



A popular French bisque “Bebe Triste” in an unusual size 13 awaits the beginning of the auction as customers mingle in the background. This beautiful French bisque by Emile Jumeau sold for \$13,225.



American portrait of Cissy, by Alexander, 1960, likely a special commission, left its \$3,500 high estimate far behind when it sold at \$18,400.



Two attendees of Theriault’s January 11 auction study the movements of the “Little Girl with Butterfly Net” automaton by Leopold Lambert. It sold at \$10,925.

Theriault’s Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary With Legendary Huguette Clark Doll Auction

Auction Action In Santa Barbara, California



This rare 26-inch French bisque art character, 225, Jumeau doll, dressed in a couturier costume with a parasol, in pristine unplayed with condition, and preserved in original box with unique color-tinted label, went to \$113,500, with plenty of cheering and clapping from the audience as it sold inhouse.

This lovely lady, a splendid musical automaton, “Elegant Lady Reclining on Recamier” by Leopold Lambert, circa 1885, sold at \$48,300 for a rare, intricate and artistic model.



Review by
Antiques and The Arts Weekly
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Photos Courtesy Theriault’s



French musical automaton “Shepherdess with Surprise Lamb” by Jean Roulet, Paris, circa 1880, with seven intricate movements was estimated at \$12/18,000 — the 24-inch shepherdess sold at \$29,900.



A fine French bisque bebe by Emile Jumeau, with a stunning couturier costume by Ernestine Jumeau, with its original box and in unplayed with condition, realized \$26,450.

never knew who she was — all our dealings were with her lawyer.”

Clark was the 104-year-old daughter of W.A. Clark, the Gilded Age copper baron. When she died in 2011, she and her father left a legacy that spanned from the American Civil War all the way to the Obama administration. This fascinating life was documented in the *New York Times* best-selling book, *Empty Mansions*, by Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell Jr.

Among the treasures she left behind in her Fifth Avenue Manhattan penthouse were paintings by Monet and Renoir, violins by Stradivarius, jewels from Cartier and her famed collection of rare antique dolls. “For years after she died, collectors kept asking about her dolls,” Florence said, “where are they and what’s happening with them?” they asked. We were thrilled when the opportunity to auction the collection came to us, especially considering our long-time relationship with her and her dolls.”

The collection comprises extraordinary dolls and automata from the French golden age of 1860-90, as well as selections of sought-after early Japanese cultural dolls and architectural miniatures. A small collection of historically relevant dolls was curated by Theriault’s and retained by Bellosguardo for inclusion in the home display.

A commemorative catalog was prepared for the auction, which includes many historical references concerning the life of Clark, including such unique correspondences as that with Christian Dior, the iconic fashion house which created custom costumes for some of her Nineteenth Century fine French bebes.

The top lot of the sale was a French bisque art character doll, 225, by Jumeau (\$25/35,000). The 26-inch standing doll with a bisque socket head with a perfectly oval face of an older child, was offered in her couturier costume with parasol and the original box.

Strong bidding across platforms ended when an inhouse bidder won it at \$113,500 — and the audience cheered.

Three lots later, a rare and stunningly beautiful petite French bisque bebe A.T., by Andre Thuillier, circa 1882, sold amid great enthusiasm to a gallery bidder at \$66,600. Estimated at \$8/11,000, the 9-inch bebe sported a wooden fully-jointed body with straight wrists, dainty antique costume, undergarments, socks and shoes, and her blue eyes were surrounded by a waist-length mohair blonde wig.

Other fine bebes also exceeded estimates, including a French bisque blue-eyed bebe triste in marquis costume by Emile Jumeau, size 9 (\$11/15,000); Jumeau’s sad-faced signature model known as Bebe Triste, circa 1882, the rare smallest size, just 20 inches tall, sold at \$39,100. Another bebe triste, so called for its sad, wistful expression, realized \$35,650 going to an inhouse bidder who could see first-hand the 29-inch Emile Jumeau model, circa 1880, sculpted by Carrier-Belleuse for Jumeau, with a lovely antique costume of bronze silk and blue velvet, a bonnet with silk ball fringe edging, and leather shoes signed “Paris Bebe 14.”

A French bisque brown-eyed poupee by Adelaide Huret in a fine early gown more than doubled its high estimate, selling at \$34,500.

Coming as a surprise, according to Florence, and offered as the last lot of the day, was a doll belonging to Huguette Clark since childhood, a 12-inch bisque bebe named Suzette, which was offered with her old wooden box with other outfits, some handmade, and an estimate of \$600/900. According to Chris Sattler, Clark’s personal assistant for more than a decade, Huguette spoke often of her favorite childhood doll, named Suzette, which she kept her entire life “in an old box with the clothes



A rare 9-inch and stunningly beautiful petite French bisque bebe A.T., by Andre Thuillier, circa 1882, sold to a gallery bidder at \$66,600, far above its \$8/11,000 estimate, which caused loud clapping from the inhouse bidders.

she played with.” Bidders responded to the history of this especially pretty bebe with gentle expression wearing an old lace dress, and she sold “for \$27,450 to the doll collection of the newly opened Barry Museum in Virginia which will share exhibition of the doll with Bellosurdo,” Theriault said. “The museum was hoping it could win something from the collection and is delighted with this doll.” It is likely this doll is shown cradled in Huguette’s arm in the portrait painted by Tade Styka, and also held by her in the garden photograph of Huguette posed with her mother and sister.

