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## THE ART NEWSPAPER

### French Realist painting resurfaces at Cincinnati auction thanks to Facebook tip

Work by William-Adolphe Bouguereau sells for \$1.1m at Cowan's Auctions

by [GABRIELLA ANGELETI](#) | 19 October 2016



Rayon de Soleil (Sunbeam) painted by William-Adolphe Bouguereau in 1899 sold at Cowan's Auctions for \$1,102,500

A long-lost French Realist masterpiece by the Academic artist William-Adolphe Bouguereau was sold to a phone bidder for \$950,000 hammer (\$1.1m with premium) on 15 October at Cowan's Auctions in Cincinnati,

Ohio.

The painting, titled *Rayon de Soleil (Sunbeam)* (1899), had not been seen publicly since it was sold between 1909 and 1910 for around \$6,500 by Moulton and Ricketts to a buyer in Elkhart, Indiana, and was passed on to his descents. It was offered at Cowan's with a "conservative" estimate of \$300,000 to \$500,000.

Wes Cowan, the founder of Cowan's Auctions, was tipped on to the whereabouts of the painting through a friend who messaged him about it on Facebook. He subsequently discovered the work "hanging in the parlour of a modest clapboard home", according to a press release. "In a tremendous display of generosity, [the consigner of the painting is] planning on using proceeds from the sale to establish an endowment fund for students in her hometown," Cowan added.

The painting is a something of a coup for the auction house, marking only the third work that it has sold for more than \$1m since it was founded in 1995. The next-highest lot in Fall Fine and Decorative Art auction was a landscape by the Russian artist Ivan Fedorovitch Choultsé that sold for \$27,500 hammer (\$33,000 with premium).