

Heffel to Present The Gary Bell Collection: Masterworks of Northwest Coast Art

One of Canada's most important private collections of Northwest Coast Indigenous Art to come to market



Image: Christos Dikeakos, The Collector (2017), Courtesy of Chris Dikeakos

VANCOUVER, January 30, 2026 — [Heffel Fine Art Auction House](#) is honoured to present *The Gary Bell Collection: Masterworks of Northwest Coast Art*, a major online auction showcasing one of the most important private collections of historical Northwest Coast Indigenous art to ever come to market in Canada. Formed over decades with rigorous scholarship, connoisseurship, and deep respect for cultural traditions, the collection is widely regarded for its quality, rarity, and historical importance.

The auction carries a conservative pre-sale estimate of **\$650,000 – \$900,000 CAD**. Bidding will take place online from **February 5 to 26, 2026**, in a timed auction format. Bidding will begin to close at 2:00 pm ET on Thursday, February 26, 2026.

Collector Gary Bell is a notably private individual whose reputation within the Northwest Coast art community has long exceeded his public profile. His collection, now recognized as one of the most important privately held groupings of Northwest Coast art, was built through decades of disciplined pursuit, deep study and unwavering standards.

“Gary Bell collected with a refined and discerning eye, guided by scholarship and a quiet pursuit of excellence. Over decades, he patiently assembled works of rarity and beauty that reflect both artistic mastery and historical depth. This collection is the product of lifelong learning and thoughtful connoisseurship.” — Thibault Bennett, Co-Director of Online Auctions, Heffel Fine Art Auction House

When Vancouver photographer Christos Dikeakos sought to include Bell in his *The Collectors* portrait series, it reportedly took years to convince him to sit for a photograph. The resulting image shows Bell

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quietly reading in his apartment, surrounded by masterworks from his collection, a fitting portrait of a collector whose focus has always remained on the art rather than himself.

Bell's home became an informal meeting place for scholars, artists and specialists. He acquired works only after careful consultation with leading experts, reflecting a highly considered and scholarly approach. Bill McLennan of the Museum of Anthropology was a close friend and formally catalogued the collection.

Beyond collecting, Bell also contributed to cultural stewardship, assisting in the repatriation of significant works to major institutions. His legacy is defined by knowledge, care and respect for the histories embodied in the works he preserved.

Auction Highlights

- Leading the sale is a superb **19th-century Haida mountain sheep horn bowl**, the cover lot for the auction, formerly in the celebrated Diker Collection and exhibited at major international museums. With its masterful carving and distinguished provenance, this exceptional work is estimated at \$80,000 to \$100,000 (lot 108)
- A rare 19th-century bent-corner bowl formerly in the Royal BC Museum and published by Bill Holm, estimated at \$60,000 to \$80,000 (lot 111)
- A ceremonial Gitxsan Eagle Frontlet, estimated at \$50,000 to \$60,000 (lot 107)
- An important Nuxalk Frontlet, estimated at \$50,000 to \$60,000 (Lot 109)
- Two rare Tlingit shaman's drinking cups in marine ivory, each estimated at \$40,000 to \$60,000 (lots 121 and 121)
- A sculpturally dynamic Raven Rattle, estimated at \$30,000 to \$50,000 (lot 123)

Together, these works demonstrate the depth of Bell's vision - ceremonial regalia, feast bowls, rattles, and masterworks of carving that embody the artistic and spiritual traditions of the Northwest Coast.

About Heffel Fine Art Auction House

Since 1978, Heffel has connected passionate collectors across the world with outstanding works of art, with sales of more than \$1 billion. Heffel is renowned for its expertise in effectively managing and handling estates, serving as trusted experts for navigating the complexities of inherited art collections with precision and care. With facilities in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary, Heffel has the most experienced team of fine art specialists in Canada and provides premium client service to both sellers and buyers internationally.

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