Mark Blackburn: The State Of The Market Place

Colima, Protoclassic, circa 100 BCE-250 CE, 9¼ inches tall, 5 inches long. Provenance: Private collection, Oceanside, Calif. $4,900.

HONOLULU — It’s been a while since I have written something so I thought I would talk about the state of the current market place. Many prestigious and well-known shows will not happen or have not happened this year, including the Marin Native American Show, San Francisco Tribal (virtual only) and lastly one of my favorites, the London Tribal Art Fair, where you had a lot of amazing exhibitors and a place where you could always find undiscovered masterpieces. The contributing factors are fairly obvious with good fresh material being harder and harder to find and the aging-out of the dealers who exhibit at these shows. This is one of the main reasons I have focused primarily on my website as shows are not only very expensive to do and fairly non-interesting, with two exceptions: Brian Lebel’s Old West Show in Mesa, Ariz., which is a true standout, along with the historical show in my opinion in the United States. The other show is the Great Southwestern Antique Show in Albuquerque, N.M., on August 5 and 6. The Albuquerque show always has a treat.

Rare John K. Hillers photo of an Acoma pueblo, 1871-72, albumen photo on original card, 16 by 20 inches. Provenance: Maine trade. $4,400.

Tlingit salmon rattle, circa 1890, 5-3/8 inches tall, 19¼ inches long. This sculpture has a warm, old patina. Lots of wear is present towards the tail, which is most likely where it was “rattled.” In all the years of handling this type of art, I have never seen another. Used in a Potlatch Ceremony, it would certainly be interesting to go back in time and see this great object in use. Label on inside reads: “Chief Sunny Hearts Lodge – Between Kassan and Kanta Bay.” The original bindings and pebbles are missing. $11,500.

HAND-CARVED CALABASH UMEKE, KOU WOOD, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, 5-1/8 INCHES HIGH, 9¾ INCHES DIAMETER. PROVENANCE: PRIVATE COLLECTION, HONOLULU. A BEAUTIFUL OUTSTANDING BOWL WITH NUMEROUS NATIVE REPAIRS. $3,900.

Setting The Standard: The Fred Harvey Company & Its Legacy

SANTA FE, N.M. — Will Rogers noted that Fred Harvey “kept the West in food — and wives.” But the company’s Harvey Girls are by no means its only legacy. From the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway’s 1879 arrival in New Mexico to the 1970 demolition of Albuquerque’s Alvarado Hotel, the Fred Harvey name and its company’s influence have been felt across New Mexico, not to mention the American West. The company and its New Mexico establishments served as the stage on which people such as Mary Colter were able to fashion an “authentic” tourist experience, along with Herman Schweizer who helped direct the direction of Native American jewelry and crafts as an industry.

On view at the New Mexico History Museum through December 31, 2024, is “Setting the Standard: The Fred Harvey Company and Its Legacy,” which uses artifacts from the museum’s collection, images from the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives and loans from other museums and private collectors. Focusing on the rise of the Fred Harvey Company as a family business and events that transpired specifically in the Land of Enchantment, the tale will leave visitors with an understanding of how the Harvey experience resonates in our Southwest today.

“People don’t always realize that many of the turning points in the company’s history are specific to New Mexico,” said Meredith Davidson, curator of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Southwest collections. “The Harvey Girls were invented in Raton, Native American jewelry, pottery, blankets and other goods were shaped by sales at the Alvarado’s Indian Room in Albuquerque. Tourists experienced ‘the authentic Southwest’ through Indian Detours that left from Santa Fe’s La Fonda Hotel and countless others.”

Artifacts in the exhibit include: the original Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway track sign for Albuquerque’s Alvarado Hotel; Harvey Girl uniforms; furniture designed by famed architect and interior decorator Mary Colter; hand-stamped Navajo spoons; Fred Harvey’s original photo album and an iconic painting of the man behind the empire. Other artifacts include a gong similar to ones that rang on menus at El Navajo in Gallup and El Tovar at the Grand Canyon.

