

New York debut delights Copley

By Virginia Bohlin
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

There was a great deal of anticipation leading up to Copley Fine Art Auctions' first foray into the Big Apple last month, admits Stephen B. O'Brien Jr., chairman of the Newbury Street gallery.

Would 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 of New York bring in new clients?

All of these questions were answered with "a resounding yes," O'Brien says, when the auction ended with a gross of over \$1,550,000. The presale estimate for the items sold had been \$1.1 million-\$1.75 million.

The Jan. 17 auction in Wallace Hall at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola on Park Avenue saw five auction records set, including by a Canada goose made around 1917 by John Tax (1894-1967) of Osakis, Minn. One of only six known feeding stick-up Canada goose decoys carved by Tax, it brought the auction's top price of \$115,000, nearly doubling the high of its \$40,000-\$60,000 estimate.

The Tax decoy was followed by a pair of circa 1905 goldeneyes by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), the master carver of East Harwich, which sold for \$109,250 against a \$40,000-\$60,000 estimate. The pair, which had sold at auction for \$24,150 in 2000, was out of the Crowell decoy rig ordered by John Ware Willard, grandson of Boston clockmaker Simon Willard (1753-1848).

Four of the top 10 lots sold were by Crowell, including, in addition to the goldeneyes, a circa 1915 Hudsonian curlew that brought \$74,750 (estimate: \$60,000-\$90,000), and a golden plover (\$48,875) and a running plover (\$37,375), each with a \$15,000-\$25,000 estimate.

A circa 1925 mallard drake by another Massachusetts carver, Joseph W. Lincoln (1859-1938) of Accord, brought the auction's third highest price of \$86,250, more than quadrupling the low of its \$20,000-\$30,000 estimate. A circa 1890 canvasback drake by Lee Dudley (1860-1942) of Knott's Island, N.C., brought the fourth highest price of \$80,500, setting an auction record for a Dudley canvasback (\$30,000-\$50,000).

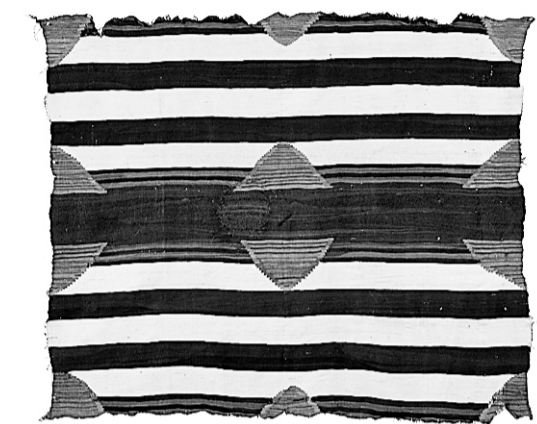
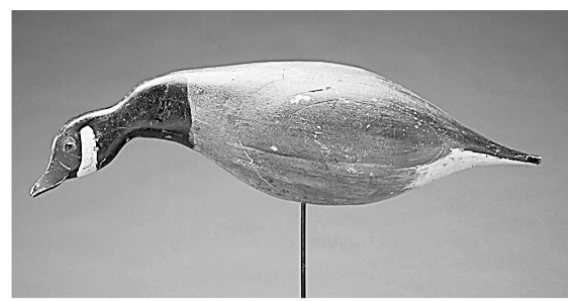
Topping the paintings in the sale were two works by the New York-born artist Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-83), who later made his home in Vermont. "Shore Line," an oil on canvas, sold for \$48,875 and "The Orchard Cover," a watercolor, for \$46,000. Each had a \$40,000-\$60,000 estimate.

Skinner's American Indian & Ethnographic Art Auction and its European Furniture & Decorative Arts Auction last month brought surprising prices.

Most surprising was the \$213,300 paid for an early Navajo third-phase chief's blanket with its original \$65 price tag and a \$5,000-\$7,000 estimate.

Douglas Deihl, director of Skinner's American In-

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES



Rare circa 1917 feeding stick-up Canada goose decoy by John Tax brought the top price of \$115,000, at Copley Fine Art Auctions' inaugural sale in New York last month. Topping the paintings was "The Shore Line," an oil on canvas by Ogden M. Pleissner (\$48,875). At Skinner's American Indian & Ethnographic Art Auction, this early Navajo third-phase chief's blanket, retaining its original \$65 price tag and expected to bring \$5,000-\$7,000, sold for \$213,300.

dian & Ethnographic Art department, said these prized early blankets do not come on the market often, but this 1860s blanket had wool loss and a large repair at the center, so it was given a low estimate.

However, once its sale was publicized, it attracted such strong interest that, when it went on the block,

bidders over 10 phone lines were competing with bidders in the room and a large number of absentee bids.

Even before the bidding began, Deihl, along with textile specialists, believed the blanket would exceed early expectations, with the experts valuing it at \$70,000: \$50,000 for its design and \$20,000 for re-weaving.

Chief's blankets were prized in the 1800s not only for their beauty but also for their versatility, serving as coats during the day and blankets at night. Being tightly woven, they were virtually waterproof.

The first chief's blankets, known as first-phase blankets, were woven around 1820 with a simple striped design. They were followed from around 1850-80, with 12 red rectangles added to the design of the second-phase blankets and nine diamonds and half diamonds used in the third-phase design.

The auction's other top sellers included a rare shaman's rattle used to communicate with ancestral spirits (\$59,250, against a \$20,000-\$30,000 estimate), a polychrome carved totem pole (\$38,513 against \$10,000-\$15,000), and an African carved wood stool (\$31,995 against \$10,000-\$15,000).

All of the top 10 selling lots in Skinner's European Furniture & Decorative Arts Auction sold for above their estimates, including a glazed earthenware charger that went for more than 25 times its high estimate.

The 19th-century Italian charger, 19 7/8 inches in diameter and decorated with a polychrome enamel courtyard scene, sold for \$30,810 against an \$800-\$1,200 estimate.

The auction's top seller was an Italian porcelain teapot made by Vezzi in Venice around 1725 that brought \$94,800, more than tripling the high of its \$20,000-\$30,000 estimate.

The second highest price was the \$43,845 paid for an 1876 Anna Pottery nine-inch-high chocolate brown glazed stoneware jug, modeled with coiled snakes around a frog. Its estimate also was \$20,000-\$30,000.

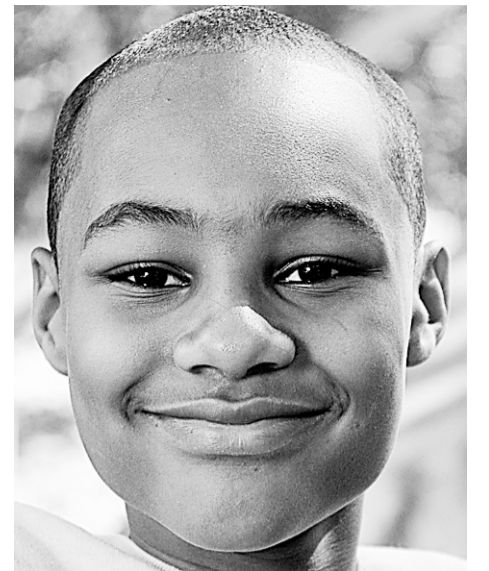
A pair of chinoiserie-decorated 26-inch-high Bristol glass vases and covers brought the third highest price of \$34,365, or 19 times the high of its \$1,200-\$1,800 estimate.

The top-selling furniture was an Italian micromosaic tabletop on a wrought iron base that sold for \$22,515 against a \$5,000-\$7,000 estimate.

