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Johnny Winter, The Auction

The Blues / Rock Legend's Iconic Guitars and hundred of other treasures to be sold by Guernsey's

"... A 130-pound, cross-eyed albino with long fleecy hair playing some of the gutsiest, fluid blues guitar you ever heard." So said Rolling Stone in 1968 when describing a young, raw and riveting Johnny Winter. Through the decades, his music thrilled millions and for many, the treasures he left behind will be both poignant and magical. On September 30 and October 1 at Gibson Brands New York Showroom (once home to the iconic recording studio the "Hit Factory"), the Johnny Winter Collection will be sold at one wild, unreserved Guernsey's Auction.

From his east Texas roots, Johnny Winter motored through the Austin clubs and onto a global stage. Many remember him for his distinct covers of songs including "Johnny B Goode" by Chuck Berry, and "Highway 61 Revisited" by Bob Dylan, as well as the original "Still Alive and Well" and "I'm Yours and I'm Hers." Often accompanied by his brother Edgar, Johnny also shared the stage with his blues idols B.B. King and Muddy Waters, and gave a spectacular performance at Woodstock. At the time of his death in 2014, he was recording with Eric Clapton, Dr. John, Billy Gibbons, Joe Perry, and Brian Setzer for the album Step Back, released posthumously.

Johnny Winter is prominently included on Rolling Stone's list of 100 Greatest Guitarists, so of course no auction would be complete without his collection of three dozen guitars. Many vividly remember the musician's love affair with Gibson's uniquely shaped Firebirds, all five of which are in the sale, including the iconic instrument that Johnny played live with Muddy Waters. Johnny also banged out song after song on his metal resonators, the instruments he affectionately called "garbage cans with strings," some of which were uniquely crafted for him. And though they appear almost toy-like, Winter's three Lazer guitars gave some of the most powerful sounds of his career. These, and assorted wonderful vintage instruments, constitute the artist's personal collection, which also includes the simple wooden ukulele—his very first guitar—that he is shown with around the age of ten in family photos.

On stage, Johnny Winter's stiletto-thin frame was often draped in memorable outfits and customized accessories. Rings, necklaces, hats (sweat stains and all), belts, straps, scarves and more were trademarks of his style. And the auction has them all! So complete is this collection that it even includes a clump of Johnny's actual beard with photos verifying the shearing.

For fans and collectors, there are many extremely rare rock and blues posters and vintage photographs documenting early appearances at clubs now long gone. And to be sure, these great graphics are not limited to images of Johnny; Janis Joplin, Muddy Waters, Ike and Tina Turner, B.B. King and Jimi Hendrix were just some of the fellow musicians who Johnny knew and admired, and whose items he treasured.

One of the most compelling sections of the sale will be Johnny Winter's notebooks, handwritten in the late 1960s and '70s and filled page after page with songs he composed. But these notebooks, and the items noted above, only begin to give a sense of the many hundreds of lots in this two-day auction being held live at one of the coolest venues imaginable. (Of course, those unable to attend in person will be able to bid via the internet on liveauctionneers.com and invaluable.com.)

To find out more about this unparalleled auction, please visit www.guernseys.com or contact the auction house directly at its NYC headquarters. But apologies in advance if during our conversation, we ramble on about the great Johnny Winter.

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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