The New Mexico History Museum is at 113 Lincoln Avenue. For information, 505-476-5200 or www.nmhistory.org.
Consign Today
Art of the American West
9.12.23

Oscar Howe (1915-1983, Yanktonai Dakota)
"Camte waste, no no wa" ("Good Heart Forever")
Price Realized: $325,000
Current Artist World Auction Record

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John Moran Auctioneers Proves Resounding Success
From The Classic To The Contemporary

BY BRENDA SMITH, JOHN MORAN AUCTIONEERS

LOS ANGELES — For more than 50 years John Moran Auctioneers has developed an esteemed reputation for offering Western art and objects, but the sale of a textile changed their position in the industry. Back in Summer 2022, a Navajo textile, known as “The Chantland Blanket” brought in a staggering $1.8 million against an estimate of $100/200,000! This auction record tripled the previous high-water mark for a similar Nineteenth Century weaving blanket and remains today as the highest price ever paid for a Native American weaving. Fewer than a dozen Navajo First Phase blankets are extant, making this rare, textile a true Navajo masterpiece. The blanket is now on view in the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

This was a turning point for Moran’s, giving them the title of best in the business — specifically when it comes to American Western art and artifacts. The event also reignited the market post-recession, increasing momentum and interest, thus allowing Moran’s the opportunity to offer three dedicated Art of the American West auctions a year. These include classic and contemporary works... and everything in between.

Continuing the success of their textile results is shown in the recent sale of a late Nineteenth Century Navajo pictorial blanket. Woven in red, cream, grey, black and yellow wool with alternating bands of horse and train motifs, and serrated zigzags, this example was valued at $50,000, achieving a final price of $12,500. Moran’s once again proves their unwavering position as a leader in the category.

In addition to textiles, buyers have long gravitated to the vast selection of impressive American Indian jewelry. One example comes from their June 2023 sale, a Hopi gold stone inlay ring by the renowned jewelry designer Charles Loloma. Starting with a $25,000 estimate, the 14K gold ring was made with a gorgeous multi-stone inlay ring, late Twentieth Century. Price realized: $8,125.

John Moran Auctioneers continues to experience above-estimate results for historical Western art like classic bronzes and Mission baskets, as demonstrated by the polychrome California Mission pictorial basket. Following the March 2022 white-glove sale of the incomparable James M. Cole Collection where a rattlesnake basket sold for a whopping $29,250, the March 2023 auction offered another reptile depicted weaving. This example, with an estimate of $57,000, was a coiled rectangular form bowl with a rattlesnake motif banding the walls with the heads joining at the center, which sold for $8,750.

Two works from Oscar Howe highlighted the summer auction with a combined total of $325,325. Howe’s market is one to pay close attention to in the coming years. In the category of Native American artificats, the auction house has recently acquired and sold a Hopi Katsina figure and an extraordinary Tlingit “Oyster Catcher” rattle. Coming from Polacca, Ariz., was a Hopi Katsina figure, circa 1913-18, with an estimate of $35,000. The standing katsina (kachina) figure of carved cottonwood, having traces of polychrome painted clothing and face mask affixed to modern black base brought in an exciting $10,400 in Moran’s March 2023 sale. Their October 2022 auction presented an exquisite Tlingit “Oyster Catcher” rattle dating pre-1900. This delicately carved polychrome wood rattle is in the form of an Oyster Catcher (a large, obvious and noisy plover-like bird). With a $10/15,000 estimate, this piece, created with a carved and polychrome bone beak and multiple inset abalone shell accents, and held together with sinew lashes, achieved an outstanding price realized of $46,875.

The reputation of John Moran Auctioneers as being an industry leader would not be possible without the knowledge of its department heads. Maranda Moran is vice president and the Silver, Western and American Indian Art Specialist. Since 2003, Moran has held many positions at Moran’s, currently as the go-to source for Western and Native American fine and decorative art. She holds a degree in History from UCLA and has additional post-baccalaureate studies in Interior Architecture. “My interest in Indigenous arts from North America stemmed from my childhood in Southern California, free to roam the hillsides and stream beds for native materials to build, weave and imagine into other forms. This foundation led to a love of all things where the historical knowledge to two decades of practical experience working as a textile conservator in the UK, and the specialized training from the post-graduate diploma she earned there. Like Moran, her undergraduate studies were completed at UCLA in Art History, but with a concentration in Native North American art. "I enjoy using my continually evolving knowledge to discover and highlight potential gems in every auction I catalog. Bringing the masterful techniques and beautiful compositions of unique and important handmade works of art to a wider audience is thoroughly satisfying." Her background, coupled with her experience, gives Andrew a distinct advantage when reviewing textiles, baskets, beadwork and the other Indigenous objects of North America.

