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Auction to Sell Items from Homes of Former President Kennedy

By Sam Peskin
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Beginning Tuesday in New York City, Sotheby's auction house is conducting a public sale of furniture, artwork, and other items from the homes of former President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. This auction is more modest than a previous 1996 Kennedy auction that brought in $34.5 million.

In preparation of its second sale of property from Kennedy family homes, Sotheby's has grouped together more than 700 items ranging from Mason jars to diamond brooches in a suite of rooms resembling a layout from a style magazine.

Sotheby's estimates the entire sale will only bring in about $1 million, and some lots have presale estimates below $200. However, the mystique associated with the family could inflate prices.

The sale includes items from the Kennedy and Onassis homes in New York City; Hyannis Port and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; Peapack, New Jersey; and Middleburg, Virginia, as well as furniture from the private family quarters of the White House.
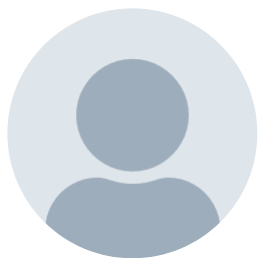
An 11th-century Khmer sandstone sculpture headlines the sale, and carries a presale estimate of $40,000 to $60,000.

David Redden, vice chairman of Sotheby's says, "Well, of course, the Kennedy family are inextricably woven into American history. They are American royalty,

the fascination with them absolutely continues, and this sale provides a really intimate glimpse into their lifestyle, particularly their country houses."

There are sofas, chairs including the rocking chairs that President Kennedy favored because of his bad back, and several sets of dishes.

The property for the auction was cosigned by Caroline Kennedy, who says in an introduction to the catalogue that she has given everything of historical significance to the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation and kept the things that mean the most to her and her children. She says a portion of the auction proceeds will go to the library foundation and other charities.

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