

## TOURING *The Broadmoor Art Academy and its Legacy: 1919-2070*

OCTOBER 12, 2019 – JANUARY 12, 2020

This touring packet emphasizes experiential inquiry-based learning by asking questions to help visitors think about the exhibition. Expertise on every work is not necessary.

### WITH VISITORS

**INFORM:** The Fine Arts Center has evolved over the past 100 years from its start as the Broadmoor Arts Academy in 1919, to its presence in 2019 as an entity of Colorado College, and its future goals as we develop along our own shifting landscape and climate in Colorado Springs. The pieces in this exhibition span chronologically from 1919 to the 1970's including a separate space highlighting lithography.

Originally, the BAA served as an introduction in the West to a European model of art. This approach to teaching art focused on three questions:

- What is art?
- How do we teach art?
- What do artists need to know?

**DIRECT:** In response to this model, first think about what art is to you. Share with someone near you what you think art is. (Pair share: Discuss your response with a person near you)

Then view the first gallery space and think about similarities between the work here that may reveal what was important to these artists.

- Ex: Art seemed to be very focused on landscapes and scenic imagery.
- Ex: Artists used very vibrant colors with often thick applications of paint.
- Ex: Art was rooted in oil painting.

**DISCUSS:** Ask group to share some of their observations about interpretations of what art was during the time and how that might differ from what they see as “art”.

**VTS:** “Navajo Woman on Horseback” by Lloyd Moylan

**AFTER VTS:** Did you hear the various narratives when we spent time looking in depth at the piece? Note that this type of observation allows for many narratives shaped by the viewer without establishing a definitive intention of the artist.

**DIRECT:** Find an artwork in the gallery that you are drawn to and engage with that piece independently.

**ASK: Why are you drawn to that work? What narrative is being formed though that piece?**

- For visitors who seem to struggle, remind them of the VTS strategies: When you make an observation, you must always consider: “What do you see that makes you say that?”

**INFORM:** In 1936, the Fine Arts Center opened with a new name and a new building that built upon the legacy of the BAA while expanding to attract different influences and styles. With these changes, the FAC began a new narrative which brought on new perspectives using the surrounding landscapes and cultures. Given the situation of the FAC in the West, many artists were fascinated with Native American culture and presented stylized and sometimes cartoonish depictions that contributed to stereotypes. Stereotypes continued through other depictions of “**ordinary lives and sights in America**”. These artworks represent the differences between lived and fictionalized assumptions of “American life”.

**DIRECT:** Look through the galleries for depictions of what artists assumed to be “American life” during that time.

Bring the group back together.

**ASK: In what ways do these artists depict the lives of Americans in the West during this time?** (Pair share: Discuss your observations with a person near you)

- Ex: There are representations of a woman milking a cow, a familiar depiction of settlers establishing and growing their farmland.
- Ex: There are students huddled around a campfire, camping as a familiar staple of the mountain West.
- Ex: Representations of Native American people often appear in a cartoonish way.

**ASK: In what ways do these depictions shape a narrative or create stereotypes for an outside perspective? What alternative points of view might not be represented by the artists in the exhibition?**

**INFORM:** In 1953, changes continued due to a shift in leadership in which avant-garde form of artist began to flock to the FAC, bringing with them abstract and modern approaches to art. These new forms made dramatic transformations from regionalism to abstraction.

**DIRECT:** Look around this next gallery and consider what changes ensued from earlier traditional models of post-impressionism and regionalism as the FAC expanded.

**ASK: Going back to our initial question, how has the previous conception of “What is art?” changed through the progression of these galleries?**

- Ex: You may notice that the pieces in the first gallery are more representational or realistic, the second gallery depicts more simplified images or figures, and the third space is more abstract and non-figurative.
- Ex: The mediums and bold colors stay more consistent over time.

**DISCUSS:** Ask group to share some of their observations about interpretations of what art was during the time.

**INFORM:** The BAA and subsequently the FAC were the epicenter of regional printmaking in the region due to the extensive lithography program that was developed at the here in the 1930's.

**DIRECT:** Explore the gallery space which both discusses the process of lithography as well as presents pieces created through this process. Watch the film that presents this process and consider the opportunities this process provided the artists.

- If visitors are interested in further exploration of lithography, direct them to “Notes from the Musick Collections” downstairs.

