

Iconic Decoys & Paintings To Lead Copley's July 13-14 Sporting Sale

PLYMOUTH, MASS. — On July 13 and 14, Copley Fine Art Auctions will conduct its 18th Annual Sporting Sale. This auction, consisting of more than 515 lots, will offer buyers the opportunity to acquire paintings, antique decoys, bird carvings, folk art and powder tins from important curated collections. With auctioneer Peter Cocculuto once again on the podium with the gavel, the live-streamed auction will utilize phone, absentee and internet bidding on three different online platforms, including Copley-Live. The auction will begin at 10 am on both Thursday and Friday.

The auction will include offerings from estates and collections, including Thomas M. Evans Jr, a descendant of Charles Porter Schutt, and Phyllis Moxham du Pont, a descendant of Thomas Coleman du Pont, and a number of other private collections.

Copley principal Stephen O'Brien Jr said, "We are thrilled about this sale as some of the finest decoys and sporting paintings known will cross the auction block."

Leading the Evans collection decoy lineup is the McCleery Eider (\$800,000-\$1.2 million). This iconic decoy was first collected by Dr James M. McCleery, who was among the greatest of decoy connoisseurs from any era.

Historian and curator Robert Shaw worked with both McCleery and his decoys on numerous occasions and explained that the doctor "considered this particular decoy the finest he owned, and, because of his devotion to it, the McCleery family withheld it from the auction of his collection." Shaw stated, "This is arguably the most sophisticated of all eider decoys, with flowing lines and stylized abstract paint worthy of a Zen calligrapher."

From the same shelves, the Earnest-Gregory-McCleery dovetailed goose (\$600/900,000) boasts extensive detail, anatomical accuracy, and "royal" provenance. The bird's only comparable sold for more than \$810,000 in 2018. Famed collec-



Thomas Blinks (1860-1912), "English Pointers," oil on canvas, 14 by 18 inches (\$30/50,000).

tor, folk art dealer and author Adele Earnest (1901-1993) owned both of the dovetailed geese and credits them for inspiring her "subsequent devotion to the decoy as an art."

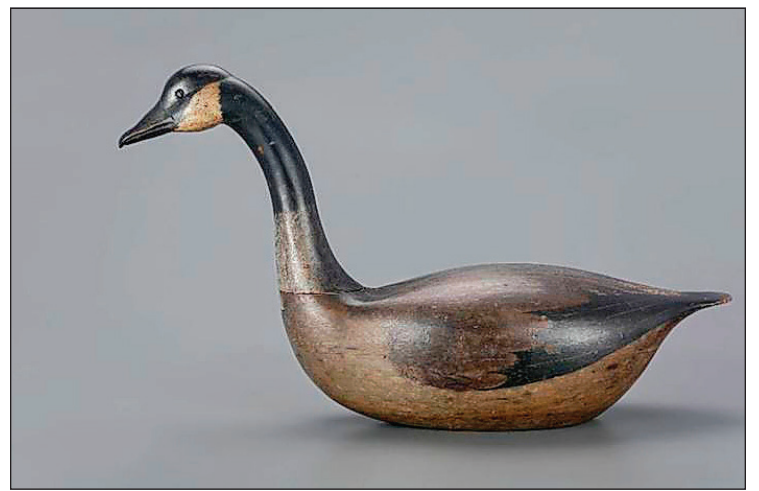
Another important Canada goose from this collection is the sleeping goose by Charles A. Safford (1877-1957) (\$500/800,000), which drew the acclaim of renowned decoy historian Gigi Hopkins, who described it as "...a drop-to-your-knees bird," further stating, "It leaps into the pantheon of the greatest American goose decoys ever made, sculpture and function in perfect marriage." This goose sculpture epitomizes the decoy as American folk art. In addition to these three important carvings, 13 other pinnacle lots by top masters, such as Gus Wilson, Joseph Lincoln, Thomas Chambers, "Shang" Wheeler, Harry V. Shourds, Os Bibber and George Boyd, will be offered from this collection. "Bird for bird, no finer collection of decoys exists," stated O'Brien summarizing the small, but exquisitely curated group.

Shoring up the auction's Midwestern decoy offerings, the preening pintail hen by Charles H. Perdew (1874-1963) (\$70/100,000), featured in the *Masterworks of the Illinois River* book, will be on offer, many consider it the Perdew's finest pintail. Another Perdew rarity to hit the block will be the only known preening black duck (\$40/60,000), also illustrated in *Masterworks*, it showcases Charlie and Edna at the height of their respective crafts.

Other decoy makers repre-

sented at this summer's auction will include Elmer Crowell, the Ward Brothers, Fred Nichols, Nathan Rowley Horne, John English, Obediah Verity, "Fresh Air Dick" Janson and other carvers. The July sale will feature works by contemporary makers, including Frank Finney, Mark McNair, and William Gibian and others.

Top fine art highlights include "Autumn Woodcock Shooting" (\$70/90,000), a watercolor and gouache by Arthur Burdett Frost (1851-1928) from Scribner's "Shooting Pictures" series, along with an oil on board of quail and chicks (\$20/30,000) by American master painter Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819-1905) and "Dove Shooting" (\$30/50,000), a watercolor by Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896-1969). These pinnacle works hail from the collection of Charles Porter Schutt and Phyllis Moxham du Pont, daughter of Eugene E. du Pont.



The Earnest-Gregory-McCleery dovetailed goose, Massachusetts or Pennsylvania, circa 1880, 29½ inches long, 17½ inches tall (\$600/900,000).



Arthur Burdett Frost (1851-1928), "Autumn Woodcock Shooting," watercolor and gouache, 13½ by 21½ inches (\$70/90,000).

The couple shared a profound love of the outdoors and the sport of shooting.

Other paintings set to cross the block include an oil of English pointers by Thomas Blinks (1860-1912), the British sporting artist (\$30/50,000), an oil of a springer with a pheasant by Alexander Pope Jr (1849-1924), one of America's most popular sporting artists (\$30/50,000), Bob Kuhn's (1920-2007) cougar

depiction (\$30/40,000), and one of William H.D. Koerner's (1878-1938) most famous oils, done for Remington Arms (\$20/30,000).

A late addition to the auction, A.B. Frost's "Winter Golf - Play the Like in Four!" (\$30/50,000) is sure to entice the golfing set. The gouache depicts the artist along with his two sons.

For information, www.copley-art.com or 617-536-0030.

'An Enduring Presence: Old Man Of The Mountain' At Museum Of The White Mountains

PLYMOUTH, N.H. — On May 3, 2003, New Hampshire awoke to a world in which an iconic stony face no longer looked out over Franconia Notch. For more than two centuries, the Old Man of the Mountain had captured the imagination of storytellers, artists, writers, statesmen, scientists, entrepreneurs and tourists. Twenty years later the Old Man of the Mountain remains a prominent New Hampshire icon and can still be found as an official and unofficial emblem across the state and beyond.

An exhibition at the Museum of the White Mountains, "An Endur-

ing Presence: The Old Man of the Mountain," currently on view to September 16, explores the history of the Old Man of the Mountain and the ways in which its images and narratives symbolized and reflected the evolving identity of New Hampshire and its citizens. The extraordinary story of the people and technology involved in the innovative efforts to preserve the Old Man's place atop Cannon Mountain is also told.

Museum of the White Mountains is at 34 Highland Street. For information, 603-535-3210, museum.wm@plymouth.edu or www.plymouth.edu.

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