



OCTOBER 20, 2014 UPCOMING AUCTIONS

## Breker to tally early computer in tech auction Nov. 14-15

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COLOGNE, Germany – In May 2013 Auction Team Breker set a new world record for selling a 1976 Apple I computer for \$671,400 (516,500 euros). The Apple I is the iconic first product of today’s most successful technology company, yet its inventor Steve Wozniak might be surprised to discover that a MAC computer that existed 18 years before Apple Inc. was founded is being offered by Auction Team Breker at its Nov. 14-15 auction of science and technology which will also include fine toys and automata.

LiveAuctioneers.com will provide Internet live bidding.

M.A.C. is the acronym for a Mechanical Analogue Computer built by the English firm Air Trainers Link Ltd. of Aylesbury in 1958. Capable of solving a range of complex equations, this early flight simulator was the first tape-controlled computer system in the world. Input and output data was presented on a moving paper recorder. Although kits were also offered for the technically ambitious, a glance at the complex machinery of shafts, levers and pulleys explains why its case was the size of a large wardrobe (64 x 77 x 24 inches) – a far cry from today’s compact Mac products. This example was discovered on the British Isle of Wight and is believed to be one of only two still in existence. The other is one at the Science Museum London. Auction Team Breker estimates the early computer at \$13,500-\$27,000 (10,000-20,000 euros).



Capable of solving a range of complex equations, this 1958 Mechanical Analogue Computer, or M.A.C., was an early flight simulator. Auction Team Breker image

Another important piece of historic technology on offer is a combined radio detector and Morse receiver of circa 1910, a unique laboratory prototype of early wireless technology (estimate: \$6,500-\$10,000 / 5,000-8,000 euros). Also included in Breker’s auction is a rare Marconi Magnetic Detector, or “Maggie,” of the sort that once outfitted R.M.S. Titanic’s radio room. The device is credited with saving some 700 lives on board the ill-fated passenger ship (estimate: \$10,000-\$15,000 / 8,000-12,000 euros).

A more recent historic event is the subject of a satirical automaton of Russian President Vladimir Putin signing the agreement of Accession of the Crimea to Russia on March 18, 2014. The work of well-known author and automata-maker Christian Bailly, Paris, this automaton was modeled on a late 19th century automaton “Pierrot Writer” by Gustave Vichy. Bailly portrays the Putin at a desk; as the light of the old-fashioned lamp dims, the president grows weary, his head drops and his hand pauses. Then, waking again, he turns up the lamp and continues writing (estimate: \$33,000-\$46,000 / 25,000-35,000 euros).

An imposing forte piano grand format musical box by Nicole Frères carries an interesting history. The property of J.A. Guichard, a merchant in Manila during the 1860s, it was discovered in a farmhouse in rural Maine in 1959, carefully restored and then enjoyed by summer visitors in one of the oldest privately owned mechanical music museums on the East Coast (estimate: \$13,000-\$20,000 / 10,000-15,000 euros).

Two rare developments in recorded sound from the turn of the century feature in Breker’s auction. The first, a Polygraphon by Polyphonwerk of Leipzig, combines a traditional disc music box with a 78 rpm record player (estimate: \$10,000-\$15,000 / 8,000-12,000 euros). The second, a Bébé Lioretgraphe, combines a beautiful bisque-headed doll by Jumeau with an ingenious celluloid-cylinder phonograph patented by the French clockmaker and sound pioneer Henri Lioret in 1893 (estimate: \$6,500-\$10,000 / 5,000-8,000 euros).

Among the traditional tin toys is an elegant open motor coach with passengers by Gebr. Bing – the first model automobile by this maker – from circa 1900 (estimate: \$6,500-\$10,000 / 5,000-8,000 euros) and a fresh-to-the-market collection of over 70 tin toy motorcycles.