LARRY RIVERS

Berdie with Cat
Oil on canvas, 1952
50 x 40 inches   127 x 101.6 cm
Signed, titled and dated on the verso (2xs - see below)
The canvas is signed, titled and dated two times, in separate directions

_Rivers, Birdie with Cat, 1952_

50 x 40 inches 127 x 101.6 cm

Provenance:
Acquired in exchange with his close friend and artist, Howard Kanovitz;
Estate of Howard Kanovitz

Attaching a singularly defining label to Larry Rivers as Rivers was a very complex artist.
Rivers was an accomplished Jazz musician, a painter, sculptor, poet, actor, television personality, filmmaker, an MC at nightclubs, a popular personality on the lecture circuit, author and teacher. He’s been aptly referred to as “a renaissance man,” but perhaps he’s most often recognized and ironically at times equally underappreciated as one of if not the key founding fathers of Pop Art.

Andy Warhol never made it a secret that he was influenced by Rivers art, but in perhaps a more revealing quote from the book “Popism” Warhol recognizes Rivers unique persona as an influential ingredient in the development of Pop Art. Warhol said, “Larry’s painting style was unique – it wasn’t Abstract Expressionism and it wasn’t Pop, it fell into the period in between. But his personality was very Pop.”

He was born Yitzroch Loiza Grossberg, in the Bronx, New York in 1923 to Samuel and Sonya Grossberg. In 1940 he began a career as a professional Jazz Saxophonist. He soon changed his name, after being introduced as “Larry Rivers and the Mudcats” at a New York City club. In 1942 he enlisted in the United States Army Air corps, but within a year was honorably discharged from the armed forces for medical reasons. In 1944 he studied music theory and composition at the Juilliard School of Music, where he met and became friends with Miles Davis and Charlie Parker.

In 1945, fellow musician Jack Freilicher showed Larry Rivers a painting by Georges Braque and in that same year after seeing the Cubist work, Rivers started painting. From 1947 to 1948 he studied in Hans Hofmann’s School of painting. Following his experiences with Hoffman, he continued his studies and in 1951, he received his BA in art education from New York University. Since graduating NYU in 1951, he received honorary doctorates from several other institutions.
In 1949 he had his first one-man exhibition at the Jane Street Gallery in New York. This same year, he met and became friends with John Ashbery, and Kenneth Koch.

In 1950 he met Frank O'Hara. This same year he took his first trip to Europe spending 8 months in Paris reading and writing poetry. Beginning in 1950 and continuing until Frank’s death in July of 1966, Larry Rivers and Frank O'Hara cultivated a uniquely creative friendship that produced numerous collaborations, as well as inspired paintings and poems. Beyond these more publicly recognized works, the two friends maintained a 15-year correspondence, exchanging numerous documents mostly comprised of letters with some poetry.

In 1951 Rivers’ works are shown by John Myers at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery where he continued to show annually (except 1955) for 10 years. A 1952 collaboration with Frank O'Hara included designing the stage set for O'Hara's play "Try! Try!".

In 1953 he completed Washington Crossing the Delaware. Of this seminal work, many years later, Rivers offered insight into the development of his persona by addressing the provocative nature of this work. In his Autobiography he wrote, “The idea of Larry Rivers was born with Washington Crossing the Delaware.”

In 1954 he had his first exhibition of sculptures at the Stable Gallery, New York. In 1955 The Museum of Modern Art acquired Washington Crossing the Delaware. This same year he won 3rd prize in the Corcoran Gallery national painting competition for “Self-Figure.” Rivers’ also painted “Double Portrait of Berdie” in 1955, which was soon purchased by the Whitney Museum.

The Whitney also acquired *Berdie in Red Shall*, 1953 for its collection:
In 1957 his mother-in-law Berdie Burger, subject of the famous work “Double portrait of Berdie” as well as the subject of many of Rivers other drawings and paintings died at age 66. This same year he and Frank O’Hara began work on “Stones,” a collaborative mix of images and poetry in a series of lithographs. This was the first project for Tatyana Grosman’s company ULAE. During this time he also appeared on the television game show “The $64,000.00 Question” where along with another contestant, they both won, each receiving $32,000.00. In 1958 he spent a month in Paris and played in various jazz bands.
In 1959 he painted Cedar Bar Menu I and II. This same year, adapted from a Jack Kerouac play, along with Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Peter Orlovsky, David Amram, Richard Bellamy, Alice Neel, Sally Gross, Pablo Frank, with narration by Kerouac, Rivers appeared in the film “Pull My Daisy.”

