

Soulis' Dec. 10 Americana auction serves up visual feast of folk & outsider art, weathervanes, shooting gallery targets

Featured: Fiske weathervane of legendary harness trotter St. Julien; targets depicting 'Pancho Villa,' cowboy gunslinger, mechanical lion tamer with lion

LONE JACK, MISSOURI, USA, December 4, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In September 2020, [Soulis Auctions](#) of suburban Kansas City knocked down record prices at their headline-making sale of the Richard and Valerie Tucker collection of carnival shooting gallery targets. The collection was notable for two reasons: it was arguably the finest of its type; and it triumphed in spite of being auctioned in the midst of the COVID pandemic. Offered alongside premier folk art, weathervanes, primitives and quirky handmade

objects, the arcade targets found a cozy niche in which to reside. In so doing, they added a vibrant finishing touch to a formula Soulis would refine to perfection in subsequent Mid-Americana Gallery Auctions, the next of which is slated for Sunday, December 10.

The pre-Christmas lineup includes so many tempting categories, the only way to uncover all of its hidden treasure is by browsing the catalog from cover to cover, which can be easily accomplished online through Soulis' website or a choice of three bidding platforms. The main auction categories are folk, tramp, outsider and Native American art; with weathervanes, textiles, country furniture and accessories in old paint, and of course, an enviable selection of fresh-to-market figural shooting gallery targets.

The most unusual target is essentially a 49-inch-tall naïve artwork on sheet metal that depicts a lady [lion tamer](#) standing face to face with a rampant lion. Made circa 1890, the impressive oversize target is probably of English or Continental European origin and has a clever mechanical



J W Fiske (attrib.) copper weathervane depicting legendary harness-racing horse St. Julien, King of Trotters. Estimate: \$15,000-\$20,000

action. A successful shot to the bull's-eye causes the lady's arm to lower and the lion's jaw to open, revealing fearsome upper and lower teeth. Its estimate is \$5,000-\$10,000.

Another top highlight is a scarce 1930s sheet-iron shooting gallery target that depicts a Cowboy Gunfighter. Although unattributed, it is similar to a model made by William F Mangels of Coney Island. With old park paint in red, white, yellow and blue, the Old West figure's attractive, naturally-achieved surface texture is uniquely its own after years of impact from countless lead bullets. It stands 41.5 inches tall, inclusive of display support, and comes to auction with a \$6,000-\$9,000 estimate.

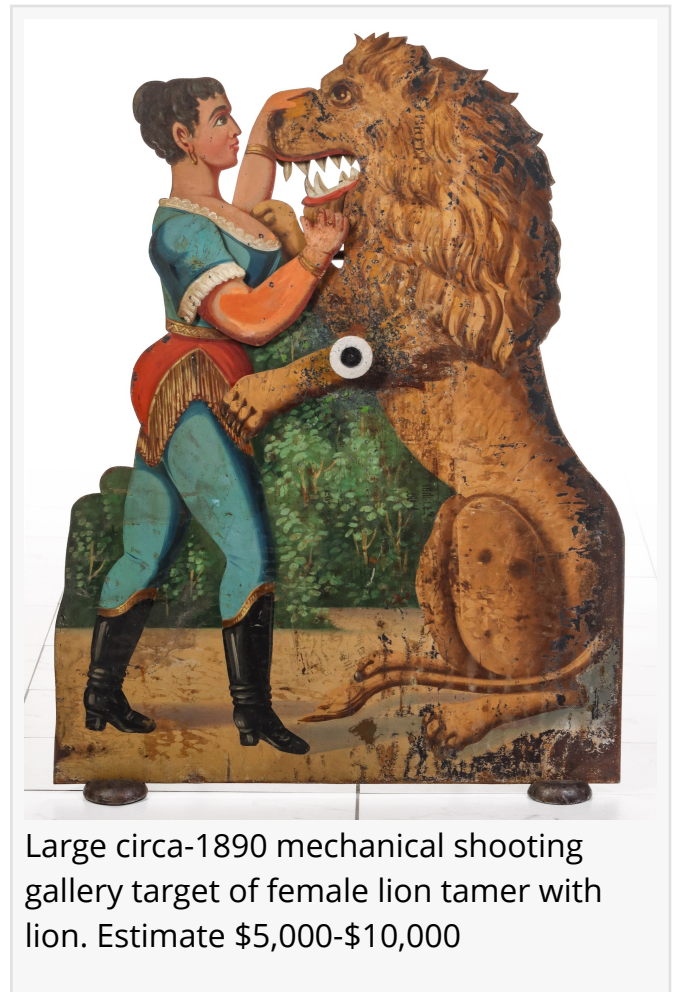
Also noteworthy, an early 20th-century "Pancho Villa" cast-iron target is attributed to Emil Hoffman of Chicago and was illustrated and described in the company's circa-1912 catalogs as "Mexican Head-Illuminated Eye Target." Villa escaped from prison and fled to El Paso on Christmas Day in 1912, so the timelines between his notoriety and the target's time of manufacture appear to be in close parallel to one another. Despite the catalog description, the auction example was not constructed to illuminate. Its eye openings are

backed by a circular iron gong that rings if a shot passes through an eyehole. Estimate: \$2,000-\$4,000

