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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crowell and Pleissner Top Copley's \$1.8 Million Winter Sale 2018

CHARLESTON, SC - Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC (copleyart.com), the nation's premier decoy and sporting art auction house, realized over \$1.8 million in sales at the Winter Sale 2018, held at the American Theater on February 16th in Charleston, South Carolina. The sale, containing 345 lots, was an impressive 97% sold, extending Copley's stellar track record in the industry.

All eight cover lots sold. Thirty-nine items sold for five-figure prices, evenly dispersed between decoys and paintings. There was robust and active bidding from all platforms and across all categories, including paintings, prints, folk art, and antique and contemporary decoys. The historic American Theater on King Street in Charleston was filled with a buzzing energy throughout the sale as over five hundred bidders participated in person, over the phone, and through the internet. New buyers in town for the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition lined up to compete against established collectors, dealers, and institutions.

Copley's owner and principal Stephen B. O'Brien, Jr., said, "Our commitment to realistic and conservative estimates continues to pay dividends in terms of our consignors' successes. Many offerings from the Winter Sale were fresh to the market and came from private single owner collections or estates and were sold without reserve. We distinguish ourselves in the industry by providing thorough condition reports and accurate post-auction reporting. This gives our clients a great deal of confidence when making important selling and buying decisions."

The top lot of the sale was the A. Elmer Crowell Turned-Head "Dust Jacket" Plover. Paddles on the floor competed with five phone lines on the lot, which made for lively bidding. The plover soared past the \$75/95,000 estimate, landing at \$156,000. The next highest decoy lot was a standing black duck by Ira D. Hudson, which brought \$96,000, a world record for a decorative carving by the maker. The Canada goose by Charles A. Safford proved one of the better buys of the auction, coming in at \$48,000, below its \$60,000 low estimate.

Copley once again shattered world records for multiple artists, and proved that works with hunting dogs in action remain favorites. An oil on canvas of setters on point by Gustav Muss-Arnolt set a world record for the artist, soaring well above its high estimate of \$24,000 to land at \$33,600. Muss-Arnolt specialized in the depiction of field trial dogs. He worked as a judge in dog shows, served on the board of the American Kennel Club from 1906-1909, and demonstrated an incredible knowledge of a variety of sporting breeds in his paintings. A second Muss-Arnolt oil of dogs in action brought \$28,800, oustripping its high estimate of \$18,000. An English setter by Edwin Megargee got the auction off to an auspicious start, more than doubling its high estimate and selling for \$7,500. After the strong start to the sale with the Megargee, the painting session maintained its energy with a world record being set for a sporting painting by William Henry Machen of *Grouse and Quail*. The hanging game painting

saw brisk action on all bidding platforms, and went to a phone bidder for \$8,400, nearly tripling its high estimate of \$3,000. The Megargee and Machen both came out of the collection of Davison B. Hawthorne (1924-2018), noted decoy carver, collector, and art and antiques dealer.

Momentum continued when works by Harry Curieux Adamson, California's most important waterfowl painter, crossed the block. Both paintings by Adamson brought well above their high estimates, as the pintails sold to a phone bidder for \$21,600 on a \$10/\$14,000 estimate, and *Sanctuary - Wood Ducks* soared to \$20,400, well above its high estimate of \$14,000. *Autumn Grouse Shooting*, a watercolor on paper by Ogden M. Pleissner, sold for \$42,000, within its \$40/\$60,000 estimate.

The sporting audience was wild for turkeys, with contemporary artist C. Ford Riley's oil on canvas of gobblers establishing a world record after active bidding on the floor. It eventually sold for \$22,800, more than doubling its low estimate of \$10/\$15,000. Additionally, a Maynard Reece depiction of turkeys brought \$7,800, nearly doubling its high estimate of \$4,000.

Copley continued its charitable and conservation-oriented efforts, with an acrylic bonefishing painting by Chet Reneson selling for \$7,800 to benefit the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust (BTT). Reneson was named BTT's Artist of the Year for 2018, and 50% of the proceeds of the sale will go directly to BTT to support research on bonefish, tarpon, and permit, along with their sensitive ecosystems. A bronze by sculptor Walter T. Matia was designated to benefit the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to conserving birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. *Tides that Bind* brought \$4,800 on a \$2,500/\$3,500 estimate, and 100% of the proceeds will go to ABC.