Rivers continued to cultivate a strong interest in collaboration, working with the poet Kenneth Koch on the collection of picture-poems New York 1959-1960. In 1961 he met Jean Tinguely; together they produced several collaborative works, including the “The Friendship of America and France” shown at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

Rivers first comprehensive retrospective in 1965 included 170 works comprised of paintings, drawings, sculptures and prints. The show toured five U.S. museums. Rivers prepared “The History of The Russian Revolution: From Marx to Mayakovsky” for inclusion at the final venue, an exhibition at the Jewish Museum. Of this work Rivers remarked: “it’s either the greatest painting-sculpture-mixed media of the 20th century, or the stupidest.”

In 1966 Rivers designed the sets and costumes for Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex; a performance with the New York Philharmonic under Lukas Foss. Rivers set the opera in a boxing ring, and dressed the chorus in sleeveless undershirts and sunglasses; the production outraged critics and audience alike.

The following year he traveled to central Africa to film the television documentary “Africa and I” with Pierre Gaisseau. This same year he participated in the Museum of Modern Art’s memorial exhibition for poet and curator Frank O’Hara.

In 1968 he returned to Africa with Gaisseau to complete the documentary film. The two narrowly escaped execution as suspected mercenaries.
In 1970 he began working with videotape. This same year he completed “Some American History” for the De Menil Foundation.

In 1976 he traveled to Russia at the invitation of the Union of Soviet Artists where he lectured in several cities on contemporary American art. Traveling with his son Steven Rivers, the two documented this trip; making videotapes along the way. Continuing to experiment with various mixed media, Rivers began producing works generated by combining color carbon paper, a technique that he demonstrated as a guest on the Dick Cavett show.

In 1978 he began work on the “Golden Oldies” series where, consistent with his efforts to investigate historical subject matter, he reexamines his own works of the 50’s and 60’s.


Commissioned by Jeffrey Loria in 1984, Rivers worked from 1984-85 on the “History of Matzoh (the Story of the Jews)” which was subsequently exhibited at The Jewish Museum, New York. In 2006, honoring Rivers’ desire to have this work exhibited in a more public venue, Jeffrey Loria donated “History of Matzoh” to Yale University.

Building on his earlier experimentation’s with three-dimensional works, Rivers developed a formula for creating three-dimensional relief paintings that focused on a broad range of subjects. He documented this technique in a film he made called “Duck Farm.”
In the 1990’s, Rivers work is either the subject of or included in a wide variety of comprehensive shows: A retrospective of his paintings and drawings, “Public and Private” opened at the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio in 1990 and toured the United States until 1992. In the fall of 1991, he was featured in an exhibition “Pop Art” at the Royal Academy of Arts in London and in “American Realism and Figurative Art 1952-1991”, an exhibition that traveled to five museums in Japan. The exhibition “Copier/Créer de Turner à Picasso, 300 Œuvres inspirées par les Maîtres du Louvre”, organized by the Louvre in Paris in 1993, included several of his works. “Hand-painted Pop: American Art in Transition 1956-62,” which originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and traveled to the Whitney Museum in New York in 1993, also included works by Rivers. One of his three dimensional works was selected for the exhibition “Slittamenti,” a segment of the 1993 Venice Biennale.

In 1992, Harper Collins, New York, Published Larry Rivers' Autobiography, “What did I do?” At the same time Rivers’ is also the subject of several scholarly monographs and videos, and a doctoral dissertation.

In 1993, a solo exhibition entitled “Art and the Artist” marked a thirty-year association with Marlborough Gallery in New York. The exhibition traveled to Marlborough in Madrid, Spain. In 1994 a show at the Nassau County Museum of Art entitled “Art After Art” featured paintings by Larry Rivers.

Rivers was also a central figure in the major exhibition entitled “Bop, Beat, and Beyond” in 1995 at Australia’s Museum of New South Wales. This show explored the connections between visual artists, musicians and writers of the beat period. He was also featured in the comprehensive exhibition “Beat Culture and the New America (1950-65)” at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1995.


In 2001 Marlborough presented a second “Fashion Show” which previewed, appropriately, at Lord & Taylor Department Store on fashionable Fifth Avenue in New York and moved on to Marlborough Gallery in Monte Carlo.

