

Extremely Rare Decoys by Cobb, Ward Brothers, and McLellan Come to Auction With Copley

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NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, February 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Copley Fine Art Auctions](#)' upcoming two-day Winter Sale, held from February 24 to February 25, 2023, will feature hundreds of quality carved decoys, sporting art, and other decorative art items. Live bidding on the first day of the sale will begin at 10:00 AM EST. Over 330 lots will be available during the first session.

Leading the auction catalog is a running curlew decoy crafted by Nathan F. Cobb Jr. (lot #163; estimate: USD 80,000 – \$120,000). This rare piece from the 1880s has remained in private hands for decades and was mostly recently in the collection of Ted and Judy Harmon, leading figures in the decoy collecting market. The available curlew features the Cobb family's distinctive German bead-glass eyes and precise tail cut. It also bears Cobb's original brown, black, and rust-red paint, which the auction house states is in excellent condition.

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/the-harmon-running-cobb-curlew-decoy-by-nathan-f-cobb-jr-1825-1905-4577769>



The Harmon Running Cobb Curlew Decoy by Nathan F. Cobb Jr. (1825-1905)



Exceptional Swimming Merganser Decoy

Another top lot of the sale is a swimming merganser decoy from circa 1890 (lot #181; estimate: \$80,000 – \$120,000). The piece is an extremely high-quality example of hollow mergansers, although the carver's identity is unknown. This decoy shares some characteristics with carvings from noted Massachusetts rigs of Capt. Charles C. Osgood and Fred M. Nichols. It includes precise details such as incised mandible carving, a rasp finish along the head ridge to suggest wetness, and a raised wing tip carving. The decoy is offered in its original condition. There are only two other known decoys created in this same style and plumage.

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/exceptional-swimming-merganser-decoy-4577770>

Additional decoys in this auction include an early American black duck by brothers Lemuel T. and Stephen W. Ward in 1921 (lot #164; estimate: \$70,000 – \$90,000). Identified by many historians as among the most influential decoy carvers of all time, the Ward brothers raised the bar for realism and artistic quality. They worked together as artistic partners for over 30 years. Their artistic practice started in response to the Great Depression and blossomed in the ensuing years. The available humpback black duck decoy is slightly oversized to account for open-water hunting in Tangier Sound. It comes to auction with its original paint.

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/early-humpback-black-duck-decoy-by-the-ward-brothers-4577771>

Collectors can also consider an exceptional mallard drake decoy by Chauncey "Chance" Wheeler from the 1920s (lot #177; estimate: \$50,000 – \$70,000). This piece is among the finest extant mallard decoys from the period, and it features Wheeler's famed "heart pattern" on the wings and back when viewed from above.

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/exceptional-mallard-drake-decoy-by->



Early Humpback Black Duck Decoy by The Ward Brothers



Exceptional Mallard Drake Decoy by Chauncey "Chance" Wheeler (1888-1945)

[chauncey-chance-wheeler-1888-1945-4577772](https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/chauncey-chance-wheeler-1888-1945-4577772)

Fine artworks in the sale include an 1871 hunting painting by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, titled On the Qui Vive! (lot #60; estimate: \$50,000 – \$70,000); <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/arthur-fitzwilliam-tait-1819-1905-on-the-qui-vive-4576829>

Percival Rosseau's Pair of Aces sporting dogs painting from 1921 (lot #59; estimate: \$30,000 – \$50,000); <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/percival-rosseau-1859-1937-pair-of-aces-4576830>

A contemporary dog painting by Julie Jeppsen titled Scent on the Side (lot #58; estimate: \$15,000 – \$25,000). <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/julie-jeppsen-b-1960-scent-on-the-side-4576832>

Copley Fine Art Auctions



The upcoming live auction will include several additional lots of note:

- A flying brant goose decoy by George William McLellan (lot #93; estimate: \$35,000 – \$55,000) <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/flying-brant-decoy-by-george-william-mclellan-1897-1987-4577776>

- A pair of merganser decoys by Clark C. Madara (lot #75; estimate: \$14,000 – \$18,000) <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/the-madara-merganser-pair-by-clark-c-madara-1883-1953-4577787>

- A waterfowling Santa Claus carved figure by Frank S. Finney (lot #39; estimate: \$10,000 – \$20,000) <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/waterfowling-santa-claus-by-frank-s-finney-b-1947-4577790>

- Aiden Lassell Ripley's Grouse and Vines watercolor painting from 1917 (lot #155; estimate: \$10,000 – \$15,000) <https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/aiden-lassell-ripley-1896-1969-grouse-and-vines-4576835>

- A cast bronze sculpture depicting two quail in flight by Walter Matia (lot #61; estimate: \$5,000 – \$7,000)

<https://www.bidsquare.com/online-auctions/copley/walter-matia-b-1953-pine-spirits-ii-4576840>

Copley Fine Art Auctions is the world's leading American sporting art auction company. Located in Boston, Copley specializes in antique decoys and 19th- and 20th-century American, sporting, and wildlife paintings. Principal Stephen O'Brien Jr., a fourth-generation sportsman with a refined collector's eye, launched Copley Fine Art Auctions in 2005 after almost fifteen years in the antiques trade. A trusted advisor to leading collectors, O'Brien opened Stephen O'Brien Jr. Fine Arts, LLC, in 1996, today considered one of the finest galleries dealing in American sporting art. Copley was a natural evolution for O'Brien, and a means of providing yet another arm of services to his clients. Copley has set numerous world-record prices for top sporting artists and decoy makers, establishing itself as the go-to company for decoys and sporting art.

The Winter Sale 2023, Day 1 will be held on February 24, 2023 starting at 10:00 AM EST. Interested collectors can view the complete catalog and register to [bid on Bidsquare](#).

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