

American Indian Art

Sotheby's

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Sale 8210



Lot 165, a Crow beaded and fringed hide man's coat, 37 inches in length

By Carter B. Horsley

Sotheby's Spring 2006 auction of American Indian Art is very strong with some wonderful clothing and some marvelous Tinglit objects, a fine Tsimshian mask and some excellent Hopi Kachina dolls.

Probably the most spectacular piece is Lot 165, a magnificent Crow beaded and fringed man's coat that the catalogue notes was "possibly inspired by a European frock coat, decorated overall with yellow ochre, thread sewn innumerable shades of opaque and outline white glass beads, in sport-stitch and contour techniques, with stars and floral elements, trimmed down the front with brass button and red silk ribbon pendants against a green wool band edged in dark blue silk, red and blue cloth trim on the cuffs and hemline.

The 37-inch-long coat has an estimate of \$25,000 to \$35,000. **It sold for \$20,400 including the buyer's premium as do all results mentioned in this article. The sale totaled \$4,532,402 with 183 of the 214 offered lots selling.**



Lot 157, Southern Plains beaded and fringed hide ghost dance shirt, 43 inches long

Another fine garment is Lot 157, a Southern Plains beaded and fringed hide ghost dance shirt. Like Lot 165, it is decorated with yellow ochre. The hide is painted in red and green pigments with birds, probably crows, circles and "idiosyncracies" on the front and a cluster of stars on the back. The catalogue entry notes that the Ghost Dance began after 1888 with many Plains Indians on reverberations hoping for a return to their former lives. Crows were the sacred bird of the Ghost Dance. The lots an estimate of \$40,000 to \$60,000. **It sold for \$66,000.**



Lot 153, Southern Plains painted and fringed hide tunic and shirt, each 41 inches long

Lot 153 is a very fine Southern Plains painted and fringed tunic and shirt, each 41 inches long, decorated overall with yellow ochre, each painted with a board red vertical line. The lot has an estimate of \$35,000 to \$55,000. **It sold for \$54,000.**

Another lovely garment is Lot 158, a Cheyenne beaded hide dress with many fringes. It is decorated with three tiers of cut hide pendants strung with large, faceted iridescent glass beads and a beaded belt. It has a modest estimate of \$7,000 to \$10,000. **It sold for \$6,000.**



Lot 159, a Plateau beaded and fringed hide dress, probably Cayuse, 51 ¼ inches long

Lot 159 is a beautiful Plateau beaded and fringed hide dress, probably Cayuse, that is 51 ¾ inches long. It comes from the Sacajawea Museum in Spalding, Idaho. The catalogue notes that it is "constructed with an elaborate yoke sewn in numerous shades of opaque and translucent, and faceted iridescent glass beads, with concentric bands, overlaid by a diamond medallion beneath the collar, surmounting cut hide pendants strung with tubular glass beads in red, yellow, and two shades of blue." It has a modest estimate of \$5,000 to \$7,000. **It sold for \$4,800.**

An important group - lots 83 through 109 - in the auction are objects from the John W. Painter Collection.

Lot 105 is a striking Sioux beaded and quilled hide tobacco bag with ochre pigment, decorated along the top and sides with zigzag porcupine quillwork dyed purple, yellow and faded green, a small quilled

strike-a-light trimmed with tin cones against the hide ground in the field above, the lower section with tracked columns against a purple quilled ground the openwork section of hide strips below wrapped in red, white, yellow and faded bluish-green dyed porcupine quills, trimmed with twisted fringe, each with a brass bead, tincone and dentalium shell suspension with blue yarn, a German silver button attached at each side.

The lot has an estimate of \$15,000 to \$20,000. **It sold for \$19,200.**



Lot 106, Northern Plains beaded hide pictorial gun case, 46 ¾ inches long

Lot 106 is an excellent Northern Plains beaded hide pictorial gun case that is 46 ¾ inches long. The buffalo hide case has a frieze of animals painted at one end with cut-hindering along half of one edge. It has an estimate of \$10,000 to \$15,000. **It sold for \$9,600.**



