

# Vibrant paintings by Canadian folk art legends Maud Lewis and Joe Norris share the spotlight in Miller & Miller auction

*Six paintings by Maud Lewis combined for \$184,680, while four original works by Joe Norris totaled \$57,230 (Canadian). Overall, the auction grossed \$432,260.*

NEW HAMBURG, ONTARIO, CANADA, October 26, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As expected, the acclaimed Canadian folk artist [Maud Lewis](#) (1903-1970) dominated the list of top lots in Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd.'s online-only Folk Art auction on October 14th, but this time she shared the spotlight with two other Canadian luminaries – [Joe Norris](#) (1924-1996) and [Joe Sleep](#) (1914-1978). All three posted high dollars.

Six original paintings by Maud Lewis combined to bring \$184,680. They included a mixed media on Masonite from 1967 titled *The Lobsterman* (\$53,100); a 1950s oil on board titled *Two Birds in Winter* (\$44,250); a 1950s mixed media on scrap cardboard titled *Dog Beneath Cherry Trees* (\$32,450); a circa 1967-1967 mixed media on Masonite titled *Train Station* (\$27,140); a circa 1964-1965 mixed media on beaverboard titled *Winter Sleigh Ride* (\$25,960); and a 1967 mixed media on Masonite work titled *White Cat with Flowers, Butterflies and Yarn* (\$24,780).

All prices quoted here are in Canadian dollars and include an 18 percent buyer's premium.

Four original works by Joe Norris totaled \$57,230. They included a 1993 enamel on board titled *Hauling the Herring Nets* (\$21,240); a 1995 enamel on board titled *Boat Landing* (\$17,700); a circa 1980 oil on canvas titled *Canada Geese* (\$9,440); and an early 20th century Victorian side table,



later painted by the artist, with an autumn homestead in primary colors on top (\$8,850). A 1978 latex and marker on Masonite by Joe Sleep, titled *Cat*, sold within estimate for \$5,900.

“This specialized sale was a celebration of contemporary, post-1950 folk art,” said Ethan Miller of Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. “It was exciting to witness the support for both highly recognized and emerging artists. Maud Lewis, Joe Norris, Joe Sleep, Charlie Tanner, Collins Eisenhauer, Edmond Chatigny, Everett Lewis and Patricia Promaine were just a few of the artists represented, and I’m quite confident a few benchmarks were set for these artists in the auction.”

Mr. Miller added, “Patricia Promaine (1918 – 2012) who only created approximately 200 pieces during her lifetime, is starting to get the recognition she deserves. Her painstakingly detailed folk paintings have a similar aura to those of American folk master Grandma Moses.” Her painting, a hard-to-find circa 1980 busy village scene painted on canvas board, hammered down at \$2,750.



1993 enamel on board painting by Canadian folk artist Joe Norris (1924-1996), titled *Hauling the Herring Nets* (CA\$21,240).

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*Ethan Miller*

“While I expect that is a new record, I believe we will start to see even higher prices from Ms. Promaine moving forward,” Mr. Miller commented. “We strive to focus on the ‘better and best’ examples of artists, and in doing so the market responds with driving exceptional outcomes. The works by Maud Lewis, Joe Norris, Charlie Tanner, Collins Eisenhauer and others bore this out.”

The 269-lot auction featured carvings and sculptures, paintings and drawings and walking sticks. There was no

live in-gallery bidding, but 256 registered online bidders place a total of 5,069 bids. Online bidding was provided by LiveAuctioneers.com and the Miller & Miller website. Nearly all lots (99 percent) were sold, and 58 percent of the top 50 lots exceeded estimate. The total gross was \$432,260, another feather in the cap for one of Canada’s premier auction houses.

The surprise lot of the auction was a rare and beautiful circa 1900 diorama out of Lehigh Corners, Leeds County, Ontario, titled A Great Catastrophe, Shoot Dat Dog, which blasted through its \$600-\$900 estimate to finish at \$8,260. The pine and glass cigar box diorama, depicting a black figure dressed in a striped shirt and rust-colored trousers sitting astride a donkey painted in a cream color, was distinguished by incredible patina, design and detail.

Maud Lewis has 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, and died in poverty, though enjoying national fame. She overcame severe physical challenges to create a unique artistic style, and 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.

Joe Norris spent most of his life in the small hamlet of Lower Prospect, Nova Scotia. He began painting in 1972, after a 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 from the government. Work by Joe Norris can be found in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of History, and in many corporate and private art collections across North America.

