



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

Two Exhibitions, Feb. 24 Event at Scottsdale's Museum of the West Showcase Scottsdale's Origins as Arts Epicenter

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West on February 24, 2017 spotlights two recently opened exhibitions that offer an intimate look at the city of Scottsdale's evolution from a small, agricultural community into an arts epicenter of the American Southwest.

"Marjorie Thomas: Arizona Art Pioneer" and "The Scottsdale Craftsmen: A 70-Year Legacy" pay tribute to groundbreaking local artists and artisans of the first half of the 20th century who played a fundamental role in establishing downtown Scottsdale as a major creative and artistic regional hub. Both exhibits will be on view through late December 2017.

In conjunction with the exhibitions, the museum will celebrate Scottsdale's arts heritage from 5 to 7 p.m., Friday, February 24 – a date which honors the anniversary of the opening of the Arizona Craftsmen Center (February 24, 1946). Informative presentations about the exhibitions will be given by Joan Fudala and Betsy Fahlman, Ph.D., members of the museum's board of directors. Museum guests also will be able to view these exhibitions, as well as the museum's other galleries, and enjoy light refreshments.

Entry to the event and the museum exhibitions is included in admission, and is free to museum members. The museum is located in downtown Scottsdale at 3830 N. Marshall Way (one block west of Scottsdale Road at First Street, near the Main Street galleries).

About "Marjorie Thomas: Arizona Art Pioneer"

"Marjorie Thomas: Arizona Art Pioneer," presents the artwork of trailblazer, artist and early Scottsdale resident Marjorie Thomas (1885-1978), whose life and career link the chronicle of Arizona's art and history. The exhibition includes more than 40 paintings and drawings by the artist on loan from public and private collections.

As Scottsdale's first professional resident artist, Marjorie Thomas occupies a special place in Arizona's history. Arriving from Massachusetts before statehood, she witnessed at first hand many changes in Scottsdale and the state that became her home.

(more)

“Marjorie Thomas: Arizona Art Pioneer” showcases the artist’s bucolic scenes that depict Scottsdale in its early days, when throngs of sheep headed for pasture crowded downtown streets and mules were used to construct the Arizona Canal. Her drawings and paintings portray desert landscapes, Native peoples and ranch scenes, often including imagery of the donkeys, horses and sheep that played an integral role in the region’s early history.

Thomas’ art and career highlight a significant time when the state’s early art community was almost entirely female. The women who moved to Arizona in the first two decades of the 20th century were independent spirits who relished an exhilarating personal freedom from the rigid social constraints of the eastern United States. Inspired by Arizona’s spectacular landscape and by encounters with Native Americans, these women reinvented themselves in a state with few artistic amenities.

The exhibition is guest curated by Betsy Fahlman, Ph.D., a member of the museum’s board of directors and an Arizona State University art history professor.

About “The Scottsdale Craftsmen: A 70-Year Legacy”

“The Scottsdale Craftsmen: A 70-Year Legacy” celebrates the historic Arizona Craftsmen Center (1946-1950), and its significant role in the emergence of postwar Scottsdale’s cultural identity. The exhibition highlights the diverse talents of the center’s artists and craftspeople whose paintings, sculptures and handcrafted objects were catalytic in Scottsdale’s transformation into a widely recognized artistic destination.

From 1946 to 1950, the Arizona Craftsmen Center functioned as a central location for highly skilled and schooled artisans of Scottsdale. The artisans elevated Scottsdale’s cultural standing with their work, and gained substantial recognition and public support from notable figures such as former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Artworks presented in “The Scottsdale Craftsmen: A 70-Year Legacy” represent the Arizona Craftsmen Center’s uniquely experiential atmosphere where customers could watch handcrafted items being made-to-order by the craftspeople working within the facility’s studios. This communal, creative environment fostered artists’ collaborations that advanced the development and recognition of the center on local, national and international fronts.

Represented in the exhibition are more than two dozen paintings, sculptures and objects created by six of the original Arizona Craftsmen artisans who reflect the diverse trades and superior quality works that flourished at the center. Featured artists include blacksmith George “Doc” Cavalliere, painter Lew Davis, fashion designer Lloyd Kiva New, woodcarver Raymond Phillips Sanderson, ceramicist Mathilde Schaefer Davis and silversmith Wesley Segner.

The exhibition is curated by Rachel Pool, museum associate curator, with the research assistance of Joan Fudala, Scottsdale historian and member of the museum’s board of directors.

###

About the Museum

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West features regularly changing exhibits of Western art and artifacts, entertaining events, and informative programs that bring our Western heritage to life. The museum became a Smithsonian Affiliate in 2015, and has been named "Best Western Museum" in the nation for two consecutive years (True West magazine's 2017 and 2016 "Best of the West" annual listings). 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. For more information about the museum, visit scottsdalemuseumwest.org.

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 (full-time with ID) and children (6-17 years); and free to museum members and children 5 and under.

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

###

MUSEUM MEDIA CONTACTS:

Rebecca Heller, Communications and Marketing Manager
Office (direct): 480-686-9539, ext. 219; Cell: 480-677-5005
rheller@scottsdalemuseumwest.org

Emily Mangieri, PR/Marketing Coordinator
Office: 480-686-9539, ext. 216
emangieri@scottsdalemuseumwest.org

Feb. 14, 2017