Tarpon, the top-selling Lynn Bogue Hunt of the sale, leapt well over its high estimate of \$8,000 to land at \$11,400. Other works by contemporary artists performed well, such as Peter Corbin's *Permit Flats*, which doubled its high estimate of \$2,500 and sold for \$6,600. *November Skies* by Brett James Smith brought \$9,600, well above its high estimate of \$5,500.

The often traditionally minded sporting art collectors responded to a touch of modernism, as Dutch painter Ewoud de Groot's dynamic oil of a snowy owl in flight had four phone lines pitted against several active bidders on the floor. *Snow Hunter (Snowy Owl)* more than doubled its high estimate and set a world record for the artist, ultimately selling to a phone bidder for \$26,400 on an \$8/\$10,000 estimate. The previous de Groot world record mark had been *Oystercatchers*, set by Copley just a year earlier at \$13,200. A second work on offer by de Groot, *Three Pintails*, also doubled the high estimate of \$10,000 and brought \$20,910.

Noted American illustrator Arthur Burdett Frost's watercolor and gouache entitled *The Farmer's Pride* saw active bidding from the floor against the phones. This work ultimately sold to a phone bidder and more than doubled its high estimate of \$8,000, hitting \$21,600 all in. George Browne's *Following the Shore* shot through its high estimate of \$14,000 and brought \$16,800.

Robert K. Abbett's portrait of his *Labrador Retriever - Bo* sold for \$9,600 on a \$5/\$7,000 estimate.

The Canada Goose by Captain Charles C. Osgood achieved a world record for a goose by the maker, selling to a phone bidder for \$72,000. Osgood was a ship's captain from Salem who sailed for California in 1849. While waiting to return with his cargo, he carved a rig that included this decoy as well as five other examples that reside in the collection of the Shelburne Museum in Vermont.

A running yellowlegs by famed Massachusetts carver A. Elmer Crowell, which is slated for inclusion in the upcoming book *Elmer Crowell: The Father of American Bird Carving*, shot above its high estimate of \$45,000 and brought \$72,000. A swimming red-breasted merganser, also by the maker, landed within its estimate and sold for \$14,400 on a \$14/\$18,000 estimate.

Interest and bidding for items from the Nelson Collection remained strong. The Grant Nelson Collection of Shorebird Decoys, one of the finest ever assembled, was built over two decades. The collector was highly focused on acquiring exemplary pieces with great form, surface, and provenance. Decoys from this session were marked with the notable collector's ink stamp. The market responded well to his eye, as the Turned-Head "Dust Jacket" Plover by Crowell sold for an impressive \$156,000. The Crowell Turned-Head "Dust Jacket" Yellowlegs brought \$57,000, exceeding its \$35/\$45,000 estimate. This example, with its cranked and lifted head attitude, showcases the maker's unique ability to capture the semblance of movement in gunning decoys perhaps better than any other maker.

Interest in works by Massachusetts carver Lothrop Turner Holmes was strong, with rare early examples of a black-bellied plover and a yellowlegs both soaring over their high estimates to \$57,000 and \$14,400 on \$25/\$35,000 and \$5/\$8,000 estimates, respectively. Unlike many professional carvers who earned a living selling their decoys, Holmes only carved decoys for his own rig, which he used along the marshes of the Jones River and Duxbury Bay. He is one of the earliest documented shorebird makers from any region.

A pair of Ward Brothers outstanding green-winged teal met estimate and sold for \$12,000. Eli Doughty's boldly carved early brant brought \$13,200, more than doubling the high estimate of \$3,500/\$5,500.

An iconic running curlew by Captain Robert Andrews landed at \$45,000, within the \$30/\$50,000 estimate. Andrews decoys are perhaps the rarest of the region's top makers, and this distinctly Smith Island curlew stands as the most iconic remaining decoy from the isle and perhaps the best of its kind to come to light. The long-reaching body resolves with the region's most elegant wing carving. Copley's decoy specialist, Colin S. McNair was "encouraged to see a return of broad interest to the shorebird decoy market."

There was ample interest in a complete set of whale carvings by Clark Voorhees. The top lot was a right whale, which hammered at \$2,400, within the \$2/\$3,000 estimate. The humpback whale closely followed and brought \$2,337 on a \$2/\$3,000 estimate.

