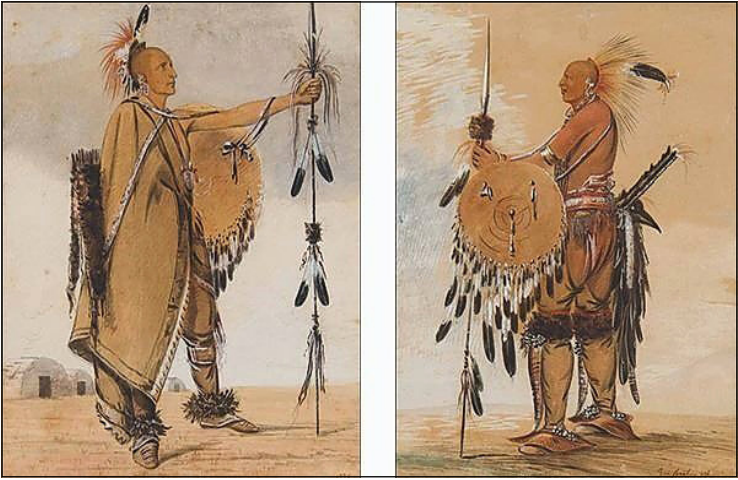


Practically Covid Proof! Western Art Finds Herd Immunity In Scottsdale

Auction Action In Scottsdale, Ariz.



According to Brad Richardson, “Grizzly Bear” by Carl Run- gius resonated with collectors as it was a rare subject for the artist. An online bidder prevailed against considerable competition, chasing it to \$468,000 (\$200/300,000).



George Catlin (1796-1872) was one of the earliest “explorer artists” whose paintings rarely come to market. “Tal-lee” and “Ea’h-pa-ko-ia’s-kuk” were each done in watercolor on paper and dated 1836. They sold online for \$117,000 (\$30/50,000).



An online buyer lassoed “Wild Horses” by John Clymer for \$380,250. It was done in oil on board and measured 24 by 36 inches (\$150/250,000).



Achieving the third highest price in the sale at \$497,250 was “Star King Mountain” by Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902). It was done in oil on paper mounted on board, which was a typical medium for the artist, and measured 14 by 19 inches (\$300/500,000).

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. — If one logged into Scottsdale Art Auction’s (SAA) live-streamed sale on April 9 and 10, the sounds of bids being shouted from the phone bank and the hum of chatter from the sales- room floor might give one a momentary pause. In an era where live gallery bidding is the exception rather than the norm, it was sheer pleasure to witness the excitement that nothing but a live auction can deliver.

Made up of a triumvirate of Western Art gallery owners based in Scottsdale, New York City and Hilton Head, S.C., SAA is celebrating 17 years of auc- tions. We caught up with Legacy Gallery’s owner, Brad Richard- son who, along with Michael Frost of J.N. Bartfield Galleries and Jack A. Morris Jr of Morris Fine Arts, said that the sale exceeded its \$12 million aggre- gate high estimate by achieving a total of \$13.3 million, with 98 percent of lots selling. While most of the bidders and buyers were in the United States, the



A private collector, bidding on the phone, made the right call on Charles Schreyvogel’s “A Close Call” and took it to the top price in the sale. The oil on canvas measured 25¼ by 34 inches and realized \$819,000 (\$750,000-\$1.25 million).

sale had bidders from China, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Canada and France. A total of 900 clients registered to bid in-person, online or on the phone.

