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## **The Neil Leifer Photographic Collection**

**Widely recognized for photographically capturing the great Muhammad Ali like no other, the Legendary Sports Photographer to sell his own work along with his riveting collection of printed images by other Legendary 20th Century Photographers**

It is rare that one individual is so accomplished in his or her field of endeavor that that person's name is recognized globally. But so it is for Neil Leifer and his world of sports photography. On December 2 & 3, Guernsey's will be presenting Mr. Leifer's personal collection of his own photographic prints and a broad array of noteworthy prints he has received over his lifetime from other highly-regarded photographers from all fields of photography. The approx. seven hundred lot event (of which 96% will be sold without minimum reserve) will be held live at New York City's Bohemian National Hall and available to absentee bidders on both [liveauctionneers.com](http://liveauctionneers.com) and [invaluable.com](http://invaluable.com).

Leifer's remarkable career was born on his sixteenth birthday, December 28, 1958, when he somehow managed to find his way onto the field at Yankee Stadium for the NFL Championship between the New York Giants and Baltimore Colts. That game, more than half a century later, is still often referred to as "the greatest football game ever played." Leifer's picture of Allan Ameche scoring the winning touchdown in "sudden death" is considered today to be a classic.

With more than one hundred and seventy of his photos appearing on Sports Illustrated's covers and another forty on the covers of Time Magazine, there is barely a sports story or a major news event that Neil hasn't documented. When a big moment or person in sports history, politics, or entertainment was in the news, Neil was almost surely there with his camera, positioned to capture the very essence of the event's "big climactic moment."

Although many of the most memorable images from baseball, football, basketball, hockey, golf, horse racing, the Olympics and virtually any other sport one can think of can be traced back to a memorable photo taken by Neil, for many it is his work within the world of boxing that most resonates. And while Neil has taken compelling shots of the likes of fighters from Sugar Ray Robinson to Sugar Ray Leonard, and from George Foreman to Mike Tyson, it has been his career-long relationship with the legendary Muhammad Ali that will forever stand the test of time.

In June of this year, the world paused for a moment when the great Muhammad Ali passed away. One would imagine that there wasn't a spot on this planet where he wasn't memorialized. The image most often used to celebrate the late Champ was that of a young Ali (who had only recently changed his name from Cassius Clay) challenging the fallen Sonny Liston to rise off the canvas. That iconic photograph, often referred to as "the greatest sports photograph of all time" was, of course, taken by Neil Leifer.

Remarkably, this auction will contain nearly one hundred classic photographs of Ali, many of them unpublished, and many of them signed by the late Champ. Without question, one of the most

compelling lots in this event will be that image of Ali standing over Liston printed decades ago using the Dye Transfer method (a now unavailable technique that produced the highest caliber color prints) and mounted alongside Neil's Leifer's "working press" credentials that put Leifer front row ringside. As luck would have it, this was exactly the place from which to capture the iconic image on that fateful 1965 night in Lewiston, Maine. The following inscription appears at the base of the photo: "To Neil Leifer, thank you for such a great picture - From Muhammad Ali."

Although in and of itself an auction devoted to Neil Leifer's photographic accomplishments is noteworthy, the photographer's own work represents only half this auction. As it turns out, half a century ago when Neil's work started attracting attention, he found a new hobby, which over years became an obsession. As an ardent admirer of other great photographers, Leifer began reaching out to them to trade his photographs for prints of theirs. And so it happened that Neil Leifer assembled a world-class photography collection documenting the 20th Century. By contacting, and ultimately befriending the likes of Alfred Eisenstaedt, Carl Mydans, Martha Holmes, Margaret Burke White, Annie Leibovitz, David Kennerly, Arnold Newman, Gordon Parks, Mary Ellen Mark, Dmitre Kessel, Ralph Morse, Hy Peskin, Joe Rosenthal, Ozzie Sweet and dozens of other legendary photographers, he built a remarkable collection of original prints, all personally autographed by the masters who created these compelling, lasting images.

Whereas Neil's work has primarily been focused on the field of sports, these many other greats were involved in every aspect of photography. Imagine bidding on vintage prints of Eisenstaedt's "Time Square Kiss", a provocative image of Marilyn Monroe by Milton Green, Nat Fein's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic shot of Babe's Farewell at the Stadium, or Martha Holme's riveting picture of Jackson Pollock at work.

More than simply great photographic prints, the images that together constitute the Neil Leifer Collection are memorable,,, and remarkable. To learn more about this compelling, mid-December auction, please contact Guernsey's.

## **ABOUT GUERNSEY'S**

In its fortieth year, Guernsey's has built a reputation as the auction house known for representing the most extraordinary properties. From the largest auction in history (the ocean liner S.S. United States) to vintage racing cars on to artwork from the Soviet Union, pre-Castro Cuban cigars and the \$3 million baseball, the firm has few rivals when it comes to the presentation of wildly diverse artwork and artifacts. The John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, Princess Diana, Elvis Presley, Jerry Garcia, John Coltrane, Dick Clark, Mickey Mantle and the Beatles events were all conducted by Guernsey's.

Guernsey's is particularly proud of its work with the Library of Congress in the preservation of the complete Rosa Parks Archive. In the midst of its series devoted to the legendary, Holocaust-related poster collection of Dr. Hans Sachs, other upcoming sales in 2015 include the Urban Archaeology Collection, Historic Artifacts from the Kennedy White House, Atocha Undersea Treasures, and a remarkable, recently-discovered work by Pablo Picasso.

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