



WESTERN ART PATRONS

Newsletter: Fall, 2021

Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block  
140 N. Main Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85701

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## We're Baaack!!! In-Person Fall Opening Event Draws a Crowd

For the first time in twenty months, members of the Western Art Patrons congregated for an in-person event held at the Baker Education Building on the campus of the Tucson Museum of Art. Some forty-seven WAP members emerged like wide-eyed prairie dogs from the digital confines of the virtual world to renew friendships, imbibe drinks and sample a luscious spread of hors d'oeuvres from Café a la C'Art on a balmy Halloween afternoon in the Larkin Patio courtyard. The crowd then donned their masks and wandered into the auditorium for the opening event of the fall season, a fascinating presentation by Tohono O'odham potter and basket weaver **Reuben Naranjo, PhD.**, who shared insights on the background and traditions of the Tohono O'odham people in the Sonoran region, with particular emphasis on his own pottery-making. Naranjo is a member of TMA's Collections Committee and served as a community curator for the installation of TMA's Indigenous Arts gallery, where two of his works are proudly displayed.



TMA curator Christine Brindza poses with Reuben Naranjo at WAP Fall opening event

## Felicitious Home Invasions

Forty-three potential kleptomaniacs (all WAP members) descended like locusts on the Ventana Canyon homes of TMA Board of Trustees President **Mary Jo Brown** and WAP members **Ken and Judy Riskind** on Sunday afternoon, November 14th, for a tour of the art collections of the gracious hosts. Nothing was reported missing, save a goodly percentage of the M&Ms temptingly arrayed in the Riskinds' kitchen. Mary Jo Brown's collection featured great examples of Western and contemporary art, including several works by celebrated Tucson artist Jim Waid. The Riskind collection displayed Western and wildlife paintings and sculpture as well as choice examples of photography (including Ken's own very impressive work) and horology. A reception on the Ventana Clubhouse Patio after the conclusion of the tours offered solace to the unsuccessful kleptomaniacs. Kidding aside, it was a wonderful afternoon—a terrific opportunity to see fine art while spending time with fellow WAP members in delightfully gracious residential settings.



Mary Jo Brown, Ken Riskind and Rexene Andrle at the WAP Home Tours

## New WAP President Judy Betty: the Minnesota Dynamo

Judy Betty, the dynamo with two first names, is the new president of the Western Art Patrons. A native Minnesotan, Judy brings to her new position a grab-bag of administrative skills honed from a career in childhood education. After attending St. Olaf College and Winona State University, Judy obtained postgraduate degrees at St. Thomas University in St. Paul. She began her career as a fifth grade teacher in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, moving on to a position at the Minnesota Department of Education (1989-91) followed by a dozen years as a principal in the Minnetonka Public Schools system. While raising her two children with husband (and fellow WAP board member) Jim Betty, she served two terms on her local school board (in those good old days when such service wasn't life-threatening).

Judy and Jim spend their summers in Wayzata, Minnesota near their children and three grandchildren, but spend most of each year in Tucson. When not whipping the WAP board into shape, Judy volunteers at the Assistance League of Tucson and enjoys reading, bridge and water walking (which, she assures me, is *in* water and not *on* water). Her favorite drink is the Corpse Revival II, a pre-Prohibition cocktail designed to rouse the drinker from the dead (Google it if you dare).

"I see the Western Art Patrons as a many-faceted organization," she said in a moment of sobriety. "First, we are a social group, friendly and fun loving! We bring like-minded people together to meet and learn from and about artists, share travel opportunities (both day trips and overnights), enjoy social events, and support the Museum by sponsoring exhibitions and art acquisitions."



## Upcoming Events

### *Amerind Museum Roadtrip*

Up to twenty-eight WAP members will have the opportunity to tour the **Amerind Museum, Art Gallery & Research Center** on **Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>** starting at 10 A.M. Located in Dragoon, Arizona, an hour's drive from TMA, the Amerind is dedicated to the promotion of understanding of the country's Native Peoples, offering intriguing displays highlighting archaeology, Native cultures, and Western art. Lunch will be included in the day's program; participants will provide their own transportation (carpooling is strongly encouraged). Preregistration for this event is required. Please watch your email for announcements and registration information.

