

Contact: Bea Somerville, 617.536.0536, bea@americansportingart.com

For Immediate Release—August 2007

RECORDS SMASHED AT COPLEY'S 2ND ANNUAL SPORTING AUCTION

PLYMOUTH, Mass.—Collectors and sporting art enthusiasts packed the Plymouth Radisson's ballroom to capacity on July 26th as Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC conducted its second annual sale of sporting art, antique decoys, rare books, and Americana. Over three hundred clients, some from as far away as Japan and Papua New Guinea, registered to bid with the company. The one day auction soared above its high estimate (\$2,594,965 in total sales) with an exceptionally strong 93% lots sold.

In the morning session of antique decoys, numerous lots brought well over their high estimates. Highlights included the extraordinary running curlew by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) of East Harwich, Massachusetts, estimated at \$60,000-\$80,000, which sold for \$186,500, a new world record for a Crowell decorative shorebird. Another record for a single Crowell decorative upland bird was also set with a life-sized woodcock selling for \$66,125. A wood duck by Orel LeBoeuf (1880s-1968) of Anicet, Quebec sold for \$25,300, a record for a work by the maker. The Lloyd Parker turnstone brought a record shorebird price for the maker at \$16,100.

Other decoy highlights included a brant carved and painted by Joseph Lincoln (1859-1938) of Accord, Massachusetts, estimated at \$15,000-\$20,000, which sold for more than twice the high estimate at \$48,300. According to Copley Chairman and CEO Stephen B. O'Brien, Jr., "Lincoln made literally hundreds of brant decoys. This particular bird is special because it was hunted, it retains a great untouched original paint surface, and it has a superb provenance (the Alvin White collection)." A ruddy turnstone (c. 1890) by John Horn of New Gretna, New Jersey set a new auction record for the maker selling for \$14,950. The Crowell Canada goose, estimated at \$6,000-\$9,000 brought \$20,700. The Plum Island turnstone sold over estimate as well at \$37,950. The pair of geese by Dave "Umbrella" Watson (1851-1938) of Chincoteague, Virginia went within estimate at \$44,850.

The painting results in the afternoon's second session were especially strong. One of the more notable sales was the oil painting *Blue Fin Tuna* by Lynn Bogue Hunt (1878-1960), which sold for a record-breaking \$126,000. The new Hunt record is exactly seven times the previous one set by Sotheby's in November of 2006. The next lot in the sale, a gouache entitled *Bobwhite Covey* by the same artist, sold for \$92,000, further solidifying the market for exemplary Hunt paintings.

Watercolors by Boston artist Frank W. Benson (1862-1951) were also very strong—*Flight of Egrets*, a watercolor measuring 25 ¾ by 20 ½ inches, sold for \$103,000. A late addition watercolor by the same artist entitled *Sea-gulls and Surf* sold for \$153,500, the second-highest price ever realized for a watercolor by the artist. According to O'Brien, "This painting came in ten days before the auction, was exhibited at the MFA in 1936, and had never been offered for sale. Understandably, the provenance and freshness of the painting sparked a bidding frenzy. I have sold dozens of original paintings by Benson over the last sixteen years, and it ranks as one of my favorites."

Coastal Marshes, an oil painting by Francis Lee Jaques (1887-1969) depicting canvasbacks and bluebills, brought \$28,750-- a price surpassed only by Jaques's *Seven Swans*, which sold for \$33,350 in Copley's 2006 sale.

The prints also did impressively well. The original folio of twelve chromolithographs of original works (entitled *Shooting Pictures*) by A.B. Frost (1851-1928) and printed by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1895, estimated at \$8,000-\$12,000, sold for a whopping \$63,250, cruising past the previous record for the set.

The third session of the sale was comprised of the Sporting Library of Asa B. Allen, a long-time fly fisherman and rare book collector. The Library included over 40 books published by the Derrydale press and dozens of first, deluxe and limited edition offerings. Books such as *Salmon Fishing on the Grand Cascapedia* by Edmund Davis and *Jones' Guide to Norway* by Frederic Tolfrey attracted the attention of sportsmen, sporting art collectors and book collectors alike and brought strong prices of \$2,415 and \$3,450 respectively. The highlight of the book session was *The Leisenring Book of Colors and Materials* which brought \$17,825. This rare unpublished book, once part of the Sporting Book Collection of Lindley Eberstadt, was put together by James E. Leisenring and Vernon Hidy and is one of no more than ten copies in existence.

"While we didn't have a \$750,000 Benson oil like we did last year, our sale was much stronger overall," said O'Brien. "I was a little nervous when a colleague notified me moments into the sale that the stock market had plummeted nearly 450 points," recounts O'Brien. "We are very pleased to have by-passed the prospect of a sophomore slump and are already being inundated with calls about consignments for our July 2008 auction. Having set numerous records for sporting artists and decoy carvers in our brief two-year history, we are excited about the prospects for the upcoming year." Next year's sale has been scheduled to be held at the Plymouth Radisson. For those who wish to sell items, early consignments are strongly suggested.

For more information, please contact: Copley Fine Art Auctions, 617.536.0030, www.copleyart.com