

Seven original paintings by Canadian folk artist Maud Lewis (1903-1970) bring a combined \$198,830 (Canadian) at auction

Another Nova Scotia folk artist – Joe Norris (1924-1996) – also did well: four of his paintings combined for \$49,560. Overall the sale grossed \$491,264.

NEW HAMBURG, ONTARIO, CANADA, February 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Six original oil on board paintings by the renowned Canadian folk artist [Maud Lewis](#) (1903-1970), plus a watercolor and pen on paper by Ms. Lewis, sold for a combined \$198,830 in Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd.'s online-only [Canadiana & Folk Art](#) auction held on February 11th. Nearly 300 lots in a wide array of categories came up for bid.

All prices quoted are in Canadian dollars.

As expected, the Maud Lewis painting titled Three Black Cats was the group's top achiever. It bested the \$25,000-

\$30,000 pre-sale estimate and then some by bringing \$44,250. It was also the auction's top lot. The work was a serial image only found in the mid-to-late 1960s. This one was likely painted in 1966. The 12 inch by 12 ½ inch (sight, less frame) painting was artist signed.

The other oil on boards included Spring Scene (\$35,400); Horse Pulling Logs (\$24,780); Sandy Cove Harbour Scene (\$25,960); Oxen in Winter (\$23,600); and Covered Bridge (\$25,960). The watercolor and pen on paper, titled Harbour Scene, doubled as a handwritten letter, folded in quarters into a card and addressed to Eva Gray, a teacher, cousin and friend. It brought \$18,880.



The auction's top lot was this oil on board painting by Maud Lewis (Canadian, 1903-1970) titled The Three Black Cats, a serial image only found in the mid-to-late 1960s, signed (CA\$44,250).

Maud Lewis has, over time, become one of Canada's most renowned artists, the subject of numerous monographs, novels, plays, documentaries, and even a feature film. She was born into relative comfort and obscurity, but died in poverty, despite enjoying national fame. She overcame severe physical challenges to create an artistic style uniquely hers.

Ms. Lewis's style and inspiration were such that she sparked a boom in folk art in her home province of Nova Scotia. Though she rarely left her tiny house, her works have travelled around the world, and in the decades since her death, she has become an iconic figure, a symbol of Nova Scotia, and a beloved character in the popular imagination.

Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. is no stranger to Maud Lewis. Her work has been featured in several past sales, including one held in October 2022, in which eleven paintings by the artist sailed past their high estimates to bring a combined \$559,510. The top lot was *Winter Sleigh Ride* (est. \$20,000-\$25,000); it finished at \$100,300. Demand for her work just keeps climbing.

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Ben Lennox

Another Nova Scotia folk artist – [Joe Norris](#) (1924-1996) – also did well in the auction, as four of his paintings combined for a total of \$49,560. The top seller was a circa 1980 oil on canvas titled *The Lighthouse and Three Schooners*, a large (39 inches by 59 inches, less frame) depiction of a fishing village including lobster boats and fishermen (\$22,420).

The other works by Norris were a powerful enamel on board from 1991 titled *Schooner Taking Shelter from the Storm* (\$10,030); a simple and colorful enamel on board from 1987 titled *Deer at the Salt Water Pond* (\$9,440); and a striking Lower Prospect (Nova Scotia) enamel on board from 1970 titled *Six Gulls* (\$7,670). All exceeded estimates.



Vibrant oil on board painting by Maud Lewis (Canadian, 1903-1970), titled *Spring Scene*, a rare serial image and a perfectly balanced and brilliantly filled painting (CA\$35,400).

Joe Norris began painting in 1972, after a major heart attack forced his early retirement from the fishing and construction trades. His works depicted life along the seacoast, with scenes of wildlife, nature and landscapes painted in bold, saturated colors. Norris's work included painted chairs, tables and chests in addition to his two-dimensional paintings.

After his work was discovered in 1975 by Maine antique dealer Chris Huntington, Norris was able to live off of his income as an artist rather than disability allowance from the government. Paintings by the artist can be found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of History.

"There is strong demand for paintings from the masters of Canadian Folk Art and this continues to be reflected by the prices realized by Maud Lewis, Joe Norris and Joseph Sleep," said Ben Lennox of Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. "It's exciting to witness our Canadian material folk heritage soar. Collectors remain hungry to add the best from these important collections."

Mr. Lennox added, "These collections have taken decades to accumulate, and being able to bid on the cream of these collections isn't lost on collectors. That's reflective of the prices realized."

The rest of the auction was loaded with items that include advertising signs, art, art pottery, Canadiana, clocks, decoys, folk art, lamps and lighting, pottery and stoneware, rugs and more. The auction attracted 459 registered bidders, who combined to place 6,377 bids. All 291 lots were sold, and 50 percent of the top 50 lots exceeded estimates. The auction grossed \$491,264.

Following are additional highlights from the auction. Internet bidding was facilitated by the Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. website and LiveAuctioneers.com. Phone and absentee bids were also accepted. All prices quoted in this report are inclusive of an 18 percent buyer's premium.

A scarce, 11-inch-tall, four-gallon stoneware crock made circa 1870 by G. I. Lazier (Picton, Ontario), fresh to the market and desirable because very few examples of decorated stoneware



Circa 1965 oil on beaverboard painting by Maud Lewis (Canadian, 1903-1970), titled Sandy Cove Harbour Scene, a serial image featuring Sandy Cove along Digby Neck (CA\$25,960).

featuring animals such as horses and cattle exist, reached \$12,980. Also, an exceptional Waterloo County (Ontario) two-piece corner cupboard with six lights per door in the upper section and the original red and amber paint, 84 ½ inches tall by 65 ¾ inches wide, changed hands for \$12,980.

A book form slide lid spruce gum box made in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia in 1896 of pine, mahogany and bone inlay, featuring a central star surrounded by a heart, diamond, club and spade, blasted through its \$700-\$900 estimate to finish at \$10,620; while a traditional folk art powder horn (Jenkins family, Newfoundland, circa 1850), an exuberantly decorated and heavily carved cow horn with wooden plug and rope strap, 16 inches in length, hammered for \$5,015.

Next up for Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. are a Petroliana & Advertising auction on Saturday, March 11th; a two-day sale later on in the month: a Canadiana & Decorative Arts auction on Saturday, March 25th and a Historic Lamps & Lighting auction on March 26th; and the exclusive sale of the Jean-Marc and Danielle Belzile Collection on Saturday, May 13th. All are online-only.

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Ethan Miller

Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd.

+1 519-573-3710

[email us here](#)



Late 1965 oil on beaverboard painting by Maud Lewis (Canadian, 1903-1970), titled Covered Bridge, rare in that the artist uses pink rather than blue for shadowing (CA\$25,960).



Powerful enamel on board composition by Joe Norris (Canadian, 1924-1996), titled Schooner Taking Shelter from the Storm, one of four works by Norris in the auction (CA\$10,030).

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