Lot 94, Great Lakes beaded cloth leggings, 27 inches long

Lot 94 is a beautiful pair of early Great Lakes beaded cloth leggings, 27 inches long, of dark green worsted wool trade cloth, decorated on the cuff with appliqued panels of deep pink, bright yellow, forest green, and pale and dark blue silk ribbon, cut in a diamond and scalloped pattern, additional ribbon work panels at the midsection, decorated with overlaid appliquéd diamond patterning against a red trade cloth ground, and stitched with double curves and crisscross elements in white glass seed beads, almost cylindrical in form, against an alternating deep pink and rich green silk ground; silk-ribbon tassels and edging. The leggings were collected circa 1830 by Sir John Colborne (later Baron Seaton), who had served as Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada from 1828 to 1836 when he was appointed Commander of the British Forces in Upper and Lower Canada (Quebec) and in that capacity suppressed the Canadian Rebellions, 1837-1838, and then became Governor General of Canada from 1838 to 1839. The lot has a modest estimate of \$20,000 to \$30,000. **It failed to sell.**



Lot 101, rare Cheyenne painted parfleche envelope, 28 ½ by 16 inches

Lot 101 is a rare Cheyenne painted par fleche envelope that measures 28 ½ by 16 inches. The lot has an estimate of \$30,000 to \$50,000. **It sold for \$57,000.**

The auction contains a selection of property that Sotheby's said is "amongst the most historically significant groups of American Indian art ever to be offered at auction." The group comes from "the Earl of Southesk 1951 Settlement Removed from Kinnaird Castle in Scotland.

"In 1858, James Carnegie, the 9th Earl of Southesk, traveled to the United States and Canada from his native Scotland, after being advised it would improve his health that had deteriorated following the death of his wife....His route...included traveling up the Athabasca River from Fort Edmonton, across what is now called Southesk Pass, and down Job Creek and Coral Creek to the Kootenay Plains of the Saskatchewan River Valley.

The selection consists of 39 lots, numbered 176 to 214.



Lot 183, Upper Missouri River man's quilled and pony beaded hide shirt, probably Blackfoot, 57 inches long

Lot 183 is an "early and important" Upper Missouri River man's quilled and pony beaded hide shirt that the catalogue states is probably Blackfoot. The 57-inch-long shirt is the cover illustration of the catalogue.

The front and back of the shirt have a porcupine quillwork disk in ivory and red, "each with an hourglass design flanked by crosses," the catalogue noted, added that "the rectangular bib composed of red wool cloth, trimmed with human and horse hair pendants wrapped with quillwork; similar hair pendants down each sleeve." The catalogue quotes one expert as noting that among Blackfeet the fringes on the leggings are locks of humanoid and "these identify the wear as a warrior who was taken scalps."

The lot has an estimate of \$350,000 to \$550,000. **It sold for \$800,000.**



Lot 203, Early Upper Missouri River beaded hide dress, 52 inches long

Lot 203 is a lovely Early Upper Missouri River beaded hide dress collected from a Blood Indian. It is stitched in white and bright blue glass pony beads with a concentric linear pattern across the front and back of the bodice. The lot has an estimate of \$175,000 to \$225,000. **It sold for \$497,600.**



Lot 212, Great Lakes quilled hide knife sheath, probably Huron, 9 ¼ inches

Lot 212 is a stunning Great Lakes quilled hide knife sheath, probably Huron, that is 9 ¼ inches long and finely decorated in ivory, orange and blue porcupine quillwork with an edge trimmed with tiny tin cone pendants inserted with red-dyed deer fur. It has an estimate of \$25,000 to \$35,000. **It sold for \$66,000.**

Another impressive knife sheath is Lot 180, an Upper Missouri River quilled, beaded and fringed hide knife sheath that is 11 7/8 inches long. Stitched in ivory, red, blue and purple porcupine quillwork in edging, plaited and linear techniques, with a series aggravated checkered squares, enclosed by concentric bands, trimmed along one edge with lohng hide pendants, wrapped in quillwork in similar colors, decorated with blue and white glass seed beads, and tied at the ends with red, green and yellow dyed horse hair tassles.

The lot has an estimate of \$30,000 to \$40,000.

The auction also includes a fine selection - lots 64 through 82 - of Kachina dolls from the Alan Kessler Collection.