In 2002 Larry Rivers was as busy as ever with a major retrospective at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC and a show of early works at Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York in the spring. With another “Fashion Show” scheduled at Marlborough Gallery in the fall, Rivers continued working on fashion paintings up until three months before his death in August, 2002. Obituaries appeared in various newspapers and periodicals worldwide, with national coverage that included among others, Time Magazine and the front page of the New York Times, where they honored a formerly predicted front-page coverage of his passing.

Rivers’ works have begun to ‘make waves’ at auction- Privately, the known high price was paid by SFMOMA of $2,5 million.

RECENT AUCTION SALES –
1

**Larry Rivers**

**Title**
French money III

**Description**
signed, titled and dated '62 on the More ...

**Medium**
oil on canvas

**Year of Work**
1962

**Size**
Height 35 in.; Width 59.1 in. / Height 89 cm.; Width 150 cm.

**Misc.**
Signed, Inscribed

**Sale of**
Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, November 9, 2010 [Lot 00011]
Contemporary Art Evening Sale

**Estimate**
300,000 - 400,000 USD

**Sold For**
1,142,500 USD Premium Currency Converter

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2

**Larry Rivers**

**Title**
Africa I

**Medium**
Oil on Canvas

**Year of Work**
1961-1962

**Size**
Height 72.5 in.; Width 64.5 in. / Height 184.2 cm.; Width 163.8 cm.

**Misc.**
Signed

**Sale of**
Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, May 8, 1990 [Lot 00057]
CONTEMPORARY ART, PART I

**Estimate**
300,000 - 400,000 USD

**Sold For**
467,500 USD Premium Currency Converter

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3

**Larry Rivers**

**Title**
The journey

**Description**
Larry Rivers (1923-2002)The Journeysigned, titled and dated More ...

**Medium**
oil on canvas

**Year of Work**
1956

**Size**
Height 104 in.; Width 115 in. / Height 264.2 cm.; Width 292.1 cm.

**Misc.**
Signed, Inscribed

**Sale of**
Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 [Lot 00193]
Post -War And Contemporary Art Morning Session
**Larry Rivers**

4

**Title**
Marriage photograph II

**Description**
signed and dated 61 oil and collage on canvas

**Year of Work**
1961

**Size**
Height 72 in.; Width 60 in. / Height 182.9 cm.; Width 152.4 cm.

**Misc.**
Signed

**Sale of**
Sotheby's New York: Friday, May 9, 2008 [Lot 00056]
Property from the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection

**Estimate**
200,000 - 300,000 USD

**Sold For**
445,000 USD Premium

5

**Larry Rivers**

**Title**
Little French money

**Medium**
oil on canvas

**Year of Work**
1962

**Size**
Height 18 in.; Width 30 in. / Height 45.7 cm.; Width 76.2 cm.

**Misc.**
Signed

**Sale of**
Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 [Lot 00046]
Contemporary Art Evening Sale

**Estimate**
150,000 - 200,000 USD

**Sold For**
432,000 USD Premium
Larry Rivers

**Title:** Beyond Camels

**Description:** signed and dated 'Larry Rivers 80' (lower right); signed and dated again and titled

**Medium:** oil and graphite on canvas

**Year of Work:** 1980

**Size:** Height 39.4 in.; Width 31.5 in. / Height 100 cm.; Width 80 cm.

**Misc.** Signed, Inscribed

**Sale of:** Christie's New York: Thursday, May 16, 2013 [Lot 00165]

**Post-War & Contemporary Morning Sale**

**Estimate:** 350,000 - 550,000 USD

**Sold For:** 423,750 USD Premium

Larry Rivers

**Title:** The accident

**Medium:** Oil on Canvas

**Year of Work:** 1957-1957

**Size:** Height 82 in.; Width 90.5 in. / Height 208.2 cm.; Width 229.8 cm.

**Sale of:** Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 14, 2003 [Lot 00041]

**Post-War and Contemporary Art (Evening Sale)**

**Estimate:** 200,000 - 300,000 USD

**Sold For:** 410,700 USD Premium

Larry Rivers

**Title:** Welding wall

**Medium:** oil on canvas

**Year of Work:** 1958

**Size:** Height 70 in.; Width 79 in. / Height 177.8 cm.; Width 200.7 cm.

**Misc.** Signed

**Sale of:** Sotheby's New York: Thursday, November 10, 2005 [Lot 00154]

**Contemporary Art / Morning**

**Estimate:** 250,000 - 300,000 USD

**Sold For:** 352,000 USD Premium
Larry Rivers

**9**

**Title**: Dutchmasters - Blunts

**Description**: Larry Rivers (1923-2002) Dutchmasters (Blunts) signed, titled.

**Medium**: Oil and graphite on paper collage with scotch and masking tapes on panel

**Year of Work**: 1963

**Size**: Height 35.2 in.; Width 24.5 in. / Height 89.5 cm.; Width 62.2 cm.

**Misc.**: Signed, Inscribed

**Sale of**: Christie's New York: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 [Lot 00195] Post-War And Contemporary Art Morning Session

