

# Estates Reign Supreme At Copley's Winter Sale 2021

HINGHAM, MASS. — On Friday and Saturday, February 19-20, Copley Fine Art Auctions will host its Winter Sale 2021. To accommodate numerous estates, the company's auction has expanded to a virtual two-day format. The auction will begin at 10 am on both Friday and Saturday.

Copley principal Steve O'Brien reflected on the upcoming two-day sale: "Copley prides itself in handling the top estates in the field and the coming sale certainly reflects this. Our ethos is to handle quality over quantity. Clients rely on us, knowing we will give their collections the research, cataloging and marketing they deserve."

The auction will feature offerings from single-owner estates, which include several of the top decoy and sporting art collections in the United States. Properties have been sourced directly from the collections of Dr Peter J. Muller Jr, a New York City museum, Kroghie Andresen, Len Carnaghi, John Dillon, William K. du Pont, Dale W. Farrell, Ted and Judy Harmon, Dwight Miller, Dr Leonard O. Oden and Herb Wetanson. Provenance listings will include important works from the collections of Walter L. Bush, Donal C. O'Brien Jr, William J. Mackey Jr, Dr James McCleery, Adele Earnest, William H. Purnell Jr and Joel Barber, among many others.

Painting and works on paper offerings in February are sure to excite collectors. Copley's fine art specialist Leah Tharpe reported, "This is the finest assemblage of American sporting art to be offered at auction for years. The masters are well represented, with major oil paintings by Frank W. Benson, Edmund Osthaus, A.F. Tait, and Ogden Pleissner. Several of these set records the last time they were on the market, and we are excited to see where these high-quality works land in February.

"In addition, selections from the Dale Farrell collection, consisting of major Rockport School paintings by Emile Gruppe, Anthony Thieme, J.J. Enneking and other important American artists who found inspiration on the coast of New England, will be available."

The paintings are led by "Redheads in Flight," a significant oil on canvas by noted wildlife artist Frank W. Benson. The 1916 painting depicts a flock of redheads near Long Point, an important private hunting club where the artist traveled to hunt (\$250/450,000). Benson scholar Faith Andrews Bedford writes, "One can almost feel the rush of the ducks wings and hear their calls." The artist's "Canada Goose Shooting" will also be on offer (\$40/60,000). "Young Buck with Doe," a work by wildlife artist Bob F. Kuhn (\$80/120,000), joins a salmon fishing oil by Ogden M. Pleissner titled Jimmy's Pool on the Restigouche" (\$60/90,000).



**The Mackey Cobb Feeding Brant by Nathan F. Cobb Jr (1825-1905) (\$100/150,000).**



**Edmund H. Osthaus (1858-1928), "Pointer with Quail," oil on canvas, 27 by 36 inches (\$150/250,000).**

Other important paintings slated for the sale include several quintessential hunting dog oils, such as "Pointer with Quail" by Edmund Osthaus featuring a pointer holding its quarry. This painting was commissioned by George M. Brady, Esq., of Detroit, Mich., in 1890 (\$150/250,000). An 1883 oil painting by A.F. Tait titled "Setters on Quail" (\$50/70,000) joins eight additional works by Tait. Seven of the Tait paintings in the Winter Sale are documented in Warder H. Cadbury and Henry F. Marsh's monograph on the artist, *Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait: Artist in the Adirondacks*. Frederic Remington's rare depiction of an English setter (\$50/70,000), which has been accepted by the Remington Examination Committee for the artist's catalogue raisonné, will also be included in the sale.

Other exemplary works by fine art masters include Anthony Thieme's 1932 depiction of fishing smacks, exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (\$25/35,000).

Paintings and works on paper will cross the block by Antonio Jacobsen, Aiden Lassell Ripley, George Browne, Chet Reneson, Ewoud de Groot, Luke Frazier and Maynard F. Reece, among others.

Regarding the decoy and decorative carvings on offer, Colin McNair, Copley's decoy specialist, explained, "Complementary estates have converged to create a decoy and decorative bird carving lineup that is

truly exceptional. A New York City museum [the Walter Bush collection], the Dr Muller collection and The William K. du Pont collection, among others, have been this cataloger's dream. I can't wait to share some of the history and revelations these works have brought to light, especially considering that numerous premier carvings have been off the market for 40 to 70-plus years. From seminal decoys made before the Civil War to World Championship winning decoratives from the last few years, the development of the American bird carving artform will be on full display."

Day one of this year's Winter Sale will feature Session II of the Dr Peter J. Muller Jr collection of American Bird Decoys, widely regarded as "the finest collection ever assembled in the South." Two of the masterworks from that collection are carvings in feeding postures by Nathan F. Cobb Jr of the island in Virginia: the Mackey Cobb Feeding Brant (\$100/150,000) and the Cobb Feeding Curlew (\$80/120,000).

Hailing from the collection of William Kemble du Pont, the Decorative Preening Curlew by A. Elmer Crowell is sure to turn heads (\$60/90,000). This, along with an early woodcock that is a mantel mate to the Dr John Henry Cunningham Woodcock (\$50/70,000), an early running yellowlegs with a faux clamshell carved base (\$35/45,000), a rare complete



**Frank W. Benson (1862-1951), "Redheads in Flight," oil on canvas, 36¼ by 45 inches (\$250/450,000).**



**The Decorative Preening Curlew from William Kemble du Pont collection by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) (\$60/90,000).**

set of waterfowl miniatures (\$35/45,000) and a bobwhite quail pair (\$30/50,000) will also cross the block.

This year's auction will feature a number of pairs by the Ward Brothers: the Purnell-Muller Ward Canvasback Pair (\$50/80,000) and the Bishops Head Black Duck Pair (\$50/70,000). Many consider these pairs to be among the finest duos to emerge from the famed Crisfield workshop. Decorative pairs commissioned by du Pont will lead other works by the Ward Brothers on offer.

Several one-of-a-kind works are expected to garner considerable interest: a circa 1890 blue-bill hen by Lee Dudley, which remains one of the finest renderings of the species (\$40/60,000), and a contemporary high-head Canada goose from the Herb Wetanson collection, carved by Jim Schmiedlin. Other contemporary decoys will include 16 works by Mark McNair.

Images of many of the lots on offer at the Winter Sale 2021 can be viewed at [www.copley-art.com/auction-preview](http://www.copley-art.com/auction-preview).

For information, 617-536-0030 or email [info@copleyart.com](mailto:info@copleyart.com).

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