

Aug. 22 auction features Indigenous art treasures from collection of Santa Fe's distinguished Ralph T. Coe Center

Native American, Pre-Columbian, African, Asian and Pacific Island rarities include iconic statuary, tribal weapons, cultural relics, textiles, jewelry and more

BOULDER, CO, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- On August 22, Artemis Fine Arts will conduct an online-only auction of rare and exceptional cultural art and antiquities from the collection of the nonprofit Ralph T Coe Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. All proceeds from the 380-lot sale will benefit the Coe Center's Rehoming Program, a bold and thoughtful initiative focused on returning Indigenous artworks to their original communities or to institutions that prioritize cultural context, accessibility, and continued care.

"The Rehoming Program is at the heart of the Coe Center's final chapter, as they will be closing later this year," said Artemis Fine Arts' executive director, Teresa Dodge. "Honoring the legacy of the Coe's founder, Ralph T Coe (1929-1910), the Rehoming Program respectfully fulfills the Center's core mission of good stewardship by ensuring each meaningful piece in their collection is not only preserved, but also responsibly reconnected with the people, places and stories from which they came."

The Coe's collection is global in breadth, with historically-significant artworks and tribal artifacts from North and Central America, Africa, Asia, New Zealand and other Pacific Island nations. All items in the auction are legal to buy or resell under the US Statute covering cultural patrimony, Code 2600, Chapter 14, and are guaranteed to be as described or the buyer's money will be refunded. A Certificate of Authenticity will convey to the winning bidder of each and every item.

Several important relics from the Maori culture of New Zealand are among the top lots to be auctioned, starting with a rare 19th century CE tamere, or ceremonial axe. Its wooden haft is



Rare 19th century CE New Zealand Maori tamere (ceremonial axe), wooden haft elaborately carved with traditional rauponga patterns. Estimate: \$4,000-\$8,000

elaborately carved with traditional rauponga patterns of parallel ridges and notches symbolic of lineage, mana (authority) and ancestral connection. The lower terminal is notable for its openwork carving of stylized manaia or abstract kaitiaki (guardian) figures. Measuring 17 inches long, this impressive example of South Pacific artistry is estimated at \$4,000-\$8,000.

A gorgeous circa 20th century CE New Zealand Maori mere (hand weapon / symbol of authority) is carved from deep-green nephrite jade and displays swirling tonal variations and a beautiful translucency. Its finely-polished teardrop-shape blade culminates in a pierced, knobbed grip, completing its well-executed design. The pre-auction estimate is set at \$4,000-\$8,000.

Also finely carved, a circa 19th century CE Maori tokotoko (ceremonial staff indicating status and authority) was masterfully created from dark hardwood and boasts intricate surface decoration, inlaid shellwork, and a decorative silver ring. Its terminal is carved with a zoomorphic head having a pronounced jawline, carved brows and large inlaid mother-of-pearl eyes. Measuring 37.4 inches long, this statement piece is expected to sell for \$3,000-\$4,500.



Rare and finely preserved example of a New Ireland (Melanesia) male kulap funerary figure, circa 1830s CE. Estimate: \$4,000-\$8,000

From across the Tasman Sea in neighboring Australia comes a circa-1930 CE [Aboriginal painted wood shield](#) or alkwerte. Carved from a single piece of soft beanwood, it has deeply fluted parallel grooves, is richly coated in red ochre, and dotted in white pipe clay to form the image of a sinuous, snake-like ancestral being. Measuring 28.9 inches long, this extremely attractive artwork is entered with a \$2,000-\$4,000 estimate.

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Teresa Dodge, Executive Director, Artemis Fine Arts

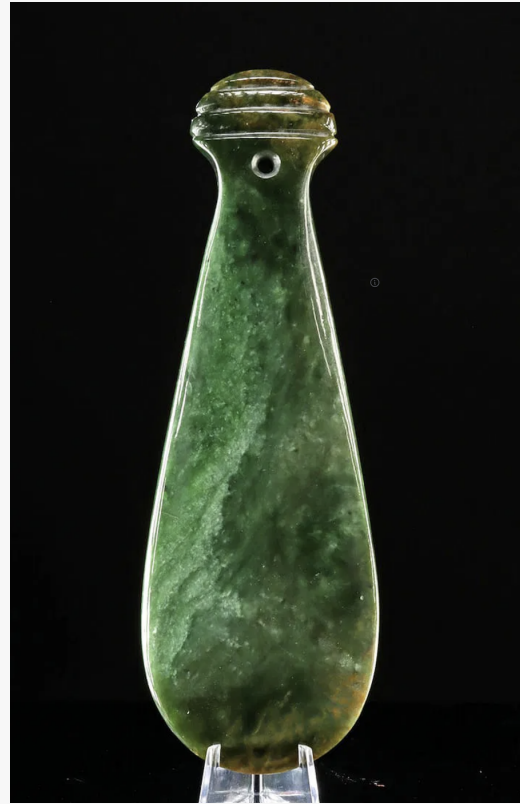
There's a medley of imaginative artistry to appreciate in a rare and finely preserved New Ireland (Melanesia) male kulap funerary figure dating to around the 1830s CE. The figure is carved from soft chalk limestone and has painted yellow and blue details, including simulated facial tattoos. Its coiffure is carved to represent a textured cap. Such figures were culturally important because they served as a temporary abode for the spirit of the deceased. The

auction example, which stands 19.9 inches tall (21.8 inches inclusive of its custom stand), was exhibited in 2015 and 2016 at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe. Its

line of provenance can be traced back to Leendert van Lier (Dutch, 1910-1995) of Kunstzaal Van Lier (art gallery), and MLJ Lemaire of Amsterdam. Estimate: \$4,000-\$8,000

