

Auction Action In Scottsdale, Ariz.

As Sun Begins To Sets On Summer, Scottsdale Art Auction Shines At \$3.2 Million



At \$96,000, the auction was led by “The Buffalo Rattler” by Martin Grelle (b 1954), 2004, oil on canvas, 48 by 52 inches (\$100/150,000).

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. — Scottsdale Art Auction’s two-day Summer Sale, August 21-22, achieved a 99.4 percent sell-through rate and brought \$3,188,387 million, a figure that marks the highest August and online auction total in the firm’s history. The 507-lot auction, of which only four lots went unsold, was highlighted by 15 lots from the collection of collector, dealer and Western art scholar A.P. “Abe” Hays (1930-2025), a grouping that the auction house has been selling since he passed in 2025.

While this August auction is 100 percent online, representative Haley Delaunais noted that there were “well over 3,000 registered bidders” competing for the

vast selection of historic and contemporary Western, wildlife and sporting art. The grand total was driven by record-setting results for contemporary Western artists and the enthusiastic reception of 16 works by Western illustrator, artist and novelist Will James, which kicked off the second session with all but one lot landing within or well beyond the estimate range.

“Our August auction as well as our April auction proved without a doubt that the market for classic and contemporary art is not just alive and well but absolutely thriving,” said Brad Richardson, co-owner of Scottsdale Art Auction. “Our August auction saw over 3,000 people bidding online across our three platforms, more than ever before. Additionally, we are continually seeing new and very active buyers on the market and sold works are being sent out

all over the country.”

The sale’s top price came from the traditional Western category when Martin Grelle’s 2004 “The Buffalo Rattler” crossed the block for \$96,000 during the second session. From a private collection in Arizona, this was the original oil on canvas painting of Grelle’s most sought-after prints. The work showed three Native Americans on horseback, “pausing on the open plains to behold the strength of the buffalo rattler’s medicine,” according to a note from the auction house. Other Grelle works to find success were the 2004 oil of a Native warrior “Crossing the Greasy Grass,” also known as Little Bighorn River, at \$48,000 and the 2008 acrylic of a horse standing out in the snow in its thick “Winter Coat” at \$39,000.

According to the firm’s representatives, the auction saw some



Review by
Carly Timpson, Associate Editor
Photos Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction



“Buffalo Medicine - 1999” by John Nieto (1936-2018), 1999, acrylic on canvas, 48 by 60 inches, became the artist’s highest-priced wildlife painting when it sold for \$66,000 (\$20/30,000).



“Sky Flower 2” by Logan Maxwell Hagege (b 1980), 2021, oil on linen mounted on board, 12 by 12 inches, blossomed for \$45,000 (\$15/25,000).



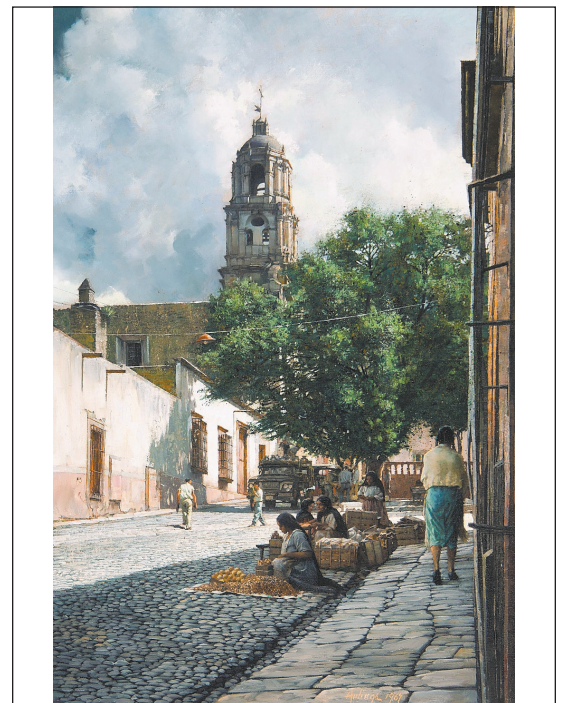
“Canyon Fog” by Ed Mell (1942-2024), 1983, oil on canvas, 50 by 38 inches, settled at \$66,000 (\$45/65,000).



