



**WESTERN
SPIRIT**
SCOTTSDALE'S
MUSEUM
OF THE WEST

John Coleman: Past/Present/Future
Exhibition at Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West
Sept. 17, 2016 – May 31, 2017

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Images of American Indians infused with the history and mythology of the American West have made John Coleman one of the nation's most highly regarded contemporary artists.

Beginning Saturday, September 17, visitors to Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West will have the opportunity to see Coleman's distinctive artworks in a new exhibition spanning more than 40 years of the artist's career. Entitled "John Coleman: Past/Present/Future," the Prescott, Arizona-based artist's retrospective show will be on view through May 31, 2017. The exhibition was made possible by Scottsdale residents Frankie and Howard Alper.

More than 70 artworks in charcoal, graphite, oil, bronze and clay are featured, including a monumental clay for bronze sculpture measuring 17 feet in height, entitled "One Who Brings Life – The Rainmaker."

"It is a long-standing goal of the museum's founding Board of Trustees and administration to feature one-person exhibitions of both emerging and accomplished artists of different media," commented Museum Director/CEO Mike Fox. "We're proud to provide this unparalleled opportunity to examine and celebrate the career of this pioneering painter, sculptor and influential teacher."

"This exhibition contains scores of Coleman's masterworks with accompanying viewpoints and stories shared by the artist," commented Chief Curator Tricia Loscher, Ph.D. "By presenting Coleman's earliest artworks drawn from various collections across the country, along with a selection of more recent works, as well as clay models including the 17-foot high "Rainmaker," viewers will have a rare opportunity to discover continuity and change in the artistic inspiration and creativity of one of America's most renowned artists.

"We especially want to recognize and express our appreciation to John Coleman and his wife Sue for their enthusiasm and tremendous generosity, which made this exhibition possible," Loscher added.

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The museum is located in downtown Scottsdale at 3830 N. Marshall Way, near the Main Street art galleries and Old Town Scottsdale. It was named a Smithsonian Affiliate in 2015 and in 2016 was named “Best Western Museum” and “Best Western Art Museum” in the United States in an annual ranking by True West magazine.

Coleman is an award-winning member of the Cowboy Artists of America, a Fellow Member of the National Sculpture Society and a Signature Member of the California Art Club.

Coleman’s artworks are rich in symbols and metaphors, reflecting his fascination with visual storytelling. When describing how he achieves this objective, he makes an analogy to music. “As in music, the Native American subjects that I use are the lyrics,” he said. “The design is the music that carries the emotional mood...” Describing his work as American Mythology, Coleman continued, “I find using the history and culture of Native people the perfect metaphor to express the larger story.”

The exhibition’s sculpture “The Rainmaker” (created in 1999 and recreated as a monumental sculpture in 2016), represents a turning point in Coleman’s career, according to the artist. It was “a definite break from my more literal work,” he said.

Coleman said the sculpture’s symbolism reflects man’s desire to control his environment through a spiritual wish or physical action. It portrays an American Indian archer, shooting an arrow skyward in an attempt to pierce a cloud and bring rain. The arrow represents a prayer for rain; the smoke it travels through represents the breath of the Great Spirit, which is used as a vehicle to carry the arrow to its intended target.

Reflecting on the exhibition, Coleman noted that his work continues to evolve (hence the “Future” reference in the exhibition title). “My work is moving towards a simplistic, ethereal and eloquent feeling,” he said.

“Every artist in their heart wants things to evolve, and doing a retrospective show means there is an evolution there,” he said. “Each piece that you do, there is the joy that you actually finished a piece. And maybe the next piece is an evolution of the earlier piece. And that is the hope.”

In addition to the exhibition at Scottsdale’s Museum of the West, on November 4-5, 2016 Coleman will have a one-man show and sale entitled “Spirit • Lives • Legends” at The Legacy Gallery, 7178 E. Main St. in downtown Scottsdale.

For additional information about “John Coleman: Past/Present/Future,” contact Scottsdale’s Museum of the West at 480-686-9539 or visit scottsdalemuseumwest.org.

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Exhibition: John Coleman: Past/Present/Future

Dates: September 17, 2016 through May 31, 2017

Location: Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West, 3830 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Price: Included with museum admission: \$13, adults; \$11, seniors (65+) and active military; \$8, students (with ID) and children (6-17); and free to museum members and children 5 and under.

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Info: (480) 686-9539

Website: www.scottsdalemuseumwest.org

Museum Hours:

Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat.: 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Closed Monday

About the Museum

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West celebrates the art, culture and unique stories of the 19 states comprising the American West. Its regularly changing exhibits of Western art and artifacts, entertaining events, and informative programs bring the country's Western heritage to life.

The Smithsonian Affiliate and 2016 "Best Western Museum" and "Best Western Art Museum" in the nation (True West magazine) opened January 15, 2015. It is owned by the City of Scottsdale and managed by Scottsdale Museum of the West, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Community leader and businessman Jim Bruner is its board chairman. Michael Fox is its director/CEO. The nonprofit relies upon private support to fund the museum's operation.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Rebecca Heller, Communications and Marketing Manager

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West

Office (direct): 480-686-9539, ext. 219; Cell: 480-677-5005

rheller@scottsdalemuseumwest.org

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