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**Exhibition Showcasing Iconic Cowboy Artist and Celebrated Author, Will James, Returns to Scottsdale’s Museum of the West (SMoW)**

*On Loan from Paradise Valley Resident and Founding SMoW Trustee, Abe Hays;*

*Exhibition is Back by Popular Demand*

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – May 7, 2019 –** Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West (SMoW) announced today the public opening and second run of *Will James: Cowboy Artist and Author* – an exhibition back by popular demand and on loan to SMoW by Paradise Valley, Ariz., resident, Abe Hays, for an exclusive three-month showing.

The exhibition opens to the public today through Aug. 18 and features James’ paintings, drawings, etchings, books and ephemera. The Abe Hays Family Will James Collection is the largest and most comprehensive collection of James’work in private hands. It features 80-plus original works of art, all 26 of his books and those illustrated by James for other authors; letters; photographs; posters; prints; and artifacts including his Winchester M1894 carbine rifle, pen knife, World War I dog tags and his saddle.

James (1892-1942) was a prolific Western artist, illustrator and writer who was best known as one of the greatest “action artists” of all time and as author of the award-winning book, “Smoky the Cowhorse,” which won the prestigious Newberry Medal for children’s literature and was made into three film adaptions. James had 26 books published, and eight of them will also available for sale in SMoW’s Sue and Robert Karatz Museum Store.

Will James was born near Montreal, Canada, and named ‎Joseph Ernest Nephtali Dufault. He sketched at a young age and always dreamed of becoming a cowboy. At 15 he left home, found his way to the U.S. West, where he changed his name to Will James and began working as a cowboy for large and small “cow outfits.” James also spent some time in Hollywood performing as a daring stuntman on horseback and as a bit player in various Western films. He was always known as the “cowboy who drew pictures.”

“As a working cowboy, Will James was able to work up close and personal with horses and cattle. In his artwork, most notedly his illustrations, James perfected the expression and muscle-packed energy of his subjects -- especially horses,” said Dr. Tricia Loscher, Assistant Museum Director -- Collections, Exhibitions and Research for SMoW. “We are thrilled to bring back this popular exhibition for a limited three-month run during our Summer season so that locals, staycationers and visitors alike can come in an experience the life-force of this extraordinary iconic Western artist.”

The exhibition will be featured in the *Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust Fine Arts Gallery* and returns to SMoW after being part of its grand opening collection when the museum first opened its doors in Jan. 2015.

“Will James is the greatest gestural artist America has produced to date,” said Abe Hays. “His action drawings in Lalla and my collection show the skill he possessed many times over. We are thrilled to share this collection -- once again -- with the guests of Scottsdale’s Museum of the West.”

Dedicated to telling stories of the Greater Western Region with both permanent and rotating exhibitions, the Will James exhibition is one of eight new exhibitions featured in the 2018-19 season at the four-year-old Smithsonian Affiliate destination. Soon-to-arrive exhibits in the fall include artworks by Maynard Dixon, as well as the Gil Waldman collection. SMoW helps its guest “See the West from a whole new perspective” and connects visitors of all ages to the Western lifestyle – past, present and future.

**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 artifacts.

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 main 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

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.

General Contact:   
480-686-9539  
www.scottsdalemuseumwest.org

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