

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rare, Unpublished Will James Watercolor up at Auction

A recently discovered 1925 watercolor by James, signed and inscribed, will be sold June 25, 2011 at Brian Lebel's 22nd annual Old West Auction.

DENVER, CO – Though Will James pieces are perennial favorites in the Western art market, rarely does an opportunity arise to purchase a new-to-market, unpublished watercolor by the popular illustrator and writer. Painted the same year “Smoky” was written, the piece was for presentation to his wife’s brother. Signed and inscribed, it is estimated at \$25,000 - \$30,000.

A watercolor and pencil on paper, the piece is from James’s “Franktown” period, the time that most James fans agree he produced his most creative and best work, and also when he exploded on the Scribner’s scene. Signed and dated on the lower left with his name and trademark “III,” the piece measures 13” x 12” and is framed to “23 x 22”. The lower center bears the title, “Here’s Hoping That the Trail Ahead Keeps Moist... But Not Too Moist,” and is underscored by a trail of hand-drawn footprints. The lower right is inscribed, “With compliments our friends Maude and Cese from Alice and Bill – III ’25.”

Noted James authority and collector, Abe Hays, wrote that “James’ output of watercolors was small, only 32 published pieces and a few unpublished...” Auction founder Brian Lebel said of the piece, “it may be the best watercolor of James’s career. It’s the best I’ve seen.” Lebel is quick to add that it is not the only important Will James piece in this year’s auction. “We also have the earliest known bucking horse drawing. And that’s saying something about a guy who drew countless bucking horses during his career.” The auction is also offering a large collection of James’s books, including a number with added drawings, signatures, and many first editions.

Lebel’s auction will be offering over 350 pieces of Western art, artifacts, antiques and collectibles. Held at 5:00 pm on June 25, 2011 at the Denver Merchandise Mart, the live auction offers absentee, phone and internet bidding for those who can’t attend in person. Lebel’s 22nd annual Old West Show will be held that same weekend (Friday through Sunday, June 24 -26, 2011), featuring 200 dealers in antique and contemporary Western goods and merchandise. Both the Show and Auction are open to the public. Visit the website www.denveroldwest.com for more information.

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