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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wood Ducks and Pointers Lead the Way at Copley's \$3.4 Million Winter Sale

HINGHAM, MA - Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC (copleyart.com), the nation's premier decoy and sporting art auction house, realized \$3.4 million in total sales in their recent Winter Sale. It marked the second highest Winter Sale total in the company's history. Commenting after the auction, Copley owner Stephen O'Brien Jr. stated, "The recipe for our recent auction successes have been pretty straight forward; single-owner collections, conservative estimates, and the right mix of unestimated lots are the secret sauce." The March 4–5 auction was live-streamed from Plymouth, MA. There was a frenzy of bidders participating on all three online platforms and across all categories, with new buyers, established collectors, dealers, and institutions fully engaged over the two-day auction. Extending Copley's unmatched track record in the industry, the 556-lot sale was 94% sold.

The top lot of the sale was the Wood Duck Pair by Charles "Shang" Wheeler (1867–1956) from the collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller. The duo set a new record for any lot by the maker landing at \$216,000, above its \$100/200,000 estimate.

From the auction's start, the miniature carvings came out punching above their weight with a golden pheasant by perennial favorite Elmer Crowell (1862–1952) landing at \$13,530 on a \$5/8,000 estimate and a miniature goldfinch by the same maker flying past its \$2/3,000 estimate to \$7,380. When miniatures by A.J. King (1878–1963) began to cross the block, world records came crashing down. A rare miniature belted kingfisher pair reached an unprecedented \$33,825 on a \$7/10,000 estimate. The previous world record for the artist was \$22,140 for a miniature dove pair with chicks, set at the Sporting Sale 2021.

King carvings continued to turn heads with a pair of screech owls soaring beyond their \$6/9,000 estimate to \$20,400, a bald eagle landing at \$18,000 (\$6/9,000 estimate), a wood duck family reaching \$14,400 (\$5/8,000 estimate), and the pintail family with the same estimate commanding \$19,200.

Other world record miniature prices for carvers included a miniature ruffed grouse by Robert Morse (1920–1960), which raced by its \$2/3,000 estimate to \$4,200, and a pair of unestimated miniature great blue herons by Wendell Gilley (1904–1983), which topped out at \$10,200, also a new world record for a Gilley miniature.

Quality factory decoys enjoyed the limelight with the Dodge Wood Duck, hailing from the J. N. Dodge Factory (1883–1893), more than doubling its low estimate of \$50,000, stretching out to \$108,000, and besting the previous record for a Dodge decoy by over \$50,000. The Mason Decoy Factory (1896–1924) was also well-represented at the auction, with a challenge-grade merganser drake drawing \$10,800 to land above its \$7/10,000 estimate.

Beyond Michigan, other Midwest carvings performed well. The Trinosky Family Kankakee Pintail Hen from the Herman R. Trinosky (1874–1956) Rig landed at \$84,000, within its \$75/95,000 estimate, and the High-Head Canvasback Drake by Joseph Sieger (1871–1959), previously out of The McCleery Collection, achieved its high estimate of \$30,000.

West Coast decoys continued to be strong with a pintail pair by Sonoma, California, carver Richard "Fresh Air Dick" Janson (1872–1951) selling for \$16,800 on a \$2,5/3,500 estimate.

In addition to his miniatures, full-size works by "Father of American Bird Carving" A. Elmer Crowell (1862–1952) continued to be in high demand. The top lot by this carver, the Raised-Wing Canvasback Pair, landed at \$102,000 on a \$50/80,000 estimate. The maker's Golden Plover in Winter Plumage more than doubled the high estimate of \$24,000 bringing \$60,000, and The Payson Crowell Preening Dowitcher surpassed its \$30,000 high estimate on its way to a \$55,350 sale price.

Lew Horton Collection decoys from Nantucket soared high at the auction, with the Hollow Nantucket Golden Plover flying past the \$65/85,000 estimate to land at \$108,000, and a pair of Nantucket wind bird willets besting their \$14,000 high estimate to reach \$15,600. In addition, the Hollow Nantucket Merganser Pair realized \$22,800, beating their \$20,000 low estimate.

While the Maine decoy market has been languishing a bit recently, several Downeast carvings perked up this important sector of the folk art market. An eider hen by an unknown Maine carver brought \$32,400, a rare feeding merganser drake carved by Maine carving legend Augustus "Gus" Aaron Wilson (1864–1950) surpassed its \$18,000 high estimate when it hammered at \$21,600, and a merganser pair by Willie Ross (1878–1954) of Chebeague Island, swam past their \$12,000 high estimate on their way to \$20,400.

Top Southern decoy lots included a brant by Charles Birch (1867–1956), which surpassed its \$9,000 high estimate to land at \$13,200. The Mackey-O'Brien Dudley Canvasback Drake landed at \$60,000, squarely between its \$50/80,000 estimate.

The Haid Cavanaugh Ward Mallard Drake, a fine example by The Ward Brothers, shot above its \$24,000 high estimate, finally going for \$36,000. A Canada goose by Nathan Rowley Horner (1882–1942) achieved \$33,000 on a \$15/25,000 estimate.

The Sleeping Canada Goose by Charles A. Safford (1877–1957), only the second of the form to ever surface, was a relative buy, inching close to its low estimate of \$100,000 and making \$96,000.

Unestimated lots once again proved enticing to bidders. A Maine eider hen garnered \$32,400, a Floyd Scholz (b. 1958) barn owl reached \$22,000, an early North Carolina Canada goose pair

reached \$13,200, and a decorative carving by James E. "Jim" Hazeley, entitled "*The Lek*" Sage Grouse, sold for \$9,600, believed to be an auction record for the world champion master.

Contemporary carving saw lots of action at the Winter Sale with the top carving by Mark S. McNair (b. 1950), *The Stavis Preening Mallard*, hammering down at \$8,400, more than doubling its \$4,000 high estimate. Carvings by Oliver "Tuts" Lawson (b. 1938), of Crisfield, Maryland, maintained their perennial popularity as a whistling swan shot to \$9,000 on a \$5/7,000 estimate. Works by Frank S. Finney (b. 1947) attracted bidders with his top lot, an unestimated life-size great horned owl, bringing \$7,800 and his top miniature carving, a woodpecker, making \$3,997. An unestimated miniature American woodcock by Connecticut carver Keith Mueller (b. 1956) finally topped out at \$4,612.

Colin S. McNair, Copley's Decoy Specialist, states, "New collectors continue to arrive and they're participating at every level. Beginning with the O'Brien Collection in 2017–2018, followed by the Muller, du Pont, and Johnson collections in 2020-2021, Copley has been bringing high-profile single-owner collections to the marketplace, and bidders have responded."

Paintings started off with a bang as active interest and bidding led to multiple bidders vying for *Snowy Owl*, a work by contemporary Dutch painter Ewoud de Groot (b. 1969). The work glided over its high estimate of \$12,000 and struck the block at \$51,000, selling to a museum.

Copley's Fine Art Specialist Leah Tharpe reports, "Fresh works with conservative estimates continued to lead the day, and I was thrilled to see so much active bidding across all platforms, indicating a broad base of collectors seeking high-quality sporting and wildlife art."

96% of the 145 painting and print lots found buyers, with spirited bidding across the board. The top painting lot of the sale was *Dog with Three Quail*, an oil by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819–1905) depicting a pointer on bobwhite quail, which sold to a phone bidder for \$90,000, above its \$50/80,000 estimate.

Golden Hours, a watercolor depiction of fishing by renowned sporting artist Ogden M. Pleissner (1905–1983), sold for \$69,000, within its estimate. A watercolor by the artist depicting a fishing scene, titled *Down the York*, leapt over the \$35,000 high estimate to \$39,000. Pleissner's *Grassing the Boat* brought \$46,125, landing squarely within its \$40/60,000 estimate.

Aiden Lassell Ripley's *Grouse on a Winter Morning* sold for \$33,000, just shy of its \$35,000 high estimate. The noted sporting artist's watercolor, *The Rock in the River*, proved to be a good buy at \$39,000 on a \$40/60,000 estimate.

Always on the Move by the 2022 Bonefish & Tarpon Trust Featured Artist, Mark A. Susinno (b. 1957), brought \$13,200, outstripping its \$10,000 high estimate and setting a world record at auction for the artist. Half of the proceeds from the sale will go directly to BTT, whose mission is to conserve and enhance global bonefish, tarpon, and permit fisheries and their environment.

Hauling the Nets, a bold commercial fishing scene by Emile A. Gruppe (1896–1978), shot to \$42,000 on a \$30/50,000 estimate. Copley continues to be the “go-to” firm for major works by Gruppe.

The Winter Sale also included a selection of works by contemporary artists. Interest in the paintings by Chet Reneson (b. 1934) continued, with an acrylic on board titled *Leaping Tarpon* leaping to \$14,400, above its high estimate of \$7,000, and establishing a new world record for the artist. An oil of ruffed grouse by David A. Maass (b. 1929) flew to \$13,530, well above its \$6/9,000 estimate. *Mountain Pool* by Brett James Smith (b. 1958) more than doubled its high estimate, splashing in at \$10,200. A watercolor by David A. Hagerbaumer (1921–2014), titled *Flushing Quail Covey*, sold well for \$9,840, the third highest result for this perennially popular artist. The firm has now sold the top four Hagerbaumers to ever cross the auction block

Mallards, a gouache by bird artist Basil Ede (1931–2016), soared to \$12,000 on a \$2/3,000 estimate, setting a new world record for the artist. *Mandarin Ducks*, also by Ede, was not far behind at \$8,400. Works by Rodger McPhail (b. 1953) saw strong interest with a watercolor titled *Stag and Grouse* landing at \$10,800, well above its \$6/9,000 estimate, and setting a new world record for the British wildlife artist

Leading the works on paper was a hand-colored engraving of *Iceland, or Jer Falcon* by John James Audubon (1785–1851) sold for \$36,000, more than double its \$15,000 high estimate.

Works by Frank W. Benson were led by the ink wash *In the Marsh* (Duck Hunting), which brought \$26,400. Benson’s top etching was *The Guide* which brought \$2,214. Two Bird Maps by Richard E. Bishop (1887-1975) sold for \$3,690, and an etching depiction of “Dogs in the Field” along with a copy of the book with the same title by Marguerite Kirmse (1885-1954) landed at \$2,580. Kirmse’s three etchings of Scotties achieved \$1,968. Aiden Lassell Ripley’s top etching was *Goose Shooting* which brought \$1,800. An etching by Roland H. Clark (1874-1957) entitled *Inbound* reached \$492.

There was active bidding on seven powder tins and a match box which brought \$4,750. A sperm whale carving by Mark S. McNair jumped to \$7,995.

Copley provided the convenience of online bidding through Bidsquare and Live Auctioneers, as well as the sporting art industry’s first app, Copley Live. A full list of prices realized from Copley’s Winter Sale 2022 is available at www.copleyart.com. All prices include a 20% buyer’s premium and an additional 3% for online purchases. All record painting prices cite AskArt.com.

Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC is currently accepting consignments for their Sporting Sale in July 2022. Consignments will be accepted until April 30th or until full. For a free confidential auction estimate, call 617.536.0030 or email info@copleyart.com.

For high-resolution images, please contact Chelsie Olney at 617.536.0030 or chelsie@copleyart.com.

Images available to include:

Rockefeller Wood Duck Pair, Charles "Shang" Wheeler (1867–1956), Estimate: \$100/200,000, Sold for \$216,000

The Dodge Wood Duck, J. N. Dodge Factory (1883-1893), Estimate: \$50/90,000, Sold for \$108,000

The Raised-Wing Canvasback Pair, A. Elmer Crowell (1862–1952), Estimate: \$50/80,000, Sold for \$102,000

The Horton Hollow Nantucket Golden Plover, Estimate: \$65/85,000, Sold for \$108,000

The Trinosky Family Kankakee Pintail Hen, Herman R. Trinosky (1874-1956) Rig, Estimate: \$75/95,000, Sold for \$84,000

Rare Miniature Belted Kingfisher Pair, A.J. King (1878–1963), Estimate: \$7/10,000, Sold for \$33,825

Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819–1905), *Dog with Three Quail*, oil on canvas, 14 by 22 in., Estimate: \$50/80,000, Sold for \$90,000

Ogden M. Pleissner (1905–1983), *Golden Hours*, watercolor, 27 by 18 in., Estimate: \$60/90,000, Sold for \$69,000

Emile A. Gruppe (1896–1978), *Hauling the Nets*, oil on canvas, 30 by 40 in., Estimate: \$30/50,000, Sold for \$42,000

Ewoud de Groot (b. 1969), *Snowy Owl*, oil on linen, 47 by 47 in., Estimate: \$8/12,000, Sold for \$51,000

James Audubon (1785–1851), *Iceland, or Jer Falcon*, hand-colored engraving, 35 by 23 in., Estimate: \$10/15,000, Sold for \$36,000