

Press Release
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For Immediate Release
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Records, and Snow, Fall at Copley's Inaugural Winter Sale

BOSTON, MASS. - There was a great deal of anticipation leading up to Copley Fine Art Auctions' first auction foray into the Big Apple. Would the buyers show up at the new auction site? Would the doldrums of the decoy market finally break? Would Copley's cross-marketing move with Keno Auctions bring in new clients and increase interest? All of these questions were answered with a resounding yes when the auction brought over \$1,550,000, toward the high end of the \$1.1-\$1.75 million estimate of all items sold.

The auction took place on January 17th in Wallace Hall at St. Ignatius Loyola on Park Avenue. The spacious venue was open and airy and had surprisingly good light for a church basement. The viewing of the 430 lots kicked off Saturday morning with a steady crowd coming to study the paintings, decoys, and other related folk art for sale. The preview hit its crescendo on Saturday evening with over 450 guests in attendance for a special Scotch and Smoked Salmon Cocktail Preview. "We flew in 16 sides of salmon from New Brunswick" said Copley Chairman Stephen B. O'Brien, Jr. "We wanted to create a festive atmosphere. We had a lot of people traveling in from all parts of the country so we wanted to do something special and smoked salmon is one of my favorite things after coming in from a long day on the river."

The excitement from the cocktail preview carried over to the decoy sales, which led the day. The top lot was a Canada goose by John Tax (1894-1967) from Osakis, MN, c. 1917. This rare, hollow cedar decoy by the famous Minnesota maker is one of only six known feeding stick-up Canada goose decoys ever created by Tax. The goose sold for \$115,000, almost doubling its high estimate and setting a new world record for the maker. Following closely behind the Tax was an outstanding pair of goldeneyes by Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) from East Harwich, MA, c. 1905 out of the historic Crowell decoy rig ordered by John Ware Willard, who was the grandson of the famous Colonial Massachusetts clockmaker Simon Willard. The two decoys sold for \$109,250 on a \$40/\$60,000 estimate. The pair had previously sold for \$24,150 in January 2000 at Sotheby's and Guyette & Schmidt's auction of the collection of Dr. James M. McCleery.

The market for decoys by Elmer Crowell proved strong, as four of the top ten lots sold were by the Massachusetts maker. In addition to the goldeneyes, a stunning Hudsonian Curlew created c. 1915 sold for \$74,750, landing within its \$60/90,000 estimate. A golden plover sold for \$48,875 and a rare running plover sold for \$37,375, far exceeding their \$15/25,000 estimates.

Other notable decoy sales included a mallard drake by Joseph W. Lincoln (1859-1938) from Accord, MA, c. 1925 that sold for \$86,250, almost tripling its high estimate of \$30,000. A canvasback drake by Lee Dudley (1860-1942) from Knott's Island, NC, c. 1890 sold for \$80,500, setting a world record for a Dudley canvasback and outstripping the \$30/50,000 estimate. A red-breasted merganser by Levi Rhodes Truex (1860-1934) set a new record for the maker when it more than doubled its high estimate of \$18,000 and brought \$37,375, shattering the

old record of \$16,100. Rounding out the records set, a great horned owl made by Herter's Manufacturing Company in Minnesota sold for \$3,800 on a \$2/3,000 estimate, establishing a new world record for the maker.

Leading the painting sales was a beach scene by Ogden M. Pleissner titled *The Shore Line*. This oil on canvas sold for \$48,875, within its \$40/60,000 estimate. Pleissner's watercolor *The Orchard Cover*, a classic wintry grouse hunting scene, followed closely when it sold for \$46,000 on a \$40/60,000 estimate. Pleissner, a New York native who painted out west and ultimately moved to Vermont, proved a perennial favorite when his small oil on canvas of Jenny Lake sold for \$20,700 on a \$15/20,000 estimate and a number of small watercolor studies exceeded their high estimates, such as *Grousehouse*, which crossed the block at \$8,050 on a \$3/6,000 estimate.

A beautifully presented set of fifteen Federal Duck Stamps and original prints, from 1934-1950, sold for \$28,750, above its \$15/\$25,000 estimate and at what is believed to be a new world record price. The unique collection included a very rare first edition of Francis Lee Jaques' 1940 design, which was produced in an edition of only thirty. Other works by the artist, who spent much of his career at the American Museum of Natural History, performed well. An oil on canvas of Pintails and Teal that was a wedding gift from the artist sold for \$16,100, above its \$10/\$15,000 estimate, and a scratchboard bookplate of black ducks surpassed its \$4/600 estimate and sold for \$1,093.

Other painting results included a George Browne (1918-1958) oil of a flying grouse which split its \$12/\$18,000 estimate, going for \$16,100. An oil painting of hanging game by New York artist Richard La Barre Goodwin (1840-1910) sold for \$13,800 on a \$15/25,000 estimate, and a striking oil painting of mountain goats by wildlife and western painter Michael B. Coleman (b. 1946) sold for \$13,800, within its \$10/15,000 estimate. Copley continued its tradition of strong results for the artist Harry Curieux Adamson (b. 1916), realizing the highest price per square inch and the fourth-highest price at public auction for a depiction of mallards landing, which sold for \$20,700 on a \$15/25,000 estimate. Rounding out the notable painting results, Arthur D. Fuller's painting created for the cover of *Field & Stream* shot past its \$1/2,000 estimate, selling for \$5,462.50.

A large Sperm whale carving by Clark Voorhees (1911-1980) shot to \$11,500 on a \$2/4,000 estimate, smashing the previous record for the maker. Additionally, a dramatic bronze of a hunter in a boat with his dog and decoy rig fighting a storm by Wisconsin artist William J. Koelpin (1938-1996) exceeded its high estimate of \$9,000, selling for \$9,775. Copley's offering of signed etchings, drypoints, and lithographs fared well, with an original drypoint by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, the founder of the Federal Duck Stamp program, taking off to \$2,530 on a \$4/600 estimate.

All prices include a 15% buyer's premium. Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC is busy preparing for its 2011 Sporting Sale, which will be held July 21 and 22 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and welcomes consignment inquiries. Please call 617.536.0030 for information regarding the

upcoming auction or private sales. A full list of prices realized from Copley's 2011 Winter Sale is available at www.copleyart.com.

IMAGES TO INCLUDE:

359. Feeding Canada Goose by John Tax (1894-1967), Osakis, MN, c. 1917 (\$115,000)

263. Outstanding Pair of Goldeneyes by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), East Harwich, MA, c. 1905 (\$109,250)

245. Mallard Drake by Joseph W. Lincoln (1859-1938), Accord, MA, c. 1925 (\$86,250)

137. Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983), *The Shore Line*, oil on canvas, 20 by 34 inches (\$48,875)

218. Sperm Whale by Clark Voorhees (1911-1980), Weston, VT, c. 1950 (\$11,500)