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The scene portrayed by the Fiske weathervane is very similar to one seen in a circa-1880 Currier & Ives print, an example of which is held in the Library of Congress' 1880s Lithograph Collection.”

Dirk Soulis, Owner, Soulis Auctions



Large circa-1890 mechanical shooting gallery target of female lion tamer with lion. Estimate \$5,000-\$10,000

Other key targets include a never-before-seen painted-iron Fishing Boy, \$2,000-\$3,000; a rack of seven excellent iron Native American knockdown target figures, \$2,000-\$4,000; and several by C W Parker: a Whippet, \$6,000-\$9,000; Decorated Pony with Rider, \$2,000-\$3,000; and a rare variation, a brass-plated Deer with a relief red heart to its flank which serves as the target, \$4,000-\$6,000.

A beautiful selection of antique weathervanes is led by a J W Fiske (attrib.) copper vane replicating the legendary harness-racing horse [St. Julien](#), "King of the Trotters." The

horse is shown running at full speed, with his celebrated real-life trainer and driver Orrin A. Hikok at the reins. The scene portrayed by the vane is very similar to one that was immortalized in a circa-1880 Currier & Ives print, an example of which is held in the Library of Commerce's

1880s Lithograph Collection. Auction estimate: \$15,000-\$20,000

Also at the forefront of the weathervanes is a Cushing & White copper vane depicting a full-bodied dairy cow. Its original gilt finish is largely intact with naturally-occurring verdigris highlights. Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000. A second copper dairy cow vane, attributed to Harris & Sons (Boston), is expected to make \$5,000-\$7,000; while a signed, circa-1860 A L Jewell weathervane created as a likeness of the popular American fast-trotter "Ethan Allen" will be riding with the herd, carrying a pre-sale estimate of \$3,000-\$5,000.

The equine theme continues with a very fine iron-spoked pull toy fashioned as a top-hatted man riding an articulated horse with a dog running alongside them. The toy was exhibited at The Museum of American Folk Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and New York Historical Society. It is also a reference-book example and was formerly in the Kahn Collection, as noted on the cloth tag affixed to its underside. Estimate: \$2,000-\$4,000

Another important piece is the rare mid-19th-century carved and painted pine whirligig crafted in the form of a gentleman wearing a top hat. The man's suit consists of a coat with tails, brownish-red trousers, and a mustard-colored waistcoat. Affixed to a sheet-metal vane, it stands 28.5 inches high and 17.5 inches long. Estimate: \$3,000-\$4,000

A great variety is represented in the sale, with discoveries to be made at all price points, such as: a 19th-century joined-wood ship's figurehead depicting a helmeted soldier with helmet and



Cushing & White copper weathervane depicting full-bodied dairy cow with gilt finish. Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000



Scarce 1930s sheet-iron shooting gallery target depicting cowboy gunfighter. Estimate: \$6,000-\$9,000

“chain mail,” \$1,000-\$3,000; a late 20th-century prison-art painted matchstick model of a yellow school bus, \$300-\$450; and a group-lot of original shooting gallery trade catalogs from Emil Hoffman (early 20th century) and H C Evans (1930s), \$200-\$400.

Soulis’ Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023 Mid-Americana Gallery Auction will commence at 12 noon CT/1pm ET. Preview by appointment or from noon till 5pm every day of the week prior to the auction. Gallery address: 529 W. Lone Jack Lee’s Summit Rd., Lone Jack (suburban Kansas City), MO 64070. All forms of remote bidding will be available, including live via the Internet through LiveAuctioneers, Invaluable or Bidsquare. To reserve a phone line, leave an absentee bid or obtain additional information about any item in the auction, call 816-697-3830 or email dirk@soulisauctions.com. Visit Soulis online at <https://soulisauctions.com/>.



Folk art pull toy depicting animated top-hatted man riding articulated horse with articulated dog running alongside them. Estimate: \$2,000-\$4,000

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