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### **Ward Bros. and Rosseau Top Copley's Record Setting \$2.4 Million Winter Sale 2019**

CHARLESTON, SC - Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC ([copleyart.com](http://copleyart.com)), the nation's premier decoy and sporting art auction house, realized over \$2.4 million in sales at the Winter Sale 2019, held in partnership with the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE) at the Charleston Marriott on February 16 in South Carolina. The auction, consisting of 389 lots, was an impressive 95% sold, extending Copley's stellar track record in the industry.

The auction hall was filled with a buzzing energy and plenty of foot traffic throughout the sale, as over 650 bidders participated in person, over the phone, and through the internet. Additional chairs were set up after the auction's start as new buyers, in town for SEWE, lined up to compete against established collectors, dealers, and institutions.

Thirteen out of fourteen cover lots sold. Four lots reached six figures, and forty-two items sold for five-figure prices. There was robust and active bidding from all platforms and across all categories, including paintings, prints, folk art, canes, and antique and contemporary decoys.

Copley's owner and principal Stephen B. O'Brien Jr. said, "This was our best Winter Sale ever on several fronts. I am really excited to witness a sea of new bidders coming into the sporting art market." O'Brien has reason to be excited as his firm continues to build momentum in the field. Focusing on quality over quantity, over the last decade Copley has regularly posted the highest average price per decoy lot. Further illustrating the success of this approach, over the last ten years Copley has placed twenty-six lots on *Decoy Magazine's* "100 All-Time High Prices" list, more than the rest of the field combined during this period.

The top lot of the sale was a pair of wigeon by the Ward Brothers from Crisfield, Maryland. Paddles on the floor competed with phone lines on the lot, which made for lively bidding and an energetic room. The pair soared past the \$125/175,000 estimate, landing at \$228,000. This was the highest price ever paid for a Southern decoy lot offered in the South. The auction's second highest decoy lot was a standing goose by Charles S. Schoenheider Sr., which split the estimates, bringing \$108,000.

Every dog has his day, and so did the three hunting dog paintings that led off the sale. The top painting lot, Percival Rosseau's *Perfection*, saw active bidding on phones and internet, ultimately selling for \$54,000 on a \$30/\$50,000 estimate. Back-to-back lots by Edmund H. Osthaus held strong; *A Fine Pair* and *On Point* sold for \$26,400 and \$39,000, respectively. Both works depict hunting dogs in action and fell within their estimates.

A. F. Tait's classic oil painting, *Wide Awake, Raquette Lake*, proved one of the better buys of the auction, coming in at \$54,000. A watercolor by Aiden Lassell Ripley, entitled *Woodcock* by

*the Stream*, exceeded its high estimate of \$30,000 and landed at \$32,400. Robert K. Abbett's *Shooting at Riverview* hunting scene landed between the \$20/\$30,000 estimate, selling for \$24,000. A setter on point, also by Abbett, saw dramatic interest as a videographer got up-close and personal to capture phone bidders battling it out, ultimately hammering down for \$19,200, well above the high estimate of \$12,000. Additionally, a watercolor by noted California artist Donald Teague significantly outperformed expectations, with *Boats in Harbor* launching to a sale price of \$6,000, seven and a half times the high estimate of \$800.

Several smaller works by sporting art master Ogden M. Pleissner saw plenty of activity—*Salmon Fishing* sold for \$13,200, *At the Point of Rocks* brought \$24,000, and *Wyoming Trout Fishing* sold for \$5,100 with all three watercolors landing within their estimates.

Two works by Francis Lee Jaques, painted for Arthur H. Howell's 1932 publication *Florida Bird Life*, proved good buys. Both *Birds of the Pine Woods* and *Birds of the Scrub* brought \$13,200 each, and demonstrated Jaques' skillful combination of artistry and accurate bird identification.

Additional smaller works by classic sporting artists, including Aiden Lassell Ripley and Frank Benson, demonstrated continuing interest. Ripley's pencil drawing, *Quail Hunting*, shot to \$2,160 on a \$2/400 estimate, and a pencil and charcoal drawing, *Duck Hunting*, sold for \$720, also on a \$2/400 estimate. All seven Benson etchings offered sold, with the *Federal Duck Stamp Design* bringing \$3,690, above its \$2/\$3,000 estimate, and *Wildfowler* selling for \$2,160 on its \$1/\$2,000 estimate.

Bronze sculptures by contemporary artist Walter T. Matia all found buyers with a pair of bronze setters more than doubling their high estimate of \$1,500 and hitting \$3,900. Matia's curlew pair more than quadrupled its high estimate of \$1,500, reaching \$6,600. The egret pair brought \$3,300 on a high estimate of \$1,500, and a California quail pair burst well above the high estimate of \$1,200 and landed at \$4,613.