Partner Jack Morris said, “There is always a demand for quality. Despite Covid restric-

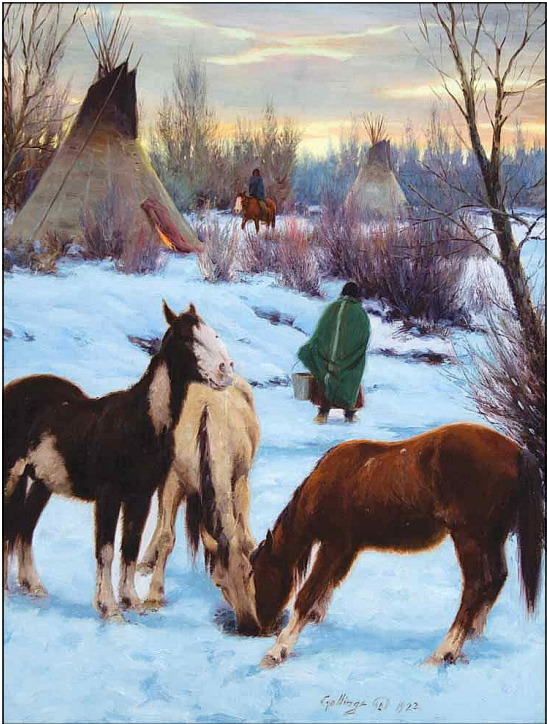
tions, collectors continued to pursue paintings and sculpture through the internet and auc- tions. Our sale on Friday and Saturday had a dramatic increase in absentee and tele- phone bids, and traffic on the internet platform was up over 100 percent, with 402 active bid- ders compared to our pre-Covid sale in 2019.”

Though the salesroom did not achieve the maximum crowds it has drawn in the pre-pandemic era, Richardson said they had the usual number of lots on offer, and between 200 and 300 people in the audience at any given time, with up to ten phone lines employed. Absentee bid- ding and online bidding on SAA’s dedicated internet plat- form rounded out bidding options. Richardson noted that since the pandemic, more clients have become more comfortable bidding online.

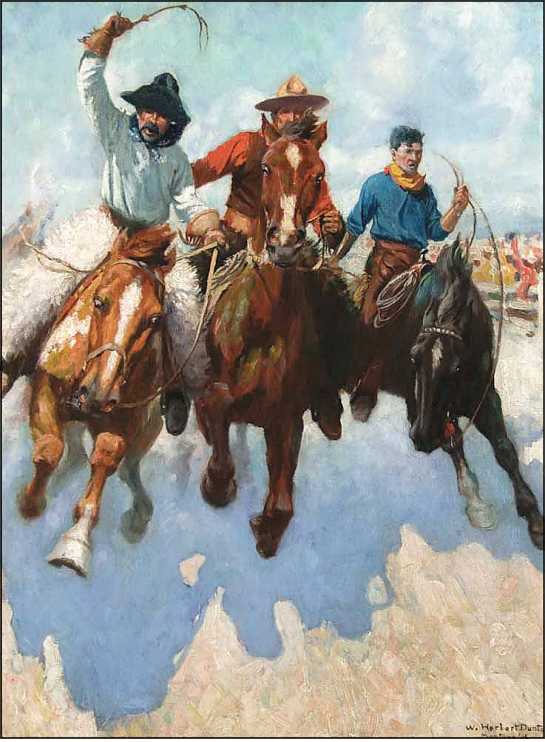
Charging to the head of the sale was “A Close Call” by Charles Schreyvogel (1861-1912), which had carried one of the highest estimates of the sale



An online bidder prevailed against an institutional bidder and won “The Battle at Belly River” by Charles Russell for \$409,500. The active, complex composition was atypical of the artist but, in Brad Richardson’s opinion, provided an opportunity for a Russell collector to diversify their collection (\$250/350,000).



Beautiful colors and a dynamic composition are some of the elements that make “Cheyenne Winter Camp” by William Gollings one of the artist’s best works and worthy of his record setting price of \$643,500. A private collector, bidding by an agent in the room, acquired the 1922 oil on canvas, which measured 24 by 18 inches (\$300/500,000).



The dynamic composition of having the rid- ers racing toward the viewer in “Three Montana Cowboys” was “unique,” accord- ing to Brad Richardson. One of three works in the sale by William Dunton (1878-1936) measured 25½ by 19 inches, was dated 1906 and sold to an online buyer for \$257,400 (\$175/225,000).



