The Art of Sport

Paintings, works on paper, books, decoys and folk art highlight Copley's Sporting Sale 2010.

Copley Fine Art Auctions' Sporting Sale 2010 on July 22 and 23 promises to be its biggest in terms of numbers with over 800 lots divided equally between paintings, works on paper, books, decoys and folk art. Items range from early engravings by John James Audubon from the mid-1800s to modern masters. Now in its fifth year, Copley's is the world's leading American sporting art auction company.

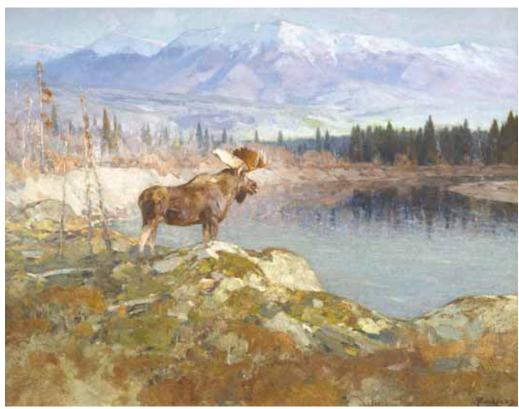"This year's auction represents an incredible opportunity to own some of the finest paintings by Ogden M. Pleissner, Arthur Burdett Frost and Carl Rungius, many of which we purchased directly from the artists or galleries that represented them decades over. It's the first time that many have been on the market," says Copley Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Stephen B. O'Brien Jr. "These aren't your average everyday works by these artists coming on the market, many of these are masterworks."

Among the auction highlights is a rare oil painting by Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983) titled *The Rapids*. Painted in 1938, this early work is one of Pleissner's finest and being done in oil elevates its importance.

"He was primarily known as one of the great watercolorists in America after Wyeth and Homer," says O'Brien. "*The Rapids* is a great fishing picture and an important work by him."

The auction's first session begins at 11 a.m. July 22, featuring the sporting art collection

Carl Clemens Moritz Rungius (1869-1959), *Moose,* oil on canvas, 40 x 50" **ESTIMATE: $200/400,000**

Luke Frazier (b. 1970), *Pushing to the Meadow,* oil on board, 34 x 48" **ESTIMATE: $15/20,000**

Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983), *The Rapids,* oil on canvas, 30 x 40" **ESTIMATE: $60/90,000**

The Ward Brothers, Lemuel T. (1896-1983) and **Stephen (1895-1976),** *Mallard Pair,* c.1934 **ESTIMATE: $30/60,000**

Carl Clemens Moritz Rungius (1869-1959), *Near Summit Lake, British Columbia,* 1947, oil on canvas, 30 x 40" **ESTIMATE: $200/400,000**

of Thomas W. Sheppard and an important private collection from Florida of waterfowl paintings representing Frank W. Benson, Thomas Aquinas Daly and Roland H. Clark.

The second session begins at 11 a.m. July 23, featuring the decoy collection of Peter Brams of New York. There will be 300 decoy lots for sale in addition to 100 sporting collectibles—including fly rods and reels—and sporting books. The Brams collection features 20 retired decoys, which were deemed works of art when carved.

"It's one of the great collections representing decoys as folk art," says O'Brien. "Decoys were made as utility pieces for use in the field, but eventually collectors and hunters put them away on the mantle as memories of a bygone hunt because they liked them as sculpture. Now they can bring over $1 million."

Also not to be missed are five original paintings and a dozen etchings and drypoint by Carl Rungius (1869-1959) from the H. Wendell Endicott collection. In the 1930s, Endicott, a prominent businessman and director of Sears, Roebuck & Co., traveled regularly to Alaska and Alberta, Canada, for the beautiful scenery and in search of majestic big game. After a visit to "The Paintbox," Rungius' studio, Endicott purchased five canvases by the artist. These paintings adorned the walls of Endicott House, now owned by MIT, for over 60 years. They are now being offered for the first time since they were purchased from the artist.

"The market for Rungius paintings is consistently strong as he's one of America's finest wildlife painters," says O'Brien, adding. "There's high quality in each category and that's what we strive for. The sale is as strong as we've ever had."

Copley Fine Art Auctions' Sporting Sale 2010

When: Auction, 11 a.m. July 22-23; Preview, 8:30-10:30 a.m. both days; Cocktail Reception and Preview, 5:30-7:30 p.m. July 21; Dealer Exhibition, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. July 22, 9 a.m.-noon, July 23.
Where: Radisson Hotel, 180 Water Street, Plymouth, MA 02360
Information: (617) 536-0030, www.copleyart.com