

**Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West Launches Latest of Nine Exclusive New Exhibitions to Keep Western Storytelling**

**Fresh for Guests**

***By Beauty Obsessed: Gilbert Waldman Collects the West*** *Helps Guests See the West from a New Perspective* *with More than 50 Stunning Artworks Collected by Local Resident, Gilbert Waldman, that Showcase the Beauty of New Mexico, Arizona,*

*Northern Plains and the Mountain West*

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Sept. 10, 2019 –** Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West (SMoW) announced today the public opening of ***By Beauty Obsessed: Gilbert Waldman Collects the West*** – its latest in a series of new exclusive exhibitions aimed at helping visitors “See the West from a whole new perspective,” which is SMoW’s continued goal for its guests.

This exhibition offers an unparalleled opportunity for SMoW to showcase an important private Western art collection that is on loan from Phoenix-Scottsdale resident and founding member of the SMoW Board of Trustees, Gilbert Waldman. The exhibition runs today through Aug. 23, 2020, and includes more than 50 artworks by nearly 40artists featuring stunning content –landscapes, wildlife, diverse cultural perspectives and more – organized across four geographical regions of the American West: New Mexico, Arizona, Northern Great Plains and the Mountain West.

The new SMoW exhibition, located in the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust Fine Arts Gallery, is co-curated by Dr. Tricia Loscher, Assistant Director – Collections, Exhibitions and Research at SMoW, and Waldman’s wife, Christy Vezolles, who is also an avid art collector, appraiser and writer, as well as a Trustee at the Heard Museum.

“This exhibition is a true showcase of Gil Waldman’s point of view and his obsession with the beauty of the American West. The artworks date back as early as the 1860s to about 1950 and range from landscapes and portraits to human-animal interactions and ceremonies depicting important moments in time,” said Loscher. “Gil is passionate about the West – its people, history and environment – and this exhibition is intended to reveal the poignant spirit of these places through the distinctive vision of the collector as he selectively acquired these works throughout several decades.”

Having grown up in Albany, New York, Waldman has an affinity for Hudson River School artists Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, who both traveled to the American West in the 1800s and early 1900s and created some of the earliest depictions of the region, including areas familiar to us today as national parks. Waldman’s early visits to Santa Fe and Taos attracted him to the art of the Taos Society of Artists (TSA), which formed the core of his collection. With the inquisitive mind of a true enthusiast, Waldman was drawn to a broader array of artists creating works from the diverse geographical regions. This exhibition examines how a collection can successfully develop from its original emphasis on the historical Southwest into a more expansive view of the art of the American West.

The exhibition includes artworks by Bierstadt and Moran, well-known Western artists such as Olaf Seltzer and Charles M. Russell, Taos Society Artists Eanger Irving Couse, Joseph Henry Sharp and Walter Ufer,as well as lesser-known artists like Valentine Walter Bromley and Thomas Hill. The exhibition also includes important paintings by notable women artists of the West including Barbara Latham, Olive Rush, Gene Kloss, Dorothy Brett and Ila Mae McAfee. Many of these painters were from the eastern United States and Europe and traveled to the West – lured by the unique landscape, light, people and events of the region.

***By Beauty Obsessed: Gilbert Waldman Collects the West*** presents artworks across four regional areas:

* Arizona: ***The Grand Canyon*** by Gunnar Widforss, is perhaps one of the artist’s largest oil on canvas renditions of this iconic geological feature -- one of the seven wonders of the world -- and affords guests the opportunity to reflect upon the conservation legacy of those who came before and protected these special lands. With 2019 as the Grand Canyon’s 100th anniversary as a national park, this majestic artwork, c.1930, captures the extraordinary beauty of the canyon and helps SMoW celebrate Arizona’s own 17th official national park in America, which was established in 1919.
* New Mexico: a key call-out piece in the New Mexico section of the exhibition is Emil Bisttram’s ***Indian Woman***, 1932, oil on canvas, as painted by the Hungarian-born artist who became an innovator of modern art. Having achieved recognition and honors throughout America for his work, this painting speaks to the dynamic symmetry that he taught and his beliefs in color theory and an internal rhythm that guided his creative vision.
* Northern Great Plains: artworks covering this area of the West include exquisitely detailed paintings by iconic Western artists, as well as Joseph Henry Sharp’s ***Winter 1904, Crow Reservation, Montana****.*
* The Mountain West: a focal piece is Albert Bierstadt’s ***Yosemite Valley***, c. 1863, which is among the first depictions of the area, which was officially established as Yosemite National Park more than two decades later, in 1890.