“Smoky and his Mammy” by Will James (1892-1942), 1926, graphite on paperboard, 13 by 11 inches, brought \$39,000 (\$6/9,000).



“Evening Storm” by Ed Mell (1942-2024), oil on canvas, 22 by 22 inches in 27-by-27-inch signed Ed Mell frame, earned \$84,000 (\$35/55,000).



“San Miguel de Allente” by Clark Hulings (1922-2011), 1967, oil on canvas, 30 by 20 inches, had provenance to Scottsdale Art Auction founder and Clark Hulings Foundation advisory board member Jack A. Morris, Jr, and descended through the family, ultimately selling here for \$39,000 (\$15/25,000).

of its most competitive bidding on the 16 lots from the Hays collection of works by Will James, which reached a combined total of \$305,100. The selection was led by a drawing titled “Eventually” that featured two riders on horseback followed by a spirited wagon train, a scene said to depict the One-Elevens Rodeo Caravan, according to a label on its reverse. This graphite drawing sold for \$51,000, more than tripling its high estimate.

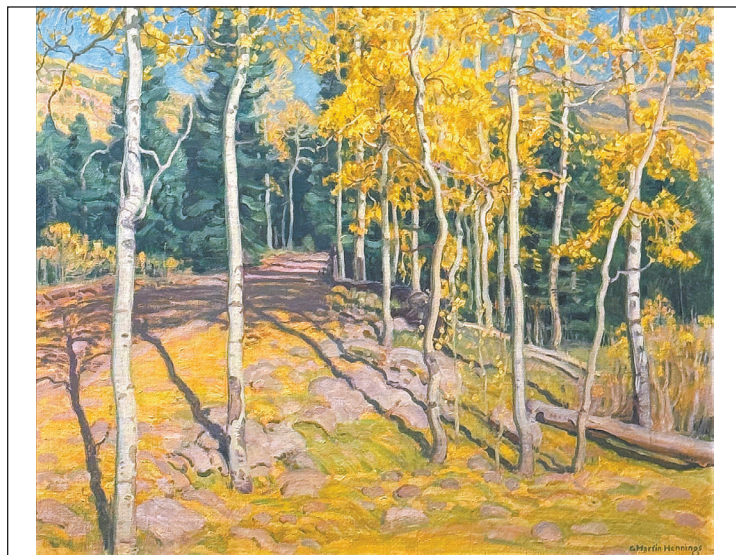
Other James works included “Smoky and his Mammy,” a 1926 graphite drawing of James’ famous *Smoky the Cowhorse* character. On the reverse, James inscribed the work, “To my wife / who faithfully helped me with ‘Smoky.’” After the artist’s death, his wife, Alice, gave the work to Hays and further inscribed, “This picture is my pride and joy, has been through the years and my heart goes with it. My best to you, Abe Hayes [sic]. Alice James Ross. July 30/79, Reno, Nev.” The illustration was exhibited alongside other art and literary works in the Autry Museum of the American West’s (Los Angeles) “Will James: Cowboy Artist and Author” in 1997-98. It achieved the second-highest price of the grouping at \$39,000.

Bringing \$84,000 was Ed Mell’s abstracted “Evening Storm” landscape in bold, warm tones of yellow, orange, red and navy. The oil on canvas was housed in a signed Ed Mell frame and in excellent condition, per the catalog notes. As the firm reported, “Many of the strong results in both sessions came from work by first- and second-generation artists associated with the New West movement. The market for paintings by Arizona icon and Modernist Ed Mell continues to show strength and resilience as several of his paintings sold well above the auction estimates.” This painting was estimated \$35/45,000 and nearly doubled the high mark. Mell was further represented by his 1983 “Canyon Fog,” which was featured on the February 1984 cover of *American Artist*, Volume 48, Issue 499, published by Glenn Heffernan. A copy of the magazine accompanied the lot when it sold just above its \$45/65,000 estimate at \$66,000.