**Estimate**: 200,000 - 300,000 USD

**Sold For**: 337,000 USD Premium

**Currency Converter**

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**10**

**Title**: Untitled

**Description**: signed and dated '58 oil on canvas

**Year of Work**: 1958

**Size**: Height 46 in.; Width 44.5 in. / Height 116.8 cm.; Width 113 cm.

**Misc.**: Signed


**Estimate**: 100,000 - 150,000 USD

**Sold For**: 314,500 USD Premium

**Currency Converter**
11. Larry Rivers
   - **Title**: Kings
   - **Description**: signed, titled and dated summer 1960 on the reverse, on canvas
   - **Year of Work**: 1960
   - **Size**: Height 52 in.; Width 60 in. / Height 132 cm.; Width 152.4 cm.
   - **Estimate**: 150,000 - 200,000 USD
   - **Sold For**: 314,500 USD

12. Larry Rivers
   - **Title**: July
   - **Medium**: oil on canvas
   - **Year of Work**: 1956
   - **Size**: Height 24.8 in.; Width 32 in. / Height 62.9 cm.; Width 81.3 cm.
   - **Estimate**: 150,000 - 200,000 USD
   - **Sold For**: 313,000 USD

13. Larry Rivers
   - **Title**: French money
   - **Description**: signed; signed, titled and dated 1962 on reverse, on canvas
   - **Year of Work**: 1962
   - **Size**: Height 17.9 in.; Width 40.5 in. / Height 45.4 cm.; Width 102.9 cm.
   - **Sale of**: Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, November 12, 2008 [Lot 00190] Contemporary Art Day Sale
   - **Estimate**: 300,000 - 400,000 USD
14  Larry Rivers
Title  FINAL VETERAN: THE LAST CIVIL WAR VETERAN IN THE COFFIN
Medium  Oil on Canvas
Year of Work  1961-1961
Size  Height 80 in.; Width 51 in. / Height 203.2 cm.; Width 129.5 cm.
Misc.  Signed
Sale of  Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, May 2, 1989 [Lot 00059]
CONTEMPORARY ART PART I
Estimate  150,000 - 200,000 USD
Sold For  286,000 USD Premium Currency Converter

15  Larry Rivers
Title  Dutchmasters II
Medium  Oil on Canvas
Year of Work  1963-1963
Size  Height 42 in.; Width 50 in. / Height 106.7 cm.; Width 127 cm.
Misc.  Signed, Inscribed
Sale of  Sotheby's New York: Tuesday, May 13, 2003 [Lot 00014]
Contemporary Art (Evening)
Estimate  300,000 - 400,000 USD
Sold For  254,400 USD Premium Currency Converter
16. Larry Rivers
Title: Parts of the body: French vocabulary lesson III
Medium: Oil on Canvas
Size: Height 72.5 in.; Width 48 in. / Height 184.2 cm.; Width 121.8 cm.
Estimate: 150,000 - 200,000 USD
Sold For: 231,000 USD

17. Larry Rivers
Title: Untitled
Description: signed and dated '57 oil on canvas
Medium: Oil on canvas
Year of Work: 1957
Size: Height 20.6 in.; Width 25 in. / Height 52.4 cm.; Width 63.5 cm.
Misc.: Signed
Estimate: 150,000 - 200,000 USD
Sold For: 230,500 USD

