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George Washington Portrait Soars at Auction

Rosemary McKittrick's website LiveAuctionTalk.com offers anything and everything about the world of collecting. Visit the site. Sign up for a free weekly subscription.

/24-7PressRelease/ - Santa Fe, NM, May 28, 2008 -- Gilbert Stuart, the father of American portrait painting portrayed more than 1,000 famous people and their families on canvas. Stuart said he could tell a sitter's personality just by studying their features.

George Washington was a good example.

When Stuart painted Washington in Philadelphia in 1796, he told Maj. Gen. Lee, whose likeness he was also painting, the president had a temper he kept tightly under wraps.

A few days later, Gen. Lee sat eating breakfast with Washington and wife Martha.

"I saw your portrait the other day - "a capital likeness," said Lee, "but Stuart says you have a tremendous temper." "Upon my word," remarked Mrs. Washington, "Mr. Stuart takes a great deal upon himself, to make such a remark." "But stay, my dear lady," said Lee, "he added that the President had it under wonderful control."

With something close to a smile, Washington said, "He is right."

Stuart's likeness of Washington is the classic portrayal of America's first President. The 'Athenaeum' portrait, painted live, served as a model for countless copies.

It wasn't easy humanizing the larger-than-life Washington. Stuart admitted having trouble painting the President's face, especially his jaw, which was distorted by his new set of false teeth.

Washington's likeness was in big demand. Few painters copied Stuart's work better than his youngest daughter Jane. As his assistant, Jane was in a good position to understand her father's style.

On Feb 22, Northeast Auctions offered a portrait of Washington by Jane Stuart in its Manchester, N.H., auction. The 30 by 25 inch oil on canvas sold for \$194,000.

Read the entire article at <http://www.LiveAuctionTalk.com>

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LiveAuctionTalk.com is devoted to the rare, weird and wonderful objects people love to collect.

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Rosemary has provided auction coverage and analysis on thousands-and-thousands of antiques and collectibles sold since the column started 16-years ago. She includes auction sale results to give readers a feel for what their treasures are worth because the power of auctions is simple.

When the bidding stops and the hammer falls, the value of an item is set. The buyer, not the seller, sets the price, and this simple distinction cuts through all the chitchat about what art, antiques and collectibles are really worth. The emphasis is on today's values, not yesterday's wishful thinking.

Each week another new article is posted featuring a particular area of collecting.

• Every article showcases an auction item and how it fits into the big picture.

• A compelling, historical context is provided for the treasures people collect.

• Collecting tips are offered.

• Current prices realized are listed.

Rosemary is the co-author of *The Official Price Guide to Fine Art* published by Random House and received her training in the trenches working as a professional appraiser and weekly columnist.

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