

Two New Records Set at John Moran's October 20, 2015 California and American Fine Art Auction

- New auction records set for California artists Anna Skeelee and Joane Cromwell
- Works by top-tier artists such as Cyrus Edwin Dallin, Maurice Braun and Franz A. Bischoff achieve excellent prices
- In-person attendance strong; just over ten percent of lots sold via online platforms

PASADENA, CA – On Tuesday, October 20th, John Moran Auctioneers opened the doors on their second and final California and American Fine Art Auction of 2015. The curated sale featured over 230 lots of American works of art spanning from the 19th century to the contemporary, with bidding available online via LiveAuctioneers, Invaluable and Bidsquare. In-person attendance at the event was strong, and reserved telephone lines were at capacity for a number of the evening's top lots; because of robust attendee participation, a relatively modest 12% of sales were achieved via online platforms. Sales for top-tier California artists were strong, with two new auction records set for prominent 20th century women artists.

Attendees of Moran's October 21st California Fine Art Auction were presented with a number of quality choices by top-tier artists. One such work, San Diego-based Maurice Braun's (1877-1941) "Nocturne", was very well received by Moran's buyers; the verdant impressionist composition depicts a pair of hilltop eucalyptus trees against a hazy rolling backdrop. "Nocturne" was offered for \$20,000 to \$25,000, and earned \$36,000 thanks to competition between multiple absentee bidders (prices realized include Moran's 20% Buyer's Premium). Jack Wilkinson Smith (1873-1949 Alhambra, CA) was represented in Moran's catalogue with five works; one coastal composition featuring pink-tinged clouds above an expanse of crashing waves proved especially popular with buyers. An online buyer proved the successful high bidder, taking possession of the work for \$18,450 (estimate: \$10,000 to \$15,000). Franz A. Bischoff's poppy and lupine-studded landscape from the Jim and Lauris Philips Collection in San Marino, CA was brought to the block with a \$10,000 to \$15,000 estimate, and exceeded all expectations after the bidding on the floor outpaced that of the interested phone buyers; the bidding topped out at the \$22,800 mark.

One of the top lots for the evening was a richly patinated bronze sculpture by Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861-1944 Boston, MA), titled "On the Warpath". The work, modeled with a Native American man on horseback, was conservatively estimated to bring \$15,000 to \$20,000, which was quickly outstripped thanks to a phone bidder, bringing a surprising \$54,000.

Happily, Moran's October event saw two new records set for 20th century California women artists. The first was for Joane Cromwell's (1895-1969 Laguna Beach, CA) historically important work "Laguna Beach Festival Of Arts". Cromwell herself served on the Board of Directors and as a Juror of the Laguna Beach Art Association and was integral in the organization and growth of the festival. Dating to 1936, "Laguna Beach Festival Of Arts" depicts the fourth Laguna Beach Festival, and the third and final time it was held on El Paseo Street, adjacent to the Hotel Laguna. The artist placed Frank Cuprien, a long-time member of the Laguna Art Association, directly in the center of the composition, and populated the rest of the scene with exhibitors, festival-goers, and families alike, giving the piece an overall warm, communal feel. The painting was offered with an initial \$20,000 to \$25,000 estimate, and established the new record with a \$22,800 selling price.

The second record was set for a work by Anna Katharine Skeelee (1896-1963 Monrovia, CA), titled "Pueblo Life, Taos". Depicting two women collecting water from a stream, the composition is an excellent example of Skeelee's fond depictions of everyday life in the Taos Pueblo, boldly executed in the artist's color-saturated modernist style. Skeelee spent many summers working and living among the Taos Indians, and the paintings she completed there have become the most defining subject of her artistic career. "Pueblo Life, Taos" tripled its high estimate, realizing \$45,000.

Excellent prices were also achieved for modern artists such as Jack Laycox, Millard Sheets, Eyvind Earle and Peter Ellenshaw. A fantastical take on the San Francisco shoreline as seen from the Bay by local artist Jack Laycox (1921-1984) appealed to a number of collectors vying remotely from the Northern California area; as a result the work shot to a \$6250 selling price within seconds of opening (estimate: \$6000 to \$8000). Millard Sheets's (1907-1989 Gualala, CA) "The King's Tent", a charming, jewel-toned oil dating to 1938 (while the artist was a student at Chouinard Art Institute) depicts a Gypsy tent camp located at the Whittier Narrows, erected when Gypsies from all over the United States assembled in order to elect a new queen. Sheets's work earned \$33,000 at the block, within the \$30,000 to \$40,000 estimate. A highly anticipated large-scale acrylic by Eyvind Earle (1916-2000 Carmel, CA), offering an unusual view of cows grazing in a pasture beyond foreground trees, was offered for a conservative \$5000 to \$7000, quickly flying to a price realized of \$16,800. Finally, one of Peter Ellenshaw's ever-popular seascapes, this particular example featuring waves crashing along a rocky coast, rounded out the auction event when it sold for a very respectable \$6600 (estimate: \$2000 to \$3000).

Watercolor compositions by a number of California artists achieved strong prices at Moran's October 21st event:

- Marion Kavanagh Wachtel's (1870-1954 Pasadena, CA) depiction of a pastel-hued Ojai landscape brought \$13,200, within the \$10,000 to \$15,000 estimate.

- A well-executed study in gray, Arthur Burnside Dodge's (1863-1952 Los Angeles, CA) watercolor painting of well-dressed buyers and sellers at a Chinatown street market, framed within an elaborately carved giltwood surround, flew to an impressive \$6600 selling price, after competition between telephone bidders and a very determined floor buyer (estimate: \$1000 to \$2000).

- Maynard Dixon's (1875-1946 San Francisco, CA / Tuscon, AZ) sweeping 1937 Nevada landscape brought a very respectable \$10,000 (estimate: \$10,000 to \$15,000).

John Moran Auctioneers will hold their next auction event on Tuesday, December 8th at the Pasadena Convention Center, located at 300 E Green St. in Pasadena, CA. This single-session fully catalogued auction will feature Fine Jewelry from local collections and estates. The line-up includes jewelry ranging from the antique to the contemporary, including Art Deco gems, fine timepieces for men and women by makers such as Panerai, Rolex and Patek Philippe, a wide variety of GIA-graded diamonds and jadeite, and designer selections from Bulgari, Van Cleef & Arpels, Henry Dunay and more. Preview will be available at the Convention Center from 12pm to 5pm on Monday, December 7th and from 12pm until the auction's 3pm start on Tuesday the 8th.

The next of John Moran Auctioneers' biannual California and American Fine Art Auctions is scheduled for March 22nd, 2016.

The March fine art sale will be preceded by an inaugural online-only California Fine Art Auction, scheduled to go live on January 19th and running through the 27th. Primarily featuring paintings with estimates under \$2000, bidding will be available exclusively via Liveauctioneers.com, however in-person public preview will be available on the 22nd from 2pm-8pm or by private appointment. Highlights and more information on all the above sales can be found at: www.JohnMoran.com.

Consignment inquiries across all categories are always welcome; contact John Moran Auctioneers directly at: (626) 793-1833 or to email info@johnmoran.com.