The 1,034-lot auction included more than 400 lots of Wedgwood topped by an early-19th-century 10-inch Caneware canopic jar (a jar used in ancient Egypt to hold the remains of the dead). It fetched \$10,073 against a \$3,000-\$5,000 estimate.

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SUNDAY'S CHILD



Amari draws his future and sees his art and a family

Hi. My name is Amari. I'm doing very well in school and I enjoy drawing.

Amari is a sweet-tempered 11-year-old described by others as sensitive and creative. He enjoys listening to music and drawing and considers himself an artist.

On target academically, Amari is very conscientious about his schoolwork. He loves his classes and he also loves playing video games. He dreams of being a games designer when he grows up.

Amari would do best with a mother and father who have no other children or whose children are significantly older. He is an active boy and his ideal family would enjoy doing activities together and having fun as a family. Amari is excited to join a family permanently, and he hopes to maintain contact with his older sister.

Amari's special wish is for a fun and creative family.

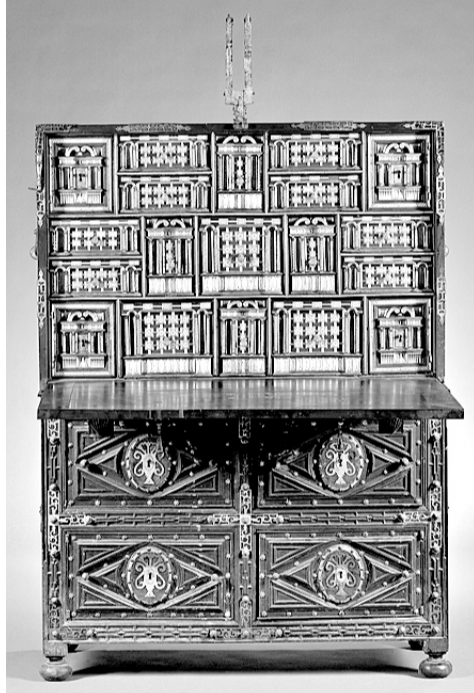
What is MAPP training?

Part of the process to adopt a child from foster care is a training course. After an initial home visit by a social worker, you may be invited to attend the Massachusetts Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) training. The 32-hour MAPP course is typically held one night a week for eight weeks. It is designed to help you gain the best possible understanding of, and preparation for, parenting an adopted child.

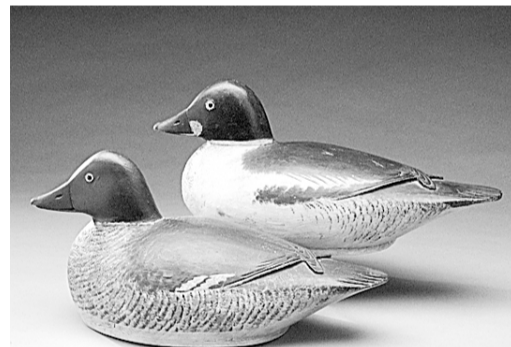
MAPP training includes information about the needs of children who are waiting to be adopted and what behaviors they might exhibit. It teaches communication, positive discipline, and self-esteem-building techniques. It also discusses the resources and supports available to adoptive families. A couple considering adoption should attend MAPP training together.

To learn more about Amari, and about adoption from foster care, call the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) at 617-54-ADOPT (617-542-3678) or visit www.mareinc.org. The sooner you call, the sooner a waiting child will have "a permanent place to call home."

Circa 1905 pair of goldeneyes by the master carver A. Elmer Crowell of East Harwich brought \$109,250, the second highest price at Copley Fine Art Auctions' New York sale. Pair of 19th-century chinoiserie-decorated Bristol vases and covers went for more than 19 times the high of their \$1,200-\$1,800 estimate, fetching \$34,365 at Skinner's European Furniture & Decorative Arts Auction. At that same sale, this vargueno, a Spanish wooden cabinet mounted with red velvet panels accented with brass fretwork and studs, sold for \$14,220 against a \$1,000-\$1,500 estimate.



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