

DESERT CABALLEROS
WESTERN MUSEUM
MEDIA RELEASE

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CINDERELLA STORY INSPIRES MUSEUM EXHIBITION
Cowgirl Up! Art from the Other Half of the West
2006 Invitational Exhibition & Sale
Desert Caballeros Western Museum, April 8-30, 2006

Wickenburg, AZ – Though the first migration of women artists to the West started back in the late 1800s and early 1900s, these ladies haven't earned too much ink over the years. Even when they somehow found the time for artistic pursuits – when they weren't occupied with chopping wood, planting and harvesting crops, tending to domestic animals, fighting off hostiles or birthing babies and raising children -- art schools weren't exactly springing up throughout the foothills, prairies and deserts of the West

“Art training for women was limited, so fewer women became artists in the first place,” says Betsy Fahlman in an article entitled *Cowgirl Up!* appearing in the April issue of *Cowboys & Indians*. Trained or self-taught, women artists had to struggle against prejudice. Art history professor at Arizona State University, Fahlman goes on to point out that “given all that worked against them, it's not surprising that women are under-represented in the art history of the American West.”

Rewriting history with a Cinderella story Wickenburg's Desert Caballeros Western Museum intends to change that oversight. Slated for three weeks in April, *Cowgirl Up!* is the most comprehensive exhibit of women artists working in the western genre to date. According to the show's 68-page, 4-color catalogue, a celebratory leather boot will awarded to the most outstanding painter or sculptor instead of the magical glass slipper associated with the fairy tale.

“It's high time these women had their day in the sun and a new chapter in western art was written,” says Royce Kardinal, the Museum's executive director. Show Chairman Dick DeVore couldn't agree more. “We hope that the year 2006 will become a milestone akin to 1966, the year the Cowboy Artists of America (CAA) held its initial show.”

A Who's Who of Western women artists Almost 60 artists comprise the roster and come from Colorado, Montana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Washington and Wyoming, as well as Arizona. World-famous icon Glenna Goodacre, who designed the engraving of Sacagawea used on the dollar coin as well as the Vietnam War Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C., has contributed a charming sculpture entitled *Flower Girl*. The roster also includes women who chose the paintbrush or the chisel because of their mothers or grandmothers. Sculptor Cynthia Ridgen is a third-generation artist from an Arizona family of ranchers who stuck to their artistic guns. A piece she'll have in the show, *Time Out*, depicts one of the many calves she raises on her ranch annually.

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Themes embraced by the artists Common themes among the artists, whether they have migrated from the East, or grown up here as true daughters of the West, have to do with either the wildness of the Old West, or its disappearing wilderness. Many including Elaine Manning Crook with her *Apache Daughter*, and Shawn Cameron with her *Far and Away*, explore classical western themes.

Harkening back to the early days, when women tended the cows, horses, pigs and other domestic critters, there is also a tremendous interest in both domestic and wild animals which is reflected in many of the works. Linda St. Clair's *How About a Hand for the Dog* as well as Linda Loeschen's *Watcha Got There?* are perfect examples.

Whatever the subject matter, whatever the medium, the *Cowboys & Indians* article proclaims that the paintings and sculpture produced by these women of the West "all exhibit high quality".

Remembering Rogue Simpson Arizona artist Rogue Simpson was killed late last year in an automobile accident. Graduating with a degree in Fine Art from the University of Arizona, Simpson piled up many honors during her brief life. She was one of the first women to create a poster for the Phoenix Jaycees Rodeo and helped organize the prestigious American Women Artists. "Rogue painted what she loved – cowboys and their horses and dogs and wildlife from the biggest buffalo to the grandeur of a seven-point elk," wrote Shari Morrison, publisher of *Art-Talk*, in the new *Cowgirl Up!* catalogue. As a special tribute to this well-liked artist, Simpson's painting entitled *Autumn Gold* is also included in the *Cowgirl Up!* exhibition.

A rip-snorting roundup of special events Galas, parties, insightful lectures and even a luncheon with the daughter of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans help make this show an exciting, unforgettable milestone in the history of Western art.

Saturday, April 8, 1:00pm – *Painting a Different Picture: Women Artists of the West*– a look at the contribution of women artists in the West since 1900 by Arizona State University professor and Western art authority Dr. Betsy Fahlman. Free to members; suggested \$10 donation non-members.

Saturday, April 8, 5:30pm – Gala *Cowgirl Up!* Reception, Preview & Sale with cocktails, supper and entertainment. \$150 per person; includes ballot book to make purchases.

Sunday, April 9, 9:00am – Artists' Quick Draw, Auction and Chuck Wagon Breakfast on the streets of Wickenburg and the Museum's grounds. Quick Draw & Auction free; breakfast \$15 per person.

Sunday, April 9, 11:30am – *Heroine of the West: A Story in Search of a Teller* – Drawing from ancient icon and symbol, artist Donna Howell-Sickles both tells the story, and explodes it off the page. Free to members; suggested \$10 donation non-members.

Tuesday, April 11, 6:30pm - Las Senoras *Girls Night Out*, a high-spirited evening of wining, dining and pampering, all in celebration of *Cowgirl Up!* and women in the West who create great art. \$30 per person.

Wednesday, April 12, Noon – *Lunch with a Legend*. Cheryl Rogers-Barnett dishes up tales of life with her legendary Mom and Dad – Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. \$30 per person.

The *Cowgirl Up!* Invitational Exhibition & Sale will be on view during regular Museum hours Monday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm and Sunday noon to 4pm from Sunday, April 9 through Sunday, April 30 (closed Easter Sunday). The exhibit is free with Museum admission. For reservations to the special events listed above, please call 928-684-2272, ext. 100.

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About the Desert Caballeros Western Museum

The Desert Caballeros Western Museum is *Arizona's Most Western Museum* serving more than 40,000 visitors a year by preserving and exhibiting the art and history of the Southwest and desert frontier. The Museum is known for its innovative programming and has an extraordinary collection including Western art and Native American arts, along with the Hays' *Spirit of the Cowboy Collection*, one of the most complete collections of Western artifacts on display in the country. The Museum's entire lower level is devoted to a re-creation of life in Late Territorial Wickenburg and to an exciting permanent exhibit called *Out on the Ranch* which has been especially created with children in mind. The Museum is located at 21 N. Frontier Street in Wickenburg. For information, call 928-684-2272, or visit www.westernmuseum.org