Second-generation New West artists included Logan Maxwell



“Under the Sheltering Sky” by Billy Schenck (b 1947), 2024, oil on canvas, 45 by 45 inches, climbed to \$72,000 (\$30/40,000).



“Aspens” by E. Martin Hennings (1886-1956), oil on canvas, 20 by 24 inches, went out at \$84,000 (\$40/70,000).

Hagege (b 1980), whose “Sky Flower 2” blossomed well beyond its \$25,000 high estimate to bring \$45,000; Kyle Polzin (b 1974), whose still life “Leading the Charge” brought \$36,000; and Kim Douglas Wiggins (b 1960), whose “The Dispute of Don Cristobal” closed for \$24,000. “Under the Sheltering Sky” from 2024 topped the selection of five offerings by contemporary artist Billy Schenck at \$72,000.

Taos Society artist E. Martin Hennings, considered one of the defining figures of early Twentieth Century Southwestern art, also had pieces bid beyond estimates. His sunny autumn land-

scape titled “Aspens,” which had provenance to a private Massachusetts collection, achieved the auction’s third-highest price at \$84,000. Two floral still lifes by Joseph Henry Sharp each sold for \$27,000.

Marking a record for a wildlife painting by John Nieto, “Buffalo Medicine – 1999” was pushed more than double its high estimate and finished at \$66,000.

Prices quoted include the buyer’s premium as reported by the auction house. Scottsdale Art Auction’s next sale is scheduled for August 23. For information, www.scottsdaleartauction.com or 480-945-0225.



“Crossing the Greasy Grass” by Martin Grelle (b 1954), 2004, oil on canvas, 30 by 40 inches, came from a private collection in Iowa and achieved \$48,000 (\$50/70,000).



Coming from a private collection in California, “Crow Crown” by Thomas Blackshear (b 1955), 2019, oil on board, 20 by 28 inches, soared for \$39,000 (\$18/12,000).



“Eventually” by Will James (1892-1942), 1920, graphite on paper, 13¼ by 22½ inches, rode off for \$51,000 (\$10/15,000).

YCBA’s ‘The Landscape Reimagined’ Surveys John Constable

NEW HAVEN, CONN.—“John Constable: The Landscape Reimagined” is on view through July 25 at the Yale Center for British Art in the second floor galleries.

The exhibition explores Constable’s bold, innovative open-air paintings, which radically transformed the trajectory of European landscape painting. Working against the “picturesque” tradition, in which long-established conventions governed what landscape painting should look like, Constable made the skies, light, seasons and atmosphere the central subjects of his art. Created outdoors and rooted in the direct observation of

nature, his iconic pictures of the English landscape have shaped the image of Britain in the popular imagination.

As the only major US exhibition to focus on the seminal British painter on the 250th anniversary of his birth, “John Constable: The Landscape Reimagined” offers a unique opportunity for American audiences to experience the breadth of the artist’s masterpieces.

Bringing together a rich selection of Constable’s great works, the exhibition includes

his remarkable cloud studies and plein air sketches alongside two of his “six-footers,” including “Hadleigh Castle,” one of the most iconic works of English landscape painting.

The exhibition also presents works that have never before been publicly displayed in the US, among them is a study of Hampstead Heath that was recently acquired by the YCBA.

The Yale Center for British Art is at 1080 Chapel Street. For information, britishart.yale.edu or 877-274-8278.

“Sir Richard Steele’s Cottage, Hampstead” by John Constable, 1831-32, oil on canvas, 8¼ by 11¼ inches. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

