

Previews of Works For Sale at Upcoming Shows

JANUARY 2017

113

# WESTERN ART

## COLLECTOR



# A Historic Return

John Coleman's long-awaited solo exhibition at The Legacy Gallery brings out hundreds of guests and yields more than \$1.4 million in sales.



To create a stunning new collection of work for a solo exhibition, John Coleman had to cause a drought of his work for the better part of a year, a drought that was clearly over when guests arrived at the November 5 show at The Legacy Gallery and were greeted by a 17-foot bronze of a Native American medicine man firing a flaming arrow into the sky. It's title: *The Rainmaker*.

The show, *John Coleman: Spirit • Lives • Legend*, marked the triumphant return of the Arizona sculptor, who had been largely

absent at major museum exhibitions throughout 2016 as he prepared for the solo show, which marked a new chapter in Coleman's career, one as a full-fledged painter. Before the show even opened in the upstairs space that Legacy usually reserves for the *Scottsdale Art Auction*, a massive crowd had gathered downstairs as Coleman and Legacy owner Brad Richardson unveiled *The Rainmaker* and introduced the concept of the show. Then, as guests, fellow artists and longtime Coleman collectors streamed upstairs, it was obvious the exhibition would be a historic event.

"Obviously we were overwhelmed," says Richardson of the by-draw sale. "We had twice as many people as we anticipated.

You always dream of a sell-out show like this, but they don't come around very often. It also shows that Scottsdale is still a great place that collectors want to come and support. We believe in Scottsdale, and we're thrilled that so many people came out to be a part of everything. But really, though, the star of the show was John, who created a great body of work."

Asked if he expected a turnout of this magnitude—Richardson pegged the attendance at more than 400 people—Coleman replied, "It was always my hope, but you never know with these things. You just do the best you can."

Well, as the saying goes, when it rains it pours. By the end of the night, more than \$1.4 million worth of art had sold across five drawings, 10 oil paintings and five bronzes, many of which sold out entire editions of 15 or 30 pieces. Seth Hopkins, director of the Booth Western Art Museum in Georgia, was attending the show with several museum patrons, and he proclaimed the event to be the third-highest selling exhibition of Western art of the year,



John Coleman with *Monarch of the Buffalo Nation*.

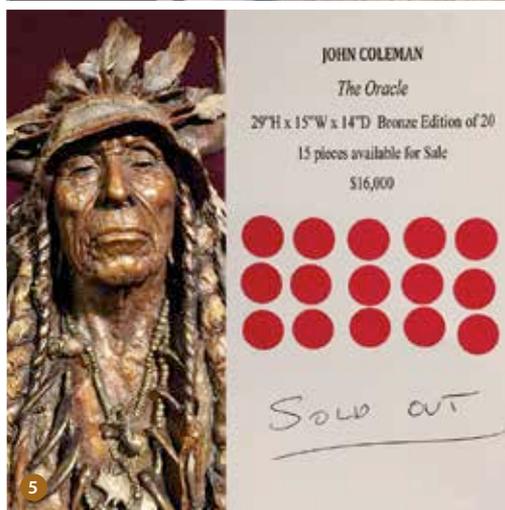
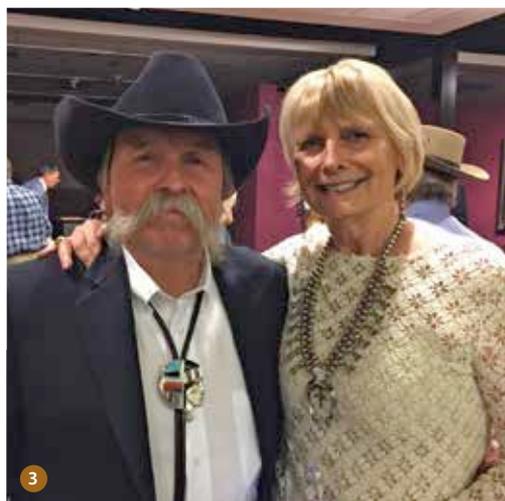
behind only the *Masters of the American West* at the Autry Museum of the American West and the *Prix de West* at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. To put it into perspective further, Coleman outsold the entire Cowboy Artists of America show from a month earlier by a factor of two.

"To sell out bronze editions like that was kind of crazy for me. Usually I tell myself that we can hold some back for other shows, but literally everything was gone by the end of the night," Coleman says. "With a sellout and all the people who were there, it was important for me because it gives me the momentum and the confidence to keep going even further with painting and sculpture. I was just pretty astounded by everything."

The million dollar question now: What's next for Coleman? "The beautiful thing is I don't even need to think about it. I can do what I want to do. And I can do it in a way that's more and more on my own terms. When I was younger I rode the coattails of artists in the CA, and now I'm at a point where people can ride



*Sun Priest*, oil, 49½ x 29"



on my coattails and I can still determine my own trajectory," Coleman says, adding that he would like to do some traveling. "I'd really like to renew my relationship with the Native people all around the country. I'm going to take some time this year to do that." 🍷

**1.** Legacy at the opening of the John Coleman exhibition. **2.** Former gallery owner Troy Murray, left, Booth Western Art Museum executive director Seth Hopkins, and collector Myron Deibel. **3.** John and Sue Coleman during the opening of the show. **4.** Linda Roberts, left, with Bob and Barbara Hunter. **5.** Red dots indicate a sold-out edition for John Coleman's bronze *The Oracle*. **6.** Guests mingle at the show opening. **7.** Sculptor Bill Nebeker, left, with Steve and Melissa Todd. **8.** Collectors Howard Chambers, left, and Gary Kinslow. **9.** Artist Alvin Marshall with Raymond James Financial art curator Emily Kapes.