Lot 64, Hopi polychrome wood Kachina doll, 10 ¾ inches

Lot 64 is a fine Hopi polychrome wood Kachina doll, 10 ¾ inches high, depicting the Shalako Mana, of highly stylized form, standing on squat legs. Kachinas, the catalogue explains, are "spirit supernaturals, once of this world" who live in an underworld with Hopi ancestors and who are supposed to reappear in the first half of the year when they are personated in dance. The lot has an estimate of \$20,000 to \$30,000. **It sold for \$21,600.**

Lot 69 is another Hopi polychrome wood Kachina doll. The 15 ¼-inch-high figure holds a spotted lizard in its mouth and has exaggerated ears. It is attributed to Wilson Tawaquaptewa who was born in 1873 into the Bear Clan of the Hopi village of Oraibi on the Third Mesa in northeastern Arizona. In 1904, Tawaquaptewa became village chief and remained so until his death in the 1960s except, the catalogue notes "for a few interruptions related to political imprisonment or to health problems." He was the leader of the Friendlies who supported cooperation between the Hopi and the United States Government. His dolls, the catalogue continued, "are now valued by collectors and museums for their quirky creativity, the distorted realism and their artistic presence." The lot has an estimate of \$20,000 to \$30,000. **It sold for \$21,600.**

Lot 76 is an early Hopi polychrome wood Kachina doll, 18 ¾ inches high, depicting Whinru, wearing red boots, a white kilt, and woven red, green and white sash, with exaggerated snout and "pop" eyes, decorated with large stars on the cheeks and surmounted by a cap with horns, attached with dyed turkey feather pendants. The lot has an estimate of \$70,000 to \$100,000. **It failed to sell.**



Lot 82, Zuni polychrome wood Kachina set, 10 1/4 inches high

Lot 82 is a Zuni polychrome wood Kachina set depicting the "Greasy Boys," each carved in naturalistic form with articulated limbs secured with iron nails, one carrying the other on its back. The set is 10 ¼ inches high. It has an estimate of \$5,000 to \$7,000. **It failed to sell.**



Lot 44, early Salish sheep horn rattle, 13 ¾ inches without wool trim

Lot 44 is a wonderful, early Salish sheep horn rattle that is 13 ¾ inches long without the wool trim. Traditional Salish horn carving, according to the catalogue, probably ended by 1900 and the Cowichan and Central Coast Salish peoples used such rattles "during potlatches and winter dances." It is composed of a wood handle, carved with a mask-like face, with flaring nostrils, ovoid eyes, inset with abalone plaques, beneath wide arching brows, expanding to a born 'pillow form' head, each side finely carved in deep relief with a humanoid face, one side with additional shell decoration to resemble teeth, the sides perforated for attachments and trimmed with long twisted pendants of mountain sheep wool." The lot has an estimate of \$30,000 to \$40,000. **It sold for \$102,000.**

Another major group in the auction - lots 1 through 63 - comes from the Collection of Fred Boschan and the Mimi Boschan Trust.

Lot 18 is a fine Tlingit polychromed wood shaman's crown decorated with a series of small masks surmounted by a long curving section resembling a goat horn. The object was collected by George Emmons on Admiralty Island 1882-7 and was once in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History and the Dresden Museum in Germany. It has an estimate of \$15,000 to \$20,000. **It failed to sell.**



Lot 23, Tlingit polychrome wood shaman's ceremonial dance rattle, 13 inches long

Lot 23 is an early Tlingit polychromed wood shaman's ceremonial dance rattle that is 13 inches long and was possibly collected, according to the catalogue, by I. G. Voznesenskii in northern Southeast Alaska, 1839-1849. It was once in the collection of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and Adelaide DeMenil and Edmund Carpenter. The rattle is in the form of a bird in flight with a shaman's figure resting on the bird's back with hands grasping the exaggerated tongue emerging from the mouth of a mounting goat. The lot has an estimate of \$125,000 to \$175,000. **It sold for \$150,000.**



Lot 36, Tlingit polychromed wood headdress, 7 3/8 inches by 6 1/2 inches

Lot 36 is a fine Tlingit polychromed wood headdress carved with a straight-beaked bird, probably a raven, a secondary figure with humanoid characteristics between its outspread wings, decorated with abalone shell plaques. The headdress measures 7 3/16 by 6 1/2 inches. It has an estimate of \$25,000 to \$35,000. **It sold for \$51,000.**

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