John Moran Auctioneers is at 145 East Walnut Avenue. For additional information, 626-793-1833 or www.johnmoran.com.


Charles Loloma (Hopi, 1921-1991), a Hopi gold stone inlay ring, late Twentieth Century. Price realized: $8,125.

A Navajo pictorial blanket (Diné, Late Nineteenth Century). Price realized: $12,500.
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Exhibitions and Events of Note

MUSEUMS

Ongoing

Dazzling Array: The Richard A. Gates Collection of Native American Jewelry
The Autry — A Portrait of the American West — Scott T. Boster
Reel or Reality? Storied Histories of Film's Indigenous Cultures and Cowboys
Scottsdale's Museum of the West
Scottsdale, Ariz.
www.scottsdaleartmuseumwest.org

In the Service Of American Indian Veterans Art and Tributes
Substance of Stars
Heard Museum
Phoenix, Ariz.
www.heard.org

The Thaw Collection of American Indian Art
Fenimore Art Museum
Cooperstown, N.Y.
www.fenimoreartmuseum.org

Imagined Wests
Waterways
Art of the West
Avery Museum of the American West
Los Angeles, Calif.
www.theautry.org

The Northwest Studio Jewelry Art Display
Chihuly at Tacoma Art Museum
Metaphor into Form: Art in the Era of the Pilchuck Glass School
Tacoma Art Museum
Tacoma, Wash.
www.tacomaartmuseum.org

American Art: The Stories We Carry
Pacific Species
Art and Life Along the Northwest Coast
Seattle Art Museum
Seattle, Wash.
www.seattleartmuseum.com

Native Artists Make Toys
Rustic: Stylized Statures of Southwest Baskets
People, Places, and Perspectives
Medicinal Healer, An Artist to Remember: Charlie Willeto
From Converse to Native Canvas
Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.wheelwright.org

Spirit Totems: Sculpture by Herb Alpert
National Wildlife Museum of Art
Jackson, Wyo.
www.wildlifeart.org

Americans
Return to the Place: Algonquian Peoples of the Chesapeake
National Museum of the American Indian
Washington, DC
www.americanindian.si.edu

Native New York
Ancestral Connections
Infinity of Nations
National Museum of the American Indian
New York City
www.americanindian.si.edu

Discovering Russell: The Mackay Collection
A Collector's Vision
C.M. Russell Museum
Great Falls, Mont.
www.cmrusell.org

The Palace Seen and Unseen: A Convergence of History and Archaeology
The Massachusetts of Don Pedro Villasur
Setting the Standard: The Fred Harvey Company and its Legacy
Segressor Hide Paintings
New Mexico History Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

To August 3
Italy's Legendary Cowboys of the Maremma: Photographs by Gabrielle Savori
Buffalo Bill Center of the West
Cody, Wyo.
www.centerofthewest.org

To August 6
Changing Views: The Photography of Dorothea Lange
Eteljorg Museum
Indianapolis, Ind.
www.eteljorg.org

Prix de West Instutorial Art Exhibition of Fine Art
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Okla.
www.nationalcowboy.org

To August 13
San Jose Ties: The Art & Artist
Texas Art: Kindship and Culture
Witte Museum
San Antonio, Texas
www.witte.org

Booth Artists' Guild Annual Exhibition
Both Western Art Museum
Carterville, Ga.
www.boothmuseum.org

To September 3
Cowgirl Up! Art from the Other Half of the West
Desert Caballeros Western Museum
Wickenberg, Ariz.
www.wemuseum.org

Fiesta: Art of World of Inspiration
Witte Museum
San Antonio, Texas
www.witte.org

To October 15
Wideview
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Okla.
www.nationalcowboy.org

Barbara von Cleve: Women of the West
Booth Western Art Museum
Carterville, Ga.
www.boothmuseum.org

To October 18
American Farmer
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Okla.
www.nationalcowboy.org

To October 21
Always in Relation: Artwork from the Schultze Collection
Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.wheelwright.org

