



TUCSON MUSEUM of ART

WESTERN ART PATRONS

Newsletter: Spring, 2022

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

Cowboy Cantina: Dinner & Diné artist Shonto Begay

The Mountain Oyster Club was this year's venue for the ninth edition of the Cowboy Cantina, the Western Art Patrons' principal annual fundraising event. Eighty-eight attendees devoured a buffet dinner and the charm of this year's rousing speaker, the entertaining Diné artist **Shonto Begay**, who described his spiritual and artistic journey and even graced the crowd with a traditional Diné chant. Born in a hogan in Navajo Nation, the artist is one of sixteen children of a Navajo rug weaving mother and a medicine man father. Begay began writing, illustrating and painting professionally in 1983 and is now represented in numerous museums and fine art galleries throughout the country (including Mark Sublette's Medicine Man Gallery in Tucson). His work has been exhibited in solo shows at the Museum of Northern Arizona, Arizona State Museum, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, The Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, the American Indian Contemporary Arts Museum in San Francisco and the Phoenix Art Museum. Among the highlights



Shonto Begay poses with one of his paintings



Begay's *Ancestor Prayer*

of the event was the announcement that, thanks to the generosity of WAP member **Jerry Freund**, Shonto Begay's *Above Parched Ground* (c. 2019, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 30 in.), has been added to the collection of the Tucson Museum of Art.

The Road to Amerind

A clutch of intrepid WAP members ventured southwest on a cold morning in late January to explore the collections of The Amerind Museum in Dagoon, Arizona. A warm welcome was provided by curator **Eric Kaldahl** who led the group through the main building which featured an immense collection of Navajo and Zuni jewelry. A tour of the vault followed, revealing endless shelves of Indigenous objects from pottery to kachinas to ancient artifacts. The participants then decamped to the art gallery where they viewed a display of Western art focusing on the theme of the horse as well as an exhibition of the work of the Navajo photographer **Priscilla Tacheney** who documents the Southwest landscape and skies. A bountiful lunch at the Fulton Seminar House, a hacienda-style home from the 1930's on a hill above the museum, capped the afternoon.



The Amerind Museum in Dagoon, Arizona

Upcoming Event: A Dandy Dose of Darcie, Oh, My!

A scant two weeks remain to claim your spot at this year's Western Art Patrons Annual Meeting to be held in-person on Thursday evening, April 28, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. in the Alice Baker Education Building at the Tucson Museum of Art. This year's featured speaker is someone very special: longtime Western artist, designer and educator, **Darcie Peet**, who will stir you from your reverie with an enthralling discussion of her multi-faceted career in the arts. Many of you have also planned on attending the optional dinner spread next door at Café à La C'Art after the meeting. While there is no charge for the meeting and presentation, a twenty and three fivers will buy you dinner (\$35/person for those who've abandoned math in retirement).

If you've yet to sign up, you can still do so by clicking [HERE](https://tinyurl.com/WAPAnnualMeeting) Or visit <https://tinyurl.com/WAPAnnualMeeting>. Be there **and** be square!

Online with Western Masters Piehl and Fawcett

Before there'll be Peet there was Piehl. That's **Walter Piehl**, the Willem de Kooning of Western abstract art, who offered up a bit of personality and artistic insight during a "Cocktails with a Curator" online session with Glasser Western Art Curator Christine Brindza on February 24th. The North Dakotan artist, featured in a traveling retrospective of over fifty years of his art, is represented in the TMA collection by *Handful*, pictured below (acrylic on canvas, from the "Sweetheart of the Rodeo" Series; gift of Elizabeth Dane in honor of Patrick Clinton).



And after Piehl came Fawcett. That's the venerable Western artist **John Fawcett**, who shared insights about his art (oils and watercolors) and process with an online audience of WAP members on March 7th. A former veterinarian who splits time between residences in Pennsylvania and Colorado, he is renowned for his depiction of horses and Western ranch life.



John Fawcett, *Hits and Misses*, 2000, w/c, TMA Collection, Gift of John and Elizabeth Fawcett

Roseta Santiago in Scottsdale

A half-dozen WAP members had the good fortune to join veteran Western artist **Roseta Santiago** for the opening of her exhibition of paintings at King Galleries on Main Street in Scottsdale on March 24th. Entitled *Messages and Messengers*, the show featured sixteen new paintings by the Santa Fe-based artist, nearly half of which were sold at the opening. A number of members joined her for dinner at Mai Lee's Thai Bistro preceding the show. Santiago was an Annual Meeting guest speaker for the Western Art Patrons in 2015. TMA is honored to include one of her works, *Journey to Blue Lake* (2017), as part of its permanent collection.



