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# Object Lesson

## Lichtenstein's Happy Tears

BY JACKIE COOPERMAN, PUBLISHED ON 03/30/2010

**OBJECT** Roy Lichtenstein's 1964 *Happy Tears*, a 38-inch-square magna on canvas, to be auctioned at Christie's New York on November 13.

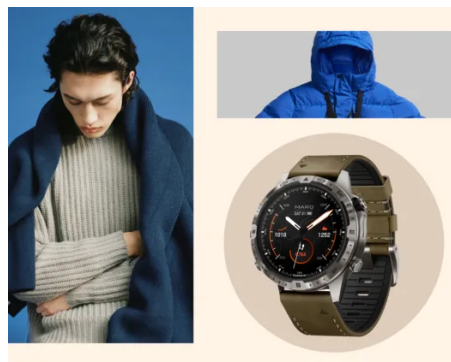
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**PROVENANCE** Philadelphia art collectors Robert and Janet Kardon bought the work through Manhattan dealer Leo Castelli in 1964 (they won't say what they paid, but experts estimate the cost then at less than \$2,000). Since then, with the exception of a traveling 1967-68 Lichtenstein exhibition, it has hung in their home. Careful tending has kept the painting in pristine condition, says Brett Gorvy, international co-head of postwar and contemporary art at Christie's.

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS** Part of the "Girl Comics" series painted between 1961 and 1966, *Happy Tears* is a twist on Lichtenstein's signature sad young women in ill-fated love affairs: Here the woman cries tears of joy. The artist's fame began with this series, says Patricia Tompkins, director of New York's James Goodman Gallery, which has handled Lichtenstein's work for over 30 years. "Probably the most important period for him is the women from the sixties," she says. "He was poking fun at the very American, true-love sorts of magazines. There's always a bit of melodrama in his pictures that's intended to be ironic." Equally notable, Gorvy says, is the brushwork. At this early stage in his career, Lichtenstein was still experimenting with grid and stencil techniques for applying his famous Benday dots. The canvas is signed and dated on the back.

**ESTIMATE** \$5 million to \$7 million.

*Christie's, 20 Rockefeller Plaza; 212-636-2000; [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com).*

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