## EXHIBITION TEXT

### El Pomar South didactics

#### **The Broadmoor Art Academy** (small section text)

The Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) owed its beginning to the patronage of Julie and Spencer Penrose, prominent philanthropists and patrons of the arts in Colorado. The Penroses donated their residence at 30 West Dale Street, realizing their long-held dream of establishing an art school. The BAA emphasized easel painting and also functioned as a center for music, dance, and theatre. This core mission continues undiminished in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In addition to notable guest instructors during the 1920s such as John Carlson, Robert Reid, and Birger Sandzén, the BAA promoted the work of Colorado Springs artists and hosted traveling exhibitions. In doing so, it informed both the student body and the Colorado Springs community of current art trends and the cultural heritage of previous centuries.

- Stan Cuba, consulting curator

#### **Post Impressionism** (small section text)

Emerging in France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the post-impressionist style embraced painterly techniques such as thick layers of pigment and expressive action. Many of the first artists at the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) had trained in Paris where they were inspired by the work of visionary artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne. BAA founding director John F. Carlson was heavily influenced by post impressionism, which is captured beautifully in his very Cézannesque *Timberline Austerities* from 1920. In addition to the work of Carlson, note paintings by Ernest Lawson, Birger Sandzén, and Nellie Knopf located in this gallery.

- Michael Paglia, arts writer and critic

#### **Regionalism** (small section text)

By the time the Fine Arts Center's (FAC) new John Gaw Meem-designed building was opened in 1936, regionalism had supplanted post-impressionism as the dominant aesthetic force at the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) as it transitioned into the FAC. Regionalism employed stylized, sometimes cartoonish depictions of recognizable subject matter in order to convey narratives about the ordinary people and places in America. The regionalist style was shepherded in Colorado Springs by Boardman Robinson, the influential BAA and FAC art school director. In addition to Robinson's work, the style is evident in pieces by other artists on view in this gallery, including Tabor Utley, Arnold Blanch, and George Biddle.

- Michael Paglia, arts writer and critic

### **The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center** (large intro panel?)

In April 1936, the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) entered a new era with the grand opening of the new Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (FAC). Funded by local philanthropist Alice Bemis Taylor, the building was designed by Santa Fe architect John Gaw Meem. Site specific murals by artists including Boardman Robinson, Archie Musick, and Frank Mechau were commissioned for the building. Mechau's *Wild Horses* mural adorns the FAC courtyard; the study is on view in this exhibition. The inaugural festivities featured an exhibition of French painting by artists such as Henri Matisse, Vincent van Gogh, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Dancer Martha Graham performed on the FAC theatre's main stage and composer Eric Satie's *Socrate* was staged on a set designed by Alexander Calder. The grand vision of the BAA as a center for arts and culture in the Rocky Mountains had fully materialized as the FAC.

- Stan Cuba, consulting curator

### El Pomar Center didactics

#### **Modernism** (small section text)

The influence of European modernism was strong for some of the most significant artists of the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) and Fine Arts Center (FAC). Among this group was Charles Bunnell, whose studies at the BAA began in 1927 with post-impressionist painter Ernest Lawson. Bunnell successfully incorporated modernist ideas into his work, merging regionalist subject matter with an interest in vanguard art. This stylistic transformation, from traditional representation to styles related to cubism, surrealism and other modernist approaches, began in the late 1930s, and continued into the early 1950s. These aesthetic tactics are evident in the work of Bunnell, Jean Charlot, and DeForrest Judd on view in this gallery.

- Michael Paglia, arts writer and critic

#### **Murals and the Works Progress Administration** (small section text)

Murals by artists affiliated with the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) or the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (FAC) can be found in nearly 100 towns and cities in at least 26 states. Most were painted under federal New Deal programs that provided economic relief to artists during the

Great Depression. FAC artist George Biddle, inspired by Mexico's government-funded murals, suggested the program to his former classmate President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In addition to encouraging civic pride among Americans, these mural projects were the foundation for lasting art careers. Mural projects also helped to establish lifelong friendships among artists like Archie Musick, Ethel and Jenne Magafan, and Eduardo Chavez.

- Pat Musick, artist and historian

### El Pomar North

#### **Lithography** (large intro panel?)

The Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA), and subsequently the Fine Arts Center (FAC), was at the epicenter of regional printmaking production for more than two decades. First introduced to the academy in the early 1920s, lithography became a central focus when Boardman Robinson arrived at the BAA in 1930.

In lithography, artists draw directly on a prepared surface—traditionally limestone—with a greasy crayon. When the oil-based ink is applied to the stone, the ink adheres only to the drawn image but not the surrounding treated and water-moistened stone. While many artists experimented with making lithographs, few became thoroughly skilled in technical printing aspects; most had their stones printed by a master printer.

After training with the 1936 lithography instructor Charles Locke, artist Lawrence Barrett became the FAC's master printer. During Barrett's tenure, the program expanded dramatically and achieved national stature. Barrett worked closely with artists like George Biddle, Jean Charlot, and Adolf Dehn; these artists made important contributions to the printmaking world. Barrett's departure in early 1952 dismantled the once-popular program.