To October 22
Alfred Jacob Miller: Revisiting the Rendezvous — in Scotland and Today
Tovy Foster: Watercolor Diaries from the Green River
Buffalo Bill Center of the West
Cody, Wyo.
www.centerofthewest.org

To October 30
Radical Abstraction
Georgia O’Keeffe Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.okeeffemuseum.org

To October 31
Honoring Tradition and Innovation: 100 Years of Santa Fe’s Indian Market, 1922-2022
New Mexico History Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

To November 12
Remapping Conservation
National Wildlife Museum of Art
Jackson, Wyo.
www.wildlifeart.org

Courtney M. Leonard: Logbook 2004-2023
Hecksher Museum of Art
Huntington, N.Y.
www.hecksher.org

To November 26
Laura Wilson: Lomahboi Ranch Revisited
Eteljorg Museum
Indianapolis, Ind.
www.eteljorg.org

To November 30
Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces
National Museum of the American Indian
Washington, DC
www.americanindian.si.edu

To January 1, 2024
Shelley Niro: 100 Year Itch
National Museum of the American Indian
New York City
www.americanindian.si.edu

To January 7
Mi Cultura: The Photography of Al Rendon
Witte Museum
San Antonio, Texas
www.witte.org

To January 14
On Native Land: Landscapes from the Haub Family Collection
Tacoma Art Museum
Tacoma, Wash.
www.tacomaartmuseum.org

California Stars: Huaso/Puaisi
Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.wheelwright.org

To February 1
Anti-Gravity: Shashi O’Leary’s Staudant
Annual Theme Exhibition: Heroes Rockwell Museum
Cornning, N.Y.
www.rockwellmuseum.org

To February 4
The North Star Changes: Works by Brenda Mallory
Heard Museum
Phoenix, Ariz.
www.heard.org

To February 18
Open for Business
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Okla.
www.nationalcowboy.org

To March 27
Georgia O’Keeffe: Making a Life
Georgia O’Keeffe Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.okeeffemuseum.org

To March 31
Sharing Honors and Bardens: Rennick Institutional 2023
Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery
Washington, D.C.
www.americanart.si.edu/visit/renwick

To April 9
Native History is Made Here
Eteljorg Museum
Indianapolis, Ind.
www.eteljorg.org

To April 17
Native Portraiture: Power and Perception
Planes to Call Home: Settlements in the West
Winter in the West
Tacoma Art Museum
Tacoma, Wash.
www.tacomaartmuseum.org

To April 22
Indeterminate Beauty
Heard Museum
Phoenix, Ariz.
www.heard.org

To May 5
National at War: Field Sketches of a Paunsa Warrior
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Okla.
www.nationalcowboy.org

To July 16
Horizons: Weaving Between the Lines with Dose Textiles
Museum of Indian Arts & Culture
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.indianartandsculpture.org

To November 20
Yellowstone In Color: Moran and Prang Print the West
Fred Jones Jr Museum of Art
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Okla.
www.ou.edu

To January 25, 2025
Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations
National Museum of the American Indian
Washington, DC
www.americanindian.si.edu

To April 1
Silver and Stones: Collaborations in Southwest Jewelry
New Mexico History Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

To April 3
The Santos of New Mexico
New Mexico History Museum
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

AUCTIONS

July 21
Art of the West Showcase Auction
Heritage Auctions
Dallas, Texas
www.ha.com

July 21
Western Treasures: Property to Benefit the Couse-Sharp Historic Site
Heritage Auctions
Dallas, Texas
www.ha.com

August 1
California Living
John Moran
Monrovia, Calif.
www.johnmoran.com

August 26
Scottsdale Art Auction
Scottsdale, Ariz.
www.scottsdaleartauction.com

October 24
Made in Mexico
John Moran
Monrovia, Calif.
www.johnmoran.com

November 14
California and American Fine Art
John Moran
Monrovia, Calif.
www.johnmoran.com

SHOWS & MARKETS

July 28-30
71st Annual Traditional Spanish Market
Spanish Colonial Arts Society
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.spanishcolonial.org

August 19-20
SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market
Preview August 18
Historic Plaza
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.swaia.org

November 10-19
Objects of Art Santa Fe
Kim Mapes and John Morris
Santa Fe, N.M.
www.virtualobjectsofartsantafe.com
Brian Lebel’s 34th Annual
Cody Old West Show & Auction
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