

Milestone Auctions' Jan. 13 Antique Toy Extravaganza presents international mix of rarities from fine collections

Featured: Boxed Mechanical Popeye & Olive Oyl Tank, super-rare blue/red arms Diamond Planet Robot, Marx Big Loo Moon Robot prototype, Batman Tank

WILLOUGHBY, OHIO, USA, January 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Toys, toys and more toys! That's what's in store for collectors at Milestone's big January 13 New Year's Antique Toy Extravaganza in suburban Cleveland. The 732-lot sale includes some of the most sought-after of all European, American and Japanese playthings from the golden era through postwar-production years. Many have their rare factory boxes and present in excellent original condition. Marquee highlights include a super-rare boxed Linemar Mechanical Popeye & Olive Oyl Tank, a stellar [Diamond Planet Robot](#), and a Marx Big Loo robot prototype with impeccable documentation and provenance from its original designer.



John Elsbury with the boxed Linemar Mechanical Popeye & Olive Oyl Tank he kept ever since receiving it 66 years ago as a 7th birthday gift from his parents. Estimate: \$40,000-\$60,000

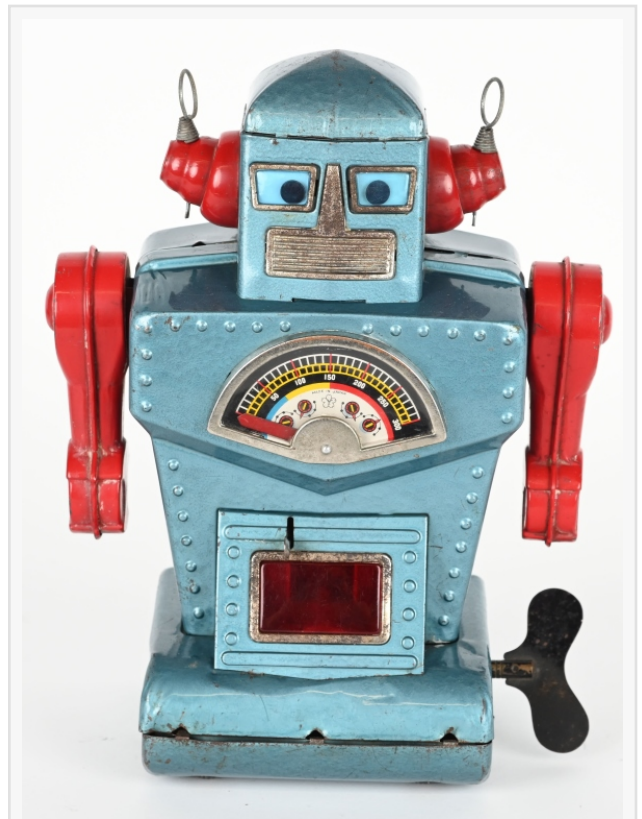
The toy hobby is still buzzing about the boxed Popeye & Olive Oyl Tank that set a world auction record on April 9, 2022 when Milestone auctioned it for \$105,000. One of perhaps a half-dozen examples known to exist, the toy had emerged from Australia, a fact that became widely known after the sale. But, contrary to the old adage, lightning did strike twice in the same spot. Worldwide postsale coverage led to the discovery of yet another [boxed Popeye tank](#) in Australia, from a different, completely unrelated source.

The elusive character toy's consignor, John Elsbury of Western Australia, received the tank in 1957 as a 7th-birthday gift from his parents. He clearly remembers being instructed by his mother to sit outside Randall & Edwards jewelry store in downtown Kalgoorlie while the secretive

purchase was being made. Sixty-five years later, after stumbling across an online article about the \$105,000 price paid for a similar-looking tank, Elsbury starting digging through old boxes and eventually located his birthday toy. It was still in its colorful pictorial box and even retained its original 2-shilling price tag. Elsbury got in touch with Milestone's co-owner Miles King, and arrangements were made for the tank's shipment to Ohio. Now a top entry in the January 13 event, it will be offered with a pre-sale estimate of \$40,000-\$60,000.

In case Popeye and Olive would like some field fortification on auction day, they won't have to look far. The sale also features a great-looking Yonezawa Batman Tank, all-original and complete with its vinyl Batman driver. One of the rarest of all Batman toys, the bright red tin friction vehicle is emblazoned with Japanese writing, bat logos and nice-looking cartoon images of both Batman and Robin. The scarce toy is in working order and carries a \$15,000-\$25,000 estimate.

Exceptional Japanese robots and space toys from the same production period as the comic-character tanks will be jockeying for the auction spotlight as well. A fantastic Yonezawa 10-inch windup Diamond Planet Robot is an especially rare variation with a silvery-blue body and red arms and ears. "Any Diamond Planet Robot is like a Faberge egg to robot collectors. It was made in two



Yonezawa (Japan) windup Diamond Planet Robot, 10in tall, very rare variation with blue body and red arms. All original and complete. Estimate: \$20,000-\$30,000

“

We feel very fortunate to have so many incredible toys from advanced collections in one sale. Many are high-end, museum-quality pieces, including rare variations and prototypes.”