“Like many serious collectors, the beauty of art has become somewhat of an obsession for Gil,” reports his wife, Christy, who co-curated the exhibit. “But it’s not simply about the personal acquisition of art, it’s about appreciation and enjoyment. We travel throughout the U.S., Mexico, Canada and Europe, visiting dozens of art museums and galleries each year – we joke that we are ‘museum nerds.’ For decades, Gil has been a tremendous supporter of museums from coast-to-coast, and has loaned works to many local and national exhibitions. It’s important to him to share with others the beauty and spirit that he finds so captivating. This exhibit is a wonderful opportunity for SMoW visitors to share his excitement for the American West.”

SMoW CEO/Director, Mike Fox, said "Gil's leadership, scholarship and philanthropic support shared with our institution since its opening in 2015 have greatly contributed to its many achievements leading to recognition as a bona fide new museum of the 21st Century.”

In addition to the 2018 exhibition of Southwest landscapes at the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Okla., Waldman has had two exhibits at the Phoenix Art Museum – his collection of Gustav Baumann prints and paintings in 2012, and his collection of Gene Kloss prints and paintings in 2014. Along with the collection of historical paintings, Waldman and Vezolles collect modernist paintings and American Indian Art forms, such as Navajo weavings, Hopi katsina dolls, Pueblo pottery and jewelry from many artists at various Indian markets including those held at the Heard Museum and the Southwest Association for Indian Art/Santa Fe Indian Market (SWAIA).

***By Beauty Obsessed: Gil Waldman Collects the West*** features paintings acquired by Gil Waldman and his late wife, Nancy Waldman, as well as more recently with Vezolles. This exhibition has been generously sponsored by Annadru and Richard Lampert, Zaplin Lampert Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**About Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West (SMoW)**
Since its opening in Jan. 2015, SMoW has become a **Smithsonian Affiliate**organization. The museum is also a recipient of the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, enjoys a 4.5 out of 5 star rating on TripAdvisor and Yelp and is recognized as the “**Nation’s Best Western Museum”** (2019 Editors’ Choice, True West magazine). SMoW features regularly changing and permanent exhibits of Western and Native American art and artifacts, entertaining events and informative programs that bring the West’s heritage, culture and community to life. Permanent exhibitions continuously on display include **Canvas of Clay: Hopi Pottery Masterworks from The Allan and Judith Cooke Collection**, which features 65 of the finest examples of Hopi pottery spanning six centuries, and **The Abe Hays Family Spirit of the West Collection**, a showcase of more than 1,400 saddles, spurs, cowboy gear and other Old West objects.

Featured Collections include: Alper Bronze John Coleman Collection; Cooke Hopi Pottery Collection; Hays Legendary Cowboy Collection; Peterson Early and Contemporary Western Art Collection; and Strickland Golden West Poster Collection.

Buildings and Campus
SMoW is owned by the City of Scottsdale and the museum is managed by Scottsdale Museum of the West, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It features an award-winning 43,000-square-foot, two-story building designed by Phoenix-based architectural firm Studio Ma. The museum campus was designed by landscape architect Colwell Shelor of Phoenix and features low water-use desert plantings. Both indoor and outdoor spaces are certified as LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold, conserving precious natural resources, while raising public awareness of their vital importance to the Western region.

SMoW also features the beautiful outdoor Christine and Ted Mollring Sculpture Courtyard with a rotating selection of sculptures. The 135-seat Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Theater/Auditorium hosts performances, special programs and events. The Sue and Robert Karatz Museum Store offers a rare and wide selection of Western-themed art and gifts. “Spirit Is” is an exclusive 10-minute must-see film shown on the hour at the museum that captures the spirit of the West.

Museum Hours
Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat.: 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. (November-April) & 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (May-October)
Sunday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Closed Monday

Admission Prices
Adults: $15
Seniors (65+) and Active Military: $13
Students (Full-time with ID) and Children (6-17 years): $8
Members and Children 5 and under: FREE

Groups of 15 or more receive a discounted rate: Adults $12; Children/Students $5 (must make single payment)

Thursdays, November-April, Scottsdale residents with proof of residence (e.g., driver’s license, utility bill) receive FREE museum admission.

Location
3830 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

SMoW is located in Old Town Scottsdale, one block west of Scottsdale Road at First Street. The museum is readily accessible from throughout the metro Phoenix area and is within easy walking distance of numerous art galleries, retail stores and restaurants. Day-long, come-and-go admission allows guests to tour SMoW, have a bite to eat in a local Old Town restaurant and return for more viewing.

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