WAP members pose with Roseta Santiago (third from right) at King Galleries opening

Denver Here We Come: Save the Date!

After a delay imposed by the realities of the pandemic, the WAP Travel & Events Committee is delighted to reveal long-awaited plans for a trip to Denver on October 17-21, 2022. Participants will stay at The Art Hotel, an exciting new Hilton experience next door to the Denver Art Museum. In addition to touring DAM, the group will enjoy a special tour of The Anschutz Collection (the American Museum of Western Art), an astounding Western art collection featuring over three hundred paintings displayed on three floors of a beautifully restored 19th-century building (a one-time brothel) in downtown Denver. It's a brothel visit even wives will approve! The trip will also include visits to artist galleries and studios (**Duke Beardsley**, **Don Coen** and **William Matthews** are currently on the agenda), an art conservation laboratory and a prestigious private collection. More information and a sign-up opportunity will be provided at a later date.

Curator's Corner

A Year in Review, Sort of

When taking a moment to step back and reflect upon this TMA season (October-April), one may realize truly how much has been accomplished. In doing this, I want to share some of the major acquisitions, exhibitions, and other projects that have kept my desk and email inbox rather full.

First, there were some most generous gifts to TMA Art of the American West collection. Two of note include **James T. Bialac's** contemporary Indigenous Arts collection donated in 2021. This donation amounts to over 400 works of art by Indigenous artists across the Southwest and beyond. This doubled the Indigenous Arts collection! In addition, the **Donald L. Graf and Julia B. Graf Revocable Living Trust** gifted 18 Diné (Navajo) textiles and 49 New Mexico Modern artworks. We are so grateful to donors who consider gifts like these.



Hyrum Joe (b.1980), Diné, Title Unknown, oil on canvas. Collection of the Tucson Museum of Art. Gift of James T. Bialac.

Regarding exhibitions, I have been working toward the insertion of TMA's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (IDEA Plan) into curatorial practice and exhibitions. This is evident in the *People of the West* intervention in the Hamilton Gallery. This wall of artwork discusses ideas about representation, asking "What is a Westerner?" and "Who is left out of the broader narrative of the American

West?” This has gained traction since it was installed, being used in docent training, exploratory training sessions, and has been discussed by University of Arizona classes.

Along with these items, there have been several projects in progress. TMA is in Year 3 of a major grant (the largest grant won in TMA history) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). It is a prestigious Leadership Award that supported the installation and community-based curation of the Indigenous Arts gallery in March 2021. To build upon the success of that experience, the next step is to replicate the process in another space, the Maxfield Gallery, and concentrate on the theme of art of the Southwest. The result of the project will be a toolkit that other museums across the U.S. can access.



T.C. Cannon (1946-1978), Kiowa, *Diné*, linocut. Collection of the Tucson Museum of Art. Gift of James T. Bialac.

Another award, *Stories in Clay*, comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This one-year project focuses on the historic Indigenous Arts pottery collection. It incorporates both Native community and academic knowledge to inform research. TMA recently hired Gabriella Moreno as a Collections Fellow to work with me on digging deeper and expanding our understandings further about what we know about this type of pottery.

With all this, there are exhibitions and projects coming next season! Opening in October is *More Than: Expanding Artist Identities from the American West*. This exhibition examines artist identity, engages in dialogue about disparities in artist representation, and works to broaden definitions of the art of the American West. Stay tuned, as much more will be revealed about this exhibition!



Emil Bisttram, *Rain Over Taos*, 1958, watercolor. Collection of the Tucson Museum of Art. Gift from the Donald L. Graf and Julia B. Graf Revocable Living Trust.

Lastly, Arizona Humanities recently announced a project award for TMA to support the exhibition *Enduring Legacies: The Indigenous Art Collection of James T. Bialac*. Opening in early 2023, it will debut selections of his large gift and utilize Indigenous Humanities scholars as part of the exhibition process. More will be announced about this exhibition, too!

Thank you all for your support! Art of the American West is alive! It has been an exciting season with so much more yet to come.

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

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