William J. Koelpin's bronze, *Bear Country*, clawed above the \$6/\$9,000 estimate and reached \$10,200, continuing Copley's strong results for the artist. *Racing to the Sea*, a bronze depicting baby sea turtles by Florida artist André Harvey, saw active bidding with five phone lines competing against internet bidders. It launched well above the high estimate of \$2,000 and paddled its way to \$8,610, with an internet bidder winning.

Dutch contemporary artist Ewoud de Groot was the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust's (BTT) 2019 Artist of the Year, and his painting, *Resting Terns*, glided over its high estimate of \$12,000 and struck the block at \$15,600 after a battle between phones. Fifty percent of the proceeds from this sale will go directly to BTT, whose mission is to conserve and enhance global bonefish, tarpon, and permit fisheries and their environment through stewardship, research, education, and advocacy.

The decoy, folk art, and Americana session began with a selection of decoys from the Estate of Mrs. Seth Shannahan Jewell. Active bidding on the first lot in this section led a miniature

Canada goose by Edward T. Parsons to double its high estimate, bringing \$3,600, and a miniature canvasback hen sold for \$3,000, soaring above the high estimate of \$1,800. An iron goldeneye hen wing duck by Richard L. Tilghman landed at \$6,600, more than doubling the high estimate of \$3,000. A preening Canada goose by an unknown maker sold within the \$10/\$15,000 estimate for \$12,000 to a floor bidder. A reaching swan, attributed to Lloyd J. Tyler, more than doubled the high estimate of \$3,000, stretching out to \$7,800.

An early hollow running curlew by an unknown maker from the Grant Nelson Collection saw plenty of action, surpassing the high estimate of \$80,000 and achieving \$84,000, more than double its auction debut in 1997. The Nelson Collection's A. Elmer Crowell golden plover also topped its estimate of \$20/\$30,000, hitting a \$42,000 sale price.

The Gifford Holly Swan shot past the high estimate of \$85,000 and landed at \$102,000, nearly doubling the results from its first auction appearance in 2009. The Ira Hudson Flying Black Duck met the low estimate and sold for \$18,000, selling to an astute young gentleman on the floor. A Cassius Smith swimming gadwall, nearly doubled the high estimate and brought \$33,000. Chauncey Wheeler's flying blue-winged teal pair fell within the \$16/\$20,000 estimate and hammered down at \$19,200.

The eighth consecutive lot in a row selling for five figures or more was a pickerel by none other than "the father of American bird carving," A. Elmer Crowell. The fish sold for \$11,400 on a \$5/\$8,000 estimate. Interest in Crowell continued several lots later as the "Boss" Hoover mallard drake sold for \$18,000, just shy of the \$20,000 low estimate.

A high-head pintail hen saw active bidding with four phones lines battling it out. This remarkable decoy from the Kankakee Marsh landed between the \$75/\$95,000 estimate at \$84,000.

Works by Joseph W. Lincoln got off to an auspicious start as a run of five decoys by the carver saw active bidding. The long-tailed hen, consigned by a descendent of Lincoln's premier patron, Chester Spear, shot to \$81,000, which was well over the high estimate of \$60,000. A Canada goose and an early black duck by the carver each sold for \$11,400, both well above their high estimates of \$6,500 and \$8,000 respectively.

Back-to-back lots by Nathan F. Cobb Jr. had active interest, with the Mackey Purnell Cobb Curlew meeting the low estimate of \$60,000, while the Johnson Levinson Running Red Knot rose into the estimate at \$21,600. The highest flying lot from the Carolinas was an Enoch S. Tolson curlew, which brought \$19,200 on an estimate of \$18/\$24,000.

A fine pair of pintails by Charles E. "Shang" Wheeler saw competitive bidding on four phone lines. The pintails shot above the \$40,000 high estimate and landed at \$51,000, almost three times their last sale in 2001 at Sotheby's. A preening black duck by fellow Connecticut carver Edward "Ted" Mulliken settled at \$6,765, multiples over its high estimate of \$1,800.

New York City restaurateur and sports car collector and driver, Herb Wetanson, also known as a top Ward Brothers collector, offered seven quality works by “America’s Decoy Carvers.” The Ward beavertail pintail drake topped its \$75/\$95,000 estimate and achieved \$102,000. Decoy specialists Colin S. McNair and Stephen B. O’Brien Jr. had fun with the established Ward collecting nomenclature on the “Fat-Jaw Humpback Beavertail Goldeneye,” and the lot made estimate at \$66,000.

Also from the Wetanson Collection were two carvings from Alastair Bradley Martin’s Guennol Collection. The Earnest Guennol Dropped-Wing Sandpiper by A. Elmer Crowell split its estimate at \$60,000, and the Guennol Heron also went within estimate at \$42,000.

The Mason Decoy Factory market continued to search for its footing. The top factory lot was the only known pair of oversized mallards, which originated from the rig of Bernard Baruch at Hobcaw Barony and later resided in the collections on Dr. James McCleery and Mr. Wetanson. They achieved \$28,200, short of their \$35/\$45,000 estimate.

The Nantucket shorebird market is beginning to catch a tail wind. Offerings from a descendent of Alfred Ely were 100% sold, bolstered by the late Mr. Ely’s provenance records, which shed new light on plover hunting on Nantucket during the 19th century. An Ely Collection Nantucket golden plover pair shot up to \$30,000 on a \$3/\$4,000 estimate, ten times the low estimate. A Nantucket feeding golden plover from a private collection reached \$10,200 on a \$6/\$9,000 estimate.

Decoys from a descendant of L. H. LaMotte proved in high demand. The first lot of this collection, a ruddy turnstone carved by John Horn, landed within estimate at \$7,200. An Ira Hudson dowitcher shot above the high estimate of \$5,000 and brought \$7,500.

Premier carvings made within the last half-century continued to show strong results, with a Jim Schmiedlin wood duck drake surpassing its \$5,500 high estimate on its way to a \$9,000 sale price. A Mark S. McNair sperm whale pulled bidders on a Nantucket sleigh ride past the high estimate of \$6,000 on its way to \$8,400, and the maker’s loon also topped its \$3,500 high estimate at \$4,200. Donal C. O’Brien Jr., who is recognized as a premier decoy collector, was also an award-winning decoy carver, and a pair of his green-winged teal brought \$8,400, over the \$6,000 high estimate.

Copley’s Decoy Specialist Colin S. McNair “was very excited to see another strong decoy sale after a tentative market in the fall followed the blockbuster summer. We liked our inventory going into the sale and were able to connect with the market’s top buyers.” He also attributes Copley’s decoy success to the company’s presale research process which involves “a lot of UV light and hundreds of X-rays.”

Copley closed out the final session of the Ronald S. Swanson Collection with a splash, as a forty-five pound Atlantic salmon model by John Bucknell Russell brought \$7,995 on a \$5,000 high estimate.

An E. F. Payne Rod Co. bamboo fly rod achieved \$1,476 without an estimate. Folk art canes again saw considerable action, with a sporting and farm life cane nearly tripling the high estimate of \$500 and selling for \$1,440.

A well-known recipe for success, single-owner collections and conservative estimates were a key to the overall success of this historic sale. These were among the factors that drove the total to the highest level realized for decoys and sporting art in the South in over 5 years.

Copley provided the convenience of online bidding through Bidsquare, as well as the sporting art industry's first app, Copley Live. A full list of official prices realized from Copley's Winter Sale 2019 is available at [www.copleyart.com](http://www.copleyart.com). All prices include a 20% buyer's premium (23% for online bidding), and all record prices cite [AskArt.com](http://AskArt.com) and *Decoy Magazine*.

Copley Fine Art Auctions, LLC is preparing for The Sporting Sale 2019 and will be making a major collection announcement soon. The sale will return to Plymouth, Massachusetts, on July 24-25th. Consignments will be accepted until April 15th or full. For a free confidential auction estimate, call 617.536.0030 or email [info@copleyart.com](mailto:info@copleyart.com).

For high-resolution images, please contact Amy Lunderville at 617.536.0030 or [amy@copleyart.com](mailto:amy@copleyart.com).

**Images to include:**

Percival Leonard Rosseau (1859-1937), *Perfection: Ned and Bob*, oil on canvas, 18 by 14 in., Estimate: \$30/\$50,000, Sold for \$54,000

Edmund H. Osthaus (1858-1928), *On Point*, oil on canvas, 24 by 36 in., Estimate: \$30/\$50,000, Sold for \$39,000

Edmund H. Osthaus (1858-1928), *A Fine Pair*, oil on canvas, 29 1/4 by 22 1/2 in., Estimate: \$20/\$30,000, Sold for \$26,400

Francis Lee Jaques (1887-1969), *Birds of the Scrub*, oil on canvas, 28 by 24 in., Estimate: \$14/\$18,000, Sold for \$13,200

Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896-1969), *Woodcock by the Stream*, watercolor, 18 by 29 in., Estimate: \$20/\$30,000, Sold for \$32,000

Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819-1905), *Wide Awake, Raquette Lake*, oil on canvas, 26 ¼ by 22 ½ in., Estimate: \$60/\$70,000, Sold for \$54,000

William J. Koelpin (1938-1996), *Bear Country*, 1994, bronze, 30 by 6 by 12 in., Estimate: \$6/\$9,000, Sold for \$10,200

Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983), *At the Point of Rocks*, watercolor, 17 by 24 ½ in., Estimate: \$20/\$30,000, Sold for \$24,000

Robert K. Abbett (1926-2015), *Shooting At Riverview*, 1983, oil on board, 24 by 36 in., Estimate: \$20/\$30,000, Sold for \$24,000

Robert K. Abbett (1926-2015), *A Setter On Point*, signed "Abbett" lower left, oil on masonite, 24 by 30 in., Estimate: \$8/\$12,000, Sold for \$19,200

Early Hollow Running Curlew, Massachusetts, c. 1850, 19 ¼ in. long, Estimate: \$70/\$80,000, Sold for \$84,000

Ewoud de Groot (b. 1969), *Resting Terns*, oil on linen, 29 ½ by 59 in., Estimate: \$8/\$12,000, Sold for \$15,600

Walter T. Matia (b. 1953), *Curlew Pair*, bronze, 16 ¼ by 20 by 7 in., Estimate: \$1/\$1,500, Sold for \$6,600

Bishops Head Wigeon Pair, The Ward Brothers, Lemuel T. (1896-1984) and Stephen W. (1895-1976), Crisfield MD, c. 1928, 16 ¼ in. long, Estimate: \$125/\$175,000, Sold for \$228,000

The Gifford Holly Swan, John "Daddy" Holly (1818-1892) or James T. Holly (1855-1935), Havre de Grace, MD, c. 1885, 20 in. tall by 34 ¾ in. long, Estimate: \$65/\$85,000, Sold for \$102,000

Swimming Gadwall, Cassius Smith (1847-1907), Milford, CT, c. 1890, 17 ¼ in. long, Estimate: \$14/\$18,000, Sold for \$33,000

Flying Blue-Winged Teal Pair, Chauncey Wheeler (1888-1945), Alexandria Bay, NY, 1934, 15 ½ in. long, Estimate: \$16/\$20,000, Sold for \$19,200

Pickarel Carving, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), East Harwich, MA, 1936, fish is 17 in. long, board is 21 in. long, Estimate: \$5/\$8,000, Sold for \$11,400

High-Head Pintail Hen, Herman R. Trinosky (1874-1956) Rig, Kankakee Marsh, IN, c. 1895, 17 in. long, 9 ½ in. tall, Estimate: \$75/\$95,000, Sold for \$84,000

The Spear Family Long-Tailed Hen, Joseph W. Lincoln (1859-1938), Accord, MA, c. 1910, 14 in. long, Estimate: \$40/\$60,000, Sold for \$81,000

The Humbracht Standing Goose, Charles S. Schoenheider Sr. (1854-1924), Peoria, IL, c. 1918, 20  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. tall and 23  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, Estimate: \$100/\$125,000, Sold for \$108,000

Mackey Purnell Cobb Curlew, Nathan F. Cobb Jr. (1825-1905), Cobb Island, VA, c. 1870, 15 in. long, Estimate: \$60/\$80,000, Sold for \$60,000

The Earnest Guennol Dropped-Wing Sandpiper, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), East Harwich, MA, c. 1900, 8 in. long, Estimate: \$50/\$70,000, Sold for \$60,000

The Guennol Heron, Massachusetts, c. 1900, 41  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. tall, Estimate: \$40/\$50,000, Sold for \$42,000

Pintail Pair, Charles E. "Shang" Wheeler (1872-1949), Stratford, CT, c. 1940, 17  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. and 20  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, Estimate: \$30/\$40,000, Sold for \$51,000

Early Golden Plover, A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), East Harwich, MA, c. 1910, 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, Estimate: \$20/\$30,000, Sold for \$42,000

Rare Beavertail Pintail Drake, The Ward Brothers, Lemuel T. (1896-1984) and Stephen W. (1895-1976), Crisfield MD, c. 1928, 20  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. long, Estimate: \$75/\$95,000, Sold for \$102,000

Fat-Jaw Humpback Beavertail Goldeneye, The Ward Brothers, Lemuel T. (1896-1984) and Stephen (1895-1976), Crisfield, MD, c. 1918, 15  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. long, Estimate: \$65/\$85,000, Sold for \$66,000

Important Golden Plover Pair, Nantucket, MA, c. 1840, 10 in. long, Estimate: \$3/\$4,000, Sold for \$30,000