Along with her dolls, Clark also collected automata from the French golden age of 1860-1890. Among the top ten lots on Saturday were three automaton dolls—each selling for well above estimates: a splendid musical automaton “Elegant Lady Reclining on Recamier” by Leopold Lambert, circa 1885 (\$22/34,000) rose to the occasion, selling at \$48,300 for the rare, large (23 inch long) intricate and artistic model.

Standing upon a velvet covered flat base, a 26-inch bisque-head lady with large brown glass paperweight eyes, performs a series of six complicated movements in realistic and synchronic rhythm when wound. By Gustav Vichy, circa 1885, this wonderfully preserved rare, all-original, grand-size automaton with elegant movements, and gorgeous original costume, sold at \$33,350 (estimate \$12/17,000).

Rounding out the top three automata was a French musical automaton “Shepherdess with Surprise Lamb” by Jean Roulet (\$12/18,000), Paris, circa 1880. With a commissioned bisque portrait head from Emile Jumeau and seven intricate movements, including the baby lamb in the basket lifting and turning its head and bleating, the 24-inch shepherdess sold at \$29,900.

Clark was known for her voluminous correspondence across many categories. She carried on unique correspondences with Christian Dior, commissioning him to design costumes for her Nineteenth Century bebes. One such doll was a French bisque brown-eyed bebe E.J., Emile Jumeau, which sold at \$14,950. From the Parisian atelier of Christian Dior, his outfit comprised a jacket, brocade vest with gilt buttons, silk pants, white shirt and an additional jacket having pattern to match the vest and custom leather boots marked “12 E. Jumeau Medaille d’Or Paris.” Included were three original handwritten letters from M. Gervais of Christian Dior to “Chere Madame,” dated from April 1959 until May 1962, detailing the project such as the unsuccessful visit to an antiquarian to find the desired antique fabric, the naming of the costume as “Petit Prince,” the acknowledgment that a second jacket in the same fabric as the vest, was desired, and finally the “infiniment plaisir” that Madame loved the costume.

A French bisque “Bebe Phonographe” by Emile Jumeau as “Cantatrice” also dazzled in a Christian Dior costume and bidders sent the price well beyond its \$9,000 high estimate to also sell at \$14,950. Wearing blue silk gown with woven silver metallic borders and fine lace trim over matching cotton gown,



All-original French musical automaton “Elegant Lady with Lorgnette,” Gustav Vichy, circa 1885, a grand-size automaton with elegant movements and gorgeous original costume was a clear favorite when it sold at \$33,350 (\$12/17,000).



Offered as the last lot of the long 413-lot auction was a doll belonging to Huguette Clark since childhood. The 12-inch bisque bebe named Suzette was offered with her old wooden box with other outfits, some handmade. Going to the newly opened Barry Museum in Virginia, this especially pretty bebe with gentle expression sold for \$27,450 (\$600/900).

both pieces had the cloth label of the Parisian couturier, and with ivory satin slippers with Jumeau signature and Paris.

Rounding out other top lots of the 413-lot auction that Theriault said “seemed to go on and on, there was so much enthusiasm out there,” was an all-original French bisque brown-eyed bebe, Emile Jumeau, with a gilt letter armband reading “Bebe Jumeau” and gilt lettered shoes reading “Bebe Jumeau Med d’Or Paris 5” (\$5/7,500). The 12-inch doll garnered multiple bids until she finally sold at \$33,350. A



A French bisque bebe “Bleuette” with original au nain bleu trunk and costumes, circa 1938 era, had an \$800-\$1,000 estimate but realized \$19,550.



This French bisque bebe triste by Emile Jumeau, sold at \$35,650. The doll was acquired by Huguette Clark in 1986 at Theriault’s auction of the Helen Jo Payne collection (it was on the cover of the catalog) and was featured on the cover of Theriault’s 2020 50th Anniversary calendar.



A French bisque brown-eyed poupee by Adelaide Huret in a fine early gown more than doubled its high estimate, selling at \$34,500.

21-inch fine Jumeau in an original Ernestine Jumeau courtier costume and with her early box in unplayed with condition, estimated at \$8/11,000, sold at \$26,450.

Theriault’s auction on January 12 was a continuation of dolls, although none from the Clark Collection. As Florence Theriault said, “The second auction brought record prices for ‘A Circle of Dolls’ as we called it.”

Another auction of Clark dolls is scheduled for February 22 and 23 at the The Westin Baltimore Washington Airport, BWI, 1110 Old Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, Md., when the “Dolls in the Back Cupboard” will be offered.

Florence stated, “These are the dolls that were duplicates or dolls that didn’t meet the criteria we set for the first auction. Also on offer will be Clark’s collection of BAPS dolls. She [Huguette] must have cornered the market on these dolls, and many were commissioned by her; she even commissioned a doll house from them and was actively involved in its construction.”



French bisque blue-eyed bebe triste by Emile Jumeau in rare ivory satin Marquis costume (\$11/15,000) sold at \$39,100.



All-original French bisque brown-eyed bebe, Emile Jumeau, in original couturier costume with a gilt letter armband (\$5/7,500) ended up at \$33,350.

Florence concluded, “In the end, people wanted something of Huguette. It felt like the Shirley Temple auction [Theriault’s auctioned the Shirley Temple doll collection July 14, 2015], everyone wants something from this collection to remember her and sort of have part of her.”

All prices, with buyer’s premium, as reported by the auction house. For further information, www.theriaults.com or 410-224-3655.



Doll energy fills the room as collectors circle around the tables with excitement for the event.