



Newsstand Rate \$1.75

Published by The Bee Publishing Company, Newtown, Connecticut

INDEXES ON
 PAGES 36 & 37



Accoutrement of the working cowboy, Stetson hats and chaps from the A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo



Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West as seen from its northern perspective. Concrete walkways are imprinted with tooled leather designs inspired by Western saddles.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum Of The West

By JAMES D. BALESTRIERI
 SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. — Scottsdale has long been a nexus of Western history, lore and art. In the beginning, there was Troy Murray, who hung his first Olaf Wieghorst canvas and turned his saddle shop into a gallery. Steve Rose opened the Biltmore and stocked it with scenes of the Grand Canyon, Taos and Canyon De Chelly. And Abe Hays, who plied his trade among the impedimenta of the Old West — bits and bridles, saddles and spurs, and more than a few Maynard Dixon paintings. There was also the woman who billed herself

as Pancho Villa's widow. She sold — once or twice a year, and strictly on the q.t. — the great Mexican revolutionary's "authentic" skull to a gullible tourist. Legend says Villa popped up here, there and everywhere at the same time, but who knew he was cloned?

Centuries ago, in what would become Scottsdale, the Hohokam people tamed the Salt River, constructing a complex irrigation system that allowed them to farm the desert. Their descendants, the Pima and Maricopa, expert weavers and potters, reside here. To the south loom the

Superstition Mountains, home of the Apache Thunder God. In the 1870s, Apache widows wept there after a fierce battle with the US Cavalry. Their tears fell as black obsidian stones: the Apache Tears you find, along with the story, in the great old rock shops. General Miles chased Geronimo through the Superstitions. General Pershing chased Villa there, as well. And it was there that the lost Peralta gold mine was found by the "Dutchman" Jacob Waltz in the 1890s. But the

(continued on page 30)

Heritage finds a new home in the Southwest's newest venue for the arts.



This Colt .45 pistol with factory-carved ivory longhorn steer grip was owned by lawman Frank Hamer. Hamer's posse killed outlaws Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker in 1934. —Gabe Mikesell photo



"Pony Express Rider" by Herman W. Hansen. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

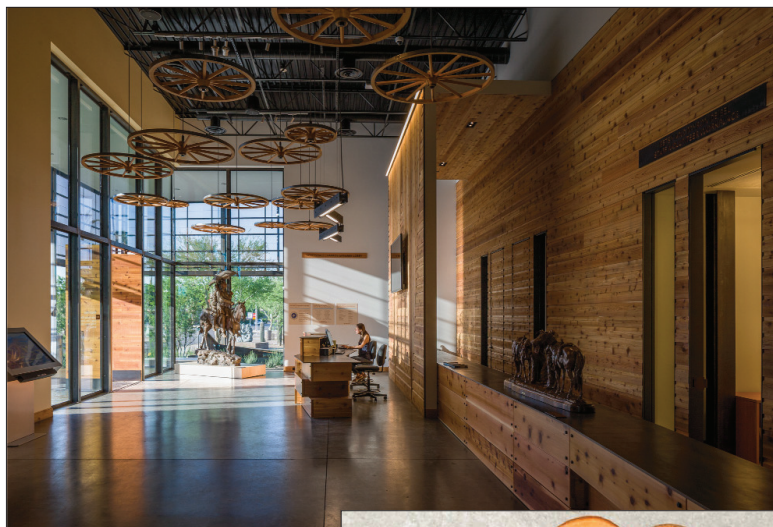


"The Lost Greenhorn" by Alfred Jacob Miller, circa 1865. Chromolithograph. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West opened in January in the renovated Loloma Transit Station. It is centrally located between the heart of the Main Street gallery scene and the Scottsdale Artists' School.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum Of The West

(continued from page 1C)



The museum's entrance and visitor services area.

Beaded spurs marked by North & Judd, New Britain, Conn., patent dates 1911 and 1912. Buffalo nickel mountings with Native American beaded straps. A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo



Works by Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington hang near displays of Navajo weaving. Center is a Classic First Phase Chief's Blanket of circa 1840, Right, a Classic Second Phase Chief's Blanket, circa 1860. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

Dutchman died the night before he said he would reveal the location. Treasure hunters still seek his mine. Every year, some quester vanishes in the labyrinthine rocks, adding to the mystery.

These stories resonate and circulate in the atmosphere of Scottsdale's Old Town, in the galleries during the Art Walk on Thursday evenings, in the music that drifts out of the Rusty Spur, in the Harley roar and Mustang rumble on Scottsdale Road. Two auctions, the Scottsdale Art Auction and Altermann's, add to the action, offering fresh opportunities for collectors to acquire Western art and become part of the story themselves. Painters and sculptors; artists who work in clay, silver, fiber or leather; writers, dancers, composers and filmmakers all call Scottsdale home, or home away from home. Like the West itself, Scottsdale is continually adding new layers to its slogan: "The West's Most Western Town."

There are several Scottsdales. The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art represents the urban, cosmopolitan New West. The Scottsdale Artists' School brings exceptional artists and talented students together to pass on the area's artistic heritage. At the edge of town, Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West affirms the Phoenix suburb's place in the Modernist movement. Missing until now was a crucial piece of the cultural puzzle — a museum devoted to the American West, one that would show and tell the story of westward expansion, of powerful cultures on a collision course, a story of conflict and cooperation, a story that spins and renews itself for each generation.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West opened this past January. It is precisely what the city needed. Housed in the renovated Loloma Transit Station, the museum sits between the heart of the Main Street gallery scene and the Scottsdale Artists' School.

Director and CEO Michael Fox touts the location: "We are proud to be the new, western anchor to the historic downtown arts district. We support the city's identity by providing a major, Western heritage destination attraction that offers outstanding art and artifacts of the West. Because we're in a pedestrian-friendly area surrounded by numerous art galleries and restaurants, we're seeing a synergy with the neighborhood businesses, which makes the area a more attractive destination for residents and visitors."

But the museum is not a new idea. "Over 30 years ago," Fox says, "former Scottsdale mayor, the late Herb Drinkwater, established a small group of community members to keep the dream alive. Many of the original visionaries, under the leadership of our board chair, Jim Bruner, helped bring the dream to reality. In 2013, a partnership was formed with the City of Scottsdale and a 501(c)(3) organization named Scottsdale Museum of the West. With city bed tax funds and private sector support, the nonprofit organization built the museum, now managed by the nonprofit organization, Scottsdale Museum of the West."

Conceived by the Phoenix-based architectural firm Studio Ma, the 43,000-square-foot museum boasts a state-of-the-art LEED Gold Standard for green construction and sustainability. Many of the materials are recycled and even the condensation from the air conditioners is collected and sent to the gorgeous sculpture gardens in the center and on the perimeter of the building. With steel that has a weathered feel, railings like hitching posts and wood beams and decorative wheels that recall flatboats, boom towns, wagon trains, blacksmith shops and log and clapboard cabins, the design blurs the distinction between inside and outside, reminding visitors that the primary protagonist in the story of American West was — and remains — the environment in all its exquisitely beautiful and, at times, brutally challenging aspects.



"Fighting Meat," also known as "Horse and the Hunter," by Charles M. Russell, 1919. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

In the Saddle Corral, examples by some of the West's top makers, including Visalia Stock Saddle Company of San Francisco; N. Porter Saddle and Harness Company of Phoenix; Frazier Saddlery of Pueblo, Colo.; and F.M. Stern of San Jose, Calif. A.P. Hays Collection. —Gabe Mikesell photo

Western Spirit's space is magnificent, but the mission and ambition the space contains are even more so. Chief curator Tricia Loscher outlines some of the many exhibitions currently on view for those who have a week, or only an hour, to spend in the museum.

She says, "Seeing original artworks by Charles Russell and Frederic Remington from the Tim Peterson Family Collection may be one person's 'must do.' Another visitor may be excited and inspired by experiencing the American West through the eyes of the artists, as in the exhibition 'Process and Materiality' from the collection of Howard and Frankie Alper, where renowned sculptor John Coleman explains the stories conveyed by his bronzes through the descriptive labels that accompany his artworks. Most visitors can't resist getting their picture taken in artist Douglas Rouse's interactive 3D painting, where you literally stand on a painting that is an image of the Old West and have your photograph taken to send to friends and family around the world."

