

By Julie Carlson



ANGLED SCOTTSDALE'S MUSEUM OF THE WEST ENTRANCE



JOHN COLEMAN'S ONE WHO BRINGS LIFE TO THE RAINMAKER

Western Heritage

of the American West is on display at Scottsdale's Museum of the West.

amid the adobe style boutiques and galleries of the city is Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. The square foot, two-story building opened its doors in 2007. It has retained its goal of preserving the history of the American West during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The museum provides visitors with the opportunity to learn about the American West and its history through fine art, Old West events, and informational programs. The museum's exhibits include docent tours, which tell the story of the American West through art and artifacts. The museum is designed by Phoenix-based architectural firm Frank Lloyd Wright elegance with a modern design. The campus was designed by landscape architects of Phoenix, and features low-water use desert landscaping. The outdoor courtyard is named after Christine and her supporters of the museum. The courtyard features a selection of sculptures from artists including R. Greene, Allan Houser, Doug Hyde, Herb Lubber, as well as a weeping wall with its own water feature that provides sustenance to the greenery.

Western Spirit is owned by the city of Scottsdale and operated by Scottsdale Museum of the West, an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. It stands on what was once the historic Lolo-ma Transit Station, which has since been converted into administrative offices and the Ridenour Learning Center. Bringing the museum to fruition wasn't easy. For nearly 25 years, the city of Scottsdale and a group of individuals selected by former Mayor Herb Drinkwater worked vigilantly on various scenarios. But due to unforeseen developments or issues, the project proved unsuccessful for some time. In 2007, the not-for-profit organization was incorporated by a group of dedicated citizens and businesspeople with the goal of creating a western museum in Scottsdale. But that didn't come without challenges. "Shortly thereafter the economy experienced a dramatic downturn. During the next six years, the nonprofit worked closely with the city staff and specialized consultants as the economy recovered," says Fox. "In February 2013, the Scottsdale City Council unanimously voted to proceed with the design and development of the museum as proposed by the Scottsdale Museum of the West." Several months after opening, the museum was accepted into the Smithsonian Affiliations program. Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West not only has rotating exhibits but on-going exhibits including The A.P. Hays Spirit of the West Collection showcasing 1,250 saddles and spurs in this one-of-a-kind collection; Courage and Crossroads: A Visual Journey through the Early American West showcasing paintings, Pueblo pottery, Navajo chief's blankets, and objects related to Kit Carson; and the Confluence of Cultures in the American West: A Selection of Contemporary Artists from the Peterson Collection featuring paintings of mountain men, American Indians, cavalry and settlers, buffalo,

and the friendship and tensions between mountain men and American Indians. "In Heritage Hall, guests can explore inspiring images and biographies of people, past and present, who have made contributions to the American West," says Fox. Don't miss out on the final month of the Lone Wolf exhibition featuring the paintings of contemporary Blackfeet Indian artist Hart M. Schultz during August. And from September through May, the glorious Native American bronze sculpture work, charcoal and graphite drawings and oil paintings of Prescott artist John Coleman is a must see. Coleman is a member of the Cowboy Artists of America and the National Sculpture Society. The museum also provides audio and video kiosks and hands-on activities for kids and a 135-seat theater with programs and events that tell the stories of the American West through music, plays, films, and presentations by a variety of artists, authors and historians.

While wandering around taking in the sights, don't forget to stop by the museum store to see a wide assortment of high-quality keepsakes from jewelry to purses to glassware to kitchen linens to books for visitors of all ages. There's so much to learn from and explore at Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. "People should visit the museum to enjoy the beauty of the artwork and the museum building; to gain a greater understanding of the rich heritage that is the foundation of the American West," says Fox. "To see rare artifacts and one-of-a-kind collections; and to be part of a community that loves our western heritage and wishes to celebrate and perpetuate it."



Julie Carlson is a local freelance writer and an aspiring screenwriter.



A.P. HAYS SPIRIT OF THE WEST

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