



104 East 25th Street • New York, NY 10010
Telephone: 212.254.4710 • Fax: 212.979.1017
swanngalleries.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 2015

Contact: Alexandra Nelson
Communications Director
212.254.4710 ext. 19
alexandra@swanngalleries.com

NEW AUCTION RECORDS FOR FAITH RINGGOLD, JOHN BIGGERS RESULT FROM SWANN
GALLERIES' AUCTION THE ART COLLECTION OF MAYA ANGELOU

New York—Swann Galleries' **September 15** auction of **The Art Collection of Maya Angelou** brought in nearly \$1.3 million with just 44 lots, and set new records at auction for 14 individual artists. The sale sold 98% to a standing-room-only audience and a number of active phone bidders.

Nigel Freeman, Director of Swann's African-American Fine Art department, said, "We are absolutely thrilled—this auction exceeded all of our expectations and reinforced the great status of Dr. Angelou as an American cultural icon. It was an honor to handle her collection."

The top lot of this sale was Faith Ringgold's stunning story quilt, *Maya's Quilt of Life*, acrylic on canvas and painted, dyed pieced fabrics, 1989, which sold for \$461,000*, nearly double its pre-sale estimate of \$150,000 to \$250,000, and set a record for the artist at auction. The quilt was commissioned by Oprah Winfrey as a gift for Dr. Angelou's birthday and was the first of Ringgold's story quilts to come to auction. It was purchased by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, as an addition to their contemporary collection.

Multiple works by John Biggers landed among the top lots, including the bustling 1962 panoramic *Kumasi Market*, oil and acrylic on masonite board, which brought \$389,000 and set a record for the artist at auction. Biggers's 1969 Conte Crayon drawing *Ethiopian Women*, brought \$37,500, while his 1986 lithograph *Black Family (Family of Six)* realized \$8,125.

Watercolors by Romare Bearden performed well in the sale, with his bright 1984 watercolor *The Obeah's Choice (Le Choix de la Sorcière; Choua Manbo-A)* fetching \$87,500. Three other Bearden watercolors, all circa 1985, were among the top lots, with *Rooster* selling for \$21,250, *The Woman* going for \$11,250, and *The Train* realizing \$7,250. A well-known color lithograph by the artist, *Falling Star*, 1980, brought \$15,000.

Dr. Angelou was an ardent supporter of female artists, and many works by women were among the top lots. Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's 1993 hand-colored silver print portrait, *Maya Angelou*, sold for \$17,500 to the Muscarelle Museum of Art at The College of William and Mary; while mixed media collages

MORE

by Phoebe Beasley entitled *Catnap*, 1980 and *Play it Pretty for the People*, 1994, brought \$11,875 and \$8,125, respectively. Both *Maya Angelou* and *Catnap* set records for the artists at auction. Another female artist whose work performed well was Elizabeth Catlett, with two lithographs selling in the top lots: *Madonna*, 1982, which realized \$8,750; and *Two Generations*, 1979, which brought \$8,450.

Sculptor Melvin Edwards's *OWWA Maya*, welded steel, 2011, a gift presented to Dr. Angelou by the Organization of Women Writers of Africa, sold for \$40,000 and set a record for Edwards at auction.

Several pieces were the artists' first works to come to auction. Alonzo Adams's *Phenomenal Woman*, watercolor and pencil, 1993, sold for \$10,000; while James McKissic's *Jimmy's Blues*, oil on canvas, 2002 brought \$9,375.

Wrapping up the top lots were works by Jacob Lawrence, Jonathan Green, and Charly "Carlos" Palmer. Green's *Wading in the Surf*, acrylic on masonite board, 1989, brought \$13,750; Palmer's *His Story*, acrylic and collage on canvas, circa 2008, realized \$7,500; and Lawrence's 1990 screenprint *And God said - let the Earth bring forth the grass, trees, fruits and herbs*, also sold for \$7,500.

Swann Auction Galleries continues to be the only major auction house with a department dedicated to auctions of African-American Fine Art

Complete results are available online via www.swanngalleries.com.

For further information, or to consign items to upcoming auctions of African-American Fine Art, please contact Nigel Freeman at 212-254-4710, extension 33, or via email at nfreeman@swanngalleries.com.

*Prices include buyer's premium.

#

CATALOGUE AND ADDITIONAL DIGITAL IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST