autographs Auction**

**New York**—On **November 1**, a mere nine days before the American Presidential election, **Swann Auction Galleries** offered an autograph album signed by 18 presidents, starting with Abraham Lincoln and ending with Barack Obama. Fourteen presidents signed the album on a single page, to make for a head-spinning who's-who of powerful Americans. The album, which sold to a collector for \$60,000, was the centerpiece of an eclectic and well-attended **Autographs** auction.

Presidents and historic political superstars performed exceptionally well in the sale. A Letter Signed by Samuel Huntington as Governor, informing the Governor of New Jersey that Connecticut had ratified the Constitution, sold for \$36,400—over ten times the high estimate and an auction record for a letter signed by Huntington. Various Partly-printed Documents Signed by George Washington achieved high prices, including a 1768 Virginia lottery ticket, which sold for \$7,250, and the 1783 military discharge of Edward Keyser from the Second New York Regiment, which brought \$13,750.

One outstanding lot was a Clipped Signature by Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon religion. The fragment was cut from a letter that closed, “your friend” and on the verso mentioned the town of Plymouth, a site of spiritual relevance to Mormons. Bidders over the phone, online and in attendance pushed the price to nearly twenty times the estimate—it eventually went to a collector for \$13,750.

Also in the sale was an Autograph Letter Signed by Claude Monet to his friend, the artist and art critic Gustave Geffroy, inviting him to visit the garden “resplendent with flowers” in Giverny, where Monet painted his famous water lilies. The letter, dated July 14, 1891 and still in the original envelope, sold for \$8,125. An Autograph Letter Signed by Edvard Munch to Judge J. Roede stated that his handyman will continue to assist in his painting, though he will no longer be able to garden or grow asparagus. The undated letter, in Danish, went for \$3,250.

There was no shortage of musicians' signatures in the sale, led by Sergei Rachmininoff's Autograph Musical Quotation dated and Signed, which sold to a collector for \$7,000. Meanwhile, an Autograph Note Signed by Gustav Mahler with the salutation “Dear Director” in German sold above its estimate at \$6,240. A poster featuring inkblots, each signed by a member of the Beatles with Ringo, the shortest Beatle, signing the shortest inkblot and inscribing his height, sold for \$5,750 after frenzied bidding.

Swann Galleries' Autographs Specialist Marco Tomaschett said, “Presidential autographs performed well, demonstrating that this election season has not diminished enthusiasm for the presidency. We are also seeing collectors bid enthusiastically for popular culture icons, while autographs of fine artists and classical musicians continue to increase in value.”

\*All prices include Buyer's Premium

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