



MEDIA ALERT | 21 OCTOBER 2021 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIG JOHN RETURNS TO ITS ORIGINAL LAND AFTER REACHING 6.6M€ AT AUCTION

AUCTION ON THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 2021 AT HÔTEL DROUOT



On Thursday 21 October 2021 at Hôtel Drouot auctioneer Alexandre Giquello offered the exceptional skeleton of the Big John triceratops for €6,651,100 including premium. Estimated to reach between €1,200,000 and €1,500,000, the animal aroused the fervour of collectors present in the saleroom, over the telephones and live on Drouot.com. The bids reached €6,651,100 (including fees), won by an American buyer after a long bidding battle. Big John thus returns to his original land.

Since its resounding arrival in Paris last September, this imposing specimen has entered the Guinness World Records® as the largest known triceratops skeleton.

"This result confirms the growing interest of connoisseurs in this category. It reveals a market that is now structured and favours exceptional pieces and impeccable provenance", added **Alexandre Giquello, auctioneer of the sale and President of the Drouot Group.**

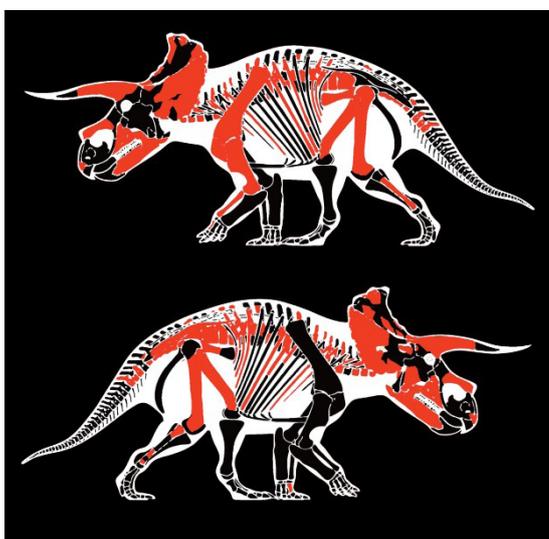
"The spectacular result achieved by Big John reflects the interest in this prodigious fossil and the significant restoration and scientific research work carried out since its discovery in 2014", said **Iacopo Briano, expert in palaeontology and natural history.**

Big John was the centrepiece of the Naturalia auction organised by auctioneer Alexandre Giquello at Hôtel Drouot, under the expertise of Jacopo Briano. This sale, which each year assembles the most impressive and aesthetic natural curiosities, had already been the scene of auctions of fossilised dinosaurs that have fetched millions of euros: two allosaurus sold for €1.4M (2018) and €3M (2020), and a diplocodus sold at €1.4M (2018).

Big John stands apart from his peers due to the exceptional size of his skull: 2.62m long and 2m wide. The animal's two largest horns are 1.1m long and over 30cm wide at their base, each capable of withstanding 16 tons of pressure.

A laceration in his collar bears witness to a duel with another, smaller, triceratops during which Big John would have sustained a wound. These violent combats took place during the lifetime of these animals, probably for reasons of territorial defence or courtship of a mate.

Big John lived in Laramidia, an island continent stretching from present-day Alaska to Mexico. He died in an ancient flood plain - the current Hell Creek geological formation (South Dakota, United States) - allowing the conservation of his skeleton in mud, a sediment devoid of any biological activity.



Big John, 60% complete skeleton and 75% complete skull. (real bones in red)

The fossilised bones were discovered by the geologist Walter W. Stein Bill in May 2014, and the excavation was completed during August 2015. The bones, still enveloped in rock, arrived in Trieste, at the Zoic workshop in October 2020. This renowned workshop, specialised in the restoration of prehistoric specimens since its creation forty years ago by Flavio Bacchia, has already given a second life to two of the four most important Triceratops discovered, now exhibited in international museums: Cliff, at the Boston Museum of Science, and his “cousin” at the Gwacheon National Science Museum in South Korea. Once again, the team of geologists and technicians has devoted thousands of hours of painstaking work to extract, clean, restore and catalogue each fossil in order to reconstruct the animal's skeleton.

Big John, over 60% complete and with a 75% complete skull, is both a miracle of nature and a work of art.

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