*Miles King - Co-Owner,
Milestone Auctions*

color variations – red body with blue arms and ears, and the even rarer blue body with red arms and ears, like the one in our auction. They simply do not turn up for sale anywhere,” said Miles King. The auction example is complete and all-original, with its distinctive googly eyes, “oxygen meter” [on chest], and large windup key. “It’s a great example of what is arguably the most sought-after of all robots,” King continued. “Only a few have ever come to market, so it’s sure to attract strong competition.” Estimate: \$20,000-\$30,000

The word “prototype” is music to any toy collector’s ears, and that certainly applies to robot fans, who will have a real treat in store at this auction: THE prototype for [Marx’s Big Loo Giant Moon Robot](#). Standing 38 inches tall and of a form that is

identical to the production robot that followed, the unpainted silver Big Loo was acquired directly from the toy's designer, Harry Evanoff, in 1963. It has production numbers on its back and retains a Marx sample tag that says "7650, Big Loo, Erie, Return to Harry E." The auction lot also includes archival letters from Louis Marx about production issues and returns, and other unique documents such as a test-sample letter and a timesheet showing hours spent in development. The godfather of all Big Loo robots has been assigned a \$15,000-\$25,000 estimate.

It has been quite some time since a selection of early European tin windups has come to market that was as exciting, or as large, as the selection being offered by Milestone. There are hundreds of rare examples from the premier German and French manufacturers of a century ago, including Lehmann, Fernand Martin, Gunthermann, Victor Bonnet, Saalheimer & Strauss, Distler and so many more.

Lehmann favorites include a boxed Snick Snack (gentleman walking dogs), \$8,000-\$10,000; Boxer Rebellion, \$6,000-\$8,000; Walking Down Broadway (aka Mr. & Mrs. Lehmann with Dog), \$6,000-\$8,000; and an early, boxed flywheel toy called Going to the Fair, \$3,000-\$5,000. More than three dozen charming French windup toys by Fernand Martin include a very rare Soldat Bulgare (Bulgarian Soldier), boxed and in spruce condition, \$4,000-\$6,000; Roller Skater, \$4,000-\$5,000; Diablo Sticks Player with box, \$3,500-\$4,500; and a boxed Field Worker, \$3,000-\$4,000. Many very early Gunthermann toys will be on hand to delight bidders with their actions, including Clown Violin and Bassoon Players, \$4,000-\$5,000; Man on High-Wheel Bike with Dog, \$2,500-\$3,500; and a windup Flapping Wing Airplane, \$4,000-\$6,000.



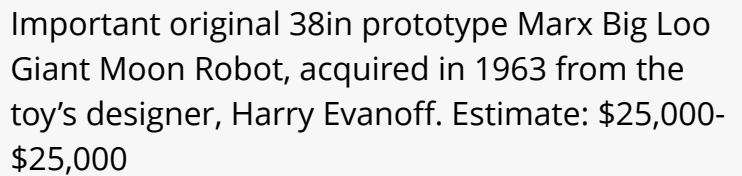
Rare German tin flywheel motorcycle, 9in long with spoked wheels and rider figure. All original with working flywheel mechanism. Estimate: \$5,000-\$7,000



Yonezawa (Japan) tin friction Batman Tank, 8½in long. All original and complete with vinyl Batman driver. Estimate: \$15,000-\$25,000

A revved-up fleet of six dozen antique motorcycle toys runs the gamut from the earliest hand-painted productions through prewar Japanese and German bikes and the highly colorful designs from the period immediately following World War II. Some are even boxed. Three coveted flywheel motorcycles by M&K (Germany) are among the top lots in the category. Two are impressive 9-inch single-cylinder depictions with well “dressed” riders steering primitive handlebars. Each is estimated to be 10 to 12 inches long. Each has its own great look and fine detail. Manufacturers represented in this group are: EBA, Fischer, Kico, Ingap, Gely and more.

"We feel very fortunate to have so many incredible toys from advanced collections in one sale. Many are high-end, museum-quality pieces. Also, there are some unusual buying opportunities in the mix, like the rare variations and prototypes, which toy buyers always respond to very favorably," King said.



Milestone's Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024 New Year's Antique Toy Extravaganza auction will be held at Milestone Auctions' gallery at 38198 Willoughby Parkway, Willoughby (suburban Cleveland), OH 44094. Start time: 10AM ET. All forms of remote bidding will be available, including absentee, by phone, and live online through Milestone's bidding platform or LiveAuctioneers. To reserve a phone line or for additional information about any item in the sale, call 440-527-8060 or email info@milestoneauctions.com. Online: www.milestoneauctions.com

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