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ARTS

Scottsdale's Museum of the West opens new \$12 million center



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(J. GRABER/INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA)

"Victory! Plenty Coups" by John Coleman is one of the many pieces on display in the Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West's new Louis Sands IV Center.

Posted Thursday, March 26, 2026 11:41 am





By **J. Graber** ([/browse.html?byline=J.%20Graber](#))
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One of Scottsdale’s crown jewels got a little more brilliant March 24.

Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West opened its new, 12,000-square-foot Louis Sands IV Center.

The addition houses four exhibits: “From Earth to the Stars” traces the evolution of American Indian jewelry; “Visions in Bronze” explores how sculptors have used the medium to shape modern myths of the frontier; “Fire of Ages” explores over six centuries of American Indian ceramic traditions; and the “Working Partners: Masterworks from the Eddie Basha Collection” is the inaugural public presentation of one of the most significant collections of Western art.

The collections bring together everything from the sculptures of John Coleman to the jewelry of Jesse Monongya and Lee A. Yazzie.

“Working Partners: Masterworks from the Eddie Basha Collection’ explores one of the central realities of life in the American West: no one did it alone,” said the museum’s chief curator Dr. Andrew Patrick Nelson.

“From Earth to the Stars” is “a story of artistry grounded in place, shaped by the materials of the Earth and brought forth by generations of makers who transformed silver, stone and shell into enduring expressions of beauty and identity,” Nelson said.

“Fire of Ages’ traces nearly a thousand years of ceramic tradition in the American Southwest ... It is a story not of static tradition but of continuity, revival and reinvention across time,” Nelson commented.



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And finally, “Visions in Bronze’ explores how American sculptures use a time-honored medium to cast a modern mythology,” Nelson said. “Like the bronzes of ancient heroes before them, these works give lasting form not only to figures of the frontier but to the legends and ideals that shaped the West.”

The \$12 million addition brings the 11-year-old museum up to 55,000- square-feet.

The ribbon cutting had a standing room only crowd that featured five Scottsdale mayors, Paradise Valley Mayor Mark Stanton, Charles and Buzz Sands, Nadine Basha and museum executive committee member Jim Bruner, who played a crucial role in the creation of the museum.

“It’s kind of one of the cultural capstones of our arts district, arts ethos and culture,” Scottsdale City Councilman Barry Graham said of the museum. “We wear it as a badge of honor, metaphorically speaking.”

The City of Scottsdale built the original 43,000-square-foot building and covers about 40% of the museum’s operating budget.

“From (artist) Ed Mell to ancient pottery, it’s fantastic,” Scottsdale Vice Mayor Adam Kwasman said. “People will come to see it. Anybody who loves the Heard (museum) would love it here.”

For more information, visit [westernspirit.org](http://www.westernspirit.org) (<http://www.westernspirit.org>).

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J. Graber



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Meet J.

Graber joined Independent Newsmedia, Inc., USA, in February 2023, starting his career as a staff writer covering the City of Scottsdale and was named news editor of the Scottsdale Independent in 2024.

Community: He serves on the altar guild as well as being an usher at St. Mathews Episcopal Church in Chandler.

Education: He earned his BA in creative writing with a minor in journalism from the University of Arizona. He then earned an MS in Mass Communications from the University of Oregon.

Random Fact: He enjoys reading novels by Russian authors.

Hobbies: Playing classical guitar, reading, fishing, going to the gym, watching sports and spending time with his family.

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Keywords

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West, Scottsdale, Louis Sands IV, Eddie Basha collection

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