Review by
Madelia Hickman Ring, Associate Editor
Catalog Photos Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction



Capping bronze works was “Monarch of the Plains” by Henry Shrady (1871-1922). The 13½-inch-tall work was signed and dated 1899 and marked Theodore B. Star on the reverse. An online bidder bagged it for \$175,500 (\$85/125,000).

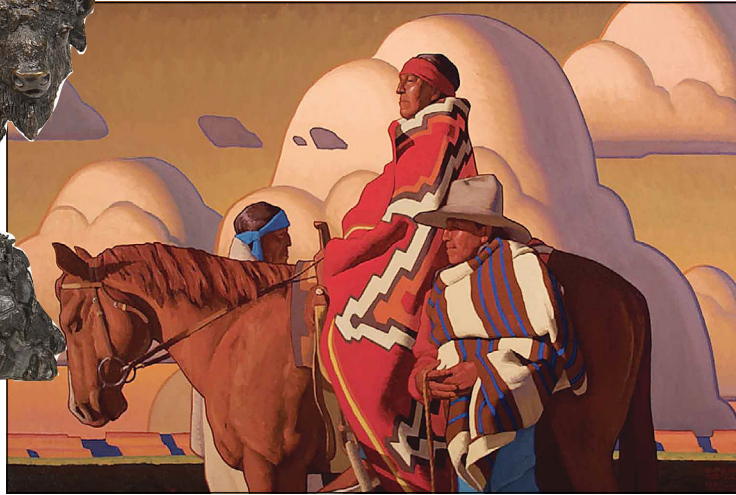
and sold for \$819,000, within estimate, to a private collector bidding on the phone. “Schreyvogels are just very rare,” Richardson said of the artist who was a contemporary of Charles Russell and Frederic Remington. “He was not very prolific and most are in institutions. When one comes up, because there’s not a large market, they bring a good price.”

After nearly 20 years of sales, it is not unusual for some of the works on offer to be crossing SAA’s block for the second time. That was the case with the auction’s second highest price, which was established at \$643,500 and realized for William Gollings’ (1878-1932) “Cheyenne Winter Camp.” Scottsdale had offered the painting in 2007 with an estimate of \$250/350,000; at the time, it brought \$414,400, the record for the artist. The painting retains the distinction as the highest selling work by the artist as it exceeded its \$300/500,000 estimate to bring \$643,500 from a private collector who had previewed the work in person and whose agent was bidding on it from the salesroom. Richardson said he was thrilled for the consignor, further commenting that “it illustrates the point that collecting is about owning the best of an artist. In anyone’s book, this was a ‘10.’”

The sale set new records for two other artists. Bill Schenck’s (b 1947) “Blood on the Horizon,” which was the cover lot for the catalog, realized \$64,300 on the first day. SAA smashed its own record for Clark Kelly Price (b 1945), surprising the audience when a 24-by-36-inch work estimated at \$5/8,000 and titled “Last of the Water” brought \$81,900, more than doubling Price’s previous record of \$40,250, which SAA achieved in 2014.

Albert Bierstadt’s “Star King Mountain” had been dated to 1866 by the Bierstadt experts Richardson worked with. He attributed the price it realized of \$497,250, which was just shy of its high estimate, to its subject matter and recognized place, as well as pristine condition. “It had everything going for it.” Like most of the top lots, it sold to a private collector.

The sale offered not less than nine works by Carl Rungius (1869-1959), with the group led by “Grizzly Bear,” a subject matter that was done with less frequency than sheep or deer and which is always sought-after by collectors. Such was the case with the example on offer, which roared to \$468,000 for an online bidder, well past its high estimate. The work had previously sold at Freeman’s in 2012, when it realized \$230,500 from an estimate of \$200/300,000. Online buyers purchased all of



“Gathering” by Logan Maxwell Hagege (b 1980) was one of several works by one of the top-selling young Western Art artists. It brought \$152,100 from an online bidder (\$85/135,000).

the other works by Rungius in prices ranging from \$9,945 for a landscape of a meadow to \$292,500 for a sweeping landscape with bighorn sheep in the foreground.

