

Auctions & Exhibitions



COPLEY TO AUCTION ‘MAGNIFICENT SEVEN’ CROWELL DECOYS

Seven major works by famed carver A. Elmer Crowell will be offered by Copley Fine Art Auctions, July 15 and 16, in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The “magnificent seven” will be among a number of valuable decoys at the firm’s 2009 Sporting Sale.

Originally commissioned by New England sportsman Harry V. Long between 1910 and 1920, and descended through the Long family, this extraordinary group of carvings has never been offered together on the market.

“This is the most important

collection of Crowell works to have ever come up for auction,” said Stephen B. O’Brien, chairman of Copley Fine Art Auctions. “For decoy collectors, the birds are akin to discovering the Holy Grail times seven.

A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) is renowned for his fine waterfowl and shorebird carvings, which along with miniature decoys, he created at his shop in East Harwich, Massachusetts.

“There had been whispers of the existence of these birds for years and to have the opportunity to bring them to market is an honor for our firm,” said O’Brien. “We have estimated the group’s value

Nesting Canada Goose, with an estimated value of \$600,000-\$900,000, will be among seven Elmer Crowell decoys to be offered by Copley Fine Art Auctions.

between \$1.6 and \$2.6 million. However, these birds are some of the pinnacle works by one of the world’s most revered decoy and folk art carvers of all time, so in some regards these estimates may be irrelevant.”

Included in this iconic group is the third and final piece of Crowell’s famed “Long Trinity” of Canada geese – a gander described by Crowell scholar Gladys Hopkins as “the best of



the three.” Estimated at \$600,000-\$900,000, this exquisite decoy is considered to be one of the finest waterfowl carvings in existence.

The other “Long Trinity” goose carvings are no strangers to the spotlight. The hissing goose sold for \$605,000 in April 2004 at a Guyette & Schmidt auction. The preening Canada goose was featured in the *Wall Street Journal* in May 2000 when it sold at a Sotheby’s and Guyette & Schmidt auction for a then record \$684,500. The same goose appeared on the cover of the *Boston Globe* in September 2007, when O’Brien brokered the bird privately for \$1.13 million.

Other Crowell decoys in the auction include a robust preening pintail drake with elaborate raised wings, estimated at \$500,000-

\$800,000. The pintail drake and gander are accompanied by a swimming black duck and a plump merganser drake, each estimated at \$100,000-\$200,000.

The last three are working shorebird decoys. There is a highly unusual yellowlegs in a calling position, estimated at \$150,000-\$250,000, and two classic “dust jacket” plover decoys estimated at \$100,000-\$200,000 each. The one-of-a-kind yellowlegs displays a delicate open bill and retains paint identical to Crowell’s famous “dust jacket” plovers illustrated on the cover of William J. Mackey Jr.’s *American Bird Decoys* (1965).

For more information contact Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC, 268 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116, (617) 536-0536, info@copleyart.com.

Ken Carlson’s Goat Ledge sold for \$103,500 at last year’s Coeur D’ Alene Art Auction. The image will grace the cover of Sporting Classics’ new book on the celebrated artist.

ANNUAL COEUR D’ ALENE ART AUCTION SET FOR JULY 25 IN RENO

The annual Coeur d’ Alene Art Auction will be held July 25 at the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno. The sale will feature many paintings by prominent masters, including C.M. Russell, Frederic Remington, Carl Rungius and O.C. Seltzer. The works of top contemporary painters will also be featured, such as Ken Carlson, Martin Grelle, Luke Frazier, Brett James Smith, Guy Coheleach, Robert Abbett and Howard Terpning.

For more information or to order a catalog, call (208) 772-9009 or visit www.cdaartauction.com.