Folk art canes saw considerable action, with a carved dog head cane selling for \$2,040, more than quadrupling its low estimate of \$500, and a well-carved shoe cane coming close to tripling the high estimate of \$600, hammering down at \$1,680.

Miniatures proved consistently collectible, as a miniature canvasback by A. Elmer Crowell approached its high estimate of \$3,000 and brought \$2,880, and a miniature woodcock by A.J. King thundered past its \$2,500 high estimate to \$3,900.

The Davison B. Hawthorne Collection of Decoys, Paintings, and Folk Art opened both sessions of the sale. Ultimately, the 52 lots were 100% sold and soared to 114% of their high estimate. A ceramic rattlesnake jug by Michael A. and Melvin S. Crocker exceeded its high estimate of \$500 and set a new record for the makers at \$2,520, selling to a live bidder.

Attendance remained strong throughout the sale, as interest in contemporary carver Mark S. McNair's works brought live bidders back to the floor to compete with bidding from the phones and internet. A pair of yellowlegs more than doubled the high estimate of \$1,500 and brought \$3,600, while the maker's pintail pair hit \$3,900. The top offering by Pennsylvania carver Jim Schmiedlin was a hooded merganser drake, which shot above the high estimate of \$4,000 and sold for \$4,800.

Copley provided the convenience of online bidding through Bidsquare, as well as the sporting art industry's first app, Copley Live. The sale featured selections from the Collections of Richard and Lynn Gove, Davison B. Hawthorne, Ernest and Carolyn Kramer, Blair Ledingham, Grant Nelson, John T. Ordeman, a descendent of Barrie and Bernice Stavis, and Ronald S. Swanson. A full list of official prices realized from Copley's Winter Sale 2018 is available at www.copleyart.com. All prices include a 20% buyer's premium (23% for online bidding), and all record prices cite AskArt.com and *Decoy Magazine*.

Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC is preparing for its Sporting Sale 2018 which returns to Plymouth, Massachusetts, on July 18-20th. Session III of The Donal C. O'Brien, Jr. Collection will headline this sale, which also will feature items from the Hawthorne, Sharpless, and Swanson Collections. Consignments accepted until April 15th or full. For a free confidential auction estimate, call 617.536.0030 or email info@copleyart.com.

For high resolution images, please contact Amy Lunderville at 617.536.0030 or amy@copleyart.com.

Images to include:

William Henry Machen (1832-1911), *Grouse and Quail*, oil on canvas, 27 ¼ by 22 ⅛ in., Sold for \$8,400

Robert K. Abbett (1926-2015), *Labrador Retriever – Bo*, 1983, oil on board, 16 by 20 in., Sold for \$9,600

Gustav Muss-Arnolt (1858-1927), *Setters on Point*, oil on canvas, 20 by 28 in., Sold for \$33,600

Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983), *Autumn Grouse Shooting*, watercolor on paper, 17 ½ by 27 ½ in., Sold for \$42,000

C. Ford Riley (b. 1952), *Wild Turkey*, oil on canvas, 30 by 40 in., Sold for \$22,800

Ewoud de Groot (b. 1969), *Snow Hunter (Snowy Owl)*, 2015, oil on linen, 19 ½ by 47 in., Sold for \$26,400

Arthur Burdett Frost (1851-1928), *The Farmer's Pride*, 1904, watercolor and gouache, 24 ½ by 18 in., Sold for \$21,600

Miniature Canvasback, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), 4 ½ in. long, Sold for \$2,400

Rattlesnake Jug, Michael A. and Melvin S. Crocker, 12 ½ in. long, Sold for \$2,520

Canada Goose, Charles A. Safford (1877-1957), 27 by 15 by 10 ½ in., Sold for \$48,000

Canada Goose, Captain Charles C. Osgood (1820-1866), 24 ½ in. long, Sold for \$72,000

Outstanding Running Yellowlegs, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), 13 ¼ in. long, Sold for \$72,000

Turned-Head "Dust Jacket" Plover, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), 10 ½ in. long, Sold for \$156,000

Standing Black Duck, Ira D. Hudson (1873-1949), 15 in. long, Sold for \$96,000

Dog Head Cane, 33 ½ in. long, Sold for \$2,040

Shoe Cane, 34 in. long, Sold for \$2,680

The Andrews Running Curlew, Captain Robert Andrews, 18 ½ in. long, Sold for \$45,000