18. Larry Rivers
Title: King of spades
Description: oil on canvas
Medium: Oil on canvas
Year of Work: 1960
Size: Height 40.9 in.; Width 34 in. / Height 104 cm.; Width 86.4 cm.
Estimate: 100,000 - 150,000 USD
Sold For: 218,500 USD
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Year of Work</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Sale Details</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Sold For</th>
<th>Currency Converter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Drug Store</td>
<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Height 84 in.; Width 65.5 in. / Height 213.4 cm.; Width 166.4 cm.</td>
<td>Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 [Lot 00299] Contemporary Art Day Auction</td>
<td>150,000 - 200,000 USD</td>
<td>197,000 USD Premium</td>
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<td>Buick painting</td>
<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Height 48 in.; Width 60 in. / Height 121.9 cm.; Width 152.4 cm.</td>
<td>Christie's New York: Wednesday, November 14, 2007 [Lot 00131] Post War and Contemporary Art Morning Session</td>
<td>100,000 - 150,000 USD</td>
<td>193,000 USD Premium</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Drugstore</td>
<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Height 83.5 in.; Width 65 in. / Height 212 cm.; Width 165.1 cm.</td>
<td>Christie's New York: Wednesday, November 9, 2005 [Lot 00253] Post-War and Contemporary Art (Morning Session)</td>
<td>60,000 - 80,000 USD</td>
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22. Larry Rivers
Title: Pots and Pans
Medium: Oil on canvas
Year of Work: 1958
Size: Height 47 in.; Width 45.8 in. / Height 119.4 cm.; Width 116.3 cm.
Misc.: Signed
Estimate: 150,000 - 200,000 USD
Sold For: 180,000 USD Premium

23. Larry Rivers
Title: Dutch masters
Medium: Oil on Canvas
Year of Work: 1963
Size: Height 32 in.; Width 40 in. / Height 81.3 cm.; Width 101.6 cm.
Misc.: Signed
Estimate: 60,000 - 80,000 USD
Sold For: 178,500 USD Premium

24. Larry Rivers
Title: The family
Medium: Oil on Canvas
Year of Work: 1954-1955
Size: Height 82 in.; Width 72 in. / Height 208.3 cm.; Width 182.9 cm.
Misc.: Signed, Inscribed
Sale of: Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg New York: Thursday, May 15,
2003 [Lot 00026]  
Contemporary Art, Part I  
Estimate 120,000 - 180,000 USD  
Sold For 174,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter]  

25  
Larry Rivers  
Title Double nude  
Description signed and dated More...  
Medium oil on canvas  
Year of Work 1957  
Size Height 32.3 in.; Width 40 in. / Height 82 cm.; Width 101.6 cm.  
Misc. Signed  
Estimate 180,000 - 250,000 USD  
Sold For 170,500 USD Premium [Currency Converter]  

26  
Larry Rivers  
Title U.N. Painting  
Medium Oil on Canvas  
Year of Work 1959-1959  
Size Height 96 in.; Width 96.5 in. / Height 243.8 cm.; Width 245.2 cm.  
Misc. Signed  
Estimate 100,000 - 125,000 USD  
Sold For 165,000 USD Premium [Currency Converter]
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<th>No.</th>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Year of Work</th>
<th>Size</th>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>RAINBOW REMBRANDT II</td>
<td>Acrylic on Canvas</td>
<td>1977-1977</td>
<td>Height 66.5 in.; Width 76 in. / Height 169 cm.; Width 193 cm.</td>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>Sotheby's New York: Wednesday, May 9, 1990 [Lot 00403] CONTEMPORARY ART, PART II</td>
<td>150,000 - 200,000 USD</td>
<td>165,000 USD Premium</td>
<td>Currency Converter</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>French money</td>
<td>Oil on Canvas</td>
<td>1965-1965</td>
<td>Height 34 in.; Width 59.5 in. / Height 86.4 cm.; Width 151.1 cm.</td>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>Phillips, de Pury &amp; Luxembourg New York: Tuesday, November 12, 2002 [Lot 00128] Contemporary Art, Part II</td>
<td>120,000 - 180,000 USD</td>
<td>163,500 USD Premium</td>
<td>Currency Converter</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Larry Rivers</td>
<td>Me II</td>
<td>Oil on Canvas</td>
<td>1959-1960</td>
<td>Height 115.9 in.; Width 186.5 in. / Height 294.5 cm.; Width 473.7 cm.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christie's New York: Thursday, May 15, 2003 [Lot 00117] Post-War and Contemporary Art (Morning Session)</td>
<td>80,000 - 120,000 USD</td>
<td>147,500 USD Premium</td>
<td>Currency Converter</td>
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</table>
Larry Rivers

Title: Lions on the Dreyfus Fund IV
Description: Larry Rivers (1923-2002) Lions on the Dreyfus Fund IV signed, titled, inscribed
Medium: oil, graphite, board and paper collage on fiberboard
Year of Work: 1964
Size: Height 57 in.; Width 57 in. / Height 144.7 cm.; Width 144.7 cm.
Misc.: Signed, Inscribed
Estimate: 100,000 - 150,000 USD
Sold For: 146,500 USD Premium

Currency Converter