

Copley's Winter Sale—

# Auction To Showcase Four Collections Of Bird Carvings

CHARLESTON, S.C. — On Friday and Saturday, February 14-15, Copley Fine Art Auctions will make its annual sojourn to the Southeastern Wildlife Expo (SEWE) with its Winter Sale 2020. The sale will offer the opportunity to see and take home world-class paintings and bird carvings. The auction will be conducted at the Charleston Marriott at SEWE's bustling riverfront venue.

Returning to South Carolina for the sixth year in a row, this year's sale will showcase four collections of bird carvings: the Dr Peter J. Muller Jr collection of American bird decoys, Session II of the Dr Morton D. Kramer collection, decoys from the William J. Butler Jr estate and a collection of carvings by A. Elmer Crowell.

Muller is known for assembling one of the very first curated collections of premier American bird decoys. He was introduced to the field in the 1960s and his early mentor was William J. Mackey Jr, the author of the seminal book *American Bird Decoys*. After the collector's sudden passing in 1973, Muller participated in all eight of the Mackey auction sessions, acquiring many of his iconic works. Following this summer's release of the A. Elmer Crowell book and Harmon collection catalog, Copley's decoy specialists, Stephen B. O'Brien Jr, Chelsie Olney and Colin S. McNair, have been writing a dedicated Muller collection catalog in addition to the main Winter Sale catalog. The standalone Muller collection catalog will feature several Mackey collection stars, several of which are expected to bring six figures, including a swan by Charles Birch (1867-1956), carved circa 1920; a rare hooded merganser pair, circa 1935, by Chincoteague Islander Ira D. Hudson (1873-1949); a long-tailed drake by Harry V. Shourds (1861-1920), a rare Mason Decoy Factory long-tailed drake; and a Joseph Lin-



Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983), "Western Pheasant Hunting," watercolor, 27 by 37 inches (\$40/60,000).



"Dust-Jacket" yellowlegs by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) (\$100/150,000).

coln (1859-1938) swimming Canada goose.

This year's sale catalog will feature a "Dust-Jacket" yellowlegs by A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952), carved circa 1910 (\$100/150,000). The term "dust jacket" was coined by collectors because carvings from these early rigs were chosen for the covers of William J. Mackey Jr's *American Bird Decoys* and John and Shirley Delph's *New England Decoys*.

Another top New England lot will be a Charles Safford (1877-1957) Canada goose from the maker's personal rig (\$30/50,000). This decoy is related to the Safford sleeping goose. One more decoy bringing together iconic form and important provenance is the feeding yellowlegs by Fred Nichols (1854-1924), which hails from the Dr James M. McCleery collection (\$65/85,000).

The paintings are led by a rare watercolor depiction of western pheasant hunting by noted sporting artist Ogden M. Pleissner (1905-1983) (\$40/60,000). The sale will also feature dog art, perfect for the SEWE crowd, including an atmospheric Percival Rosseau (1859-1937) oil portrait depicting a setter and pointer (\$30/50,000) and a masterwork by Gustav Muss-Arnolt (1858-



Mackey-Muller swan by Charles Birch (1867-1956)

1927) of two setters (\$16/24,000). Also set to cross the block is a significant work featuring an English springer spaniel with a pheasant by Thomas Blinks (1860-1912), an English artist who flourished during the Victorian era (\$18/24,000). Watercolors by Edmund H. Osthaus (1858-1928) and Arthur Wardle (1864-1949) round out the offering of paintings depicting working dogs.

Leading the works on paper slated for the sale is a bound set of seven octavo volumes of *Birds of America* by John James Audubon (1785-1851)

joined with the three *Quadrupeds of North America* volumes, which the famed artist put together with his son John and Dr John Bachman of Charleston, S.C. (\$30/50,000).

Copley will offer items from the estate of Alfred F. King III. King was the owner of the Sportsman's Edge gallery in New York City for many years. Works from his collection include two drawings and an acrylic by Bob Kuhn (1920-2007) and paintings by father-son wildlife artists Tom (1926-2000) and Greg Beecham (b 1954).

Exemplary works by sporting

art masters include paintings and works on paper by Frank W. Benson (1862-1951), Richard E. Bishop (1887-1975), David Hagerbaumer (1921-2014), Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896-1969), William Goadby Lawrence (1913-2002) Carl Rungius (1869-1959), Wilhelm Kuhnert (1865-1926) Ken Carlson (b 1937) and David A. Maass (b 1929).

Additionally, six bronzes by contemporary sculptor Walter Matia will be available, including "Curlew Pair" (\$1/1,500) and a pair of avocets, which was the artist's first sculpture (\$1/1,500). Two works by rising Dutch artist Ewoud de Groot, one depicting a curlew and the other a group of oystercatchers, are included (\$8/12,000). Further contemporary artists included in the sale are Chet Reneson, Luke Frazier, Kent Ullberg, John Kobald, Mike Stidham, Rod Serbousek, and Thomas Aquinas Daly, among others.

Items will be available to preview on Friday, February 14, from 3 to 5 pm and Saturday, February 15, from 8:30 to 10 am. The live auction will begin at 10 am on February 15.

The Charleston Marriott is at 170 Lockwood Boulevard. For information, 617-536-0030 or [www.copleyart.com](http://www.copleyart.com).

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## Lelands Scores Steelers' Game-Worn Jerseys For Spring Auction

MATAWAN, N.J. — Lelands has secured 20 high-quality jerseys directly from the Pittsburgh Steelers for inclusion in its spring auction, which will end May 15. A sneak peek of some of the items include game-worn jerseys from Jack Lambert (1977), Andy Russell (1975), Mel Blount (1976) and Rod Woodson (1992).

One of the big stories of this collection is a 2004 Troy Polamalu game-worn jersey, which is the first jersey worn by the future Hall of Famer that the Steelers have ever offered in public auction. There are also more than half a dozen other items of memorabilia that the

team has provided.

For the past several years, Lelands has been the exclusive auction house for vintage game-used jerseys and other memorabilia consigned directly from the Pittsburgh Steelers. Some of these latest jerseys have been in safe-keeping by the team for over a half a century and are just being offered to collectors now.

Lelands President Michael Heffner appreciates the Steeler's foresight noting, "Thank goodness the franchise had the thoughtfulness to save these precious pieces of sports history for collectors who will cherish them." Past jerseys that Lelands has obtained from the Steelers have proven to be top-notch game-worn examples.

There are good reasons why Steelers memorabilia is some of the most sought-after in the hobby. First, the Steelers are rich in football history and have assembled some of the finest and most colorful teams ever. Secondly, their fan base is and always has been one of the tops in the NFL, and the Steeler fans are active bidders for the franchise's memorabilia. Finally, and specific to this collection,



the fact that the jerseys come directly from the team have increased their value dramatically and have given collectors an opportunity to acquire

authentic game-worn jerseys. Established in 1985, Lelands is at 435-H State Highway 34. For more information, 732-290-8000 or [www.lelands.com](http://www.lelands.com).