

## Sheer torture at New York auction house 古代刑具紐約拍賣會待沽



Above: Centuries-old torture instruments are on display, as part of a collection to be auctioned later this year by Arlan Ettinger, president of Guernsey's Auctions, in New York, on May 12, 2009.

PHOTO: AFP/EMMANUEL DUNAND

Below: A piece, used to silence a person by expanding it in their mouth, from the same collection displayed at Guernsey's auction house in New York, on May 11, 2009.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ERIC THAYER

上圖：五月十二日，有幾百年歷史的刑具在紐約展示，這套收藏今年稍晚將由格恩西拍賣公司總裁亞蘭·艾丁格親自拍賣。

照片：法新社／以馬內利·杜南德

下圖：五月十一日，這件用來撐開嘴巴、使人噤聲的刑具也出自紐約格恩西拍賣公司展示的另一套收藏。

照片：路透社／艾瑞克·塞爾

A New York auction house is offering a collection of what it says are centuries-old **torture** instruments.

"These are devices created to cause pain ... very diabolical devices," said Arlan Ettinger, president of Guernsey's Auctions.

"There is one pretty much to cause pain to any part of the body. It's fascinating but terrible."

The 252 items include **gruesome** instruments such as a tongue clamp, a chair covered in spikes and an iron glove that Ettinger said was used to "burn the flesh of your hand."

Ettinger, estimating the collection to be worth three to four million dollars, says the devices date to the 17th century or earlier, and come with rare books showing "early engravings of scenes of torture."

The bizarre collection was well known in the 19th century, touring Europe and exhibiting in New York in 1893, he said.

There is even a register of visitors to exhibitions in England and Germany as far back as the 18th century, he said.

According to Ettinger, the collection disappeared at the turn of the century until after World War II "when a Norwegian gentleman who was persecuted by the Germans for harboring Jews acquired the collection and brought it to the states."

"He died in the 1970s. The collection remained in his family hands. They thought that there is so much discussion of torture today that now was the time to bring this public."

The items might have been constructed to deliver pain, but there is a plan to give some of the proceeds to Amnesty International so that their sale helps fight modern torture, Ettinger said.

The alleged use of torture by the CIA is a **water cooler topic** in the US where the former administration of George W. Bush is under fire for allowing water boarding and other so-called "enhanced" interrogation techniques.

"Assuming that we will sell the collection, a portion of the proceeds will be going to Amnesty International and other organizations devoted to preventing torture in the future," he said.

(AFP)

紐約一家拍賣公司將拍賣一套有幾百年歷史的刑具。

格恩西拍賣會總裁亞蘭·艾丁格說：「這些都是設計來折磨人的工具...非常殘忍的工具。」

「其中有一件幾乎可以用來折磨身體的任一部位。非常吸引人，卻也非常嚇人。」

兩百五十二件拍賣品中，包括了像舌鉗、佈滿尖釘的椅子，還有艾丁格說用來「灼燒雙手」的鐵手套等駭人工具。

艾丁格預估這套收藏品價值約三到四百萬美元，並稱這些刑具的歷史可追溯到十七世紀或更早，還有數本極為珍貴、收錄了「早期刑求場景版畫」的書。

他說，這套奇特的拍賣品十九世紀時廣為人知，並曾於一八九三年在歐洲及紐約巡迴展出。

他說，早在十八世紀，英國和德國的民眾甚至得事前預約才能參觀展覽。

據艾丁格所言，這套刑具「十九世紀末、二十世紀初時曾一度消失，直到二次世紀大戰後才又出現」，當時一位因窩藏猶太人被德國人迫害的挪威籍男士得到了這套收藏，並將其帶入美國。

「他一九七〇年代過世後，這套收藏就一直由家族保管。他們認為現今有這麼多關於刑求的討論，所以現在是將這套收藏公諸於世的時候了。」

艾丁格說，這些物品或許原先是被當成折磨人的器具，但這場拍賣的部份收益將捐贈給國際特赦組織，幫助對抗現代的酷刑。

美國前布希政府就因為允許中情局使用水刑和其他所謂「改良式」審訊手段而飽受輿論抨擊。

「倘若我們賣出這套收藏品，其部份所得將轉捐給國際特赦組織和其他致力於防止未來刑求的組織。」

(法新社／翻譯：袁星豐)



### TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **torture** / tr / n.

酷刑 (ku4 xing2)

例: Torture is illegal in most jurisdictions.  
(酷刑在大部分的司法體系中都是不合法的。)

2. **gruesome** / grus m/ adj.

可怕的 (ke3 pa4 de5)

例: The DVD we rented was too gruesome for kids to watch.  
(我們租的那片DVD對兒童來說太恐怖了。)

### IDIOM POINT 重要片語

**water cooler topic**  
引發討論的話題

A **water cooler topic** is an event or issue that causes a lot of public discussion. The phrase originates from the water coolers in offices, where workers gather to chat.

「water cooler topic」就是引發輿論熱烈討論的事件或議題。這個慣用語源自於辦公室的飲水機，因為員工會聚在飲水機旁聊天。