Joe Sleep grew up in Saint John, New Brunswick. He spent his life working in the fishing industry and as a jack-of-all-trades before becoming a worker for the Bill Lynch Shows travelling carnival.



This 1978 latex and marker on Masonite painting by Canadian folk artist Joe Sleep (1914-1978), titled Cat, sold within estimate for CA\$5,900.



It was not until 1973, when Sleep was hospitalized at the Halifax Infirmary, that he discovered his passion for drawing. The nurses requested he draw posters for them, and provided him with paper and art supplies - a gesture that started him on his late-life career as a painter.

Sleep later opened a small art studio on Argyle Street in Halifax. His folk art pieces incorporated many materials, including latex, cardboard, canvas, Masonite, felt markers and even spray paint. Work by Joe Sleep is in the collections of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie University Art Gallery, National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of History.

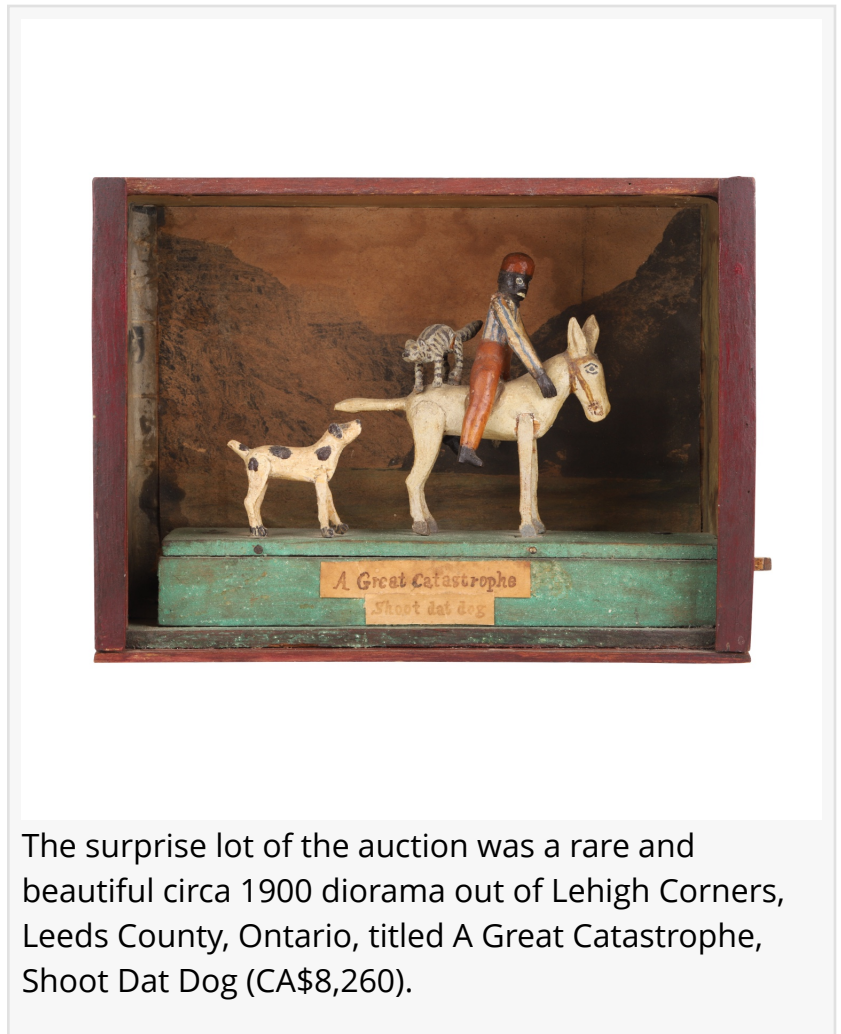
Miller & Miller Auctions has back-to-back sales planned for Friday, October 27th (Advertising & Americana) and Saturday, October 28th (Advertising, Petroliana & Coin-Op). Both are online. Then, on Friday, November 17th, the firm will hold a Luxury Watches auction, also online-only.

Miller & Miller Auctions, Ltd. is Canada's trusted seller of high-value collections and is always accepting quality consignments. The firm specializes in watches and jewelry, art, antiques and high-value collectibles. Its mission is to provide collectors with a trusted place to buy and sell.

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Circa 1950s oil on board painting by Canadian folk artist Maud Lewis (1903-1970), titled Two Birds in Winter (CA\$44,250).

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