In addition, A.P. Hays's comprehensive "Spirit of the West" collection of badges, boots, quirts, reatas and other Western gear will thrill the would-be range rider and bronc buster.

Noted collector Tim Peterson, who specializes in art from and about the fur trade and mountain man era, has loaned a number of works to the museum, including, among others, exquisite paintings by Alfred Jacob Miller and A.F. Tait, early painters who chronicled the lives of trappers, traders and explorers and the Native Americans they encountered. In fact, three of the museum's current exhibits draw on his collection.

"I liked Michael Fox immediately," Peterson says, "and I saw that Western Spirit would be open-minded and creative, that they were coming at this without preconceived notions. That this was a start-up intrigued me. That it was in Scottsdale, one of the centers of Western art, intrigued me. I saw that they were creating a nice venue and felt that they would be good stewards of collections. And they were willing to showcase each of the three areas of interest in my collection: the historical pieces, the Lewis and Clark series and the works of contemporaries like Howard Terpning. Viewers would see the evolution of Western art."

Drawn from the Peterson collection, "Inspirational Journey: The Story of Lewis & Clark" is one of the most ambitious of the new installations. The display showcases contemporary painter Charles Fritz's ten-year, 100 paintings project, commissioned by Peterson to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804–06. Fritz did a great deal of painting on location, creating paintings that are faithful to their sources in the explorers' journals and historically accurate.

Peterson feels strongly that the Lewis and Clark story is one that needs to be remembered. "Growing up in Minnesota, canoeing and camping, hiking and rafting, my imagination drew me to stories of the early explorers of the West. But Lewis and Clark fascinate me. They walked for two years and encountered many different native cultures. Yet none of these meetings erupted into violence. I wonder, could that happen today? Anywhere? So there are lessons here: about diversity, about how we meet and deal with those who aren't like us. And there are lessons about hardship, commitment and friendship that I think we can learn from today."

In 2017, Western Spirit plans to mount a major exhibition of the works of the Taos Society of Artists. Founded in 1915 by six resident artists, including Joseph Henry Sharp, W. Herbert "Buck" Dunton and E.L. Blumenschein, the society's influence on American art and design reverberates today. Tricia Loscher feels that a Taos show is "timely, and appeals not only to visitors who may have never heard about this group of important artists of the West, but also to our newer, upcoming collectors, as well as those long-established collectors in the field of Taos art."

This fall, Western Spirit will opening two new

shows. The first, "Cowboy Artists of America: 50th Anniversary" (November 7–May 31), will be a retrospective featuring one artwork by every artist who has ever been a member of the august society. The second exhibition will celebrate the museum's hometown. As Loscher explains, the presentation "relates to themes of both the Old and the New West, and highlights Scottsdale's remarkable heritage" by focusing "on the artists, businesses and people from all walks of life who have been part of this city they call home, or those who have contributed in some way even though they may have been itinerant travelers passing through."

The story about Pancho Villa's widow selling skulls may well be one of Scottsdale's many urban legends, a tale that has achieved its own mythic truth through retelling. If so, let us hope that some rightfully sheepish collector, or his equally sheepish children, will dust off an "authentic" skull and lend it to Western Spirit. To see it alone would be worth the price of admission.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West is at 3830 North Marshall Way. For additional information, www.scottsdalemuseumofthewest.org or 480-686-9539.

A playwright and author who writes frequently about the arts, James D. Balestrieri is the director of J. N. Bartfield Galleries in New York City.



"Grand Canyon" by William R. Leigh, 1909. Oil on canvas. Private collection, courtesy Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe.



"Trappers Following the Trail: At Fault" by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, 1851. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.

"A Brush with the Redskins" by Frederic Remington, circa 1891. Oil on canvas. Tim Peterson Family Collection.



Old West Town in The A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection. Photo Rees W. Candee.