

Online—and Off the Charts

TOP LOTS

THIS SUMMER SOTHEBY'S SET THE RECORD FOR THE single most expensive work sold on the Internet.

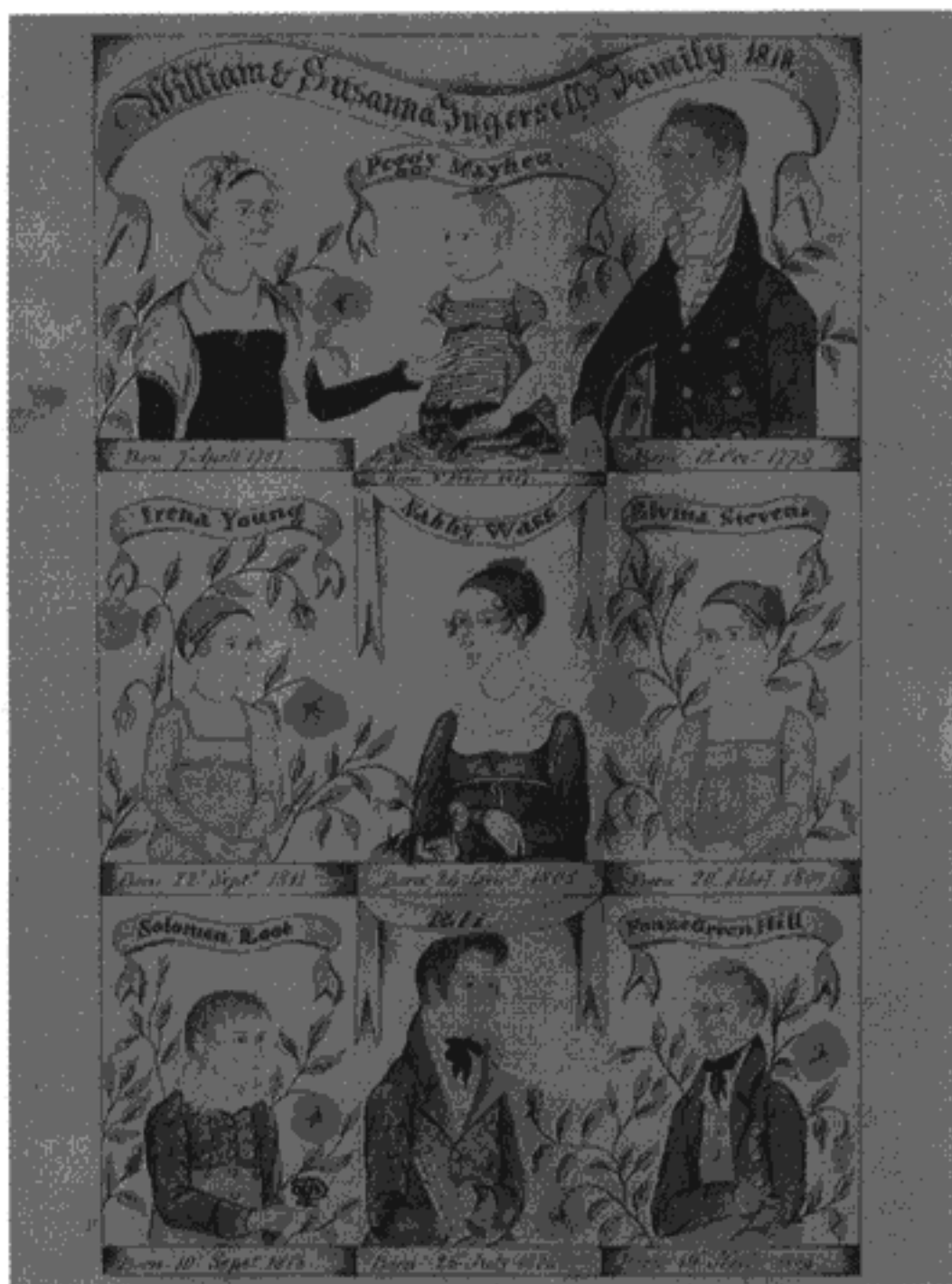
On June 29, TV producer Norman Lear and a business partner, Internet entrepreneur David Hayden, bought a copy of the *Declaration of Independence* for a whopping \$8.1 million, well beyond its \$4–6 million estimate.

In the world of online sales of art and collectibles, the *Declaration's* price is exceptional. But with new records being set every month, buyers are demonstrating a willingness to spend larger and larger sums on Internet purchases. To assess the high end of the online art market, *Art & Auction* consulted fixed-price art sites—eArtGroup.com, Guild.com and

Onview.com—as well as online auctioneers Artnet.com, Auctions.com (formerly Auction Universe), Circline, eBay's Great Collections (eBay's general site does not track sales), eHammer, eWolfs.com, iCollector, Sothebys.com and Sothebys.amazon.com.

We asked for the top lots sold online in the past year—from June 1, 1999, to June 1, 2000.

The results are in, organized below by category. (Where available, estimates are provided, as are the names of the sellers.) Do these high points suggest a promising future for the fermenting online art market? Judge for yourself.



Paintings

← **\$92,699/eHammer.com:** *The William and Susanna Ingersell Family Portrait*, an anonymous American folk painting from 1818. Sold after 57 bids on October 17, 1999.

▶ **\$57,200/Sothebys.com:** *Portrait of Rose Cropsey* (est. \$10–20,000), a circa 1863 oil on canvas by Jasper F. Cropsey. Sold after 69 bids on March 23, 2000.

\$53,475/eWolfs.com: *Emerald Garden*, an undated oil on canvas laid on panel by Ernest Lawson (1873–1939). Sold after 25 bids on September 30, 1999.

\$36,300/Sothebys.com: *La madeleine* (est. \$8,000–12,000), an undated oil on canvas by Edouard-Léon Cortes (1882–1969). Sold after 53 bids on May 20, 2000.

\$31,900/Sothebys.com: *Seascape* (est. \$8,000–12,000), 1886, an oil on canvas by William Trost Richards. Sold by Scott Nussbaum Antiques of Louisville, Kentucky, after 32 bids on January 29, 2000.

