

# NATIVE AMERICAN ARTIFACTS, FINE ART SHINE AT THOMASTON PLACE AUCTION

Review and Onsite Photos by W.A. Demers

THOMASTON, MAINE — Kaja Veilleux, owner of Thomaston Place Auction Galleries, decided to do something experimental with his firm's annual winter sale — and it paid off. With an opportunity to offer the lifelong collection of Nancy Prince, encompassing more than 340 lots, why not devote one of the sale's three days to Native American artifacts, African ethnographic and antiquities? Not only would the sale feature Prince's exceptional examples of



early beadwork, figural war clubs, pottery and basketry, but it would also encompass native jewelry, historically

This Hudson Bay Native American coin silver gorget with three suspended crosses of Lorraine achieved \$7,188.



(Previous) A rare circa 1900 carved and polychrome painted Northwest mask, most likely of Tlingit origin, soared to \$112,100, chased by three bidders and the Internet and ultimately going to an online bidder.

important photographs and groupings of pre-Columbian and African tribal artifacts.

"It was like a magnet," said the auctioneer. "Really, it was amazing the way the sale put itself together," he said of the February 6 session, which kicked off the weekend-long event. "I was determined to keep the [Prince] collection whole. We were friends, and I wanted to keep the things in Maine to the extent possible," he said. Prince, an art educator, artist and published expert on American Indian arts and artifacts, who collected and sold Native material for more than 45 years, recently retired from the business and in the process of moving to Florida decided to consign her collection to auction.

Prince's myriad examples of baskets and Native artwork acquired from many weekends scouring local flea markets, provided ample, inexpensive opportunities for bidders. Highlights were a selection of Native carved clubs and canes, including a large group of Nineteenth Century Maine Penobscot carved birch root figural war clubs that were exhibited at the Portland (Maine) Historical Society, artfully displayed during preview in their museum mounts. "The war clubs all went way over estimate," said Veilleux after the sale. If Prince's collection was the anchor of the Native American and ethnographic session, a rare circa 1900 carved and polychrome painted Northwest mask, most likely of Tlingit origin, turned out to be the day's centerpiece, as it soared to \$112,100, chased by three bidders and the Internet and ultimately going to

an online bidder. This piece in original, as-found condition with untouched surface patina was acquired in 1908 and descended through the consignor's family. Auctioneer Veilleux said that he saw the mask hanging on the

A group of Nineteenth Century Maine Penobscot carved birch root figural war clubs from the Nancy Prince collection, shown here with owner/auctioneer Kaja Veilleux, were artfully displayed on their original museum mounts from the exhibition at the Portland (Maine) Historical Society. "The war clubs all went way over estimate," said Veilleux.



homeowner's wall during a house call and inquired whether it might be consigned for Thomaston's upcoming auction. "Only if it's featured on the cover," replied its owner. It was —

Veilleux cleverly designed the sale's catalog to have two covers — front and back. February 7 and 8 were devoted to fine art, decorative art and antiques. Sunday's excitement stemmed from an Andy Warhol (1928–1987)



**The Andy Warhol (1928–1987) serigraph on paper, "Sunset," 1972, which came to the gallery on an appraisal day, having been purchased by its owner at a flea market sale for a few dollars, rose to \$34,500.**

serigraph on paper that "walked" itself into the gallery on an appraisal day, having been purchased by its owner at a flea market sale for a few dollars. Titled "Sunset," 1972, the piece was given a conservative \$6/8,000 estimate but rose to \$34,500.



Reoffered in this sale after a winning bidder in a previous auction failed to pay for it, this stone bas relief of St Peter enthroned, holding the key to heaven, garnered \$17,250.



While most period furniture continues to be a bargain at auction, a strong performer among the sale's furniture offerings was this English oak, circa 1680, intricately carved and paneled wedding chest that fetched \$6,555.



A Meso-American carved stone panel from the Mayan culture depicting a priest bearing a serpent sold for \$20,060.

The next Thomaston Place Auction Galleries fine art and antiques feature auction will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 30 and 31.

For information, [www.kajav.com](http://www.kajav.com) or 207-354-8141.



**There was spirited bidding for this Tiffany counterbalance desk lamp with swirled favrile Damascene glass shade and bronze split arm base that ended at \$11,500.**

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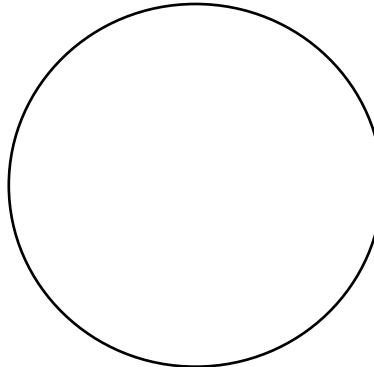
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