### *Cowboy Cantina with Special Guest Shonto Begay*

The annual Western Art Patrons **Cowboy Cantina** will take place at the Mountain Oyster Club on **Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**. The Cowboy Cantina is the primary annual fundraising vehicle for the Western Art Patrons. We are particularly fortunate to have as this year's guest speaker Dineh' (Navajo) painter, illustrator, author and educator **Shonto Begay**. Sign-up details will appear in an upcoming email announcement.

### *Cowgirl Up!*

Another road trip is scheduled for **Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**, this time to the **Desert Caballeros Western Museum** in Wickenburg, Arizona, for the annual **Cowgirl Up!** exhibition and sale featuring works by female Western artists. Bus transportation and lunch will be arranged.

### *WAP Annual Meeting*

This year's annual meeting will take place on **Thursday evening, April 28<sup>th</sup>** at the Tucson Museum of Art. An optional dinner will be available next door at **Cafe a la C'Art** after the meeting. Guest speaker will be Western artist **Darcie Peet**. As Darcie's work is not yet represented in the collection of TMA, we'd urge any of our readers who may own one of her works to consider the possibility of donating it to TMA at or before the event.

## Curator's Corner

### **The Frank and Jean Hamilton Gallery: A Fresh Look**

This summer, the Tucson Museum of Art completed a reinstall of the *Art of the American West* collection in the **Frank and Jean Hamilton Gallery**. It was the first major overhaul of the gallery since the reinstallation of TMA in 2017. Since that time, the museum field has emerged with many new ideas for interpretation and display, and I was ready to incorporate some of these strategies while staying true to the principles of the collection.

The new gallery features both old favorites as well as new interpretations of the art of the American West. Within the space, several thematic sections are present, including *Yesterday's West: The Idyllic Scene*, *Today's West: New Definitions*, *The World and the West: Art of the Horse and People of the West*. Here are a few highlights to share with you.

*Today's West* examines contemporary imagery of the region, showing different styles and art forms that have emerged within the last few decades. In conjunction with the current *Patrick Martinez: Look What You Created* exhibition on view in the **Kasser Wing of Latin American Art**, there is a work by Martinez included in the Hamilton Gallery called *Sitting Bull Cake*. This is a portrait of the famed Lakota chief made of texturized acrylic paint on a rectangular form made to look like a sheet cake. (You must see it in person!) There are other works by Martinez displayed throughout TMA as part of this exhibition.



Patrick Martinez, *Sitting Bull Cake*, 2019, heavy body acrylic, acrylic airbrush, ceramic cake roses on panel with gold mirror, Plexiglas, 26 x 20 x 3 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles.

Another unique theme in the Hamilton is *Art of the Horse*, which takes a global look at horse culture, displaying items from other TMA collections in conversation with those of the West. One can examine the similarities and differences between a terra cotta female equestrian figure from the T'ang Dynasty, Latin American Folk Art horses, and an Olaf Wieghorst bronze. It shows how the horse can bring powerful connections through time and place.

*People of the West* is a special project displayed in dialogue with the rest of the Art of the American West collection. This area examines the modern meaning of the term “Westerner,” containing representations of people of color, women, immigrants, and people with disabilities. With select works, artists and community experts wrote Community Voice labels, providing additional context. This is part of a project supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The Hamilton Gallery shows how the Art of the American West collection is evolving to broaden representation and provide additional opportunities to link with regional identities while building relevancy to individuals of all backgrounds. I invite you to check out the new gallery and explore these themes and ideas.

-- **Christine C. Brindza**, Glasser Curator of Art of the American West



View of the Hamilton Gallery facing the “People of the West” special project

## Western Art Patrons Board of Directors

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