

TOURING *Notes from the Musick Collection*

AUGUST 3 – NOVEMBER 3, 2019

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:

- In the early 20th century, Colorado Springs became a popular destination for sightseeing. Much of the striking landscapes in and around the Springs made the city especially attractive to landscape artists.

ASK:

- (For locals) **What do you think is the greatest natural attraction in Colorado Springs? What makes this natural attraction so unique?**
- (For tourists) **What has enticed you about the natural landscape in Colorado Springs?**

INFORM:

- Artists presented in this exhibit, including Archie Musick, were connected to BAA and the FAC. They were all inspired by the natural world around them and their place in it. Many of the works in this exhibit are rooted in the distinct landscape of Colorado and the greater southwest, and many seem to evoke the way that we as humans experience the landscape. Ideas about space, place and landscape are often tied to how humans identify themselves (e.g., birthplace, hometown, regional ties, etc.)

DIRECT: Direct audience to further explore the works and ephemera while noticing any images or emotions that remind them of their experience of being in Colorado.

ASK:

- **Which landscape-related images elicit a memory or meaningful personal connection for you? (pair share)**
- **In what ways do you share a connection to the lived experiences of these artists? (pair share)**

INFORM:

- Archie Musick connected much of his work to the landscapes in his environment, but he also used symbolic images to represent his personal placement in the world (he used the image of a lone wolf to represent his separateness in opinion from his classmates). He consistently held beliefs that often countered those held by the majority. In his

memoir, he denotes his purpose to “help save and share the spice of an era.” His unique perspectives and expression of those perspectives through his work established his role as a lively figure in local history. (give examples of why?)

- Musick regularly traded artworks and collaborated with other artists connected with the BAA and the FAC.
- Spanning a total of 16 artists, the works in this exhibition represent Musick’s extensive collection. Musick’s works are presented alongside ephemera from his and fellow artists’ lives in order to illustrate a critical period of local history and its vibrant artistic scene.

DIRECT: Explore the exhibition while looking out for connections between the art and the ephemera. Offer types of connections that they may find:

- **Figures:** *What connections can you draw between figures in the works of art and the collected ephemera?*
 - The photographs containing people appear as inspiration for some of the art pieces (“Singing around campfire” photo and “Beaux Arts Brawl” lithograph)
 - Ex: The animals present in the ephemera are often sketched in the same position in the artwork, denoting perhaps the perspective in which the artist saw these figures.
- **Studies of artwork:** See if you can find any place where we see both a draft of a work and its finished version. *In what ways has the work changed given its multiple states?*
 - Ex: The sketch of “Seen in Aspen” takes on so much more depth as a lithograph. The landscapes become more pronounced drawing attention to the desolation of the landscape as opposed to the cartoon-esque nature of the sketch.

ASK:

- *These works of art in this exhibition emphasize textures, forms, vistas, and light. What ideas, themes, or attitudes towards nature and landscapes might be inspired by these works?*
- *How do these ideas, themes, or attitudes inform your own experiences with the works?*

RECOMMENDED FOR VTS

VTS: *Kubla Kahn (this would allow the audience to explore the work and for you to provide information on lithographs – this may make exploring mediums more accessible) - DIRECT TO EXHIBITION TEXT BELOW*

- **DIRECT:** Compare to “Kubla Kahn” stanza from poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Exerpt:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

- Are there words from this stanza that you feel accurately depict the images in the work?

ASK after VTS: How does your deep examination of this piece influence your understanding of the exhibit as a whole?

EXHIBITION TEXT

Lithography—literally, drawing or writing on stone—enjoyed a surge of popularity in the 1930s and 40s. The BAA and FAC offered a spectacular setting and climate as well as superb instructors, a combination unmatched by any other major early to mid-20th century American art school. Both resident and visiting artists made prints inspired by the sublime mountain ranges, derelict mines, ghost towns, and dramatic rock formations of the Pikes Peak region.

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, it 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 such as Lawrence Barrett.

In 1937, Archie Musick, Guy Maccoy, Joseph Meert, Bernard Steffen, and Jackson Pollock collaborated on a folio of lithographs, hoping to capitalize on the growing national interest in the medium. Each artist produced one print to contribute to the folio, united by regionalist sensibilities. All had studied with Thomas Hart Benton in New York; some with him in Kansas City. All but Pollock had studied at the BAA and FAC. At the time, only Musick was in Colorado. Correspondence among them reveals the long-distance planning process and, later, their largely unsuccessful efforts to sell the folios. Barrett printed Musick's image, Meert had his printed Kansas City, and the rest were printed at the Art Student League in New York City.

Ethel and Jenne Magafan, Eduardo Chavez

American (1916-1993, 1916-1952, 1917-1995)

Illustrated notes to Archie Musick

1930s-1945

Ink, colored pencil; lithograph; ink, gouache; ink, colored pencil

“The Twins and Ed” were Musick’s lifelong friends, introduced to each other by artist Frank Mechau, for whom Chavez and the Magafans worked as apprentices. Chavez and Jenne Magafan married in the early 1940s then settled in Woodstock, New York after World War II, along with Ethel Magafan and husband Bruce Currie. Even after Jenne’s tragic early death, the two families continued to visit Colorado each summer; Musick and his family joined them for camping and sketching trips in the mountains. These trips provided Ethel with source material for her next year’s paintings back in Woodstock.

The caption inside Chavez’ delightful sketch of casting off his Army uniform reads: “I am free once again—and happy!”