“The Battle at Belly River” has more figures and depicts more action than is atypical of works by Charles Russell (1864-1926); as a result, Richardson said they were not sure how it would be received but, in the end, the fact that it depicted a historic battle may have helped. He noted that at least one institution had come to the table for the work but it sold to a private collector, bidding online, for \$409,500.

Another work that featured unusual elements that attracted interest was “Wild Horses” by John Clymer (1907-1989). Despite living in Jackson Hole, Wyo., Clymer reportedly did not paint the Tetons into his landscapes, a feature present in the work offered that Richardson thought drove the price. It had lots of competition, selling to an online bidder for \$380,250.

Richardson noted that several of the top lots were staying in Arizona. Among these was “Burning the Hogan” by Edgar Payne (1883-1947), one of two lots by the artist, which a private collector, bidding online, took to \$292,500. Another Arizona buyer outlasted competition on “Poplars in Moonlight” by Birger Sandzen (1871-1954), taking the only work in the sale by the artist to \$222,300.

“Forgotten” by Oscar Berninghaus (1874-1952) is a common subject matter for the artist, who Richardson said “did a lot of them.” The \$60/90,000 estimate was in line with what these typically bring, but Richardson thought this was better and he was right. It finished at \$210,600, from an online bidder.

One of the earliest Western artists — known as “explorer artists” — is George Catlin (1796-1872), whose renderings of native people established a lot

of what is known about tribes who were eventually largely eradicated by smallpox. The sale featured two watercolor works on paper that Richardson deemed “very historically important,” saying additionally that in 17 years of sales, SAA has sold “very few” works by the artist. Sold together and each dated 1836, “Tal-lee” and “Ea’h-pa-kia’s-kuk” measured 13 by 11 inches in their frames and brought \$117,000 from an online bidder.

The auction house is rarely willing to reoffer a work within a few years of it selling, but made an exception in the case of Joseph H. Sharp’s (1859-1953) “Hunting Son and Eagle Star,” which a Santa Fe auction house sold in 2018 for a hammer price of \$300,000. The buyer passed away since acquiring it, and Scottsdale was the auction house chosen by their estate. It exceeded expectations and made \$198,900.

Richardson pointed out SAA’s ability to get high prices for living, even young, contemporary Western Art artists. “Compared to some of our competing Western Art auction houses, we excel in the most sought-after current Western artists,” he said, pointing to prices realized for works by Logan Hagege (b 1980) and Kyle Polzin (b 1974). The sale featured five works by Hagege, with all selling to online buyers for prices ranging from \$15,210 to \$152,100. Polzin was represented with seven still life pictures offered across both days. Internet buyers remained dominant and all sold at or above their high estimates, for prices from \$17,550 to \$87,750.

Scottsdale Art Auctions’ next sale will take place in spring 2022.

Prices quoted include the buyer’s premium as reported by the auction house.

For additional information, www.scottsdaleartauction.com or 480-945-0225.



The only work in the sale by Birger Sandzen was “Poplars in Moonlight,” a work that Brad Richardson said was atypical of the artist’s body of work. An online buyer in Arizona acquired it for \$222,300 (\$125/175,000).



Topping expectations despite being offered by another house in 2018, “Hunting Son and Eagle Star” by Joseph H. Sharp sold for \$198,900 (\$125/175,000).



Howard Terpning (b 1927) is one of the top-grossing living Western Art artists and “Hunting” reflected his popularity. Despite its relatively small size at 20 by 27 inches, the oil on board painting brought \$321,750 from an online buyer (\$275/325,000).



“That was a beautiful painting,” Brad Richardson said of Edgar Payne’s “Burning the Hogan,” which a private collector in Arizona, bidding online, took to \$292,500 (\$200/300,000).



“That performed phenomenally,” Brad Richardson said of Oscar Berninghaus’ “Forgotten.” Even though it is a scene that the artist made numerous times and was priced in line with past sale records, it was considered better, an opinion that was evidenced by its \$210,600 result (\$60/90,000).