Indonesia's Nias Island, situated off the western coast of Sumatra, was first inhabited as early as 10,000 BC, and the name "Nias" is actually derived from the word "niha," which means "human" in the local language. One of the most highly prized artworks in the sale comes from the [Ono Niha](#) people of Nias Island. It is a circa early 20th century CE carved-wood ancestral figure of a male seated on a plinth base, holding a bowl in both hands as if in an offering gesture. The 18.8-inch-tall figure wears an asymmetrically carved turban and a carved necklace, both symbolic of a high-ranking Nias nobleman, as well as large double-spool ear ornaments. Figures of this type embodied the spirits of ancestors and served as conduits between the living and supernatural realms. Its esteemed line of provenance includes a December 11, 2001 auction at Christie's Amsterdam. Estimate: \$5,000-\$7,500

From the Hawaiian Islands, a 19th century Native koa wood calabash bowl of classic umeke form has a highly polished surface and rounded base. Early in its lifetime it underwent repairs referred to as "pewa" ("butterfly") patches, in varying sizes and directions. These patches, which many find quite attractive, serve as evidence of the bowl's valued and prolonged use. The bowl was exhibited in 2015 and 2016 at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian and can be traced back to a purchase Coe founder Ralph T Coe made in Hawaii decades ago. Estimate: \$3,500-\$5,500



Rare 19th century CE New Zealand Maori tamere (ceremonial axe) made of green nephrite jade. Estimate: \$4,000-\$8,000



19th century Native Hawaiian koa wood calabash bowl of classic umeke form. Estimate: \$3,500-\$5,500

An important prehistoric North American artwork, a Native American carved-stone "Hopewell" effigy figure is from the Ohio River Valley and dates to the Middle Woodland period, circa 100 BCE to 500 CE. The seated female figure holds a bowl and a fowl, possibly a duck. It is very likely that the figure was associated with a ritual offering or was used in a ceremony. Laboratory analysis confirmed the presence of naturally-occurring manganese oxides, strongly supporting its archaeological age and probable long-term burial. Estimate: \$4,500-\$6,500

An iconic Plains Region Native American roach headdress, circa 20th century CE, is composed primarily of porcupine guard hairs accented with dyed horsehair and a large turkey feather. Its core structure features a dense row of natural porcupine hairs projecting upward in a dramatic, radiating crest. Along the outer edges, vivid purple and red-dyed horsehair provides vibrant contrast and textural depth to the piece. Its auction estimate is \$3,000-\$4,500.

Made by the Baule people in the early 20th century, an [Ivory Coast Kpan Pre mask](#) was carved from a single block of wood with a pair of dramatic, rear-sweeping goat horns. Its facial features include high arched brows that frame narrow, slit-form eyes beneath inverted crescent lids; a long and elegant nose, and a softly tapering chin, pierced at the mouth for breathing. The Kpan Pre appears as the third mask in the Baule Goli masquerade performed during funerals of high-ranking community members and at major village gatherings. With a line of provenance that includes a November 28, 1984 auction at Christie's New York, it is offered in Artemis Fine Arts' August 22 auction with a \$2,500-\$4,500 estimate.

Another significant African artwork is an early 20th century CE Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) wood and pottery fetish created by the Teke or Bateke people to represent a Central African power figure known as a "nkishi." Its torso is packed with ritual clay and organic matter, and it has abstracted limbs, a crisply-carved geometric head and incised coiffure. Its helmet-like cap is crested with a sculptural fin that reinforces the figure's position of martial and ancestral authority. Standing 15.75 inches tall (16.75 inches on the included custom stand), it is entered in the auction with a \$2,500-\$4,500 estimate.

Artemis Fine Arts' Friday, August 22, 2025 Auction of Indigenous Art from the Ralph T Coe Center



Prehistoric Native American carved-stone Hopewell female effigy figure from Ohio River Valley, dating to Middle Woodland period, circa 100 BCE to 500 CE. Estimate: \$4,500-\$6,500

for the Arts in Santa Fe, NM will start at 8am MT/ 10am ET. Absentee bidding is currently in progress. The company ships worldwide and has its own in-house white-glove packing and shipping department to ensure quality control, however customs-clearance issues prevent shipment of goods to Germany, Switzerland or Australia. Also, it should be noted that Artemis is unable to ship ancient items to their country of origin (e.g., Egyptian pieces to Egypt, Greek pieces to Greece, etc.). View all lots, with detailed, authoritative descriptions and multiple photos, in the online catalog. For additional information on any auction item, call Teresa Dodge at 720-890-7700 or email teresa@artemisfinearts.com. View the digital catalog and bid absentee or live online through LiveAuctioneers.

https://www.liveauctioneers.com/catalog/384291_indigenous-art-ralph-t-coe-center-santa-fe/

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