

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Copley Winter Sale Rises Above The Storm, Setting Multiple World Records**

CHARLESTON, SC - On February 13, Copley Fine Art Auctions had great success offering over four hundred lots of American art, antique decoys, and sporting collectibles in Charleston, South Carolina. The auction landed within its estimate and resulted in over \$1.7 million in sales to hundreds of different collectors, with approximately 88% of lots selling. Despite a winter storm hammering the country, Copley packed the American Theater to standing room only.

"We were delighted with the southern hospitality we found in Charleston, and are pleased with the strong sales results in spite of the interfering weather gods," Copley President and Owner Stephen B. O'Brien, Jr. said. "We found success at all levels of the painting and decoy markets."

After a preview the night before the sale, Copley saw a record number of clients registering for absentee and telephone bids. The Southeastern Wildlife Exposition brought sporting and wildlife enthusiasts from all over the country to Charleston, and Copley helped them go home with some incredible art.

The auction led off with a nice group of contemporary bird carvings including works by acclaimed carver Mark McNair. These works found ready buyers, with all but two selling at or above their estimate. McNair's decoys were led by an Old Squaw, which brought \$3,600 on a \$3/4,000 estimate. A nice pair of canvasbacks by Mike Borett supported the solid contemporary results, going for \$2,040, well above the high estimate.

A number of accomplished decorative carvings then crossed the block, such as a fine group of whales carved and painted by Vermont artist Clark Voorhees. These charming works saw intense bidding and all sold within or above their estimates, including the large sperm whale for \$6,600 and the dolphin for \$4,500. Quality decorative works by the acknowledged master of all decoy carvers, A. Elmer Crowell, continued their typical sales results when the bobwhite quail doubled its high estimate, selling for \$40,800.

The high end of the decoy collecting world was in evidence during the sale, as two McCleery Boyd mergansers both sold right in the middle of their estimates of \$100/150,000. The hen fetched \$138,000 and the drake crossed the block at \$120,000. Both results surpassed the previous world record for the esteemed maker. Surprisingly, just a dozen lots later McCleery's Dexter Gardner dowitcher pair, with their \$200/300,000 estimate, passed.

An exceptional Shang Wheeler preening wigeon proved to be an astute buy at \$30,000, and this animated bird will be the newest member of a good collection. A decorative pintail pair by Maryland carver Lemuel Ward sold for \$10,800.

Over the course of the sale, shorebirds from various regions proved their enduring popularity. Joseph Lincoln's grand black-bellied plover likely set a record for the species by the maker, selling between the estimates squarely for \$24,000. Additionally, an important duo of early North Carolina yellowlegs met the middle of their estimate, selling for \$9,600.

A ruddy turnstone, made by Long Island carver John Dilley and out of the McCleery collection, with its detailed, stylized painting, split its estimate and found a new home for \$96,000. The next lot, a willet by the same maker, came close to its high estimate, selling for \$17,400. Continuing the strong shorebird results, the plover by Obediah Verity, from the collection of Milton C. Weiler, shot through its estimate of \$30/50,000 and sold for \$60,000. Other top Long Island shorebirds on offer saw competitive bidding with the Verity tern selling for \$30,000 on a \$25/35,000 estimate, along with a yellowlegs by William J. Southard which fetched \$12,000. Additionally, the Bunn/Bowman willet sold for \$24,000, and a ruddy turnstone by the same maker also landed at \$24,000.

The shorebirds by the Jasper N. Dodge Decoy Factory went within estimate, selling for \$3,600 each, and the oversized, long-billed curlew made the Mason Decoy Factory in Detroit, Michigan met expectations when it sold for \$24,000. A rare high-headed mallard pair by Walter H. "Tube" Dawson snuck past its high estimate of \$10,000 and sold for \$10,200. Daniel Lake Leeds shorebirds continued their market strength, with the black-bellied plover over its high estimate at \$13,200, the ruddy turnstone within its estimate at \$45,000, and the robin snipe surpassing estimate at \$24,000.

The decoy portion of the sale finished out with numerous lots estimated from \$400 to \$1,000. The majority of these items sold within or above estimate, including a box of twelve finger bowl decoys that sold for \$2,700 on a \$3/500 estimate and a flying green-winged teal pair by Harry W. Vreeland that doubled its high estimate and sold for \$2,400. All levels of the decoy collecting community found something to take home as Copley's two hundred decoy lots crossed the block.

The painting section of the Winter Sale was led by major works from noted sporting artist Ogden M. Pleissner. *Southern Cabin*, a stunning 1975 work, sold for \$138,000 and set a world record for a watercolor by the artist, surpassing Copley's own record set with *Quail Shooting from July, 2013*. *Above the Falls* landed squarely within its estimate at \$54,000, and the oil painting *Salmon Fisherman*, with its strong composition and lively palette, shot well above its high estimate and sold for \$102,000.

Immediately following the notable Pleissner results, Copley set another world record, this time artist for Milton C. Weiler with *First Drop at the Elbow, New Brunswick*, which sold for \$7,200 on a \$3/5,000 estimate. Strong painting sales continued throughout the afternoon, as both watercolors by Aiden Lassell Ripley sold above their estimates, with *Ruffed Grouse in Snow* bringing \$28,800 and *Wild Turkeys* finding a new home for \$23,400.

Before a stretch of watercolors created for *National Geographic* by Louis Agassiz Furtess, a watercolor of black ducks in winter by Robert Verity Clem went over estimate for \$4,800. The Furtess works on paper saw strong absentee and telephone bidding interest, with all of the avian lots offered selling within or above their estimates. The star of the group, a watercolor of goshawks from a 1920 article on falconry, more than doubled its high estimate of \$7,000, ultimately selling for \$16,800.

An oil painting of Dall Sheep by wildlife artist Guy Coheleach sold within its estimate for \$11,400, while Alexander Pope Jr.'s whitetail deer painting passed.

Copley continued to yield strong results for paintings and items by artists who are known for their depictions of dogs, including a set of Wedgwood plates designed by Marguerite Kirmse which brought \$4,080. An oil portrait of the two hunting dogs, *Hunk O'Luck and Safe Hit*, by Gustav Muss Arnolt, sold near its high estimate for \$21,600, and an exquisite small oil by Percival Rosseau of two setters brought its high, \$12,000.

A remarkable offering of almost thirty lots of drawings and watercolors by Long Island artist Paul Desmond Brown yielded very active and competitive phone bidding. Sixteen of the lots brought four-figure results, with many going five to ten times above their estimates, and they were led by eight polo player drawings from the Milton C. Weiler collection that sold for \$5,700. Two pencil drawings and a signed edition of *Black Beauty* sold for \$1,920.

Works by contemporary artist John Swan appeared to rebound with the watercolor *Canoe on the St. Jean* selling for \$8,400, a new world record for the artist, and Chet Reneson's *On the Flats* led a group of seven watercolors by the artist, selling for \$6,300. Finally, Copley continued its strong results for Harold Newton, a top Florida highwayman painter, selling the oil *Back Water Marsh* for \$7,200. This price surpassing Copley's own record set in July 2013.

After such success in Charleston, Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC is already preparing for its 2014 Sporting Sale, which will be held in Plymouth, Massachusetts on July 25 and 26, with consignments accepted through the end of April or until full. For a free confidential auction estimate please call 617.536.0030 or email [info@copleyart.com](mailto:info@copleyart.com). A full list of official prices realized from Copley's 2014 Winter Sale will be available at [www.copleyart.com](http://www.copleyart.com). All prices include a 20% buyer's premium. Auction records are based on [askart.com](http://askart.com).