

New Format, Quality Works Bring out the Buyers at John Moran Auctioneers' First Fine Art Auction of

- Record auction prices achieved for three American artists
- Over 1.5 million in sales amassed
- A record number of internet bidders registered with John Moran using one of three available online platforms – over 430 active online bidders were recorded

Pasadena, CA— John Moran Auctioneers’ first fine art sale of 2012 proved well worth the wait – bidders turned out in droves to the newly formatted two-session art sale, featuring fine works of the highest quality. The new bi-annual format, featuring a Modern and European session followed by an American and California session, now allows sale director Katie Halligan and the entire staff at Moran’s more time for the meticulous curation and selectivity for which John Moran Auctions are already known. This format also allowed singular European works, which may have otherwise been lost in the shuffle of an antique sale, to shine.

And shine they did - Modern and European works were certainly given the attention and adoration they deserved by bidders, which translated into very healthy hammer prices. Not long into the European session, an early 17th century Flemish School piece in the style of Peter Paul Reubens went for \$9000 – quite higher than the estimate of \$2500 - \$3500, giving those in attendance a taste of what was to come.

One of many showstoppers of the evening came early in the sale – a museum-quality work by Frederic Arthur Bridgman, depicting a North African Street Scene. Painted in 1882, the piece is an excellent example of Bridgman’s ability to vignette a picturesque narrative and draw the viewer into his Orientalist tableaux with the technical precision and execution of a master of his craft. The work brought \$270,000 – only a hair below the \$300,000 to \$500,000 estimate. “Evening Calm”, a coolly meditative winter landscape by Russian painter Vladimir Nikolaevich Fedorovich, pulled in bidders with its masterful composition, and earned double the high estimate at the block, pulling in \$12,000 (estimate: \$4000 - \$6000).

An exquisite example of a Balinese themed work by Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merpres caused a quiet scene, with international buyers scrambling over every available phone line in order to place their bids. Experts and admirers of Le Mayeur made the trek from as far as Singapore to view the piece and bid. Hailing from a private estate in Claremont, the work ultimately realized \$240,000 at the block, a healthy amount more than the estimate of \$100,000 - \$150,000.

A surprise highlight from the Modern session came in the form of seven silkscreen prints done after Andy Warhol, acquired from a corporate Los Angeles collection. The psychedelic floral prints were estimated at a conservative \$1200 to \$1800, and ultimately found a buyer at \$5206.25. The American and California session was equally anticipated, with high quality pieces by over one hundred artists gracing the walls of the convention center. Three pieces by American artists broke world auction records with their high sale prices. The first, one half of a pair of portraits of a nanny and her ward by the Salt Lake City, Utah artist Lee Greene Richards, realized \$5100 (estimate: \$2000 - \$3000). The second piece was a Hollywood themed gouache and watercolor piece by John Jules Billington, “Hollywood Series No. 2, ‘Sunset Strip”, which realized \$2160. Finally, a piece titled “Beach Car”, by Francis Atee Caldwell inspired a bidding war between buyers on the phone and those on the floor, ultimately setting the record for Caldwell’s work with a price tag of \$21,600 (estimate: \$2000 - \$3000).

An early highlight from this session included an unassumingly small, but masterfully executed seascape and rocky coastline by William Ritschell – a 9.75” by 13” work done in Ritschell’s signature painterly style. The piece, “A Morning on California Coast”, was estimated to bring \$3000 to \$5000, but ended up pulling in \$13,200 – proving that big things sometimes do come in small packages. An atmospheric landscape by Hanson Duvall Puthuff which reflected the artist’s singular skill in depicting the filtered, hazy qualities of light cascading over California hillsides quickly gathered momentum at the block, going for well above its estimated selling

price at \$45,000. A highly anticipated work by William J. McCloskey, completed in 1896, and featuring McCloskey's signature mode of still-life on a semi-reflective mahogany surface brought in a healthy \$90,000, solidly within the \$80,000 to \$120,000 estimate. The fresh to the market piece was one of many that McCloskey and his wife executed with painstaking attention to detail, color, texture, and composition .

Also fresh to the market was an oil on canvas by Glendale artist Paul Lauritz, acquired by a private collector prior to the 1950s, only to resurface now in the offices of John Moran. The work, featuring a dramatic desert mountain set behind a foreground of desert foliage and cacti inspired phone bidders to come out in droves, and ultimately brought \$12,000 at the auction block. A charming Bert Geer Phillips piece featuring a Native American Family in an orchard stole the hearts of floor bidders, but sold in the end to a very determined telephone buyer for a price of \$19,200 – well over the estimate of \$10,000 to \$15,000.

John Moran Auctioneer's looks forward to their next fine Art Auction of 2012, which will be held on October 16th at the Pasadena Convention Center. Consignments are now being accepted for this important, two-session auction.

The next John Moran sale is set for June 19th, 2012, and features fine Antique and Decorative Arts objects from around the world. Of note is the inclusion of a first phase Navajo Chief's blanket, done in the Ute style, in this sale. This museum quality piece is one of only a hundred known surviving blankets of its kind, and is completely fresh to the market, traded to the consignor's family for dry goods and kept in the family ever since. More information on this and other upcoming pieces can be found by visiting JohnMoran.com or calling the offices directly.

Consignment inquiries are always welcome – contact Info@JohnMoran.com or call (626) 793-1833 for more information. Bidding in John Moran Auctions is available on the floor, by telephone, and live online through Invaluable.com, Auctionzip.com and LiveAuctioneers.com. br />