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The Russell 2026 Sells Out, Showcases Record Success and Strength of Western Art

March 25, 2026, Great Falls, MT — The C.M. Russell Museum announces another sold-out year for [*The Russell*](#) exhibition and sale, marking a significant milestone for one of the country's leading Western art events and reaffirming its importance in Montana's cultural landscape.

Over three days, collectors, artists, and visitors from across the country gathered in Great Falls to celebrate the enduring legacy of Charles M. Russell while advancing the future of Western art.

The 2026 auction achieved **over \$5.7 million in total sales** (hammer prices plus buyer's premium), including:

- **Art in Action:** \$192,416 (artists donate 100% of proceeds to the museum)
- **First Strike:** \$383,674
- **Live Auction:** \$5,196,148

After expenses and consignor payouts, the Museum anticipates retaining \$1 million to support operations and mission-driven work.

Historic works by Charles M. Russell led the sale, including:

- [*The Rattlesnake*](#) (oil): \$1,506,000
- [*The Run*](#) (oil): \$877,500
- [*The Bolter*](#) (watercolor and gouache): \$819,000
- [*Finger That Kills Wins His Squaw*](#) (watercolor and gouache): \$210,600

Contemporary artists also drew strong attention, underscoring the persistent evolution of Western art:

- [*The Beginning of the End*](#) (oil) by Luke Frazier: \$72,800 (Best in Show, Saturday Live Auction)
- [*Montana Memories*](#) (oil) by Gary Lynn Roberts: \$61,600

Additional honors included W. Steve Seltzer's [*Pleasurable Pastime*](#) (People's Choice) and Colt R. Idol's [*Emerald and Ember*](#) (Best in Show, First Strike).

"Seeing this level of turnout and engagement says a lot about the strength of the work, the community behind it, and the enduring appeal of Western Art," said Duane Braaten, Executive Director of the C.M. Russell Museum.

Importantly, the C.M. Russell Museum does not sell works from its permanent collection. All auction items are consigned pieces.

Beyond the auction, the weekend's full slate of programming included a celebratory Preview Party, Quick Finish, and Educational Symposium—creating a shared experience that connected auction goers with the artists and stories that continue to shape the American West.

Proceeds from The Russell supports the museum's mission to preserve and share Western art, history, and culture for future generations—ensuring that the spirit of the West not only endures but continues to evolve.

The Russell will return to Great Falls, Montana on March 18–20, 2027.

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About the C.M. Russell Museum

Founded in 1930, the C.M. Russell Museum is the first museum of Western art in the United States and is dedicated to sharing the life, art, and legacy of Charles Marion Russell (1864–1926). Located in Great Falls, Montana, the museum complex includes an extensive collection of Western art and artifacts, as well as Russell's fully restored home and studio, a National Historic Landmark.