

Moran's Sets New World Records at June California and American Paintings Sale

Pasadena, CA – A large crowd filled the Pasadena Convention Center on Tuesday, June 23rd in anticipation of John Moran Auctioneer's second California and American Paintings Sale for 2009. In an encouraging sign for the art market, the number of first-time bidders increased significantly over that of previous auctions, while established clients returned in force. Results were strong, with gross sales totaling just shy of \$1 million on the 121 lots sold. Several new world auction records were also set.

The first world record of the evening was for a work by Southern California artist Ben Abril (1923-1995). His “Angels Flight Pharmacy, Bunker Hill, Los Angeles exceeded expectations, selling for \$13,800. The very next lot also broke the previous record for Abril, becoming the second highest price realized for this artist. “Summer 1959, Old Edison Building looking South from Bunker Hill Ave” realized \$12,650.

The biggest surprise of the evening was lot 72, an oil on board by California artist Anna Katherine Skeelee (1896 – 1963). “Child of Taos” Estimated to bring \$4-6,000, it quickly generated a flurry of bidding from the phones and floor and finally settled at a world record price of \$40,250. This result more than doubled the previous record, set in 2007.

The final world record of the evening was achieved late in the sale. “Reno,” a watercolor and gouache by California Style artist Jack Laycox (California 1921-1984), is a busy nighttime street scene depicting brilliant flashes of light from signs and buildings, with a Hurrah's sign prominent among them. Expected to earn \$7,000 on the high side, this engaging work realized \$13,800, breaking Moran's own record for this artist set in October 2007.

Early in the sale, a bright, highly textured oil by Dedrick Stuber (California, 1878-1954) entitled “Big Tujunga Wash” sold for well over the estimate at \$5,462. An oil by Maurice Braun entitled “A Bend in the Stream” was estimated to bring \$25,000 on the high side. It sold to a pleased bidder for \$31,625.

“Casa de Pintores” was signed by Ralph Holmes (California, 1876-1963) and, interestingly, also by eight other prominent artists. The verso carries an inscription in Holmes's hand reading “in 1927 this composite was made- each added something and signed.” The oil almost doubled its high estimate, realizing \$8,050. Moran holds the record for this artist for the February 2008 sale of “The Landing” for \$13,800.

Among the other strong and notable sales was the \$24,200 achieved for “Grand Canyon Vista” by Hanson Puthuff. \$48,875 was realized for “Moonlit Poplars” by Birger Sandzen and “Down the Beach” by Phil Dike sold very well for \$28,750.

John Moran's next important auction of California and American Paintings will be held on October 13, 2009. Several significant works have already been consigned for this sale, including two oils by Maurice Braun, both entitled “Eucalyptus,” and a spectacular oil by William Wendt entitled “Spring.” Moran's art sales feature California and American Impressionist oil paintings and watercolors painted prior to the 1950s.

John Moran's next Antiques and Fine Furnishings Estate auction will be held in two sessions on Tuesday, July 28th. Among the highlights of this sale will be property from the Donald A. Cole Living Trust and collections from notable Beverly Hills and San Francisco estates.

Bidding for Moran sales is available in person, by phone, absentee and via the internet through www.ArtFact.com. All sales are held at the Pasadena Convention Center in Pasadena, California. their upcoming July 28th or October 13th sales or to consign, please call the offices of John Moran at (626) 296-6642 or visit www.johnmoran.com