- Cori Sherman North, curator; Pat Musick, artist and historian

### Steiner

#### **Abstraction** (small section text)

Prioritizing form, color, and composition over recognizable subjects, abstraction was the principle concern for many artists in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1953, Emerson Woelffer, an abstract expressionist, took the helm as director of the Fine Arts Center (FAC) Art School. He joined avant-garde artist Vaclav Vytlacil and hired renowned modernists such as Robert Motherwell. That same year, Mary Chenoweth, who was already experimenting with abstraction in the late 1940s, joined the faculty of Colorado College. Many of the first generation of Colorado abstractionists were connected to the FAC, making Colorado Springs a center for abstraction in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples by Woelffer, Vytlacil and Chenoweth are on view in this gallery.

--Michael Paglia, arts writer and critic

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

On October 15, 1919, the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) was born. Through the generosity of Julie and Spencer Penrose, the art school was housed in their former residence at 30 West Dale Street. Drawn to the idea of exploring the Wild West, artists came to Colorado Springs to experience its clear blue skies, dramatic lighting, and rugged landscape. Countless influential artists came to the school through 1935, contributing to its inspiring and creative environment. From great American Impressionists and Post-Impressionists to celebrated muralists, Regionalists, and Social Realists, the Academy was concurrently rooted in tradition and responsive to the zeitgeist of the first half of the 20th century. Built on the foundation of the prestigious Broadmoor Art Academy, the Fine Arts Center opened in 1936 with a new name and new building on the same site, perpetuating the legacy of the BAA. Elevating techniques in printmaking and embracing the language of abstraction, the mid-century was a period of innovation that progressed toward the establishment of a unique regional artistic identity. In 2019, the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College continues to celebrate and embody the vision of our predecessors. We honor Colorado's arts and cultural heritage through vibrant programming in our non-profit art museum, performing arts theatre, and arts education center. Proudly looking back on 100 years, we are inspired to continue progressing boldly toward tomorrow, creating an institution in service to our local and global communities. The FAC of 2019 is testament to our storied past, and the future will be what we dream of today. This FAC Legacy Series exhibition is a confluence of hundreds of works from dozens of local, national, private, and public collections, and interpreted by some of the finest regional art historians.

## RELATED EVENTS

Interested visitors should also look out for other exhibitions related to the Broadmoor Art Academy:

- “O Beautiful!” (open now through December 30, 2019)
- “Notes from the Musick Collection” (open now through February 9, 2020)

## CELEBRATE 100 YEARS WITH THE FAC

October 12

Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (galleries open until 7:30 p.m.)

Fine Arts Center, 30 W. Dale St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903

FREE and open to the public

Join us as we celebrate the Broadmoor Art Academy's official birthday and the opening of *The Broadmoor Art Academy and Its Legacy, 1919-1970, an FAC Legacy Series exhibition that brings together hundreds of works from dozens of local, national, private, and public collections, interpreted by some of the finest regional art historians.*

This community celebration will include FREE museum admission, artist demonstrations, informal gallery discussions in various exhibitions throughout the day, a special film screening, hands-on art activities from the Bemis School of Art, food trucks, sweet birthday treats and more!

## HIDDEN HERITAGE: THE BROADMOOR ART ACADEMY

October 15 @ 5:00 pm

FAC Member-Only Lecture

In honor of the FAC's centennial milestone, we are pleased to host a very special member-only lecture featuring Dr. Jim Raughton. Drawing from his research on the topic, his personal knowledge, and appreciation as an avid collector of works by artists of the Academy, Jim will provide insights about the BAA practitioners, their personalities, and memorable moments central to the early days of our 100-year history. No RSVP required, check-in at front desk.

## RETHINKING REGIONALISM: 20TH-CENTURY ART AND VISUAL CULTURE IN THE AMERICAN WEST

December 6, 2019 - December 7, 2019

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Broadmoor Art Academy (the precursor to the current Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center), this symposium aims to provide a forum for new inquiries, challenges, and reassessments of Western American regional art and visual culture. For this event, scholars from around the country will gather to present the latest research on this vibrant period in American art and history.

Friday December 6: Keynote lecture and reception, 7 p.m.

Saturday December 7: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., symposium

Our Keynote speaker is Dr. Anne Hyde, historian at University of Oklahoma and former professor at CC; winner of the Bancroft prize for her book *Empires, Nations and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860.*

*Locations:* FAC and Cornerstone Arts Center Screening Room

Free and open to the public

Supported by Inasmuch Foundation