Archie Musick

American (1902-1978)

Kubla Khan

c.1930s

Etching

Archie Musick

American (1902-1978)

Kubla Khan

c.1930s

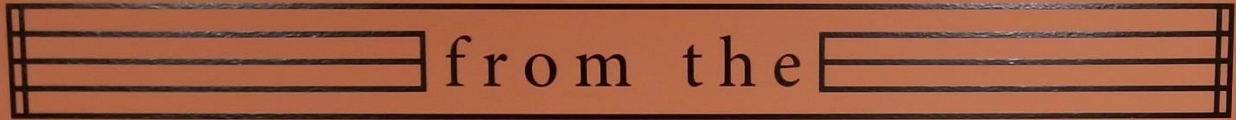
Pencil

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea...*

First encountering Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" in college, at a time when he was exploring Missouri caves, Musick wrote, "Poetry [had] ordinarily passed me by... 'Kubla Khan' ...crashed head-on into my consciousness and left me groping for solid ground..."

Years later, he spent the summer of 1932 working in Carlsbad Caverns, exploring the cave during his free time. The poem and memories of the caves inspired numerous drawings, prints, and paintings throughout his life.

NOTES



MUSICK COLLECTION

A dedicated and gregarious student, Archie Musick (1902-1978) studied at the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA), 1927-28; the Art Students Leagues in New York and Los Angeles, 1929-31; then again at the BAA and Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (FAC) until World War II. Archie Musick developed lasting friendships with fellow students, instructors, and visiting artists.

This selection from Musick's collection of artworks and ephemera reflects the depth of those relationships. These prints, sketches, inscriptions, correspondence, and collaborations reveal glimpses into the approaches, personalities, and collegiality among the artists, and their commitment to their work and to one another.

Using lithographic techniques, these artists explored the challenges of the landscape's evocative visual textures, forms, vistas, and light. Because an edition of prints produced multiple copies of a single image, artists could sell their work to private collectors as well as trade readily with each other, resulting in meaningful personal collections of art.

Pat Musick, Guest Curator

Joy Armstrong, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

Anna Doctor, Curatorial Paraprofessional

Archie Musick

American (1902-1978)

Seen in Aspen (World's Fair)

1941

Lithograph

Ghost towns and abandoned mines piqued Musick's sense of nostalgia and, on occasion, whimsy, as in his depiction of this once-optimistic abandoned building. In addition to the eerie mining remnants, Musick found continual inspiration from the local scenery in Colorado Springs. He had originally fallen in love with the Garden of the Gods at the age of six while still living in Missouri, via images seen through a stereoscope viewer. His first in-person visit to the majestic site in 1924 only confirmed for him the rock formations' grandeur, timelessness, and mystique. His home beside the Garden became a lifelong base for his explorations.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Archie Musick was a lively figure in local history who had close ties to several other significant participants in the Broadmoor Art Academy (the Fine Arts Center's predecessor). First a student at the Broadmoor Art Academy and later an instructor at the Fine Arts Center School, Musick developed a collection of works on paper from both collaborative efforts and trades with colleagues over the years. His collection represents around 15 local artists who were working in the early 20th century. Most of the artists represented in this exhibition are connected through their involvement with the Broadmoor Art Academy.

Archie Musick studied at the Broadmoor Art Academy with Randall Davey, Ernest Lawson, and Boardman Robinson and at the Art Students League with Thomas Hart Benton. Musick taught intermittently in Missouri and Colorado, working at Cheyenne Mountain High School and Elementary School as well as at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and at the Fine Arts Center School.

Musick was an author as well as an artist and published several books and articles on subjects ranging from art to his own memoirs. His art work was regularly featured in exhibitions throughout the United States, including the New York World's Fair, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Corcoran Gallery, and the Los Angeles Museum of Art, and his work remains in private and public collections including the National Museum of American Art and the Missouri State Historical Society. Musick was also a muralist funded by the Works Progress Administration and his public murals were prominently featured at the Colorado Springs City Auditorium, the Manitou Springs Post Office, and on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center. It was during his mural projects that he developed his signature technique of combining egg tempera and colored pencil.

RELATED EVENTS

Arts and Letters: Archie Musick's Correspondence

Aug 5, 7:30 p.m. in the FAC Music Room

Artists who studied at the Broadmoor Art Academy (later the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center) were a close knit, lively group that included local artist Archie Musick, who painted murals at the FAC. Archie's daughter, Pat Musick, presents a reading of the letters, some hilarious, others poignant, giving eyewitness views on the arts and events of the time.

Admission: Free

Rethinking Regionalism: 20th-century Art and Visual Culture in the American West

December 5-6, 2019: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, Colorado Springs

Timed to coincide with 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 art and visual culture.

This symposium takes as its departure point the Broadmoor Art Academy, founded in 1919 in Colorado Springs, which gathered together national and international artists to train new generations of students. The Academy's founders and early leaders – including artists such as

John Carlson, Robert Reid, and Randall Davey – created a vibrant center for Regionalist art in a part of the West known for its natural beauty. In the 1930s and 40s, teachers such as Boardman Robinson, Edgar Britton, Adolf Dehn, Ward Lockwood, Birger Sandzén, Frank Mechau, and Lawrence Barrett arrived from Europe and the East to provide instruction for students from across the country. The students and teachers of the Broadmoor Art Academy were admired practitioners of American Scene, Regionalist, New Deal, Modernist, and other preeminent art movements of the first half of the 20th century.

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

- “O Beautiful!” (open now through December 30, 2019)
- “The Broadmoor Art Academy and Its Legacy, 1919-1970” (open October 12, 2019 through January 12, 2020)